

Temple burglars held in Hyderabad, property worth Rs 5.36 lakh seized

Hyderabad: Two persons who were stealing idols and ornaments of deities from temples in Rachakonda were arrested by the police on Wednesday. The police seized property worth Rs 5.36 lakh from them.The arrested persons, K Sivananda (52), a native of Kurnool, and Shaik Ham Shareef (38), a native of Prakasam district in Andhra Pradesh, were staying in Vanasthalipuram.According to G Sudheer Babu, Commissioner of Police, Rachakonda, the two men moved around the city outskirts and targeted temples to fund their lavish lifestyle."Sivananda and Shareef targeted five temples in Yacharam and Ibrahimpatnam police station limits.

Telangana universities told to stop fee collection from students eligible for reimbursement

Hyderabad: The Telangana Council of Higher Education (TGCHE) on Wednesday asked universities to direct all degree colleges under different managements not to collect tuition fee from students eligible for fee reimbursement from the State government.This direction comes following a story published in these columns with the headline 'Rough start for degree students' on Wednesday, which highlighted how colleges, including government-aided and university colleges, were forcing students to shell out at least half the tuition fee despite being eligible for fee reimbursement.In fact, several students' organisations have also raised the issue with the TGCHE and the government, expressing their strong dissent against the colleges' move.

PM Modi embarks on historic 5-nation tour to deepen ties across global south and Atlantic

GNS News Agency, July 2

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday embarked for Accra, Ghana, marking the first leg of his five-nation tour aimed at reinforcing India's global partnerships, with a focus on strengthening bonds across the Global South and both sides of the Atlantic.The tour includes visits to Ghana, Trinidad & Tobago, Argentina, Brazil, and Namibia — nations that PM Modi described as vital partners in India's evolving foreign policy architecture, spanning historical ties, cultural linkages, economic engagement, and multilateral cooperation.In his departure statement, PM Modi said, "At the invitation of President John Dramani Mahama, I will visit Ghana on July 2-3. Ghana is a valued partner in the Global South and plays an important role in the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States."He expressed anticipation about deepening bilateral cooperation in areas, including investment, energy, health, security, and development partnership. "As fellow democracies, it will be an honour to speak at the Parliament of Ghana," he said.The Prime Minister will then travel to Trinidad & Tobago from July 3-4, a country he said shares "deep-rooted historical, cultural and people-to-people connect" with India."I will meet President Christine Carla Kangalo, who was the Chief Guest at this year's Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, and Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, who has recently assumed office for the second term," he noted.Highlighting the longstanding diaspora bond, PM Modi recalled, "Indians first arrived in Trinidad and Tobago 180 years ago. This visit will provide an opportunity to rejuvenate the special bonds of ancestry and kinship that unite us."From Port of Spain, PM Modi will head to Buenos Aires, marking the first bilateral visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Argentina in 57 years.Calling Argentina "a key economic partner in Latin



America and a close collaborator in the G20," he said, "I look forward to my discussions with President Javier Milei, whom I also had the pleasure of meeting last year. We will focus on advancing our mutually beneficial cooperation, including in the areas of agriculture, critical minerals, energy, trade, tourism, technology, and investment."Following Argentina, the Prime Minister will participate in the BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro on July 6-7.Emphasising India's foundational role in the bloc, he said, "As a founding member, India is committed to BRICS as a vital platform for cooperation among emerging economies. Together, we strive for a more peaceful, equitable, just, democratic and balanced multipolar world order."PM Modi also confirmed he will meet with several world leaders on the sidelines of the summit. The visit to Brazil will continue with a bilateral state visit to Brasilia, the first by an Indian Prime Minister in nearly six decades. "This visit will provide an opportunity to strengthen our close partnership with Brazil, and work with my friend, President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, on advancing the priorities of the Global South," he said.The final leg of PM Modi's tour will take him to Namibia, which he described as "a trusted partner with whom we share a common history of struggle against colonialism."

Harish Rao rebuts CM Revanth's remarks

Hyderabad, July 2 :Former minister and Siddipet MLA Harish Rao today strongly condemned the false campaigning being carried out by CM Revanth Reddy on the water share of the State in the Krishna river. He flagged that the betrayal of 299 and 512 TMC of water in the Krishna river was the fault of the Congress party. Harish Rao warned that anyone, who says that the BRS party had agreed to 299 TMC would have their tongues cut by them.

Speaking to mediapersons at Telangana Bhavan here today, Harish Rao alleged that CM Revanth Reddy was the virus of lies that had infected Telangana. Harish Rao said there was a vaccine called BRS, which is the antidote to the virus of lies. "Revanth Reddy is blaming the man of the house while making excuses for those outside. Former CM KCR achieved Telangana. He worked hard to achieve Section 3 and achieve water share in Krishna. Will the CM show that we signed the 299:512 TMC rights agreement, I will resign from the post, Harish Rao challenged CM Revanth.He said if the Congress party gave 968 TMC in Godavari, doesn't the credit for 299:512 in Krishna also belong to the Congress party..? He said on November 18, 2013, the joint AP Justice Sri Krishna Committee gave a report and added that the same report was also tabled in the Legislative Assembly. "The report said Telangana was given 299 TMC in Krishna and AP 512 TMC. Who wrote the death warrant for Telangana's water rights. The 299 TMC share has been limited due to your incompetence and inaction,"

Will be CM for five years, says Siddaramaiah

GNS News Agency, July 2

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday (July 2, 2025) asserted that he will be in office for a full five-year term. "Yes, I will be. Why do you have the doubt?" the veteran leader said in response to a question by reporters whether he will be the CM for five years.There has been speculation within political circles, especially within the ruling Congress, for some time now about the Chief Minister change later this year, citing power-sharing agreement involving Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar.However, Mr. Shivakumar on July 1, said there is no discussion on leadership change and stressed on strengthening the hands of CM Siddaramaiah and the party's government in the state.On claims by the BJP and JD(S) leaders that the CM will be replaced, he shot back, "Are they our high command?"

"R. Ashoka (Leader of Opposition in the Assembly) is a BJP man. B.Y. Vijayendra (State BJP President) is a BJP man. Chalavadi Narayanaswamy (Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council) is a BJP man. Will you write if they say such things? Should you verify or not?" he asked.Siddaramaiah asserts he will be Karnataka Chief MinisterKarnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday (July 2, 2025) asserted that he will be in office for a full five-year term. "Yes, I will be. Why do you have the doubt?" the veteran leader said in response to a question by reporters whether he will be the CM for five years. | Video Credit: The HinduEarlier, speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Mr. Shivakumar asserted that there is no disagreement within the ruling Congress and when Siddaramaiah is there as the CM, there is no need for any discord on the leadership issue.



Hyderabad, July 2 : Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka has called upon Ministers, MLAs, MPs, and all Congress leaders, starting from village-level unit presidents, to ensure the grand success of the upcoming public meeting of All India Congress Committee (AICC) President Mallikarjun Kharge. The meeting is scheduled to be held at LB Stadium in Hyderabad on July 4.In view of AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge's visit to the city, Bhatti Vikramarka along with Telangana Congress in-charge Meenakshi Natarajan, TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud,

Govt sanctions Rs. 33 crore to facilitate loan waivers for handloom workers



Hyderabad, July 2 : The State government has granted administrative approvals for the allocation of Rs. 33 crore to facilitate loan waivers for handloom workers. This initiative will benefit a total of 5,691 handloom workers in Telangana through the Handloom Weavers Scheme.In a statement released on Wednesday, Minister for Handlooms and Textiles Tummala Nageswara Rao explained that, according to the guidelines, the loan waiver applies to loans (including both principal and interest) up to Rs. 1 lakh that have been acquired for handloom production and related professional activities from all banks and District Cooperative Central Banks between April 1, 2017, and March 31, 2024.

He added that the verification of beneficiaries will proceed on a district-by-district basis in alignment with the guidelines, and the loan waiver will be deposited into the workers' accounts promptly following the completion of the verification process. The Minister also mentioned that if handloom workers wish to do so after receiving the loan waiver, bankers will approve new loans to the same extentAccording to the Minister, since the Congress government assumed power, approximately Rs. 920 crore has been allocated for the benefit of handloom workers. To ensure

Hyderabad district in-charge Minister Ponnam Prabhakar, Ranga Reddy district in-charge Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, and DCC President Rohin Reddy, reviewed the event preparations and addressed the media. On the occasion, Bhatti Vikramarka highlighted that this is the first time in the country that the AICC President will hold a direct interaction with village-level Congress presidents, and that Telangana is the first state to be given this opportunity. He mentioned that similar programs will be conducted across the country following Telangana.

Considering the importance of this event, the Deputy Chief Minister emphasised that large-scale arrangements are being made. He appealed to all Congress leaders across the state, including village, mandal, district presidents, MLAs, MPs, and ministers, to coordinate and attend the meeting by 3 PM on July 4 without fail. Expressing gratitude to the AICC for giving Telangana the first opportunity to host such a unique program, the Deputy Chief Minister urged party leaders to mobilise in large numbers, stating that this is a rare chance to directly interact with AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge.

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sure that handloom workers have access to permanent employment, all government departments have been directed to acquire textiles from TGCO, resulting in textile orders amounting to Rs. 579 crore from various departments.The Minister further noted that initiatives have been implemented to guarantee ongoing work for 16,000 weavers in Siricilla through the Indira Mahila Shakti Saree Scheme. Additionally, Rs. 193 crore is currently being invested in the Handloom Abhayastam Scheme, while the Rs. 290 crore owed to workers by the previous government has been transferred to their accounts through the Netannaku Cheyutha Scheme.

Kavitha urges BJP Telangana chief to secure Presidential approval for BC reservation bills

Hyderabad, July 2 : BRS MLC K Kavitha has called on the newly appointed BJP Telangana president, N Ramchander Rao, to urge the Central Government to expedite Presidential approval for the BC reservation bills.

She emphasised that both the Telangana Assembly and Council have approved two bills that allocate 42 per cent reservation for Backward Classes in education, employment, and local governance. In an open letter addressed to Ramchander Rao on Wednesday, Kavitha highlighted that BC reservation is a longstanding and rightful demand of the Other Backward Classes, particularly in Telangana. She noted that following persistent advocacy from Telangana Jagruthi and the United Phule Front (UPF), the State government successfully introduced and passed these two bills in the legislature.



Telangana and he deserved India's highest civilian award Bharat Ratna, the CM said he will pursue the Centre to recognize the noted doctor's services and present the prestigious award to him. The visit of Miss World contestants to the famous hospital displayed the advancement of medical care in Telangana worldwide.Listing out initiatives taken by the government to strengthen the medical care, the Chief Minister said the family doctor system existed once and now specialist doctor services are in high demand. Government hospitals are already under construction in different parts of the State and the works for the new Osmania hospital are under progress. A total of 7000 additional beds will be available after the completion of all new hospital building works, the CM said. Since Hyderabad has become a hub of IT and emerging healthcare services provider in the world, the Chief Minister said government is holding talks with the Union government to increase direct flight connectivity between Middle East countries and Hyderabad. More air connectivity will help Hyderabad to develop further.

CM Revanth Reddy to launch statewide distribution of new ration cards on July 14: Uttam



Hyderabad, July 2 Irrigation, Food & Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy announced on Wednesday that the state government would begin distributing new ration cards from July 14 at Tirumalagiri in Tungaturthi constituency. The programme will be formally inaugurated by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, with Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka also participating.

Addressing a review meeting at the Nalgonda District Collectorate, the Minister directed collectors to complete verification of all eligible applications by July 13 to ensure no deserving family was left out. Uttam Kumar Reddy stressed that the beneficiary selection process must be transparent and corruption-free.The government's focus is to ensure that every eligible person gets a ration card without any discrimination," he said, adding that review meetings will now be held twice a month to maintain strict oversight.Uttam Kumar Reddy explained that Telangana's flagship free fine rice scheme delivers 6 kg of rice per person every month to nearly 3.10 crore people, about 84% of the population, through fair price shops, at a cost of over ₹13,000 crore annually. In June, July, and August, the state provided three months' worth of rations at once to ensure uninterrupted supply, distributing 18 kg per person, 105 kg per Antyodaya family, and 30 kg per Annapurna family. He sharply criticised the previous BRS government for neglecting food security and ration card enrolment. "At the time of Telangana's formation in 2014, there were 89.73 lakh white ration cards, but the BRS added only around 49,000 new cards, mostly during by-elections, ignoring lakhs of families," Uttam Kumar Reddy pointed out. He said the Con-

BJP Mahila Morcha holds Mock Parliament session

Hyderabad, July 2 BJP Mahila Morcha today held a Mock Parliament session at KMIT College in the city. BJP Telangana State president N. Ramchandra Rao took part in the event. Speaking on the occasion, he said the Mock Parliament program held on the occasion of the completion of 50 years of the Emergency, which was a dark chapter in the history of Indian democracy, was reminiscent of the oppression that was inflicted on the people during that period and the dark days of history."When I was studying in school at that time, my father used to explain what the situation was like in the country. The Newspapers could not publish real news. If any newspaper wrote the truth, it would be stopped. Censorship would be imposed. All these are the misdeeds that happened during the Emergency," he said.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

GST, a tumultuous journey

Overcoming initial scepticism, technical glitches and political differences, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime has come a long way and has proved largely beneficial for the country. As the bold indirect tax reform completes eight years of implementation, the occasion calls for an honest appraisal and the introduction of further reforms. There is a strong case for simplifying compliance, reducing the number of tax slabs to three, and broadening the base by bringing petroleum products under the GST purview. At present, petroleum products remain subject to central excise duty and State Value Added Tax (VAT). They can be brought within the ambit of GST only upon a specific recommendation by the GST Council, comprising Finance Ministers from the States and the Centre. However, the primary concern of the States is that subsuming these commodities under GST would lead to a revenue shortfall. The GST was originally conceived by the Congress-led UPA government years before its actual rollout on July 1, 2017. Gross GST collections have doubled over the last five years to touch a record Rs 22.08 lakh crore in 2024-25, according to official data. Gross GST collections in 2024-25 rose 9.4 per cent year-on-year with an average monthly mop-up of Rs 1.84 lakh crore. In comparison, total GST collections stood at Rs 11.37 lakh crore in 2020-21. The rise reflects the increasing formalisation of the economy and improved tax compliance.

The robust growth is attributed to timely reforms, simplified procedures, and upgrades to the GST portal, which have helped taxpayers comply with ease. Since its rollout, the number of active registered taxpayers has more than doubled, from 60 lakh at inception to over 1.51 crore as of April 2025. The GST Council determines tax rates and policies under the four-tier rate structure of 5, 12, 18, and 28 per cent.

GoodWorks CoWork forays into Hyderabad in partnership with Ektha Group, eyes leadership in Managed Offices and GCC Enablement



Hyderabad: India's premium managed office and coworking platform GoodWorks CoWork has announced its strategic entry into the Hyderabad market through a partnership with renowned real estate developer Ektha Group. This move marks a bold expansion by GoodWorks into India's fastest-growing enterprise and Global Capability Centre (GCC) hub.

As part of the foray, GoodWorks will launch two landmark centres at Hitech City and Financial District in Hyderabad with a combined development potential of over 150,000 sq. ft. of Grade A space. These premium centres will cater to startups, scale-ups, and large GCCs looking for flexible, scalable and fully managed office solutions. The expansion will also operationalize SansoviGCC by GoodWorks, a first-of-its-kind GCC enablement platform that offers infrastructure, compliance, talent, and advisory support for foreign companies looking to set up operations in India. Hyderabad will be a flagship launchpad for this platform. "Hyderabad is the epicenter of India's GCC and enterprise boom, and we're entering with a vision to lead, not follow. Our partnership with Ektha Group is a convergence of shared ambition and execution capability. With SansoviGCC, we're not just offering offices; we're offering India entry-as-a-service," said Dr. Vishwas Mudagal, Co-founder & CEO of GoodWorks Spaces. "Ektha Group, known for delivering high-quality commercial and residential developments in South India, will partner with GoodWorks on space acquisition, development and lifecycle management of the Hyderabad assets."

"We are thrilled to welcome GoodWorks to Hyderabad and to be their partners in this exciting phase of growth. Our shared vision is to create spaces that support global business and innovation. With these centres, we are positioning Hyderabad as the most enterprise-ready city in India," said Dr. Sreenivasa Musani, Chairman & Managing Director of Ektha Group. "Further, the partnership will expand beyond Telangana to Andhra Pradesh as well, with Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada as focus areas," he added. GoodWorks currently operates over 8 lakh sq. ft. of premium office space across Bangalore and other metro cities, serving a client base that includes Fortune 500 companies, high-growth tech startups, and global GCCs. With Hyderabad added to its map, GoodWorks is poised to cross 1.0 million sq. ft. under management in the coming quarters.

Telangana CID arrests man in organ trafficking racket

Hyderabad: The Telangana Crime Investigation Department arrested a man who was allegedly involved in a human organ trafficking case. The arrested man, Kondagorri Murali Krishna, a resident of Vizianagaram in Andhra Pradesh, along with other accused, was luring innocent people from Tamil Nadu on the pretext of employment. "Murali Krishna trafficked the people to Hyderabad and later illegally conducted kidney transplants at a hospital in Saroornagar."

Grand Felicitation to District Library Chairman by Single Window Chairman Kotha Srinivas.



"PS Ashokan" Indian Chronicle "Manthani, June 2" "In a gesture of appreciation and respect, Single Window Chairman Kotha Srinivas ceremoniously felicitated District Library Chairman Anthathi Anniya Goud with a shawl on Wednesday during his official visit to Manthani. The visit was undertaken in accordance with the directions of Minister for IT, Industries, and Legislative Affairs, Sri Duddilla Sridhar Babu, who emphasized the immediate need for interim library infrastructure until the construction of a state-of-the-art model library building is completed. "During the inspection, Chairman Anniya Goud thoroughly assessed the site and proposed the establishment of essential temporary facilities including the construction of a shed, installation of a borewell, and development of hygienic toilet amenities to



ensure smooth and uninterrupted library services for the public. "The occasion was marked by the active participation of several notable local leaders and dignitaries including Mandal Congress President Ayili Prasad, TGRC Member Shashibhushan Kache, RTI Member Manthani Suresh, Former AMC Chairman Azeem Khan, Mandal Congress Working Committee President Budida Shankar, Youth Mandal President Sadhula Srikanth, District Social Media In-Charge Arelli Kiran Goud, and local leaders Kududula Venkanna, Digambar, Maruthi, Tati Buchaiah, among others. "This collaborative initiative reflects the commitment of both political and administrative bodies in strengthening educational and intellectual infrastructure at the grassroots level."

Coalition Government Committed to Public Welfare, Counters Baseless YSRCP Allegations



"July Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator" Chittoor Member of Parliament, Daggumalla Prasad Rao, and Palamaner MLA, Amarnath Reddy, today strongly asserted that the ruling coalition government is a welfare government dedicated to the well-being of the people. They vehemently condemned the YSRCP's baseless accusations, stating that such criticisms stem from an inability to tolerate the significant progress being made in Andhra Pradesh. "Speaking at a public meeting in Padigala Kuppm village, V. Kota Mandal, as part of the 'First Step in Good Governance' and 'Intintiki Telugu Desam Party' (TDP to Every Household) programs, MP Daggumalla Prasad Rao and MLA Amarnath Reddy called upon TDP cadres to effectively counter the false narratives propagated by YSRCP leaders. The event, presided over by V. Kota Mandal President Ranganathan, also saw the participation of TDP Chittoor Parliament President C.R. Rajan, former MLC Dorababu, former MLA A.S. Manohar, and CHUDA Chairperson Katari Hemalatha. The leaders extended their heartfelt birthday wishes to Palamaner MLA Amarnath Reddy, commending his selfless service to the people as



their elected representative. "Addressing the gathering, MP Daggumalla Prasad Rao and MLA Amarnath Reddy highlighted that the coalition government is the only administration that has sincerely implemented the promises made to the people during the 2024 general elections. They emphasized the successful rollout of the 'Super Six' schemes, which have brought light into the lives of citizens. They reiterated that their primary objective is to transform the Chittoor Parliament constituency into an industrial hub. The leaders warned that the public will not tolerate the YSRCP's attempts to smear the good name of a government tirelessly working for public upliftment, simply for their own political survival. They stated that the people are ready to teach the YSRCP a lesson in the future. "Elaborating on the ongoing public outreach programs, the leaders explained that 'First Step in Good Governance' and 'Intintiki Telugu Desam Party' are designed to inform the public about the positive work undertaken by the government. Simultaneously, these initiatives aim to understand the challenges faced by the people, assuring them that the MP and MLA stand firmly with them in their struggles. "Embrace the People's Government for Good Governance."

Canon India Onboards Ruben Bijy Thomas as EOS Ambassador, Strengthening Its Commitment to India's Wedding Imaging Community



Hyderabad: Canon India is proud to announce the onboarding of Ruben Bijy Thomas, one of the most sought-after names in wedding filmmaking, as an official EOS Ambassador. Known for his cinematic brilliance and larger-than-life celebrity weddings across India and beyond, Ruben represents the evolving face of wedding storytelling in India. A driving force behind Magic Motion Media, Ruben has captured some of the country's most high-profile and star-studded weddings, with a signature visual style that has influenced a whole generation of wedding creators. Most recently, he was recognised among the Top 50 Global Wedding Photographers by the prestigious DWP Congress a testament to his international acclaim and creative impact.

Commenting on the announcement, Mr. Vishesh Magoo, Assistant Director, Imaging Communication Business Centre, Canon India, said, "Ruben and Magic Motion Media represent everything Canon stands for: creativity, innovation, and pushing the boundaries of visual storytelling. As we expand our EOS Ambassador community, we're excited to welcome someone who not only elevates wedding cinema but also inspires the next generation of creators. With the influence of Magic Motion Media and Canon's imaging technology, we look forward to nurturing even deeper connections within India's vibrant wedding community." As part of the EOS Ambassador program, Ruben Bijy Thomas will play a pivotal role in engaging with emerging filmmakers, leading workshops, and sharing his expertise on how to craft emotionally resonant, high-production-value wedding films using Canon's imaging ecosystem. His onboarding further reinforces Canon's commitment to elevating India's wedding imaging industry by nurturing talent, enabling access, and celebrating creators who are redefining modern wedding storytelling. Speaking on the collaboration, Ruben Bijy Thomas, Co-Founder,

Magic Motion Media, "Joining the Canon EOS Ambassador family feels like a full-circle moment. Canon cameras have been at the heart of our work for years powering some of our most cherished stories. I'm thrilled to collaborate with Canon India and give back to the wedding community that continues to evolve and inspire. There's so much talent in this country, and I hope to be a small part of helping shape its future."

Volkswagen India announces the return of Autofest – The annual National Exchange Carnival



Hyderabad: Volkswagen India is proud to announce the return of Volkswagen Autofest, the brand's highly anticipated National Exchange Carnival. This annual event is designed to offer customers across the country an exceptional opportunity to upgrade their drive and experience the premium engineering of a Volkswagen. Running for a limited period at Volkswagen dealerships nationwide, Volkswagen Autofest brings together exclusive exchange and attractive finance offers, loyalty rewards and comprehensive service packages — making it the ideal time for prospective buyers to bring home a Volkswagen. Mr. Nitin Kohli, Brand Director, Volkswagen India, said, "Volkswagen Autofest is more than just a sales event—it's a celebration of our commitment to offering Indian customers premium mobility solutions with added value. Whether it's the elegant Virtus, the striking Taigun, or the Beyond better Tiguan R-Line, Autofest gives customers the perfect gateway to upgrade their driving experience with unmatched benefits."

Seethakka expresses happiness over announcement of Medaram Maha Jatara schedule

Hyderabad, July 2: Minister for Panchayat Raj Seethakka has expressed her delight regarding the official announcement of the Medaram Maha Jatara schedule.

The priests' association has confirmed that the Medaram Maha Jatara, recognised as Asia's largest tribal fair, will take place from January 28 to 31, 2026. On January 28, the deities Saralamma, Govindaraju and Pagiddaraja will arrive at the Gaddelu. The following day, January 29, Goddess Sammakka will come from Chilakalagutta to the Gaddelu. On January 30, devotees will make their offerings, and the fair will conclude with Ammavarla Vanapravesham at 6 PM on January 31. In a statement released on Wednesday, the Minister indicated that with the schedule set for the Maha Jatara, officials should accelerate the ongoing development projects, which are costing Rs. 110 crore. She indicated that the ongoing permanent development projects in Medaram are advancing swiftly, and the state government is committed to finishing the works within the designated timeframe.

Adluri Laxman visits Yadagirigutta temple

Yadadri Bhongir, July 2 Minister for SC, ST and Minority Welfare Adluri Laxman made a visit to Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple in the Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district on Wednesday.

He received an elaborate reception from the temple authorities, with priests greeting him with a poornakumbham. Joining in the welcome were Government Whip and local MLA Beerla Ilaih, District Collector Hanumantha Rao, Additional Collector Bhaskar Rao, as well as other temple officials and priests. After having the darshan of Lord Narasimha Swamy, Vedic scholars offered their blessings through the recitation of hymns. The temple's Executive Officer, Venkat Rao, presented the Minister with a portrait of the Lord and laddu prasadam. Subsequently, the Minister attended a housewarming ceremony for a beneficiary of Indiramma Housing in Saidapuram village, located in the Yadagirigutta mandal, where he also conducted special pujas at the Sri Veerabhadra Swamy Temple in the village.

BharatBenz Strengthens Construction Segment with All-New Construction and Mining Range to Power India's Infrastructure Boom



Hyderabad: India's mining and construction equipment sector is poised for significant growth, projected to expand from \$16 billion to \$45 billion by 2030. To support this surge, Daimler India Commercial Vehicles (DICV), a wholly owned subsidiary of Daimler Truck AG, today launched the all-new BharatBenz Construction and Mining range comprising of their HX and Torqshift series models. This heavy-duty truck series directly addresses the critical need for reliable, high-performance vehicles as large contractors increasingly invest in owned assets and modernize their aging fleets.

