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PM's Ghana visit a boost to Global South outreach initiative

The salience of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Ghana has unfolded along expected lines, marking another step in India's sustained outreach to the Global South. In an era where India is actively recalibrating its foreign policy, Modi's visit reaffirms New Delhi's commitment to the principle of strategic autonomy while strengthening ties with Africa, a continent increasingly pivotal to the evolving global order. This is Modi's first bilateral visit to Ghana and, notably, the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the west African nation in over three decades. The significance of this trip transcends ceremonial optics; it signals India's intent to forge deeper partnerships beyond traditional allies, as the country positions itself as a credible and independent player in a multipolar world. Addressing Ghana's Parliament, Modi underscored the rapid changes sweeping the global landscape. He argued that the post-World War II global order is becoming obsolete, unable to sufficiently address the emerging realities shaped by technology, the growing influence of the Global South, and shifting demographic patterns. In this context, he emphasised the urgent need for "credible and effective reforms in global governance" to ensure that the institutions guiding international relations are more inclusive and reflective of contemporary power structures. Modi announced that India has decided to elevate its relationship with Ghana to a "comprehensive partnership," signaling an expansion of cooperation beyond trade and investment into areas such as technology, education, defence, and sustainable development. He affirmed India's support for Africa's indigenous development frameworks, asserting that India would work alongside

SVU Vice-Chancellor: Academic Consultant Reviews Enhance Teaching Quality



"July 5 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator" "Sri Venkateswara University (SVU) successfully concluded an academic performance review for its working Academic Consultants, held from July 1 to July 5, 2025, at the SVU Vice-Chancellor's Chambers. "The review was chaired by I/C Vice-Chancellor Professor Ch. Appa Rao, with University Registrar Professor M. Bhupathi Naidu serving as Convener. The process involved subject matter experts, principals of relevant colleges, and heads of departments. "This initiative aligns with the guidelines issued by the Andhra Pradesh State Higher Education Council via Letter Number APSHE-UNIVS-C1-999-Contract Teachers/2025, dated June 19, 2025. These directives emphasize the necessity of regular evaluation of contract teachers' academic performance, consistent with UGC guidelines and legal principles established by the Supreme Court and High Court regarding contractual appointments in higher education. "During the review process, academic consultants from various departments showcased their teaching competencies and academic skills before a panel of experts. This review also served as a motivational platform for academic consultants to upgrade their skills, adopt modern teaching methodologies, and adhere to higher education standards. "The daily breakdown of the academic consultant review was as follows: " July 1, 2025: 11 Departments - 41 Academic Consultants " July 2, 2025: 7 Departments - 43 Academic Consultants " July 3, 2025: 6 Departments - 60 Academic Consultants " July 4, 2025: 11 Departments - 47 Academic Consultants " July 5, 2025: 13 Departments - 50 Academic Consultants "Over the week-long review sessions, 48 departments actively participated with a total of 241 academic consultants. The entire process was conducted smoothly and transparently, with live video recordings ensuring accountability. "Sri Venkateswara University extends its heartfelt gratitude to all participants, experts, and administrative teams for their contributions to the success of this program.

Housing Board To Auction Premium Land Parcels In City Commercial Zones

Hyderabad, July 5 As Hyderabad continues its meteoric rise as India's leading tech and commercial hub, opportunities for acquiring prime land in the city's most coveted areas have become increasingly rare. The Telangana Housing Board (THB), recognizing the demand for high-quality commercial real estate, is set to offer exclusive land parcels that promise exceptional investment and development potential.

In response to the surging demand from multinational corporations, real estate developers, hospitality groups, and institutional investors, THB will soon auction a signature land parcel of approximately 7.3 acres, directly abutting the prestigious KPHB-Hi-Tech City corridor. This parcel occupies a high-potential zone with seamless

access to major business districts, IT parks, international schools, world-class healthcare, and upcoming metro infrastructure.

This unique location is perfectly suited for landmark projects such as Grade-A office towers, luxury hotels, high-end residential skyscrapers, premium retail destinations, IT and innovation hubs, integrated mixed-use developments.

Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy Launches Derma 360 World-Class Surgical and Non-Surgical Aesthetic Clinic



Hyderabad: Derma 360, the trusted leader in advanced skin, hair, and wellness treatments, proudly announces the grand launch of its new surgical and non-surgical aesthetic facility in Kavuri Hills, Hyderabad. This state-of-the-art clinic, the fourth branch in the region, heralds a new era of beauty and wellness solutions, officially inaugurated today by Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, Minister for Revenue, Housing, and Information & Public Relations. Joined by esteemed dignitaries including Ramashayam Raghuram Reddy, MP, Lok Sabha Member, and MLAs Payam Venteswarulu, Tellam Venkat Rao, Jare Adinarayana, and Manohar Reddy,

the launch highlighted Derma 360's unwavering commitment to providing world-class aesthetic services.

Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy remarked, "I congratulate Dr. Bala K. Ravi for returning to India after 35 years of experience in the United States. I wish Derma 360 clinic to become one of the top 5 clinics in Hyderabad." This sentiment reflects the high expectations surrounding the new facility, designed to combine advanced technologies and global expertise to offer the most extensive range of FDA-approved, globally acclaimed aesthetic procedures. With a focus on patient privacy, comfort, and optimal results, Derma 360 stands as Hyderabad's new landmark for aesthetic excellence. Derma 360 sets itself apart through a team of internationally trained, highly credentialed experts. The clinic boasts over 75 years of combined clinical experience, having treated thousands of patients across North America, Europe, Asia, and beyond. The team of specialists includes renowned names such as Dr. Bala K. Ravi, a triple board-certified cosmetic surgeon recognized for his expertise in aesthetic surgery; Dr. Krishnanand Boosa, a leading dermatologist specializing in advanced aesthetic dermatology and non-surgical procedures; Dr. P. Sudha Rani, a veteran consultant dermatologist committed to ethical and evidence-based skincare; Dr. Karun Raj Balasetty, an aesthetic medicine specialist with multi-continental training and innovative vision; and Dr. Anuroop Roy, founder and medical director, who is a pioneer in non-surgical aesthetics.

Goat Theft Ring Apprehended “45 Animals Recovered”



July 5 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator "Authorities in Tiruchanur have successfully apprehended a five-member syndicate specializing in the theft of goats and sheep. The Tiruchanur police have recovered 45 goats and sheep, two two-wheeled vehicles, and a car, with the total seized assets valued at approximately ₹6,72,000. "The arrests were made near Mangalam SVCE College when officers intercepted the suspects transporting two sheep in a car. Subsequent investigations linked the gang to eight separate theft cases spanning across Tiruchanur, Chandragiri, R.C. Puram, Renigunta, Erpedu, and Vadamalapeta. All 45 reported stolen animals have been successfully recovered as a result of these efforts. "The individuals taken into custody have been identified as Enugu Dati Manikanta, Challa Madhu, Avilala Jaya Krishna, Pakkala Naveen Kumar, and Nennuru Nitin. Formal charges

have been filed against them, and they have been remanded to judicial custody. Police Commended for Solving Goat Theft Cases "Tirupati District Superintendent of Police, Harshavardhan Raju, has officially commended and announced rewards for the police personnel who were instrumental in solving the recent goat theft cases.

"The officers recognized for their significant efforts include Tiruchanur Inspector B. Sunil Kumar, Sub-Inspector T. Sainath Chowdary, and Sub-Inspector E. Jagannadha Reddy. The crime party staff—VNL Prasad, Prabhakar, Prasad, Haliyamma, and retired RPF Head Constable Chandrashekar Reddy—along with other police station staff, were also specifically lauded for their dedication and hard work in apprehending the culprits and recovering the stolen animals.

Satyavedu MLA Requests TUDA Funds for Constituency Development



"July 5 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator "Satyavedu MLA Koneti Adimulam has requested TUDA (Tirupati Urban Development Authority) Chairman Dollars Diwakar Reddy to allocate funds for development projects within the Satyavelu constituency. "On Saturday, MLA Adimulam met with Chairman Diwakar Reddy, felicitating him with a garland. Following the felicitation, they engaged in discussions regarding the development of the Satyavedu constituency. MLA Adimulam urged the allocation of TUDA funds for essential infrastructure development within the constituency, which falls under TUDA's

jurisdiction. "In response, Chairman Diwakar Reddy assured that TUDA is prepared to support infrastructure development in Satyavedu.

He committed to sanctioning funds upon receiving detailed proposals. MLA Adimulam expressed his pleasure at Diwakar Reddy, a young leader who has risen from the grassroots, becoming the TUDA Chairman, and expressed hope that TUDA would achieve further development under his leadership. "Senior leaders from the Telugu Desam Party in the Satyavedu constituency also participated in the meeting.

Women's Growth Is Society's Growth: Seethakka

Hyderabad, July 5 : Minister Seethakka today said the Congress government had brought a free bus scheme for women within 24 hours of coming to power. She also said it was not just free travel, but also the government made the women owners of buses. She noted that the women's growth was growth of the society. She made it clear that the State government was working with an inspiration drawn from the women. She criticized that in the past, interest-free loans were not given. She said the launch of a book that

tells the experiences of the women, who travelled in RTC buses was gratifying and added that the wishes of the women in the Mandal Samakhya were being fulfilled. She said women were growing economically through the women's groups. She said the women's groups had received loans of Rs 25,000 crore since the formation of the State government. She also said since the loans taken are being paid regularly, banks were giving loans without any problems.

Do You Only Preach Values But Not Practice Them..



!! "Khammam Bureau (Praneeth Kumar Pathakamudi), July 05, "Indian Chronicle. "You always try to prove you're not what you really are, says Osho. A poor man tries to look rich, while a rich man often tries to appear humble or simple. Warren Buffett, who could buy car companies, drives a second-hand car, while a low-salaried worker buys an iPhone on EMI. Osho's insight feels strikingly relevant today especially when we look at the media. Media houses, often the loudest advocates of ethics and values, tend to act as if those very values don't apply to them. In a recent conference, a representative from a leading media outlet addressed the controversy surrounding the use of objectionable thumbnails and headlines. He candidly admitted "When we use such titles, we get a million views. We continue using them because they work. Management isn't always aware. If someone raises an objection, we remove them. We've done so in the past too". This blunt honesty about the business model of sensationalism reveals a lot. What it really means is this, as long as content sells and draws revenue, even baseless news is fair game. Ironically, the very media that lectures society about morals has reduced news to a commodity, discarding journalistic ethics in the process. In the novel Gopatrudu, writer Patanjali offers a satirical look at this. A village head wins a court case debating whether the Earth is round or flat. When a journalist goes to interview him, the headman demands money "You came to interview me, so you must pay me". The reporter replies, "Whether I come to you or you come to me, I always get paid. That's why I chose this profession". Patanjali's mockery of the local journalism of the print era seems prophetic when you consider today's electronic media mafia. "Most media houses today have deep-rooted ties with political parties. Some are affiliated with different parties in different states. In fact, the very origins of Indian media were political started by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru to support the freedom movement. But media has transitioned from being in the hands of freedom fighters to now being tools in the hands of communal agitators and political profiteers. Some channels, especially those based in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, now play a dual role supporting one party in one state and another in the neighboring state. For instance, a channel set up to promote the TDP in Andhra now supports Congress in Telangana not out of ideology, but because TDP is no longer a force in Telangana post-bifurcation. This selective loyalty is rewarded by the parties involved. Earlier, even sensationalism in TV news had boundaries. But with the rise of YouTube journalism, everything changed. YouTube requires no infrastructure or journalistic training, but its influence on traditional satellite news has been massive. Today, ad revenue alone isn't enough to keep mainstream media afloat only the top 2-3 players get significant private ads. Most others rely heavily on political funding. When political leaders start their own channels, it's often to gain party recognition or electoral tickets. Once their objective is fulfilled, they offload the loss-making channel, often to local reporters. These new owners, driven by ambition or loyalty, continue the mudslinging for survival. Sensationalism has now overtaken even journalistic tragedy. When a female journalist died by suicide, it too became clickbait content. If the controversial stories they air are genuinely true, why not provide evidence and file cases? Why quietly delete content instead? "Is all media negative? Certainly not. Positive stories do exist, but often they're exaggerated to the point of absurdity. When Chandrababu Naidu was arrested, one channel claimed protests erupted in 150 countries. Even TDP, while enabling misinformation in Telangana, speaks of democracy and media ethics elsewhere. With misleading thumbnails and sensational headlines, media credibility is eroding. To safeguard journalism, fake news outlets must be held accountable. A businessperson can exit a loss-making business and enter another. But for a journalist, this is a lifelong profession not easily abandoned. One Telangana politician is known not just for switching parties but for overnight shifting his channel's alignment to match. For him, it's just political enterprise. But for real journalists, this is a calling. Journalism, once meant to safeguard society, is now struggling to protect itself. And that, perhaps, is the most tragic headline of all.

Seethakka Mocks Ktr's Comments



Hyderabad, July 5 Minister Seethakka today mocked that BRS party working president KTR did not seem to understand the challenge thrown by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. She clarified that CM Revanth Reddy threw the challenge to former CM KCR come for a discussion in the State assembly and not to KTR. She said the CM wanted KCR, who has the status of the Leader of the Opposition in the State assembly, to come for a discussion. She said BRS party was dead. She ridiculed that even KTR's sister K. Kavitha had also not accepted KTR's leadership and added that Kavitha had made this thing clear in an interview while noting that KTR was not their party leader.

Jagga Reddy To Stay Away From His Birthday Celebrations

Sangareddy, July 5 TPCC working president Jagga Reddy has taken a key decision regarding his birthday celebrations. He has decided to stay away from his birthday celebrations this year. Jagga Reddy and his daughter Jaya Reddy's birthday is on the 7th of this month. Every year, their birthday celebrations are organized grandly under the auspices of the Congress party workers and leaders. However, i

ZPHS Manthani to Emerge as a Model Digital Institution: Minister D. Sridhar



PS Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"Manthani, July 5:"Hon'ble Minister for IT, Industries, and Legislative Affairs of Telangana, Sri Duddilla Sridhar Babu, asserted that empowering students with contemporary technological skills is imperative in today's digital age. He emphasized that Digital Literacy, AI proficiency, and English fluency are no longer optional, but essential tools for academic and career advancement. "As part of an extensive developmental tour of Manthani town, the Hon'ble Minister, accompanied by District Collector Sri Koya Sri Harsha, laid foundation stones and inaugurated multiple public infrastructure projects aimed at holistic progress in education, recreation, energy, and civic facilities. "Major Foundation Stone Ceremonies Conducted: "Synthetic Tennis Court at Junior College Grounds – ₹35 lakhs" "Children's Park – ₹10 lakhs" "Beautification of Ravula Cheruvu – ₹4.05 crores" "Beautification of Ayyagari Cheruvu – ₹2.99 crores" "33/11 KV Substation at Gangapuri – ₹2.55 crores" "Inaugurations of New Facilities: "Children's Park at Boyinipet – ₹12 lakhs" "Free Women's Tailoring Training Centre in association with Usha International" "Brahma Teertham Mukti Daamam (gas-based crematorium) supported by Sitaram Seva Sadan" "Advanced Digital Classrooms and Library at ZPHS Girls School – ₹58 lakhs, facilitated by SEEDS NGO" "Speaking on the occasion, Minister Sridhar Babu reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment to revitalizing public education and healthcare. He lauded the success of the Badi Baata initiative and expressed delight that 25 students migrated from private to government schools, reflecting renewed trust in the public education system. "He took a strong stand against the previous government's negligence in the education sector and vowed to ensure transparent and merit-based teacher transfers and promotions. The Minister highlighted the successful recruitment of over 10,000 teachers through the Mega DSC and filling of 60,000 government

posts within the administration's first year. "Driving the Digital Revolution in Government Schools: "Minister Sridhar Babu unveiled his vision of transforming Zilla Parishad High School (Girls), Manthani into a flagship digital campus. He underscored that the new digital classrooms, computer lab, and enriched library now available rival even the most reputed private institutions. "The Minister declared that the government would extend complete digital transformation to all schools in the Manthani constituency, leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding. Emphasizing futuristic learning, he announced plans to introduce Robotics, AI, and Driverless Vehicle Technologies as part of the curriculum. "He encouraged both students and faculty to utilize the Prototype Innovation Center available locally and revealed that teachers will receive specialized training in AI-integrated pedagogy. "Noting the growing demand for global communication skills, the Minister emphasized the importance of Spoken English and assured that the government would implement necessary strategies to improve English proficiency among students. "He further revealed plans to establish a Digital Staff Room for Teachers at Manthani schools and shared the success story of a newly established software unit in Manthani, which has already provided employment to 30 local youth. "If we build skills, industries will follow," he remarked, underscoring the importance of skill development for attracting investment and employment opportunities to the region. "Vision for the Future: "ZPHS Manthani will stand as a beacon of digital excellence," the Minister declared, directing officials to convert remaining classrooms into smart learning spaces. He appealed to students to embrace technology, heed their teachers' guidance, and evolve into enlightened, responsible citizens ready to lead India's digital future. "The event was graced by Library Corporation Chairman Sri Nannaya Goud, RDO Sri Suresh, Tahsildar, MPDO, government officials, public representatives, and community leaders.

Youth Urged to Stay Away from Drugs: Chandragiri DSP Prasad



July 5 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema co-ordinator"Chandragiri Sub-Division DSP Prasad urged young people to stay away from intoxicants to protect their future. "Police Monitoring and Counseling" Initiatives"Following the directives of Tirupati District SP V Harshavardhan Raju, the Eagles team has been established to continuously monitor anti-social activities using drones. As part of these efforts, on Saturday, the Eagles team, while surveying abandoned buildings and deserted areas within the Tiruchanur Police Station limits with drones, apprehended individuals consuming ganja."

"Counseling Session Conducted"Chandragiri Sub-

Division DSP Prasad conducted a counseling session for those caught consuming ganja, in the presence of their parents. During the session, the DSP reiterated the importance of youth avoiding intoxicants to safeguard their bright future."

"Future Plans and Rehabilitation" DSP Prasad stated that under the supervision of Tirupati District SP V Harshavardhan Raju, the Eagles team will expand its services in the future. He also mentioned that individuals addicted to drugs would be sent to rehabilitation centers. "Tiruchanur CI Sunil Kumar, SI Sainath Chowdary, and other officials participated in the counseling program.

Recruitment Rally Under Agnipath Scheme At Aoc Centre

Secunderabad, July 5 Army recruitment rally under Unit Headquarters Quota will be held at Joginder Singh Stadium (Ex Thapar Stadium), AOC Centre, Secunderabad from July 31, 2025 to September 14, 2025 for enrolment of Agniveer General Duty (GD), Agniveer Clerk/SKT (AOC ward only), Agniveer Tradesmen 10th Std (Chef, Artisan Misc Works, Dresser & Washerman), Agniveer Tradesmen 8th Std (House Keeper) Category and Outstanding Sportsmen (Open Category). Outstanding sportsmen (Open Category) are required to report at Joginder Singh Stadium AOC Centre, by 0600 hrs on July 31, 2025 for sports trial. Outstanding sportsmen, who have represented in any of the National or International levels, in the fields of Athletics, including Track and Field events, Swimming & Diving and Weight Lifting, can participate along with their certificates. The age limit for all the categories is 17½ to 21 years. Educational qualification for Agniveer General Duty (GD) is Class 10th / Matric pass with 45% marks in aggregate and 33% in each subject. Candidates with valid Light Motor Vehicle Driving License will be given preference for the Driver requirements.

For Agniveer Clerk/SKT, 10+2 Intermediate exam pass



in any stream with 60% marks in aggregate and minimum 50% in each subject, securing 50% in English and Maths/ Accts/Bookkeeping in Class XII is mandatory. For Agniveer Tradesmen (10th Std) - Class 10th simple pass (33%), for Agniveer Tradesmen (8th Std) - Class 8th simple pass (33%) For details, candidates can contact Headquarters AOC Centre, East Marredpally, Trimulgherry, Secunderabad, Telangana - 500015. The Headquarters Email address is tuskercrc-2021@gov.in and also visit www.joinindianarmy@nic.in site for more information about the recruitment rally.

Participate and Make the Nationwide General Strike a Grand Success.

"Khammam Bureau, July 05, Indian Chronicle."DYFI district secretary Sheik Bashiruddin has called upon the youth to actively participate and ensure the success of the nationwide general strike scheduled for July 9, expressing complete support for the strike against the anti-labour and anti-people policies being pursued by the Modi government. A DYFI district committee meeting was held at the local Sundarayya Bhavan under the leadership of district president Maddala Prabhakar. Speaking on the occasion, he said that while the government had promised to generate two crore jobs annually after coming to power, it has not only failed to deliver but also eliminated existing employment opportunities. He added that public sector enterprises were being privatized, worsening the unemployment crisis, and that the BJP and Modi were handing over public assets to corporate and private entities. He further alleged that the Modi-led BJP government was instigating communal hatred by pushing a saffronization agenda and attempting to divide people along lines of religion, caste, and region, as part of a conspiracy to alter the Constitution. He criticized the introduction of the four labour codes by the BJP



government, which he claimed dismantled existing labour laws and stripped workers of their rights. He also accused the BJP and Modi of introducing black laws aimed at denying farmers fair prices and conspiring to hand over the entire agricultural sector to corpo-

rate powers. In response to these policies, he called on youth, unemployed individuals, workers, farmers, and the general public to come together and make the July 9 strike a grand success. "The meeting was attended by DYFI state committee member Chintala

Ramesh, district vice presidents Sheelam Veerababu, Boddur Madhu, and Kurapati Srinu, as well as district leaders Yerra Sai, Raavulapati Nagaraju, Karthik, Gopinath, Dheeraj, Rakesh, Manoj, Rajasekhara, Prem Kumar and others.

Manthani to Witness a Week of Divine Illumination "Grand Bhagavata Saptaha Jnana Yajnam Commences Today at Late Smt. Mahavadi Sarojini Devi's Residence."



