

INDIAN CHRONICLE

24 February, 2026 | Tuesday | Volume No:11 | Issue No:11

Pages: 12+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

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CM expresses deep condolences over demise of Vennam Raghavender Reddy

Hanumakonda: The Chief Minister Anumula Revanth Reddy visited Reddyal village in Mahabubabad district on Sunday to offer his deep condolences over the demise of Vennam Raghavender Reddy, a well-known social figure and the father of former TPCC State General Secretary Vennam Srikanth Reddy and Big TV Chairman Vennam Vijaykanth Reddy, who passed away at the age of 70 following a heart attack.

MLA assures devpt of tribal hamlet

Wanaparthy: Local MLA Thudi Megha Reddy attended the housewarming ceremony of an Indiramma house constructed by Bhagyamma at Anusandhan Thanda in Tatipamula village of Srirangapuram mandal on Sunday. Addressing the villagers, the MLA was apprised of various developmental needs of the thanda. He assured residents that the hamlet would be developed in all sectors within a year.

As it was the MLA's first visit to the thanda, residents accorded him a grand welcome with traditional drum beats, folk dances, and a shower of flowers. Women of the hamlet performed cultural dances to mark the occasion. Participating in the housewarming ceremony, the MLA presented new clothes to the couple and conveyed his wishes.

Uttam Vows to Fast-Track Gouravelli Project

Hyderabad, February 23 — Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy has assured that the Gouravelli Irrigation project will be expedited, with all legal hurdles and funding issues addressed as a priority. He expressed confidence that environmental clearance would soon be granted for the project, and the land acquisition process would be completed within a set timeframe.

Hyderabad City Guide

Joined by Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar, Uttam Reddy held a high-level review at his Secretariat chambers to discuss obstacles hindering progress. The Gouravelli project, part of the Indiramma Flood Flow Canal (IFFC) scheme, was initially proposed with a 1.41 TMC storage capacity in Siddipet district, aimed at creating an ayacut of 1.06 lakh acres. It was later enhanced to 8.23 TMC.

The Minister assured farmers of fair compensation and prompt payments for land acquisition, emphasising the need to fast-track the process. He directed Collectors from Karimnagar, Jangaon and Siddipet to prioritise land acquisition issues, with funds to be released before June 2.

Addressing legal challenges, Uttam Reddy instructed the Advocate General to prepare strategies ahead of an upcoming Supreme Court hearing. He expressed hope that legal hurdles would be overcome, stating the project's works had been stalled for years due to various reasons.



The government remains committed to completing the project, with funds to be released without delay. Minister Prabhakar has been urging swift progress. Uttam Reddy stressed that the land acquisition deadline set by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy must be met at all costs.

Amid rising land values in urbanising areas, the Minister called for fair compensation policies. He directed Irrigation Advisor Adityanath Das to resolve issues hampering progress. Senior officials, including Special Secretary Prashant Jeevan Patil and others, participated in the review.



Ponguleti mandates daily hours for newly elected councillors

GNS News Agency, Feb 23

Hyderabad/Khammam: "Politics persists only until the elections are concluded. Once elected, it is imperative for representatives to serve the people on behalf of the government. It is essential to understand that a leadership position entails not authority, but accountability," stated Revenue and Housing Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy.

On Sunday, Pokabathini Anitha, the newly elected chairperson of Edulapuram municipality, officially took charge at the municipal office in Peddathanda. Ponguleti honoured the occasion as the chief guest.

During his address, he emphasised that the effectiveness of the system hinges on the active involvement of elected representatives in the people. The Minister remarked on the trust bestowed upon Congress candidates by the electorate in the recently conducted municipal elections.

"It is crucial for all leaders to engage regularly in the field, instead of remaining confined to their offices. Each councillor should visit their designated wards five days a

week for at least two hours each morning. Not all tasks necessitate financial resources; the efficacy of officers and staff will improve significantly only when leaders fulfil their responsibilities diligently," stated Ponguleti.

The Minister pledged to transform the Yedulapuram Municipality into a model for the entire state of Telangana.

He instructed officials to take immediate action to resolve issues concerning drinking water, prevent sewage stagnation, and address the encroachment upon drains.

Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy indicated that he would conduct a follow-up review in fifteen days, during which councillors are expected to have a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced in each ward.

Subsequently, the Minister participated in the housewarming ceremony for a beneficiary of the Indiramma Housing Scheme in Satyanarayanapuram. He extended his congratulations to the family for their new residence and presented them with silk garments as a gesture of goodwill.



74 lakh names deleted in final TN voter list post SIR

New Delhi, Feb 11

The Election Commission on Monday released the final electoral roll for Tamil Nadu in which 74.07 lakh names of voters have been deleted under various categories, leaving the number of electors in the southern state at 5.67 crore.

Addressing a press conference in Chennai, Chief Electoral Officer Archana Patnaik said before the SIR exercise, the state's electorate stood at 6.41 crore. While 97.37 lakh names of voters were deleted during the special intensive revision (SIR) exercise, 74.07 lakh names have been deleted in the final list after the revision, leaving the number of electors in the southern state at 5.67 crore as on today.

However, Tamil Nadu has seen a rise of 4.28 per cent in the number of voters as compared to the draft list. The draft list is the preliminary voter list published during the SIR. At this stage, citizens can raise objections, request corrections and file claims for inclusion. After all

claims and objections are resolved, the final electoral roll is published.

As per the final list, there are 5,67,07,380 voters in Tamil Nadu, 23,30,624 more than the 5,43,76,756 voters in the draft list, which had come out on December 19, thus showing an increase of 4.28 per cent in total voters' tally. The Assembly polls in the state are due in April this year.

Tamil Nadu has joined states like Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Gujarat and the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar, which have witnessed a rise in the number of voters after the final electoral lists were released last week, marking the completion of the SIR there.

Only Goa has seen a dip in the number of voters by 27,000 after its final voters' list was released last week.

West Bengal's final voters' list is expected to be released on February 27, which according to rough estimates, is likely to witness heavy deletions amid several postponements in its SIR schedule. SIR 2.0 was held in nine states and three union territories.

Journalists Issues to Be Resolved Soon : Minister Ponguleti Assures

N JANARDHANACHARY, NEWS BOOM

Khammam, Feb 22: State revenue, information and public relation, housing Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy has assured that the problems being faced by journalists will be resolved at the earliest. He stated that accreditation committees would be constituted strictly in accordance with the proposals submitted by journalists' unions.

A delegation of TUWJ(IJU) Journalists Union leaders, led by State General Secretary K. Ram Narayana, met the Minister at his camp office in Khammam and submitted a memorandum highlighting issues related to journalists' accreditation, websites, cable channels, and small newspapers.

The union leaders explained that journalists are facing confusion regarding the issuance of accreditation cards. Though the government had earlier stated that accreditation cards would be issued to 44,709 journal-

ists, the provisions in the government order indicate that even 50 percent coverage may not be achieved. They pointed out that the norms imposed on freelance and veteran journalists are causing difficulties and that the questions asked on the accreditation website are not conducive to granting cards.

They also objected to the change in the traditional system of forming district accreditation committees, stating that earlier, representatives recommended by registered unions were approved by the Commissioner's office, whereas now powers have been vested with district collectors. They urged the Minister to continue the earlier practice. Concerns were also raised over the reduction of accreditation cards for major newspapers, satellite channels, desk journalists, and small newspapers.

Responding positively, Minister Ponguleti assured that accreditation committees would be formed as per the proposals of journalists' unions. He said the accreditation website would be simplified and announced that the accreditation deadline would be extended by one more month. He urged journalists and union leaders not to worry and clarified that accreditation cards would be issued to all eligible journalists.

State and district leaders of the TUWJ(IJU) journalists were present in this program.



2 top Naxals surrender before Telangana Police

New Delhi, Feb 23

Two topmost Naxal commanders Thippiri Tirupati, alias Devji, and Malla Raji Reddy have surrendered before the Telangana Police.

However, sources aware of developments said their arrest would be announced formally by the Telangana Government in a day or two. Both Naxals, who are members of the Central Committee of the outlawed CPI (Maoist), are said to have surrendered before the Telangana Police on February 22.

Devji carried a bounty of Rs 1 crore on his head and after creating the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA), he went on to become a key central committee

member.

The surrender of Devji and Raji Reddy comes just weeks before the Centre's March 31, 2026 deadline for ending Naxalism from the country ends. Their surrender is also a blow to the already depleted leadership of CPI (Maoist), whose 10 central committee members had either been killed or had surrendered in 2025.

However, as reported by The Tribune on February 23, around 300 cadres of Maoists are still active in the regions bordering Chhattisgarh and Telangana, mainly in the Abujhmad region of Bastar. Sources have said penetrating South Bastar still remains a challenge for security forces. Also, two more central committee members Misir Besra and Mupalla Lakshmana Rao are absconding.

EDITORIAL

POLITICAL CRISES

ENGLISH DAILY, HYDERABAD

**Should extinct species return?
Ethics and realities of de-extinction**

Resurrection, generally known as de-extinction, aims to reverse the extinction of animals by creating new versions of lost species. The goal is to create functional equivalents of extinct species, resulting in ecological enrichment and the restoration of biodiversity and ecosystem functions lost through extinction. Put simply, resurrection science seeks to one day literally bring extinct species back from the dead.

De-extinction works mainly through three technologies: cloning, genome editing and back breeding. Cloning involves extracting DNA from preserved remains of an extinct species — such as fossils or museum specimens — and inserting it into the egg cells of a closely related species. The modified embryo is then transplanted into a surrogate mother, which gives birth to an organism genetically identical to the extinct species. Genome editing, particularly through Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats (CRISPR), alters the DNA of living species by introducing genes from extinct species. Back breeding involves breeding animals for an external characteristic that may not be seen throughout the species. This method can recreate the traits of the extinct species. Researchers are attempting to bring back several extinct creatures, and one has already been revived.

Dire wolf: In April 2025, George Church, founder of Colossal Biosciences, Laboratories, USA, announced the successful birth of three dire wolf pups, establishing the species as the first successfully de-extinct species — a historic milestone in conservation science. Researchers obtained genetic material from dire wolf fossils, including a 13,000-year-old tooth and a 72,000-year-old skull. From these remains, scientists sequenced and deciphered the dire wolf genome (complete set of DNA).

Using CRISPR genome editing, Church's team edited living cells from the modern Grey Wolf (dire wolf's closest living relative) to carry dire wolf genes. These edited cells were used to create embryos through Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer, replacing the genetic material in donor egg cells with the edited dire wolf DNA. The viable embryos were implanted into domestic dog surrogates, resulting in the birth of three healthy dire wolf pups: two males (Romulus and Remus) and one female (Khaleesi). These pups already exhibit classic dire wolf traits such as thick white fur, broad heads and sturdy builds, and display wild lupine instinct unlike domestic dogs. This initiative adhered to IUCN guidelines on creating proxies of extinct species for conservation purposes. Church asserts that another major disruptive conservation project aims to introduce the woolly mammoth gene into the Asiatic elephant for conservation purposes. There is a possibility that species such as woolly mammoth, passenger pigeon, dodo, quagga and aurochs, supported by well-preserved DNA samples, may potentially return in modified forms. The de-extinction efforts in India are primarily focused on the reintroduction of the Asiatic cheetah, declared extinct in 1952. While no major CRISPR-based projects are under way, the possibility is being explored, particularly through the Lazarus project, which collaborates with Indian researchers on reviving the extinct Himalayan quail using DNA from museum specimens. Resurrected species would remain highly vulnerable and require long-term protection. Concerns also include whether they can adapt to today's environmental conditions and reproduce successfully in the wild.