Satyakam Arya, Managing Director and CEO, Daimler India Commercial Vehicles, said, "India's construction and mining sector continues to be one of our strongest business pillars, powering the next phase of national development. We're seeing a decisive shift as large contractors invest in owned assets for better control and long-term returns. Many fleets are 8-10 years old and reaching the end-of-life, creating a major replacement cycle. Our extensive customer trials with 150+ trucks have validated the real-world performance and profitability impact these vehicles deliver. "Comprehensive Range for Diverse Applications The expanded BharatBenz Construction and Mining lineup includes: • Heavy-Duty Construction Vehicles: The HX series, comprising the 2828C HX and 3532C HX models, are engineered for extreme durability, class leading productivity, unmatched fuel efficiency, and best in class drivability. Offered in two powerful configurations—280 hp with 1100 Nm torque and 320 hp with 1250 Nm torque—the trucks come equipped with additional features such as Hill Hold Assist, unitized front axle bearings, wind deflector, and advanced driver state monitoring systems, delivering long-lasting performance under the most demanding conditions. Pradeep Kumar Thimmaiyan, President & Chief Technology Officer, Daimler India Commercial Vehicles, said, "We designed the HX by listening to customers. Priority for vehicles with higher payload capacities, faster TAT and fleet managers demanding lower maintenance costs. Every component re-design addresses real customer challenges. We've prioritized driver safety with full EU ECE R29-03 cabin compliance and best-in-class safety features."

Kiran Karnik to attend 16th Convocation of GITAM

Hyderabad, July 2 (NSS): GITAM Deemed to be University is honoured to announce that Kiran Karnik, former president of NASSCOM and a distinguished leader in India's IT and space sectors, will grace the 16th Convocation as chief guest. The ceremony is scheduled to take place on July 19, 2025. M. Sriharat, President of GITAM and MP from Visakhapatnam, will preside over the ceremony. Dr. Virander Singh Chauhan, Chancellor; Prof. Errol D'Souza, Vice-Chancellor; Prof. D.S. Rao, Pro Vice-Chancellor; and Dr. D. Gunasekaran, Registrar, will also participate in the solemn occasion.

Indiramma Houses Sanctioned for the Poor in the First Phase – Minister Thummala Nageswara Rao.



“Khammam Bureau, July 2, Indian Chronicle.”“State Minister for Agriculture, Marketing, Handlooms and Textiles Thummala Nageswara Rao, announced that Indiramma houses will be sanctioned for the poor in the first phase. On Wednesday, during his visit to Chimmapudi village in Raghunathapalem mandal, the minister laid foundation stones for multiple development projects. An internal CC road and drainage system in the SC Colony of Chimmapudi at a cost of 80 lakhs. A BT road from Chimmapudi to Pandithapuram Santha at a cost of 4.95 crores. Another road from Chimmapudi to Manchukonda to be built at a cost of 1.5 crores. Speaking on the occasion, the minister instructed officials to identify the poor living in huts and ensure they are given Indiramma houses in the first phase. He emphasized. The importance of providing nutritious food to children at Anganwadi centers, with continuous monitoring of their growth. Pending development works should be completed quickly. All eligible people should receive houses, aiming to eliminate huts in phases. Welfare schemes implemented by the government must reach all eligible citizens.



He noted that Chimmapudi previously lacked proper road infrastructure, which has now been addressed. Schools like Swami Narayana School and Integrated Gurukul Schools are being set up in Raghunathapalem mandal to promote education as a tool to eradicate poverty. He insisted that every child must be educated. The minister also mentioned that work on completing the Bugga Vagu Project is underway to ensure irrigation water for farmers. He expressed a vision for green, clean villages where people live happily and harmoniously, promising to resolve all issues gradually.

He called for inclusive development, urging everyone to rise above caste, religion, and politics.”Prominent participants included Rayala Nageswara Rao, Chairman of State Warehousing Corporation, Hanumanth Rao, Chairman of Khammam Market Committee, Diksha Raina, ZP CEO, Narasimha Rao, RDO, Pullayya, District Agriculture Officer, Venkat Reddy, PR SE, Pawar, R&B EE, Shweta, Raghunathapalem Mandal Tahsildar, Ashok Kumar, MPDO, Other public representatives and officials.”

Tirlapuram Panchayat in Disarray.“? Muddy Roads Due to Rains – Lack of Drains and Canals Causing Hardships.“



“Manuguru, June 2, Indian Chronicle.”“In Tirlapuram Panchayat of Manuguru mandal, all roads have turned muddy and unusable due to continuous rains. Villagers are struggling to walk as pathways have become slushy and waterlogged. The absence of drainage systems and canals has led to stagnant water collecting in front of houses, making it difficult for residents to even step outside. Water puddles have formed throughout the village, resulting in a spike in mosquito breeding. With the

threat of seasonal diseases, the failure of panchayat authorities to take preventive measures has left villagers vulnerable to fevers and infections. Residents complain that despite repeatedly requesting local leaders and officials to lay proper roads, their appeals have been ignored. When questioned, officials cited a lack of funds as the reason for their inability to build roads or drainage systems.”The villagers of Tirlapuram are now urging Singareni authorities to intervene and take steps for the development of their village.

People, officials, and staff should be alert in the wake of incessant rains: District Collector Jitesh V. Patil.“

“Bhadradi Kothagudem, July 2, Indian Chronicle: Due to the incessant rains in Bhadradi Kothagudem district, there is a possibility of rivers, streams, and ponds overflowing. Water may reach the roads. District Collector Jitesh V. Patil advised people not to come out unless it is an emergency, and if they have to come out, they should be alert, and similarly, officials and staff should also be alert and available to the people. He advised people not to go to the overflowing streams, ponds, and rivers to take selfies and get into danger. In case of a disaster, people can immediately call the helpline numbers set up at the District Collectorate... or RDO offices... or their Mandal Tehsildar and MPDO offices and provide information and get help, the Collector said. The Collector ordered the district officers, division-level officers, and all mandal officers to be alert and to monitor the situation arising due to the rains from time to time and be available to the public. The Collector said that in case of any emergency, immediate action should be taken in coordination with the concerned revenue, police, roads, municipal, and panchayat departments. The District Collector suggested that the officers and staff should make it a habit to be alert during the current rains. The Collector said that the



precautions and alertness measures taken during the rains during this time will also be useful during the upcoming Godavari floods, and the officers should always work in a planned manner to be ready to respond to the floods that occur at any time. On this occasion, Collector Jitesh V. Patil appealed to the people to cooperate with the measures taken by the authorities to prevent accidents.

Immediate Action Must Be Taken on Women’s Complaints - Commissioner Sunil Dutt.



“Khammam Bureau, July 2, Indian Chronicle.”“On Wednesday, Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt conducted a surprise inspection at the Women’s Police Station. During the visit, he reviewed the station’s administration, pending cases, investigation procedures, charge sheet records and CD files offering several instructions to the officials. Commissioner Sunil Dutt emphasized that the safety of women

must be given utmost priority. He directed officers to respond immediately to the complaints lodged by women and take necessary protective measures. He stated that complaints made by women seeking help at the women’s police station should be addressed without delay. He instructed that women visiting the station must be treated with respect, their grievances should be patiently listened to, and appropriate action should be taken within the framework of the law. Furthermore, the Commissioner advised that women police personnel should regularly visit colleges, schools and areas with a large female presence to create awareness about legal protections available to them. He stressed the importance of educating women on how to seek police assistance in times of distress.

Three accused in murder case nabbed

Hyderabad, July 2 : The Kukatpally Police have apprehended three accused involved in the murder of one Syed Shahed. The arrested individuals were produced before the Court for their judicial custody. Principal accused is identified as Y Hanak alias Munna of Baba Sailani Nagar, Borabanda, A2 identified as Md Sajid, AC Technician, of Moula Ali, Hyderabad and A3 is Md Sameer Khan alias Dagad Sameer alias Pothuraju of Borabanda, Hyderabad. The deceased Syed Shahed was a notorious rowdy-sheet with a history of criminal activities. He is in the cloth business and in present situations he is having rivalry with accused A-3 Sameer.

NeoFascism - Growing Gap Between Labourers



And Intellectuals.”“Khammam Bureau (Praneeth Kumar Pathakamudi),”July 02,“Indian Chronicle.”“It is a common practice among communists to establish and run schools and colleges in the areas where they work, to collect donations from the people for this purpose and to involve the community in their operation. Similarly, the fascist organization RSS and its affiliates also run schools for children. However, these schools are fundamentally different from those run by the communists.”“Firstly, communists never intended to control the schools they set up, nor did they aim to teach only their worldview to the students. Their goal was to contribute to the overall improvement of public education standards. Communists believed that as people advanced in their education, they would naturally come to understand the value and importance of the communist worldview. As a result, the educational institutions run by communists gained credibility and empowerment, becoming recognized and respected entities.”In contrast, fascists focus on establishing schools with the strategic aim of indoctrinating children with their ideology from a very young age. Communists, on the other hand, also set up colleges where young adults are encouraged to express their thoughts and opinions freely, fostering maturity and critical thinking.”Thus, the communist perspective on education is fundamentally different from that of fascists. Bertolt Brecht once wrote, A hungry man is eager to hold a book in his hand. This implies that education broadens one’s perspective and helps in achieving liberation. The fascist view of education is the opposite. They believe that as people’s thinking broadens, they are more likely to rebel; hence, they aim to restrict education and instead impose fascist propaganda.”Whereas communists encourage a hungry man to reach for a book, fascists, like in Nazi Germany, encouraged the burning of books. Today’s neo-fascists are following the footsteps of their predecessors. Their hostility toward intellectuals, and toward public programs typically organized by scholars, is unjustifiable by any means.”Just as they are destroying highly esteemed educational institutions in India, similar actions are taking place in other countries governed by neo-fascist regimes. Even in the US, educational institutions are facing similar fates. In India, intellectuals who voice their views boldly are being targeted with fear tactics through the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Campaigns are being run to incite public hatred against them by labeling them as the Khan Market Gang (whatever that means), the Tukde Tukde Gang (a gang that allegedly wants to divide the nation) or Urban Naxals.”In the US, Trump declared that all universities are filled with communists and called for their expulsion this was not a coincidence. In neo-fascist regimes, such extreme paranoia among rulers is inevitable.”The Modi government has systematically tried to dismantle prominent institutions like Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Visva-Bharati University, the University of Hyderabad, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi University, the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) in Pune (where students protested for an extended period) and the Fine Arts department at Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. All these institutions were developed post-independence and stand as proud symbols of Indian intellectual and cultural strength. Attacking these institutions in such vile ways is essentially an attempt to suppress independent and creative thought.”Similarly, the Trump administration also attacked institutions like Columbia University and Harvard, showing contempt for independent thought. Neo-fascism inherently suppresses intellectual activities and disregards the value of independent thinking. Understanding this is not difficult, but recognizing this trend in India has become somewhat questionable.”Traditionally, India has held intellectuals in high regard, even before capitalism took root. So

how have these widespread attacks on intellectuals and institutions gained such momentum? Until recently, intellectuals, especially those in education, were seen as highly respected figures. So why hasn’t there been significant public backlash against these attacks by the Modi government?”The main reason is the introduction of neoliberal economic policies. Neoliberalism contributed to this situation in three major ways..”Widening Income Gaps: Though intellectuals are not part of the wealthiest classes, they are relatively better off compared to the broader population under neoliberalism. For example, in 1974, the minimum support price for a quintal of wheat was 85, and a central university associate professor earned 1,200 per month. Today, the wheat MSP is 2,275, while an associate professor’s basic salary is 1,31,400. The professor’s income has grown about 100 times, while the farmer’s only 27 times tripling the income disparity between the two. Erosion of Traditional Social Structures: Capitalism dissolves older societal groups and incorporates them into its fold. After neoliberal reforms, feudal remnants were absorbed, further widening the gap between intellectuals and working people.”Rise of Individualism: In the globalized era, many intellectuals became disconnected from their local societies, becoming part of global networks. This distancing made it easier for neo-fascism to attack them. Intellectuals typically support democracy, secularism and tolerance values that neo-fascism seeks to undermine.”If anyone thinks that the loss of respect for intellectuals among working class people is acceptable because they confuse or obscure societal inequalities, they are mistaken. In an egalitarian society, everyone will be both a labourer and an intellectual (a goal for which communists strive in establishing educational institutions). But belittling the role of intellectuals now is harmful, it leaves society vulnerable to neo-fascism and dogma. Thought is becoming monopolized by a small group who dominate discourse and crush dissent. Instead, ideas must be broadly shared among the public.”

Even a liberal capitalist thinker like Keynes believed that educated bourgeois are essential for the capitalist society, as they could identify and help correct its flaws. But in the neoliberal phase, many intellectuals became self-absorbed and unconcerned with society, rendering them ineffective. This contradiction within capitalism has facilitated the rise of neo-fascism, particularly in countries like India.”Now, it’s crucial to bridge the growing gap between laborers and intellectuals to defeat neo-fascism. This is possible due to the crisis that neoliberalism is currently facing. The intellectual class, which once held a privileged place under neoliberalism, is now suffering. Many of them are not receiving timely salaries. As their financial conditions worsen, their futures are becoming increasingly tied to those of the working class. At the center of this growing crisis is the simultaneous collapse of both neoliberalism and neo-fascism.”

Design TGSDMA a model for nation: Ponguleti tells officials

Hyderabad, July 2 Minister for Revenue Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy has instructed officials to establish a system where the Telangana State Disaster Management Authority (TGSDMA) serves as a national benchmark. He emphasised that the state government is actively working to enhance the TGSDMA’s capacity to effectively manage natural disasters and reduce the potential for loss of life and property. In line with this initiative, the government plans to restructure the TGSDMA. The Chief Minister will serve as the Chairperson of the authority, while the Ministers for Revenue, Home, Finance, Medical and Health, Major Irrigation, Roads and Buildings, and Panchayati Raj and Rural Development will join as members. The Chief Secretary will be the Member Convener, and the Special Chief Secretary of the Revenue Department will be a special invitee. On Wednesday, Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao and

Special Principal Secretary for Disaster Management, Arvind Kumar, convened a meeting at the Secretariat with Collectors from various districts and other senior officials to discuss flood management in the Godavari and Krishna river basin regions. During the meeting, the Minister emphasised the need to establish a comprehensive system for disseminating information about sudden floods and rainfall attributed to climate change. He underscored that this data should be scientifically analysed in collaboration with the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) and made available at all times. Furthermore, he noted that the information system should be enhanced. The Minister mentioned that the state government is designating special nodal officers for various departments, including irrigation, electricity, health, agriculture, police, and transport, to address issues related to rainfall and floods at the state level.)

SIP Academy to bring green revolution to Hyderabad

Hyderabad, July 2 SIP Academy, India’s largest children’s skill development organization, is set to bring a green revolution to Hyderabad by announcing its plan to create a dense urban forest using the globally acclaimed Miyawaki method. The initiative was shared by Uma Swaminathan, National Manager, New Franchisee Acquisition, who highlighted the Academy’s growing commitment to environmental sustainability.

SIP Academy has already created five Miyawaki forests across Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Delhi, Maharashtra, and West Bengal. The upcoming Hyderabad project will be the first in Telangana and is envisioned as a collaborative effort with the Telangana State Forest Department. “We have not yet formally approached the department, but we certainly intend to take this up in partnership with a responsible government body,” said Uma. The Miyawaki method, pioneered by Japanese botanist Professor Akira Miyawaki, is a proven technique for growing dense, native forests on small plots of land — even in urban areas. It involves planting a mix of native tree and shrub species close together, enabling rapid growth and biodiversity enrichment. Over time, these forests become self-sustaining and require minimal maintenance.

“This is one of the most effective tree planting techniques for rapidly restoring green cover on degraded land,” Uma explained. “It replicates natural forest ecosystems and is especially impact in urban areas where land is scarce and ecological restoration is critical.” SIP Academy will require about an acre of land to implement the project in Hyderabad. Once completed, the forest will serve as a model of green urban transformation, contributing to improved air and water quality, biodiversity restoration, and climate change mitigation. Globally, over 3,000 Miyawaki

forests have been created, and India alone is home to more than 100 such forests initiated by citizens, NGOs, and government bodies. The world’s largest Miyawaki forest, located in Smritivan, Bhuj (Kutch), also stands proudly in India. This initiative is part of SIP Academy’s broader mission to instill environmental values in children and communities while enhancing their life skills and social responsibility. “Because the best gift we can give our children is not just skills for life — but a planet to live them on.”

Every X Class pass student should complete intermediate: CM

Hyderabad, July 2 (NSS): Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has instructed the officials to ensure that every student, who passes the 10th class must complete Intermediate as well. He said a large number of students were passing in the tenth grade... but the number was being reduced significantly by the time their Intermediate was completed and added that efforts should be made to identify the problems and solve them. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy conducted a review of the Education department at the ICCO on Tuesday. Since the Intermediate stage is crucial in a student’s life, the CM opined that there was a need for proper guidance for the student during this stage. The State government officials informed the CM that in other States, there were classes from the 9th to 12th classes and added that the number of dropouts there was less

Sandeep Mathur Reviews Monsoon Preparedness of the Zone

Hyderabad, July 2 Sandeep Mathur, General Manager, South Central Railway (SCR) conducted a detailed review meeting on the monsoon preparedness and safety measures being undertaken across the zone in view of monsoon rains on Wednesday at Rail Nilayam, Secunderabad along with Neeraj Agrawal, Additional General Manager, SCR and Principal Heads of Departments. Divisional Railway Managers (DRMs) / Addl. Divisional Railway Managers and Divisional Engineers (ADRM)s of the six divisions viz., Vijayawada, Guntakal, Guntur, Secunderabad, Hyderabad and Nanded Divisions also participated in the meeting through Video conference. During the review meeting, Sandeep Mathur, General Manager laid primary focus on safety measures undertaken at identified vulnerable sections such as bridges, tunnels etc. He reviewed the availability of emergency equipment and reserve stocks of necessary materials like sand, boulders and pipes in case of any eventuality. He instructed the officials to conduct regu-

lar inspection and ensure round-the-clock monitoring at vulnerable sections and bridges. He instructed that repair works, if any, should be completed immediately.

The General Manager reviewed the safety measures undertaken at vulnerable Road Under Bridges which are prone to water logging. He took stock of the precautions taken like provision of lifting barrier, drainage works, warning board provision, water pumping arrangements, 24x7 watchman availability etc.

He advised the officials and staff to strictly adhere to safe working practices, proper maintenance of registers pertaining to train operations and undertake all necessary monsoon precautions. The General Manager stated that all supervisors should constantly monitor the field level activity and any issue should be attended instantly and rectified at the earliest. He also advised the officials to regularly sensitize the safety category staff through group meetings and individual counseling sessions etc. (

One drug supplier nabbed

Hyderabad, July 2 The sleuths of Commissioner's Task Force, South West Zone team and Kanchanbagh police apprehended one drug supplier in the limits of Kanchanbagh Police station and seized 7.5 kg of Ganja from his possession. Drug peddler was identified as Mohd Amer, driver of Errakunta, Balapur, Cyberabad. 7.5 kg Ganja worth Rs 1,86,000/- was seize Mohd Amer is native of Cyberbad and residing in Errakunta, Balapur area. He is working as a car driver from past five years, his earning aren't sufficient to fulfil his lavish life. He came to know that, selling of Ganja makes more profitable. So, he decided to sell the ganja to needy customers. He used to visit Mangalhat area and purchased Ganja from unknown person and sells the same to needy customer in higher rates and made huge profit from it.

Mohd Amer came into contact Mohd Ismail of Hafeezbaba Nagar, Hyderabad, who is the Ganja supplier.

Mohd Amer procured the Ganja from Mohd Ismail alias Shabba for Rs 2000 per 100 gram and sells the same to needy customers for Rs 3,500 to Rs 4,000/-. On Tuesday, in the evening hours, Mohd Amer procured the 7.5 kg of Ganja from Mohd Ismail near his residence at Hafeez baba Nagar, Hyderabad and returning to his residence. Acting on credible information, the Commissioner's Task force, South West zone team and Kanchanbagh police apprehended accused and seized 7.5 kg of Ganja from his possession. A case has been registered in Cr no: 87/2025 U/s 8(c) r/w 20(b)(ii)(B) of NDPS ACT of PS Kanchanbagh against accused. The arrest was made under the supervision of G. Santosh Kumar, Inspector of Police, Commissioner's Task Force, South West Zone & Y. Kamal Kumar, Inspector of Police, Kanchanbagh PS, by SI G. Vijayanand, Task Force, South West Zone, K. Raju SI of Kanchanbagh PS and their staffs.

Dynamic Entrepreneurs & Women Innovators launched

Hyderabad, July 2 : A bold new chapter in women's entrepreneurship has begun with the official launch of DEWI (Dynamic Entrepreneurs & Women Innovators), a collective aimed at empowering, connecting, and elevating women entrepreneurs and innovators across industries. The launch event took place at Novotel Convention Center, HITEX, Hyderabad, with a grand inaugural ceremony that brought together trailblazers, visionaries, and change makers.

Dr Neelima Vemula, Founder and Chairperson of DEWI, Satyavathi Prasanna Madipadige, Honorary Chairperson along with Dr Kalyani Guduguntla, Vice Chairperson & Co-founder, Pallavi Nagalla, Co-founder & Brand Custodian and Raju Madipadige, Chief Adviser unveiled the initiative. The star-studded event was graced by esteemed chief guests which included Alekhya Punjala - Renowned Kuchipudi Dancer, Dinaz Vervatwala - Celebrity Fitness Expert, Zubeda Ali - Philanthropist and Spouse of actor Ali,

Dr. Suneetha Reddy (Y.S.) - Medical Professional & Advocate for Women's Health, Madhuri Duvvada, Founder - Vakula Silks, Kalva Sujatha - Chairman, TG Arya Vaishya Corporation.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Neelima Vemula said "DEWI is more than just an organization – it's a movement. We're building a sisterhood of powerful, purpose-driven women ready to take charge, support one another, and redefine success." As part of the celebrations, Visista Jewellery Director Sinduja Palabatl and Suraksha Pharma Director Padmaja Manepalli were ceremoniously crowned as "DEWI Kuberas" – a title bestowed upon women leaders who will act as future investors and fundraisers supporting DEWI's mission of scaling women-led ventures. From startup founders to seasoned professionals, creators to investors – DEWI is open to all women passionate about shaping the future of business and innovation.

SCR registers best-ever Revenue

Hyderabad, July 2 : South Central Railway (SCR) registers its best-ever performance revenue during the first three months of current financial year. The zone has registered Rs 5219 Crore of gross originating revenue during the period from April to June 2025, which is 1.2% more than the previous best of Rs 5,156 Crores registered during 2024-25. This has been backed up by originating passenger revenue of Rs 1485.21 Crores and freight revenue of Rs 3457.33 Crores during this period. Similarly, the Zone has achieved highest ever freight loading of 37.41 Million Tonnes which is 4 % higher than the previous best of 35.89 MTs loaded in 2024-25.

The Zone is putting a special focus on improving freight basket by adding new streams of traffic and also new destinations, while strengthening the existing traffic. The continuous endeavor in this direction has resulted in the Zone recording its best-ever freight loading in the first 3 months of the current financial year, by transporting 37.41 MTs of freight commodities. This is 1.52 MTs more than the last year freight loading in the same period (35.89 MTs). The

improvement in freight loading is clearly visible in all commodities like Coal, Iron Ore, Cement etc. Simultaneously, the Zone has been constantly monitoring the passenger trends so as to introduce and operate special trains wherever required and feasible. SCR has operated 865 trips of special trains wherein 11.18 lakh passengers were carried through these trains during the first quarter of current fiscal. In addition, the Zone has been augmenting the trains with additional coaches, wherever there is demand and feasibility, leading to clearance of waitlisted passengers. In terms of Passenger revenue, the Zone achieved Rs 1485.21 Crore revenue during this period, which is 2% more than the last year (Rs 1455.15 Cr).

Sandeep Mathur, General Manager, South Central Railway has expressed his satisfaction and complimented Team SCR for achieving these impressive earnings in the first quarter of the current financial year. He advised the staff and officers of all the Divisions and headquarters to maintain the same tempo so as to achieve the best performance by the end of the financial year.

Youth & women should enter politics: Kishan Reddy

Hyderabad, July 2 : Union Minister Kishan Reddy today took part in the 'Mock Parliament session' held at KMIT on the occasion of 50 years of Congress Emergency by state BJP Mahila Morcha. Speaking on the occasion, he said in the future, there was a need for youth and women to enter politics in large numbers in the country. He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's aspiration was to introduce moral and righteous politics and reminded that Modi had called for one lakh youth across the country to enter into politics. The young men and women who participated in this mock parliament should rise to the level of having to argue in Parliament in the future. The Indian Constitution is the best one in the world. In many countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, internal crises have arisen in those countries due to the violation of the constitution and suppression of democracy with military regimes. In India, we are implementing the constitution framed by Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar. However, in 1975, during the rule of Indira Gandhi, the Constitution was set aside, civil rights were suppressed, and freedom of the press was taken away, and Emergency was imposed. On that day, without discussing it in the cabinet, the President was forced to sign it at midnight and lakhs of people were arrested before dawn. Among those arrested were Jayaprakash Narayan, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Lal Krishna Advani, V. Rama Rao, Venkaiah Naidu and Bandaru Dattatreya. We are organizing this mock parliament with the intention of making today's generation aware of the anti-democratic actions that took place during the Emergency," he said.