"PS Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"Manthani, July 5:"A spiritually uplifting event — the Bhagavata Saptaha Jnana Yajnam — commenced today in Manthani, ushering in a week-long celebration of divine wisdom, dharma, and the glories of Lord Sri Krishna. The sacred event is being held at the residence of Late Smt. Mahavadi Sarojini Devi and Sri Narasayya, located at Katta Veedhi,

Thammicheru, and is being devotedly organised by their sons Sri Mahavadi Sudheer and his brothers. "This grand spiritual initiative features enlightening pravachanam (discourses) by Purnashiroamani Brahmarshi Marupaka Satyanarayana Sharma, a revered spiritual scholar who has delivered over 186 Bhagavata Saptahs across India. Brahmarshi Kollarapu Venkatarajam Sharma will conduct the Bhagavata Parayanam (scriptural recitation), invoking divine vibrations throughout the program. "The Yajnam will



be conducted daily from 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, and again from 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM, enabling devotees to participate in both spiritual learning and reflection. "This sacred gathering aims to delve into the philosophical essence and divine pastimes of Lord Sri Krishna, highlighting His incarnations, teachings, and miracles as described in the Srimad Bhagavatam. The core message of the Yajnam is reflected in the eternal verse:

"Yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bhārata, abhyutthanam adharmasya tadatmanam srijamyaham" — Whenever Dharma declines and Adharma rises, the Lord incarnates to restore balance. "Devotees from across the region are warmly invited to partake in this rare spiritual opportunity and attain divine insight, peace, and blessings. This event stands as a beacon of dharma, devotion, and cultural heritage in the heart of Manthani.

Officials inspecting various development works.

"Rayala Kishore, Yellandu Constituency, July 5, Indian Chronicle:"With the co-operation of the central and state governments, officials toured various developmental and construction works sanctioned by the government in the Mandals, including the Local Body Additional Collector and the DRDO Vidya Chandana. "To begin with, on Saturday, they visited Rompedu village to inspect the land sanctioned by the Revenue Department for establishing a Plastic Waste Management Unit and expressed satisfaction over the site. "Subsequently, in Nayakulagudem village, they examined the construction work of a Poultry Mother Unit sanctioned under the Employment Guarantee Scheme and IKP SERP. Speaking with the beneficiary, Cheemala Kotamma, they advised her—as someone already experienced in poultry farming—to take proper care and ensure the birds do not contract any diseases. "They instructed that the construction, which has a total budget of 5 lakh rupees (3 lakhs sanctioned through EGS and 2 lakhs from an IKP group bank loan), should be completed quickly. After checking the material and workmanship quality, they expressed satisfaction and advised that EGS payments be processed promptly. "They created awareness among the community on social security schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, and Atal Pension Yojana, encouraging all self-help group members and their families to get insured. "In addition, they urged people to make use of employment generation programs under the Prime Minister's Employment Guarantee Scheme and the business loans provided by the



government. "At Bojjayigudem village, they supervised the construction works of community sanitary toilets and a shopping complex sanctioned to the Lakshmi village association and women's groups, inspecting the quality standards and measurements. "Participating in the program were MPDO Dhansingh, MPO Chiranjeevi, CC Kommalu, Telangana Cultural Art Envoys Balu, Sneha Kalabrundam, who performed songs to raise awareness about seasonal diseases and plastic usage. Also present were Secretaries Anvesh, Maunika, Pasha, Village Association President Lakshmi Bai, VVOs Ramadevi and Somayya, members of the women's associations, and others.

Tgswreis Cautions Public Against Middlemen Cheating On Gurkul Admissions

Hyderabad, July 5 The Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TGSWREIS) Hyderabad, issued a public caution following alarming reports of fraudulent practices by middlemen claiming to secure admissions into its Gurukulam schools. These unauthorised agents are allegedly collecting money from unsuspecting parents under false assurances of guaranteed admission, exploiting the trust and aspirations of families from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Sources within TGSWREIS revealed that certain individuals are going to the extent of using fabricated letter-heads bearing the names and logos of elected public representatives, including MLAs and MPs, to convince parents of their legitimacy. These acts have come to the attention of the Society, prompting it to urge the public not to fall prey to such deceit. Officials categorically clarified that no seat in any of the Gurukulam institutions is allotted through recommendation or financial exchange. The Society reiterated that its admission process is entirely merit-based and has been functioning with full transparency this year unlike previous years. This year merit list along with mark is also published in the Society website. All applications are processed digitally and student selection is determined solely by merit through performance in a common entrance examination conducted in February 2025. Once the selection is made, the names of the successful candidates are listed on the official website, and SMS notifications are sent directly to the registered mobile numbers provided during the application process. In addition, parents are guided through voice message also.

In past years, there were several complaints of seats being influenced by intermediaries or through monetary deals. In response, TGSWREIS implemented sweeping re-

forms in 2024 to prevent discretionary admissions, eliminate corruption, and ensure that deserving students from the most marginalised and low-income backgrounds receive equal opportunity. As a result, fraudulent agents are now resorting to more sophisticated deceptions, including forged documents and political name-dropping, to lure poor families. The Society has firmly advised parents and guardians not to engage with any individuals or groups who promise admission in exchange for money or through recommendation. They are encouraged to immediately report any such approaches to the nearest police station, as fabricating documents and misrepresenting authority constitutes a criminal offence. Officials stressed that such cases will be pursued with legal action to deter further incidents. Additionally, in cases where selected students do not join or report within the stipulated time, the resulting vacant seats are filled strictly on the basis of the next eligible candidates as per the merit list. No deviation from this transparent process is allowed under any circumstances. Public is informed that the admission is and will be only merit-based and there is no other means to secure the seat. TSWREIS appeals to the public, media, and community stakeholders to stay alert and contribute to awareness efforts, ensuring that the dreams of marginalised students are not sabotaged by fraudulent elements. The Society also urges parents to rely solely on official communication from the institution and to check for verified information on its website, <https://tgswreis.telangana.gov>. Admission into Gurukulam schools is not for sale, the Society affirmed, adding that no fabricated letter, recommendation, or payment can replace merit. Parents are, therefore, requested to act with caution, avoid being misled, and cooperate in upholding the integrity of the admission process.

Gau Katha Revived As Powerful Medium For Cow Protection & Dharma

Hyderabad, July 5 Through Gau Katha, the next generation learns not just history, but humility, said Radhakrishna Maharaj, a well-known Gau Katha Expert. Gau Katha matters more now than ever—it educates people about the cow's vital role in organic farming, Ayurveda, and the rural economy. He said Gau Katha is not just storytelling—it is a sacred tradition that honours Gau Mata (Mother Cow) and emphasises her spiritual, ecological, and societal significance. Speaking at a Gau Katha Mahotsav organised by Dhyan Foundation at SNC Convention, Pillar No. 268, Attapur, where over 2,000 cow devotees gathered. His orations are held every day till July 7. "The age-old tradition of Gau Katha is now being revived and has become one of the most preferred and impactful forms of spreading the message about cow protection, dharma, and sustainable living," he said. Once confined to temples and villages, Gau Katha has now reached towns and convention halls. Radhakrishna Maharaj, a revered saint from Rajasthan, has been touring the country for over 26 years, inspiring awareness, policy advocacy, and community responsibility for cow protection. "Gau Katha is not merely a recital—it's a prayer, a path, and a call to action," he said. All governments must strictly protect cows from slaughter and trafficking," Radhakrishna Maharaj emphasised. "States like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh have introduced several welfare measures and incentives to protect cows. We expect the Telangana gov-

ernment to take similar proactive steps. We urge both State and Union governments to act with greater urgency and commitment to cow protection," he added.

Dhyan Foundation, a spiritual and volunteer-led organisation working in the fields of yoga, meditation, and animal welfare, invited Radhakrishna Maharaj for the event. The Foundation operates 47 gau shalas across India, sheltering over 70,000 cows, and works closely with the Border Security Forces (BSF) to rescue cows from cross-border traffickin “The cow is not just a symbol; she is the soul of Indian culture. Gau Katha is her voice—gentle, nourishing, and divine,” said Maharaj. These sacred stories—drawn from the Vedas, Puranas, and epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata—remind us of Lord Krishna, the divine cowherd, and India’s millennia-old bond with the cow. Through songs, bhajans, and storytelling, Gau Katha fosters values like non-violence, service, compassion, and gratitude, making it a powerful educational tool for all generations. It also highlights the cow’s contributions to organic farming, Ayurveda, and village economies, where cow dung and urine are used in eco-friendly fertilisers, medicine, and fuel. Hyderabad alone is home to over 35 cow shelters, collectively caring for 20,000+ rescued cows. Across Telangana, there are over 500 shelters, supporting nearly one lakh cows. The Dhyan Foundation runs two cow shelters in Telangana—at Shamshabad and Yadagirigutta—housing close to 3000Plus Gauvansh.

President Post Is An Honour: Ramachandra Rao

Hyderabad, July 5 “The State BJP party president post is the honour I have received for the work I have done for the party. It is not a position given to me. This is the respect given to a party worker. This is the respect given to lakhs of workers,” said the newly appointed BJP State chief Ramachandra Rao today. Rao took charge as the State party president at the party’s State office Saturday. Later, he spoke to the media. He said the BJP was a party with 45 lakh workers. He said there was a sacrifice of many party workers. He revealed that BJP was a party with 14 crore members across the country.

He criticized the Congress and BRS parties for not keeping the trust given by the people. He was angry that the BRS and Congress parties cheated farmers, students, unemployed people and women. He said the Chief Minister had directly admitted his helplessness. He made comments that if the farmers are cheated, they would suffer. He said

the people would teach both the parties a lesson in the upcoming local body elections. Rao said the BJP was ready to discuss with CM Revanth Reddy about public problems and challenged the CM to come to a discussion if he is sincere. He advised the CM to rethink before making allegations against the BJP. He made comments by saying that what AICC president Kharge, CM Revanth Reddy and the Congress party leaders should know was that AICC stands for All India Cheating Committee. He expressed confidence that the next government in the State would be led by the BJP. He predicted that people were going to give 90 assembly seats to the BJP in Telangana. He said the people had given a warning to the Congress and the BRS parties in the MLC elections. He noted that the Congress got only two MLA seats in GHMC. Ramachandra Rao lashed out by saying that the credit for turning a rich State into a debt-ridden State belongs to the BRS and Congress parties.

Officials Remove Chennamaneni Ramesh's Name From Voters' List

Hyderabad, July 5 (NSS): State Government Whip and Vemulawada MLA Adi Srinivas has won another victory in a long legal battle against former MLA Chennamaneni Ramesh. The State government officials removed the name of former MLA Chennamaneni Ramesh from the Vemulawada assembly constituency voters' list. The officials put up a notice at the gate of Ramesh's residence informing him about the removal of his name from the voters' list.

It may be noted here that the Telangana High Court

had, in its verdict, ruled that Chennamaneni Ramesh was not an Indian citizen. Following this, MLA Adi Srinivas asked the officials to remove Chennamaneni Ramesh's name from the voter list based on the High Court's verdict. The Officials issued notices regarding the removal of his name from the voter list. However, Chennamaneni Ramesh did not respond to the officials' notice. Following this, the officials removed Ramesh's name from the voter list. This is the first time in the country that the name of a party leader, who won as an MLA for four times has been removed from the voters' list.

Kodanda Counters Ktr's Remarks

Hyderabad, July 5 The Chairman of the State Farmers' Commission M. Kodanda Reddy today countered the remarks made by BRS party working president KTR. He told KTR that 30 lakh families, who had land rights were not given the titles due to the Dharani portal brought in by his party government. When former CM KCR was holding the Revenue department, he abolished the Bhoodan Board and broke down the doors at midnight and took away the land documents of the board. KCR is credited with auctioning the lands assigned to the poor by former PM Indira Gandhi to real estate people. As the IT Minister, KTR handed over all the details of the Telangana farmers' lands to a bankrupt American company called QUANTELA. He gave them the details of the farmers' bank account numbers and Aadhaar cards. KCR is credited with playing with the lives of 30 lakh farmers' families by putting them in the hands of a foreign company. KCR, who managed the Revenue Department and KTR, who cheated the farmers as IT Minister, are both



criminals in the issue," he alleged. Reddy recalled that it was the KCR government that handcuffed the chilli farmers in Khammam district for demanding a fair price in the market for their produce. He said the hypocritical love that KTR was showing towards the farmers today was astonishing to all.

Cmd Balram Presents Certificates To Singareni's First Women Rescue Team

Singareni Bhavan, July 5 Singareni CMD N. Balram has called upon the women rescue team of Singareni to prove their capabilities in rescue operations and to deliver the best services with skill, hard work, and dedication. For the first time in the 136-year history of Singareni, he felicitated the first women's rescue team trained in rescue operations and presented certificates to them on Saturday at Singareni Bhavan, Hyderabad.

He expressed his happiness over the formation of the first women's rescue team in Singareni and providing them with specialized training. He emphasized that the women rescue team should demonstrate its strength and capabilities during emergencies and service activities. He conveyed his best wishes for them to participate in national and international rescue competitions soon, bringing laurels to Singareni. He highlighted that Singareni rescue teams recently rendered commendable services during the Srisailem tunnel mishap, the fire accident at Hyderabad, and the accident that occurred in Tamil Nadu, earning widespread appreciation. He informed that Singareni rescue stations are providing specialized training to the State and Central di-

Guv Presents Medical Excellence Awards

Hyderabad, July 5 Governor Jishnu Dev Varma graced the Medical Excellence Awards–2025 as chief guest, organized by the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS), Hyderabad District Branch, on the occasion of National Doctor's Day. The ceremony was held at Samskruthi, Raj Bhavan Community Hall, Hyderabad. In his address, the Governor paid glowing tributes to Bharat Ratna Dr B.C. Roy, underlining the legacy of compassionate and ethical healthcare he championed. Applauding the tireless dedication of doctors across Telangana, the Governor remarked that the true reward for a doctor lies in selfless service to humanity, beyond the conferment of awards.

Reflecting on India's strides in healthcare infrastructure and wellness-centric approaches, the Governor urged members of the medical fraternity to extend their expertise voluntarily for the benefit of the underserved. "Let us move from commerce to compassion in the field of medicine," he emphasized.

16-year-old dies after drinking soft drink laced with poison, uncle arrested for murder in Mumbai

GNS News Agency, July 5

Mumbai murder case, 19-year-old kills nephew, minor murdered by uncle, Mumbai police murder arrest, family dispute murder Mumbai. As per police, he broke down and confessed to having killed the minor. (File photo) The Mumbai police arrested a 19-year-old man for allegedly murdering his 16-year-old nephew as the latter was allegedly 'ignoring him' and not answering his calls. Senior inspector Anagha Satavase said on June 28, when the minor did not return home, his family members started looking for him and approached police. Next day, his body was found at his uncle's residence, who too was vomiting and complaining of stomach ache. He was also rushed to the hospital.

After being given basic treatment, the uncle claimed to the police that he and his nephew had gone to meet the latter's friends who gave them an energy drink. He said they both started feeling unwell on coming home and started vomiting.

The uncle said that he slept off and woke up in the afternoon on June 28. When he woke up, he found the minor unconscious and the police also arrived at his residence around the same time. The police were however suspicious of his version and based on enquiries, found that the accused had purchased an energy drink and there was no one else when they consumed it near the shop. The police also found out that the accused was lying about the deceased's two friends giving them a drink. Infact, a few friends of the minor told the police that when they were

Seen outside BJP leader's house in Rajkot, public benches with Surat inscription spark political row in Gujarat

GNS News Agency, July 5

Surat to Rajkot benches controversy, Surat public benches outside BJP leader house, AAP allegations on BJP Gujarati, MLA grant benches Surat, The controversy began on Friday evening, when AAP Corporator of Surat Municipal Corporation's (SMC) ward no. 17, Vipul Suhagiya, uploaded photos and videos of six benches parked outside the main gate of a house. (Express photo) Six public benches, having allegedly travelled a distance of 450 kilometres from Surat to Rajkot, have become a cause of political controversy in Gujarat. Spotted outside the house of a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader in Rajkot's Old Pipaliya village, the inscription on these stone benches indicate they are from Surat. While the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) alleged that the benches, which were to be allotted to the citizens of Surat, had reached directly to Rajkot, a minister in Gujarat government said the benches were old and insisted that they were still being used for the public. The AAP, meanwhile, said it would approach the Surat district collector, seeking action in the matter.

The controversy began on Friday evening, when AAP Corporation of Surat Municipal Corporation's (SMC) ward no. 17, Vipul Suhagiya, uploaded photos and videos of six benches parked outside the main gate of a house. Written in Gujarati, the inscriptions on the benches say they were "allotted from MLA Praful Pansheriya from Kamrej seat (Surat), grant year 2016-17, and MP Prabhubhai Vasava from Bardoli (Surat), grant year 2022-23". Pansheriya is now a Minister of State for Primary, Secondary and Higher Education with the Gujarat government. In the social media post, Suhagiya alleged that the benches were transported from Surat to Rajkot by BJP leader Bharat Vadodariya, and had been placed outside his house. Vadodariya had contested the 2021 SMC election but lost.

Suhagiya told The Indian Express, “I got the videos and photos from my friend who is a resident of Old Pipaliya village. He told me that the benches were placed outside the house of Vadodariya, who hails from the village and is settled in Surat City. The purpose of posting such videos and photos on social media is to ensure that government officials are aware of where the benches allotted through

saster response teams.

He said that the latest equipment and support tools have been procured to strengthen Singareni rescue operations. At the same time, he revealed plans to develop the Mines Rescue Station at Ramagundam-2 Area into a world-class rescue training center. On the occasion, GM (Rescue) Srinivas Reddy stated that, under the directions of CMD N. Balram, for the first time in Singareni, 13 women officers were selected for the women's rescue team and were given 14 days of specialized training. He added that during the training, the women officers demonstrated their strength and capabilities on par with their male counterparts. He informed that preparations are underway to train the women's team for upcoming rescue competitions as well. Director (Projects and Planning) K. Venkateswarlu, Director (PA&W) Goutham Potru, Executive Director (Coal Movement) S.D.M. Subhani, and HOD (Marketing) T. Srinivas participated in the felicitation program. On the occasion, appreciation certificates were presented to rescue trainers Tirupati, Kishan Rao, Sandeep, and Sajid Ali, who provided training to the women's rescue staff.

The Governor lauded the Indian Red Cross Society for its wide-ranging health outreach, including mobile medical units, blood donation campaigns, CPR training, elder care programs, and services for the differently abled. He noted with appreciation the establishment of a new Blood Centre at Masab Tank and IRCS's plans to introduce generic medicine outlets and elder wellness initiatives. Distinguished doctors from Telangana were felicitated for their exemplary contributions to public health on the occasion. The Governor also appealed to the medical community to dedicate at least one day a week to voluntary service and actively participate in national health campaigns such as the TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan. Hyderabad District Collector Harichandra Dasari, IAS, senior officials from Raj Bhavan, IRCS State and Hyderabad District office-bearers, eminent doctors, and their families have attended the programme.



seated with the deceased in an autorickshaw, the accused had come there and was upset with the minor. Police waited for the accused to be discharged from the hospital on Friday, following which they interrogated him. As per police, he broke down and confessed to having killed the minor. Police said the accused was upset with the minor as the latter would not answer his calls or even acknowledge him. He would only answer his calls or come to him when he wanted money. Police said seeing the minor with his friends angered the 19-year-old, who had recently gone to Bihar's Madhubani, where he hails from. From there, he brought some tablets used to kill insects to Mumbai. He then crushed the tablets and added it to the energy drink that he knew his relative liked. Police said in order to prove nothing was amiss, he took a few sips of the energy drink himself and then gave it to the deceased, who gulped it down that eventually led to his death.



MP and MLA grants and funds are being allocated. If Vadodariya wanted benches, he should have asked the elected MLA or MP of his native village." Suhagiya further added, "We (AAP) will complain about this issue to the Surat district collector next week." When contacted, Minister Pansheriya said, "I have also come across such videos and photos, and it is from my last term. Generally, we provide benches for people to sit in a (housing) society in Surat city. Somebody may have taken such old benches from some society in Surat city and transported them to their native village. Even there, the benches are kept on a paved block path, and are not being privately used. Even there, they are meant for public use." Talking to The Indian Express, Bardoli BJP MP Prabhu Vasava said, "tion."

Every Revenue Village Will Have A Gpo: Ponguketi

Hyderabad, July 5 (NSS): Revenue Minister Ponguketi Srinivas Reddy today made it clear that every revenue village would have GPO (Grama Paripalana Adhikari) in the State. He said they had taken up the recruitment of the GPOs to strengthen the revenue system He made these remarks during a meeting with the Revenue department employees.

Earth trapping heat has doubled in 20 years



GNS News Agency, July 5

How do you measure climate change? One way is by recording temperatures in different places over a long period of time. While this works well, natural variation can make it harder to see longer-term trends. But another approach can give us a very clear sense of what's going on: track how much heat enters Earth's atmosphere and how much heat leaves. This is Earth's energy budget, and it's now well and truly out of balance. Our recent research found this imbalance has more than doubled over the last 20 years. Other researchers have come up with similar conclusions.

This imbalance is now substantially more than climate models have suggested. In the mid-2000s, the energy imbalance was about 0.6 watts per square metre (W/m2) on average. In recent years, the average was about 1.3 W/m2. This means the rate at which energy is accumulating near the planet's surface has doubled. These findings suggest climate change might well accelerate in the coming years. Worse still, this worrying imbalance is emerging even as funding uncertainty in the United States threatens our ability to track the flows of heat. Earth's energy budget functions a bit like your bank account, where money comes in and money goes out. If you reduce your spending, you'll build up cash in your account. Here, energy is the currency. Life on Earth depends on a balance between heat coming in from the Sun and heat leaving. This balance is tipping to one side. Solar energy hits Earth and warms it. The atmosphere's heat-trapping greenhouse gases keep some of this energy. But the burning of coal, oil and gas has now added more than two trillion tonnes of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. These trap more and more heat, preventing it from leaving. Some of this extra heat is warming the land or melting sea ice, glaciers and ice sheets. But this is a tiny fraction as 90 per cent has gone into the oceans due to their huge heat capacity. Earth naturally sheds heat in several ways. One way is by reflecting incoming heat of clouds, snow and ice and back out to space. Infrared radiation is also emitted back to space. From the beginning of human civilisation up until just

a century ago, the average surface temperature was about 14°C. The accumulating energy imbalance has now pushed average temperatures 1.3-1.5°C higher. Scientists keep track of the energy budget in two ways. First, we can directly measure the heat coming from the Sun and going back out to space, using the sensitive radiometers on monitoring satellites. This dataset and its predecessors date back to the late 1980s. Second, we can accurately track the build-up of heat in the oceans and atmosphere by taking temperature readings. Thousands of robotic floats have monitored temperatures in the world's oceans since the 1990s. Both methods show the energy imbalance has grown rapidly.