**Minister Ponnam felicitates
Municipal Chairperson**

"Jagtlial Correspondent, Ennam Kishan Reddy, February 23 (Indian Chronical): "State Minister for BC Welfare and Transport, Ponnam Prabhakar, felicitated Jagtlial Municipal Chairperson Samindla Vani Srinivas. "At the Minister's camp office in Hyderabad,



Chairperson Vani Srinivas, along with Jagtlial MLA Sanjay Kumar, met Minister Ponnam Prabhakar and presented a bouquet. The Minister honored them with a shawl. "Minister Prabhakar advised Chairperson Vani to develop Jagtlial town in all aspects, according to the people's aspirations. [4:23 PM, 2/23/2026] +91 80198 13525: End

**Jeevan Reddy
condoles the family of
reporter Sajid**

"Jagtlial Correspondent, Ennam Kishan Reddy, February 23 (Indian Chronical): "Former Minister Tatiparthi Jeevan Reddy visited the family of senior reporter Sajid, who recently passed away, and expressed his condolences. "Jeevan Reddy went to Sajid's home, consoled the family members, and expressed his deep sorrow over the loss. He also offered his sympathies to the family. "Jeevan Reddy also visited the family of Jella Ravi, Youth Congress leader, whose son Anudeep died in a road accident, and paid his respects to the deceased.



**OU Archaeology Students Participated in
Excavations at Janampet**



"Indian Chronical OU February 23: Archaeological excavations are currently underway at Janampet in Bhadradi Kothagudem district. Students from the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Arts College, Osmania University, participated in these excavations. "The students stated that they visited the site with the encouragement of Arts College Principal and Head of Archaeology, Professor C. Kaseem. "OU Archaeology faculty member Dr. Shivanand Yalala said that these excavations would bring to light evidence of early humans and reveal many aspects related to human history. "He

further explained that the excavations are being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Nikhil Das, Superintending Archaeologist of the Hyderabad Circle, Archaeological Survey of India. "Dr. Shivanand Yalala added that by visiting the megalithic burials at Janampet along with departmental students, they would be able to unearth skeletal remains of early humans and artifacts used by them. This would help in understanding the history, culture, and lifestyle of ancient generations. "He stated that observing excavation methods would provide students with valuable practical experience, enabling them to grow into professional archaeologists in the future. "Theory Along with

Practical Knowledge: Research Scholar Medi Divya "Research scholar Medi Divya said that studying archaeological should not be limited to theory alone. Visiting archaeological excavations as part of practical learning provides students with hands-on knowledge. This enhances their interest in the archaeology course. She also mentioned that students' report writing can be useful to historians, government authorities, and officials. She stated that she is conducting her research under the supervision of Professor N. R. Giridhar. "Site Supervisor Nikhil, Vamshika, Rishendra, Research Scholar Medi Divya, Archaeology Department faculty member Dr. Nagamani, and students participated in the program.

**EWS 10% reservations should be
fully implemented**

OC JAC District Convenor Rajanna at Delhi Dharna

"Jagtlial Correspondent Ennam Kishan Reddy, February 23 (Indian Chronical): "OC Social Welfare Association Jagtlial District Convenor Mahankali Rajanna demanded that the government recognize and address the social and economic injustices faced by the upper castes. "Rajanna and CH Venkata Prabhakar Rao spoke at a dharna organized by OC Welfare Associations at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi. They expressed sorrow that despite 70 years of independence, OC communities are still lagging behind in various fields. "They criticized the state governments for not implementing the 10% reservations for economically backward classes as introduced by the central government. They demanded that the government take steps to ensure that these reservations are implemented in reality, not just on paper. "Rajanna and Prabhakar Rao alleged that the government is neglecting the principles of equality guaranteed by the constitution. They warned that they will take up this issue as a people's movement in the coming days and urged all political parties to take a



clear stance on OC issues. "The dharna was attended by National OC JAC President Poladi Rama Rao, Chairman Nalla Sanjeev Reddy, Telangana State President Gopu Jaipal Reddy, Badduri Venkateswar Reddy, Jagtlial district OC representatives Sirisilla Rajender Sharma, Baddam Narayana Reddy, Katakam Chandramouli, and representatives from Telugu states and other states.

**Extensive Tour by Congress Party In-charge Mandumula
Parameshwar Reddy in Gandhi Nagar Market Basti, Uppal**



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, February 23 (Indian Chronical): "Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, along with former corporator Mandumula Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy, conducted an extensive visit on Monday in Gandhi

Nagar of Uppal Division. During the visit, residents briefed him about issues related to the community hall and poor road conditions in the colony. Responding promptly, Parameshwar Reddy instructed the concerned officials to resolve the road problems at the earliest. "Uppal Division President Bakaram Lakshman, Bazaar Jagannath Goud, Eega Anjaiah Mudiraj, Lingampalli Ramakrishna, Hanumanth Reddy, Boosam Raghunath Reddy, Amarnath, Sonnila Bal Raj, Jeeyagudem Abraham, Narsing, Alugula Anil Kumar, Bakaram Arun, Alwala Bhaskar, Thokata Raju, Pujari Hanumanth, Mashetty Raghavender, Janagama Ramakrishna, Prashanth Reddy, Vijay Kumar, Silver Prem Kumar, Nomula Suresh, Sai Reddy, Bharat, Devaraj, Manoj, Basha, Sudhakar, Prakash, Bhaskar, Ajay, Prabhakar, Pratyush, Kranthi, Sonnila Ashwini, Ambika, Malleswari, Narsamma, Satyamma, Hemalatha, Geetha, Lakshmi, Kishamma, Maheshwari, Kamalamma, Bhagyamma, Saritha, Lakshamma, Sandhya, and Lalitha, along with several others, participated in the programme.

**Media Must Stand as the Voice of the People:
Dr. Vyasabhath Srivani Chowdary**



formed committee of the Uppal Print & Electronic Media Club would work with social responsibility and serve the public interest. She also stressed that media support is essential in creating awareness about welfare initiatives and development programs. She urged media representatives to cooperate constructively in the development of the Uppal region. Dr. Srivani Chowdary assured her full support for the good initiatives undertaken by the Uppal Print & Electronic Media Club. The program was organized under the leadership of Uppal Media Club (Print & Electronic) President Vaddepalli Kishore.

"Grand Felicitation to the New Committee of Uppal Media Club "KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, February 23 (Indian Chronical): "Members of the newly formed executive committee of the Uppal Video Club (Print & Electronic Media) met Dr. Vyasabhath Srivani Chowdary, Founder and Chairperson of the Telangana Human Rights Justice Forum. The delegation, led by Uppal Media Club President Vaddepalli Kishore, paid a courtesy visit to her. "On this occasion, Dr. Srivani Chowdary felicitated and congratulated the new committee members. Speaking at the meeting, she emphasized that the role of the media is crucial in delivering truthful information to the public. She stated that the media has a responsibility to highlight public issues impartially and stand as the voice of the people. She expressed hope that the newly

**Ensure speedy justice
for victims**

SP Ashok Kumar instructs officials

"Jagtlial Correspondent, Ennam Kishan Reddy, February 23 (Indian Chronical): Jagtlial District SP Ashok Kumar instructed officials to ensure speedy justice for complaints received at police stations and during Grievance Day. "During Grievance Day, SP Ashok Kumar per-



sonally interacted with 14 petitioners from various parts of the district at the district police headquarters. He enquired about their problems and instructed the concerned officials to take immediate action and provide justice to the victims. "Speaking on the occasion, SP Ashok Kumar said that the police department is working towards bringing the police closer to the people and resolving their problems. He stated that the police are not only receiving complaints but also inspecting them at the field level and taking prompt action to ensure justice for the victims.

**Women Congress
should move forward to
strengthen the party**

"District Women Congress President
Tatiparthi Vijayalakshmi

"Jagtlial Correspondent, Ennam Kishan Reddy, February 23 (Indian Chronical): "Jagtlial District Women Congress President Tatiparthi Vijayalakshmi Devaraj Reddy called upon Women Congress members to move forward to strengthen the party. "The Women Congress district executive meeting was held at Indira Bhavan in Jagtlial district headquarters on Monday, following the instructions of National Women Congress President Alka Lamba and State Women Congress President Mogili Sunitha Rao. State Women Congress responsible person Aparna attended the meeting. "Vijayalakshmi



spoke about the programs undertaken by the Women Congress and emphasized that Women Congress plays a crucial role in strengthening the Congress party. She stated that the Telangana Congress government is working towards women's welfare, empowerment, and self-reliance, and urged women to take note of this. "She highlighted the government's initiatives, including free bus travel, 200 units of free electricity, gas cylinder subsidy, and distribution of Indiramma housing plots in women's names. The government aims to make one crore women economically self-sufficient through women's associations. "Vijayalakshmi urged people to support and bless the people's government, which is working towards women's development and welfare. The meeting was attended by State Women Congress General Secretary Tatiparthi Shobha Rani, District Vice-President and Jagtlial Municipal Councilor Allala Sarita Ramesh Rao, farvin, padhma, laxmi, vijayalakshmi, lavanya, manjula, jayasri, priyanka and other Women Congress leaders.

Global Media English Medium School, Wankidi Students Donate Rs 5,376 to Sri Sai Orphan Old Age Welfare Society



support to Sri Sai Orphan Old Age Welfare Society by donating ₹5,376 as financial assistance. "The amount was voluntarily collected by the students and handed over to the representatives of the welfare society. On this occasion, the organization's spokesperson, Mr. M. Prabhudas, appreciated the students for their kindness and social responsibility. "As a mark of encouragement, student Sankirithana was awarded a Gold Medal, while student Manikantha received a Silver Medal for their active participation and contribution to the noble cause. "The program was attended by School Principal MD Tafheem, Vice Principal, Karpetha Ramachander, teachers Zainab Fathima, Kavitha, Geetha, and other students. The school management stated that such activities help nurture compassion, humanity, and a sense of social responsibility among students from a young age.

""Indian Chronicle" kumram bheem Asifabad District Reporte, Jade Srinivas, February, 23. ""Students of Global Media English Medium School, a private school located at Wankidi mandal headquarters, extended their

Sanitation, Streetlights, and Road Issues in Uppal Bhagya Layout Raised at Prajavani

""KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, February 23 (Indian Chronicle): ""Representatives of the Uppal Bhagya Layout Welfare Association submitted a petition to GHMC Additional Commissioner (Sanitation & Transport) C.N. Raghu Prasad during the Prajavani grievance redressal programme held at the Malkajgiri Commissioner's Office on Monday. During the weekly Prajavani programme, officials receive public grievances and work toward resolving them. On this occasion, association members explained the severe civic issues prevailing in Uppal Bhagya Layout. They reported that garbage is piling up on roads at several locations, leading to an alarming increase in mosquitoes. Residents are facing serious inconvenience and are at risk of diseases such as dengue and malaria. "The members also highlighted the absence of streetlights in the layout, which has created safety concerns. They stated that anti-social activities, including public drinking at night, are occurring on dark streets. Further, they explained that roads in the layout have become riddled with potholes, causing severe hardship to motorists and increasing the risk of accidents. The association stated that they have submitted multiple representations to concerned government departments in the past, but authorities have allegedly failed to respond effectively. They urged officials to provide basic civic infrastructure at the earliest. They also pointed out that during recent CC road works in nearby colonies such as Laxma Reddy Colony, Surya Nagar Colony, and Raj Nagar Colony, large heaps of mud were left unattended on roads, causing inconvenience to commuters. "Association President Mekala Madhusudan Reddy, along with members Garikapati Shivaprasad, Mujakari Pawan, and Mallikarjun, participated in the programme and submitted the petition.