Reddy recalled during the rule of Indira Gandhi, when the problems of corruption and unemployment increased exponentially, Navnirman Samiti was formed in Gujarat and Bihar and added that a large-scale movement was launched by students against the Emergency and added that the police caned them. He recalled that in 1971, Socialist leader

Raj Narayan, who lost the Lok Sabha elections, filed a case in the Allahabad High Court with evidence alleging that Indira Gandhi had engaged in electoral corruption and misused the power machinery. Indira Gandhi brought a new ordinance and postponed the elections in the name of internal crisis in the country. "The elections that were supposed to be held once every five years were postponed for another year and an emergency was imposed. On that day, many Vidyarthi Parishad and Jana Sangh activists, women's groups, youth groups, reporters, and politicians in Hyderabad city were lathicharged and arrested under the MISA Act. The Indira Gandhi government violated the constitutional rights of the people who claimed that they had the right to speak out against the Emergency. After the elections in 1977, when the Emergency was lifted, only a few of those arrested were released. Later, the Janata Party, formed under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan, came forward to protect the country's democracy. In that election, all the ministers of the Indira Gandhi government were defeated and the Janata Party won through a silent revolution of the people," he recalled.

Reddy said it was imperative that future generations be informed about the incidents that deprived the people of their fundamental rights during the Emergency and added that the Janata government set up the Shah Commission to investigate the injustices, constitutional violations and the destruction of democracy committed by the Congress government. He criticised that the Emergency was not an event that can be covered up in history and added that Indira Gandhi and her government must be aware of the brutal anti-democratic measures taken by this generation. He said the responsibility of knowing history, protecting the Constitution and democracy, protecting freedom of speech in the future, leading the country in the right direction and eradicating poverty lies on the shoulders of the youth.

IIIT Hyderabad's TechForward Research Seminar Series

Hyderabad, July 2 International Institute of Information Technology --- IIIT Hyderabad's TechForward Research Seminar Series, an academia-industry confluence around emerging technologies, is currently in its 12th edition, having completed a year of deep insights, directional talks, and industry/business outlooks from highly accomplished thought leaders, on one theme every month.

The talks were converted into features that are compiled into a monthly dispatch as a ready reckoner for technology directions. The research seminar series covered themes across various domains such as computer vision, artificial intelligence, robotics, quantum computing, AI on

the Edge, healthcare, tech in financial services, software architecture, LLMs, sustainable mobility and agentic AI. Over the past year,

IIITH collaborated with leading companies such as Qualcomm, ISB, Google, GoldmanSachs, Bosch, Llyods Technology Centre, Meta, Accenture Evernorth Health Services, ZF India and ServiceNow. The 12th edition of the seminar, themed around Technology and Cinema with talks by Shobu Yarlagadda, co-founder, Mihira Visual Labs and Prof P.J. Narayanan, Director, IIITH, was held last evening at the IIITH campus, with Hyderabad Software Enterprises Association (HYSEA) as the co-organising partner.

Wisconsin Supreme Court strikes down 176-year-old abortion ban

GNS News Agency, July 2

The Wisconsin Supreme Court's liberal majority struck down the state's 176-year-old abortion ban on Wednesday (July 2, 2025), ruling 4-3 that it was superseded by newer state laws regulating the procedure, including statutes that criminalise abortions only after a fetus can survive outside the womb. The ban state lawmakers adopted in 1849 made it a felony when anyone other than the mother "intentionally destroys the life of an unborn child."

It was in effect until 1973, when the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark Roe v. Wade decision legalising abortion nationwide nullified it. Legislators never officially repealed the ban, however, and conservatives argued that the U.S. Supreme Court's 2022 decision to overturn Roe reactivated it. Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul, a Democrat, filed a lawsuit that year arguing that the ban was trumped by abortion restrictions legislators enacted during the nearly half-century that Roe was in effect. Kaul specifically cited a 1985 law that essentially permits abortions until viability. Some babies can survive with medical help after 21 weeks of gestation.

Sheboygan County District Attorney Joel Urmanski, a Republican, defended the 1849 ban in court, arguing that it could coexist with the newer abortion restrictions, just as different penalties for the same crime coexist. Dane County Circuit Judge Diane Schlipper ruled in 2023 that the 1849 ban outlaws feticide — which she defined as the killing of a fetus without the mother's consent — but not consensual abortions. Abortions have been available in the state since that ruling but the state Supreme Court decision gives providers and patients more certainty that abortions will remain legal in Wisconsin. Urmanski had asked the state Supreme Court to overturn Schlipper's ruling without waiting for a decision from a lower appellate court. It was expected as soon as the justices took the case that they would overturn the ban. Liberals hold a 4-3 majority on the court and one of them, Janet Protasiewicz, openly stated on the campaign



trail that she supports abortion rights.

The justices concluded that "the legislature impliedly repealed" the ban "by enacting comprehensive legislation about virtually every aspect of abortion, including where, when, and how healthcare providers may lawfully perform abortions," Justice Rebecca Dallet wrote for the majority. "That comprehensive legislation so thoroughly covers the entire subject of abortion that it was clearly meant as a substitute for the 19th-century near-total ban on abortion." In a dissent, Justice Annette Ziegler called the ruling "a jaw-dropping exercise of judicial will." She said the liberal justices based the decision on their personal preference to allow abortions. Urmanski's Attorney, Andrew Phillips, didn't immediately respond to an email Wednesday morning seeking comment. Kaul's spokesperson, Riley Vetterkind, also didn't immediately return an email. Democratic-backed Susan Crawford defeated conservative Brad Schimel for an open seat on the court in April, ensuring liberals will maintain their 4-3 edge until at least 2028. Crawford has not been sworn in yet and was not part of Wednesday's ruling. She'll play a pivotal role, though, in a separate Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin lawsuit challenging the 1849 ban's constitutionality. The High Court decided last year to take that case. It's still pending.

SBI classifies Reliance Communications loan as 'fraud', reports Anil Ambani to RBI



GNS News Agency, July 2

Reliance Communications in a regulatory filing said that it has received a letter dated June 23, 2025 from the State Bank of India (SBI) to this effect. SBI has decided to report the loan account of the company as 'fraud' and to report the name of Anil Ambani (erstwhile director of the company) to the RBI, as per the extant RBI guidelines, it said. As per the RBI guidelines, after a bank classifies an account as 'fraud', the lender should then report the fraud to RBI within 21 days of detection and also report the case to CBI/Police. According to the filing, Reliance Communications and its subsidiaries received a total loan of ₹31,580 crore from banks.

SBI, in the letter sent to RCom, said it has found a deviation in the utilisation of the loans involving a complex web of fund movements across multiple group entities. "We have taken cognisance of the responses to our Show Cause Notice and after due examination of the same, it is concluded that sufficient reasons have not been provided by the respondent to explain the non-adherence to the agreed terms and conditions of the loan documents or the irregularities observed in the conduct of the account of RCL to the satisfaction of the bank," it said. Accordingly, the letter said, the Fraud Identification Committee of the bank has decided to classify the loan account of RCL as fraud.

As per the RBI guidelines, the penal provisions are applicable to the fraudulent borrower, including the promoter director and other whole-time directors of the company. In particular, borrowers who have defaulted and have also committed fraud on the account would be debarred from availing finance from banks, Development Financial Institutions, government-owned NBFCs, etc., for a period of five years from the date of full payment of the defrauded amount. After this period, it is for individual institutions to take a call on whether to lend to such a borrower and no restructuring or grant of additional facilities may be made in the case of fraud accounts. As per the report of the Fraud Identification Committee, out of the total loan, ₹13,667.73 crore, about 44 per cent, was utilized for the repayment of loans and other obligations. An amount of ₹12,692.31 crore, 41 per cent of the total loan, was utilised to pay connected parties.

According to the filing, ₹6,265.85 crore was used for repaying other bank loans and ₹5,501.56 crore was paid to related or connected parties which were not aligned with sanctioned purposes. Further, a ₹250-crore loan from Dena Bank (meant for statutory dues) was not utilised as per the sanctioned use. The loan was diverted to RCom Group company Reliance Communications Infrastructure Limited (RCL) as an Inter-Corporate Deposit (ICD) and was later claimed to repay an External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) loan. The committee found that a loan of ₹248 crore was sanctioned by IIFCL for meeting capital expenditure but RCom paid ₹63 crore to Reliance Infratel Limited (RITL) and ₹77 crore to RIEL for repayment of loans. "But instead

of transferring the fund directly to these companies, it was routed through RCIL. The reason for that has not been given by management or by Anil Ambani. These (Dena Bank and IIFCL loan use) appear to be misappropriation of funds and breach of trust," the report said. The committee observed potential routing of bank loans by RCom Group, including mobile tower firm Reliance Infratel Limited (RITL), telecom service company Reliance Telecom Limited (RTL), Reliance Communications Infrastructure Limited (RCIL), Netizen, Reliance Webstore (RWSL), etc. RCom used a 100-crore intraday limit to cycle funds through group entities, including RWSL, RTL, and RCIL multiple times in a single day. These transactions do not appear to be genuine or conducted in a normal course of business. It appears that RCom has utilised intra-day limits to finance RWSL to pay collection proceeds worth ₹1,110 crore. "As a result, debtors of RTL got reduced by that extent... transactions can be termed as manipulation of books of accounts through fictitious accounts," the report said. The committee raised a question on fund transactions involving Netizens as "an attempt at diversion of funds by manipulation of books of accounts through fictitious accounts/fictitious entries".

It is to be noted that RCom is under a corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) pursuant to the provisions of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016. With effect from June 28, 2019, its affairs, business and assets are being managed by, and the powers of the board of directors are vested in, the Resolution Professional, Anish Niranjana Nanavaty, appointed by National Company Law Tribunal, Mumbai Bench, order dated June 21, 2019. The credit facilities or loans referred to in the letter from SBI dated June 23, 2025 pertain to the period prior to the CIRP of the company and are required in terms of the IBC, to be necessarily resolved as a part of a resolution plan or in liquidation, as the case may be.

Contradictory statements from Sigachi top brass deepen confusion over mishap

Sangareddy: A letter from Sigachi Chloro Chemicals Private Limited's Company Secretary Vivek Kumar to the NSE and BSE has sparked confusion after he stated that Monday's accident was not caused by a reactor explosion, contrary to earlier assumptions. As Sigachi is a listed company, Kumar formally communicated with both stock exchanges. While mentioning that a detailed investigation was under way, he stated that initial findings indicated the mishap was not due to a reactor explosion.

Meanwhile, Sigachi Vice-Chairman and Wholetime Director Chidambaranathan Shanmuganathan, who visited the government hospital in Patancheru to meet the families of victims, added to the uncertainty with his remarks. He denied any negligence on the part of the management in the plant's operations. When asked if the company had obtained a no objection certificate (NOC) from the Fire Department, Shanmuganathan said he was unaware of it, citing his lack of involvement in company operations for the past five years. Responding to queries from reporters on Wednesday, Shanmuganathan said technical experts who supplied equipment to the plant would visit the site on Wednesday evening to collect samples, which might help determine the cause of the accident.

Udupi teen pays Rs 17,000 for fake NEET scorecard to impress family; FIR lodged



GNS News Agency, July 2

An 18-year-old boy from Udupi in Karnataka allegedly paid Rs 17,000 to a person through a YouTube channel to procure a digitally altered NEET-UG 2025 scorecard to 'impress' his family, prompting authorities to launch a wider investigation into online scams that offer forged academic documents for money. According to a complaint filed by the boy's father with the Udupi Cyber Economic and Narcotic Crime Station last week, the boy came across a YouTube channel called Editing Master (@Editingmaster-d6r) in April, during his NEET preparation. The channel showcased how National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), and Joint Entrance Ex-

amination (JEE) mark-sheets could be digitally manipulated, and also shared two WhatsApp numbers for those seeking fake scorecards, he said in the complaint. The boy contacted one of the numbers, and a person identifying himself as Vishnu Kumar responded. Over a few days, the boy transferred Rs 17,000 through UPI. On June 16, Kumar allegedly sent the boy a tampered NEET scorecard and an OMR sheet via WhatsApp, showing a fabricated score of 646 and an all-India rank of 107. After showing the fake mark-sheet to his family, the boy's father, a government employee, was puzzled when the achievement didn't make it to the news. He then shared the mark sheet with a local newspaper, which published the story. However, when the father checked the website of the National Testing Agency (NTA), he discovered his son's real score was just 65, with a rank of 17,62,258. "A complaint has been registered under Sections 66(c) and 66(d) of the Information Technology Act, and multiple sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The police are now tracing the accused, and suspect others may have been similarly duped," Hariram Shankar, Superintendent of Police, Udupi, told reporters. The police said further scrutiny of the fake scorecard revealed numerous inconsistencies, including altered fonts, a tampered Government of India logo, an incorrect designation of the signatory, a one-page layout instead of two, and an invalid rank that belongs to a student from New Delhi.

Greater Noida Authority imposes Rs 5 lakh fine on Ajnara Homes society for wasting

GNS News Agency, July 2

The Greater Noida Authority has imposed a fine of Rs 5 lakh on a housing society in Sector 16B of Greater Noida West after discovering that the water supplied to it was allegedly used for gardening, flushing, and housekeeping, leading to a shortage, officials said. According to Rajesh Kumar, Senior Manager of the Water Department of the Greater Noida Authority, the penalty was imposed on Ajnara Homes after residents complained of a water shortage following the society's motor pump going out of order. The authority received information about the residents facing a water shortage through social media. "We sent our team to the spot to verify the claims. The team discovered that the motor pump of the society was out of order. The water supplied by the water department was being used for gardening, flushing and housekeeping, whereas there is a clear order from the National Green Tribunal that only STP [sewage treatment plant] water can be used for gardening, flushing and housekeeping," Sunil Kumar Singh, Additional Chief Executive Officer of Greater Noida Authority, said. Singh said that the social media posts on the water shortage had tar-



nished the image of the authority. "Due to this, the water department has imposed a fine of Rs 5 lakh on Ajnara Homes society," he added. Singh also appealed to the society management to keep the water network in order so that the residents do not have to face a water shortage. "We appeal to use only water purified from STP for gardening, flushing and housekeeping," he said.

The Emergency, 50 years on: Those dark days of 1975 when government and police jailed anyone, anywhere, anytime

GNS News Agency, July 2

It has been 50 years since the Emergency was imposed on the country, but I still remember the day I was arrested from Panjab University. At the height of Jayaprakash Narayan's movement, the Allahabad High Court on June 12, 1975, set aside Indira Gandhi's 1971 Lok Sabha election. As calls for her resignation grew, she declared Emergency late on the night of June 25.

By the next morning, key opposition leaders like Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Lal Krishna Advani, Morarji Desai, Charan Singh, and Devi Lal were jailed under MISA. Authoritarianism puts self-interest above all else. Indira Gandhi not only imprisoned opposition leaders but also senior Congress figures such as Chandra Shekhar and Krishan Kant. Thousands of innocents were jailed, livelihoods destroyed, and families left desperate. Yet across the country, people stood firm and resisted the Emergency. I was only 23 years old at the time and served as the general secretary of the Punjab University Students' Council and the president of the Punjab and Chandigarh Students' Committee, part of the movement led by the late Jayaprakash Narayan. On July 13, 1975, when I went to seek admission to the Law Department of Punjab University, I was denied admission despite being on the merit list. As I came out of the interview room, I was arrested. A false case was registered against me, alleging that I had organised a massive student rally outside the Law Department and declared that we would overthrow the Indira Gandhi government. In December, the then Judicial Magistrate Hans Raj Nagara discharged me from the case and ordered my release. Later, on 27 January 1976, I offered satyagraha at the Punjab University and presented myself for arrest. I was taken into custody, and at night, was taken to the police lines in Sector 29, where I was tortured. Thin copper wires were tied to my right-hand fingers, and electric shocks were administered. For a moment, I felt it could be the last night of my life. But with God's grace, I survived.

During the Emergency, all fundamental rights were suspended. Courts were shifted to jails, with judges ordered to conduct hearings inside prison walls. The police and government functioned with complete impunity, jailing anyone, anywhere, anytime on false charges. Bail for political prisoners was legally banned. Around six months after the imposition of the Emergency, the RSS, Jan Sangh, opposition parties, and other non-Congress organisations launched a movement against it. Thousands of people defied the dictatorship of the Prime Minister by offering themselves for arrest. Those days were indeed very dark. Relatives and friends were afraid to meet us. Fear and terror hung heavy in the air. With rural broadcasts censored, people secretly listened to BBC news for information.

The entire country resembled an open prison — a landscape dominated by cruelty, dictatorship, and fear. People lived in dread of the police. At times, we doubted whether we would ever come out of the jail alive. When Indira Gandhi convened Parliament to pass the Emergency Bill, it marked the first and only instance in Indian parliamentary history when all opposition benches were empty. Only MPs from parties supporting the Emergency attended. It was also perhaps the first time that a Prime Minister recommended Emergency to the President without Cabinet approval. The then President, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, accepted the unconstitutional recommendation. The Cabinet was informed only the next morning.

Drunk on power, Indira Gandhi believed that no political party or leader could challenge her. In January 1977, under pressure from foreign countries and the growing opposition movement, she suddenly announced elections, hoping to deal another blow to her critics. But the people's



patience had worn thin. They rose in open defiance. The slogan coined by Jayaprakash Narayan — "Every vote cast for Congress will prove to be a handcuff and a shackle for your feet" — resonated powerfully. Indira Gandhi and the Congress party suffered a crushing defeat. Emergency was lifted only after this electoral loss. When Indira Gandhi went to the then President B D Jatti to submit her resignation, he advised her to first withdraw the Emergency. Otherwise, the new government could use the laws enacted during the Emergency against her. Acting on this advice, she recommended lifting the Emergency before leaving office. Even today, the mind trembles at the memory of those days. But the people of India possess immense resilience, and Indian democracy is strong enough to withstand even the gravest crisis. Today is a day for the entire country to take a solemn vow: governments may come and go, but no dictator shall ever again dare to trample upon our Constitution or our democracy.

box in India, with Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau, says minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu

Following media reports that the black box of the Air India flight AI 171 that crashed in Ahmedabad has been sent to the United States for data retrieval and analysis, Union Minister of Civil Aviation Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu clarified on Tuesday that it is currently in India with the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB). "It (the black box) is in India. It is all speculation that it has been sent outside. The AAIB is taking care of it according to the rules and procedures. The panel is already in, the investigation started from day one," Naidu said, speaking to the media at the 7th Helicopter and Small Aircraft Summit in Pune. Asked when the data retrieval from the black box was expected, Naidu said, "This is a very technical matter. The AAIB is doing it, so let them. I do not want to put any pressure... Let them go through the whole process. They are in charge of the investigation."

Protesters outside Israel embassy detained for several hours, FIR registered



GNS News Agency, July 2

Protesters demonstrating in front of the Israel embassy on Monday claimed that they were harassed and assaulted by the police while being detained at Mandir Marg police station for several hours. The protesters, who were from the Indian People in Solidarity with Palestine (IPSP) group, were protesting against Israel's attacks on Gaza and burned a photograph of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu along with a flag of Israel. Suraj Raut (25), a protester, said that the group was picked up by the police at around 4 PM on Monday. However, one of their fellow protesters began developing a breathing issue during the detainment. As the group was piled onto a police van, the protesters allegedly tried bringing the police's attention to the woman's health issues but to no avail. "She began gasping for air while sitting inside the van but the van was driven around different areas of Delhi for at least 40-45 minutes," said Raut. Ultimately the woman and two other women protesters were allegedly dropped off at a private hospital in Pandav Nagar to get treated.

The police have registered an FIR against the protesters under BNS sections 221 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 132 (assault or criminal force

In poll mode, Bihar Cabinet approves pension hike, wedding halls, subsidised food

In Assembly election-bound Bihar, the government on Tuesday announced a slew of new measures, including community wedding halls in each panchayat, subsidised eateries in each block, and financial assistance to women entrepreneurs from poor families. The decisions were announced following a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday. Last week, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar had announced a hike in social security pension from Rs 400 to Rs 1,100 per month for 1.11 crore beneficiaries, including the elderly, disabled and widows. This proposal also got the Cabinet's approval on Tuesday. As per the announcements, wedding halls under the Mukhya Mantri Kanya Vivah Mandap Yojana will be constructed in all 8,053 gram panchayats of the state at a cost of Rs 50 lakh each. Rs 4,026 crore will be spent on this in different phases over five years.

The Cabinet also approved the Rural Development Department's proposal to run Jeevika Didi Ki Rasoi at block-level offices. The Didi Ki Rasoi will provide food at a subsidised rate of Rs 20 per plate at block-cum-circle offices, sub-divisional and district-level offices, as well as government medical colleges and hospitals. Also cleared was the setting up of a committee under the chairmanship of the Development Commissioner to find ways and criteria for

to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), and 223 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant). "We told the protesters to leave the area due to the embassy's security concerns, however when they refused to comply with police instructions and directives, they had to be forcibly removed from the area. They also refused to cooperate with the police when asked to disclose their details. The protesters claimed that they're students of JNU. We are currently verifying this and will take it up with the University's administration, if it's true," said DCP New Delhi, Devesh Mahla. The DCP further emphasised that the police did not use brute force nor damage the property seized from the protesters.

The group was divided in two and sent to two different police stations. "In Tughlak Road police station, the police seized cameras from some freelance photographers who had come to cover the protests... the group was also subjected to casteist and misogynistic slurs," claimed Raut. By 7 PM all protesters had been assimilated in Mandir Marg police station. Inside the lock up, the group continued their protest, this time adding their demands to be given back their cameras and for their fellow protester's hospital bills to be paid by the police. Meanwhile, two of the protesters were allegedly taken to a separate area and interrogated, claimed the protesters. "They asked us personal questions ranging from what our parents do to where we study and which place we come from," said Priyambada Sharma (30), an activist with the IPSP. "They then asked us questions about how big our organisation is, how we recruit members and since when we have been associated with this group," added Vishal Kumar (30), another activist. The protesters were let go at around 1 AM, they said, after a sizable crowd had gathered to protest against the detention in front of the Mandir Marg police station. On Tuesday Raut said that they planned on getting Medico-Legal Cases (MLCs) recorded for the injuries they sustained during their detainment.



the disbursement of Rs 2 lakh to women entrepreneurs from 94 lakh poor families. The Cabinet also approved enhancing bank loans for Jeevika from Rs 3 lakh to Rs 10 lakh at an annual interest rate of 7%. The state government will reimburse any interest beyond this rate. A proposal allowing gram panchayats to take up works up to Rs 10 lakh under MGNREGA, against the earlier limit of Rs 5 lakh, was also cleared. The Cabinet also approved giving Rs 5 lakh ex gratia to the next of kin of members of the three-tier Panchayat Raj system in case of their death during their tenure.

Wings clipped in family and party, Tej Pratap on course to become a commercial pilot

Tej Pratap Yadav Tej Pratap's selection comes over a month after he made headlines for publicly expressing his willingness to serve the country as a pilot in the wake of Operation Sindoor. Former Bihar minister Tej Pratap Yadav has been provisionally selected for the Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL) course at the Bihar Flying Institute, according to a circular issued by the state's Directorate of Aviation Training.

He had appeared for the interview for admission to the CPL course during the 2023-24 academic session, as part of the selection process conducted by the Bihar Directorate of Aviation Training. However, the release of the results was delayed due to ongoing litigation related to reservation provisions. Following a court order, the final merit list was published on June 20, making him eligible for formal admission to the course. Tej Pratap's selection comes over a month after he made headlines for publicly expressing his willingness to serve the country as a pilot in the wake of Operation Sindoor. It also comes weeks after former chief minister Lalu Prasad announced his son's expulsion from the Rashtriya Janata Dal, and "from the family", citing "irresponsible behaviour" and actions not in line with the family's values and traditions. On May 7, as the Indian armed forces launched Operation Sindoor, striking terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and PoK, Tej Pratap posted on social media: "If my pilot training can be of use to the nation, I, Tej Pratap Yadav, am always ready to serve the country. For your information, I have received pilot training, and if I lose my life for the country, I would consider myself fortunate. Jai Hind!" Along with the post, he had also shared pictures of his flight radio telephone operator's licence.

Two days later, he made another post addressing Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Honourable Prime Minister, Vande Mataram. In this situation of crisis, all countrymen are together. I, Tej Pratap Yadav, son of Shri Lalu Prasad Yadav, resident of Patna, Bihar, am also capable of fulfilling my responsibilities as an aircraft pilot. I have a strong desire to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our security forces at the border and thwart the evil intentions of our enemies. I request you to give citizens like me the opportunity to serve Mother India. If my life is lost in protecting the country and its citizens, I would consider myself fortunate." The posts had created a flurry on social media, with many pointing out that he did not have the required qualifications to be a pilot at the time. However, it was another social media post that saw Tej Pratap expelled from not just his party, but also his family.

On May 25, RJD chief Lalu Prasad said in a post on X, "Ignoring moral values in personal life weakens our collective struggle for social justice. My eldest son's activities, public conduct, and irresponsible behaviour are not in accordance with our family values and traditions..." This came a day after a post was shared on Tej Pratap's Facebook profile that showed him with a woman. The caption claimed the two had been in a relationship for 12 years. The post was later deleted, and he claimed his social media profiles had been hacked. A day before his selection to the CPL course, on June 19, Tej Pratap posted a cryptic message on social media, hinting at personal and political betrayals



and vowing to reveal the truth, saying, "Those who mistake my silence for weakness, do not think that I am unaware of your conspiracies. You started it, I will end it. I am going to break this web of lies and deceit. Be ready, the truth will come out. My role will be decided by my beloved people and the Hon'ble Supreme Court, not by any party or family."

At 56, key Bihar minister selected as assistant professor in political science dept

GNS News Agency, July 2

Senior Bihar minister Ashok Kumar Choudhary (56) has emerged as one of the 274 candidates selected as assistant professors after the Bihar State University Service Commission (BSUSC) advertised 280 vacancies in the political science department. The commission announced the teacher appointments last evening.

The BSUSC had advertised vacancies for a total of 4,638 assistant professors across several subjects. The selection was based on academic performance, teaching experience and published works, followed by an interview. Choudhary qualified in the Scheduled Caste category.