Doubling of the energy imbalance has come as a shock, because the sophisticated climate models we use largely didn't predict such a large and rapid change. Typically, the models forecast less than half of the change we're seeing in the real world. Why has it changed so fast? We don't yet have a full explanation. But new research suggests changes in clouds is a big factor. Clouds have a cooling effect overall. But the area covered by highly reflective white clouds has shrunk, while the area of jumbled, less reflective clouds has grown. It isn't clear why the clouds are changing. One possible factor could be the consequences of successful efforts to reduce sulphur in shipping fuel from 2020, as burning the dirtier fuel may have had a brightening effect on clouds. However, the accelerating energy budget imbalance began before this change. Natural fluctuations in the climate system such as the Pacific Decadal Oscillation might also be playing a role. Finally – and most worryingly – the cloud changes might be part of a trend caused by global warming itself, that is, positive feedback on climate change. What does this mean? These findings suggest recent extremely hot years are not one-offs but may reflect a strengthening of warming over the coming decade or longer. This will mean a higher chance of more intense climate impacts from searing heatwaves, droughts and extreme rains on land, and more intense marine heatwaves. This imbalance may lead to worse longer-term consequences. New research shows the only climate models coming close to simulating real world measurements are those with a higher "climate sensitivity". We don't know yet whether other factors are at play, however. It's still too early to definitively say we are on a high-sensitivity trajectory. We've known the solution for a long time: stop the routine burning of fossil fuels and phase out human activities causing emissions such as deforestation. Keeping accurate records over long periods of time is essential if we are to spot unexpected changes. Satellites are our advance warning system, telling us about heat storage changes roughly a decade before other methods. But funding cuts and drastic priority shifts may threaten essential satellite climate monitoring.

Emergency: The betrayal that we must never forget, never repeat

GNS News Agency, July 5

It is tempting to believe that the national Emergency is history—done and dusted. Some like AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge even scoff, saying, "It's a forgotten issue, raked up only by the BJP to hide its failures." But such indifference is dangerous. The very reason we must observe this black chapter is to remind those born after 1975 that India once witnessed its Constitution being subverted, its democracy throttled, federalism undermined, and its people robbed of liberty and dignity. The Emergency was not just a moment—it was a mindset. A mindset that still lurks in the corridors of power, waiting for complacency to return. It must not be remembered merely as a historical footnote but as a blood-stained warning. A reminder that when citizens sleep, tyranny wakes. When a nation forgets to question, it forfeits its right to be free. Andhra Pradesh recently witnessed how blind faith in a single leader without vision and vindictive political attitude can ruin a state. Between 2019 and 2024, under Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, governance turned autocratic. The man earned the moniker of a political "psycho," and his party, the YSRCP, having been routed, still hasn't learned any lessons. Their brand of rule eerily echoed Emergency-era overreach—draconian laws, surveillance of dissent, and misuse of institutions. That is why we must understand: the tools of tyranny are always just a signature away from misuse. If we cannot guarantee that it won't happen again, we've learned nothing. And that would be the second betrayal.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in the newly released Emergency Diaries, recounts his role as a young RSS pracharak resisting Indra Gandhi's dictatorship. The book compiles first-hand accounts from those who stood with him in that fight. It's not about glorifying one man—it's about preserving the memory of those who fought to keep India democratic.

While I do not wish to romanticise the rulers who imposed it, I refuse to whitewash the horrors either. Sanjay Gandhi—the de facto prime minister—led a brutal sterilisation campaign. Over 1.07 crore procedures were carried out in two years. People were denied rations, jobs, healthcare, and even housing if they had more than two or three children and resisted sterilisation. Coercion replaced compassion. Dignity was crushed. As a student at Delhi University, I witnessed this first-hand. I barely escaped arrest for resisting it. I remember the slogan that defines our collective duty today: Remember. Resist. Reclaim.

Two moments are etched in my memory with permanence. The first: the night of June 25, 1975, when India lost its voice to Emergency. The second: the horrific 1984 anti-Sikh riots following Indra Gandhi's assassination. Thousands were killed, injured, and displaced. And yet, all Rajiv Gandhi could say was, "When a big tree falls, the earth shakes." That was not just insensitivity—it was complicity cloaked in metaphor. Today, when Congress spokespersons and self-styled intellectuals lambast the Modi government for not calling a special Parliament session after Operation Sindoor or for not "consulting" the opposition, I ask: did you ever question the undemocratic decisions under Congress rule?

Take bank nationalisation in 1969. Was there a cabinet debate? No. The PMO summoned a Finance Ministry official and demanded a draft in three hours. An ordinance was issued unilaterally. When Emergency was imposed in 1975, even key ministers were unaware. Indra Gandhi called a meeting of select ministers including Jagjivan Ram during the early hours of June 26, told them of her decision, and then announced it on Akashvani. No agenda papers, no consultation, just dictation. This was not governance—it was authoritarianism. What followed was a national assault. A constitutional coup. At midnight—not to awaken a nation like Nehru once dreamed, but to push it into darkness—Indira Gandhi suspended the Constitution, jailed opposition leaders, censored the press, and turned institutions into loyalist echo chambers. Over 100,000 people were jailed under preventive detention laws like MISA (Maintenance of



Internal Security Act). Parliament became a puppet theatre. The media, once the fourth pillar, fell to its knees. The bureaucracy obeyed whispered orders. The Constitution was turned into a pliable sheet of rubber. Fundamental Rights were suspended. Habeas corpus—the last refuge of individual liberty—was buried. The Supreme Court, the last hope, failed in its duty during the infamous ADM Jabalpur case. Only one judge—Justice H R Khanna—had the courage to dissent. For that, he was superseded and denied the Chief Justice's post. It took the 44th Amendment later to undo the worst constitutional wreckage. The Emergency was not imposed because of any real internal threat. It was to save Indra Gandhi's political career after the Allahabad High Court invalidated her election. The Congress sycophancy of that era echoed in slogans like "Indira is India, and India is Indira." What followed was not democracy—it was despotism draped in national flags. Where were the voices of conscience then? Today's loud liberal intellectuals—editors, poets, professors—pontificate on freedoms, but where were they when journalists were jailed and newspaper printing presses were sealed? Their silence then was louder than their activism today. The Emergency also exposed how easily our institutions could crumble. They were not destroyed from outside—but from within. The executive bent them. The judiciary surrendered. The press folded. The opposition was crushed. And yet, democracy survived—not because of institutional bravery but because of public resistance. At the helm of that resistance stood Jayaprakash Narayan. JP was no career politician—he was the moral compass of the nation. His call for "Total Revolution" united students, farmers, intellectuals, and politicians across ideologies. His arrest wasn't just an attack on a man—it was an attack on the soul of India. He rightly said, "This is not a struggle for power. It is a struggle for the soul of the nation."

Telangana DCA arrests two for distributing counterfeit Rosuvastatin tablets

Hyderabad: The Drugs Control Administration (DCA) of Telangana has arrested two individuals for their involvement in the distribution of counterfeit drugs, specifically 'Rosuvastatin F 20' and 'Rosuvastatin F 10' tablets — a combination of Rosuvastatin and Fenofibrate — falsely claimed to be manufactured by Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd.

The arrested persons have been identified as Praveen Kumar Kanodia of Ganga Pharma Distributors and Mithinti Srinivas of Sri Nandini Pharma, Sultan Bazar. They were produced before the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Court in Nampally, which remanded them to 14 days in judicial custody at Chanchalguda Jail, according to Shahnawaz Qasim, Director General, DCA. Acting on intelligence inputs, DCA officials raided the premises of both distributors, uncovering large quantities of counterfeit tablets. These drugs are commonly used to reduce cholesterol and triglyceride levels and to prevent cardiovascular diseases.

How Pune nurtured the ‘parachute woman of India’



GNS News Agency, July 5

When India announced the launch of Operation Sindoor against Pakistan, Pune-based Smita Yeole was out of the country. What she saw stirred her in a deeply personal way, for Smita was in the business of manufacturing a product closely linked to war: parachutes. Since 2004, Mumbai-based Oriental Weaving and Processing Mills, which was founded by Smita's late father, Vishwanath Chalke, has been making parachutes that are used for dropping flares, bombs, drones, cargo, missiles, and humans from aircraft. "There are hundreds of varieties of parachutes," says Smita, the managing director of the company, adding that there are underwater parachutes and parachutes that drop 16,000 kg tanks from an aircraft in high-altitude regions such as Leh.

Oriental supplies parachutes to the armed forces, and in 2009-10, it became the first private Indian company to export parachutes internationally. While the company manufactures more than 50 products, there is no website listing these. "I cannot disclose details because these are customer-specific and related to a country's defence. I have a lot of customers who are against each other, so I cannot share one person's matter with another," she says. The entrepreneur supplies parachutes to the Israelis and the UK, among others. A quick learner

Smita lives in a ground-floor apartment full of comfortable furniture and artefacts from around the world. The drawing room looks out at a converted outdoor dining space, and the sounds of the kitchen meander through conversations. As Smita talks about enjoying cooking and gardening, the domestic everydayness is a striking contrast to the high-action life-and-death scenarios in which she has made her mark. A Mumbai girl, Smita, who calls herself a "textile person", had worked in a few companies before joining her father's business. "I started at the bottom of the ladder," she says. In 1988, Smita had an arranged marriage with Ajay Yeole, a metallurgist and gold medal-winning College of Engineering, Pune, alumnus, who worked at Tata Motors and came to Pune. "For one year, I was sitting at home and doing nothing. I told my husband, 'Boss, I cannot stay

at home like this. You better do something or I will have to keep shuffling between Bombay and Pune", she recalls.

Ajay took it upon himself to start a small aluminium foundry in Uttam Nagar in 1990. While helping him, Smita learned the foundry business from the workers, the consultants and the day-to-day working. By 1997-98, it became the top aluminium foundry in Pune. Smita brought the same attitude to her father's business in 1999-2000. Blessed with a hands-on husband and supportive mother-in-law who took care of their two sons, she began to shuttle between Mumbai and Pune. "I spent Mondays, Tuesdays, half of Wednesdays, and half of Fridays working with my husband at the foundry. Thursdays used to be for my father's textile business in Mumbai. On Saturdays and Sundays, I used to be at home," she says. A leap forward Smita's father had pioneered making parachute fabric in India in the 1970s, after the India-Pakistan war. "India was importing those fabrics, and my dad indigenised these," she says. She was visiting the Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment in Agra with him when a director told her, "You have made this fabric. Why don't you stitch it up for me?" This was the first time that a defence lab was asking somebody outside the lab, or a non-defence production company, to make parachutes. Smita, who read drawings like a book because of her foundry experience, took up the task.

The initial challenges included finding tailors to gain knowledge. Besides fabric and cords, a parachute needs tapes, cotton yarn, webbing and metal parts that are sourced from all over India. All components have to be sent for testing to the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies before they are applied to the product. Gradually, the company established vendors and pipelines and fine-tuned its systems. Today, the company operates out of three locations—Gujarat, where the thread is woven; Mumbai, where the fabric is processed with a centralised lab and head office; and Agra, where the parachute fabrication is done. "We bagged orders one after the other. I have taken transfer of technology for the SU-30, i.e. the Sukhoi aircraft, the LCA aircraft, the Hawk and the MiG, among others. I make all these parachutes for the defence. Earlier, I used to supply only to India, now I supply globally," she says. Parachutes for the future Smita regularly attends exhibitions abroad, meets people, learns and incorporates the developments in her work. Once, former Union minister Smriti Irani had referred to Smita as the Indian woman manufacturing parachutes. Yet, at meetings with suppliers in India, she says, she often meets people who want to "speak to Mr Yeole".

Smita, who is also the vice-president of the prestigious Independence-era organisation, The Synthetic and Art Silk Mills Research Association, which is linked to the Ministry of Textiles, is optimistic about the future. "Earlier, parachute fabric was made on an ordinary loom; now, it is made on water jet looms. The quality has improved manifold," she says. AI has also made it "easy to assimilate data", she adds. "An abiding challenge is the availability of the yarn for making the fabric. It is all imported. When India becomes self-sufficient in that, the country will be on solid ground," says Smita. Ironically, Smita has never used a parachute herself. "Maybe...one day I have to do it. It is on my bucket list," she says.

‘If found guilty, he should get maximum punishment’: Father of Monojit Mishra, prime accused in Kolkata rape case, speaks out

GNS News Agency, July 5

Two days after Monojit Mishra was arrested in the Kolkata law college rape case, his father is still coming to terms with the news that his son has been accused of raping and assaulting a 24-year-old student for hours. A priest from Kalighat, Mishra's father (name withheld on request) said he was ashamed after hearing the news. "We stay in a 6 x 8 ft room. We worked so hard and rose from the lower strata of society to make him a lawyer. It is hard to believe that my son has done it," he said, speaking to The Indian Express over the phone.

"He is my son. I worked very hard to make him a lawyer. But I must say, if the judiciary, after seeing all the evidence, finds him to be guilty, he should be given the toughest punishment, the maximum punishment. I will accept it with my head bowed," he added. Mishra, 31, the prime accused in the rape case, is among the four accused arrested. A former member of the ruling Trinamool Congress's (TMC's) student wing and a former president of its college unit, he allegedly wielded immense clout on the law college campus. The TMC has claimed that Mishra is no longer associated with the party.

Asked if he would pursue the case for his son, Mishra's father said, "I will not pursue the case or fight a legal battle. Frankly, I cannot afford it. It is a fact that as a father, one's duty is to do everything to see his son become something. What more can a father do? Then this happens." Mishra's father said he and his son have been estranged for the last



five years. "We have not had any communication for the last five-six years. He is so busy. I live on my own money. Sometimes clients come enquiring about him, and I tell them this is not his chamber. Since this is his permanent address, his ATM cards and other things come. He collects it," Mishra's father said. According to him, since school, Mishra had supported the TMC. "Later, when he joined law college, he became a leader there. There was so much factionalism in the TMC in his college. There were cases and counter-cases...which is normal in college politics," he added.

Mishra's father said he loved "being called 'Dada Dada' in college", liked it when students ran behind him, enjoyed felicitations, etc. "I always wanted him to be a big lawyer. Now see what happened. Now, wherever I go, I fear people will point fingers at me," he said.

Abrasion marks found around neck, body of student, says medical report

GNS News Agency, July 5

Kolkata Police personnel at the law college where the alleged rape took place Kolkata Police personnel at the law college where the alleged rape took place. The medical report of the 24-year-old student allegedly raped inside a law college campus in Kolkata has confirmed several abrasion marks on her body and said that "sexual assault cannot be ruled out". According to the report, a copy of which is with The Indian Express, the alleged incident took place between 7.30 pm and 10.50 pm on Wednesday. The survivor's medical check-up was held at 10 pm on Thursday. The medical report states: "Abrasion marks around the neck was seen." It adds, "Few marks over the (private parts) was seen", and further states that "sexual assault cannot be ruled out". The report highlighted that three 'swab tests' were undertaken.

Four people have been arrested so far in connection with the alleged incident that took place on Wednesday. While three people, including Monojit Mishra, the prime accused who is a former leader of the Trinamool Congress's student wing and an ex-student of the college, Zaib Ahmed, and Pramit Mukherjee, were arrested earlier, Pinaki Banerjee, a security guard at the college, was arrested on Saturday. While the TMC has claimed that Mishra is no longer associated with the party, Ahmed and Mukherjee are allegedly members of the college's Trinamool Chhatra



Four people have been arrested so far in connection with the alleged rape of a 24-year-old student inside a law college campus in Kolkata.

Parishad unit and Mishra's associates. The police said Mishra allegedly sexually assaulted the woman while the other two locked the door of the room from the outside. The incident has come in the backdrop of Kolkata witnessing widespread protests over the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in a state-run R G Kar Medical College last year.

Man stabbed to death after his scooter ‘grazes’ 3 pedestrians in Delhi’s Shahdara



GNS News Agency, July 5

A man was stabbed to death Friday night after the scooter he was riding allegedly grazed three pedestrians in the Geeta Colony area of Shahdara, the Delhi Police said

on Saturday. The victim was identified as Yash, 20, a resident of Rani Garden, officers said.

According to the police, at 9.41 pm on Friday, a hospital in Laxmi Nagar alerted them about a man who arrived with stab injuries. “It was stated that the man was brought by the public with a stab injury on the lower back, and he was declared dead on arrival,” a police officer said. Officers said Yash had a scuffle with Amaan, Lucky and a minor boy after his scooter grazed them near the Geeta Colony flyover. Probe revealed that the accused also chased Yash after the incident and one of them stabbed him with a knife before fleeing. Passersby rushed the victim to a hospital, the police said, adding that some local residents, who identified Yash, informed his parents who lived nearby. Prashant Gautam, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Shahdara, said CCTV footage has been collected from nearby lanes to corroborate the sequence of the events. “Prima facie, it is suspected that the incident was caused after the victim’s vehicle grazed the accused,” the DCP said. According to another police officer, Yash’s parents stated that he also had an enmity with a few people over an issue related to a woman. The family’s claims are currently being verified. The officer said that soon after the incident, several teams were formed and all three accused, including the minor, were identified and tracked down late into the night. They were apprehended from the same area. The accused are being questioned and further investigations are on, officers said. The police have also deployed extra personnel in the locality in anticipation of further tension.

40 kg of waste in 2.5 hours: How Pune Ploggers helped clean city after Palkhi processions

GNS News Agency, July 5

Following the Palkhi processions of Sant Tukaram Maharaj and Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj near Shaniwar Wada on June 21, a group of 17 volunteers from Pune Ploggers, a non-profit organisation, conducted a cleanup drive in the area. The team collected nearly 40 kilograms of waste during a two-and-a-half-hour cleanup drive left behind after the annual Palkhi procession. “We came across items like plastic bottles, food containers, footwear, and rubber mobile covers. What stood out were the large sacks of mixed food waste,” said Harsh Jain, 27, a volunteer.

He said that most of the waste was located near the temporary food and water distribution areas around Shaniwar Wada. But for volunteers like Jain, this was not a one-off gesture. It is part of a growing commitment among Pune’s youth to clean up their city, one plogging at a time — a quiet transformation that has been sweeping through the city. Pune Ploggers was launched in October 2019 by Vivek Gurav, an environmental and solutions consultant from Jaysingpur. The initiative was sparked by the growing pollution in the city. “After seeing the irresponsible dumping of waste in rivers, I realised the real problem was in the city. It needed a movement that brought people together,” Gurav said. Co-founder Bhushan More echoes the urgency that shaped the idea. “The flash floods during those years made us realise the need for a wider initiative that involves and brings citizens together,” he said. Since then, the movement has grown to over 20,000 volunteers with chapters across India and the UK. In Pune, they have conducted hundreds of clean-up drives across JM Road, Koregaon Park, Taljai Hills, ARAI Tekdi, and Hanuman Tekdi. The model is simple: jog while picking up litter. “You pick up litter, save the planet, burn calories, and drop your ego. Most people think this kind of work is beneath them but once



they join us, that changes,” More asserted.

For Sakshi Jain, 26, it began during the Covid-19 pandemic with a walk along the Mula Mutha River and a desire to make the city cleaner. A friend introduced her to the community, and she now helps organise clean-up drives as part of the core team. Regarding the type of waste they collect during clean-up drives, Jain said, “On the streets, it is mostly plastic wrappers, coffee cups, and cigarette butts while on riverbeds, we have found everything from textile waste, deity idols, and medical syringes.” More pointed out that biomedical waste is also a recurring issue across most areas of the city. “We often come across single-use plastic, disposable food packaging, textile waste, religious offerings, and alcohol bottles,” he added. According to internal estimates, the group has collected over two million kilograms of waste, with about 30 per cent being recycled and the rest for segregation and responsible management. Jain said their consistency is making an impact. She said, “We have been at it for five years now, and people are beginning to notice.” But for the founder, it is more than just clean-ups but it is about creating impact through awareness and community.

Delhi drugs control department cracks down on sale of fake cholesterol medicines

GNS News Agency, July 5

The Delhi drugs control department recently uncovered a multi-level distribution network involved in the sale and circulation of spurious Rosuvastatin F 20 tablets, a prescription drug used to manage cholesterol and triglyceride levels, officials said on Friday. The action followed a complaint from Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd, which reported that fake versions of its Rosuvastatin F 20 tablets were being sold by a retail outlet in central Delhi. The complaint mentioned a multi-level supply chain involving multiple wholesalers and distributors across the city.

Rosuvastatin F 20 is a fixed-dose combination drug containing Rosuvastatin (20 mg) and Fenofibrate (160 mg). It is commonly prescribed to patients who require medication to manage high cholesterol and triglyceride levels, especially when lifestyle changes alone are not sufficient. The drug plays a vital role in preventing serious cardiovascular conditions such as heart attacks and strokes. Drugs control department officials said Rosuvastatin F 20 tablets were a fast-moving drug, and on June 14 and 15, 1,800 spurious tablets worth Rs 88,000 were seized from two locations in Okhla and Bhagirath Palace. “On June 14, we first received a complaint from Rajinder Nagar, but no stock was found. A link was established in Okhla and Bhagirath Palace, where raids were conducted,” an official said.

Officials noted irregularities and a suspicious absence of genuine stock at several distribution points, which ultimately led them to a firm located in the Okhla Industrial



Area. “Visual inspection and comparison with authentic samples suggested that the seized products were spurious — their appearance and packaging did not match those of the legitimate manufacturer,” said an official. Here, additional suspect stock of Rosuvastatin F 20 was found. Legal samples were collected from Bhagirath Palace, Chandni Chowk — one of Delhi’s busiest medicine markets — and sent to a government laboratory for quality testing, while manufacturer verification is also underway, officials revealed. The department has secured custody permission for the seized drugs through the Delhi High Court. “We are now coordinating with authorities in other states to trace the full supply chain behind the fake medication,” the official said.

Security guard of Kolkata law college where student was raped held, fourth arrest in case

GNS News Agency, July 5

The Kolkata police Saturday arrested the security guard of a law college in the city in connection with the alleged rape of a 24-year-old student inside its campus on Wednesday. This is the fourth arrest in the case. “We have arrested a security guard of the college,” said Rupesh Kumar, Joint Commissioner of Police, Crime. He has been identified as Pinaki Banerjee, a resident of Khardaha who was on duty when the crime took place inside the college. In her complaint, a copy of which is with The Indian Express, the survivor had alleged that she was raped inside the guard room after the security guard was told to leave. “We found discrepancies in the guard’s statement and the survivor has made a direct complaint against him. His role when the crime was being committed is being investigated. He will be produced in court today,” said a senior Kolkata police officer. Earlier, the police had arrested three people over the matter, including Monojit Mishra, the prime accused who is a former leader of the Trinamool Congress’s (TMC) student wing and an ex-student of the college. The TMC has



claimed that Mishra is no longer associated with the party. The other accused have been identified as Zaib Ahmed and Pramit Mukherjee. In her complaint letter to the police, the survivor had stated that she was forcibly taken to the guard room by the three accused. The woman said she was raped, physically assaulted and threatened with dire consequences if she revealed the matter to anyone. She also stated that the accused made a video of her at the time and threatened to make it public.