Temporary Disruption in Drinking Water Supply Due to Emergency Repairs



""Statement by Mission Bhagiratha E.E. Rakesh""Indian Chronicle" kumram bheem Asifabad District Reporte, Jade Srinivas, February, 23. ""Asifabad: Due to emergency repair works, there will be a temporary disruption in drinking water supply, according to Executive Engineer (E.E.) Rakesh of Mission Bhagiratha. "The repairs are being carried out at the 115 MLD (Million Litres per Day) Water Treatment Plant located at Manikguda ADA in Asifabad mandal, Komuram Bheem Asifabad district. The Clear Water Pump House

motors developed technical issues, necessitating immediate maintenance. "Officials stated that, as part of pre-summer preparedness measures, special steps are being taken to resolve technical problems in the pump sets to ensure uninterrupted and quality drinking water supply during the upcoming summer season. A team of technical experts is working to complete the repairs at the earliest. "Areas Affected" Due to the ongoing repair works, drinking water supply will be temporarily suspended until 11:00 PM on February 26 in the following constituencies: "Asifabad" "Vankidi" "Rebbena" "Sirpur (T)" "Certain areas under Bellampalli constituency" "Appeal to the Public" E.E. Rakesh assured that water supply will be restored immediately after the completion of repair works. He requested residents of the affected areas to store sufficient drinking water in advance and extend their cooperation during this period. "The department is taking all necessary measures to minimize inconvenience to the public and to ensure smooth water supply throughout the summer season. ""Issued by: District Public Relations Office, Komuram Bheem Asifabad District

Former Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj Inspects CC Road Works in Beerappagadda



""KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, February 23 (Indian Chronicle): ""Former Chilkana Division Corporator and GHMC Standing Committee Member Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj inspected the newly laid CC road works on Monday in the streets opposite the Lakshminarasimha Swamy Temple at Beerappagadda in Chilkana Division. "Speaking on the occasion, she stated that CC road works sanctioned across the division are being completed in phases. She assured that the remaining pending and yet-to-be-san-

tioned works will also be taken up with the support of MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy. She instructed that contractors must strictly follow quality standards during construction and emphasized that GHMC engineering officials should continuously monitor the work to ensure durability and proper execution. Work Inspector Kedar, BRS State leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, senior leaders Eddula Kondal Reddy, Kokonda Jagan, Govu Anand, Indrasena Reddy, Balu, and local residents including Bala Reddy, Bhaskar Reddy, Chandramouli, Lakshamma, Parvatamma, Renuka, Sujatha, Vanaja, Saraswati, Balu and others participated in the inspection.

149th Birth Anniversary of Sant Gadge Baba Celebrated at Jetwan Buddha Vihar

""Indian Chronicle" kumram bheem Asifabad District Reporte, Jade Srinivas, February, 23. ""Wankidi: The 149th birth anniversary of Sant Gadge Baba was celebrated with great devotion and enthusiasm on Monday at Jetwan Buddha Vihar in Wankidi mandal headquarters. Floral tributes were offered to his portrait, and the gathering paid heartfelt respects to the great social reformer. "Speaking on the occasion, chief guests Buddhist monk Bhante Bharadwaj and Bharatiya Bauddha Mahasabha District President Ashok Mahulkar highlighted that Gadge Baba gave utmost importance to cleanliness and social reform. They noted that he personally traveled from village to village, cleaning streets and spreading awareness about hygiene, while also working to eradicate social evils and superstitions. "They further stated that Gadge Baba had immense respect and affection for the architect of the Indian Constitution, B. R. Ambedkar. Likewise, Dr. Ambedkar also held Gadge Baba in high regard. It was mentioned that both leaders attended each other's programs. Gadge Baba would make it a point to listen to Dr. Ambedkar's speeches wherever they were held, and Dr. Ambedkar, in turn, would attentively listen to Gadge Baba's devotional songs and discourses. "The speakers emphasized that Gadge Baba worked tirelessly for the upliftment of marginalized communities. In Maharashtra, he established special schools and hostels for the education of underprivileged students, contributing signifi-



cantly to social and educational reform. "The event was attended by Ambedkar Sangham Secretary Roshan Upre, community elder Shyam Rao Lahuji Durge, Events Manager Balwant Upre, former Siddharth Youth Association President Durgam Deepak, Upasak Ramesh Dongre, Vithal Chunarkar, Vidya Sagar, Vivek, Swagat, Venkati Jade, Prashanth Jade, Manoj Durge, Rentiki Buddha Ji, and others. "The celebrations concluded in a spiritually vibrant and respectful atmosphere.

Komaram Bheem Asifabad District Police Prajavani: SP Nitika Pant Receives Public Grievances

""Indian Chronicle" kumram bheem Asifabad District Reporte, Jade Srinivas, February, 23. ""Komaram Bheem, Asifabad: As part of the weekly Prajavani public grievance redressal program, District Superintendent of Police (SP) Nitika Pant received petitions from complainants at the District Police Office on Monday and directed officials to ensure speedy justice for the victims. During the program, the SP personally heard grievances submitted by citizens from various parts of the district. She instructed the concerned officers to resolve the issues strictly in accordance with the law. The petitions received were immediately reviewed, and the SP spoke over the phone with the concerned DSPs/ASPs and Circle Inspectors to assess the status of each case and issue necessary directions for prompt action. "The SP emphasized that the primary objective of the district police is to maintain peace and order while ensuring that justice is delivered transparently and fairly. She encouraged citizens to approach the police fearlessly, without the involvement of middlemen or recommendations, and to make voluntary use of police services to resolve their issues lawfully. She further stated that the Prajavani program is conducted every Monday to directly receive public grievances and ensure timely resolution. Victims and members of the public facing any issues are urged to make effective use of this platform to seek justice. The District Police reaffirmed their commitment to being more accessible to the public and strengthening trust between the police and the community.



Tarawih Prayers Conclude in Uppal During Ramadan

– Services Led by Irshad Khan (Uppal Khan)



""KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, February 23 (Indian Chronicle): ""During the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims observe special nightly Tarawih prayers, which are regarded as a deeply spiritual practice that strength-

ens devotion and faith. On the final night, Sunday, a special concluding program was held at the Milad Imam Azam Abu Hanifa Madrasa in the Beerappagadda area. "Approximately 800 men and women participated in the Tarawih prayers. Following the prayers, haleem, sweets, and other refreshments were served to the attendees. The event was successfully organized under the leadership of local youth leader Irshad Khan (Uppal Khan). Speaking on the occasion, he stated that Ramadan is not only about fasting but also symbolizes patience, discipline, charity, mutual respect, and unity. He shared his views on the development of the Muslim community, the educational progress of students, utilization of government welfare schemes, and the development of mosques and burial grounds. He emphasized that collective progress is possible only when men and women work together in unity. Special prayers were also offered for the political progress, health, longevity, and continued public service of Uppal constituency Congress leader Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy. Prayers were further offered for peace, communal harmony, and development of the people of the Uppal constituency. Completing the recitation of the Holy Quran through Tarawih prayers provides Muslims with a profound spiritual experience. The program stood as a symbol of devotion, unity, and community service.

AITUC Memorandum to District Collector: Fill Vacant Posts in Labour Department, Clear Pending Claims

""Indian Chronicle" kumram bheem Asifabad District Reporte, Jade Srinivas, February, 23. ""Komaram Bheem Asifabad: On the call of the AICBCW National Committee, a memorandum was submitted on Monday to District Collector K. Haritha under the leadership of the Building and Construction Workers Union affiliated to AITUC. "Speaking on the occasion, AITUC District General Secretary Boge Upender demanded that all vacant posts in the Labour Department be filled immediately and that pending claims of workers be cleared without further delay. He stated that due to staff shortages and administrative delays, construction workers are facing serious difficulties in accessing welfare benefits. "Key Demands Submitted: "Increase the cess to 2 percent. "Withdraw the proposal to hand over insurance schemes to private companies. "Increase natural death compensation to ₹5 lakhs. "Increase maternity assistance to ₹1 lakh. "Increase marriage assistance to ₹1 lakh. "Amend Telangana Government Order (GO) No. 12. "Provide immediate approval for labour cards registered online and update renewals without delay. "Clear all pending claims at the earliest. "Appoint a separate administrative mechanism for the Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) Board in the Labour Department. "Fill all vacant posts in the Labour Department. "Constitute the Welfare Board with representatives from labour unions as members of the governing body. "The union leaders emphasized that the welfare of construction workers must be prioritized and that the government should take immediate steps to strengthen the Labour Department to ensure timely delivery of benefits. "Workers including Divakar, Tulasiram, Mohan, and Prakash participated in the program.



GDC Hussaini Alam,organized a One-Day Workshop on Cyber Awareness

HyderabadThe Department of Commerce and Computer Applications , GDC Hussaini Alam,organized a One-day workshop on Cyber Awareness, Online Safety, and Job-Ready Cybersecurity Skills to educate students about digital security and career opportunities in cybersecurity. The session was interactive and clarified many real-time cyber issues faced by students.



Day Workshop on Cyber Awareness, Online Safety, and Job-Ready Cybersecurity Skills to educate students about digital security and career opportunities in cybersecurity.

The program was conducted under the guidance of Prof. Appiya Chinnamma Madam ,Principal, who encouraged students to enhance their digital knowledge and responsible online behavior.

Prasad Palepu, founder of cyberwallnet addressed various student queries regarding cyber frauds, online

time cyber issues faced by students.

Ashrit , Cyber security Engineer demonstrated common security threats and explained how to report cyber fraud cases through the national helpline number 1930.

He emphasized the importance of immediate reporting to prevent financial loss.

The workshop successfully created awareness about cyber safety and motivated students to develop job-ready cybersecurity skills.

Innovative and Life-Saving “Helmet Bank” Initiative



Hyderabad Under the guidance of the Commissioner of Police, Malkajgiri, the DCP Traffic, Sri K. Rahul Reddy, IPS, has launched a field-level “Helmet Bank” initiative to improve helmet usage among two-wheeler riders.

As part of this initiative, riders found travelling without a helmet are being given an option to borrow a hel-

met free of cost on the spot by submitting their basic details. They are required to return the helmet within 24 hours after purchasing a new helmet. The objective is to ensure immediate compliance, protect the rider’s life, and encourage responsible riding behaviour instead of focusing only on punitive action.

The initiative has been implemented at key traffic junctions across the Malkajgiri Zone, including Sangeet Chowrasta under Gopalapuram Traffic Police Station limits, and is aimed at preventing head injuries, saving lives, building public trust through positive policing, and creating lasting behavioural change.