The age limit in all categories, as of 1 January 2020, was 55 years.

Though Choudhary, away in Assam, was not available for a comment, his daughter and LJP (RV) Samastipur MP Sambhavi Choudhary confirmed her father's selection as an assistant professor of political science.

Colleges would be allotted to candidates at a later stage. In an earlier conversation, Choudhary had told The Indian Express, "After having pursued higher education, it is my desire to become an academician while I may continue to be in politics."

Family sources said that Choudhary would most likely take up the role and then take a sabbatical to continue his political career. He is among three key ministers in the Nitish Kumar cabinet, along with Vijay Kumar Choudhary and Shrawan Kumar, and has served as the minister for rural works.

Israel kills 40 in further Gaza bloodshed after reaching truce with Iran



GNS News Agency, July 2

Israeli forces killed at least 40 Palestinians in Gaza and ordered new evacuations on Tuesday local medics and residents said, in further bloodshed shortly after Israel and Iran agreed to a ceasefire in their air war.The Israel-Iran deal announced by U.S. President Donald Trump raised hopes among Palestinians of an end to over 20 months of war in Gaza that has widely demolished the territory and displaced most residents, with malnutrition widespread."Enough! The whole universe has let us down. (Iran-backed Lebanese group) Hezbollah reached a deal without Gaza, and now Iran has done the same," said Adel Farouk, 62, from Gaza City.

"We hope Gaza is next," he told Reuters via a chat app, speaking before two explosions rang out in Tehran, with Mr. Trump accusing both sides of violating the deal, though voicing particular unhappiness with Israel, rebuking it with an obscenity in an extraordinary outburst of frustration.In Gaza, deadly violence continued with little respite.Marwan Abu Naser, of the Al-Awda Hospital in Nuseirat in central Gaza, said it had received 19 dead and 146 injured from crowds who tried to reach a nearby aid distribution centre of the U.S.-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation.Abu Naser told Reuters the casualties resulted from gunfire.Israel's military said that a gathering overnight was identified adjacent to forces operating in Gaza's central Netzarim Corridor, and it was reviewing reports of casualties.Responding to a Reuters request for comment, the GHF said in an e-mail that there has been no incident near their aid site, which it added was located several kilometres south of the Netzarim Corridor.U.N. aid trucks

entering Gaza also use area roads and Palestinians have in the past few days reported killings of people by Israeli fire as they waited at roadsides to grab bags of flour from the trucks.

Israel has been channelling much of the aid it lets into Gaza through the GHF, which operates a handful of distribution sites in areas guarded by Israeli forces.The United Nations rejects the GHF delivery system as inadequate, dangerous, and a violation of humanitarian impartiality rules. Israel says it is needed to prevent the Hamas militants it is fighting from diverting aid deliveries. The Palestinian Islamist group denies doing so.Philippe Lazzarini, head of the United Nations' Palestinian aid agency UNRWA, told reporters in Berlin on Tuesday that the new mechanism was an "abomination" and "a death trap".Separately, 10 other people were killed by an Israeli airstrike on a house in the Sabra neighbourhood of Gaza City, while 11 were killed by Israeli gunfire in the southern city of Khan Younis, medics said, raising the day's toll to at least 40.Israel says militants use built-up residential areas for operating cover. Hamas denies this.Palestinians said they wished the Israel-Iran ceasefire announced by Trump had applied to Gaza.Adding to their frustration, the Israeli military dropped leaflets over several areas in north Gaza ordering residents to leave their homes and head towards the south, in what appeared to herald renewed Israeli military strikes against Hamas."Coming back to combat areas represents a risk to your lives," the army statement said.Sources close to Hamas told Reuters there had been some new efforts to resume ceasefire talks with Israel. They said Hamas was open to discussing any offers that would "end the war and secure Israel's withdrawal from Gaza". But these echoed longstanding Hamas conditions that Israel has always rejected.Hamas has said it is willing to free remaining hostages in Gaza under any deal to end the war, while Israel says it can only end if Hamas is disarmed and dismantled. Hamas refuses to lay down its arms.The war in Gaza was triggered when Hamas-led militants attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, killing 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages, according to Israeli tallies.Israel's subsequent air and ground war in Gaza has killed around 56,000 Palestinians, according to its Hamas-run health ministry, while displacing almost the entire population of more than 2 million and spreading a hunger crisis.

French tourist raped in Rajasthan; Congress warns of global ramifications

A 30-year-old French tourist was allegedly raped in Rajasthan's Udaipur by an employee of an event management company on Monday (June 23, 2025) night. The police have launched a hunt to trace the accused, who is absconding.The woman, who arrived in Udaipur from Delhi on June 22, was staying at a hotel in the city's Ambamata area. She attended a party at a restaurant near Tiger Hills on Monday (June 23, 2025) night, where she met the accused, identified as Pushp Raj.The accused engaged the French woman in conversation and offered to show her around the city. "Pushp Raj later took her to his rented apartment in Sukher locality, where he raped her," the first information report registered by the police stated.

According to the victim's complaint, she repeatedly asked the man to drop her at the hotel, but the accused instead drove to his apartment. As her phone had run out of battery, she was unable to call anyone for help.Police inform embassyThe woman later admitted herself to a private hospital in the city, where the staff reported the assault to the police. She lodged a formal complaint from the hospital, after which a case under Section 64(1) (rape) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita was registered at the Badgaon police station.The survivor was stated to be in a stable condition and was undergoing treatment at the hospital. The police have informed the French Embassy in New Delhi about the incident, besides launching an investigation.The Opposition Congress has warned of "international ramifications" of the incident, at a time when the U.S. has already issued a travel advisory for its female travellers, asking them



to exercise caution in six States in the wake of rapid increase in the rape cases. The Congress said Rajasthan could become part of such an advisory in the coming days.Veteran Congress leader and former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said the foreign tourist's rape had exposed the deteriorating law and order situation in the State to the entire world. "Women across the State feel unsafe, but the Bharatiya Janata Party government remains indifferent," he said.Pradesh Congress Committee president Govind Singh Dotsara said the incident had damaged the country's image at the international level. "Even foreign women are unsafe in Rajasthan. This extremely shameful and horrifying incident has brought disgrace to the State... The culprit should be arrested immediately and given the harshest punishment," Mr. Dotsara said.

Israel claims victory as U.S. intel says Iran nuclear sites not destroyed; nuclear sites are completely destroyed, Trump retorts

GNS News Agency, July 2

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared a "historic victory" against Iran despite a U.S. intelligence report concluding that American strikes set back Tehran's nuclear program by just a few months.Iran and Israel agreed to a ceasefire on Tuesday (June 24, 2025), ending 12 days of tit-for-tat strikes, after US President Donald Trump joined the conflict with bunker-busting bombs at the weekend that he said destroyed key Iranian nuclear sites.A classified preliminary U.S. intelligence report, however, concluded that American strikes on Iran set back its nuclear program by just a few months.White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt had previously confirmed the authenticity of the assessment but said it was "flat-out wrong".Mr. Netanyahu, in an address to the nation after the ceasefire, announced that "we have thwarted Iran's nuclear project". "And if anyone in Iran tries to rebuild it, we will act with the same determination, with the same intensity, to foil any attempt," he said.Israel had said its bombing campaign, which began on June 13, was aimed at preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, an ambition Tehran has consistently denied.Israel's military said that its strikes had set back Iran's nuclear programme "by years".

After Mr. Trump angrily berated both sides for early violations of the truce on Tuesday (June 24, 2025), Tehran announced it would respect the terms of the deal if Israel did the same, while Israel said it had refrained from further strikes.Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said his country was willing to return to negotiations over its nuclear programme, but that his country would continue to "assert its legitimate rights" to the peaceful use of atomic energy.U.S. media on Tuesday (June 24, 2025) cited people familiar with the Defence Intelligence Agency findings as saying the American strikes did not fully eliminate Iran's centrifuges or stockpile of enriched uranium.

The strikes sealed off entrances to some facilities without destroying underground buildings, according to the report.White House Press Secretary Leavitt responded on social media: "The leaking of this alleged assessment is a clear attempt to demean President Trump, and discredit the brave fighter pilots who conducted a perfectly executed mission to obliterate Iran's nuclear program."While Iran and Israel have been locked in a shadow war for decades, their



12-day conflict was by far the most destructive confrontation between them.Israeli strikes hit nuclear and military targets — killing scientists and senior military figures — as well as residential areas, prompting waves of Iranian missile fire on Israel.The war culminated in US strikes on underground Iranian nuclear sites using bunker-busting bombs -- which Israel lacks -- followed by an Iranian reprisal targeting the largest US military facility in the Middle East.Mr. Trump shrugged off that response as "weak", thanking Tehran for giving advance notice and announcing the contours of the ceasefire just hours later.."Everyone is tired. We just want to have some peace of mind," said Tel Aviv resident Tammy Shel. "For us, for the Iranian people, for the Palestinians, for everyone in the region."In Iran, people remained uncertain whether the peace would hold.Amir, 28, fled from Tehran to the Caspian Sea coast and told AFP by phone, "I really don't know... about the ceasefire but honestly, I don't think things will return to normal."Israeli strikes on Iran killed at least 610 civilians and wounded more than 4,700, according to the health ministry.Iran's attacks on Israel have killed 28 people, according to official figures and rescuers. The international community reacted with cautious optimism to the truce.Saudi Arabia and the European Union welcomed Mr. Trump's announcement, while Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia hoped "that this will be a sustainable ceasefire".But French President Emmanuel Macron warned there was an "increased" risk that Iran would attempt to enrich uranium secretly following the strikes on its nuclear sites.After the truce was announced,

Andrew Cuomo concedes New York City Democratic mayoral primary to Indian-American Zohran Mamdani



GNS News Agency, July 2

Former Gov. Andrew Cuomo conceded New York City's Democratic Mayoral Primary to Zohran Mamdani as the 33-year old Indian-American member of the State Assembly had a significant lead in the race Tuesday (June 24, 2025) night.Mr. Cuomo's concession came as the race's outcome will be decided by a ranked choice count after neither Democrat got a clear majority in the vote.Mr. Mamdani, a 33-year-old democratic socialist member of the State Assembly, started to pull ahead with more than an estimated 80% of ballots counted.Mr. Cuomo, in a speech to supporters, said Mr. Mamdani "won" and that "we are going to take a look and make some decisions". Mr. Mamdani would be the city's first Muslim and Indian-American Mayor if elected.

Mr. Cuomo is trying to make a comeback from a sexual harassment scandal. Incumbent Mayor Eric Adams skipped the primary. He's running as an independent.The race's ultimate outcome could say something about what kind of leader Democrats are looking for during President Donald Trump's second term.The vote takes place about four years after Mr. Cuomo, 67, resigned as governor following a sexual harassment scandal. Yet he has been the favourite throughout the race, with his deep experience, name recognition, strong political connections and juggernaut fundraising apparatus.The party's progressive wing, meanwhile, had coalesced behind Mr. Mamdani. A relatively unknown State Legislator when the contest began, Mr. Mamdani gained momentum by running a sharp campaign laser-focused on the city's high cost of living and secured endorsements from two of the country's foremost progressives, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Sen. Bernie Sanders.

The primary winner will go on to face incumbent Mr. Adams, a Democrat who decided to run as an independent amid a public uproar over his indictment on corruption charges and the subsequent abandonment of the case by Mr. Trump's Justice Department.Republican Curtis Sliwa, the founder of the Guardian Angels, will be on the ballot in the fall's general election. There is also a possibility that Mr. Cuomo runs on the November ballot as an independent candidate if he loses the primary.The mayoral primary's two leading candidates — one a fresh-faced progressive and

Twins to Chennai's Munro statue

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As it always happens when I visit London, I go walkabout as Muthiah would say, getting happily lost and finding some gem or the other. This visit has been no different. One rather warm afternoon I set off to Leadenhall Street just to see the site where the East India Company HQ once stood. That building was demolished a long while ago, in the 19th century to be precise, and the history-loving English have been careful enough not to have a commemorative plaque. The building standing there is a Lloyd's Bank edifice, inaugurated sometime in the 1930s. Having seen it, I found myself near the Bank of England and looking up, saw an equestrian statue that took me back to the Island in Madras.

What I saw was the twin of our Thomas Munro statue, right down to the pedestal. From its base, even the rider looked similar. The inscription, however, said this was a statue of the Duke of Wellington, erected here in 1844. The sculptor was the same — Francis Chantrey — and this was one of three equestrian statues of his: Munro in Madras, the Duke in Threadneedle Street, and King George IV at Trafalgar Square, London. Interestingly, among all the statues that Chantrey sculpted, and he was a busy man, these were the only equestrian ones, as he was not comfortable doing animals.

What is even more interesting is that he probably used the same horse for all three statues, one sourced from the king's stables. Certainly, the king and Munro are mounted on horses modelled after the same animal. And yet, among the three, it was considered that the Munro horse was the

the other an older moderate — could be stand-ins for the larger Democratic Party's ideological divide, though Mr. Cuomo's scandal-scarred past adds a unique tinge to the narrative.The rest of the pack has struggled to gain recognition in a race where nearly every candidate has cast themselves as the person best positioned to challenge Mr. Trump's agenda.Comptroller Brad Lander, a liberal city government stalwart, made a splash last week when he was arrested after linking arms with a man federal agents were trying to detain at an immigration court in Manhattan. It was unclear if that episode was enough to jump-start a campaign that had been failing to pick up speed behind Lander.Among the other candidates are City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams, State Sen. Zellnor Myrie, hedge fund executive Whitney Tilson and former city Comptroller Scott Stringer.Mr. Mamdani's energetic run has been hard not to notice.His army of young canvassers relentlessly knocked on doors throughout the city seeking support. Posters of his grinning mug were up on shop windows. You couldn't get on social media without seeing one of his well-produced videos pitching his vision — free buses, free child care, new apartments, a higher minimum wage and more, paid for by new taxes on rich people.That youthful energy was apparent Tuesday evening, as both cautiously optimistic canvassers and ecstatic supporters lined the streets of Central Brooklyn, creating a party-like atmosphere that spread from poll sites into the surrounding neighbourhoods.Outside his family's Caribbean apothecary, Amani Kojo, a 23-year-old first-time voter, passed out iced tea to Mr. Mamdani canvassers, encouraging them to stay hydrated."It's 100 degrees outside and it's a vibe. New York City feels alive again," Mr. Kojo said, raising a pile of Mr. Mamdani pamphlets. "It feels very electric seeing all the people around, the flyers, all the posts on my Instagram all day." Mr. Cuomo and some other Democrats have cast Mamdani as unqualified. They say he doesn't have the management chops to wrangle the city's sprawling bureaucracy or handle crises. Critics have also taken aim at Mamdani's support for Palestinian human rights.In response, Mr. Mamdani has slammed Mr. Cuomo over his sexual harassment scandal and his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.In one heated debate exchange, Mr. Cuomo rattled off a long list of what he saw as Mamdani's managerial shortcomings, arguing that his opponent, who has been in theState Assembly since 2021, has never dealt with Congress or unions and never overseen an infrastructure project. He added that Mr. Mamdani couldn't be relied upon to go toe-to-toe with Mr. Trump.Mr. Cuomo resigned in 2021 after a report commissioned by the state attorney general concluded that he had sexually harassed at least 11 women. He has always maintained that he didn't intentionally harass the women, saying he had simply fallen behind what was considered appropriate workplace conduct.During the campaign, he has become more aggressive in defending himself, framing the situation as a political hit job orchestrated by his enemies.

Twins to Chennai's Munro statue

worst, such being public perception! There were other similarities — all three riders have the same posture, and all three are without stirrups. This, in Madras, is often said to be an error on the part of the sculptor, on discovery of which he died by suicide. But sadly, for morbid Madras, this was not so. Chantrey intended all three to be that way, as tributes to the riding skills of the three men. And he died of a heart attack, at home.

Munro presented Chantrey more than enough challenges as it is. There was at that time only a portrait of the former Governor available. This, by Martin Shee, was 'half length to left', which meant the sculptor had to imagine how the rest of Munro's face looked. We know for a fact that many friends of Munro, as also his wife, were called in to testify that the final statue did look like him. Among those who came was the Duke of Wellington, soon to be the subject of Chantrey's third and last equestrian statue. His approval was clearly important.Chantrey evidently took time over his statues. Munro, commissioned in 1828, took him 10 years and the king's, begun at roughly the same time, was completed in 1843. Wellington got his in 1844. But of the three, it was Munro's that was destined to travel the farthest. It was shipped in three pieces, Munro, horse, and granite pedestal, along with an apprentice, arriving in Madras in September 1838. The base had been prepared here by the firm of Ostheider's and on it, the statue's pedestal, once again near identical to the king's and later Wellington's, was mounted. The statue took a year to unveil, the event marked by a ceremony complete with a seventeen gun salute on October 28, 1839.

What is a percentile?

On June 14, the results of the NEET-UG, India's most competitive medical entrance examination, were declared. Among over 22 lakh candidates, Mahesh Kumar, a student from Rajasthan, stood out with a score of 686 out of 720. Yet, his percentile was reported not as 100 but as 99.9999547. This number may seem puzzling. Why is the national topper in the country not awarded a 100th percentile? What does percentile mean anyway? As lakhs of students await their ranks and counselling, it becomes important to decode the mathematics behind this misunderstood metric.Percentage vs percentile

A percentage is a straightforward measure of how much a student scores out of the total possible marks. For example, Mahesh's 686 out of 720 translates to roughly 95.27%. Based on the questions answered, it is an absolute measure, showing how much a student knew. A percentile, on the other hand, is a relative measure. It tells us how a student performed compared to others. A 99 percentile means the student did better than 99% of the test-takers. It doesn't say how much the student scored, but where they stand in the crowd. This distinction becomes crucial in exams where lakhs of candidates participate. In competitive exams, especially those with a vast number of candidates, a small difference in marks can translate into thousands of ranks. The use of percentiles helps standardise the evaluation. A mark of 640 might land in a higher percentile one year and a lower percentile the next year simply because the overall performance of the cohort changes. Percentiles help admission authorities compare students by relative performance.How percentiles are calculatedThe basic formula used to calculate percentile is: Percentile = {Number of candidates scoring less than you} divided by {Total number of candidates}*100.This is why even the top ranker doesn't get a 100 percentile. For Mahesh, the number of candidates scoring less than him is 22,09,317 out of 22,09,318 (including himself). When multi-

plied by 100, that fraction gives a value that is very marginally below 100. This explains the seven-decimal-place result: 99.9999547. It also means that the 100 percentile is mathematically impossible under this formula. You can get very close, but never exactly 100.Interestingly, while a 100 percentile is impossible, a zero percentile is theoretically allowed. The lowest scorer, who performs worse than everyone else, will have zero candidates below them. This gives: Percentile= {0} divided by {Total candidates}* 100 = 0However, such a percentile is rarely displayed in public portals. Systems often show a minimum value or round it up to a small positive number.One fascinating implication of the percentile system is that it reveals the scale of competition. If a student's percentile is 92.8571428, the number of digits after the decimal (in this case, seven) can hint at the total number of test-takers. This is because: Total number of candidates (approximately) = {1}divided by [{1 - ({Percentile}/{100})}.A high degree of decimal precision is used to differentiate between students who are extremely close in performance. For example, a difference of 0.00001 in percentile could separate thousands of candidates in a large exam like NEET.Across the world, many tests adopt percentile scoring systems. The GMAT, used for MBA admissions, reports raw scores and percentiles. The SAT and GRE also use scaled scores derived from statistical normalisation, often converted to percentiles for easier interpretation. Even in countries like South Korea and China, high-stakes national exams incorporate relative grading systems to separate top scorers fairly and consistently. The widespread use of percentiles recognises how much a student knows and how well they've performed against others. In tightly packed score ranges —especially at the top — even a half mark can create a significant shift in ranks. Percentiles, with their precision, reveal that shift clearly. For parents and students, understanding this system can prevent unnecessary confusion.

Axiom-4 mission: Weather 90% favourable for launch, says SpaceX



After multiple delays, Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla and three others are all set to travel to the International Space Station on Wednesday (June 25, 2025) with SpaceX announcing that the weather was 90% favourable for lift-off. "All systems are looking good for Wednesday's (June 25, 2025) launch of @Axiom_Space's Ax-4 mission to the @Space_Station and weather is 90% favorable for liftoff," SpaceX, which is providing transport for the space mission, said in a post on X.

NASA, Axiom Space, and SpaceX are now targeting 12.01 p.m. (IST), Wednesday (June 25, 2025), for launch of the fourth private astronaut mission to the International Space Station, Axiom Mission 4, NASA said. The mission will lift off from Launch Complex 39A at NASA's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida. The crew will travel to the orbiting laboratory on a new SpaceX Dragon spacecraft after launching on the company's Falcon 9 rocket. The targeted docking time is approximately 4.30 p.m. IST on Thursday (June 26, 2025) NASA said in a statement. Peggy Whitson, former

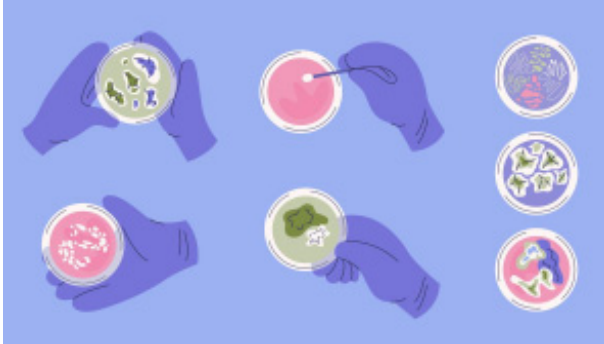
NASA astronaut and director of human spaceflight at Axiom Space, will command the commercial mission, while ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla will serve as pilot. The two mission specialists are ESA (European Space Agency) project astronaut Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski of Poland, and HUNOR (Hungarian to Orbit) astronaut Tibor Kapu of Hungary. The Axiom-4 mission has run into multiple delays, first on account of inclement weather and then due to leaks detected on SpaceX's Falcon-9 rocket and later on the Russian module of the International Space Station. The launch opportunity comes after NASA and Roscosmos officials discussed the status of the recent repair work in the transfer tunnel at the aft (back) most segment of the orbital laboratory's Zvezda service module, NASA said.

"NASA and Roscosmos have a long history of cooperation and collaboration on the International Space Station. This professional working relationship has allowed the agencies to arrive at a shared technical approach and now Axiom Mission 4 launch and docking will proceed," said acting NASA Administrator Janet Petro. As part of a collaboration between NASA and ISRO, Axiom Mission 4 delivers on a commitment highlighted by President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to send the first ISRO astronaut to the station, the NASA statement said. The space agencies are participating in five joint science investigations and two in-orbit STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) demonstrations. Once docked, the private astronauts plan to spend about two weeks aboard the orbiting laboratory, conducting a mission comprising science, outreach, and commercial activities.

Widely used fungicide found to be driving C. tropicalis infections

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Candida tropicalis is an important fungal pathogen in India and many parts of the world. Its infections are associated with a mortality rate of 55-60%. Anti-fungal drugs called azoles, such as fluconazole and voriconazole, are used to treat its infections. But there is a growing concern in medical circles that clinics are seeing an increasing number of infections by strains of C. tropicalis that exhibit high resistance to these drugs. What is driving this alarming increase in drug resistance? A paper published recently in PLoS Biology by researchers from Fudan University in Shanghai has provided the answer. They found that an azole-related fungicide called tebuconazole widely used by farmers and gardeners, and which can accumulate and persist in the environment has driven the increase in azole-resistant C. tropicalis infections seen in clinics. The team also found that tebuconazole-resistant strains exhibited aneuploidy — meaning their chromosome number showed differences from the normal chromosome count for the organism. Such deviation from the normal chromosome complement is known as ploidy plasticity.



identified as diploid or close to diploid were found by more detailed analyses to, in fact, be segmental aneuploids: they carried duplications or deletions of some chromosome segments.

The duplicated chromosome segments carried genes whose overexpression was known from other studies to increase resistance to azoles. For example, several TBZ-resistant strains had duplications of a chromosomal segment carrying a gene named TAC1, which encodes a protein that helps the cell to produce more of another protein named the ABC-transporter. The ABC-transporter pumps toxic compounds such as the azoles out of the cell. Conversely, other segmental aneuploids showed haploidisation, that is, deletion of one copy of a segment of another chromosome that carried the HMG1 gene. The overexpression of HMG1 decreased the biosynthesis of a chemical in cell membranes named ergosterol.

Previous studies had shown that in budding yeast, HMG1 overexpression led to lower synthesis of ergosterol and a lower resistance to fluconazole — whereas reduced expression of HMG1 stimulated ergosterol synthesis and elevated resistance to fluconazole. Thus, although the aneuploidies created imbalances in the C. tropicalis genome that reduced their growth rate, they enabled the strains to better resist antifungals. The researchers also verified that the strains with altered ploidy were more virulent than the progenitor strains in mice treated with fluconazole. An unexpected haploidAnother unexpected bonus from the new study was the discovery that tebuconazole-resistant strains included stable haploid strains of C. tropicalis. The haploid cells were able to undergo mating. These serendipitous findings now provide researchers a useful tool for future genetic analyses. The researchers recovered a haploid cell from among the tebuconazole-resistant strains generated in the laboratory. They wondered whether any of the 868 C. tropicalis strains recorded in clinical visits around the world might include any haploids (that is, naturally haploid rather than as an abnormality). They examined publicly available genomic sequences of these strains and found that two of them, isolated from Spain, were indeed haploid.

In conclusion, the research showed that the reckless use of triazole antifungals in agriculture can unwittingly promote the emergence of pathogenic strains showing cross-resistance to azoles of clinical importance. Further, some of the resistant strains were haploid, like our sperm and egg cells, and could likewise mate and hence be capable of introducing their resistance mechanisms into new genetic backgrounds. This exemplifies the prophetic warning: "sow the wind, reap the whirlwind".