As KSHEC flags ‘violations’, St Joseph’s University defends programme expansion, calls govt report a ‘misreading of norms’



GNS News Agency, July 5

St Joseph’s University has refuted allegations made by the Karnataka State Higher Education Council (KSHEC) that it violated state norms by launching new academic programmes and admitting excess students without government approval. The university, in its official response, termed the objections “a misreading of UGC norms and state-issued guidelines” and said that it would consider raising the matter with the state government.

On June 24, the Karnataka Higher Education Department announced a penalty of Rs 4 lakh on the university based on KSHEC’s inspection report which found that St Joseph’s had introduced over 20 new undergraduate programmes and admitted more than 500 additional students during the 2023–24 and 2024–25 academic years. The report also said that the institution failed to share 60 per cent of its seats with the state, as mandated for private universities. In a detailed response, Prof Dr Melwin Colaco, Registrar of St Joseph’s University, said the changes were made in good faith, based on the National Education Policy

(NEP) guidelines issued by the state. “It is our understanding that the council’s objections are based on a wrongful reading of UGC norms and the specific directions issued from time to time,” he said. Tracing the developments back to 2021, Prof Colaco explained that when the institution was still St Joseph’s College (Autonomous), affiliated to Bangalore City University, it had restructured academic offerings in response to the NEP.

“Three major programmes were reconfigured into two major combinations, thereby increasing the number of programmes offered, though the overall student intake remained the same,” he clarified. To expand access, particularly for students from marginalised communities, the institution introduced a third academic shift (Shift-III), incorporating courses from the erstwhile St Joseph’s Evening College. “A resolution to this effect was passed during the Academic Council meeting in 2021,” Prof Colaco said, adding that the government was kept informed. “We had sought formal approval from the Government of Karnataka and Bangalore City University, but there was no response. As per the circular dated August 26, 2021, autonomous colleges were permitted to introduce new programmes as long as the government was duly informed.” In July 2022, when the institution became a university, it continued offering the modified programmes, assuming continuity under NEP reforms. Approvals were sought for additional PG and PhD programmes from the KSHEC, which were later approved by an expert committee in 2023. However, during a 2025 inspection, a KSHEC member raised objections to the expanded course list and Shift-III, calling it inconsistent with UGC rules. “We explained that the shift system was introduced to optimise underutilised infrastructure. These concerns were nevertheless recorded as violations,” Prof Colaco said.

Karnataka HC declines to quash proceedings against man in ‘suicide abetment’ case following live-in partner’s death

GNS News Agency, July 5

Refusing to quash the criminal proceedings, the court stated, “...the contents of the phones, the FSL report and the testimonies recorded, do not allow this Court to step into the shoes of the trial Court. Refusing to quash the criminal proceedings, the court stated, “...the contents of the phones, the FSL report and the testimonies recorded, do not allow this Court to step into the shoes of the trial Court.” The Karnataka High Court has declined to quash proceedings against a man in connection with the alleged abetment of his live-in partner’s suicide, observing that the facts of the case had to come out in a trial.

The order was passed on Wednesday by a bench consisting of Justice M Nagaprasanna after the accused approached the high court to quash the proceedings against him under the Indian Penal code and sections of the Information Technology Act. “The nuances and textures of this tragic narrative must be unfolded in a full-blown trial,” the court stated, adding, “It cannot be forgotten that a young life has been extinguished in a manner that raises grave concern.” The accused and his partner had been in a relationship for three years and the man had allegedly promised to marry the woman. However, the woman died by suicide in December 2023, following which her father filed a complaint against her partner. The counsel for the accused argued that the statements referred to in the complaint, such as “go and die” or “do whatever you want”, could not alone be considered as abetment to suicide. He also argued that the deceased had been suffering from depression due to loss in investments and health issues. The opposing counsel stated that the investment losses faced by the accused and the deceased were beside the matter, and alleged that the accused had blackmailed her for money from time to time using her nude photographs which were in his pos-



session. He also pointed out that the Forensic Science Lab had retrieved the images from the accused’s phone, stating that a sum of Rs 51 lakh had been extorted. The court stated that this was a matter that had to come out in the trial. It said, “It is the submission of the learned Additional State Public Prosecutor that the petitioner has blackmailed or threatened the deceased to part with close to Rs 50 lakh through credit card or otherwise for his business or business of both...”

“(It) is a matter of trial as laptop and mobile phone of the petitioner is full of pictures and videos between the deceased and the petitioner, all taken during the live-in relationship of the petitioner with the deceased,” it added. Refusing to quash the criminal proceedings, the court stated, “...the contents of the phones, the FSL report and the testimonies recorded, do not allow this Court to step into the shoes of the trial Court. The plea that this is a case of mere scorned affection or a casual taunt cannot be countenanced when placed against the backdrop of deliberate humiliation and alleged extortion.”

Stark difference in labour costs pushes Maharashtra farmers to grow illegal HTBt cotton variety



GNS News Agency, July 5

Over the last few years, Laximant Kauthankar has refrained from using genetically modified cotton variety, commonly known as Bt cotton, and has completely switched to using the unauthorised Herbicide Tolerant Bt (HTBt) cotton. This farmer from Adgaon Budruk village in Akot taluka of Akola knows such cultivation is illegal but claims that simple economics pushes him towards it. “Weed control alone in Bt cotton would cost me over Rs 20,000 per acre. In the case of HTBt, the same would cost Rs 2,000. So why should I not go for it?” he asks. Kauthankar says the input shop in his village hardly sees any sale of Bt cotton — most farmers have crossed over to HTBt for the same reason as him.

Like him, other cotton growers in Maharashtra have lapped up the unauthorised transgenic cotton, fully knowing the illegality of their act. Central government regulations stipulate fines as well as jail term for the cultivation of non-authorised GM crops. India has so far allowed the commercial release of Bt cotton. Bt stands for *Bacillus thuringiensis* — the name of the bacteria whose gene has been inserted into the cotton seed. HTBt is the next generation of GM cotton and allows the plants to resist the spray of the commonly applied herbicide glyphosate for weed control. But the sale, production as well as storage of this variant is illegal in the country.

But for farmers like Kauthankar, the ground situation matters. “Consider this: for an acre of land, I would require around four cycles of weeding during the entire 6-7 month cycle of the cotton crop. For a single weeding, I would require around 15 labourers and thus the total requirement for

labourers would be around 60. At a daily wage of Rs 300 per day, the total labour expenditure for weeding turns out to be Rs 18,000. Even if I arrange the money, where are the labourers?,” said the farmer who cultivates cotton and soyabean over 40 acres of his holding. On the other hand, HTBt cotton requires spraying of the herbicide, and the total cost of this operation across the entire cotton crop cycle comes to Rs 2,000 per acre. Seed companies acknowledge this growing trend and say that of the 120 lakh hectares of cotton-growing area, around 15-20 per cent sees the cultivation of this unauthorised transgenic variety. Farmers say the seed production happens in Gujarat after which it mostly enters Maharashtra, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh. In the north, this variant has failed to gain popularity with farmers. Over the last few years, seed associations have asked the government to acknowledge the changing trend and take steps to address it. However, till date, no decision has been taken to regularise this variant. A senior seed industry official said that without regularisation, farmers are exposed to various threats like fraud. “There is no control over the sale and quality of this transgenic variety. At the end of the day, it is harmful for the industry,” the official pointed out.

Mumbai laundryman consumes fabric stain remover mistaking it for cough syrup, dies

A 59-year-old laundryman from the Lower Parel area in Mumbai died on Thursday after he allegedly accidentally consumed a chemical meant for removing stains from clothes, mistaking it for cough syrup. The man, who was suffering from a cough, had stored the chemical in the cough syrup bottle, the police said. The deceased has been identified as Sambhajit Sajai Dhobi, 59, who ran a laundry store near Deepak Talkies. According to the police, Dhobi experienced acute pain in his stomach and later vomited blood on Thursday. He was rushed to the civic-run KEM Hospital in Parel and died during the night during treatment. The NM Joshi Marg police were informed about the incident.

Practising equality in constitutional courts



GNS News Agency, July 5

Recently, the Supreme Court of India decided to refine the methodology and the criteria for designating lawyers as senior lawyers. In Jitender @ Kalla vs State (Govt.) of NCT Of Delhi (2025), the Court revisited the earlier judgments in the Indira Jaising vs Supreme Court of India cases of 2017 and 2023 and directed the High Courts in the country to frame rules in the light of the instant judgment. Delivered on May 13, 2025, it did not earn much public attention because of an erroneous notion that it dealt with an internal issue within the judiciary. The legal profession has a public character. Therefore, the inequality within the judiciary impacts not only judicial democracy but also the country's political democracy. The legal plutocracy in India is essentially systemic and it is perpetuated by the political and judicial wings of the state.

The Orwellian notion that some are more equal than the others was imported to the legal profession in the country as Section 16 of the Advocates Act, 1961. It classifies advocates into two: senior advocates and advocates. It says that, based on ability, standing at the Bar or special knowledge or experience in law, a 'deserving' advocate could be designated by the constitutional courts as a senior advocate. The very incorporation of this provision in the statute was problematic as it accepted the idea of unequal treatment of those who are otherwise equals. This led to a sharp division in the legal profession and created a legal oligarchy, which in turn deeply impacted our idea of justice. This division also had the tendency to accelerate the commercialisation of the legal profession, making it almost resemble the scene in the United States.

A Reuters report titled 'The Echo Chamber' (2014) says that in the U.S., "an elite cadre of lawyers has emerged as first among equals, giving their clients a disproportionate chance to influence the law of the land". The report added that a survey of cases between 2004 and 2012 showed that "66 of the 17,000 lawyers who petitioned the Supreme Court succeeded at getting their clients' appeals heard at a remarkable rate". The report demonstrates that during this period, less than 1% of lawyers were handling 43% of the appeals to the U.S. Supreme Court. It adds that 51 out of 66 were the most influential members of the profession and represented the corporate firms. This resulted in "a decided advantage for corporate America, and a growing insularity at the court", says the report. It is not as if we have followed suit in India. The point is that our system is vulnerable to the danger indicated by the U.S experience. Therefore, India must guard against the perils of growing inequality in the legal profession. The judgments in Indira Jaising and Jitender fail to address this fundamental issue and endorse Section 16 of the Advocates Act with inadequate reasoning. By way of these judgments, not only has the Court failed to put its house in order but has also perpetuated the inequality that can damage the justice delivery system enormously. The basic judgment in Indira Jaising (2017) authored by Justice Ranjan Gogoi, sought to 'reform' the existing practice. The Court also considered a writ petition by the National Lawyers' Campaign for Judicial Transparency and Reforms, that challenged the classification of lawyers. The validity of Section 16 of the Advocates Act alongwith the corresponding provisions in the Supreme Court Rules 2013, were assailed. The prescription for pre-audi-

ence for senior advocates was also challenged. The Court, however, did not accept the contentions. In Jitender also, the Court endorsed the validity of these clauses and asked for peripheral reforms in the process of finding out the most 'deserving'.

The latest judgment said that the point-based assessment followed hitherto "can hardly be objective" and that "it tends to be highly subjective". Yet, the Court permitted the application system to continue, saying that the application for designation could be treated as a consent for designation, as required by the Statute. That the Court wanted the High Courts to frame new rules for 'designation' does not eliminate the possibility for errors or extraneous considerations. Thus, the questions whether there could be a classification among lawyers at all and whether it passes the constitutional muster remain unaddressed. The Court, in Indira Jaising (2017) said that the wrong or improper exercise of power is not a ground to invalidate the provision in the Act. But the contention was that the classification is inherently arbitrary and discriminatory. It was argued that "even if an objective criteria is laid down and is followed, the distinction between the two classes of advocates has no nexus with.... (the) advancement of the legal system, which in any case is also and in fact, effectively serviced by advocates who are not designated as senior advocates". The Court, however, ignored this submission by saying that as long as the parameters to be followed could be prescribed by the Supreme Court, the classification would hold good. This answer begs the question. It is ironic that these norms and guidelines laid down in 2017 are held to be fallacious and subjective by the Court in 2025 in Jitender. Yet, the Court did not revisit the basic contention against the offending clauses in the laws on lawyers, by referring the case to a larger Bench.

The Indian legal profession has a symbiotic relation with the country's freedom struggle. The national movement, which was led predominantly by lawyers, presented a legal fraternity that was deeply societal and sacrificial. This was followed by the political era of Nehruvian socialism which lasted a few decades after Independence, visualising India as a socialist republic. The word 'socialist' was added in the Preamble, with effect from January 3, 1977, by way of the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution. Instead of taking note of this historical trajectory in light of the equality clauses in the Constitution, the Court, in Jaising, rather mechanically noted the practice in other jurisdictions such as Nigeria, Australia, Singapore and Ireland. That there has been such a practice of classification elsewhere cannot justify its adoption when the statutory scheme was seriously challenged on constitutional and empirical grounds in the Indian context. The result was devastating: The lack of objectivity in the process led to arbitrariness that created a legal plutocracy. Jurist F.S. Nariman lamented that we have established a caste system among lawyers. It is widely felt that the judges often get impressed by persons in their own image in the matter of designation.

This is termed as 'homo social morphing' in academic circles. In this, women and the marginalised groups were sidelined. A creamy layer was segregated based on parameters which are flawed, as acknowledged by the Court. The systemic disparity within the legal fraternity is so horrendous that thousands of eligible and deserving lawyers remain unheard and go unnoticed in court halls in India. Very often, "star lawyers" monopolise the system, without any legitimacy whatsoever, leading to intellectual apartheid. This situation negates judicial diversity based on a sense of egalitarianism and deprives the Court of the representative character of the bar. Sometimes, important national issues are adjudicated based on submissions of a chosen few, as illustrated by the recent Waqf (Amendment) Act Challenge. This too creates a situation where litigation, especially in the Court, becomes the privilege of the rich which is incompatible with India's constitutional scheme. In a profession where equality is an imperative, the Court ought not to have abetted the prevailing disparity.

Benjamin Netanyahu rejects report that Israeli soldiers have orders to shoot at Palestinians seeking aid

GNS News Agency, July 5

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Israel Katz emphatically rejected a report in the left-leaning Israeli daily Haaretz on Friday (June 27, 2025), which claimed Israeli soldiers were ordered to shoot at Palestinians approaching aid sites inside Gaza. They called the report's findings "malicious falsehoods designed to defame" the military. "More than 500 Palestinians have been killed and hundreds more wounded while seeking food since the newly formed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) began distributing aid in the territory about a month ago," according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

Palestinian witnesses say Israeli troops have opened fire at crowds on the roads heading toward the sites. Reacting to the Haaretz piece, Israel's military confirmed that it was investigating incidents in which civilians had been harmed while approaching the sites. It rejected the article's allegations "of deliberate fire toward civilians." The foundation, which is backed by an American private contractor, has been distributing food boxes at four locations, mainly in the far south of Gaza, for the past month. "GHF is not aware of any of these incidents but these allegations are too grave to ignore and we therefore call on Israel to investigate them and transparently publish the results in a timely manner," the group said in a social media post. Palestinians trying to find food have frequently encountered chaos and violence on their way to and on arrival at the aid sites. Tens of thousands are desperate for food after Israel imposed a 2 1/2 month siege on Gaza, blocking all food, water and medicine from entering the territory pending the setup of the GHF sites.

"The bodies of eight people who died on Friday had come to Shifa Hospital from a GHF site in Netzarim, although it was not immediately clear how they died," Dr. Mohamed Abu Selmyiha, the hospital's director, told The Associated Press. A GHF spokesperson challenged the report, saying they did not know of any incidents at or near their sites on Friday. "Twenty other bodies his hospital received Friday came from airstrikes across north Gaza," he said. Thousands of Palestinians walk for hours to reach the hubs, moving through Israeli military zones where witnesses say Israeli troops regularly open fire with heavy barrages to control the crowds. The Israeli military says it has only fired warning shots.

Mohammad Fawzi, a displaced man from Rafah, told the AP that he was only able to get empty boxes, not food, from the aid site in the Shalouah area in Rafah when he trekked there early Thursday morning (June 24, 2025). "We've been shot at since 6 a.m. up until 10 a.m. just to get aid and only some people were able to receive it.



More than 500 Palestinians have been killed and hundreds more wounded while seeking food since GHF began distributing aid in the territory about a month ago," according to Gaza's Health Ministry

There are martyrs and injured people. The situation is difficult," he said. The group 'Doctors Without Borders' on Friday (June 27, 2025) condemned the distribution system as "a slaughter masquerading as humanitarian aid" and called for it to be immediately shut down.

More than 6,000 people have been killed and more than 20,000 injured in Gaza since the ceasefire collapsed on March 18. Since the war began, more than 56,000 people have been killed and 1,32,000 injured, according to the Health Ministry. The Gaza Health Ministry doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants, but has said that women and children make up more than half the 56,000 dead. Israel says it only targets militants and blames civilian deaths on Hamas, accusing the militants of hiding among civilians, because they operate in populated areas. The Israel-Hamas war started following the Hamas-led attack in southern Israel on October 7, 2023, when some 1,200 people were killed and around 250 taken hostage. About 50 of them still remain in captivity in Gaza. The latest deaths include six people killed and 10 wounded in Israeli strikes on a group of citizens near the Martyrs Roundabout in the Bureij Camp in central Gaza Strip, officials at Awda Hospital in Nuseirat said on Friday (June 27, 2025). The United Nations chief meanwhile urged leaders to show "political courage" and agree to a ceasefire like the one forged between Israel and Iran. Secretary-General António Guterres also urged a return to the UN's long-tested distribution system for aid in Gaza, where he said Israeli military operations have created "a humanitarian crisis of horrific proportions." "The search for food must never be a death sentence," Mr. Guterres stressed to UN reporters on Friday.

What is next for Iran's nuclear programme?



After its recent airstrikes against Iran's facilities in Fordo, Natanz, and Isfahan, the U.S. has been claiming it has set back the Islamic Republic's nuclear weapons ambitions by decades and nullified the country's ability to make a nuclear weapon of mass destruction (WMD). The question of whether Iran actually has nuclear weapons is important because of the U.S.'s history of attempts to force regime changes in foreign countries on the pretext of threats they pose, including with WMDs. Iran currently doesn't have a nuclear weapon — but that may not be the only important question.

Doubts remain in the global arms control community over whether US bombs — including the "bunker buster" massive ordnance penetrators (MOPs) designed to destroy subsurface structures — were able to damage subterranean enrichment facilities at Natanz and Fordo and Iran's stockpile of 60% enriched uranium. The latter is of particular interest. Its existence, which the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) estimated amounted to 400 kg in May, allows Iran to enrich it further to weapons-grade uranium in a matter of days, reducing the 'breakout' time within which it can be ready with a nuclear warhead. Using high-resolution satellite data provided by private operators like Maxar, experts have spotted trucks moving in and out of the Fordo facility in the days leading up to the bombing. They have interpreted this to mean Tehran may have anticipated the bombs, including the use of MOPs, and moved fissile material and equipment away to safer locales.

Indeed, Financial Times reported on June 26 that "preliminary intelligence assessments" shared with European governments suggest Iran's 60% enriched stockpile survived the US strikes "largely intact" and that it wasn't "concentrated" in Fordo when the bombs fell. In posts on X.com, Jeffrey Lewis, director of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies in California, among others also discussed satellite images showing signs of special tunnels where Iran may have moved its enriched stockpile for safekeeping.

Thus, questions linger about the extent to which the American and Israeli bombing set Iran's nuclear weapons programme back. While estimates of the damage wrought by American bombs vary, that the Iranian nuclear programme was set back at all isn't in dispute. But as Carnegie Nuclear Policy Program co-director James Acton has contended, this is separate from the question of whether Iran can build a nuclear weapon now. It can if it has access to the 60% enriched stockpile, other enrichment facilities the world doesn't know about (the IAEA has deemed this likely), and/or the ability to operationalise new enrichment centres. If the 60% enriched stockpile persists, the nuclear option also persists. In fact Israel's actions and statements in the last month and US involvement in its war are ex-

Prada acknowledges Kolhapuri chappals as inspiration after fashion show backlash



GNS News Agency, July 5

Mumbai: Following the backlash after featuring footwear strongly resembling Kolhapuri chappals, Italian fashion house Prada has acknowledged that it was inspired by the Indian handcrafted footwear. "We acknowledge that the sandals featured in the recent Prada Men's 2026 Fashion Show are inspired by traditional Indian handcrafted footwear, with a centuries-old heritage. "We deeply recognize the cultural significance of such Indian craftsmanship," said Lorenzo Bertelli, Prada Group Head of Corporate Social Responsibility, in a letter to Lalit Gandhi, president of Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture. Bertelli's letter was in response to the one by Gandhi after outrage over Prada's footwear featured as part of its Spring-Summer 2026 collection this week.

In its show notes, Prada had described the footwear as "leather sandals", with no reference to an Indian connection, evoking outrage from many in India's fashion community as well as traditional makers of Kolhapuri chappals in western Maharashtra. In his letter, Gandhi said, "I am writing to respectfully draw your attention to a matter concerning your recently unveiled Men's Spring/Summer 2026 collection, which was showcased on 23rd June 2025 in Milan. "It has come to public attention that the collection includes footwear designs that bear a close resemblance to Kolhapuri Chappals (Footwear) a traditional handcrafted leather sandal that has been awarded Geographical Indication (GI) status by the Government of India in 2019. "Kolhapuri Chappals represent centuries-old craftsmanship rooted in the cultural fabric of Maharashtra, India. These products are not only symbolic of regional identity, but they also support the livelihoods of thousands of artisans and families in the Kolhapur region and surrounding districts," Gandhi wrote. He said, "While we appreciate global fashion houses drawing inspiration from diverse cultures, we are

pected to galvanise local support for the nuclear weapons programme and strengthen Tehran's resolve. With regards to the risk of proliferation as well as what former Indian Ambassador Mahesh Sachdev has called the "geopolitical entropy" slowly unfolding in West Asia, an equal question is whether Iran has the intention to develop nuclear weapons. Technical knowhow

As things stand, Iran has amassed both the technical knowhow and the materials required to make a nuclear weapon. Second, the Israelis and the Americans have failed to deprive Iran of these resources in their latest salvo. In fact the airstrikes against Iran from June 13 cast Tehran as the victim of foreign aggression and increased the premium on its option to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) without significant international censure. Iran's parliament has also passed a resolution to suspend its cooperation with the IAEA after having accused the agency of leaking sensitive information to facilitate Israel's targeted strikes. The international community is already wary of the possibility of a proliferation cascade in the region. It is an openly acknowledged fact that Israel possesses nuclear weapons. It isn't party to the NPT either. Saudi Arabia has said it will pursue a weapon of its own if Iran has one, as might Turkey. Former US State Department members Mark Goodman and Mark Fitzpatrick have written that this situation is reminiscent of that in the Korean Peninsula, where North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT in 2003 forced South Korea and Japan to reconsider their own options. In the right conditions, highly enriched uranium (HEU) can retain its quality for several decades. Modern equipment stores uranium in inert cladding and sealed containers devoid of any moisture, with periodic surveillance and maintenance to keep the cores within their original specifications. Even the decay heat of HEU is only around 1 mW/kg, entailing virtually no thermal or radiation damage to the surrounding components.