This initiative also reinforces the ongoing “Arrive Alive” road safety campaign of Telangana Police, which emphasises that wearing a helmet is essential for every trip, irrespective of distance.

Malkajgiri Traffic Police appeals to all two-wheeler riders to wear helmets regularly and support the mission of safer roads.

A Gesture of Gratitude and Unity: Boyin Peta Councillor Srilatha Kranti Kumar Distributes Sweets to Municipal Staff

“P. S. ASHOKAN. “KARIMNAGAR BUREAU. ““In a gracious expression of appreciation and solidarity, Boyin Peta Councillor Potharaveni Srilatha Kranti Kumar extended warm greetings to the municipal workforce by distributing sweet boxes at her own expense, marking the occasion of the newly elected Manthani municipal governing body assuming office.““Earlier, the municipal staff had organized a dignified felicitation ceremony to honor the newly elected representatives of Manthani. The event reflected a spirit of mutual respect and institutional harmony between the administrative staff and the public representatives.““Following the felicitation, Kranti Kumar and Srilatha, as a couple, personally distributed sweet boxes to all municipal employees, symbolizing goodwill, encouragement, and collective commitment toward constructive governance.““Addressing the gathering, Srilatha Kranti Kumar emphasized the importance of transcending political affiliations and working in unison for the holistic development of Boyin Peta. She urged all stakeholders to uphold a cooperative and development-oriented approach, prioritizing public welfare above partisan considerations.““The event stood as a testament to collaborative leadership and reinforced the message that sustainable progress is best achieved through unity, mutual respect, and shared responsibility.



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RTC Bus Plunges Off Bridge; Several Injured



were also among those injured in the accident.“Local residents immediately alerted emergency services by calling 108, following which the injured were shifted to a government hospital and are currently receiving treatment.“The exact cause of the accident is yet to be determined.“It may be recalled that Disha had earlier published a report titled “Multiple Problems Due to Narrow Bridges in the Mandal.” Following this incident, several residents and motorists have urged authorities to respond promptly by constructing new bridges to prevent such accidents in the future.

“Indian Chronicle (Taj Khan), February 23,““Narrow Bridge Triggers Major Accident in Utnoor“An RTC bus belonging to the Asifabad depot overturned after plunging off a bridge in Utnoor mandal during the early hours of Monday.“The incident occurred at a narrow bridge in Shyampur village. According to local sources, the bus was passing over the bridge when it suddenly fell off, leading to injuries to several passengers. The driver and conductor

Register Case Under SC/ST Atrocities Act Against Accused in Minor Girl’s Murder



““Candlelight Rally Held Under Rajaka Association““KVPS District Secretary Durgam Dinakar Demands Strict Action““Indian Chronicle“ kumram bheem Asifabad District Reporte,Jade Srinivas,February, 23.““Asifabad, Komaram Bheem District:“Durgam Dinakar, District General Secretary of the Kulavivaksha Vyatireka Porata Sangham (KVPS), Komaram Bheem district, demanded that the state government immediately register a case under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and ensure strict punishment for the dominant caste assailants responsible for the murder of a minor girl belonging to the SC community at the Kummera Jathara in Nagarkurnool district.“Speaking at a candlelight rally organized by the Rajaka Association at the district headquarters on Sunday, he expressed deep anguish over the incident. He stated that despite knowing that the victims belonged to a Dalit family, the authorities failed to take minimum security measures. Under the alleged watch of officials, dominant caste attackers brutally assaulted the mother and daughter, resulting in the tragic death of the minor girl.“He criticized the incident as a reflection of the ruling class’s negligence toward Dalit lives and said it exposes the harsh reality that caste discrimination still continues in society. He further alleged that even after several days since the incident, not a single accused has been arrested. Instead, police have reportedly registered cases against the Dalit victims themselves, which he termed as unjust and condemnable.“Dinakar accused the government of completely neglecting the

victim’s family, calling it nothing less than a betrayal of constitutional values. He demanded:“Immediate registration of a case under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act““Immediate arrest of the accused““Compensation of ?25 lakhs to the victim’s family““Criminal cases against the concerned police, revenue, and municipal officials““A judicial inquiry into the incident““He appealed to democratic forces and intellectuals not to remain silent and to stand in solidarity with the victim’s family until justice is delivered. He warned that if the government fails to respond, KVPS will launch a large-scale protest on behalf of the victims.“DYFI District Secretary Godisela Karthik, Rajaka Association leaders Rajasekhara and Kadathala Sai, and KVPS leaders Vadluri Mallesh and Prasad, among others, participated in the rally.

A Resolute Stride Toward State Recognition: Manthani Sets Its Sights on the Telangana Best Municipality Award.

““P. S. ASHOKAN “KARIMNAGAR BUREAU. ““In a visionary and forward-looking address, Municipal Chairman Voddnala Srinivas called upon citizens, public representatives, and civic bodies to collectively transform Manthani into a benchmark municipality worthy of the prestigious Telangana State-Level Best Municipality Award. He expressed firm confidence that, under the progressive leadership of Minister Sridhar Babu, Manthani can usher in a new era of structured growth, civic excellence, and sustainable urban development.““The Chairman delivered this inspiring message on Monday while speaking at a grand felicitation ceremony organized by the Manthani Vidyarthi Yuvatha Organization to honor the newly elected municipal governing body. The meeting was presided over by retired Junior Lecturer Chandrupal Sudhakar Reddy, who commended the renewed administrative momentum in the town.““During the event, Rama Maruthi presented an insightful and analytical overview of Manthani’s municipal history, tracing its civic evolution, administrative milestones, and the transformative phases that have shaped its present identity.““Addressing the gathering, Kondela Maruthi, Founder-President of Manthani Vidyarthi Yuvatha, reaffirmed the organization’s steadfast commitment to development-oriented governance. He declared that the youth body would extend wholehearted cooperation to the Chairman’s leadership and work with determination and urgency to accelerate long-pending developmental projects, ensuring their timely execution through mission-mode implementation.““The felicitation ceremony was meticulously coordinated by Seethamahalakshmi and Tati Buchaiah Goud, whose organizational acumen en-



sured the event’s dignified and successful conduct.““The distinguished public representatives who were accorded a grand civic reception included:““Municipal Chairman Voddnala Srinivas““Vice Chairman Muskula Sahender Reddy““Councilors Kurra Lingaiah, Marupaka Niharika, Yellanki Vamsidhar, Maddikatla Sravanthi Ramesh, Jamboju Srimathi Sammayya, and Vemula Lakshmi Sammayya““The program concluded with a collective pledge to foster accountable governance, infrastructural advancement, and citizen-centric administration, reinforcing a shared vision of elevating Manthani into a model municipality recognized statewide for administrative excellence and sustainable civic progress.

Rahul Dravid Endorses Colgate Total to Champion Oral Health as a Performance Edge

Hyderabad In a landmark move for the oral care category, Colgate-Palmolive (India) Limited onboarded the cricket icon Rahul Dravid as the new brand ambassador for Colgate Total. The partnership marks a shift in

body, impeding muscle recovery and stamina. By partnering with Rahul Dravid - the ultimate personification of discipline - we are making this hidden edge mainstream. This isn’t just a campaign, it’s a shift in the performance paradigm, powered by Colgate Total superior technology with that fights germ build-up 3x better, preventing 8 dental problems.”

Why Oral Health is a Performance Variable

Scientific research indicates that the mouth is a primary gateway to your body. Germs in the mouth can enter your body’s cardiovascular and musculoskeletal systems, fueling inflammation, slowing

down recovery and thereby impacting athletic performance.

From Awareness to Action

This connection between health and performance is a conviction Rahul Dravid has long held. Reflecting on his evolution as an athlete—as briefly discussed



during his appearance on Breakfast with Champions show—Rahul Dravid highlighted how elite performance is the sum of small, disciplined choices. He noted that while fans see the runs, the real work happens in the unseen habits—like recovery, nutrition, and oral health—that allow an athlete to show up at 100% every single day.

The partnership debuts with a high-impact campaign that reframes oral health as the hidden 1% edge in peak performance. In today’s hyper-competitive world, excellence is built on optimizing every detail—from sleep cycles and nutrition to recovery and mental training. Colgate Total’s new campaign expands this performance framework, reinforcing that peak oral health is an essential part of the disciplined ecosystem that supports strength, stamina, and consistency.

the oral care narrative—moving from hygiene to performance ritual - positioning peak oral health for peak performance on the field.

Rahul Dravid, Brand Ambassador for Colgate Total said, “When it comes to sports performance, every detail counts. Oral health is one such detail - so much so that teams across the world & coaches like Hansi Flick now mandate dental exams for their team. That’s where Colgate Total comes in for me, it prevents 8 dental problems, giving you that proactive edge”

Gunjit Jain, EVP, Marketing, Colgate-Palmolive (India) Limited, added “At Colgate, we are constantly looking for the ‘marginal gains’ that define peak performance. While athletes have long optimized sleep and nutrition, Oral Health remains the ‘hidden edge’ in sports. The link is rooted in science: germs in the mouth can enter the

Air ambulance delay defers Bangladesh ex-PM Zia's departure to London to Sunday: BNP



GNS News Agency, Feb 23

Dhaka: The scheduled departure of critically ill former Bangladesh prime minister Khaleda Zia for London for advanced treatment has been deferred to Sunday as an air ambulance offered by Qatar could not reach Dhaka, a senior leader of her party said on Friday. The 80-year-old head of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), who was hospitalised on November 23, was originally scheduled to leave for London late on Thursday night or early Friday. "If everything goes well, it (the air ambulance) may arrive tomorrow (Saturday) and if madam's health permits travel and her medical board gives its approval, then, InshaAllah (God willing), she will fly out on the 7th (Sunday)," BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said.

According to a statement issued by Zia's media cell, Alamgir said due to technical flaws, the special aircraft provided by Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani could not reach Dhaka as scheduled on Thursday but "it

would expectedly reach Dhaka on Saturday." A medical board looking after Zia on Thursday decided to send her to London for advanced treatment, her party said. Meanwhile, Zubaida Rahman, the physician wife of Zia's only living offspring and acting chairman of BNP Tarique Rahman arrived in Dhaka on Friday to accompany her mother-in-law to London. Tarique Rahman, the self-exiled 60-year-old has been living in London since 2008. For obscure reasons, he has been unable to return home and be with his ailing mother. Instead, he steers the party as its de facto leader through virtual platforms. The three-time prime minister is being treated in a critical condition at the coronary care unit (CCU) at Dhaka's specialised Evercare Hospital under an extended medical board comprising Bangladeshi and foreign doctors. Earlier in the year, Zia returned to the country from London on May 6 after spending four months for advanced medical treatment. The BNP on Thursday also issued a list saying 14 people, one of them being Syeda Shameela Rahman, wife of Zia's deceased younger son Arafat Rahman and six being doctors, who will accompany Zia to London. The others include a party leader and Zia's adviser Enamul Haque Chowdhury, two agents of the elite Special Security Force (SSF) provided by Muhammad Yunus' interim government and her personal aides. Qatar had already offered to provide the air ambulance for Zia for taking her to London even as two military and air force helicopters on Thursday staged landing tests at the rooftop of the hospital, where she is admitted. Presumably, she will be flown from the hospital to the airport in one such helicopter. Meanwhile, supporters and BNP units across Bangladesh held prayers in mosques after Muslims Friday Jumma prayers seeking Zia's recovery.