Telangana's world-famous Balanagar custard apple inches closer to GI tag

Hyderabad: In a bid to boost local farming and gain national recognition, farmers and officials from the State have on Monday filed an application seeking Geographical Indication (GI) tag for the world-famous Balanagar custard apple. This is the 19th GI application filing from Telangana. The application has been filed by GI Practitioner Subhajit Saha of Resolute4IP on behalf of three key farmer-based organizations: Pomal Farmer Producer Company Limited, Balanagar Farmer Producer Company Limited, and The Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society, with funding support from NABARD. The application was technically facilitated by Sri Konda Laxman Telangana Horticultural University (SKLTGHU) represented by Dr Saidaiiah Pidigam, who played a pivotal role in compiling scientific documentation and validating the fruit's unique agro-morphological characteristics. Majorly cultivated in Mahbubnagar, Vikarabad and Rangareddy districts, the Balanagar custard apple is prized for its thick rind, high pulp content, minimal seeds, naturally sweet flavour, and long shelf life. These qualities distinguish it from other varieties and make it highly suitable for both fresh consumption and industrial processing. Once granted, the GI tag is expected to provide legal protection, strengthen brand identity, and open premium domestic and international market access for the Balanagar custard apples.

Saha said Telangana is also gearing up to file an addi-



tional six to eight 8 GI applications from handicrafts and horticulture products in the coming days. Project principal investigator Dr. Saidaiiah worked on grass root level and investigated and gathered the requisite information from the Balanagar custard apple growing areas, interacted with the farmers and cultivators for filing application.

A reset in West Asia, a ‘de-escalation’ for the world



West Asia has been reset with the bombing of Iran by Israel and the United States. It has been done with the tacit or open approval of almost all countries in the region and beyond. The Europeans have been their usual contradictory noisy self, but made no difference to what is unfolding in West Asia. Even Russia and China, which signed, with much fanfare, Comprehensive Strategic Partnership agreements with Iran in January 2025 and March 2021 respectively, were silent spectators. It is not that all these countries were helpless. They made a conscious decision not to interfere when Iran and its proxies are being dismantled in the region. Now with the so-called Iranian nuclear threat being rendered ineffective, West Asia is faced with a sole dominant nuclear power — Israel. The region has 40,000 American troops stationed on its soil in addition to numerous air and sea assets. They will make sure that there is no more military challenge to Israel. West Asia will now live with this reality.

Initially, the Gulf and other countries of West Asia feared, probably rightly, Iran and its proxies as much as the Israelis. The Iranian strategic and military depth in the region, when seen through the prism of its political ideology, made it the predominant threat in the region. In some ways, the presence of an aggressive Iran made the Gulf countries soft pedal, and even make compromises on many other issues which the region has been plagued with, including Palestine. They needed Israel and the U.S. to balance their vulnerability vis-à-vis Iran, which only encouraged Israel to go all the way out to dismantle the Iranian proxies, both state and non-state actors, in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza. The threat has receded except perhaps for the Houthis in Yemen and the militias in Iraq. In the meantime, the Gulf countries have been busy building bridges with the U.S. administration and waiting to operationalise Abraham Accords, which normalised their relations with Israel. They have made U.S. President Donald Trump happy by doing out goodies. But, with the cutting down of Iran to size in West Asia, do they relish the prospect of an Israel without any checks? Probably not. Can they do something at least now? Iran has hit back. Its missiles have targeted U.S. military bases in Qatar — the biggest U.S. base in West Asia with 10,000 personnel, and in Iraq, Iran claimed proportional retaliation in that the number of missiles used was equal to the number of bombs the U.S. used to attack Iran's nuclear facilities. This represented a dangerous escalation, violating the territorial integrity of one of its own "brotherly" countries, Qatar, and with the situation threatening to spiral out of control. The retaliation was not entirely unexpected. For Iran's leadership, it is an existential crisis. For the Supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and the leadership, surrendering or keeping quiet in the face of these attacks are not options if they must survive politically. They know that the end game is regime change to dismantle their theological foundation and political ideology — an ideology which threatens everyone in the region. To that extent, the war with Iran is still a work-in-progress for Israel and the U.S. They will not stop until they do a "Syria" on Iran. But there is no alternate "regime" waiting to take their place. Consequently, for their own good, the Gulf states need to step up now to prevent an Iraq- or a Libya-like collapse, which will destabilise everyone in the region. Destabilising regimes in the region has only given a fillip to Islamic fundamentalism and to terrorist organisations such as the Islamic State and al-

Qaeda. As one spat ends another crisis begins. The dramatic announcement by the U.S. of an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Iran is a surprising voice of reason, at a time when reason has become the biggest casualty in West Asia. After retaliation for the U.S. bombing and proving to the world — and more importantly to its people — that it will not be cowed down, the ceasefire call gives Iran a way out to back down. Let us not forget that Israel too has been hit hard though the western media has played it down. The fact that Iran was ready to hit American bases in the Gulf would have weighed on the U.S. to pressure Israel to stop.

It is also a wakeup call for the Gulf leadership that they are not immune. Hopefully, this should stop Iran from making good on other threats such as closing the Strait of Hormuz or exiting the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The focus shifts back to the nuclear deal, where both the U.S. and Iran may well be in a mood to find a solution. It is time for the Gulf states to support this process, even if it is late, to save the region from further conflagration. While this spat sputters to an end, the next crisis in West Asia is in the making. With the long-cherished dream of Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu realised under Mr. Trump — to take out Iran's nuclear programme — his domestic political fortunes have been revived dramatically. There are hardly any obstacles now for him to realise his "Eretz Israel" dream — the promised land from the Jordan river to the Mediterranean Sea. This is the New Middle East map which Mr. Netanyahu waved before the UN General Assembly to 193-member states — a map without Gaza or the West Bank. Israeli plans to annex them very soon and certainly before the U.S. presidential elections in 2026. If his main ultra-right coalition ministerial colleagues Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich are to be believed, and there is no reason why they should not be, this annexation will happen this year. All state and non-state actors, which can potentially oppose the move, have been defeated or chastised. The U.S. is also in sync with Mr. Netanyahu in his ambitions. The question will then boil down to these: After its annexation of Palestinian territories, will Israel continue to be an apartheid state by choice to preserve its Jewishness, where the Palestinians will not enjoy equal citizenship and remain second class citizens? Or it will become a genuine democracy by giving the Palestinians equal rights as its Jewish citizens. History indicates that it will be the first. While the opposition to this annexation should come from countries within the region, the Gulf leadership has almost given up pushing Israel for a Palestinian state or even stopping the Gaza war as the price to pay for regional stability and integration with Israel and the outside world, their noisy protestations within and outside the UN notwithstanding.

However, if they think that peace and security will be restored by annexing Palestinian territories or even status quo of occupation retained (56,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, those displaced, face daily threats, starvation and displacement, while people in the West Bank are driven out of their homes to make way for Jewish settlers), they may be forced to rethink their strategy.

Expectedly, India has neither made pronouncements on the Israeli preemptive strikes on Iran nor taken an active role — just as it has not in other wars elsewhere. Israel was one of few countries to stand by India during Operation Sindoor. However, India's joint initiatives with Iran, including Chabahar port connectivity, are equally important. India's stakes in the region are high and it is doing all it can to minimise the impact. India has, tongue in cheek, called for a "de-escalation", giving the same advice to warring parties which it received during Operation Sindoor from many parts of the world, asking India and Pakistan to de-escalate. It was a case of equating the aggressor and the aggressed. It matters no more to the world, whether one is right or wrong or whether international law or territorial integrity have been violated, as long as the warring sides "de-escalate". T.S. Tirumurti is former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs in-charge, inter alia, of West Asia and former Representative of India to the Palestinian Authority in Gaza

Tamil Nadu InFocus | When a prisoner was made to ‘run like a horse’



In his autobiography Ungalil Oruvan, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin described the Madras Central Prison during the Emergency as a "torture camp" that echoed with wails. Accounts presented to the Justice M. M. Ismail Commission in 1977 appear to validate that grim depiction. According to testimonies, prison staff seemed to take pleasure in humiliating detainees. "When one of them returned after a visit to Bangalore, he was made to run like a horse while being beaten," recounted K. Vezhavendan, a former DMK Minister who later founded the Makkal DMK. He also alleged that the staff used "disrespectful language." Even refused water

"Mr. Vezhavendan said they were not even given a bedsheet or mat. They were not given water to drink when they wanted. They were in the lock-up for 24 hours for nine days after their imprisonment till the DIG visited them. On February 2, 1976 night, he was shocked to hear shrieks and cries from other cells and the prisoners asking the staff not to beat them... The next day, the doctor, on his routine check-up, saw his condition, but he (Vezhavendan) was afraid of complaining. He was warned not to, lest more cruelty be unleashed on them. The inmates did not have a change of clothes for about eight days," reported The Hindu on the Commission proceedings. Vezhavendan said one prisoner was so desperate he contemplated suicide. After his release, Jail Superintendent K. Vidyasagar and his father K. Kolandaivelu, a former Deputy Commissioner of Police, met him in May 1977, asking him to "forget the incidents and forgive them." [Vidyasagar, however, told the Commission it was Vezhavendan who had visited him at his home.]

Dravidar Kazhagam general secretary (now president) K. Veeramani, in his deposition, told the Commission that the jail warders ignored his plea not to assault V.S. Sambandam, who had recently undergone spinal surgery. "I warned them it might kill him," Mr Veeramani said.

Sambandam confirmed he collapsed after being struck. But the warders showed no sympathy, allegedly telling him to "stop pretending" and get up. Senior DMK leader Arcot N. Veeraswami, arrested on February 1, 1976 — a day after the DMK government was dismissed — said detainees were subjected to "indecent and demeaning" language by staff. Seven inmates were packed into one cell, beaten, and denied drinking water or basic amenities for days. "New arrivals were beaten... were allowed to bathe and change clothes only on February 9," he deposed. According to The Hindu Archives, Mr. Veeraswami added that on one occasion, a large amount of salt was deliberately mixed in the soup. "On another occasion, sand was sprinkled on the food. Once the orderlies who used to help them in the kitchen were suddenly removed and replaced by four others, one of whom used to do scavenging work. Another had scabies and eczema on his hand, and the third suffered from a skin disease. The detenus protested and did not take tea in the morning. After representations, the original batch of orderlies was sent to the work. The Superintendent warned them that it was an offence to refuse food and they were liable to be punished." However, the jail staff's counsel denied the allegations, calling the salt-in-soup claim "imaginary." He accused the prisoners of spreading propaganda for political purposes. The counsel also alleged that it was Mr. Veeraswami who had shared "valuable information" to the superintendent to secure favourable treatment and release — a charge echoed by Vidyasagar.

Andhra Pradesh simplifies building norms for small structures, offers relief to plot owners and developers

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Minister P Narayana has said that the State Cabinet has approved key relaxations in building rules to support small constructions. Narayana, the Municipal Minister, said earlier, norms applied only to buildings above five floors, but now structures below five floors will also benefit from simplified approval. "Builders can mortgage 10 per cent of the plot area and construct as per the rules. For government lands, submitting an affidavit will be sufficient," said Narayana, addressing a press conference after the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

Why agri-tech might need a different approach to boost innovations



Primarily an agrarian economy, India holds large potential for research and technological innovation in agriculture. Nevertheless, innovations in this space which is estimated to be around \$24 billion, have barely scratched the surface given the myriad challenges such as low market adoption, high customer acquisition costs, lukewarm investor interest, high infrastructure costs, and more.Compared to tech in other sectors, Indian AgriTech might need a different approach to turbocharge innovations in this space, say experts. IIIT-B, for example, takes an interdisciplinary approach and often looks at developing solutions as digital public goods.

The institution has been developing a host of AgriTech projects with the idea of introducing higher efficiency in agricultural processes. These include AutoGrow - an Autonomous greenhouse System for Precision Agriculture, Smart Greenhouse with secure long-range connectivity, a Remote Compost Monitoring system for Sustainable agriculture and AgriSense (an IoT system for with a soil monitoring device) among others.An India-specific problem“Autogrow, which is the autonomous greenhouse system for precision agriculture, is an autonomous system for growing food. We are trying to solve a very India-specific problem,” says Ramesh Kestur, faculty at IIIT-B.

The system seamlessly integrates biological food production with an IoT/AI-based system and includes automated greenhouse control of climatic conditions, irrigation, and nutrient supply to plants. This can provide substantial gains in increasing the efficiency of crop production while using optimal resources and thereby reducing costs.“If you see in the West, they lack resources such as lighting and therefore cannot grow throughout the year. So, we should not imitate their solution. We have enough light, and we can grow 365 days a year. We just need to control whatever is critical for our condition,” Kestur explains.Given the abundance of sunlight and temperature in the country, his team avoided including components like LED lights in the system which helped to reduce cost and complexity. After eliminating the unnecessary, the team then looked what needed to be controlled.

One was the inputs which were essentially water and nutrients. “We thought we will try to build a system and control those things. With this motivation, we built systems for three configurations; One is the hydroponic system. The other one is what we call the vertical system where we can vertically stack growbags. And the last is the open field.”“It’s a non-linear control system where the inputs are continuously monitored, and the required amount of nutrition is administered. It is a control system realized with sensors and

AI-ML algorithms,” notes Kestur, adding that no sensors are placed in the soil as it can lead to quick draining of battery. Instead, the temperature and moisture sensors are placed in the input tank where levels of nutrition such as nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium are monitored.The project is done in collaboration with the Department of Biotechnology, IIHR, Bengaluru. The wick irrigation technology developed at IIHR has been incorporated into the system.AgriSense and Smart Greenhouse Monitoring System are led by professor Jyotsna Bapat at IIIT-B. Both are sponsored by the Government of Karnataka.The Smart Greenhouse Monitoring System aims to transform greenhouse farming by leveraging IoT to improve crop health, automate environmental controls, and facilitate remote monitoring. The idea is to enable farmers to monitor environmental conditions like temperature, humidity, soil moisture, and pH remotely, providing real-time data for precise control over crop conditions.The system looks at features such as real-time data monitoring utilising a network of sensors, automated control based on sensor data, remote accessibility for farmers via app and data analysis and alerts with the help of machine learning.Optimising inputsIn agriculture finding the optimum watering level to ensure maximum output has always been a problem. Yet another challenge is the deteriorating health of soil due to over application of fertilisers. AgriSense, an IoT system developed by the institute to address these challenges, uses Agri-cone a mushroom shaped soil-monitoring device.“We were initially looking at the bigger farms where we could help the farmers to ensure irrigation is done in the correct way. By measuring the soil moisture content and looking at the predicted forecast, we could advise them on the irrigation that should be done,” explains Bapat.

“Another aspect is the soil content and we measure carbon dioxide and ammonia in it. If the soil is of good quality, then the amount of carbon dioxide will be relatively higher. If there is too much of urea or any of the other fertilizers, the amount of ammonia released would be higher. So, we can advise them based on these too.”Inside Agri-cone, a coin battery powers various sensors for monitoring soil moisture and temperature. The sensors detect gases such as including CO2 and ammonia. Humidity sensors track air moisture levels around plants, helping to prevent diseases and promote healthy growth.“Right now, we have put a small battery. But the goal is to put solar surface on top of the mushroom so that it becomes completely sustainable,” Bapat notes.“Right now, we just use Wi-Fi. But the other solution is something called LoRA. It is used for IoT a lot in Europe and in Netherlands, their entire IoT network is on LoRA. It is more power efficient, and the range is higher which makes it suitable for a vast field,” says Bapat.The team led by Bapat has also been working on a Remote Compost Monitoring system. The idea was to build a prototype for an intelligent IoT system that remotely monitors and manages compost which can then be used as fertilizer.Bapat explains that the system developed by them can help compost Bengaluru’s garbage piles, with a lot of food waste in it, correctly while avoiding odour.The solution developed by the team comes with a sensor hub associated with each bin to monitor pH values, temperature, humidity, and CO2 levels of the compost inside them. It also allows remote monitoring

The need for gender equity in urban bureaucracy



India is in the midst of a profound urban transformation. By 2050, over 800 million people, about half the population, will live in cities, making India the largest driver of global urban growth. As cities expand spatially, economically and demographically, they are rewriting the social contract of a modern India and shaping the future of its democracy and development.In the last three decades, progressive constitutional reforms have advanced gender equity. The 73rd and 74th Amendments mandate 33% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Governments (ULGs), further strengthened to 50% by 17 States and a Union Territory. Today, women comprise over 46% of local elected representatives (Ministry of Panchayati Raj, 2024), as a rising presence of mayors and councillors.However, the bureaucratic apparatus that implements their decisions remains overwhelmingly male. While women’s representation in grass-root politics has increased, administrative cadres (city managers, planners, engineers, police) exhibit a stark imbalance, limiting the ability of cities to respond equitably to all citizens. As we invest in highways, metros, and smart cities, we overlook a foundational aspect of inclusive development — gender equity in bureaucracy.The bureaucratic gender gap

Despite more women entering the civil services, the urban administrative architecture remains male-dominated. As of 2022, women constituted just 20% of the Indian Administrative Service (IndiaSpend-2022), with even lower representation in urban planning, municipal engineering and transport authorities. In policing, only 11.7% of the national force are women (Bureau of Police Research and Development-2023), and often confined to desk roles.This gap is cause for concern. In cities, the engagement of women is different. They rely more on public transport, make multi-stop journeys for work and caregiving, and depend on neighbourhood-level infrastructure. An Institute for Transportation and Development Policy and Safetipin study found that 84% of women in Delhi and Mumbai used public or shared transport; it was 63% for men. Yet, urban planning prioritises mega-projects over safe, accessible, neighbourhood-level mobility. A 2019 Safetipin audit across 50 cities found over 60% of public spaces were poorly lit. With few women in policing, community safety initiatives often fail to resonate with women.This underrepresentation is not superficial; it affects outcomes. Women officials bring perspectives shaped by lived realities. Studies by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations and UN Women show that they prioritise water, health

and safety, and improve public trust in law enforcement through empathetic enforcement. Gender-sensitive design requires gender-diverse institutions.Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), which integrates gender considerations into public finance, is a promising but underutilised tool in India’s urban governance. Introduced globally in the 1990s, GRB recognises that budgets are not neutral and can reinforce inequities if left unchecked.

India adopted a Gender Budget Statement in 2005-06, with Delhi, Tamil Nadu and Kerala leading efforts. Delhi has funded women-only buses and public lighting; Tamil Nadu applied GRB across 64 departments in 2022-23, and Kerala embedded gender goals through its People’s Plan Campaign. Yet, studies by UN-Women and the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy show that most such efforts suffer from weak monitoring and limited institutional capacities, especially in smaller cities. For many ULGs, GRB remains tokenistic, overlooking essentials such as pedestrian safety or childcare in urban planningIn contrast, countries such as the Philippines mandate 5% of local budgets for gender programmes; Rwanda integrates GRB into national planning with oversight bodies; Uganda mandates gender equity certificates for fund approvals; Mexico ties GRB to results-based budgeting; and South Africa pilots participatory planning to anchor GRB in lived realities. These are not just fiscal reforms but also a reimagining of citizen-centric governance in cities.

Building inclusive cities requires moving beyond political quotas to ensure women’s presence in bureaucracy. This demands systemic reforms in recruitment, retention and promotion across administrative and technical roles. Affirmative action, through quotas and scholarships in planning and engineering, is key to dismantling structural barriers.Globally, countries as varied as Rwanda, Brazil, and South Korea show the impact of representation. Rwanda boosted maternal health and education spending; Brazil prioritised sanitation and primary health care; South Korea’s gender impact assessments reshaped transit and public spaces and Tunisia’s parity laws gave women more technical roles, improving focus on safety and health. The Philippines uses gender-tagged budgeting to fund gender-based violence shelters and childcare. Gender-balanced bureaucracies are not about fairness alone. They are essential for building safer, equitable, responsive cities.As India aspires to become a \$5 trillion economy, its cities must also aspire to be more than economic growth engines. They must become spaces of inclusion and equity. Gender must be mainstreamed into planning and implementation through mandatory audits, participatory budgeting, and linked evaluation. GRB should be institutionalised across ULGs, supported by targeted capacity-building.Representation must also translate into agency, and help dismantle glass ceilings. Local gender equity councils and models such as Kudumbashree offer templates, especially for small and transitioning cities. Women are already reshaping governance as elected leaders. They must now shape how cities are planned, serviced and governed. When cities reflect women’s lived experiences, they work better for all. To build cities for women, we must start by building cities with women.

‘Health, social bonds, happiness’: Participants list benefits of ‘disputed’ Kerala exercise programme



Around 5.45 am, men and women wearing white T-shirts start trickling into the spacious compound of the Narikkuni English Medium School at Chembakkunnu village, located 18 km from Kozhikode in Kerala. Fifteen minutes later, as some in the group, between the ages of 40 and 60, start with their morning walk, a trainer instructs, “Line up.”Soon, men and women take their positions in separate formations, marking the beginning of another day of the multi-exercise combination (MEC-7) programme, which has become the subject of a political row lately, after the ruling CPI(M) alleged that the Jamaat-e-Islami and Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI), the political wing of the banned Popular Front of India (PFI), were using the platform to further their political agendas.

Raising alarm over the fitness programme, CPI(M) Kozhikode district secretary P Mohahan recently said, “Lifestyle diseases should be fought and remaining physically fit is important for everyone. However, the Jamaat-e-Islami and the SDPI are using MEC-7 for their narrow politics. The Jamaat is using it as a shield for its campaign for Islamic nation. Secular society should be vigilant against such attempts.”Mohanan was forced to soften his stance — which was seen by some as continuation of the CPI(M)’s attacks on “radical” Muslim outfits — after it emerged that CPI(M) leaders in Kozhikode district supported the programme. CPI(M) state secretary M V Govindan also stepped in, saying the party did not consider MEC-7 a tool for communal activities.While a section of Muslim clerics also came out against MEC-7, their stand did not get any support from the larger community.Even as the controversy was in the limelight, Congress Palakkad MP V K Sreekanandan inaugurated a new session of the fitness programme in Pattambi, saying he wanted MEC-7 to be expanded across India, and underlined that there were “no religion elements” in it.

Kerala exercise programme After the final exercise, the participants break out of their formation to stand in a circle, and end the day’s session by shaking each others’ hands.At the Chembakkunnu school compound, the trainer guides those gathered through the paces. The MEC-7 programme comprises 21 exercises in all, each for the duration of a minute, performed over 21 minutes.The brief instructions to the 130-odd participants are about the only sounds around as they navigate from one exercise to another — jumping jacks, ankle rotations, knee rotations, hip rotations, head rotations and so on.The sound of synchronised inhaling and exhaling fills the ground as the second set of exercises, focusing on breathing, begins. A minute later, with their fingers interlocked, the participants stretch both arms over their heads while holding their breath. Next, the participants begin clapping overhead, and then stretching their arms behind their backs and bending forward, as they exhale.

In Telangana, birds of a feather ‘hunt’ rogue drones together

Seconds after the bird of prey soars under the blue Telangana skies, the “hunt” is over and it is on the ground with its “prey” — a rogue drone ensconced in a net that the eagle has been trained to deploy as part of its training for the Garuda Squad, the state police’s unique bird squad.Among the latest additions to the Telangana Police security apparatus, the five-bird squad has been undergoing training to intercept nano (weighing up to 250 grams) and micro (between 250 g and 2 kg) rogue drones, especially in no-fly zones during VIP movement. The squad’s primary role is to secure no-fly zones, say trainers.

Deployed recently, the Garuda Squad has proved to be cost-effective and efficient in counter-attacking small drones (costing around Rs 1 lakh), which have become a headache for security forces due to their size and maneuvering abilities.By teaching the birds to deploy nets, the Telangana Police has taken care of a critical concern — the safety of its squad from the spinning propellers of rogue drones as they are intercepted.telangana A collage showing an eagle from the Garuda Squad deploying “hunting down” a drone during a training exercise. (Photo: Special Arrangement)

“The training process involved a lot of trial and error, but no birds were harmed in the process. Instead of the bird seizing the drone directly, they have been trained to deploy a net, ensnare the drone and drag it to a secure, predetermined location, away from public areas,” says Tafseer Iqbal, Deputy Inspector General, Intelligence Security Wing.Stating that Telangana is now ready to assist or share its knowledge and capabilities with other police departments and security forces across the country, Iqbal says, “The Garuda Squad, the first-of-its-kind, was conceptualised in 2021, following a state government order. Three years on, it has achieved operational readiness and is currently being utilised on a pilot basis.”Recently, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had spoken about the need to establish a “comprehensive” anti-drone unit to protect the country from threats posed by drones. Shah was referring to a laser-equipped anti-drone gun mount system that has been developed, especially for border areas.

However, training the squad, which comprises kites and eagles, was easier said than done. “There were challenges, because these are birds and not machines. But the Garuda Squad is operationally ready for deployment now. We have been utilising their services for a while,” says Iqbal, director, Integrated Intelligence Training Academy (IITA), Telangana’s premier institution that provides expert training in canine handling, bomb detection and disposal techniques, and specialised instruction for both personal security officers (PSOs) and private security agencies.At the sight of an aerial intruder, a bird is released from its location to snatch from the skies the rogue drone — just as it would its prey.

“As an advanced training measure, the team has been acclimatising the birds to different scenarios, including crowd and noise levels that they would encounter in real-life situations,” says an officer.telangana An eagle from the Garuda Squad deploys a net to snag a drone during a training exercise. (Photo: Special Arrangement)

The next steps of the routine are sit-ups and acupressure, in which participants squeeze the sides and centre of their stomachs. After a moment’s rest, they begin with abdomen vibrations, meant to strengthen muscles and improve blood circulation, and then toe jumps for the next minute. After a pause, standing with their eyes closed, they begin meditating. Once that is over, they massage their faces with both hands.After the final exercise, the participants break out of their formation to stand in a circle, and end the day’s session by shaking each others’ hands.The participants say that the MEC-7 programme in Chembakkunnu began nearly four months ago, and has been part of their morning routine, for both men and women, since.It was more than a decade ago that ex-CISF assistant sub-inspector Salahudheen P conceptualised the programme, and now an estimated 1,000-plus groups which follow it, concentrated in Malappuram and Kozhikode.