While Tehran's refusal to cooperate with the IAEA is suggestive, it hasn't explicitly articulated that it will pursue nuclear weapons. In fact, since the 1960s until the US unilaterally pulled out of the Iran nuclear deal in 2018, Tehran has maintained its right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy alone. But the presence of large quantities of HEU in the stockpile is intriguing. From a purely technical standpoint, the HEU can still be diverted for non-military applications. For example it can be used in a pilot enrichment cascade to study and develop nuclear reactors for naval use. At 60% enrichment, the same fissile inventory will also fit in a third of the total mass, requiring fewer cylinders to store and transport. But these are niche use-cases. Energy- and cost-wise, enriching uranium to 60% and then down-blending it to low-enriched uranium (LEU) required to run nuclear power plants is irrational. A 60% stockpile can be blended on demand to 19.75%, 5% or 3% uranium without spinning centrifuges — but it can also be achieved by blending 20% uranium with natural or depleted feed, so there is no real advantage. Likewise, down-conversion and routine safeguards can handle large volumes easily, precluding a need to reduce the number of containers. If anything, the HEU stockpile, the technical knowhow in the country, the absence of a nuclear warhead per se, and the sympathy created by the bombing allow Tehran a perfect bargaining chip: to simultaneously be in a state of pre-breakout readiness while being able to claim in earnest that it is interested in nuclear energy for peace. What this Schrodinger's cat will look like when the box is opened is perhaps the next question.

concerned that this particular design appears to have been commercialized without due acknowledgment, credit, or collaboration with the artisan communities who have preserved this heritage through generations. "We kindly urge Prada to acknowledge the inspiration behind the design publicly, explore possibilities for collaboration or fair compensation that could benefit the artisan communities involved and consider supporting ethical fashion practices that respect traditional knowledge and cultural rights," Gandhi wrote. "Such a gesture would not only uphold ethical standards in global fashion, but also foster a meaningful exchange between heritage craftsmanship and contemporary design. We trust that a brand of Prada's stature and influence will take this concern in the right spirit and initiate a thoughtful response," Gandhi's letter to Prada said. In his response, Bertelli wrote, "Please note that, for now, the entire collection is currently at an early stage of design. development and none of the pieces are confirmed to be produced or commercialized. "We are committed to responsible design practices, fostering cultural engagement, and opening a dialogue for a meaningful exchange with local Indian artisan communities as we have done in the past in other collections to ensure the rightful recognition of their craft," he said. "Prada strives to pay homage and recognize the value of such specialized craftspeople that represent an unrivalled standard of excellence and heritage. We would welcome the opportunity for further discussion and will set a follow up with the relevant Prada teams," Bertelli's letter to Gandhi said. Artisans from Maharashtra have cried foul after footwear similar to the famous Kolhapuri chappals featured in Prada's show. They alleged violation of geographical identification (GI) rights. BJP MP Dhananjay Mahadik on Thursday led a delegation of artisans who make this traditional footwear to meet Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. They presented a letter urging him to look into the violation and preserve the product, which is a symbol of the state's cultural heritage.

Disrupting the chalkboard: How peer-led learning can close learning gaps



There is a strong case for disruption. Classrooms today look much like they did a century ago—rows of desks, teacher at the front, and one-way instruction. Despite decades of reform, learning gaps persist and have even widened. Yet, we continue to deliver learning in a format that was designed for the 19th century. This system worked in a different era. It was not designed to ignite collaboration, autonomy, or speed—all of which are essential today. The urgency for change is not just academic. The gaps created by a traditional education impact the equity, opportunity, and social mobility of learners. In this age of AI, global interconnectivity, and infinite information, these gaps are likely to widen even more. We need to rethink education and the role of the child in their own learning. Children are too often treated as passive recipients of knowledge, waiting to be “filled up”. But we have witnessed how today’s children are not only capable, they are also curious. Further, they are collaborative by nature. When we give them agency to learn with each other, they not only learn faster, they learn better, together. Peer-led learning

Peer-led learning flips the script. Students learn by teaching, questioning, and correcting each other. When children teach each other, when they ask questions made by themselves for each other, and when they check each other’s work, they understand more. They retain more. They learn more deeply. They learn faster. Explaining concepts builds mastery. When a child teaches a peer, cognitive empathy emerges. Children know how to simplify explanations for each other in ways adults often cannot. It sparks imagination and creativity. The process is natural and organic. It is remarkably effective. Learning is also much faster. Time wasted in waiting for others to catch up, or for all learners to be on the same page, is dramatically reduced because students are no longer waiting for their turn to understand. The classroom becomes a network of mini-tutors working simultaneously, reducing dependence on one authority figure. Time wasted on rote repetition is saved for meaningful interactions that keep the children engaged with learning. Reimagining the teacher’s role

This model doesn’t eliminate the teacher—it reimagines their role as a galvaniser, a guide, and a designer of learning experiences. Teachers support, observe, help scaffold, and empower. The learning momentum comes from the students themselves. This shift also relieves pressure on teachers, who have been acting as master puppeteers, controlling all aspects of learning. They have been active, while the children are passively waiting for the next lesson or the instruction, not only wasting time, but also leading to boredom. Boredom, as per meta-analysis of worldwide research by Prof. John Hattie, is the greatest opponent of learning. The belief that learning must take a long time is deeply entrenched. But this belief isn’t based on neuroscience or psychology—it’s based on institutional inertia. Children don’t need three years to read if they’re given the chance to engage, question, explain, and explore with peers. Peer-led learning closes learning gaps not slowly, but at

record speed—especially when supported by a clear structure.

Accelerated learning for all One initiative that dared to believe in children’s agency is Accelerated Learning for All (ALfA). The children in low-income communities have closed multi-year learning gaps in a matter of months—through nothing more than structured peer learning, agency, and trust. One of the most powerful forms of this has been paired learning—a focused, highly effective type of peer-led learning. Instead of depending solely on instruction from the teacher, students learn by interacting with one another—explaining, questioning, and correcting each other. The flow of learning changes direction: rather than moving only from teacher to child, it now moves from child to child. It turns the classroom into a shared space of thinking and doing, where each learner takes turns and works as equals, and without differentiation based on ability, gender, and background. This is a proof of concept that success does not stem from technology, funding, or external expertise. It testifies that success comes from unleashing the power already present in the classroom. Peer-led learning builds confidence, communication, and cooperation. Children gain a sense of ownership and pride, “I am not just learning, I am helping others learn.” This nurtures not only cognitive skills, but leadership, empathy, and emotional resilience.

What is holding us back? Fear of loss of control: Traditional systems cling to authority models that place adults in charge of every outcome. Standardised testing doesn’t reward collaboration or peer learning. Change threatens entrenched systems and mindsets. It requires acceptance of the new which is not always easy. However, much like the transition to a mobile phone seemed difficult at first to an old granny, once given a chance, it is a permanent change, no looking back. Once children take charge of their learning, teachers begin to feel its benefits.

There is a growing body of evidence proving that agency-based, peer-led models like paired learning can achieve what traditional methods struggle to deliver. Such programs show what’s possible not just at the level of individual experience, it shows that the results are far better. Starting in just 20 schools, ALfA scaled to more than 35,000 in three years. Evaluated through a randomised controlled trial by the Harvard Graduate School of Education, it showed significant learning gains—effect sizes of 0.23 for Grade 3 and 0.89 for Grade 5—in just 40 days. We must trust children, with structure and support, to be active agents of their own learning. The chalkboard was a tool of the industrial-age classroom—uniform, top-down, standardised. Today’s world demands something different: adaptive, inclusive, empowering education. When children teach each other, we don’t just accelerate learning—we redefine what school can be. Every major disruption has faced ridicule. Planes were absurd until they flew. Electricity was dangerous until it lit up the world. The internet was a toy until it redefined knowledge. In education, too, anything new—especially if fast, simple, or effective—is met with scepticism. Many resist because they believe only adults can teach properly. History tells us that progress begins where comfort ends. With generative AI now writing, calculating, and even coding, the question is no longer “What can we teach kids?” but “What can they do that machines cannot?” The answer lies in creativity, social learning, emotional intelligence, and peer collaboration. The chalkboard once symbolised a uniform, top-down model of education. But today’s world demands something else. It calls for flexibility, collaboration, trust, and inclusion. When children learn together—really together—we don’t just close gaps. We redefine what education can be.

Thousands mourn in streets of Tehran for top Iranian military commanders, scientists killed in Israeli strikes

GNS News Agency, July 5
Dubai: Thousands of mourners lined the streets of downtown Tehran on Saturday for the funeral of the head of the Revolutionary Guard and other top commanders and nuclear scientists killed during a 12-day war with Israel. The caskets of Guard’s chief Gen. Hossein Salami, the head of the Guard’s ballistic missile program, Gen Amir Ali Hajizadeh and others were driven on trucks along the capital’s Azadi Street as people in the crowds chanted: “Death to America” and “Death to Israel.”

Salami and Hajizadeh were both killed on the first day of the war, June 13, as Israel launched a war it said meant to destroy Iran’s nuclear program, specifically targeting military commanders, scientists and nuclear facilities. There was no immediate sign of Iran’s Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in the state broadcast of the funeral. Khamenei, who has not made a public appearance since before the outbreak of the war, has in past funerals held prayers for fallen commanders over their caskets before the open ceremonies, later aired on state television. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was on hand, and state television reported that Gen Esmail Qaani, who heads the foreign wing of the Revolutionary Guard, the Quds Force, and Gen. Ali Shamkhani were also among the mourners. Shamkhani, an adviser to Khamenei who was wounded in the first round of Israel’s attack and hospitalised, was shown in a civilian suit leaning on a cane in an image distributed on state television’s Telegram channel. Iran’s Revolutionary Guard was created after its 1979 Islamic Revolution. Since it was established, it has evolved from a paramilitary, domestic security force to a transnational force that has come to the aid of Tehran’s allies in the Middle East, from Syria and Lebanon to Iraq. It operates in parallel to the country’s existing armed forces and controls Iran’s arsenal of ballistic missiles, which it has used to attack Israel twice during the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. Over 12 days before a ceasefire was declared on Tuesday, Israel claimed it killed around 30 Iranian commanders and 11 nuclear scientists, while hitting eight nuclear-related facilities and more than 720 military infrastructure sites. More than 1,000 people were killed, including at least 417 civilians, according to the Washington-based Human Rights Activists group. Iran fired more than 550 ballistic missiles at Israel, most of which were intercepted, but those that got through caused damage in many areas and killed 28 people. Saturday’s ceremonies were the first public funerals for top commanders since the ceasefire, and Iranian state television reported that they were for 60 people in total, including four women and four children. Authorities closed government offices to allow public servants to attend the ceremonies. Iran has always insisted its nuclear programme is only for peaceful purposes. But Israel views it as an existential threat and said its military campaign was necessary to prevent Iran from building an atomic weapon. Khamenei’s



last public appearance was June 11, two days before hostilities with Israel broke out, when he met with Iranian parliamentarians. On Thursday, however, he released a pre-recorded video, in his first message since the end of the war, filled with warnings and threats directed toward the United States and Israel, the Islamic Republic’s longtime adversaries. The 86-year-old downplayed US strikes on three Iranian nuclear sites as having not achieved “anything significant” and claimed victory over Israel. The head of the United Nations nuclear watchdog agency, Rafael Grossi, has characterised the damage done by American bunker-buster bombs to Iran’s Fordo nuclear site, which was built into a mountain, as “very, very, very considerable.”

Woman killed as electric scooter battery explodes during charging

Amaravati: A woman was killed when the battery of an electric two-wheeler that was being charged, exploded in their house in Andhra Pradesh’s YSR Kadapa district on Friday. The incident occurred in Pottadurthi village of Yerraguntla mandal (block) of Kadapa district on Friday. The scooter, which was kept on charging, exploded, resulting in the death of a woman, who was asleep on a sofa near the two-wheeler. The woman identified as Venkata Lakshamma (62) suffered burn injuries and died on the spot. The vehicle caught fire with the explosion and was completely gutted. Some household items were partially burnt in the fire. Police registered a case and took up an investigation. The body of the deceased was shifted to government hospital at Proddutur for autopsy. Similar incidents were reported in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in recent years. During 2022, the Telugu states witnessed about eight incidents of e-bikes, houses and even e-bike showrooms and a hotel catching fire due to e-batteries exploding, killing 10 people and injuring many others.

Pakistan welcomes Court of Arbitration’s ruling on Jammu and Kashmir hydroelectric project



GNS News Agency, July 5
Islamabad: Pakistan on Saturday welcomed the ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague over two hydroelectric projects in Jammu and Kashmir and indicated its readiness for talks with India on issues relating to Indus Waters Treaty. The “high priority”, at this point, is that “India and Pakistan find a way back to a meaningful dialogue, including on the application of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT),” Pakistan said in a statement released early on Saturday.

India on Friday strongly rejected the ruling, saying it has never recognised the so-called framework for dispute resolution with Pakistan. India rejects this so-called “supplemental award”, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said, referring to the ruling in the case related to Pakistan’s objections to Kishenganga and Ratle hydropower projects. In its ruling, the Court of Arbitration said India’s decision in April to keep the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance “does not limit” its competence over the dispute and that its ruling is binding on the parties. However, India has never recognised the proceedings at the Permanent Court of Arbitration after Pakistan raised objections to certain design elements of the two projects under the provisions of the

Indus Waters Treaty. On the other hand, Pakistan called the ruling a “major legal win” emphasising that it is a “clear message that India cannot unilaterally suspend or sideline the treaty.” The MEA called out Pakistan by saying that “this latest charade at Pakistan’s behest is yet another desperate attempt by it to escape accountability for its role as the global epicentre of terrorism.” “Pakistan’s resort to this fabricated arbitration mechanism is consistent with its decades-long pattern of deception and manipulation of international forums,” it said in a statement.

The illegal Court of Arbitration, purportedly constituted under the Indus Waters Treaty 1960, albeit in brazen violation of it, has issued what it characterises as a ‘supplemental award’ on its competence concerning the Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects in the Indian Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir,” the MEA said. “India has never recognised the existence in law of this so-called Court of Arbitration,” it said. The MEA said India’s position has all along been that the constitution of this so-called arbitral body is in itself a serious breach of the Indus Waters Treaty and consequently any proceedings before this forum and any award or decision taken by it are also illegal for that reason. A day after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, India took a series of punitive measures against Pakistan that included putting the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 in “abeyance”. “Following the Pahalgam terrorist attack, India has, in exercise of its rights as a sovereign nation under international law, placed the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance, until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support for cross-border terrorism,” the MEA said. “Until such time that the treaty is in abeyance, India is no longer bound to perform any of its obligations under the treaty,” it said. “No court of arbitration, much less this illegally constituted arbitral body which has no existence in the eye of law, has the jurisdiction to examine the legality of India’s actions in exercise of its rights as a sovereign,” it added.

Adolescent health needs renewed focus in the time of climate change: report



The health and wellbeing of adolescents across the world has reached a tipping point, a Lancet Commission report has found, with focus on obesity, overweight, and mental disorders as significant causes for concern. Developed by 44 Commissioners across geographies and disciplines with inputs from 10 youth Commissioners, the report projects that in 2030, 42 million years of health-life will be lost to mental disorders or suicide and that 464 million adolescents will be obese or overweight. Vis-à-vis the first human cohort that will experience the effects of climate change throughout their lives, the Lancet Commission also projected that by 2030, half of the two billion adolescents worldwide will live in multi-burden countries grappling with an excess burden of disease. ‘Listen to young people’

The Commission’s findings come at a crucial time for the human population. A 2024 study of fertility rates across 204 countries revealed that 76% of these nations will not be able to sustain their populations by 2050. The current generation of adolescents constitute about 24% of the global population, the highest in human history. Thus, measures to protect and further their health and wellbeing becomes vital for human sustenance. “For climate change, it is essential to keep to global commitments and listen to young people and ensure they have a voice at the table. Adolescents should be at the forefront of the green economy. There is also more research needed to develop gender and age-sensitive programming to maximise climate resilience,” Sarah Baird, co-chair of the commission and professor of Global Health and Economics and vice chair of the Department of Global Health at the Milken Institute School of Public Health in the U.S., said. The report also highlighted that the number of adolescents living in conflict-infected areas has “more than doubled” since the 1990s, adding to the economic and political instability they experience. The combined effects of conflict, migration, and environmental degradation will limit the opportunities for them, and by the end of the century 90% of the world’s adolescents are projected to be affected by these issues. Obesity, mental health disorders As obesity and the consequences of climate change take centerstage in this discourse, Baird said policy initiatives at the national level become crucial. She added that undertaking initiatives like taxing sugar-sweetened beverages, increasing access to healthy food, and finding ways to promote physical activity, with an emphasis on access to green spaces, are important. The report also highlighted the interrelatedness of these issues. The triple crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and air, water, and soil pollution threaten both physical and mental health. Understanding the unique challenges that adolescents currently face is crucial. Yatan Pal Singh Balhara, a professor of psychiatry at AIIMS, New Delhi, said. He wasn’t involved in producing the report. “These also include the challenges related to excessive and problematic use of technology, the internet and digital devices. Additionally, it is important to focus on building resilience among adolescents, so they are better prepared to handle the stress and challenges of life. There is a need to establish measures across all aspects of adolescence, including family, school, college, and other relevant settings. Life skills training should be an integral component of the educational curriculum,” he added. Balhara emphasised the importance of investing in operational research in mental health to identify evidence-based models of care delivery for adolescents in the country. India-spe-

cific challenges The Commission presents key data on health outcomes in the form of disability adjusted life years (DALYs), a measure of the number of healthy years lost to disease, disability, or premature death based on data from the Global Burden of Disease study. For India, the DALYs attributed to communicable, maternal, and nutritional conditions are higher among both girls (5,193.2 per 100,000 population) and boys (3,723.9) than the target of 2,500 or lower per 100,000 population. India is estimated to have 253 million adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 years, the highest in the world. Therefore, investment in adolescent health should also increase to respond to the existing and emerging needs of this population, Surabhi Dogra, Youth Commissioner of the Lancet Standing Commission on Adolescent Health and Wellbeing, said. Emphasising the need to focus on nutritional deficiencies, Dogra pointed to the fact that 52% of girls and 20.8% of boys in India in the 10-24 age group were found to be anaemic. “The target should be less than 10%. It is essential for the country to address the double burden of malnutrition, i.e. the coexistence of undernutrition and overnutrition.” But there is also some positive news. The report highlighted India’s efforts to overturn penal codes related to criminalising consensual same-sex relations, include adolescent health-related topics in the medical education curriculum, and mentioned the country as an exemplar nation in adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights. It also cited investment in road infrastructure in two locations in Gurugram, Haryana, as an example of how road safety can help enhance adolescent health. According to UNICEF, about 220,000 children and adolescents worldwide lose their lives to road traffic injuries. The measures taken in Gurugram included a combination of safer crosswalks, dedicated areas for school students to wait and board vehicles, and measures to reduce vehicle speeds. The way forward In July 2024, the Government of India launched the ‘Economic Case for Investment in the Well-being of Adolescents in India’ report, which said that increasing investments towards the wellbeing of adolescents will boost the country’s economy by about 10.1% of annual GDP. India is also working towards these goals through its National Adolescent Health Strategy, whose handbook operates across six major thematic areas: sexual and reproductive health, mental health, injuries and violence (including gender-based violence), nutrition, substance misuse, and non-communicable diseases. However, many of the action points detailed and implemented in the Strategy are related to the sexual and reproductive health theme, Rakhi Dandona, professor and director of the PHFI Injury Prevention Research Centre in New Delhi, said. Using the example of India earning its ‘exemplary’ status for adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights, Dandona said that similar results should be seen for the other themes as well. Dandona’s research has found that economic losses from premature adolescent death and morbidity could account for as much as 1.3% of the country’s annual GDP. This makes it vital to strengthen the Strategy to improve adolescent health and avoid the high associated economic losses, she added. “Age and gender-specificity in the program is a must, both in action and monitoring of program outcomes.” Baird also said that the action points in the report demand multisectoral responses, ranging from global to local contexts, and that apart from funding for collaborative work there is also a need to encourage creative mechanisms for public-private partnerships.

The fiscal evolution of Odisha in the last two decades



From being one of the most fiscally stressed States at the turn of the millennium, Odisha has become among the least indebted State by the end of FY24. A recent article in the Reserve Bank of India's State Finances: A Study of Budgets analyses Odisha's fiscal journey from 2000 to 2024. This was the time when Naveen Patnaik, who is now the Leader of the Opposition, was Chief Minister of Odisha.According to the RBI article, the passage of the Odisha Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (OFRBMA) in 2005 marked a decisive shift in the State's financial journey. The article divides Odisha's journey into four phases: 1) FY01-FY05: high debt-era; 2) FY06-FY14: debt consolidation through rule-based fiscal policy; 3) FY15-FY20: prioritising capital expenditure; 4) FY21-24: pandemic to the present.