Why is volcanic ash a safety concern for flights? | Explained



The story so far: Last week, the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), India's aviation regulator, ordered airlines to brace for the impact of volcanic ash travelling from Ethiopia after volcano Hayli Gubbi erupted for the first time in 12,000 years.

How did it travel?

Hayli Gubbi volcano in northern Ethiopia erupted on November 23 for the first time in nearly 12,000 years, sending thick plumes of ash up to 14 km into the sky, and across the Red Sea towards Yemen and Oman. It even drifted towards Iran. The volcanic ash reached India's western border on November 24 at 5.50pm and moved out of the country's airspace by 10.30pm on November 25. Moving at around 100-120 km/hour at an altitude of 15,000 to 25,000 feet the plume carried volcanic ash, sulphur dioxide and tiny particles of glass and rock, travelling over Rajasthan, parts of Gujarat, Delhi-NCR, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh before crossing over to China.

How does it impact aircraft?

A jet engine works by sucking in air, squeezing it, mixing it with fuel, burning it, and pushing hot gases out the back to produce thrust. The engine runs extremely hot at temperatures of 1,600 degrees Celsius while turning very fast, with air racing through it at 600 mph. When volcanic

ash gets into this environment, the silicate components melt and re-solidify at high temperatures creating a glassy deposit on hot parts, which blocks tiny cooling holes choking off flow within the engine. This can lead to engines losing power or shutting down.

What did the DCGA order state?

The DGCA issued an advisory urging airlines to steer clear of affected altitudes and regions to ensure safety. Airlines were also advised to report any suspected impact of ash on engine performance or cabin smoke or odour. Airports were ordered to inspect runways for contamination and suspend or restrict flight operations, if need be. Air India cancelled at least nine flights on November 24 and 25, including those originating from Dubai, Doha and Dammam and said it was carrying out precautionary checks on aircraft. Akasa also cancelled flights to and from Jeddah, Kuwait and Abu Dhabi.

How have flights been affected?

In 1982, a British Airways Boeing 747 flying at 37,000 ft enroute from London to Auckland flew through a volcanic ash cloud from Mount Galunggung near Jakarta. All four engines failed one after another due to the ash. As engines control the pressurisation system, the oxygen levels in the passenger cabin started to drop and passenger oxygen masks were deployed. With mountains blocking the way to the emergency airport, it seemed like the plane would have to ditch in the Indian Ocean. Luckily, after descending more than 25,000 feet, the pilots managed to restart one engine and then the other three, although one engine had to be shut down again. With enough power to reach the airport safely, the crew still faced the difficult task of landing with windscreens clouded almost completely by volcanic ash. In 1989, a KLM Boeing 747-400 flying to Anchorage, Alaska, hit ash from the nearby Mount Redoubt eruption. All four engines shut down suddenly at 24,000 ft. The crew descended 14,000 ft and had to perform the engine restart procedure a number of times before it was able to successfully land the plane safely. But the engines worth \$80 million were severely damaged and had to be scrapped.

India not neutral, it is on the side of peace: PM Modi to Putin on Ukraine conflict

GNS News Agency, Feb 23

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday strongly backed the latest efforts to end the war in Ukraine and conveyed to Russian President Vladimir Putin that India will stand shoulder-to-shoulder in all peace efforts to find an amicable solution to the conflict. The Ukraine issue figured prominently at the annual summit talks between the two leaders that is aimed at further shoring up a nearly eight-decade bilateral partnership that remained in firm footing notwithstanding fractious geopolitical environment and tensions. In his televised opening remarks at the summit, Modi said India is not neutral as it is on the side of peace to end the Ukraine conflict. "We have been holding discussions following the start of the Ukraine conflict. As a close friend, you have been regularly apprising us on the situation. I think trust is a major strength," Modi said.

"We all should find the path of peace. I am aware of the latest efforts and I am confident that the world will turn to peace," he said. "I have always said that India is not neutral; India has a side and that side is peace. We support all peace efforts and we are standing shoulder-to-shoulder in all peace efforts," he said. On his part, the Russian president said Moscow is working towards a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Putin was accorded a red carpet welcome on Thursday evening on his first visit to India in four years. It is also his first trip to India since the start of the war in Ukraine in February 2022. PM Modi personally received the Russian leader with a hug at the Palam airport before travelling together in a white SUV to the prime minister's official residence for a private dinner. The conversation between the two leaders over dinner is known to have set the tone for the 23rd India-Russia summit talks that is expected to produce a number of tangible outcomes to further broadbase the time-tested relationship. Boosting defence ties, insulat-



ing India-Russia trade from external pressure and exploring cooperation in small modular reactors are set to be the focus of the summit. The Russian leader's visit to New Delhi has assumed greater significance as it is taking place against the backdrop of rapid downturn in India-US relations. Following the Modi-Putin talks, the two sides are expected to ink a plethora of agreements, including one on facilitating the movement of Indian workers to Russia, and another on logistical support under a broader framework of defence cooperation. It is learnt that under the trade basket, Indian exports to Russia are expected to significantly increase in areas of pharma, agriculture, food products and consumer goods. The move comes amid concerns in New Delhi over a ballooning trade deficit in favour of Russia. India's annual procurement of goods and services from Russia amounts to around USD 65 billion, while Russia's imports from India stand at around US\$ 5 billion. Officials said India is also looking at boosting cooperation in the fertiliser sector. Russia supplies three to four million tonnes of fertilisers to India annually. The Indian and Russian sides are also likely to discuss New Delhi's proposed free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union.

Malaria parasites corkscrew their way deeper through skin

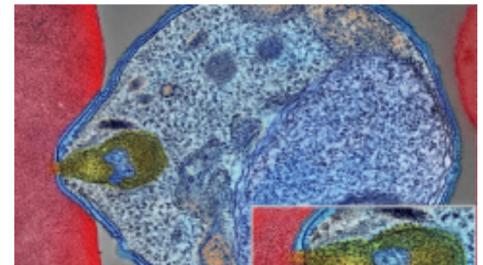
Helical paths are everywhere in the microscopic realm. Many bacteria and parasites don't simply swim or glide in straight lines. In three dimensions, they trace corkscrew-like tracks through their surroundings. Malaria parasites, for example, glide through soft 3D gels and, in the skin of a bitten host, on paths that look like stretched springs. For any such organism, the main challenge is noise. Random bursts of energy from their environment and fluctuations in their own force-generating machinery constantly try to twist it off course. Classic work on *Escherichia coli* bacteria has shown that a bacterium can lose its orientation within about a second because of rotational diffusion, i.e. collisions with surrounding molecules that slowly yet surely randomise its direction.

Yet malaria parasites and other similar microorganisms must stay roughly on track for tens of seconds or more if they're to find nutrients and — in the parasite's case — a blood vessel.

Earlier physical models typically described such microorganisms as self-propelled 'beads' buffeted by random noise. These models were mostly two-dimensional: sometimes they added a simple, constant torque to make the beads circle around. However they didn't fully treat 3D helical motion in the presence of noise that had a memory, which is to say noise whose present value depends on its recent past. At the same time, geometry-based work on malaria parasites had shown how their curved, rod-like shape and flexibility helped them loop around obstacles and structures like blood vessels, but without describing how they could move that way in detail. A new study by Heidelberg University researchers may have bridged this gap. They observed malaria parasites gliding through synthetic hydrogels and then reconstructed their paths using a model, publishing their findings in *Nature Physics* on November 24. "Our new investigations show that malaria parasites move almost exclusively on right-handed helices in 3D environments," Ulrich Schwarz, study coauthor and head of the Physics of Complex Biosystems group at the Institute for Theoretical Physics, Heidelberg University, said in a release. From the data, the team found changes happening across two time scales: one at around 20 s and another at around 100 s. The 20 s matched the duration of one helical turn and in that time the parasite's internal drive kept pushing in roughly the same way. The 100 s was how long the axis of the helix continued to point in one direction.

Malaria sporozoites injected into human skin have to cover hundreds of micrometres to find a capillary that leads them to the liver. Older geometric models had already hinted that the natural distance across which a parasite makes a turn roughly matches the radius of small blood vessels, making it easier to loop around them. The new work has added a complementary question to this picture: given the noisy nature of the parasite's internal mechanism, can following a helical path actually help it travel farther than a non-looping microorganism moving at the same speed? The study team built a 3D mathematical model of a chiral active particle, meaning a bead that tends to twist around in a fixed sense as it moves. The particle had a constant forward speed in its own frame of reference and an angular velocity that would, in the absence of noise, make it trace a perfect helix. The work's novelty lay in how the team treated the rotational noise. Instead of adding white noise, the authors described the angular velocity with an Ornstein-Uhlenbeck (OU) process. Here, the noise is 'pulled back' towards a preferred value with a certain relaxation time. This produced 'coloured noise', i.e. not just white noise but noise that was partly predictable, mimicking the slowly varying internal processes within the parasite's body. This model's predictions of the bead's average position and its displacement matched those of the parasites moving through the hydrogel.

Radius and pitch! Importantly, the authors found that in a 3D space and for a reasonable level of noise, a bead moving along a helical path could move a larger distance over more time than a bead travelling straight at the same speed. That is, given enough time, the helix could be "straighter than a straight line" in terms of how far the microorganism spread out from its origin. This behaviour differed from what many previous models had predicted. The best-fit parameters of the new model also indicated helical paths with a pitch (the distance between two consecutive turns of the helix) of about 13 micrometres and a radius of about 3 micrometres. Both values fell well within previously reported ranges for these parasites. The shapes of the paths simulated using these parameters also resembled the ones the



authors actually measured. Taken together, the results suggest helical motion isn't just a geometric quirk but a robust strategy for microorganisms like the malaria parasite to travel efficiently in noisy spaces. For a parasite whose internal 'engine' fluctuated on the same time scale as its turns, its rotating path could also average out those fluctuations and keep the overall direction of motion more stable. The conclusion fit with earlier work on sperm cells and algae, where researchers had found helical swimming could help the cells move reliably in the presence of chemical gradients, even despite strong noise in curvature and torsion. The conclusion may also complement geometric models of malaria parasites that have emphasised the importance of their natural curvature and flexibility to help them stick to blood vessels of a comparable radius. What goes around...

After a mosquito bite, only a small fraction of the sporozoites need to reach a capillary for the infection to succeed. And evolution seems to have figured the best way to ensure each parasite covers more ground before losing direction, without also requiring precise control, is to have helical motion with 'coloured noise'. "We suspect that this chirality developed during evolution to allow the pathogen to switch between the different tissue compartments in the host body quickly and always in the same way," study co-author and Heidelberg University professor of integrative parasitology Friedrich Frischknecht said in a release. Beyond malaria, the model could apply to other microscopic swimmers such as certain algae and colonial choanoflagellates, whose helical paths and noisy propulsion scientists have already documented. The authors suggested the model could also inspire designs for artificial micro- and nanobots in medicine: by engineering a controlled rotational component and appropriate internal time scales, engineers could build small devices that navigate complex tissues more effectively than simply moving in a straight line. A 2014 study by some members of the same team behind the new study treated the sporozoites as flexible rods interacting with obstacles. Subsequent models linked sporozoites' shape with their ability to glide across certain surfaces. The new model seems to have added the missing ingredient: internal 'coloured noise'. What next? The authors concluded their paper saying they'd like to connect the timing of internal fluctuations to how organisms move, and then understand how those connections are shaped by where they live and how evolution has honed them.