A public sector bank employee, K M Venugopalan, 54, says he has been attending MEC-7 sessions since they began in 2012. “I used to go for morning walks, but got interested when I heard about the programme and joined it in the initial days itself. I lost 3 kg after I started regularly doing this exercise. People from all parties and religions take part. Every morning, we meet for nearly half an hour. This gives a pleasant start to the day, apart from helping us build social bonds,” he says.Shafeeque K M, the instructor at Chembakkunnu, says more and more people are drawn to the programme due to such benefits. “Social life and personal relations have improved. We have two brothers who had been estranged, hadn’t spoken to each other for several years. But after they started attending MEC-7, change came, as every participant has to shake the hands of all the others before leaving the day’s session,” he says.Many participants at Chembakkunnu tell The Indian Express the exercise session has helped them manage weight, lower cholesterol and blood pressure, plus regulate their mornings, which otherwise they may have idled away.Aneesha, who works as a public relations officer at a nearby hospital, says that for women in particular, MEC-7 has been a game-changer. “This has grown into a collective of women. Homemakers get an opportunity to meet people of their locality and improve their bonds. We all live in the same village, but are not familiar with one another. This session gives us a positive energy for the day,” she says.Graphic designer Shiny, who is in Chembakkunnu these days on a work-from-home assignment, agrees. “Homemakers are now celebrating their social life. All us women participants at MEC-7 recently went on a tour and are planning another next month. We discuss our issues and look at how we can help a member in need,” she says, adding that the sessions have taught them a way to be happy.Usha, a homemaker, says her family was accommodative when she wanted to make MEC-7 part of her daily routine. “We rescheduled the domestic chores... I take a half-an-hour break from the kitchen. Earlier, by noon, I used to get exhausted both mentally and physically. Now, I feel the change.”MEC-7 Kozhikode district coordinator Asharaf Pulparambil says the controversy has not impacted the fitness programme’s conduct or popularity. “We are getting inquiries to start more such clubs... No religious element is involved in the exercise module,” says Pulparambil.He also dismisses the claim of Muslim clerics that the exercise is against religion, putting it down to their fears regarding the intermingling of genders. “Women have separate sessions at MEC-7 and they too realise that health is important,” the coordinator says, adding that they expect more units in Kozhikode after the present issues settle down.

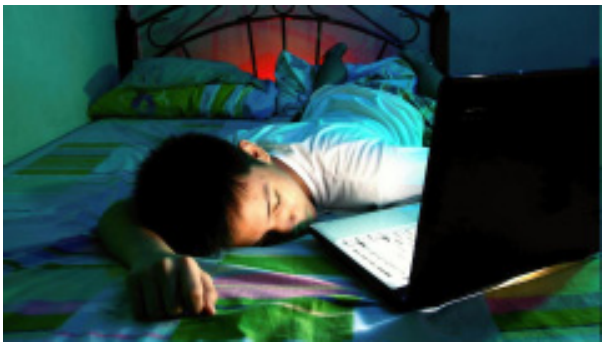


“As an advanced training measure, the team has been acclimatising the birds to different scenarios, including crowd and noise levels that they would encounter in real-life situations,” says an officer.

cise. (Photo: Special Arrangement)

As K Aravind Rao, Deputy Superintendent of Police, IITA, reiterates that the bird squad offers “an efficient and cost-effective alternative”, Alladi Nagesh, who heads the team of trainers — Mohammad Fareed and Abir Bandari — says the species chosen for the squad are “aerial hunters with a killer instinct”.Different birds have been designated for different purposes depending on their nature, size, flying pattern, hunting style and ability. For instance, kites are used for aerial surveillance due to their ability to fly at great heights with stability. “Cameras have been attached to the kite for such surveillance. Besides providing extremely stable visuals, they go unnoticed in the skies,” say officials, adding that eagles have been deployed for an attack over a short distance.Yet another bird on the squad — officials declined to reveal the species — is best suited for long-range sniper-like attacks. Nagesh, who heads the team of bird trainers, says the squad’s “sniper” can hit a speed of 390 miles per hour (approximately 620 km per hour), something a drone cannot achieve even while trying to evade a hit.Nagesh adds, “The birds are identified while still young and trained just like a canine — by using feeding as incentive. GPS trackers are attached to the birds so we don’t lose them. They are given training in different real-life scenarios involving public address systems and loud music, to prepare them for various operational environments.”Talking about a “key limitation”, officials say the birds are unable to distinguish between authorised drones and the rogue ones.Calling the inclusion of birds in safeguarding the country’s internal security a “welcome” move, Rajeev Khandelwal, general secretary, Hyderabad Birding Pals, an NGO dedicated to promoting birdwatching across Telangana, says, “As long as the birds are trained ethically, internationally set norms are followed, and they are not hurt or tortured and allowed to fly freely, it’s a fantastic move.”

Sleep disorders in children: how to recognise and handle them



Sleep has long been recognised as an active process by the scientific community, contrary to the popular belief of it being a period of inactivity. Sleep is defined as a normal, reversible, recurring state of reduced responsiveness to external stimulation and relative physical immobility. Understanding the functions of sleep is crucial to understanding the consequences of sleep-deprivation and sleep-related disorders. The functions of sleep include: fostering optimal brain growth and development; enhancing learning, attention and memory; regulating emotions, appetite and decision-making; strengthening of the immune functions as well as optimal time for rest and repair of body tissues.

The composition and functions of sleep vary with age and development. The changes noted with increasing age from infancy to adulthood are a decrease in total sleep time and the gradual setting up of a consistent sleep-wake cycle. Sleep health is a topic that has just recently garnered worldwide interest in scientific circles; however, this is yet to make much headway amongst the general public. There has also been a much-needed shift in importance from 'treatment of insomnia' to 'prevention of sleep disorders and maintenance of good sleep health'. The array of consequences of sleep disruption range from irritability to poor academic and work performance to being triggers for major mental illnesses and suicides. The impact of these are equally (if not more) significant in children and adolescents as in adults. Sleep disorders in children have ramifications in three aspects: the sleep disorder in itself and the distress due to it; the long-term impacts it has on the child's or adolescent's academics, schooling, physical activity, emotional regulation, risk-taking behaviour and effect on comorbid illnesses which could be physical or mental and the impact of family behaviour on the child's sleep and vice-versa. Let us see what the statistics say about paediatric sleep disorders. Around 80% of the child and adolescent population worldwide have sleep disorders or complaints related to sleep. Persistent sleep difficulties in childhood predict psychiatric problems in adult life and sleep deprivation also increases health complaints in children. Crucially, parental stress related to the behavioural problems in sleep-deprived children can affect their mental and/or physical well being

There are two main types of sleep disorders: primary sleep disorders and secondary sleep disorders, which have consequences of physical or mental illnesses or drug abuse. Primary sleep disorders seen in child and the adolescent population present in various forms. Insomnia, which is defined as persistent reduction in total sleep duration or poor quality of sleep is one. Hypersomnia, which is an increase in sleep duration is another. Parasomnias are undesirable physical events or experiences that occur during entry into sleep, within sleep or during arousal from sleep. There are also sleep-related breathing disorders and sleep-related movement disorders like restless leg syndrome and nocturnal teeth grinding. This apart, there are disorders of the sleep-wake cycle. All these conditions impact sleep in terms of duration and/or quality of sleep.

What is insomnia?

Insomnia can present in the form of difficulty in falling asleep, bedtime resistance, frequent nighttime awakenings, imposed sleep restrictions, unrefreshed sleep and/or poor sleep hygiene persisting over three months. The risk factors for insomnia include: predisposition to mental or physical illnesses; stressors like difficult home or family situations, safety concerns or domestic abuse; poor limit-setting by parents which may cause bedtime stalling or refusal; environmental factors like cramped sleeping conditions, lack of a conducive temperature; sleep difficulties or poor sleep hygiene in parents and excessive use of technology especially in the form of screens. Strategies that can be implemented by family members to help the child with insomnia include identifying the stressors; try to eliminate or alleviate them and initiate good sleep habits. Sleep hygiene is a set of practices that helps individuals sleep better. These include creating conducive and optimal bedroom or bedtime conditions; restriction of screens, beverages and water intake a few hours prior to bedtime; maintaining consistent bedtime

routine; a consistent sleep schedule; regular physical activity; restriction of daytime naps and most importantly, role-modelling healthy sleep habits. If the symptoms of insomnia persist or continue to be problematic, it is best to consult a pediatric sleep expert at the earliest.

What is obstructive sleep-disordered breathing?

This disorder is characterised by snoring and laboured breathing due to a partial blockage of the air passages within the body. The symptoms include nighttime snoring, excessive daytime sleepiness, bedwetting, morning headaches, restless sleep and irritability during the day. The obstruction of the air passages in children is commonly due to tonsils or adenoid enlargement or obesity. The risk factors for this disorder include obesity, exposure to passive cigarette smoke and poor air quality. Steps that can be taken by parents include measures to alleviate risk factors and a consultation with an expert.

What is a nightmare disorder?

This is a type of parasomnia where the child has frequent, vivid and distressing dreams, which often result in awakenings. This disorder is usually the result of a stress in the form of a recent psychosocial issue or a major event that may even lead to diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Family members can do quite a bit to help these children by consistently reassuring the child, avoiding negative associations or responses to the symptoms, encouraging sleep hygiene especially by restricting TV viewing before bedtime. They can also help by re-scripting or reframing the content/plot of the nightmare. Rarely, such children may require therapy and medication.

What is sleep enuresis?

Sleep enuresis or bedwetting is considered normal from infancy up until toddlerhood. However, its persistence after the age of five years qualifies for a diagnosis and needs medical attention. In some cases, children who may have been previously dry by night (for more than 6 months) may resume bedwetting, and this is called secondary enuresis. This disorder is more frequently seen in girls than boys until the age of 11. This disorder is also highly under-reported due to social stigma and a lack of awareness. The risk factors for this illness include a history of similar symptoms in parents, urinary tract infections, excessive evening fluid intake and stress in the form of parental divorce, neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse. The psychological consequences of bedwetting range from self-esteem issues, feelings of guilt and shame, social anxiety and isolation, frequent nighttime awakenings, depressive symptoms and significant family conflicts. Parental strategies for managing bed-wetting start with understanding and recognising the problem followed by help-seeking. This step is often the most crucial and decisive in the management of this problem. The next steps would be: forming a plan, in collaboration with the child, for reduction of fluids before bedtime, encouraging daytime urination, preventing daytime restriction of urination (a malady frequently seen in young girls wanting to avoid public toilets), avoiding negative responses to the symptoms and refraining from punishments. Parents can also instate an alarm system by which the child is encouraged to use the toilet during bed hours. As we can see, the steps require a lot of effort and dedication from the parents; however the results have been shown to be rewarding. Last but not the least, seek professional help when the symptoms begin to interfere with the child's day-to-day functioning. Sleep disorders secondary to psychiatric disorders

Sleep is frequently disrupted in children with psychiatric disorders and neurodevelopmental disorders. Anxiety and depressive disorders are commonly associated with delays in sleep onset and frequent nighttime awakenings, sometimes with nightmares. Restlessness and bedtime tantrums are frequently seen in children with neurodevelopmental disorders like intellectual disabilities, ADHD and autism. These sleep disorders may resolve with the adequate management of the primary psychiatric diagnosis and relevant therapy. In corollary, improvement in sleep difficulties positively impacts the symptoms of the primary psychiatric disorder.

Sleep disorders secondary to medical conditions Many physical conditions have profound effects on children's sleep. Common conditions like gastro-oesophageal reflux disorder (GERD) where a child has the frequent re-entry of stomach content into the oesophagus may disrupt the child's sleep. Migraines or other pain syndromes affect the onset and maintenance of sleep while seizures may lead to nighttime awakenings. Adequate management of the primary illness helps in reduction of sleep difficulties. Paediatric sleep health as a branch of medicine is still in its nascent stages, however, raising awareness about this is paramount, and the need of the hour. In this digital era, when forces to disrupt sleep are overwhelming, we must learn to prioritise sleep and instil healthy sleep habits in our children, who are our future.

Call for ‘sampoorna kranti’ shook Indira govt: How a semi-retired Jayaprakash Narayan stirred student protests into a storm



The JP Movement which began 51 years ago this month left an indelible mark on the country, shaping the course of not only Bihar but also national politics as it paved the way for an alternative to the Congress's dominance. In Bihar, the imprint of the movement led by socialist icon Jayaprakash Narayan is illustrated by the fact that two of its products, Lalu Prasad and Nitish Kumar, have governed the state for 35 years, with only Jitan Ram Manjhi providing a brief nine-month break in between. While Prasad, the RJD supremo, has transferred leadership duties to his son and Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Tejashwi Prasad Yadav, Kumar, the Bihar CM and JD(U) chief, continues to be a crucial player in state politics on the strength of his political constituency that he has meticulously cultivated on the back of a social justice agenda combined with development. As Bihar goes to the polls later this year, leaders in both the socialist and NDA camps moulded by the JP Movement continue to be at the thick of things in Bihar.

While the defining moment of this important chapter of Indian political history is JP's "Sampoorna Kranti" call from Patna's Gandhi Maidan on June 5, 1974, the seed of the movement was planted a few months earlier when, on March 18, students gheraoed the Bihar Assembly. The protests against the then Congress-led state government of Abdul Ghafoor were over high college fees, bus fares, and alleged mismanagement of university administration. They came at a time of high poverty, challenges on the economic front, and allegations of corruption and nepotism against the Indira Gandhi government that had started mounting right after her win in 1971.

The late Sushil Kumar Modi, former Deputy CM and another product of the JP Movement, once told this correspondent, "Though it was a students' movement, some young leaders such as me were backing it. When the 5-km protest march started from the Science College to the Vidhan Sabha, there were barely 30-odd people. But as we started walking, the crowd started building up spontaneously. When we reached Vidhan Sabha, there was a surging crowd of thousands of people. The government was caught unawares and the police had to open lathicharge." There were incidents of arson during the protest — the printing presses of two newspapers were torched — and three students were killed. As the situation looked to spiral out of control, some students and young leaders, including Modi and Shivanand Tiwari (later a Rajya Sabha MP), approached JP at his home in Patna's Kadamkuan locality to request him to lead the movement. Though the veteran socialist had been away from active politics for over two decades, the month before, he had visited college students in Gujarat whose protests were triggered by mess fee hikes.

According to activist K N Govindacharya, the veteran leader was angry with the students over the violence, but calmed down when he was told that the miscreants were not from among them. According to Govindacharya, on April 8, JP addressed a meeting of students in Patna and placed a few conditions before them, including that they wouldn't engage in any kind of violence. The students agreed and JP came to lead the movement. By then, JP engaging with the students had alarmed Gandhi who, at a public meeting in Bhubaneswar on April 1, labelled him a "fascist" and accused him of walking on the path of "violence". At Gandhi Maidan on June 5, 1974 Then came the Gandhi Maidan meeting and the "Sampoorna Kranti" call in which JP demanded changes on all fronts, from the economic and social to the political. Recalling the meeting, former MLC and socialist litterateur Prem Kumar Mani told The Indian Express, "I was in the audience at Gandhi Maidan that had not seen such a crowd before that. There was no bridge over the Ganga in those days, and yet, people arrived using whatever means of transport they could find. JP, sitting in a chair, talked of 'Sampoorna Kranti', adding it was nothing but the 'sapta kranti (seven revolutions framework)' of Dr Rammanohar Lohia." JP also invoked Jawaharlal Nehru to drive home his point. "I am not going to use angry language. But what I am going to say will contain the ideas of a revolutionary. It will not be easy to act upon them. You will have to make sacrifices, undergo sufferings, face lathis and bullets, fill up jails. Properties will be attached. Friends, this is a revolution, a total revolution. This is not a movement, not merely for the dissolution of the Assembly. We have to go far, very far. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, the people have still to travel many long miles to achieve that freedom for which thousands of the country's youths made sacri-

fices, for which Sardar Bhagat Singh and his comrades, revolutionaries of Bengal, of Maharashtra, of the whole country were shot dead or were hanged to death. Millions of countrymen filled the jails again and again to attain freedom, but after 27 years of that freedom, the people are groaning. Hunger, soaring prices and corruption stalk everywhere. The people are being crushed under all sorts of injustice. Educational institutions are corrupt. Thousands of youths face a bleak future. Unemployment goes on increasing. The poor get less and less work."

In their book The Dream of Revolution, Bimal Prasad and Sujata Prasad quote JP as saying, "Dissent is not just an intellectual luxury but a necessary catalytic agent to which society owes its progress, its revolution, and its technological and scientific advances. Without dissent, society would become stagnant and moribund." As the political situation continued to simmer, JP's call for another public meeting in Patna on November 4 made Gandhi open a communication channel with him, and three days before the rally, the two met in Delhi. As per JP's account, the meeting lasted 90 minutes, with Babu Jagjivan Ram, the Deputy PM, joining towards the end. While the PM requested him not to hold the rally, JP demanded the dismissal of the Ghafoor government and drew her attention to the mishandling of democratic institutions. The talks broke down and as JP went ahead with the rally, the Centre deployed paramilitary forces in Patna. During a lathicharge, JP narrowly escaped injury when Jana Sangh leader Nanaji Deshmukh shielded him. This incident further angered the protesters. Following his failed attempt to bring about a reconciliation between JP and Gandhi, Chandra Shekhar, who later became PM, wrote in his weekly Young Indian, "JP is not fighting for political power; he cannot be defeated by deploying state power. Mani said JP, honoured with the moniker Lok Nayak (People's Hero), had also tried to make a point against Gandhi when, in the latter half of 1974, he got her cousin Nayantara Sahgal, the daughter of Vijayalakshmi Pandit, to attend one of his public meetings. The situation in Gujarat took a sharp turn starting in March 1975 after Morarji Desai undertook hunger strikes in support of the Nav Nirman movement of the students in Gujarat and calling for fresh elections in the state. Things came to a head on June 12, when the Allahabad High Court set aside Gandhi's election from Rae Bareilly in 1971, acting on a petition of socialist leader Raj Narain. This led to JP intensifying the movement and he met the national committees of the Akali Dal, the Congress (Organisation), and the Lok Dal, all of whom called on Gandhi to resign as PM. The non-Congress and non-Left parties held a public meeting on June 12 at the Ramlila Maidan in Delhi, but JP could not attend it as his flight was diverted. He, however, was not deterred and called another meeting at the same venue two days later. "Information had reached the Prime Minister that Jayaprakash Narayan was to hold a mammoth rally at the Ramlila Maidan in Delhi on June 25 at which he was going to ask the armed forces and the police to revolt and disobey orders, which they did not consider lawful," Union Minister Ram Nath Thakur, the eldest son of former Bihar CM Karpoori Thakur, told Gandhi's biographer Pupil Jayakar has written that on being confronted with the escalating situation, the PM told her key advisor and West Bengal CM Siddhartha Shankar Ray, "Siddhartha, we cannot allow this. I want something done. I feel that India is like a baby and just as one should sometimes take a child and shake it. I feel we need to shake India." Within hours of Emergency being imposed on June 25, top Opposition leaders, including JP, Morarji Desai, Raj Narain, Chandra Shekhar, Pilo Mody, Ashok Mehta, and L K Advani, were jailed. So were the many young leaders who had stood with JP and were shaped in the cauldron of those turbulent times. Among them were Lalu, Nitish, Ram Vilas Paswan, Ravi Shankar Prasad, Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Narendra Singh, Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, and Jagdanand Singh. "While Lalu Prasad and Sushil Kumar Modi had been at the forefront of the JP Movement, Nitish Kumar also joined it at a later stage. After Emergency was imposed, the movement got only bigger, even though most of the student leaders and Opposition politicians were arrested post-Emergency," said Mani. Recalling his memories of the JP Movement, RJD's Shivanand Tiwari told The Indian Express, "When I had attended the March 18 protest outside the Assembly, I had no idea that this was the beginning of a movement that would make history. Fifty years down the line, we see how the movement yielded rich dividends, with socialists still holding the fort in Bihar."

National Institute of Virology develops portable kit for rapid Nipah virus detection

New Delhi: India will now be able to detect the Nipah virus within minutes as the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune, under the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), has developed a portable 'point-of-care' test kit for detecting the virus. This kit can provide instant results even outside laboratory settings and will be deployed soon in high-risk areas like Kerala and West Bengal, Dr Naveen Kumar, the director of NIV, said. "We have developed a LAMP-based portable kit for quick and reliable detection of the Nipah virus. It provides results in just a few minutes without the need for a laboratory. The kit has also been patented," Dr Kumar said. The Nipah virus primarily spreads through fruit bats and has caused several outbreaks in India. With a mortality rate exceeding 50 per cent, it is one of the most lethal viral dis-

eases. In India, the capability to culture the Nipah virus exists only at NIV Pune, where genomic analysis, vaccine development, and drug testing are also carried out, said Dr Pragya Yadav, senior scientist at NIV. The NIV is working with a pharma company and research partners to develop monoclonal antibodies to treat Nipah. Additionally, the institute is also working on an indigenous vaccine for the Nipah virus, which is expected to enter trial phases in the coming years. According to data, the Nipah virus samples found in India so far belong to the 'Genotype B' category, seen in both Bangladesh and India, Dr Kumar said. This variant spreads rapidly and causes severe symptoms, whereas the Malaysian variant (Genotype M) is comparatively less infectious.

In T.N., where dengue cases hit 26,000 this year, tracking every case, forecasting outbreaks is helping prevent deaths

In 2024, over 26,000 cases of dengue were recorded in Tamil Nadu. Public health officials attribute this rise to improved surveillance, increased testing, and the bringing in of more private hospitals under a daily reporting system, thereby ensuring that all cases were counted. As of December 26, Tamil Nadu has recorded 26,740 cases of dengue and 13 deaths according to data from the Directorate of Public Health (DPH) and Preventive Medicine. A closer look at the year-wise dengue infection trends in the State showed that this was the highest number of cases to be registered since 2012. The last time the State recorded over 20,000 cases was in 2017, when there were 23,294 cases. However, unlike in 2017 when 65 deaths had occurred, the number of deaths has remained low in 2024.

What is dengue?

Dengue is a viral infection transmitted to humans through the bite of infected mosquitoes. About half of the world's population is now at risk of dengue with an estimated 100–400 million infections occurring each year. While many dengue infections are asymptomatic or produce only mild illness, the virus can occasionally cause more severe cases, and even death. Prevention and control of dengue depend on vector control. There is no specific treatment for dengue/severe dengue, and early detection and access to proper medical care greatly lower fatality rates of severe dengue. Source: WHO Cases throughout the year

In fact, public health officials, who took up a retrospective study of dengue cases in T.N. from 2012 to 2023 and published their findings in an article, 'Prevention and control strategies to counter the dengue cyclical trend in Tamil Nadu', in the Tamil Nadu Journal of Public Health and Medical Research earlier this year, noted that dengue cases were identified throughout the year with an increase in incidence during monsoon. Since 2012, there were two peaks: one in 2012



itself (13,204 cases and 66 deaths) and the other in 2017. "This year, we focussed on improving surveillance for dengue. We ensured that more reporting units were brought under the system. We brought in compulsory reporting of cases on a daily basis, and included private hospitals as well. The idea was to pick up cases as early as possible to prevent deaths. So, while the initial rise in cases was manageable, we stepped up surveillance to ensure that no case went unreported. This way, we did not miss out on cases," said T. S. Selvavinayagam, Director of Public Health and Preventive Medicine. Increased surveillance helped in preventing deaths due to dengue, he said, adding: "Now, we are seeing dengue cases throughout the year. We observed that there was no cluster of cases this year. Cases were reported randomly from across the State." Ensuring that private hospitals reported cases on a daily basis helped surveillance to a large extent. "The number of tests performed also increased. So, the dengue positivity also increased. The aim was to prevent deaths," a health officer said.

Private capex not showing robust signs of revival, says MPC’s Ram Singh



Private investment in India is not showing robust signs of revival, according to Ram Singh, an external member on the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC). According to Singh, several metrics such as capital expenditure as a ratio of net operating margin, bank credit to corporates, and debt-to-equity are lower than what is required for 7-8 per cent growth. It was in this context the MPC cut the policy repo rate by 50 basis points (bps) to 5.50 per cent on June 6, as a broad-based pick-up in demand is needed for private investment to pick up. In an interview with Siddharth Upasani, Singh – Director of Delhi School of Economics – also discussed the future course of monetary policy and the outlook for growth and inflation, among other subjects.

The MPC’s decision on June 6 to tighten its stance to neutral while cutting the repo rate by 50 bps led to some confusion. Has the decision to shift the stance so quickly added to the uncertainty? Our decisions were guided by data and domestic priorities. Since the April meeting of the MPC, inflation prints have turned out to be significantly better than forecast, lowering the expected headline inflation rate to 3.7 per cent. Food price inflation is also expected to remain moderate. This created a unique opportunity for us to plan ahead and think of how much of a rate cut is possible in this cycle. Our and market’s assessment was that there is enough room for a 50 bps cut in this cycle. The only question was whether we go for a 50 bps cut in one go or stagger it. Given that the actual inflation prints were lower than expected and a more-than-benign outlook, timely onset of monsoon, and stable commodity prices outlook, MPC decided to go for a 50 bps cut to boost demand and growth.