Chart 1 | shows the debt-to-GDP ratio of all States and the debt-to-GSDP ratio of Odisha in FY01- FY24. It also captures Odisha's capital outlay as a percentage of its GSDP in these four phases.Chart appears incomplete? Click to remove AMP mode

Odisha's debt-to-GSDP ratio of 57.3% in 2002-03 was much higher than the consolidated debt-to-GDP ratio of 32.1% for all States. The interest payments-to-revenue receipts ratio (IP/RR) was 34.2% in 2002-03, placing a substantial burden on the State's finances. The debt-to-GSDP ratio declined to 16.0% in 2023-24, the lowest among

States.Odisha's finances faced severe strain during the pre-reform period. Salary and pension bills, losses from public sector undertakings, excessive subsidies, and poor recovery of loans and advances pushed the State into a fiscal quagmire.Revenue expenditure consistently outpaced revenue receipts (Chart 2). The chart shows the trends in revenue receipts and expenditure as a share of GSDP over time. It also shows Odisha's tax and non-tax revenues as a share of GSDP in the FY01-FY24 period.The Odisha FRBM (Amendment) Act, 2016, introduced stricter fiscal guidelines, mandating a revenue surplus, capping the fiscal deficit at 3% of GSDP, and limiting debt to 25% of GSDP. The State has adhered to these benchmarks, with revenue receipts increasing significantly from tax and non-tax sources, as seen in Chart 2.

Public debt also grew faster than the State's GSDP in the pre-reform period, breaching debt sustainability norms and raising concerns about long-term fiscal health. After the passage of the OFRBMA, key tax reforms, including the introduction of VAT, rationalisation of tax rates, expansion of the tax base, stricter enforcement, and the adoption of IT-based tax administration, generated a consistent revenue surplus from 2005-06 (Chart 3).Chart 3 | The chart shows deficit indicators: revenue deficit and gross fiscal deficit as a share of the State's GSDP over time.While maintaining a surplus in the revenue account, Odisha sharply increased its capital outlay during this period, largely funded through higher borrowings, as seen in Chart 1.This fiscal discipline enforced through the reform also brought debt under control, with the IP/RR ratio falling below the 15% threshold set by the OFRBMA, as shown in Table 4.Table 4 | The table shows the key fiscal indicators of the State.Odisha demonstrated good fiscal management during the COVID-19 pandemic, with periodic revisions to tax and user charges and monthly revenue reviews. It was the only State to post a revenue surplus (1.7% of GSDP) in 2020-21, which rose to 6.5% of GSDP in 2021-22, driven by higher non-tax revenue.This largely stemmed from increased revenues from mining leases, where premiums were tied to market prices rather than extraction volumes.

Odisha govt reminds RDCs, collectors of protecting tribal land rights

Odisha government has directed all Revenue Divisional Commissioners and District Collectors to review the issue of safeguarding land rights of tribals in scheduled areas of the State and controlling and checking transfer of their immovable properties as per Odisha Scheduled Areas Transfer of Immovable Property (OSATIP) (by Scheduled Tribes) Regulation, 1956.The Revenue and Disaster Management Department in the latest communication reminded the key authorities pertaining to 13 districts about their role in protecting tribal land rights.

Last year, the previous Naveen Patnaik Government had drawn flak from all quarters after the Cabinet allowed tribals to transfer their land to non-tribals by way of amending the OSATIP. The then government had to put the decision on hold.As per the decision "a scheduled tribe person may, with the written permission of the sub-collector, make a gift or exchange for public purposes or obtain a loan by securing a mortgage in a public financial institution for agriculture, construction of residential house, higher studies of children, self-employment, business or establishment of small scale industries or transfer the same in favour of a person not belonging to scheduled tribe for the above purpose."

The latest communication from Revenue Department clearly reminded the authorities of prohibition on transfer of land belonging to ST persons to non-ST with effect from September 4, 2002."It is noticed that many sub-collectors are allowing cases for hearing for indefinite period. Adjournments are given in a routine manner. No limit has been fixed on the maximum number of time-petitions to be allowed,



the maximum time by which the cases are to be disposed of. The cases are lingering for years for disposal," the department said on OSATIP implementation.Comptroller and Auditor General of India had indicated at inordinate delay in disposal of OSATIP cases. "On scrutiny of information and records, made available to audit, by the eight tech-checked sub-collectorates, it was noticed that 2,134 cases, involving 1,932.4258 acres of land, were pending for disposal, with the Sub-Collectors, as of March 2022," CAG report says.The government said if tribal land is illegally occupied, the restoration wanted is to be issued promptly. "The government has been placing great emphasis on actual restoration of land to lawful owner. It is necessary that 10% of restored cases in the field should be checked by collectors and 20% cases by sub-collectors concerned," it emphasised.

Scrapping of 'no-detention' policy for Classes 5 and 8 leads to debate in Karnataka

The withdrawal of the 'no-detention' policy for Classes 5 and 8, paving the way for schools to fail students who are unable to clear year-end exams, has been opposed by many educationists in the State.They expressed concern that this move by the Union government will particularly affect children from deprived classes such as Dalits, tribal people and those from backward classes and rural areas. They feared it would lead to more dropouts and children getting into labour market.On the other hand, some private school managements and students' groups have welcomed the government's decision.What the changed rules say



mented them till this academic year.Speaking to The Hindu, Niranjanaradhya V.P., development educationist, said that as a result of the continuous struggle for almost 100 years for free and compulsory education, in 2009, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government had brought in the RTE Act, 2009, and implemented it from 2010. Section-16 of the Act prohibited holding back or expulsion of a child from school till the attainment of elementary education. The changes in the act brought out now, he said, were a "deliberate attempt to dilute and distort the historic Act." He urged that the State government reject the detention proposal. "The Chief Minister should take the lead in this," he said.

"Repeating a class does not give the child any special resources to deal

with the same syllabus requirements for yet another year. Parents and friends of such children also tend to view them as failures," he added. He emphasised that the 'no detention' provision in the RTE Act does not imply abandoning procedures that assess children's learning, but putting in place a continuous and comprehensive evaluation procedure.Lokesh Talikatte, president of Karnataka Private Educational Institutions Association (KRUPA), said that the move of the Centre was "anti-student." He said this might lead to school dropouts.Welcomed by someOn the other hand, private school managements, such as those affiliated to Associated Managements of Primary and Secondary Schools in Karnataka (KAMS) and students' organisations like All India Democratic Students Orga-

nization (AIDSO) have welcomed the move."SSLC students in many government schools cannot read and write English or solve simple mathematics problems since there is a 'no detention' policy. Therefore, we welcome the Union government's move to scrap the policy as it will help to improve the quality of education. So, the State government should immediately implement the new rules," urged Shashi Kumar, general secretary of KAMS.The AIDSO State committee in a statement called the change in rules "a partial victory to the movement against no-detention policy" and said that parents, teachers as well as several educationists were for a change in the policy.Policy matterSpeaking to The Hindu, Ritesh Kumar Singh, Principal Secretary of the Department of School Education and Literacy,

Hasina's son claims Yunus govt weaponising judiciary for carrying out 'political witch hunt'

GNS News Agency, July 5

Sajeeb Wazed, son of deposed Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has accused the Muhammad Yunus led interim government of "weaponising the judiciary" for carrying out a "political witch hunt" against the Awami League leadership.Mr. Wazed's allegations, as a long post on X, came two days after the interim government on Monday (December 25, 2024) said it has sent a diplomatic note to New Delhi seeking Ms. Hasina's extradition from India. The corruption allegations made against my family and I are completely bogus. We have never been involved in or made money from any government projects. I have lived in the US for 30 years and my aunt and cousins have lived in the UK for a similar amount of time. Obviously we...Ms. Hasina (77) has been living in India since August 5 when she fled Bangladesh following a massive student-led protest that toppled her Awami League's (AL) 16-year regime.

Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) has issued arrest warrants for Ms. Hasina and several former Cabinet Ministers, advisers, and military and civil officials for "crimes against humanity and genocide."The judges and prosecutors appointed by unelected Yunus led regime to conduct farcical trial process through International Crimes Tribunal makes it a political witch hunt that forsakes justice and marks another ongoing onslaught to persecute Awami League leadership," Mr. Wazed said in his post on Tuesday (December 24, 2024).An IT entrepreneur, Mr. Wazed is based in the U.S. and has been an ICT adviser in Ms. Hasina's government. The kangaroo tribunal and subsequent request for extradition comes while hundreds of leaders and activists are extrajudicially killed, framing of outrageous murder charges, illegal incarceration of thousands by law enforcement and violent attacks including looting vandalism and arson going on with impunity everyday fuelled by denial of the regime," he added.On Monday (December 23, 2024), India confirmed receiving the 'note verbale' or diplomatic communication from the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi but refrained from commenting on it.Under the provisions of the India-Bangladesh extradition treaty, extradition may be refused if the offence is one of a "political character."Bangladesh's de facto Foreign Minister Touhid Hossain said Dhaka wants Ms. Hasina back to face the judicial process.

Mr. Wazed further accused that the chief prosecutor of ICT Tribunal Tajul Islam appointed by Mr. Yunus regime on December 22, despite proven records of defending war



criminals, "reportedly spread deliberate disinformation campaign" against Ms. Hasina by claiming that Interpol issued red notice against her, and termed it as "a desperate bid to extradite her and hold farcical trial to serve the interest of Dr. Yunus."But the very prosecutor later altered his statement following media exposure of the outright lie and now officially sent a request to India for the extradition," Ms. Hasina's son said."We reiterate our position that every single incident of human rights violation between July and August needs to be investigated in a free and fair manner but the Yunus led regime weaponised the judiciary, and we express no confidence in the justice system," he alleged.Last month, in an address to the nation on the completion of 100 days of the interim government, Mr. Yunus said Bangladesh will seek Ms. Hasina's extradition. "We must ensure justice in every killing... We will also ask India to send back fallen autocrat Sheikh Hasina," he had said then.Mr. Yunus, who assumed office on August 8, claimed that about 1,500 people, including students and workers, were killed while 19,931 others were wounded during the protest against the Ms. Hasina government.India has expressed concern as there have been a spate of attacks on minorities including on the Hindu community in Bangladesh in the last few months.In recent weeks, Ms. Hasina has accused the Mr. Yunus-led interim government of perpetrating "genocide" and failing to protect minorities, especially Hindus, since her ouster.Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri visited Dhaka two weeks back during which he conveyed to the Bangladeshi side India's concerns, especially those related to the safety and welfare of minorities.

When school is a trolley ride, river and a trek away in this Uttarakhand village

Their hall tickets secured to their transparent clipboards, four teenagers hopped into an open green trolley in Pithoragarh's Gharuri village with practised ease. Around 150 metres across the turbid Gori Ganga, a school teacher tugged the trolley's rope.Getting an education is no child's play in Uttarakhand's Gharuri village. In fact, the locals rely on the trolley bridge "for everything" — from rations and dairy to education.

While most middle and senior school students from the village walk around 2 km to their school daily after the trolley ride, since last month, all board students have been trekking nearly 2.5 km to their centre, the Government Inter College in Lumti.Installed atop an old abutment (a support structure for a bridge), the trolley is the easiest way to get around in Gharuri, where the nearest pedestrian bridge is located at least 8 km away. Of Uttarakhand's 3,333 bridges and 30 trolleys, the maximum (13) are located in Pithoragarh.Tugging at the rope to bring the empty trolley to her side, Priyanka Samant, 15, who, like the other girls, is in her chequered kurta uniform, said, "I was 10 years old when I boarded the gharari (trolley) for the first time. It was scary at first."In January this year, a video of the students taking the trolley across the Gori Ganga, dotted with mammoth rocks following a massive landslide in the village in 2020, went viral on social media. This prompted the Public Works Department (PWD) to direct local teachers to take turns to operate the trolley."When the children go to school now, they only need to pull the rope from one side. One teacher is on duty on the other side," said Pushkar Singh, a local.For Bhavna Samant, 15, who was on the way to Lumti for her Class 10 board exams, the PWD directive has come as a source of relief. "Before the teachers were deputed, my arms would ache and my palms would get sore after tugging on the trolley's rope," she said.Deepak Chand, a lab assistant at the school who is on trolley duty once a week, said they "discourage" children from attending school when it rains. Tugging the rope to help five students



The closest way out of Pithoragarh's Gharuri village is an open green trolley, which takes its occupants nearly 150 metres across the Gori Ganga

cross the river, he added, "It's unsafe to take the trolley during monsoon since the area is landslide-prone."A 2023 ISRO report confirms that the Pithoragarh-Khela-Malpa route is among the most susceptible to landslides in the state. The district has also been affected by cloudburst, flash floods and heavy rainfall.The district was among the worst affected in the state during the 2013 deluge. Along with houses, locals say the river washed away a pedestrian bridge, cutting Gharuri village off from the entire region.Hari Chand, sarpanch, van panchayat, Gharuri, said, "The old bridge vanished in the 2013 floods. We could not cross the river for several days. Afterwards, we had to walk 9 km through the woods to cross the river. Then MLA (and former Chief Minister) Harish Rawat sanctioned a bridge in 2015, but only the pillars and abutment had come up by 2020. In July that year, a landslide destroyed the pillars. The trolley bridge was set up on the abutment after that."Claiming that the trolley bridge, which can ferry a total of 100 kg across the river at a time, was on the verge of getting "washed away," he added, "The authorities have sanctioned a new bridge, but nothing has materialised so far."Rajesh Sharma, head, PWD, told The Indian Express that a new pedestrian bridge had been sanctioned for the area in 2024. "We were ascertaining where the bridge should come up," he said.After the education department put teachers on trolley duty, sarpanch Chand

said he wrote to the division in January, stating that this new duty was "disrupting" teaching.Stating that a reply is still awaited, Chand said his letter stated, "Until a permanent bridge is built, two Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) personnel should be stationed at the site... Sick persons and pregnant women face difficulties in using the trolley, especially during the monsoon and at night."While pregnant women are taken to the trolley on a makeshift palanquin fashioned out of two logs, some elderly persons are carried all the way up by their children.Gently lowering his father, 85, into the trolley, Chander Singh, 58, who carried him all the way up on his back, says his sons rarely come home for a visit. "One of my sons lives in Rudrapur (in Uttarakhand) and the other works in Dubai. They don't want to come back to the village. Why would they? There is no public infrastructure here" he says.For now, the only "public infrastructure" in the village is a primary school with three students and one teacher, who has been working there for 16 years now.While Uttarakhand has been pushing to plug migration from the hills, locals say the government's focus has been on border villages like Mana and Jadung in Uttarkashi district. The issue of migration was raised during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the state too.Sarpanch Chand says migration in the village spiked after the 2013 floods. Slamming the government, he says, "Lakhs are allo-

cated under MPLADS (Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme) funds, but no one cares to build us a bridge. A motor bridge will not cost the government more than Rs 15 crore."Locals say migration will continue as infrastructure for education, health and transportation is not developed. "Which tourist will come to a homestay that is accessible only via a rickety trolley? Palayan mat karo, mat karo bolne se nahi rukta (words alone will not end migration)," says local resident Pushkar, adding that two people have died in trolley-related accidents so far.Meanwhile, Congress's Harish Dhami, the incumbent legislator from the Dharchula Assembly constituency, under which the village falls, says he has been raking up the issue of a bridge for Gharuri in the Assembly. "The PWD is yet to find a place to make the bridge. If migration is to be stopped, the government has to start by fixing these issues," he says.Local resident Kesar Singh agrees, "Kitni pidhiyan chali gaye hai ek pul ke chakkar mein (multiple generations have left the village over the lack of one bridge)," he says.Referring to the motor bridge that came up between Pithoragarh's Dharchula and the neighbouring Nepal last year, he laments, "Videsh se desh ko jodne ke liye pul bane hain. Par desh ke andar logon ko jodne ke liye kuch nahi (bridges are being made to connect the country to nations abroad but not inside the country)."

India’s oil imports from US surged over 270% in first four months of year

oil imports from US surged, oil imports from US, crude oil imports, oil imports, donald trump, donald trump admin, , current affairsIndia imported 6.31 million tonnes of US crude in January-April, sharply up from 1.69 million tonnes in the year-ago period. India’s oil imports from the US jumped over 270 per cent year-on-year in the first four months of 2025, underscoring Delhi’s strategy of enhancing American imports amid trade pact negotiations and diversifying its sources of crude oil in a volatile geopolitical and geo-economic environment.Negotiations between India and the US for an interim trade deal by July 9 have entered their final phase.

According to the latest available data with the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIIS), India imported 6.31 million tonnes of US crude in January-April, sharply up from 1.69 million tonnes in the year-ago period. With this, the US accounted for 7 per cent of India’s oil imports for January-April 2025, significantly higher than 2 per cent in the corresponding four months of 2024.In value terms, India’s US crude imports in the first four months of the current calendar year stood at \$3.78 billion, a big jump from around \$ 1 billion in the year-ago period. It is worth noting that not just volumes, but oil price fluctuations also play a crucial role in determining the value of imports.

India is stepping up imports from the US across categories to address America’s key concern of a widening goods trade deficit. Under the likely trade deal, India is also expected to open up its market to a range of American goods – from cars and defence equipment to agricultural products. Official data show that while India’s overall imports in April rose by only 19 per cent, imports from the US jumped 63 per cent to \$5.24 billion, up from \$3.20 billion in April 2024. This rise in imports narrowed India’s goods trade surplus with the US to \$3.1 billion, down from \$3.4 billion.Expanding energy trade with the US would, to an extent, allay Washington’s concerns about the balance of trade between the two countries. Also, from a strategic and energy security perspective, stepping up purchases of



American oil helps India with some leverage with other supplying nations, whose supply volumes may be dented as a result, according to sources. The aim there would be to nudge them to offer oil to India at even better prices in a bid to protect their market share.Additionally, given the tensions in West Asia, sourcing oil from regions that can completely bypass the region’s shipping routes is strategically important for India, which depends on imports to meet over 88 per cent of crude oil requirement. High import dependency and growing energy consumption make the country an attractive market for oil and gas exporters.

President Donald Trump has been eyeing increasing energy exports to India and in February, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the US, the President said that India and the US had agreed to take steps towards making Washington “a leading supplier of oil and gas to India”, which could help bridge the trade deficit between the two countries. Trump said that the US will “hopefully” be India’s top oil and gas supplier.The jump in overall imports in April – potentially signalling a broader trend – was driven by a sharp 270 per cent year-on-year increase in oil imports to 3.56 million tonnes. In March, too, US oil imports surged 247 per cent year-on-year to 1.26 million tonnes. Overall, the share of US crude in India’s oil imports rose from 4.6 per cent in April 2024 to 12 per cent this year. That’s higher than the 4.7 per cent recorded just a month earlier in March.

Meat sector boom: Share in farm output rises 2.5 pc points to 7.5% in a decade

India’s meat sector boomed in the last decade, with its share in the value of agriculture sector output increasing to 7.5 per cent in 2023-24 from 5 per cent in 2011-12 when measured in constant prices, according to data from the statistics ministry released on Friday. In current prices – or prices not adjusted for inflation – the increase in share of meat’s Gross Value of Output (GVO) was similar; from 5 per cent in 2011-12 to 7.7 per cent in 2023-24.“Livestock sector has witnessed a significant boom during the last decade,” the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) said in its ‘Value of Output from Agriculture and Allied Sectors’ report. The GVO of the sector rose to Rs 9.19 lakh crore in 2023-24 from Rs 4.88 lakh crore in 2011-12 in constant prices, with its share in the GVO of agriculture and allied activities rising to 31.2 per cent from 25.6 per cent over the same period.The overall GVO of agriculture and allied activities – which include crops, livestock, forestry and logging, and fishing and aquaculture – was Rs 29.49 lakh crore in 2023-24, up from Rs 19.08 lakh crore in 2011-12. According to MoSPI’s national accounts data, ‘agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishing’ accounted for 14.7 per cent of the total gross value added in the country in 2023-24. This edged down slightly to 14.4 per cent in 2024-25.

While milk retained its position as the top contributor to the livestock category, its share has declined over the years to 65.9 per cent from 67.2 per cent. At the same time, the share of meat has increased to 24.1 per cent from 19.7 per cent.“In livestock, the application of biotechnology and improved breeding techniques has led to increased productivity and a higher output of milk, meat, and other animal products. Additionally, this sector has seen growing investments in infrastructure, such as cold chains and veterinary services, which have improved animal health and product quality,” the MoSPI report said.The rising share of meat in the GVO of livestock as well as agriculture and allied activities comes at a time when India’s exports of meat have been rising. In 2023-24, India’s meat exports amounted to \$3.83 billion, up 17 per cent from the previous year.Export of buffalo meat, which accounts for 98 per cent of India’s outbound meat shipments, rose by 17.1 per cent in 2023-



24 to \$3.74 billion, with Uttar Pradesh having a share of nearly 60 per cent. “As per the Foreign Trade Policy, export of beef which includes meat and edible offal of cows, oxen and calves is prohibited. The department is not in receipt of any State legislation impacting meat exports,” Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal had said in response to a question in the Rajya Sabha in December 2024.

With the share of livestock and other segments rising over the years, the contribution of crops to the GVO of agriculture and allied activities has declined, although it remains “the backbone of Indian agriculture” with its share in 2023-24 at 54.1 per cent, down from 62.4 per cent in 2011-12.“The data highlights a gradual diversification within the agricultural economy, reflecting changing demand patterns, policy support, and technological improvements,” the statistics ministry said in its report.Cereals and fruits and vegetables made up more than half of crop GVO, with the statistics ministry noting that the share of ‘spices and condiments’ had increased from 3.9 per cent in 2011-12 to 5.9 per cent in 2023-24, “suggesting rising domestic and export demand for spices, possibly aided by improved processing and branding”.Within fruits, the GVO of bananas was the largest for the second year in a row after it ended the dominance of mangoes in 2022-23. However, mangoes clawed back some ground in 2023-24, with their GVO rising 6.7 per cent to Rs 46,050 crore, while that of bananas was up a smaller 4.4 per cent at Rs 46,996 crore.

After Bihar plant loco export to the Republic of Guinea, BLW dispatches locos to Mozambique

Amid the Indian Railways’ push for export of rail equipment, the Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) has exported two locomotives to Mozambique. Officials said that the export was done as per the major contract awarded by Mozambique Railways (CFM) for manufacturing and supply of 10 diesel locomotives.

BLW, a flagship production unit of Indian Railways, will dispatch the remaining eight locomotives by December 2025, said the officials. “The global contract for 10 locomotives was awarded to RITES, a public sector undertaking (PSU) of Ministry of Railways, who further got the locomotives manufactured at BLW. These are advanced diesel locomotives of 3300 horse power. It is capable of running at a maximum speed of 100 kmph on Cape Gauge (1067 mm). BLW has exported locomotives to Mozambique earlier as well,” said a senior official of the Ministry of Railways.These 3300 HP diesel locomotives feature many special facilities for the loco pilot or the driver such as refrigerator,



hot plate, mobile holder, aesthetic cab design, toilet etc., in accordance with international standards.