59-year-old man loses Rs 2.4 lakh in DHL courier phishing scam

Hyderabad: A 59-year-old man from Banjara Hills lost about Rs 2.4 lakh allegedly in a courier delivery phishing fraud after clicking on a fake DHL re-delivery link.

Police said the victim received an SMS claiming that two delivery attempts had failed and asking for a Rs 25 re-delivery charge. After entering his credit card details and OTP on the fraudulent site, a large unauthorised transaction was instantly made from his card.

Hyderabad Cybercrime Police have warned citizens against clicking unknown links and reminded them that genuine courier companies do not seek payments through SMS.

They advised to verify deliveries only through official websites and report cyber frauds immediately to 1930 or cybercrime.gov.in.

U.S. raid allegedly killed Syrian undercover agent instead of Islamic State group official

GNS News Agency, Feb 23

A raid by U.S. forces and a local Syrian group aiming to capture an Islamic State (IS) group official instead killed a man who had been working undercover gathering intelligence on the extremists, family members and Syrian officials have told The Associated Press. The killing in October underscores the complex political and security landscape as the United States begins working with interim Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa in the fight against remnants of IS.

According to relatives, Khaled al-Masoud had been spying on IS for years on behalf of the insurgents led by Mr. al-Sharaa and then for Mr. al-Sharaa's interim government, established after the fall of former President Bashar Assad a year ago. Mr. al-Sharaa's insurgents were mainly Islamists, some connected to al-Qaida, but enemies of IS who often clashed with it over the past decade. Neither U.S. nor Syrian government officials have commented on al-Masoud's death, an indication that neither side wants the incident to derail improving ties. Weeks after the October 19 raid, Mr. al-Sharaa visited Washington and announced Syria would join the global coalition against IS.

Still, al-Masoud's death could be "quite a setback" for efforts to combat IS, said Wassim Nasr, a senior research fellow with the Soufan Center, a New York-based think tank focused on security issues. Al-Masoud had been infiltrating IS in the southern deserts of Syria known as the Badiya, one of the places where remnants of the extremist group have remained active, Mr. Nasr said. The raid targeting him was a result of "the lack of coordination between the coalition and Damascus," Mr. Nasr said. In the latest sign of the increasing cooperation, the U.S. Central Command said on Sunday (November 30, 2025) that American troops and forces from Syria's Interior Ministry had located and destroyed 15 IS weapons caches in the south. Confusion around the raid: The raid occurred in Dumayr, a town east of Damascus on the edge of the desert. At around 3 a.m., residents woke to the sound of heavy vehicles and planes.

Residents said U.S. troops conducted the raid alongside the Syrian Free Army, a U.S.-trained opposition faction that had fought against Assad. The SFA now officially reports to the Syrian Defence Ministry. Al-Masoud's cousin, Abdel Kareem Masoud, said he opened his door and saw Humvees with U.S. flags on them. "There was someone on top of one of them who spoke broken Arabic, who pointed a machine gun at us and a green laser light and told us to go back inside," he said. Khaled al-Masoud's mother, Sabah al-Sheikh al-Kilani, said the forces then surrounded her son's



house next door, where he was with his wife and five daughters, and banged on the door.

Al-Masoud told them that he was with General Security, a force under Syria's Interior Ministry, but they broke down the door and shot him, Ms. al-Kilani said. Sabah al-Sheikh al-Kilani, the mother of Khaled al-Masoud, sits with several of his daughters at the family home after he was killed during a raid in the town of al-Dumayr, in the Damascus countryside, Syria, October 28, 2025. Sabah al-Sheikh al-Kilani, the mother of Khaled al-Masoud, sits with several of his daughters at the family home after he was killed during a raid in the town of al-Dumayr, in the Damascus countryside, Syria, October 28, 2025. | Photo Credit: AP They took him away, wounded, Ms. al-Kilani said. Later, government security officials told the family he had been released but was in the hospital. The family was then called to pick up his body. It was unclear when he had died. "How did he die? We don't know," his mother said. "I want the people who took him from his children to be held accountable." Faulty intelligence Al-Masoud's family believes he was targeted based on faulty intelligence provided by members of the Syrian Free Army. Representatives of the SFA did not respond to requests for comment.

This hidden addiction keeps us glued to smartphones. Here's how to fix it



I've been thinking deeply about the forces that keep us glued to our phones. Why do we pick up the phone and become oblivious to time, watching endless streams of reels or doomscrolling down X feeds. I noticed that the real culprit isn't just the algorithmic fine-tuning of social media applications. It's texting. Yes, that quiet, polite, seemingly harmless act we do everyday on our smartphones. Texting via WhatsApp is clearly the hidden engine of our smartphone fixation. It is the thing that keeps the device within arm's reach even when no notification pops up.

We often talk about social media addiction as if the platforms themselves are pulling every string, but when I'm honest with myself, the behaviour that most reliably brings my phone to my hand is the arrival of a text on WhatsApp. Deep down, my brain responds to the text the way it would to someone tapping me on the shoulder. It feels like a social cue that signals me to reply. And because ignoring a cue like that creates friction, I find myself checking more often than I ever intended to. That stress becomes the gateway to all other distractions. I'll respond to the message, yes, but then I'll check one more thing, then another, and before long the entire digital carnival has unfurled itself in front of me. So, here's how I decided to tackle my own dependency at its

root, not by fighting dopamine loops or deleting apps, but by renegotiating my relationship with the device itself. The first rule was to break my "all-day available" habit. This was making me slave to the machine and keeping me on an 'always ready' mode to respond to an incoming text. Once I broke this habit by enforcing a time-in and a time-out period, I noticed that my nerves felt cooler. This also made me stop nursing the idea of someone waiting for my response. Then, I stopped carrying the phone around everywhere I go. For instance, when I go for a walk or jog, I don't take the phone with me anymore. That gives me rough forty-fifty minutes of no-device time. This phone-free time has clearly helped me connect deeply with my inner thoughts.

Thirdly, I started batching my replies. Instead of responding in real-time, I handle messages in bulk, in focused intervals. At first it felt rude. But the truth surprised me; most people didn't notice, and the ones who did, adapted quickly. Just as we learn a doctor's availability without resenting it, people learn ours as soon as we consistently signal it. To make this batching work, I had to change how I replied. Rather than firing off short, back-and-forth exchanges, I started sending messages that answered the next two or three likely questions. Fewer loose ends means fewer reasons for both parties to reopen the conversation an hour later. And for genuine emergencies, I set up narrow avenues for instant reachability: specific contacts who can get through Do Not Disturb, or a simple rule that if something is urgent, they should call, not text. These three simple rules have helped me be more focused and provide. And most importantly, what surprised me most wasn't the practical change, but the emotional one. When I reduced the constant trickle of digital chatter, my communications were fully developed. Today, with texting via WhatsApp, we have created this illusion of connection that lacks substance. Texting may be the most invisible driver of our smartphone dependency, but once we see it clearly, we can choose a different relationship with it, and with our own minds.

How the Mahad satyagraha(s) shaped constitutional discourse



The Mahad tehsil, in pre-Independent India, was a part of the Bombay Province and a significant economic centre, providing labour to the industrial sector of the Bombay Presidency. In Mahad, imitation of caste norms led to widespread acceptance of caste discrimination, with high-caste individuals treating Dalits with contempt. Untouchability, a result of casteism, represents systemic social exclusion that reinforces the hierarchical nature of the caste system. In Mahad, the exclusion of Dalits was evident in their denial of access to drinking water from public tanks, such as the Chavadar Tank. Mahad was a key site for one of India's first rights movements, which paved the way for human rights discourse and its lessons absorbed in constitutional ethics. Understanding the legacy

The movement for human rights and water democracy started with a resolution, passed in the Bombay Legislative Council in August 1923, initiated by S. K. Bole. It stated, "The council recommends that the untouchable classes be allowed to use all public watering places in dharamshalas, which are built and maintained out of public funds administered by parties appointed by the government or created by statute, as well as public schools, courts, offices, and dispensaries". This resolution challenged Brahmanical dominance and prompted social change efforts at Goregaon and Dasgaon near Mahad. In 1926, Ramchandra Chandorkar, a leader from the Chambhar caste, jumped into a public reservoir in Goregaon, which sparked attacks on untouchables — Chambhars and Mahars — properties by villagers. In Dasgaon, the Mahar Samaj Seva Sangh, which aimed to unite the depressed classes for equality, saw Chandorkar, R. B. More, Ramji Potdar, and others drink from a local lake and wells. Communist R. B. More's memoir highlights how the region was eager to support Ambedkar's struggle for equity and equality, seeking to restore the rights of untouchables. Additionally, this region was renowned for being the birthplace of activists like Gopalbaba Walangkar, N. M. Joshi, Sambhaji Gaikwad, and others. Thus, Mahad was selected by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as the site of one of India's first human rights movements.

Mahad 1.0 and 2.0. Dr. Ambedkar and his anuyayis (followers) conducted a satyagraha on March 19-20, 1927, by asserting the rights of untouchables to drink water as per the Bole Resolution of 1923. The anuyayis of Ambedkar thronged to the event with their meagre belongings, empty stomachs, and lathis (traditionally carried by Mahars, except those who came from the then Bombay presidency) to assert their rights. However, the satyagrahis were denied water by the locals; hence, water worth ₹40 had to be purchased specifically for this purpose. After the Mahad 1.0 satyagraha, purification rituals were performed, because Dr. Ambedkar and his anuyayis had touched and consumed the water, which aimed to reinforce the caste system over human rights. Consequently, Dr. Ambedkar planned the Second Mahad conference for December 25 and 26, 1927. Meanwhile, the courts issued a stay restricting water access for outcastes, claiming the Chavadar tank was privately owned. During this period, Dr. Ambedkar launched his fortnightly publication, Bahishkrut Bharat, which discussed democratic truths and ideals while emphasising human rights. He also participated in the Ambabai Temple satyagraha, initiated by Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh in Novem-

ber 1927, following violent attacks on Dalits after the Mahad incident, which led to the formation of the Ambedkar Seva Dal for their protection. Since the Chavadar Lake case was still pending, Dr. Ambedkar decided against launching a satyagraha after consulting his followers. However, on December 25, he burned the Manusmriti following a resolution from Gangadhar Sahasrabudhe, Rajbhaj, and Thorat. In Mahad 2.0, he specifically addressed women, asserting that human rights should include gender equality. The Mahad revolution

Dr. Ambedkar stated that the Mahad 1.0 and Mahad 2.0 satyagrahas embodied the zeitgeist of the French Revolution. In Dr. Ambedkar's speeches during the Mahad satyagraha, he promotes an enlightened ethos of dignity and self-respect. In Mahad 2.0, Dr. Ambedkar discusses the French National Assembly of 1798. These two historical events, which defined the two eras, Mahad 1.0 and 2.0, were instrumental in shaping the idea of India and the ethics of its Constitution.