Urban demand and demand for housing, vehicles, and other goods that are sensitive to interest rates are not at a level we would like them to be. Due to this, private capex is not showing robust signs of revival. Private capex as a ratio of the net operating margin remains low. The pace of banking credit to corporates is another indicator. In recent times, corporate debt has seen very little increase. So, the debt-to-equity ratio has been falling. Companies have chosen to use their cash not as a leverage to make investments in production lines but to distribute it as dividend or invest in some form of equity. Whichever way you look at it, private capex remains low compared to what is required for a 7-8 per cent growth rate. It is in this context that we thought of delivering a 50 bps cut. A pick up in broad-based demand is required for private investment to pick up. The MPC’s decision to change stance was needed in view of the persistent and heightened tariff related uncertainty and the highly fluid geopolitical scenario. The neutral stance gives the RBI an additional degree of freedom to respond to unforeseen contingencies. Depending on the situation, the MPC has the option of pausing, decreasing, or hiking the rates. In fact, the events post June 6, specifically the Iran-Israel conflict and concerns over the Strait of Hormuz, underscore the utility of the neutral stance. In your statement in the minutes of the meeting, you said there is scope for a 75 bps cut in this cycle without overheating the economy. Does that mean there is still room for a 25 bps cut despite the change in stance and what has happened globally since June 6? The change in stance does not mean it’s the end of the rate cutting cycle and that rate hikes are next. Even after considering the recent geopolitical situation and its possible impact on oil, gold, and fertiliser prices, headline inflation this fiscal year is likely to remain in the comfort zone of below 4 per cent. However, having reduced the repo rate by 100 bps in the span of six months, from now on we have to be cautious on account of a fluid geopolitical situation

and uncertainty over tariffs. Also, we have to assess the pace and extent of transmission of rate cuts for borrowers and investors. Therefore, the MPC must look at the incoming data carefully while taking a call on interest rates. Here, the market – especially the bond market – has overreacted. A neutral stance does not take away the freedom of interest rates remaining the same or of a further cut; it only gives us one more degree of freedom. If something unexpected happens 1-2 months down the line, we already have the comfort of having reduced interest rates substantially. So, the idea was to add a degree of freedom to the RBI’s choices. It is not even an indication of the likelihood of rates going up. Those odds do not change. It’s just that given the order of uncertainty, an additional degree of freedom is not a bad idea.

Since June 6, we have seen inflation fall to 2.82 per cent in May. Economists expect it to fall to maybe 2-2.1 per cent in June. Are these the sort of conditions which create room for further easing?

In spite of global headwinds, we have a cushion of around \$700 billion in terms of foreign exchange reserves. And except for gold and petrol, the outlook for commodity prices is fairly benign. The RBI’s inflation forecast is 3.7 per cent for 2025-26. If actual prints support a lower inflation forecast, it will generate additional elbowroom for rate cuts, certainly. Or, if we observe any stress on the growth front, that will also be a consideration.

Where do you see growth faltering? Or is it just private capex and urban demand that are concerns at the moment?

These two and the developments on the exports front. I would like to add that I am optimistic about achieving 6.5 per cent growth this year. I expect the base effect to be favourable. Last year, growth rate in the first half was slower as the Centre could not meet its infrastructure investment targets on account of elections. As the public investment pace is at an all-time high, in the first half of this financial year I would expect growth to pick up on this count. In the latter half of the year, if credit growth picks up as we are hoping, that should put us in a comfortable zone vis-à-vis the 6.5 per cent forecast.

You said in your statement in the minutes that GDP growth is below the aspiration of 7-8 per cent. Is that range in line with your estimate of India’s potential growth rate? Yes, we are capable of clocking 7-8 per cent growth rate. Ipso facto. If you look at the last 10-11 years, the growth rate has been 6.8 per cent or higher in eight years. Excluding the Covid years – 2019-20 to 2021-22 – the average turns out to be well above 7 per cent. That shows we have the potential to grow at least at 6.5 per cent, if not more.

During the last several years, core inflation has been less than the headline inflation, so capital goods inflation has been noticeably less than the GDP deflator. This, in turn, means that real investment as a ratio of real GDP is higher than what is claimed in the common discourse. The Centre’s massive investment in infrastructure and logistics and technological advances have significantly boosted productivity of capital. Due to increased productivity, you need only half the capital to produce an additional unit of output. According to reports, ICOR (Incremental Capital Output Ratio) – which was 7.5 in 2011-12 – was 4.4 in 2022-23. All this makes me confident that we have the potential to grow at more than 7 per cent, with monetary policy providing a supportive hand.

You also mentioned in the minutes that banks’ Net Interest Margins (NIMs) coming under pressure could be neutralised by other policy instruments of the RBI. Does the RBI and MPC need to look at banks’ profitability?

I agree that the RBI should not be too worried about a fall in banks’ NIMs. However, banks are very important in our economy as we do not have a rich bond market. The equity market is also developing. So, it’s important to keep banks’ interests in mind. If banks feel that transmission of rate cuts is going to pressure their NIMs, there can be attempts to delay, stagger, or undermine the transmission process. Therefore, the RBI’s decision to reduce the Cash Reserve Ratio by 1 percentage point is a prudent decision. As banks will have more capital to lend and make money, now the impact of rate cuts on NIMs should not be a reason why they delay or undercut the transmission process.

Bridging the disconnect between clinical perception and lived experience: the need for a holistic approach to vitiligo

Vitiligo, a chronic dermatological disorder caused by the autoimmune destruction of melanocytes, leads to patches of depigmented skin. Though it poses no direct risk to physical health, its impact on mental, emotional, and social well-being can be deeply disruptive. In clinical settings, vitiligo is still largely treated as a pigmentary issue — a condition of the skin. But for the millions who live with it, the reality is far more complex. In appearance-conscious societies like India, where prevalence rates of vitiligo range from 3% to 8.8%, and where fairness and symmetry are often conflated with beauty, credibility, and even professional competence, visible skin differences such as vitiligo invite intense scrutiny, stigma, and bias. What is routinely dismissed as a “cosmetic” concern becomes, for many, a daily struggle for dignity. This disconnect between clinical perception and lived experience lies at the heart of vitiligo care and is precisely why a holistic approach is not optional but essential.

For individuals with vitiligo, everyday life is often shaped by an unspoken but relentless social gaze. Whether it is unsolicited advice, insensitive remarks, or assumptions of contagion, the emotional costs run deep. Many patients internalise this scrutiny, leading to lasting feelings of embarrassment, social withdrawal, and persistent anxiety. A recent study involving 430 government employees with vitiligo—published in the Annals of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery—offers a sobering look into this reality. Using four validated psychological tools, the study captured the overwhelming emotional and social burden carried by patients. The majority reported a severe decline in quality of life, with over 80% experiencing significant disruption to daily functioning, and more than half struggling to process or express emotions (a condition known as alexithymia). Every participant reported feelings of embarrassment, frustration, social isolation, and sexual dysfunction, revealing just how deeply vitiligo affects personal and psychological well-being.

The burden was greatest for those with lesions on visible areas like the face and hands, and even more pronounced among rural individuals and those with darker skin tones, who encountered heightened stigma and discrimination. For those in public-facing professions—such as teachers, civil servants, and police officers—the impact can be career-altering. Many expressed fears of being judged as less competent, missing out on promotions, or being unfairly evaluated based on appearance rather than merit. In such environments, vitiligo becomes more than a medical diagnosis; it becomes a barrier to professional growth and personal dignity.

Perhaps most troubling were the emotional consequences: feelings of helplessness, low self-worth, and in some cases, suicidal ideation. That a non-life-threatening skin condition could drive someone to such despair reveals a stark truth—it is not the disease, but society’s reaction to it, that causes the deepest wounds.

Also Read: Harnessing the gut microbiome to halt vitiligo patches

Why conventional treatment falls short Most vitiligo treatments today focus on stopping further pigment loss and helping restore skin colour. Common approaches include medicated creams, light therapy (NB-UVB), and more recently, a new class of medicines called JAK inhibitors. Among these, ruxolitinib, a topical JAK inhibitor, has shown promising results in helping re-pigment the skin, especially in milder or localised cases. Some studies also suggest that combining these creams with light therapy can improve outcomes even further. While these treatments mark real progress, they are still evolving—and questions remain about how best to use them long-term and how much they improve a patient’s overall well-being. What is clear is that while medical therapies are essential, they address only part of the picture. For vitiligo patients, real healing also means support for the emotional and social challenges that come with the condition. Even if the white patches shrink,



the social stigma, emotional residue, and internalised shame often remain untouched. Patients report that the psychological scars take longer to heal than the skin itself. This is where conventional treatment hits a ceiling — and why holistic care must step in. Holistic care recognises that well-being is not confined to visible improvement. It acknowledges the interplay between dermatological health and mental health, and it insists that both be treated with equal seriousness. Without addressing the psychosocial dimensions of vitiligo, we risk producing technically successful but emotionally incomplete outcomes. What holistic care for vitiligo must include

A truly holistic approach does not abandon medical treatment — it expands upon it. It demands a multi-disciplinary model that includes: Routine psychological screening alongside dermatological dAccess to counselling and emotional support during and after treatment Patient education programmes that empower individuals to understand and cope with their condition Support groups and peer communities, both in-person and digital, that foster solidarity and reduce isolation Workplace and institutional sensitisation, especially in the government, healthcare, and education sectors Training for dermatologists and general practitioners to identify and address psychological distress early Critically, holistic care also involves listening to patients, not just tracking pigment but also asking: How do you feel? Are you socially active? Are you facing discrimination? The systemic shift we must make There is a deeper truth beneath the surface of all of this: vitiligo is not just a skin disorder, it is a social and psychological condition, shaped as much by biology as by the environment in which the patient lives. That means the solutions, too, must be systemic. Healthcare policies should mandate integrated care models. Public health campaigns must work to dismantle myths and reduce stigma. And medical education must evolve to reflect the biopsychosocial nature of conditions like vitiligo. This is especially important in countries like India, where large segments of the population still lack access to mental healthcare, and where societal attitudes toward skin differences are still shaped by outdated ideas of purity, caste, and aesthetics. Healing beyond the skin The demand for holistic care in vitiligo is not a theoretical ideal; it is a real, grounded, and urgent necessity. As clinicians, researchers, and policymakers, we owe it to our patients to address their condition in full, not just the parts that show up on the skin. To heal vitiligo is not merely to restore pigment. It is to restore dignity, rebuild confidence, and affirm the humanity of every individual navigating life with this visible difference. Only when we begin to treat the whole person and not just the skin they live in, will we truly be able to call it care.

In era of AI, ‘chalta hai’ attitude towards data quality won’t work: Niti Aayog CEO

Calling for greater focus on ensuring high-quality data, Niti Aayog Chief Executive Officer BVR Subrahmanyam on Tuesday said a ‘chalta hai’ attitude will not work especially in the era of artificial intelligence (AI) where data is used as an input. “India is heavy as far as digitalisation is concerned. We have got the JAM (Jan Dhan Yojna, Aadhar, mobile) trinity, UPI, the account aggregator framework, ONDC. India is one of the leaders in the world in applying digital technologies in day-to-day life... If UPI had been invented 40 years ago, three big companies wouldn’t have existed: Visa, Mastercard, and American Express.”

“So, India has a fantastic foundation to take a futuristic leap. But the problem is that this ‘chalta hai’ attitude, where we are OK with things which are 80 per cent OK, a first division, or a distinction... The problem with data is that it has to be 100 per cent (correct).” Subrahmanyam said at the release of a Niti Aayog report titled India’s Data Imperative: The Pivot Towards Quality. Citing his past work as a joint secretary in the Prime Minister’s Office on the disbursement of LPG subsidies under the PAHAL scheme, Subrahmanyam said even if 95 per cent of transfers were successful, 5 per cent bouncing back would mean lakhs of people would not get the subsidy. “In India, we can’t go by percentages; we will have to go to the Japanese quality level of 0.0001 per cent. That is the level you need... That’s where data quality becomes important.” “We are now entering the era of AI. We are mining data to get intelligent inputs. But if our data is bad — anyway a lot of these things hallucinate — then they will hallucinate on bad data, which is even worse. So, data quality is extremely important. We need to move from good enough to high confidence. We need to be very confident about the quality of data that is there,” he added. ‘Victim of data’ In its report, the Niti Aayog highlighted the problems caused by even small errors, such as pensions getting blocked due to a single wrong digit during Aadhaar enrolment. Subrahmanyam cited his own name as an example, which did not conform to the first name-second name format, and said he was a “victim of data”.

“No two things which I have, have the same name; somewhere it is BVR Subrahmanyam, somewhere it is Bhamidipati. So my demat account is currently locked. Half my bank accounts are locked because I can’t do KYC. My Aadhaar does not match my government ID, my government ID does not match my pensioner card. Believe it or not, as many IDs I have, I have as many bank accounts,” the Niti CEO said. “It is digital death if you have one item



According to a Niti Aayog report released on Tuesday, the six attributes of ‘good’ data are accuracy, completeness, consistency, timeliness, validity, and uniqueness.

wrongly fit. In the modern world, you are dead because everything is transacted online.” The report said incorrect entries had to be stopped through automated checks and standard pick-lists, with every high-value dataset requiring a specific ‘steward’ with the authority to correct and improve records on a constant basis. Further, to ensure the seamless movement of data across agencies, a common framework for people, places, and programmes needs to be adopted. “Together, these three practices turn today’s fragmented information into a reliable asset that analytics, AI, and service delivery can use without sacrificing trust,” the report said, adding that ‘good’ data should be accurate, complete, consistent, timely, valid, and unique. Statistics ministry’s efforts

Speaking at the launch of the Niti report, Saurabh Garg, Secretary in the Ministry of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), said the ministry had last week met 30 other ministries on the issue of data quality. “We are focusing a lot more on what has been traditionally called administrative data... That data can really help if we are able to ensure that it is interoperable, that it is harmonised in the sense that it follows certain basic structures so that citizens’ delivery of services improves,”

The troubled waters of Godavari

A fresh row has erupted between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh over the Polavaram-Banakacherla Link Project. The project, which will divert 200 tmc ft of Godavari water to the Krishna and Penna basins, aims to provide drinking and irrigation water to the drought-hit Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. The Andhra Pradesh government has already submitted the pre-feasibility report on the project to the Central Water Commission (CWC). The CWC has now asked the State to now furnish a detailed project report (DPR). In addition, the Centre has offered to fund 50% of the total cost of the project, which is an estimated ₹80,000 crore, as part of the interlinking of rivers; the remaining will be financed through borrowing beyond the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) limits. This has upset Telangana as the Centre had reduced the State’s borrowing limits under the FRBM Act citing the State’s off-budget borrowings to complete the Kaleshwaram project on time.

Both the Congress, which is in power in Telangana, and the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), which is in the Opposition, believe that the project violates the State’s riparian rights regarding Godavari waters as well as the provisions of Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014. But the two parties are also busy blaming each other for “allowing” Andhra Pradesh to plan the project. The other significant Opposition party in the State — the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) — has remained largely silent. This is possibly because the BJP government at the Centre has the support of the Telugu Desam Party, the ruling party of Andhra Pradesh. This, the Telangana government believes, has given the Andhra Pradesh government the advantage of getting things done with quick approvals from the Centre.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and Minister for Irrigation N. Uttam Kumar Reddy squarely blamed the previous BRS government for Andhra Pradesh’s decision to take up the Godavari diversion project. They cited the first apex council meeting of September 21, 2016, as evidence. That was when the then Chief Minister, K. Chandrasekhar Rao, had stated that 3,000 tmc ft of Godavari water discharges into the sea on average annually and could instead be utilised if there was an “understanding” between the two States. The BRS objected to this argument saying Mr. Rao had also “raised objections over the diversion of water from the Godavari to the Krishna without prior consultation of Telangana” during the same apex council meeting. Former Minister for Irrigation, T. Harish Rao, said that the Congress is deliberately misleading the people. He alleged that Andhra Pradesh was conspiring to divert Godavari waters to claim rights on it in the future by seeking re-allocation of water by the Godavari Water Disputes Tribunal. He termed the Con-



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gress government’s “soft approach” to the project as a “mortgaging of Telangana’s water rights” and said that this was “Mr. Revanth Reddy’s ‘gurudakshina’ to his political mentor N. Chandrababu Naidu”. Mr. Rao said that just as the late Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy had diverted Krishna waters from Srisailem to the non-basin (Penna) areas by expanding the Pothireddypadu Head Regulator, now Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu was diverting Godavari waters at the cost of Telangana’s riparian rights. Mr. Naidu emphasised that the project is essential. Arguing that the Godavari has ample surplus water, he asked why Telangana should object to the use of water that was anyway flowing into the sea. The BRS in turn demanded to know why the Andhra Pradesh government had objected to the Kaleshwaram project if ample water was indeed available in the Godavari. The President of the Telangana Retired Engineers’ Association, M. Shyamprasad Reddy, suggested that the Centre carry out the appraisal of the Polavaram-Banakacherla Link Project only after protecting the rights of the people of Telangana by giving permissions/clearances/approvals to all the ongoing and contemplated projects in the Godavari basin. The former chief engineer also suggested that the Centre additionally allocate more than 200 tmc ft of water in the Krishna basin in lieu of the diversion of Godavari water to other basins. Water-sharing is a sensitive issue and is linked to the economy and regional sentiments. The Centre would do well to be as unbiased as possible when dealing with inter-State water disputes.

How the game ebbed and flowed towards an England stroll



GNS News Agency, July 2

During the 78th over of the England innings, skipper Shubman Gill and his trump card, Jasprit Bumrah, were having a long chat at mid-on. Bowler Shardul Thakur and batsman Joe Root were waiting for their conversation to get over. With the new ball due in a couple of overs, England on 341/5, needed only 29 to win. It didn't seem Bumrah, who had already bowled about 45 overs in the game, would take the red cherry. India seemed to have given up after a long intense game. Mohammed Siraj took the new ball and conceded 6 runs. Spinner Ravindra Jadeja bowled the second and gave away 18. Wicket-keeper Jamie Smith hit a six over wide long-on to take England past 371. It was expected to be a steep chase and a tight finish but England's modern-day batting buccaneers, with methodical plans, ensured it was neither.

Ben Duckett (149) and Zak Crawley (64) who had an imposing opening stand of 188-1, under very difficult conditions in the first session, had set the stage. Later Joe Root (53 not out) and Ben Stokes (33) offered the finishing touches. That wasn't how it looked at tea. Before the final session, finally after seven batsmen had hit centuries, five bowlers had conceded more than hundred runs, close to 10 catches were dropped, with one five-wicket haul and several rain stoppages, England needed 102 runs in about 37 overs to win the opening Test of the series against India at Headingley.

At the crease were the present and former England skippers – Stokes and Root – veterans of many impossible chases, the brain trust of England's famous aggressive Bazball brand of cricket. Stopping the home chase to 371 in the fourth inning was a young Indian captain Shubman Gill keen to make an early impression. There were characters, a riveting plot and context too. But still there was no drama. The suspense saga ended about a couple of hours later. England recorded a five wicket win. As they celebrated, India would be ruing the missed chances, thinking of going back to the drawing board and mulling over ways to bounce back. The fight for the inaugural Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy, two greats known for their battles of fine margins, had seen a game that went into the last session on Day 5. The home team's win coming from a steep chase meant ticket sales for the rest of the rounds at Birmingham, Lord's, Manchester and The Oval have picked up. That's what the suits were discussing loudly.

From the start of the day, from the pundits to the casual fans, everyone knew that the result of the Test would

be determined by the way in which the English batsmen negotiated Jasprit Bumrah when the ball was new and countered fourth-innings destroyer Ravindra Jadeja when it got old. Both are among the most challenging cricketing puzzles. On a largely overcast day, Bumrah was to be the tougher task but the England openers were measured in their chase. At 11 am when the game started, England, 21/0 overnight, needed 350 to win. They didn't go for a flying start or got bogged down by playing through Bumrah and went for the slog later. They didn't just look to survive, even when Bumrah bowled, but scored when needed.

Indian bowling, except Bumrah, didn't seem to have learnt from their mistakes in the first innings. Siraj did have energy early in the first session, when he troubled the batsmen with seam movement. But he wasn't consistent with this length. The performance of the other two pacers, Prasidh Krishna and Shardul Thakur, was also mediocre. They did take wickets, two apiece, but it was too late in the innings. In the first session, they bowled too short and seam position wasn't ideal to get swing in these conditions. India missed a bowler of Mohammad Shami's skills. Thakur, under gloomy conditions, said to be ideal to move the ball in air, bowled with two men on the fence on the square. Duckett and Crawley got away easy as they were fed the length they preferred. Thakur was supposed to bowl up and bait the batsmen to drive and get the edge. He did not perform the role on a consistent basis. Ironically, towards the end of play, when Smith, a lower order batsmen, came to crease, the short-ball plan was not used either. Jadeja, on a brownish track with cracks, has a reputation for taking wickets but England's collective ploy to use reverse sweep against him scrambled the all-rounder's mind. Duckett started; Stokes and Root continued. Before the game, India's bowling coach Morne Morkel had said that they need to bowl on the stumps and keep the ball about 7 meters from the stumps. That just remained the coach's wish. All through the innings, Shubman was proactive in the field. He talked to his bowlers, consulted the seniors, change fielders, and switched ends of bowlers. But nothing worked. To be fair, no captain can set fields when they aren't consistent with their line or length, or not understanding the conditions to exploit them. What had started as a day of great possibility ended in disappointment. If India lose a Test after scoring 471 and 364 with Bumrah in the team, they need a rethink about the playing XI and tactics. When the Indian players stepped out of the team bus, Jadeja, among the first to de-board, looked for the sun that was hidden by the dark clouds. After a few steps, he tapped the shoulder of Gill. The skipper partially removed his headphones and listened to the senior-most player of his side and nodded his head. Among the last to leave the coach was India's highest run-getter and vice-captain Rishabh Pant. He had a stroller in one hand and a cylindrical wifi speaker, blaring Punjab song, in the other. That speaker would have been on full blast in the dressing room had India won. But at Headingley, it was the Barmy Army's trumpet that was echoing.

He's taken over from, Kohli, and then Rohit Sharma... didn't quite have that on-field aura: Nasser Hussain gives verdict on Shubman Gill's captaincy



GNS News Agency, July 2

Gill India's Mohammed Siraj, left, and captain Shubman Gill leave the field after rain stopped play on day five of the first cricket test match between England and India at Headingley in Leeds, England.

It was the first game Shubman Gill led the Indian side as skipper. Although batting-wise on a good batting pitch, India did manage to pile on runs both in the first and the second innings, it is with the ball on the field that Gill, with his bowlers, failed to create opportunities to pick 20 wickets. In the final innings, chasing 373 runs, England got there

just at the loss of five wickets.

"I thought I saw someone just finding his way, honestly. You've got to be very careful in the first Test match, the people he's taken over from, Kohli, and then Rohit Sharma. I thought he didn't quite have that on-field aura as the names I mentioned there. You look down on those two previous names, and you immediately see who was in charge of India," Nasser Hussain said on Sky Sports. "I looked down from the press box, the commentary position, there were a lot of captains; it was a bit captaincy by committee, which can happen in your early days as a leader because you're still senior players like Rishabh Pant and KL Rahul want to try and help you out as much as possible. I thought he followed the ball a lot. I thought he was reactive as opposed to proactive," he added. "A word with Jadeja, maybe as a young captain, to go to such an experienced spinner, and go, you do know the rough is out there. Ravi Shastri and Mark Butcher are up there, going, show us where that ball is pitching, and it was pitching nowhere near the rough. Ravi was saying, a bit slow, a bit wide, bowl in the rough. I was surprised that not one of the senior players or captains went to Jadeja and said, Can we go a little bit wider. But Ravi's right, they lost the game for two things that he couldn't control," Hussain added on Jadeja's bowling.

‘Managing his workload is important’: Gambhir says India yet to decide Jasprit Bumrah’s remaining two Tests

GNS News Agency, July 2

Jasprit Bumrah Sachin Tendulkar India vs England India's Jasprit Bumrah prepares to bowl on day two of the first cricket test match between England and India at Headingley in Leeds, England, Saturday. A new-look India under Shubman Gill started their World Test Championship 2025-27 cycle with a five-wicket loss against England in the first Anderson-Tendulkar Test at Headingley in Leeds on Tuesday. After edging out England in the first innings by taking a slender 6-run lead, India set a steep target of 371, which the home side chased comfortably in just 82 overs with five wickets to spare.

Indian batsmen hit five centuries in addition to Jasprit Bumrah's five-wicket haul in the first innings, but ended up losing the Test. This has been the first instance in the history of Test cricket where a team has lost the match after scoring five centuries. The biggest differentiator between the two sides was the fielding. Team India dropped eight clear chances and one half chance in addition to a missed run-out opportunity, which eventually cost them the game. Out of these, Yashasvi Jaiswal alone dropped four catches in two innings. Head coach Gautam Gambhir has defended his side and refused to single out any player to put the blame on or the failure of any single department for the defeat.

"I won't single out anyone for defeat," Gambhir said in the post-match press conference after the loss. "The first thing is that catches get dropped. The best fielders drop catches. The lower-order batting was a bit disappointing. If we had made 600 in the first innings, we could have dominated. Hopefully we will learn in the second Test (in Birmingham)," he said. "But that is not the only reason we lost.



Everyone wants to contribute and I won't single out anyone. We lose together and win together," added Gambhir. Coach Gambhir also confirmed that the loss will not change the fact that Bumrah will play only two more Tests during this tour. "To manage his workload is more important. There's a lot of cricket going forward, and we know what he brings to the table. Before we came on this tour, it was already decided that he was going to play three Test matches. We haven't decided which two other Tests he's going to play," he said. Gill, who was leading India for the first time, started confidently as a batter. He scored a fine 147 in the first innings but looked under pressure as a captain in the field. Gambhir urged patience towards Gill. "These are tough places to captain. It's like pushing someone into the deep sea, and I am sure he is going to come out as a proper professional. Look, first Test match, obviously, there are nerves. It's a great honour. As he's already mentioned, captain of the Test side not many people get that opportunity and he was phenomenal," said Gambhir.