The data available with the BLW shows that it has supplied a total of 10 Cape Gauge diesel locomotives (3000 HP, AC-AC) to Mozambique’s state-owned rail company CFM so far, with the oldest locomotive being sent in 2008-09. During 2021-22 and 2022-23, it supplied a total of five locomotives, which are currently in successful operation in

Mozambique.Apart from BLW, other production units such Marhowra Plant in Bihar has also started exporting locomotives. On June 20, Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off a state-of-the-art locomotive built at the Marhowra Plant, for export to the Republic of Guinea. This is the first export locomotive manufactured in this factory.Officials said that since the establishment of Banaras Locomotive Works (formerly Diesel Locomotive Works) on 23

April 1956, it has manufactured more than 10,000 locomotives for Indian Railways, steel plants, mines, ports and export.In January 1976, the first exported locomotive went to Tanzania. After this, the locomotive manufactured here were sent to countries like Vietnam, Mali, Senegal, Angola, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Mozambique, Sudan etc. In all, a total of 174 locomotives have been exported by the BLW so far.

India’s traditional textiles could hold key to sustainability amid fast fashion trends

Increasing affordability among consumers has seen the branded segment of India’s apparel sector grow by over 15 per cent every year over the last decade or so, with the market being disrupted by various forces such as foreign firms, e-commerce, and ever-changing fashion cycles even as clothes are being purchased faster than ever before.At the other end of the spectrum are customs and longevity. In a country where tradition and innovation are often woven together, durability may hold the key at a time when the market is being flooded with cheap and disposable clothing and trends like thrifting are catching up. According to a recent HSBC report, India’s \$86-billion apparel and accessories category is projected to grow 11 per cent annually over the next half a decade. But this growth comes with its costs.

The modern apparel sector runs at an industrial scale. India is the sixth-largest exporter of textiles and apparel in the world, accounting for 8.2 per cent of merchandise exports and employing over 4.5 crore people.But this scale consumes greater and greater resources. According to the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) 2023 report, the global fashion industry contributes up to 10 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, while dyeing and finishing processes account for nearly a fifth of industrial water pollution. This is no surprise considering the demand: a 2020 WEF report estimated people were buying 60 per cent more garments than they did 25 years ago while sticking with them for only half as long. The result: up to 85 per cent of textiles end up in landfills.At Delhi’s Dilli Haat, the piles of block-printed fabrics, wooden toys, and rows of khadi shirts signal sustainability, with vendors speaking of local materials and familiar suppliers — cotton from nearby mills, block prints from Jaipur, woodwork from Saharanpur — as choices shaped more by tradition and trust than environmental goals.It is this kind of understated circularity — local sourcing, durable materials, low-waste habits — that has defined India’s craft economy: techniques such as Kantha stitching, where layers of old fabric are quilted into new creations, the reuse of leftover yarn into Chindi rugs and handloom weaving, or traditional hand-stitched quilts made using patchwork on old saris and dhotis known as Godhadi. These are not marketing pitches but acts of necessity, passed down from one generation to another in communities making the most of what they have.Somewhere between sustainability of traditional methods and appeal of the modern is thrifting, which challenges the throwaway culture.



“Over time, I realised how much waste was being created by fast fashion and overconsumption,” said Isha Saxena, founder of @ish.museum, an Instagram thrift store.While friends and family make donations, items are also hand-picked from thrift markets and bulk vintage suppliers. Changing mindsets, though, remains a challenge, with second-hand clothes carrying the stigma of being dirty. “Helping people unlearn that, and see second-hand as stylish, sustainable, and even cooler than fast fashion — that’s the hardest part,” said Saxena.Start-ups, too, are making use of waste. Mumbai-based Dwij, for instance, upcycled 2,000 pairs of jeans into around 300 utility bags in three months. Doodlage transforms factory scraps into dresses, jackets, and co-ords and repurposes its own waste into home furnishings and bags. KaSha in Pune mixes waste plastic with old fabrics to create jackets, scarves, and skirts.Large global brands are not far behind. American retailer Patagonia now primarily uses recycled polyester and cotton, helping cut carbon dioxide emissions by over 80 per cent per pound of fibre. It is also working to eliminate virgin polyester from its products this year — a significant step, as virgin polyester contributes heavily to microplastic pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.In India, too, changes are afoot at the policy level. The government set up an Environmental, Social, and Governance task force in 2023. At the fourth meeting of the task force on June 3, the ministry held consultations on a draft Roadmap 2047 for a sustainable, circular, and resource-efficient Indian textile industry, with Neelam Shami Rao, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, saying at the meeting that sustainability was no longer a choice “but a defining imperative for the future of India’s textile sector”.

Gurugram engineer falls asleep at the wheel, rams into 2 men: How sleeplessness affects your brain

A night’s lack of sleep of less than six hours has been found to impair vigilance, reduce reaction time and decrease decision-making abilities.A night’s lack of sleep of less than six hours has been found to impair vigilance, reduce reaction time and decrease decision-making abilities. Increasingly, we are hearing reports of people falling asleep while driving with terrible consequences as they hit unsuspecting people and even endanger their own lives. The latest case is of a Gurugram-based civil engineer, who was arrested for ramming into two men, including a law student, after he fell asleep while behind the wheel.Why your brain craves sleep

Falling asleep at the wheel is a dangerous consequence of a fatigued or sleep-deprived brain. “When we are sleep-deprived, the brain experiences ‘microsleeps’ — brief, involuntary episodes of sleep that can last a few seconds. During these moments, a driver can lose awareness and control, even with eyes open. The brain’s prefrontal cortex, responsible for attention, decision-making, and alertness, becomes less active, impairing our ability to stay focused or respond quickly to road conditions,” says Dr Vinit Suri, senior consultant, Neurology, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, Delhi.

The brain’s sleep-wake cycle, governed by the circadian rhythm, also plays a critical role. Driving during low circadian alertness periods — such as late at night or early morning — increases the risk of drowsiness. “Neurochemicals like adenosine, which build up during waking hours, signal sleep pressure to the brain; without rest, this pressure continues to mount, further weakening alertness. The reticular activating system (RAS), which helps keep us awake, starts to underperform when fatigued, making it harder to stay aroused. At the same time, the thalamus — a relay centre for sensory and motor signals — becomes less responsive, reducing awareness of surroundings,” explains Dr Suri.Drowsiness also suppresses activity in the brain’s region responsible for vigilance and perception. “Furthermore, a monotonous driving environment with little stimulation accelerates the decline in brain alertness. In essence, when the brain is too tired, its ability



to prioritize staying awake over sleep fails, making it override even conscious efforts to stay alert,” says Dr Suri.

A night’s lack of sleep of less than six hours has been found to impair vigilance, reduce reaction time and decrease decision-making abilities in a similar way to alcohol consumption, according to Dr Aditya Gupta, Director, Neurosurgery & Cyberknife, Artemis Hospital, Gurugram.Warning signs like frequent yawning, heavy eyelids, or drifting lanes should never be ignored. “To prevent such cognitive shut-downs while driving, adequate sleep, regular breaks and avoiding driving during drowsy hours are essential. Fatigue behind the wheel is not a sign of weakness — it is a neurological warning that must be taken seriously,” he says.Patients with obstructive sleep apnoea may also have excessive daytime drowsiness, resulting in naps while driving and hence a history of heavy snoring should be taken, and if required, a sleep study too.

“We also caution against too much dependence on stimulants such as coffee or energy drinks. These can give a transient boost to alertness but cannot substitute for the brain’s requirement for sleep,” says Dr Gupta. When their action wears off, sleep can hit one suddenly and uncontrollably.To avoid drowsy driving, he suggests getting 7–8 hours of sleep prior to long driving, resting breaks every two hours and not driving during the circadian low points. “In the event of extreme exhaustion, the only solution is to stop and take a rest,” he adds.

Love petting dogs and cats? Watch out for this microbe that causes cyst and mimics TB symptoms

When 17-year-old Manirul Beg from Haldia came to Delhi a year ago, hoping to get herself treated for tuberculosis, little did she realise that she had been misdiagnosed. She had been suffering from another kind of lung infection linked to contact with dogs and cats.“I am an animal lover and would feed dogs and cats in the neighbourhood,” she says. What she had was a hydatid cyst, a zoonotic lung infection that mimics the symptoms of tuberculosis, like prolonged coughing, chest discomfort and general malaise. Even pet lovers are prone to it if they do not keep to hand-wash hygiene and deworm their dogs and cats on time.

“A hydatid cyst is a fluid-filled cyst caused by a parasitic tapeworm infection, the tapeworm being transmitted from animals to humans,” says Dr Vikas Mittal, pulmonologist at CK Birla hospital, who is seeing this condition in young people. “So if you are an animal



lover, handling animals from close quarters daily, then it’s important to get tested for this infection before assuming it to be TB,” he adds.

What is hydatid cyst in the lungs?

Hydatid cyst is caused when a person comes into contact with the faeces of an infected animal, (eggs from the tapeworm are passed in the faeces). The tapeworm eggs trigger formation of

cysts in vital organs such as the liver, lungs and brain. If the cysts burst, they could lead to complications like seizures and anaphylactic shock, an allergic reaction that causes the body to release a flood of chemicals. These lower blood pressure and narrow airways in the lungs. You can even get infected if the parasites are present in the saliva or fur of infected animals.

How to diagnose this

cyst?

Imaging exams and blood tests are enough. Blood tests can show elevated levels of antibodies to the parasitical infection while imaging exams show the size, shape and location of the cysts. Simple tests can avoid misdiagnosis, which not only causes unnecessary physical and mental stress but can also lead to side effects from prolonged use of strong medications.

Priyadarshini, new star of Indian women’s football



GNS News Agency, July 5

HYDERABAD: Raw talent is how coach Crispin Chettri defines 22-year-old Priyadarshini Selladurai, the Indian women's national team's newest goalscorer.Two goals in three matches for the country, but she hasn't yet made a first XI appearance in the Indian Women's League. That's not a statement you hear every day. But her hard work in training and performances in games have made Chettri fully agree with his decision to give her a first national team call-up.

“Priyadarshini is one of our raw talents. I say that because she hasn't gotten many minutes in the IWL. But we still believed in her talent and gave her the opportunity to be part of our national team camp. And she's doing well here. However, playing in the IWL will help her lot to mature as a player. I think we will have a very good number 10 in her, in the future,” said Chettri.Priyadarshini has been part of Chettri's squad since he first took charge ahead of the Pink Ladies Cup in February. However, she made her debut in May, in the first friendly against Uzbekistan in Bengaluru. And just 24 days later came the first goal.“For a long time, I had been wondering if I would ever get selected for the Indian team. Now that I've been selected and scored a goal, I'm truly happy. I can't even express how I felt inside. I don't have the words to describe it. It was like a dream come true to score for the country,” Priyadarshini shared. The dream grew gradually. From playing in the paddy fields of her small village of Savalakkaran in the Thiruvaur district of Tamil Nadu, to scoring goals for India

in Chiang Mai, also a city known for paddy production, the journey, as is the case with most female footballers in India, wasn't easy.

“I started playing football when I was in sixth class. I saw my seniors playing in the school, and decided to join them. I was selected for the Tamil Nadu team for the National School Games in Manipur in 2016, which was the first time I played outside my State,” said the midfielder. That became the turning point in her life. Football could be taken seriously. She liked it, and she was getting good at it. But it took time for her parents to approve of her new passion. “I come from a place where girls aren't encouraged to pursue sports. This was like breaking a barrier for me.”But Priyadarshini had the support of her school's physical education teacher, V Muthukumar, who actively went from door to door and convinced the parents of the village to allow their girls to play football.“We didn't have a proper football ground, so we played on paddy fields. My coach helped us a lot. He arranged the playing equipment and even gave me my first pair of football boots. Even today, when I go back, I train in the same paddy field,” she said.What earned Priyadarshini her place in the national team were impressive performances for Tamil Nadu in the Rajmata Jijabai Trophy for the Senior Women's National Football Championship and the National Games. Before her international cap, the biggest highlight of her career remained the goal in the 2023 Senior Women's NFC final in Punjab, which won Tamil Nadu only their second-ever title.Playing alongside her idol Indumathi Kathiresan, she went on to represent her State in the 2024 and 2025 Rajmata Jijabai Trophy and the National Games in Gujarat 2024 and Uttarakhand 2025. At the club level, she signed for Gokulam Kerala FC in 2023-24 and made five appearances off the bench in the IWL that season. But Priyadarshini took the Kerala Women's League by storm, scoring 24 goals in the Malabarians' title win and ending up as the league's top scorer.

Success with Tamil Nadu earned her a job as a block health officer at the government hospital in Alangudi, a town situated half an hour from her home. “As I was appointed under the sports quota, I get paid leave when I'm on national duty, like right now. For people back home, it's a matter of pride that I've become the first one to play for India from my village,” said Priyadarshini.

India aim to extend winning run against Timor Leste in AFC Women’s Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers



GNS News Agency, July 5

Hyderabad: After a thumping opening day victory, the Indian senior women's team will look to continue the winning momentum in the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers when they take on Timor Leste on Sunday at the 700th Anniversary of Chiang Mai Stadium in Thailand .The match will be streamed live on Changsuek YouTube Channel and Thai Women's Football Facebook Page.

The five-team Group B is currently led by Iraq, who are on four points after a 5-2 victory over Mongolia and a 0-0 draw with Timor Leste. India, who beat Mongolia 13-0, and Thailand, who beat Timor Leste 4-0, are on three points each.Despite Timor Leste being ranked 158th, 32 places below Mongolia, Indian coach Crispin Chettri believed that the Southeast Asian side would pose a stronger challenge.

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The dream grew gradually. From playing in the paddy fields of her small village of Savalakkaran in the Thiruvaur district of Tamil Nadu, to scoring goals for India in Chiang Mai, also a city known for paddy production, the journey, as is the case with most female footballers in India, wasn't easy.“I started playing football when I was in sixth class. I saw my seniors playing in the school, and decided to join them. I was selected for the Tamil Nadu team for the National School Games in Manipur in 2016, which was the first time I played outside my State,” said the midfielder. That became the turning point in her life. Football could be taken seriously. She liked it, and she was getting good at it. But it took time for her parents to approve of her new passion. “I come from a place where girls aren't encouraged to pursue sports. This was like breaking a barrier for me.”

But Priyadarshini had the support of her school's

Having watched all teams in action after the first two matchdays, there's now a much clearer assessment of all the remaining three opponents.

Timor Leste are a better organised team than Mongolia, and I feel they are better organised defensively than Iraq as well. They prefer going for counter-attacks. They don't mind keeping the ball either. So, in patches, they are good. But as Thailand dominated the match completely, we can't say much about their attack. But they have got pace in their team as well,” said Chettri.Chettri and his coaching staff were in attendance at the 700th Anniversary of Chiang Mai Stadium on Thursday as Timor Leste restricted 46th-ranked Thailand to four goals.India, ranked 70, have never faced Timor Leste before. Coached by Indonesian Emral bin Bustamam, Timor Leste have been more active in international football as compared to Mongolia. They finished fourth in the 2024 AFF Women's Cup, where they drew against Laos and Singapore. They have played in four editions of the ASEAN Women's Championship, and the 2-1 win over Singapore in 2019 remains the only official victory in their history. The 0-0 draw with Iraq on Monday was their first-ever point in an AFC competition.“I think when you have a tournament of four matches, this kind of rest helps in team building. Tactically, we worked on a few things which maybe we didn't do well in the first match. We had four training sessions to work on that. So, I think that has helped us a lot in preparing for our upcoming matches and specifically for certain teams also,” said Chettri.



physical education teacher, V Muthukumar, who actively went from door to door and convinced the parents of the village to allow their girls to play football.“We didn't have a proper football ground, so we played on paddy fields. My coach helped us a lot. He arranged the playing equipment and even gave me my first pair of football boots. Even today, when I go back, I train in the same paddy field,” she said.What earned Priyadarshini her place in the national team were impressive performances for Tamil Nadu in the Rajmata Jijabai Trophy for the Senior Women's National Football Championship and the National Games. Before her international cap, the biggest highlight of her career remained the goal in the 2023 Senior Women's NFC final in Punjab, which won Tamil Nadu only their second-ever title.Playing alongside her idol Indumathi Kathiresan, she went on to represent her State in the 2024 and 2025 Rajmata Jijabai Trophy and the National Games in Gujarat 2024 and Uttarakhand 2025. At the club level, she signed for Gokulam Kerala FC in 2023-24 and made five appearances off the bench in the IWL that season. But Priyadarshini took the Kerala Women's League by storm, scoring 24 goals in the Malabarians' title win and ending up as the league's top scorer.Success with Tamil Nadu earned her a job as a block health officer at the government hospital in Alangudi, a town situated half an hour from her home. “As I was appointed under the sports quota, I get paid leave when I'm on national duty, like right now. For people back home, it's a matter of pride that I've become the first one to play for India from my village,” said Priyadarshini.

Jofra and Jasprit, the speed guns without speed breakers destined to make cricket great again

GNS News Agency, July 5

England's foremost cricket pundit Nasser Hussain thinks Jofra Archer should sit out the Edgbaston Test but train with the team – bowling at nets, jogging during breaks, getting his body Test match ready. Last Sunday, Archer, England's very own Jasprit Bumrah, played a first-class game after 1,500 days.Finally, fit to play the longer format, he bowled 18 overs for Sussex and got a wicket. If you are a 150kph bowler with a sparkling red-ball history that was enough to get a Test recall. But Hussain advises caution, he wants Archer to press restart at Lord's, ironically the Test Bumrah is expected to return to, after his likely miss of the second Test that starts on July 2.

At the Home of Cricket, the two diehard Test cricket lovers will terrorise batsmen and for once the lopsided bat-versus-ball contest will be even. Bumrah and Jofra have lost out a lot because of their passion and commitment towards Tests. They could have taken the easy way out, like many of their contemporaries who just focused on white-ball cricket, cut down on workload and earned a lot. But they haven't. Jofra sacrificed money, Bumrah the captaincy.

When Jofra was recalled, BBC spoke to his close friend Saqib Mahmood. The two had roomed when they were dealing with similar injuries. “With Jof the easiest thing for him to have done is just gone purely white ball. He'd have been financially better off and had all of that. But I could always tell he wanted to play Test cricket. I just knew it,” Mahmood said.During the Headingley Test where he took five wickets, Bumrah, at a press conference, expressed his angst when asked about the constant speculation about his injury-ridden future. It's where India's MVP, a captaincy candidate till as recently as the Border Gavaskar Trophy at the end of last year, dropped a line that was about his regret at not being able to be India's long-term captain. It was a rare slip by the guarded professional who weighs every word he utters in public and even maintains a happy expression and positive tone when talking about 'dropped catches.’“Mann tha, kama bhi tha, but Indian cricket se upar kuch nahi hai. (I wanted it and could do it but there is nothing bigger than Indian cricket),” he said, explaining how the high probability of missing games due to his workload saw him step back. He said it wouldn't be fair to the team, if they can't play all the Tests as it would impact continuity.

Fast bowlers, the ones putting their body on the line to pursue real speed, are a different breed. Always risking career-threatening injury, they are known to live on the edge. They are cricket's fighter jocks, the proud men who walk around the dressing room with a swagger. The team's popular stars, the batsmen keep a distance from them, but they know their importance. In contrast, the pacers mock the team's star batsmen, they are to them what boyband artists are to hardened rock stars.

India's Jasprit Bumrah bowls a delivery on day five of the first Test at Headingley in Leeds. (AP) India's Jasprit Bumrah bowls a delivery on day five of the first Test at Headingley in Leeds. (AP)Even when Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli were in the team, no one fooled around with Bumrah. Jofra's mate Mahmood says there are a few no-go areas for him too. While the two trained, they would keep comparing his calf muscles. Jofra would have a retort that only those in 'Club 150' could possibly offer with a comeback line. “What's the fastest you have bowled?”In a game in the early part of IPL, Jofra, turning up for Rajasthan Royals, took a serious beating. Against SunRisers Hyderabad, he went for 76 in four overs. It proved to be the most expensive IPL spell. Ishan Kishan and Travis Head were responsible for the nightmarish figures.

RR coach, the Kiwi speedster Shane Bond, saw how the game impacted Jofra. “There's no doubt he was hurting a bit. I think that's a credit to how quickly he bounced back. He got back to the training ground, trained brilliantly, was really focused and knew what he wanted to do and had to do,” Bond told the BBC.By the end of the season, that spell was forgotten as Archer ended with 11 wickets. Bumrah too doesn't take injudicious batting adventurism kindly. In the 2024-25 BGT, the young Aussie opener Sam Konstas, their Ishan Kishan, riled Bumrah with his batting bravado. By the end of the tour, the Aussies were rethinking their opening options.Jofra Archer last played a Test for England four years ago in Ahmedabad. (BCCI) Jofra Archer last played a Test for England four years ago in Ahmedabad. (BCCI)



The uncertainty over the fitness, and at times even about their pace, has resulted in the two getting targeted by fans. There was a time when it was said that Bumrah would miss India games because of his health but would get magically match-fit during IPL. Jofra too faced taunts during his long recovery and rehabilitation when ECB stood by him. There were comments that Jofra was on the longest paid holiday. Though, used to such sly sledges, there comes a point when it hurts.“You try to not let it get to you but you can ignore 100 of them but sometimes that 101st is the straw that breaks the camel's back,” he once said. But Jofra would take criticism as motivation. Something that even Bumrah too is good at. Though the pacer now has legions of fans and is considered the team's rare match winner, his every injury coincides with some doomsday prediction. Bumrah, the other day, laughed at the regularity with which he gets written off.“Everybody is free to write whatever they want. It doesn't matter to me. If those thoughts come into my mind, I will start believing it. I get dictated by what I believe in,” he says. “I have played cricket on my belief since people have said 'no' to me all my life. First they said you wouldn't be able to play, next they said you will play for 6 months, after 8 months ... now I have finished 10 years of international cricket.” And then he would get philosophical, he talks about barkat – the divine favour. “I prepare the best I can and after that I leave it to the almighty. My barkat will decide how much I play,” he said.

West Indies skipper Roston Chase on umpiring decisions during 1st WI vs AUS Test: ‘So many questionable calls’

GNS News Agency, July 5

ChaseAustralia's captain Pat Cummins celebrates dismissing West Indies' captain Roston Chase, right, on day two of the first cricket Test match at Kensington Stadium in Bridgetown, Barbados, Thursday, June 26, 2025. (AP Photo/Ricardo Mazalan)West Indies skipper Roston Chase was upset about the umpiring controversy during the Test match. Third umpire in the game, Adrian Holdstock, did make a few questionable umpiring decisions, which the Coach of the West Indian side, Darren Sammy, was also critical of.