However, the French Revolution, didn't encompass women in its idea of rights. So, neither their National Assembly nor further developments base their substantive egalitarianism by including the living bodies and souls of women. It was Mary Wollstonecraft's intervention via her pamphlet "A Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Citizen" that questioned the exclusion and the place of women in the French Revolution. Dr. Ambedkar, in his 1916 paper, had proposed a novel gendered understanding of caste(s), questioning the approach of Indian sociologists to understand the making-remaking-unmaking of women to grasp the issue of caste, as well as the non-workability of the silos approach to annihilate it. The end can be achieved through gendered means only. The speeches and actions at Mahad 1.0 have the partnership of women and men, irrespective of their gender, geography, class, and caste(s). They gathered there as the National Assembly to break free from the imposed Brahmanical hegemony and chart their own course, just as the Third Estate did during their Tennis Court Oath after being denied permission by King Louis XVI. In Mahad 2.0, although preliminary, the resolution passed appears to be influenced primarily because it inflicts injustice on Shudras. However, even an initial understanding of dogmas, as well as the period of the Manusmriti, suggests that it treated women as Shudras. Contemporary literary and historical texts provide ample evidence to support this. Dr. Ambedkar's actions in Mahad 2.0,

especially the burning of the Manusmriti and addressing the gathering of women, try to foreground a new discourse on human rights whose liberty, equality, and fraternity principles are derived from non-violent Buddhism. Dr. Ambedkar introduced a new concept of a gendered nation whose enlightened nationalism was based not on essentialism but on existentialism, rooted in the body of the people and their natural, legal human rights. Thus, December 25 is also celebrated in India as Indian Women's Liberation Day. The only essentialism it strives to seek is the Manuski, based on Maitri, which is a true democracy lived rather than a mere idea of governmentality. This reflects the foundations of constitutional morality derived from the ethics learned during the Mahad Satyagraha, institutionalised in the Constitution of India.

Telangana's 5 lakh crore land gamble: growth or giveaway?



same tendencies of former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao (of BRS) during his nine-year tenure," Kishan Reddy says.

Government's defense The government contends the policy is long overdue. According to its order, decades-old industrial estates now sit inside the city's dense core, creating environmental and socio-economic pressures. What were once peripheral clusters have, over the decades, been absorbed into Greater Hyderabad's urban fabric. Industrial hubs established in the 1970s — Uppal, Sanathnagar, Kukatpally, Nacharam, Hayatnagar and others — now lie at the heart of a rapidly expanding metropolitan region, a shift accelerated by the recent merger of 27 surrounding urban local bodies. Land values have surged accordingly, as industrial estates that once sat outside the city limits now fall within a high-demand zone for commercial real estate and large-format infrastructure.

Sanathnagar and Kukatpally are today central nodes with prices nearing ₹100 crore an acre. Hayatnagar, near the Ramoji Film City, and Uppal, just a few kilometres from the city centre, have seen prices rise beyond the reach of lower and middle-income families. Medchal's merger into GHMC has only intensified this trend, where even the rates fixed by the TGIC are lower than prevailing market prices. The proposed conversion of these lands into mixed-use zones, ranging from residential, commercial and institutional to recreational, is expected to push growth in these belts to a new trajectory. With locations such as Sanathnagar, Balanagar, Kukatpally and Hayatnagar falling within accessible range of the metro rail network, rentals are likely to rise sharply, while land prices may surge, making it difficult for lower-income and middle-income families to afford even small plots for housing. Real estate developers and commercial operators are already positioning themselves for first-mover advantage as demand for premium parcels accelerates. Neighbouring localities abutting these industrial belts, including Moula Ali, Miyapur and Vanasthalipuram, offer early evidence of this shift, having rapidly evolved into self-contained mini-cities with full amenities driven by housing demand and retail expansion. The boom in commercial activity is expected to create opportunities for daily wage earners and former industrial workers who are currently relying on odd jobs to survive, but the stability of this transition remains uncertain. While the service-sector surge may offer short-term relief, it is unclear whether these new jobs can match the earnings, security and dignity that factory-floor employment provided for decades, raising important questions for policymakers about the future of low-income households in Hyderabad's changing economic landscape. Public policy expert D. Narasimha Reddy says the government's order appears more like an administrative directive than a holistic, inclusive instrument. Three glaring gaps — no safety net for workers' livelihoods, environmental protections and absence of a road map for relocation of current industries — are evident from the present policy, he points out.

'Repurposing unviable land' Against this backdrop, the government says the land faces two problems. Many industrial units have become unviable because of outdated technology, disrupted supply chains and rising compliance costs in dense urban settings. Many have already shut, leaving prime land underutilised and unproductive. It argues that relocation of these industries is not new, citing G.O. 20 (2013) in undivided Andhra Pradesh, which mandated strategic shifting of polluting industries outside the ORR. For its part, the TGIC is already developing modern, eco-friendly industrial parks to support the move. "The proposed HILTP is the logical and strategic next step to repurpose vacated underutilised lands within ORR, transforming them into productive and integrated urban spaces," the government states in the policy. Under the policy, all TGIC industrial estates, parks, auto-nagars and standalone industrial units within and near ORR are eligible for conversion, paving the way for apartments, integrated townships, offices, retail centres, hotels, schools, hospitals, research centres, parks, sports facilities and cultural centres apart from technology campuses in alignment with the State's GRID (Growth in Dispersion) policy. As criticism by the Opposition mounted, the government sought to defend its stand, claiming the proposal to relocate industries within ORR limits was not new and that the issue was mooted by the governments of the erstwhile united Andhra Pradesh as part of efforts to make the city pollution free. Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and Ministers N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, D. Sridhar Babu and Jupalli Krishna Rao called the BRS' charges "baseless" and accused it of mudslinging. "Rama Rao himself proposed shifting of 200 industrial parks from the ORR limits when he was minister between 2017 and 2022. Of those, 42 acres were converted from industrial to residential use during the BRS regime," Uttam Reddy had pointed out. They stress the land is not government-owned and was purchased by industrialists decades ago, and the change of land use formalises its new potential.

Beyond the political battle, officials are stunned by how the policy details leaked ahead of its formal announcement. Rama Rao's early disclosure of SRO values and finer points has triggered an internal inquiry. The government is reportedly preparing to release details of land deals during the previous regime, claiming that several were executed without any policy framework or Cabinet consent.

What does a ₹5 lakh crore land pool really unlock for Telangana's capital city — new economic growth or a sweet-heart deal disguised as urban transformation? That question now hangs over the Hyderabad Industrial Land Transformation Policy (HILTP), a government proposal to convert thousands of acres of industrial land within and around the Outer Ring Road (ORR) into multi-use urban zones. The policy is being fast-tracked but the land it touches is among the most valuable in Greater Hyderabad, and that is exactly why the Opposition is sounding the alarm.

HILTP will enable conversion of industrial land to multi-zones, allowing a mix of residential, commercial, institutional and recreational uses along with technology parks. In return, the government expects substantial non-tax revenue through a development fee equivalent to 50% of cost on plots abutting 80-foot roads and 30% on those less than that width. Of the receipts, 25% will stay with the Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIC), and the balance will flow to the State treasury. The government order frames the policy as a strategic intervention with profound and far-reaching economic, urban planning and environmental benefits, arguing that the ORR-region estates established 50 to 60 years ago have been swallowed by urban expansion and need repurposing.

The policy has been proposed at a time of financial strain, with the government seeking to shore up declining revenues this year. By October-end, Telangana's receipts were ₹94,555 crore, which is just 41.16% of the ₹2.29 lakh crore budget target, with five months left in the fiscal. Borrowings and liabilities stood at ₹50,541 crore. With revenues slowing, land monetisation has emerged as a way to ease the squeeze. The Opposition parties, however, see it as a major financial scandal in the making. According to their estimates, the policy impacts around 9,292 acres within and near the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits, reportedly valued at around ₹5 lakh crore. Both the Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) allege that the government has opted for conversion of the land to favour its "near and dear ones" rather than the State.

Valuation gaps stoke doubt Their case rests on variations between valuation thresholds used for calculating the one-time development fee, especially in long-established industrial belts such as Nacharam, Mallapur, Cherlapally, Moula Ali, Uppal, Kukatpally, Jeedimetla, Balanagar, Sanathnagar, Medchal Kushaiguda, Gandhinagar, Patancheru, Pashamailaram, Ramachandrapuram, Katedan, Hayatnagar and Chandulal Baradari. In Nacharam, the per square yard value fixed by TGIC stands at ₹32,881 while the sub-registrar office (SRO) value is ₹21,000. In Moula Ali, TGIC's valuation is ₹46,895 per square yard as compared to ₹20,300 under SRO. Balanagar reflects a similar jump, where TGIC's rate is ₹52,523 per square yard while the SRO rate is ₹18,300. At Hayatnagar, TGIC's value is ₹54,340 per square metre against the SRO's ₹12,200, nearly three times higher.

BRS leaders and former ministers K.T. Rama Rao and T. Harish Rao cite these gaps as proof that cheaper SRO values could be adopted to allow lands to be given away at throwaway prices. Rama Rao argues that the land was originally acquired from people to create jobs and given to industries at very low rates by previous government. "But the Congress regime led by A. Revanth Reddy is now attempting to hand over 9,292 acres of land to private individuals. This is a huge financial irregularity in the making," he has alleged. Union Minister and senior BJP leader G. Kishan Reddy has accused Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of bypassing procedure in bringing out the HILTP, stating that there was no consultation with elected representatives, current landowners or workers still employed in functioning units. He questions relocating industries outside ORR without assessing the impact on workers' families. He points to a lack of any socioeconomic impact study on thousands of unskilled and semi-skilled workers who depended on the industrial estates for steady income. M. Padmanabha Reddy, president of non-profit Forum for Good Governance, says the concerns are not about workers' employment as no industrial unit is presently operating there, but only about the cost at which the land will be transferred. "Let the Chief Minister put up the lands for auction," he suggests, adding that the way the government's approach is giving scope to a lot of "suspicion". Kishan Reddy also flags the absence of an expert committee to study the issue and make recommendations after consultation with stakeholders. The government constituted a panel only after the policy was announced and gave it just one week to submit a report. "This shows how unilaterally Revanth Reddy is taking decisions, reflecting the

Economic offenders who fled the country owe 39000 crores to indian banks

Just nine Fugitive Economic Offenders (FEOs) owed Indian banks over ₹58,000 crore in principal and interest. Despite having arrest warrants issued against them, these FEOs have left India and refuse to return to avoid criminal prosecution. Of this, the principal amount owed is ₹26,645 crore, while interest accounts for ₹31,437 crore. To date, banks have recovered just over ₹19,000 crore — roughly 33% of the total dues. Earlier this week, the Ministry of Finance informed Parliament that 15 individuals had been declared FEOs as of October 31. Nine of them are involved in large-scale financial fraud, and the amounts they owe have been made public. State Bank of India (SBI) is owed over ₹22,000 crore, followed by Punjab National Bank and Bank of India. The chart below shows the Amount owed to the banks and the amount recovered. Notably, the SBI has achieved the highest recovery rate among these lenders, retrieving close to 52%. This is largely attributed to effective recovery measures, including liquidation, in Vijay Mallya's account. In contrast, the recovery rate for other banks remains below 40%. In terms of total dues owed initially (principal plus interest), businessman Mallya tops the list with nearly ₹27,000 crore. The chart below shows the amount owed by the offenders and the amount recovered. He is followed by the Sandesara family (Sterling Group) and Nirav Modi. Over 56% of amount owed by Mallya has been recovered till date, date show, while for others, the rate is much



lower at 17% for the Sandesara family and 7% in the case of Modi. The charts below detail the loan exposure and recovered amount for the top offenders. SBI led in exposure to Mallya, whereas PNB bore the brunt of Modi's defaults. For the Sandesara family, the exposure was shared among multiple banks. The chart below details the loan exposure of various banks and the recovered amount in accounts related to Vijay Mallya. The chart below details loan exposure and the recovered amount in accounts related to the Sandesara family. The chart below details loan exposure and the recovered amount in accounts related to Nirav Modi. The data for the charts were sourced from Parliament Questions and Answers.