Neeraj Chopra wins in Ostrava despite challenge from unheralded South African

GNS News Agency, July 2

A cool sight at the Mestský Stadion during the 64th Ostrava Golden Spike on Tuesday – one of the popular European one-day athletics meetings – was seeing world javelin record-holder Jan Zelezny strike up a pose right next to the throwing area for the event, dressed in his business-casual attire. The Czechia legend is, of course, closely associated with the Ostrava Golden Spike as the meeting director and athletes in the past have spoken about how cool it is to compete in this event, where his impact is unmissable – in his current role, but also as the meet record holder with 94.64m that he threw in 1996. This time around, he had a ring-side view to watch his Indian ward compete too. In his fifth official event of 2025, Neeraj Chopra registered his third win. He has bagged back-to-back titles as he backed up his Paris Diamond League success on Friday late night, with a quick turnaround at the home event of his legendary coach.

Neeraj won the event with a best mark of 85.29m that came in the third round. The second place went to South Africa's Douw Smit with a new Personal Best of 84.12m while two-time World Champion Anderson Peters took the third place with 83.63m. After his Paris DL win, Neeraj spoke of a quick recovery with just over three days left for the Ostrava event, which he has had to miss in recent seasons. But perhaps the presence of Zelezny as his coach now meant there was a special place in the calendar for Neeraj, who typically hasn't competed with such turnaround time in recent seasons. And with his own pet project – the NC Classic men's javelin invitational – coming up next weekend in Bengaluru, Neeraj would have had good reason to not go all out.

He was asked some questions in Ostrava, first by an expected source in Peters and then by an unexpected one from South Africa's Smit. Peters started the event with the 83.63m, laying down the early marker. But Smit – a relative outsider at this level of men's javelin – came with a new PB of 84.12m that gave him the lead after two attempts. But as he often does, Neeraj did find an answer. With his third attempt, the Indian registered the only 85m+ throw of the night with 85.29m. But for the second successive event, he didn't seem all that pleased with his throws. After a couple of attempts, he had a quick debrief with Zelezny standing beside him, evidently discussing the release of the javelin. It is an area Neeraj said, after Paris, that he is working with the Czech great, trying to attain more control at the final step and using his chest more to release without falling over to the left. In fact, after his final throw, where he actually had a stumble and ended up intentionally fouling beyond the white line, he shook his head a fair few times. But eventually, as he headed to the seating area where his fellow athletes were waiting, the smiles were back. It is after all another meeting win and one that extends his long streak of finishing in the top-two of every event he has competed in since June 2021. Neeraj's focus will now turn to the NC Classic. Much like Zelezny's association with the Ostrava Golden Spike now, that event will mean a whole lot more than just one



where he is competing. The hype has been steadily building from Down Under around this incredibly talented teenage sprinter, and on his European professional debut, Gout Gout justified some of it. Trailing in the 200m race behind Reynier Mena of Cuba, he came up with a finishing kick that has already become the most noticeable trait of his sprinting style – a ridiculous ease with which he increases his speed after getting into his stride. The result was a stunning 20.02s from the clock for the teenager, a new Personal Best and an Area Record for Australia as well. And at 17, he is knocking on the door of a sub-20s timing. "Feel pretty good, first European race. Indeed the sub-20 is very, very close," he said after the race, barely unable to hide his joy. The hype appears to be very real indeed.

Gambhir defends young bowling unit after Leeds loss, says India must back future pace stars

HYDERABAD: India head coach Gautam Gambhir said that there were moments where India could have won the Test match.

"I'm not going to sit here and single out 'it's because of the tail' or 'the tail couldn't contribute' or '8, 9, 10, 11 couldn't contribute'. We lose together, we win together," he said. "First of all, I'll tell you it's not that they were not applying themselves. Sometimes people fail, and that's okay. I know it is disappointing and more importantly, I think they are more disappointed than anyone. Because they knew that we had the opportunity. If we had got up to 570, 580 in the first innings, we could have dominated from there," Gambhir said in the post-match briefing after India lost the first Test against England at Leeds in Headingley on Tuesday night.

"We will have to give players like Nitish Kumar Reddy, Prasidh Krishna, Arshdeep Singh, Harshit Rana time. Earlier, we used to have four fast bowlers in the squad with an experience of more than 40 Tests," India head coach Gautam Gambhir said after India lost the first Test to England at Leeds on Tuesday night.

‘I am not sure India believed they are going to get him out’: Steve Harmison on bowling to Ben Duckett



GNS News Agency, July 2

Chasing 373 runs, England opener Ben Duckett scored 149 to help the side win an unlikely run chase. Former England fast bowler Steve Harmison opined that India never believed that they could pick the wicket of Duckett throughout the marathon innings. "Ben Duckett played wonderfully well. He believed he was going to play a match-winning knock," Duckett said, speaking to ESPN Cricinfo. "He (Duckett) believed he was going to score runs. He had a lot of positive intent, like he always does. I am not sure India believed they are going to get him out. I don't think India got their plans right. I don't think they bowled the

right lengths and right lines to him. And, he capitalized on it," he added. "They didn't have an answer. They didn't have a formula to stop him from scoring. They didn't have a plan and really were rudderless when it came to what their plan was, executing their skill set. Even in the field, they weren't stopping singles. India's bowlers were bowling good balls, but England were getting singles." Duckett, for his heroics, was named Man of the Match. Speaking at the Post Match conference, he said, "In that period [first session], it was really important that Zak and I got through without losing any wickets. It was pretty clear to us this morning. If we batted for the whole day [at the tempo that] we normally do, we'd probably get the total, so we didn't overthink anything. Certainly, we had to get through Jasprit's first spell and that new ball, and from there on, we were just playing our natural games." Duckett's batting coach James Knott from his school days at Stowe school had told this newspaper about the origin of that reverse sweep. "Ben played hockey and rugby, as well as cricket from a young age at Winchester House Prep School and then throughout his time at Stowe. In hockey, he was a great exponent of reverse hitting the ball and could already play the reverse sweep and switch hit when he arrived at Stowe. We worked more on the orthodox sweep and the paddle sweep which he didn't play as much," the coach had told.

‘Bazball with brains! ‘We got it done mate!’ Ben Stokes answers whether he thought he made a good toss decision when India were at 430 for 3

GNS News Agency, July 2

When India were seemingly cruising at one stage in their first innings at 430 for 3, did Ben Stokes wonder if he had made a bad decision at the toss? It was a question put to him at the end of a famous run-chase of 371 at Leeds, and he had a quick repartee: "Good job that Test cricket is played over 5 days, isn't it?" Stokes said with a laugh. "It was one of those things you decide before a ball is bowled. Both teams had a lot of luck going their way in certain phases. Plays and misses, could have dropped catches, from both teams, if everyone had held their catches, this might not have been a 5-day game," Stokes told the BBC. A short while ago, on air in the BBC commentary, former England captain Michael Vaughan had hailed England's efforts in the game as "Bazball with brains".

"We did what needed to be done. Under every moment we were put under pressure, we found a way to perform. This win wasn't just about skill, but attitude in this dressing room. We know how fast this ground is for scoring. You look up batting or fielding; the team is going 4 per over without doing too much, if that makes sense. India had some special batting performances by a couple of players." Another former England captain, Alastair Cook, discussed the toss decision through the prism of his days as captain. "I have been captain of a side. If we had been in that position, there would have been certain players at 430 for 3, who would have looked at the captain and gone, 'you made a wrong choice!' And even if it's the wrong choice that Stokes made, all of them are 100% behind him. Everyone will be backing him, that's a great trait," Cook said on the BBC.

Vaughan also pointed out how this team is rapidly maturing, which augurs well not just for this series against India but the Ashes against Australia. "They are a maturing



A short while ago, on air in the BBC commentary, former England captain Michael Vaughan had hailed England's efforts in the game as "Bazball with brains".

team. Skillsets were never in question, but if you add the awareness and maturity that we saw today, they are on the journey to becoming a good cricket team," Vaughan said. "Ben and Baz have created a fantastic vibe around the group. Even today, when you look at them, they were smiling, having a laugh, having a conversation with Rishabh Pant, they seem to be able to play as a group as if they are in their back garden. It's an amazing mentality to have. He then talked about how the top seven in England's batting can make all the difference in Australia.

"This is the week I start to get excited. Ollie Pope at No. 3, he has got it, great for Pope.. Harry Brook at 5, flamboyant. They got the glue [in Joe Root] at no 4. The opening partnership [of Ben Duckett and Zak Crawley] is working. Then you've got Ben [Stokes] and Jamie Smith at 6 and 7. That seven, the last time England won in Australia, they had a rock-solid top 7. We knew the 7 before we landed in Australia. If England can continue playing like this week, they can get in that plane to Australia with a rock-solid 7."

Ground Zero: Hatemongering comes so naturally to Bollywood that it can't make an antiwar movie even when it tries; Emraan Hashmi's film is proof



“There is no such thing as an antiwar film,” the French New Wave icon Francois Truffaut famously declared once upon a time. It was almost as if he'd secretly been yanked into the future and made to attend a 'special screening' of Uri: The Surgical Strike at PVR Juhu. It is, indeed, irresponsible for any movie to glorify war, and Truffaut was of the opinion that this isn't a supposition, but an inevitability. He wasn't entirely correct, of course. There have been several great antiwar films over the years, and we'll discuss some of them here. But what about Indian movies? The recent film Ground Zero, which was released on Prime Video following a theatrical run that was unfortunately affected by the Pahalgam terror attack, appears to be aware of these concerns. But it chooses to ignore them when it matters the most.Starring Emraan Hashmi in the lead role, Ground Zero follows a BSF officer called Narendra Dubey on a determined quest to hunt down the notorious militant leader Ghazi Baba after the 2001 Parliament attacks. Ghazi Baba was a close aide to Masood Azhar, who was released by Indian authorities during the IC 814 hijacking. Instead of making him the manifestation of Kashmir and its people, Ground Zero treads the middle path; it doesn't view every Kashmiri Muslim as a traitor, but it certainly views most of them as victims. And where victims exist, there must be a saviour. That man is Dubey, who appears to be aware of the alienation that military presence has created in the hearts and minds of the locals.

Directed by Tejas Prabha Vijay Deoskar, Ground Zero doesn't go so far as to show military brutality or the 'forced disappearances' that reflect the reality of the local population. Nor does it spare a moment for the 'half-widows' who roam the land like tortured spirits. But such are the times we live in, when even a moderately responsible Hindi movie comes across as a grand beacon of empathy. One could argue that Shershaah would've been the ideal candidate to comment on the ultimate meaninglessness of war, but because the movie valorises Captain Vikram Batra's ultimate sacrifice and frames it against an Indian victory, it ends up endorsing the idea of violent combat.

How Celine Song's Materialists is an inadvertent, sharp feminist response to Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Animal

Celine Song's films, whether it's Past Lives or Materialists, underline the dilemma of the modern woman — how much to love, how much to work, what to hold on to, what to let go of. They're a woman's attempts to elbow and make space for herself in a man's world — without cutting any corners in the departments of both love and self-respect. Her new romantic movie begins in the pre-historic era where a caveman drags the raw carcass of his prey to his den, where the cavewoman waits. But their exchange isn't limited to the carnal need of hunger: He also makes a ring out of flowers and makes her wear that as the title Materialists pop up across the screen.

At the outset, Song establishes that the film is about these materialists: a man who hunts and puts food on the table, and a woman who pines for the man only because she doesn't want to sleep hungry. We then get transported to present-day New York City, where Lucy (Dakota Johnson) is working at a matchmaking agency, but is fixated on the match she wants for herself: a rich man who'll pamper her with luxuries. Call her a gold-digger, a trophy wife, or any of those woke names: but at heart, as established, she's merely a materialist.Contrast that to Sandeep Reddy Vanga's 2023 Hindi film Animal. Again, right at the outset, Vanga establishes Ranbir Kapoor's character as an alpha male. Even before we name it, which is first heard right before the interval point, we know his personality type because he explains that in as many words. While wooing his love interest Geetanjali (Rashmika Mandanna), he argues that men were historically wired only as alphas. Only the weaker, insecure men, who couldn't go out hunting, came up with poetry to give way to a new school of romantic inclination.Instinctively drawn to that anthropological pitch, Geetanjali is won over by Rannvijay (yes, that's his name, as we learn later). After all, he's the titular Animal. And in this case, she's Vanga's definition of Materialist: a woman who pines for the alpha because evolution had no bearing on her. He shows the middle finger to Charles Darwin, re-establishes the rule of the jungle, and pulls the broken parts of the food chain back together while flexing his brawny biceps.But unlike Lucy, Geetanjali doesn't feature in this food chain at all. She just makes babies, witnesses her man's downfall, nurses his wounds, poses as a punching bag, and eventually, gives up when her son follows in his father's footsteps. Lucy in Materialists won't fall for that cycle because instead of blindly surrendering to her impulses, she calculates. She calculates rather too much. For her, love is an elusive equation which is complex, but certain. It's not abstract like art, but absolute like algebra. Her prospective match is the proverbial x in an equation, which she's determined to solve, given all the surrounding variables.Math leads her to Harry (Pedro Pascal), a billionaire, who just seems too good to be true. Is he really the sum of all the parts she checks off in her ideal prospect? Is he indeed the apex predator in a tuxedo? Hell, he doesn't even go around shooting and slashing men, doesn't bother to make his love interest lick his boots to prove her loyalty, and moreover, isn't a prey to daddy issues. The materialist in Lucy is satiated. But how does the math make sense for Harry? “You can find someone younger,” she suggests, the matchmaker in her taking charge. Harry has the perfect solution: he wants her “intangible assets.” He's easily the safest risk on paper.But love doesn't happen on paper. It's carnal, primal, and elemental. Enter: John (Chris Evans), a struggling actor who has been at it ever since he was first

Neither Shershaah nor Uri are antiwar movies. Ground Zero could have been, had it not been so oblivious about certain, well, ground realities. Not too long ago, Alex Garland and Ray Mendoza's Warfare showed just how efficiently political statements can be made through cinema rooted in fact. Based on Mendoza's own experiences during the Iraq War, the movie, for him, was a tribute to his fellow soldiers. For Garland, it was an opportunity to comment on America's foreign policy, now that the dust has somewhat settled on the Bush years. Warfare ended with a shot of dazed Iraqi fighters slowly streaming out of destroyed residential buildings, having driven out a group of American soldiers they'd cornered in them. They look around silently. The Americans have fled, injured and depleted. Iraq lies ravaged. What was the purpose of all this?Ground Zero isn't as well-crafted. It paints Kashmir as a land and Kashmiris as a people not to be tamed, but to be won over — with kindness, compassion, and bravery. For a movie whose every frame seems to be have been desaturated to the point of being black-and-white, it certainly has a rose-tinted view of the complex situation. “Kuch bhi bolo, Kashmir hai toh humara,” says one of Narendra's fellow soldiers to him at one point in the movie. “Sirf Kashmir ki zameen humari hai ke yahan ke log bhi?” he asks. The movie understands that there is a difference. And, to illustrate this difference, it introduces the character of Hussain, a local youth who is brainwashed into carrying out random acts of violence against the military in exchange of a small sum of money.

Without quite understanding or examining what could've drawn a boy like Hussain towards terrorism, Narendra tries to convert him towards the 'good' side. He is made an informant, but Ground Zero doesn't portray this as its own kind of exploitation and brainwashing. Because Narendra is a virtuous man, nothing he does can be morally questionable. We must assume that he always has everybody's best interest in mind. Call it reverse fridging, but Hussain predictably dies in the line of duty and leaves Narendra to deal with the guilt. It's a personal loss for him, one that makes him all the more determined to find Ghazi Baba and end his reign of terror for good.Ground Zero is Hashmi's second film in a row to express a humanist stance at a time when warmongering seems to fetch folks extra brownie points in the Hindi film industry. For that, he must be applauded. He played the villain in Tiger 3, in which Salman Khan's protagonist refers to the people of Pakistan as his in-laws, and rescues them from their oppressors. That said, Ground Zero also prominently includes a song whose lyrics go something like this: “Thoda aur lahooh behne do.” Not to mention the climax, which involves a violent combat sequence that leaves a bunch of people dead. This may well be based on fact, but there is no moment of introspection. Was the bloodshed worth it; were the Kashmiris won over? Who knows. Ah well, at least one Narendra is trying.



in a relationship with Lucy. Like her, he calculates too: how many more dollars would it cost to park a car in X spot as compared to Y. But these are the very calculations Lucy wants to get rid of permanently. Instead of making a balance sheet for survival every month, she wants to employ all her arithmetic skills for once and then reap the returns of the financial division that's a husband. She hates labelling John's struggles “cheap” and “petty” because she was once there too, but she can't keep hating herself for it. She wants to feel loved, the kind of love that comes as diamonds — stable, secure, and pretty.But John gets Lucy like Harry can never. He embraces her confusion by serving her go-to combination — coke and beer on demand, instead of refilling her wine glass. He sits down in the middle of work to be her bouncing board when she needs one, instead of buying her out of her stress. He sleeps on the footpath through the night while waiting for her as she tends to a work emergency, instead of employing his own resources to take care of that. And he sees them growing old together, instead of sponsoring cosmetic intervention to stall her youth. Not that Harry promises to do any of these, but the discovery of his surgically elongated legs makes Lucy realize that he's too much of a calculated deal.She gets aroused by her palatial apartment instead of his sexual advances. She smiles at his good ol' chivalrous gestures, but is seduced only by the idea of that, and not really by the act itself. In Vanga-speak, Harry is the alpha every woman is seeking, and that too a rather well-behaved one. He has the money and the muscle, even if that's more bank balance than brawn. But he's too assured to be loved. Where is the uncertainty that comes with chasing dreams? The rebellious fulfillment that comes with a creative pursuit especially when it's not financially rewarding? And the belonging of being holed up in a messy, shared apartment that feels like home? Both Lucy and John realize he's a financially bad decision for her, but she can't help but invest in him anyway.Because it's not that love shouldn't be reduced to materialism, but that it can't be. It's not a case of earning woke points or being diplomatically tactful. By telling the story from the woman's point of view, Materialists depicts the human instinct more accurately than Animal does. Both go back to caveman politics, but only Materialists acknowledges why man isn't the only suffix that fits here. A cavewoman is indeed dependent on the caveman for sustenance, but as the film's opening suggests, both realize there's more to life than just preying and devouring. A woman may be historically designed to chase the riches, but she's also inherently programmed to do better.

Diljit Dosanjh says Cartier ‘stole’ Maharaja of Patiala’s necklace, tears up as he talks about Punjab: ‘We are blessed, but we are cursed’



Singer Diljit Dosanjh admitted that he is a transformed person from who he was in 2020. In an interview, he addressed the leaps and bounds that he has grown by, delivering a series of firsts for Indian artistes, particularly those from the state of Punjab. He became the first Punjabi singer to perform at Coachella, and then on The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon. He also made history by walking the red carpet at this year's Met Gala, where he dressed like a maharaja in a look designed by Prabal Gurung. He said that he always wanted to spotlight his Punjabi culture on the world stage, and made it a point to sing Bhangra-inspired songs at both Coachella and on Fallon. He also recalled tearing up when he first thought of wearing a cape with the map of Punjab on it, and addressed the criticism that comes his way for speaking only about Punjab and not India as a whole.

In an interview with BBC Asian Network, Diljit was asked about the necklace that he wore at the Met Gala, and he said with a laugh, “I knew instantly that when I go (to the Met Gala) I want to look like a raja. When I went to the Cartier showroom last time, I asked them if they'd give me the Maharaja of Patiala's necklace. It was ours, they stole it. There are more necklaces that they've taken and aren't giving back. They promised they'd give it to me, but I was later told that it was at some exhibition somewhere. So we had a replica made.”Becoming serious, Diljit said, “I was sitting in my vanity van when I first had the idea of wearing a cape with the map of Punjab on it, and Gurmukhi written on it. I cried. I cried when I first had the vision. I wanted to honour my Punjabi culture.” Diljit teared up, and continued, “Me going there isn't a big deal. But Punjab going there, and a turban being represented there, that's huge. I wanted to make the biggest statement on that red carpet. The Punjabi language is ancient. It is due some respect. There is a whole story there. Diljit isn't going to the Met Gala; Punjab is going to the Met Gala.”Diljit said that his home state is blessed, but it also has a dark history. “I don't want it to seem like I'm doing anything for Punjab. I'm just doing my job. Whatever is happening is not in my control. I am Punjabi, what can I say? Anyone who says they're doing something for others is lying. Everyone's working for themselves. If their work has ripple effects, that's another thing. I'm working for myself. I'm a very selfish guy.”

Addressing some of the hate that comes his way, especially for the way he speaks about Punjab, Diljit said, “These people are people. Everyone is a pawn in the grand scheme of things; we are all minions. We have no control over anything in our lives. We don't even have control over our own breath. When someone hates me, I like to think that there is probably something still inside me that deserves to be hated. When I become a better person, I will not be hated anymore... Punjab is such a wonderful place. It has been through so much, and yet it produces so many talented people. Perhaps Punjab is blessed, but perhaps it is also cursed.”

Aayush Sharma reveals he had two surgeries after back injury on sets of Ruslaan: ‘What I thought was temporary turned out to be...’

Aayush Sharma has been missing in action since Karan Lalit Butani's 2024 action film Ruslaan. On Wednesday, the actor took to his Instagram handle to reveal the reason. Sharing pictures of him on a hospital bed, he revealed he's had two surgeries and has been recuperating from a serious back injury he sustained on the sets of his last film.“Life has its way of slowing you down to make sure you listen. For the last couple of years, I had been experiencing consistent pain in my back it started while pulling off a stunt during the action scene in Ruslaan — nothing too dramatic, so I did what most of us tend to do... ignored it, masked it, and kept going,” he wrote in the caption.

Aayush realized while shooting for his next film, Butani's military drama Kwatha, that there's something wrong with his back. “Movements that once felt like second nature — dancing, stunts, even the simplest stretches — became restricted. What I thought was temporary turned out to be far more serious. The biggest mistake? Taking the pain lightly and hoping it would heal on its own,” he added.Sharing pictures of him doing the 'victory' sign on a hospital bed, Aayush revealed that he's undergone two surgeries and is now on the road to recovery. He also shared a video in which he's sitting dejected on a hospital bed. When asked how he's feeling going into the second surgery, he admits hospital has started feeling like his “second home” and he's hopeful this would be his last surgery for now.“This phase has taught me that good health isn't just about a six-pack — it's about what's happening inside. Don't ignore the whispers your body sends you. Act early. Heal properly,” he also wrote. Ayush even shared a video in which he's struggling to get on a bike as a pillion passenger because of his back injury.Ayush thanked his doctors, and the producer and director of Kwatha, the shoot of which has been halted because of his injury. “And to my beautiful family — Arpita, Ahil, and Ayat — thank you for turning my bedrest into what felt more like a vacation than a punishment. Your laughter, love, and support have been my real medicine,” added



Aayush.Aayush is married to Arpita Khan, sister of actor Salman Khan. They have two kids — Ahil and Ayat — born in 2016 and 2019 respectively. “And then there's my little man, Ahil, who looked at me and said — ‘Papa, you heal fast... I need my Wolverine back.’ I'm coming back stronger. For you. For me. For all of it,” wrote Aayush, referring to Marvel's superhero character of Logan aka Wolverine.Aayush made his Bollywood debut with the 2018 romantic comedy Loveyatri, produced by his brother-in-law Salman. He also starred alongside Salman in Mahesh Manjrekar's 2021 action film Antim: The Final Truth. He'll be next seen opposite Katrina Kaif's sister Isabelle Kaif in Kwatha.

Amid demands to drop Diljit Dosanjh from Border 2 following Sardarji 3 row, ex-manager defends him: ‘Same man PM Modi called Bharat ke gaon ka beta’

Diljit Dosanjh has become a target of severe backlash for his decision of going ahead with the release of his horror-comedy film Sardaar Ji 3, starring Pakistani actress Hania Aamir. His decision has received strong reactions from his fans, fellow artistes as well as the Federation of Western Indian Cine Employees, who have demanded his removal from JP Dutta's Border 2. The federation has also requested the censor board to withhold certification of Sardaar Ji 3.Now, his former manager Sonali Singh has shared a long note defending the singer and sharing that “Sardaar Ji 3 is not a film backed by a giant corporate house that can absorb the blow of the massive losses. This is someone's life's earning and it's at risk of being wiped out entirely.”

In her statement, Sonali wrote, “In a career spanning over two decades, Diljit Dosanjh has become a cultural icon not only for India but for the global stage. Yet, time and again, he has been placed under the scanner especially as a proud Sikh, a Punjabi, and an artist who has chosen to represent India with quiet pride rather than loud declarations. Diljit is the same man who was addressed by the Honourable Prime Minister as “Bharat ke gaon ka beta” a recognition that he truly represents.”She added, “What hurts the most is on one hand, the global media celebrates him as the first Indian to perform at Coachella, to appear on Jimmy Fallon carrying his traditional identity, to walk the Met Gala carrying his culture and roots. And every single time, he proudly carries India with him. But, on the other hand, in his own country, how quickly we forget. How conveniently we celebrate him when he puts India on the map, and how easily we trash him when the narrative turns. Does anyone think



this doesn't break his heart?”“(He) chose to stand by his producers not to protect himself, but to protect the families behind the film. These weren't giant corporations. These were people from his own country who had poured their lifetime's savings and dreams into Sardaar Ji. Despite the backlash he's facing, Diljit chose to shoulder the burden with them, not leaving them to take the fall alone. He stood in solidarity not for profit, but for people.”She also reminded how Diljit is also struggling with another film that has nothing to do with any actor from Pakistan.“Let's not forget he is already standing beside another producer, who has been fighting for two years to release a film that has no Pakistani cast member a deeply important story: Jaswant Singh Khaira.”