“This game is a frustrating one for me and for the team because we bowled out Australia for a relatively low score. We were very happy with that. But then there were so many questionable calls in the game and none of them went our way. I mean, as a player, you're out there, you're giving your all, you're fighting. And then nothing is going your way,” Chase said after West Indies lost the game by 159 runs.“It's clear to see anyone would feel bad or feel hurt about those decisions. You're out there playing to win, giving it your all and it seems like everyone is against you. It's frustrating because as players, when we mess up, when we get out of line, we're penalised harshly. But the officials, nothing ever happens to them. They just have a wrong decision or questionable decision and life just goes on,” Chase added.Josh Hazlewood's magic

Carlos Alcaraz, tour-leading grass courter, vs Jannik Sinner, who has to prove he isn't one-dimensional

GNS News Agency, July 5

The 22-year-old defended his French Open title in epic fashion, producing one of the great comebacks in tennis history, to win a fifth Major title last month. He followed it up by adjusting to grass courts seamlessly, winning the title at the ATP 500 event at Queen's Club to arrive at Wimbledon, which starts Monday, as the two-time defending champion that is the bookmaker's favourite to complete a treble.The defeat to Alcaraz in Paris, when he held three championship points, still rankles. It played on his mind as he slumped to what was only his fourth defeat since August last year, against the World No. 45 Alexander Bublik, at the Halle Open last week. The best, most dominant player in the world he may be, but a chink in his armour has been exposed by his biggest rival. Add to that the ignominy of having to serve a recent doping ban and that's plenty to play on a young man's mind.

While Alcaraz and Sinner are not the only hopefuls at the Championships this month – the wily eight-time former champion Novak Djokovic and the fourth-seeded home favourite Jack Draper being the two main forces of opposition – it is hard not to make the focus of the entire men's draw at Wimbledon around the top two seeds.Alcaraz Winner Spain's Carlos Alcaraz, right, and second placed Italy's Jannik Sinner pose with trophies after the final match of the French Tennis Open at the Roland-Garros stadium in Paris, Sunday, June 8, 2025. (AP Photo/Thibault Camus)Sinner is level-headed, methodical and consistent but has shown signs of one-dimensionality. Alcaraz is charismatic, flashy and spontaneous but has shown signs of fragility even against opponents that are not of his calibre. The eye will be drawn magnetically to the two players as they march through the draw and attempt to set up yet another final showdown against one another.

Grass expert?

One can get insights into what transfers Alcaraz's natural clay strengths, and what makes him such a formidable presence at Wimbledon, from the comments of eight-time Major winner Andre Agassi.While on broadcast for the French Open earlier this month, Agassi said: “Alcaraz's best surface to me, shockingly, would be between here and Wimbledon ... I would say grass. Reason I would say grass has nothing to do with his swings. It has to do with the less diminishing speed that happens to him versus other players.”“When he gets out there on the grass and then you bring in that UFO movement stuff, I mean, his second step is ridiculous and he believes in it so much he doesn't



peel out defensively when you push him into corners,” he added.Agassi's comments stand to reason. Unlike other natural clay courtiers that have a preference to hit the ball high and deep, Alcaraz hits the ball flatter through the air and therefore feels no need to adjust to the low-bouncing grass. The balls still come right into his strike zone. His natural movement does not deter either. Again, unlike those that play mostly on the crushed brick, he does not merely slide into his shots to create angles, but he can make those instant adjustments and take those small steps on the skidding grass to open up the court for himself.Add to that elements of Alcaraz's playing style that already suit grass. He is adept at mixing in serve and volley, has the best disguised drop shot on tour, can play a good backhand slice, and after ramming big forehands, he likes to finish off points at the net. The sum of these parts creates, perhaps unexpectedly, a tour-leading grass courter.One of the defining losses of Sinner's career – before he became the match-winning machine he has been for the last 18 months – came back in 2022 at Wimbledon. After expertly blowing past Djokovic to create a two-set lead in their quarterfinal, he slumped to a defeat quite meekly. The immediate impression was that a mental fragility had been exposed, but later analysis proved that the Serb was able to slowly wear him down because he simply figured out Sinner's game plan – which, while effective, he does not move away from much.Darren Cahill, Sinner's coach, revealed as much while speaking on Andy Roddick's podcast recently. “Novak got used to his ball, got used to the shape, got used to the pace and then just locked in, like Novak does, and doesn't miss. And won the last three sets reasonably easily,” he said.When he approached the Serb for feedback on the match, Djokovic would reply: “Hits the ball great, but there's no variation.

Inside Saif Ali Khan's Rs 800 crore Pataudi Palace that sprawls across 10 acres: 150 rooms, lush gardens designed by the man behind Delhi's Connaught Place



Saif Ali Khan was born a nawab to Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi and film actor Sharmila Tagore, and he inherited the Pataudi Palace after his father's death. Also known as Ibrahim Kothi, the palace was built by his grandfather Nawab Iftikhar Ali Khan Pataudi when he wanted to marry his grandmother, Sajida Sultan, the princess of Bhopal. Saif's grandfather ran out of money while he was constructing the palace, which is why a portion of it has marble floors, and other parts have a cement floor.

Sprawled across 10 acres in Haryana, the palace is currently estimated to be worth Rs 800 crore, as per The Times of India. The palace's construction was completed in 1935 by architect Robert Tor Russell, who had also worked on Connaught Place in Delhi. Over the last 90 years, the palace has been in possession of the family, but for a short while from 2005-2014, the palace was leased out to the Neemrana Hotels group, until Saif bought them out of the contract. The family now uses the house for themselves, but also rents it out as a shooting location. The palace has 150 rooms. Saif Ali Khan's Pataudi Palace Saif Ali Khan's Pataudi Palace. (Photo: House of Pataudi/YouTube) Saif Ali Khan's Pataudi Palace Saif Ali Khan's Pataudi Palace. (Photo: Trident Group/YouTube) Saif Ali Khan's Pataudi Palace Saif Ali Khan's Pataudi Palace.



In an earlier chat with Mid-Day, Saif said that even though he was supposed to inherit the palace, he had to buy it back because it was on lease for nearly a decade. "I've learnt that you cannot argue against narratives — whether or not they're true. People have a certain fixed notion. For that matter, even [with] Pataudi [palace], when my father [Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi] died, it got rented to Neemrana Hotels. Aman [Nath] and Francis [Wacziarg] used to run [the hotel]. Francis passed away. He'd said that if I wanted [the palace] back, I could let him know. I said: I want it back. They held a conference, and said, okay, you have to give us lots of money." Saif said that the money he earned through films helped him in "re-buying" the palace. "So, even the house I'm supposed to have inherited has been earned back through money from films. You can't live off the past. At least we can't in our family, because there was nothing. There is history, culture, beautiful photographs; and, of course, some land. It has been a privileged upbringing. But there's been no inheritance," he said. But, later, Saif clarified, that he did not buy the palace again but just cleared the lease. He told Bollywood Bubble, "It wasn't really re-buying, it was like clearing a lease." Saif Ali Khan's Pataudi Palace Saif Ali Khan's Pataudi Palace. (Photo: Express Archives) Saif Ali Khan's Pataudi Palace Saif Ali Khan's Pataudi Palace. In an earlier chat with India Today, Saif revealed that his grandmother told him to never turn the palace into a hotel, since it has a lot of history, but his father felt that if they had to move with the times, they had to consider that option. "Heritage-wise, the house belongs to different people over time. My father was born a nawab, he was a nawab. He lived life on his terms, and he was the most amazing man. He said that times have changed, and decided to rent the house out to a hotel... I remember my grandmother telling me, 'Never do that'. It's got a lot of history, and that's something I take pride in," he said. Soha Ali Khan, in a chat with Housing.com, shared that the palace's generator room was converted into a 2-BHK when it was used as a hotel, and she has inherited that. "The palace was leased to Neemrana Hotels, and when it was, my parents needed a place to live, so the generator room was made into a very nice equivalent of a two-BHK," she said. Saif's father Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi is buried hereln the same chat with India Today, Saif shared, "My grandparents are buried there, my father is buried there. It's my family home. There are lot of these old houses, we call them the darbar halls, but I find that an outdated name. I want to call it the long room, after the hall at Lord's. This house was built by the seventh nawab of Pataudi, and my father. I want to put up their cricket places and bats, and I really want to restore this house with their spirit. That's been my dream, and it's almost done."

Debt-ridden Amitabh Bachchan promised to return every penny he owed, made Jaya Bachchan a guarantor, recalls Aanjan Srivastav



Amitabh Bachchan went through a rather tough phase professionally in the 1980s and the 1990s. He took a sabbatical from the movies after he entered politics in the 1980s, but he had to resign amid much controversy around the Bofors scandal in 1987. At this point, Amitabh's public image took a huge hit. In a recent interview, actor Aanjan Srivastav, who also worked as a banker and facilitated many loans to Amitabh's company ABCL, shared an anecdote from the time when Bachchan was having a tough time financially. He said that the embattled star promised to return every penny that he owed to the bank. In fact, when the bank wanted Jaya Bachchan to be a guarantor on the loan, Aanjan helped make that possible. In a chat with Friday Talkies, Aanjan recalled that the chairman of the bank wanted an appointment with Amitabh Bachchan as the actor was thinking about changing branches. Aanjan shared that Bachchan invited the chairman to his house. He shared that after some time passed, and Bachchan was in the middle of the Bofors controversy, the bank wanted its money back and Aanjan was given the task of getting Bachchan to repay the loan. "The bank started saying that ask him to return our money. I took the manager with me and went to his shoot at Kamalistan Studios. He said (gestures folded hands), 'Main aapke ek ek payi vapis kar dunga (I will return every penny I owe you)'. And he did. He is a man of his word," he said. Aanjan said that, on a different occasion, the head office asked that Jaya be made the guarantor and Aanjan made that happen as well. "The head office said that they want Jaya's guarantee and she also signed," he said.

In an earlier chat with Rajshri Unplugged, Aanjan said that during the financial mess of ABCL in the 1990s, he felt that Amitabh was being fooled by those who looked after his finances. He shared that when the bank sent him

to Bachchan as they were thinking about filing a suit, he stopped them. "When we met him, he immediately got up with folded hands. He said that 'I will return your money as soon as possible'. I told him 'We have not come for that. We have come because of your accountant's mistake. You return the money when you can and we trust you that you will give and your intention is right. But in this kind of banking, don't do transactions with other banks.' I came back to the bank and told them to not file any suit. Slowly, he returned all the money," Aanjan said. He shared that Bachchan was "trapped" in the financial mess of ABCL. "When ABCL account was there, he (Amitabh) was trapped in it. We used to go to his office from the bank to take statements and people were bluffing him badly. This is what my manager and I realised," he said. Bachchan's fortunes changed in the early 2000s and he eventually paid all his creditors.

Raghava Lawrence tells actor S J Suryah: I know your biggest dream is to become a lead actor!

Chennai: Congratulating actor and director S J Suryah, who has made a return to direction after almost a decade with his next film, 'Killer', actor, director and producer Raghava Lawrence on Saturday told the gifted director and actor that he knew that his biggest dream was to become a lead actor more than becoming a director.

Taking to his X timeline to congratulate actor and director S J Suryah with whom he worked on Karthik Subbaraj's Jigarthanda Double X, Raghava Lawrence wrote, "Brother @iam_SJSuryah, Congratulations on your next directorial #KILLER. More than a director, I know your biggest dream is to become a lead actor. May this Killer movie give you the biggest success as a Hero. I pray to Raghavendra Swamy for all your dreams to come true! My best wishes to the whole team!" Multi-talented superstar SJ Surya is all set to make a comeback as a director after a gap of 10 years. S J Suryah will be both acting and directing the huge pan-India film called Killer, the story, screenplay and dialogues of which he penned himself. The film is being jointly produced by the renowned production house Sri Gokulam Movies (led by Gokulam Gopalan) and SJ Surya's own production house, Angel Studios. Gokulam Movies, which has produced successful films in Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada and other languages, is making a comeback in the Tamil film industry with this film. The film is co-produced by VC Praveen and Baiju Gopalan, and Krishnamurthy is the executive producer.

'Ours is the last generation to believe life's not only about loving your parents': Sudhir Mishra on rebellion being at the heart of his films

The filmmaker Sudhir Mishra talks about using the Emergency as a backdrop in his film Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi and his new series, Summer of '76, to pay a heartfelt tribute to youth, curiosity and dissent. Your film 'Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi' (2005) had the Emergency as a backdrop as does your upcoming eight-part series 'Summer of '76'. How do you look back at the events of those days?

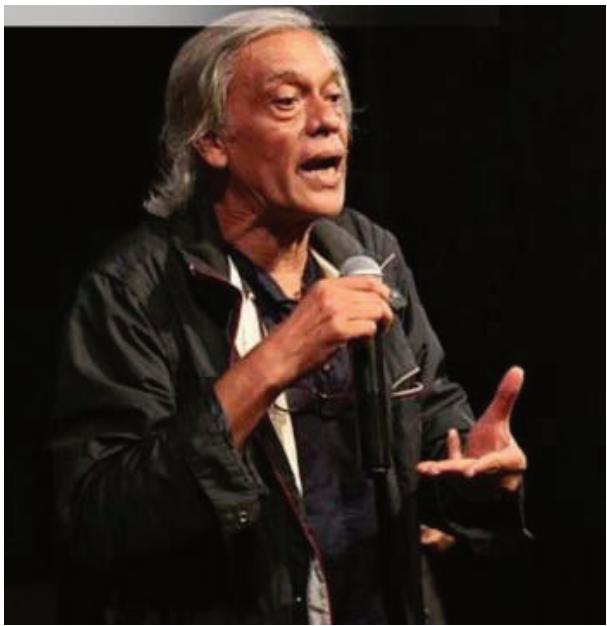
Fifty years on, it's complicated when you look at it. You have to see that those who fought against it, what happened to them, were they very different from those they opposed? Of course, the imposition of the Emergency was, for want of a better word, a not-so-great chapter in Indian history. It gave permission to a lot of petty tyrants. There was a government and from the village-level up, there were tin-pot tyrants who ruled the roost. Anybody could arrest anyone, say he is a Naxal and shoot him. This is what caused the actual problem. What Mrs Gandhi and her people did not understand was that it was a 'conference of the upset' movement against the Emergency, against them. There was a whole disappointed generation. My series is about this moment. There was a generation that did not agree with the idea of India that was handed to them by their parents who had fought for freedom. They felt a sense of betrayal. Problem is those who rebelled didn't realise that those who took power after that were actually worse than those they were opposing.

What is the 'Summer of '76' about?

It draws from the autobiography of my maternal grandfather, DP Mishra, who had been in the Congress and had two stints as the chief minister of Madhya Pradesh. He was one of the few people who fought or manipulated — call it what you want — for Mrs Gandhi to be the prime minister. But he was a follower of Sardar Patel and was opposed to Nehru. He was the only one to resign from the Congress over Nehru but was brought back as chief minister, and then campaigned for Indira Gandhi. He was sort of a Centrist. However, a Left-wing fantasy had started that thought that through Mrs Gandhi, they could bring in a revolution. They became very disappointed during her imposition of the Emergency because of Sanjay Gandhi. He had started a coterie, which was non-democratic, entitled and had a 'Babalog view' of the world, which alienated the youth in non-metro India from the English-speaking upper class. My grandfather saw that there was a kind of undeclared emergency within the Congress and so before they could kick him out, he walked away. He had joined the Congress as a 20-year-old and was an understudy to Motilal Nehru, so he said he couldn't work under the great-grandson.

As with your film Hazaaron..., will youth be at the centre of Summer of '76 too?

Yes, but it's much wider. I follow people all over the country. 'Hazaaron...' is about these college students, 'Summer of '76' is about those who got involved in the JP movement. It's also about Ramesh Dixit, one of the students arrested in JNU (Jawaharlal Nehru University), and on Pushpesh Pant's book, 'Portrait of a Student Activist'. So, factual parts of it come from there, then there are a lot of stories, fiction and imagination. The series is about what happens to the passionate, who think they are not living in the best of all possible worlds and want to change it. It's an exciting journey of seven young people and the problems they will face. The Emergency is a metaphor. This is a story of any time. It's a tribute to youth, to curiosity, to rebellion, to holding each other's hands, to taking risks. At the time of the Emergency, I was very young but I know how my grandfather felt about it. He died in 1988 and I was a filmmaker by then. I'm not a faithful family boy, I have a point of view and everything's filtered through my eyes. I'm a scientist's son, a mathematician's son. So when I see a hypothesis, I need to evaluate if it's true or



not. And if it's not, then I look at it straight in the face. We are, perhaps, the last generation that believes life is not only about loving your parents or obeying your parents. There were many rebellions happening at that time. Women were breaking free, landless peasants were attempting to break free, many lower castes were coming to the fore, claiming their place in India, the Dalit movement was gaining strength. This is what the Congress didn't see. Unfortunately, sometimes it ended up being led by the wrong people but that desire to break free was genuine.

Your films have captured the angst and idealism of a generation. Do you think people are less idealistic now?

I don't blame the youth because this is the world we gave them. The poor are bereft of one kind of nutrition; the upper class or the so-called middle class are bereft of another. The whole education system is geared to mugging up information and vomiting it out. It is not geared to create a mind which can analyse, understand and take things forward. Curiosity is not encouraged. So you have a nation of educated illiterates. You have prepared a world where anything can be said and the majority will believe it, which is why most of them will be replaced so easily by AI. There is extreme self-centeredness and a disrespect of any kind of idealism. It's not only that they do not want to be idealists but they disrespect them. And then there is a pseudo-Left, a cultural Left, which I think is the fig leaf of the Right. So there is actually no real opposition and everybody is the same.

The censorship that started then, do you see its shadow in current times?

Yes, a nation starts getting used to self-censoring. Anyway, it's not so difficult in our country because we always say, 'badon ke saamne aise nahi bolna chahiye' (you shouldn't speak like that before elders). We have a culture of censorship. Be polite, don't say this in front of your grandfather. If you have censorship in your head, then you cannot be scientific, right?

Do you think there are still ways of saying what you want to say?

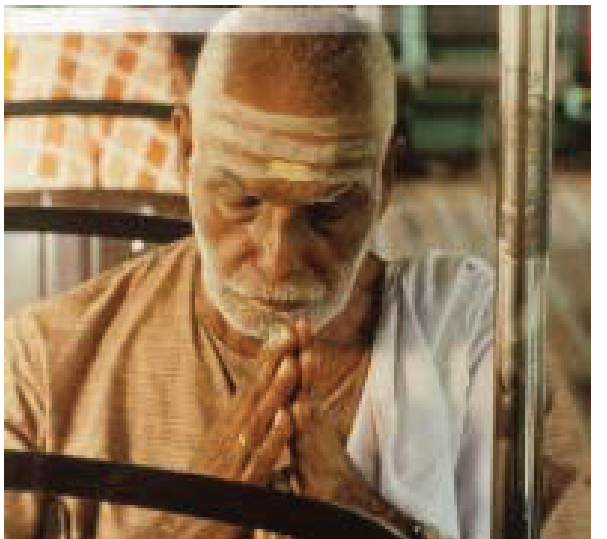
Well, in Iran, filmmakers say what they want to say and make films. So, you can. If you have a negative mindset and say I cannot express myself, then what is the message you send to other people? You become a bore. You should keep expressing yourself in a rational, non-sensationalist way but you should be prepared for repercussions that may happen.

How a 1989 Malayalam film examined the aftermath of the state's repression of a helpless individual

Hours before the evening bus is supposed to arrive, the old man has seated himself at his usual spot, waiting for his son to come home as promised. Raghu, the younger child of Raghavan Chakkar, is a student at an engineering college in a distant town. 'Isn't today the right day?' Raghavan asks his daughter while returning alone from the bus stop for the first time. 'It is probably just a day's delay,' a neighbour tells the old man on the second day that Raghu fails to turn up. On the third day, Raghavan goes to the bus stop in the morning, only to return — once again — alone. 'Did I not tell you the bus won't come in the morning?' comes the gentle chastisement from the boatman who has been ferrying Raghavan to the bus stop. Slowly, over the course of its 110-minute runtime, a terrible absence — a person-shaped hole — takes form at the centre of Shaji N Karun's 'Piravi'.

Generally believed to be inspired by the infamous case of the disappearance of P Rajan, a student at the Regional Engineering College Calicut, during the Emergency, 'Piravi' (1989) was Karun's directorial debut. Already a lauded cinematographer, especially for his work with auteur G Aravindan (who also co-composed the music for his protegee's debut), Karun won wide acclaim for the Malayalam film, including the Mention D'Honneur — Camera D'Or at the 1989 Cannes Film Festival. While the filmmaker denied being inspired by any specific story when making 'Piravi', saying that it was about the wider problem of custodial deaths, the parallels with the Rajan case are undeniable. 'Piravi' is set in 1988, 11 years after the Emergency had ended, but like Raghavan in the film, T V Eachara Warriar had set out on a dogged quest in 1976 to find out what happened to his son, Rajan. His long battle that finally unearthed the awful truth about his son's disappearance — wrongful arrest, torture and death in custody — resulted in one of the most well-known habeas corpus cases in India. It rocked the Kerala government, leading to the resignation of Chief Minister K Karunakaran a month after he led the Congress-led coalition to a landslide victory in the 1977 Assembly election.

Karun, in 'Piravi', was less interested in the legal and political aspects of the nightmare that Warriar endured, than he was in exploring, through the visual medium, the problem of depicting a disappearance: How do you show someone who is not there? Raghu's is an unfathomable absence and the film, as it delineates the anxiety and grief of the



bereaved, takes shape around the vacuum that comes to represent the missing son. The film marks a visual and sonic challenge, masterfully tackled: Like Raghu, the rain announces its arrival — monsoon winds slam doors and windows, waves crash on the beach, the afternoon darkens — only to disappoint. The landscape is suffused with sound, both human and non-human — the gentle gurgling of the river, the susurrance of the wind through the reeds, the tick-tock of Raghavan's wristwatch. Yet, what throws these into sharp relief, making each one ring out loud and clear, is the utter silence of the one who never returned home.

Many films have been made about that dark period from June 25, 1975, to March 21, 1977, most of them focusing on the political machinations or stories of state repression. As its creator stated, 'Piravi' may not be explicitly about the Emergency, yet few other films have so effectively examined the haunting question of what happens after an episode of state repression. What happens to the ones left behind? Decades after Warriar trudged from pillar to post, desperately seeking out the truth and trying to hold to account those responsible for his son's death, 'Piravi' reminds viewers of other fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, haunted by the disappearance of their loved ones.