Ukraine fights on: A journey through a nation living under relentless war



On the intervening night of November 18 and 19, at around 2.30 a.m., as the air-raid sirens went off in Kyiv, situated in the central part of the country, I hurriedly grabbed my jacket from my hotel room and ran to the shelter of the hotel premises where I was staying. I was one of the first ones to reach the shelter or basement for the third-day in a row. Perhaps years of working in conflict zones, and the loss of a few colleagues has given me the instinct to move quickly and instilled in me a deeper sense of caution. Others from Ukraine staying in the same hotel trickled in a few minutes later, explaining that such alarms had become routine for the last three-years. The neighbourhood around the hotel, where I was staying, had not been attacked so far, and several Ukrainian nationals, who were staying in the same hotel, appeared unfazed. The next day, as we caught up with the developments with the locals, it emerged that at least 25 people had been killed, including three children, and nearly 100 injured in a barrage of Russian drone and missile attacks across Ukraine. The strikes on Ternopil, on the country's western fringe, were the deadliest in weeks and the worst the region had seen despite being far from the frontline. The Russian missiles had travelled nearly 900 kilometers to reach their target. That same night, while being in the shelter, I was shown by Ukrainians on a live map on the mobile where the missiles were landing, each marker a reminder of how no corner of the country is beyond reach in the modern-day warfare. The radars alert the mobile apps as soon the missiles turn towards the Ukraine's air space.

I spent nearly eight-days in Ukraine, gaining access to a country that has become one of the most closely watched conflict zones since February 2022. My focus was on understanding how the war is reshaping Ukrainian society and transforming daily life. Travelling there is far from easy; no region has been spared the impact of the conflict. Several family members and friends had advised me against visiting, their concern fueled by the grim reports of drone strikes and missile attacks that surface with unsettling regularity. Yet it was precisely this reality, lived every day by millions, that made witnessing it firsthand essential. With 20 percent of the territories no longer with Ukraine, many millions displaced internally or externally, and no recent nationwide census (the planned census was postponed because of the war) it is extremely difficult to produce a definitive "current population." However, some of the estimates put the population has shrunk from 42 million in 2021 to 31-32 million in 2025 in the area that is still under Kyiv's control. The journey from west to the eastern borders of Ukraine offered a rare opportunity to witness the country first hand, observe the lives of ordinary people, and listen to their perspectives on the conflict. There is hardly a night when one is not confronted with the realities of war. Almost every night I was in Ukraine I had to rush to a shelter, sometimes two or three times, and on the final night, I spent four to five uninterrupted hours underground. The journey to Ukraine started through the Polish border as it is the only way to enter as all air routes are blocked due to the conflict. On the 14-hour train journey from Lviv to Kharkiv, I was struck by the warmth of the local co-passengers. Yet what stands out most is the atmosphere on board as there is an understated resilience and quiet camaraderie that reflect the country's spirit in wartime. Seeing a foreigner my co-passengers were curious about my visit and immediately thanked that I was visiting their country during the conflict when there are hardly any foreign visitors.

The 14-hour train journey from Lviv to Kharkiv offered glimpses into both Ukraine's resilience and its anxieties. The trains are well-maintained, cleaner than many I have used in Asia, the US or Europe, with spotless restrooms but relatively lesser space in the berth compartments. Yet beneath this quiet efficiency runs an undercurrent of fear shared by passengers and crew alike. As the train cuts across the breadth of a country at war, everyone knows that missiles have targeted rail infrastructure before. The hum of the carriage is therefore punctuated at times by tense glances at phones, the checking of alerts, and whispered conversations about recent strikes. Even in these moments of uncertainty, the passengers display a composed, almost habitual endurance as life must go on, despite the risks that accompany every mile.

For me, it was a rare opportunity to observe ground-level realities in Kharkiv, where the tension was palpable even before I arrived. As the train moved eastward, the cold deepened noticeably. Eastern Ukraine experiences harsher temperatures because it lies farther from the moderating influence of the Atlantic winds and sits firmly within a continental climatic zone, where winters are sharper and the air is drier. The open steppe offers little protection from icy fronts sweeping in from Russia. I was somewhat underprepared for this sudden drop in temperature and I realised, to my surprise, that it felt colder than New York, where I had lived for more than eleven-years and which had long been my reference point for tolerating winter. Much of Ukraine's industrial base and a large concentration of its engineering and medical institutes lies in the east. These regions have borne the brunt of the fighting over the past three years. Kharkiv, in particular, was long a major hub for international students from developing countries, including India, who came largely for STEM courses. Before February 2022, Kharkiv was a thriving region home to more than 900 large and medium enterprises, 715 schools, 745 kindergartens, over 800 healthcare facilities, and a dense network of cultural and educational institutions. With nearly 1.18 million people employed and an active entrepreneurial base of over 160,000 individuals, it was one of Ukraine's most productive regions. From nearly 24,000 before the war, the number of Indian students in Ukraine has fallen to about 3,000, informs the energetic Kyiv based young surgeon Anurag Krishna, who hails from Bihar. He told me that as surgeon the past three-years, marked by a steady stream of war-related casualties and complex trauma cases, have given him an exposure and surgical experience he could never have imagined elsewhere. The war has transformed the landscape in frontline areas dramatically. Since early 2024, according to Ukrainian estimates, settlements in Kharkiv have been shelled more than 21,000 times, with over 900 additional attacks recorded in the first months of 2025 alone. Guided aerial bombs, missiles, UAVs, artillery and multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) strikes have left a wide arc of destruction. As a result, more than 80,000 infrastructure objects, including nearly 38,000 residential buildings, thousands of non-residential premises, hospitals, schools, trans-

port hubs, and industrial facilities, have been damaged. Large swathes of liberated territory remain dangerous, with 1.25 million hectares potentially contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance. Despite new demining machines and coordination centres, rebuilding remains an immense challenge in a region still under constant attack. The destruction is most stark in Kharkiv, the eastern region bordering Russia. Scores of buildings lie damaged, entire neighbourhoods bearing the scars of relentless shelling.

Ukraine has endured a multi-dimensional crisis which has military, economic, humanitarian, and psychological components. Families have been torn apart. One illustrative case is Tetiana's. Her father in his early 50s is currently on the frontlines, while the women in her family have been scattered across Europe. Each day she waits for a given code from her father on WhatsApp family group to indicate that he is safe. Stories like hers reflect a broader reality: families torn apart and dispersed by a war that shows no sign of ending. In Warsaw, a week later, I saw apartment blocks converted into shelters for Ukrainian women and children, many of whom have since moved further west in search of stability.

Irrespective of where one stands on the Russian invasion, it is impossible not to be moved by the resilience of ordinary Ukrainians. For instance, in some areas of Kharkiv, for instance, communities have set up modern underground schools to ensure that children's education continues despite relentless shelling. "We cannot allow our future generations to grow up uneducated," a local community leader told me. The school is extraordinary as classes run in a hybrid format, combining offline and online teaching, and the children remain steadfast learners even amid circumstances that would overwhelm most adults. Kharkiv, what Serhii Plokhly, author of *The Gates of Europe*, calls the city a birthplace of Ukrainian romanticism. Once a bustling industrial hub shaped by Ukrainians, Russians, Jews, Poles, and others, the city reflected as the mosaic character of Ukraine's eastern lands. Today, under relentless bombardment, Kharkiv remains a symbol of endurance. In this gateway city, long defined by "the coexistence and contestation of cultures," residents now defend not only their homes but the plural identity that has always animated it. In one devastated residential block, I approached three elderly women for a conversation; they declined, saying they were too traumatized by the war.

There is a bigger challenge facing Ukrainian society today: many regions that were part of Ukraine are now under Russian control, leaving countless families divided across political lines. I met several people whose relatives are split between these territories. One of them was a young woman of Crimean Tatar origin, an ordinary citizen carrying an extraordinary burden of displacement. Now a political artist with exhibitions in Berlin, she embodies the quiet resilience of a community uprooted by force, living with the ache of separation and the memory of a homeland altered beyond recognition. She is now separated from her parents who live in Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014. She communicates with her parents through VPN. In this equation, the story of the Crimean Tatars is even more complex. The present conflict unfolds against the backdrop of their mass deportation to Central Asia in 1944 and their eventual return to Crimea decades later after the break-up of Soviet Union. There are granularities of evolution of identity that can only be understood on the ground. I asked some residents about the widely circulated claim that these are "Russian-speaking areas" towards the east. Several people explained that the reality is far more layered: during the Soviet Union, Russian functioned as the dominant administrative and social language, which meant that generations grew up speaking it irrespective of ethnicity. But younger members of many families have consciously moved away from Russian in recent years, reclaiming Ukrainian as part of a broader search for cultural and political self-definition. There is no doubt that at times language becomes a political signal rather than a cultural one, revealing the shifting fault lines of a society navigating war, memory, and the struggle to remain whole. At the same time, the lesson is that the idea of viewing political identity through the lens of linguistic identity can produce very different conclusions. This divergence underscores a crucial point: linguistic affinity does not automatically translate into geopolitical alignment. Instead, identity is shaped by lived experience, historical memory, and civic values, often outweighing the linguistic categories imposed from outside.

In Lviv, where I had started my journey in Ukraine and boarded the train to Kharkiv, the spirit of rebuilding and defending national identity was visible everywhere. Long a gateway between Ukraine and the rest of Europe, the city's streets are lined with monuments that testify to its layered past, especially its deep connections to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Being farther west, Lviv has also become a major centre for medical treatment and rehabilitation, with Ukraine establishing extensive facilities for trauma care and recovery. Thanks to support from European partners, cutting-edge services are available for both psychological and physical injuries.

If there is one place that embodies the pain of this war, it is the Lychakiv Cemetery in Lviv which is an expanse that grows larger by the week. Even a half-hour spent there reveals an unending procession of grief: family members arrive almost every hour, tending graves, wiping the marble, placing flowers, maintaining a connection that war has violently severed. When I spoke to the person overseeing the cemetery, a former army personnel and medic, he pointed to the range of ages buried there as "from an eighteen-year-old to a seventy-year-old," he said quietly. Conscriptation applies only to those above twenty-one, but many younger and elderly Ukrainians, both men and women, driven by conviction or circumstance, volunteered. The rows of fresh graves stand as a ledger of that sacrifice, each one a reminder that the war's burden is borne across generations. Finally, it is Kyiv, the country's capital, located in the center, which is at the heart of national planning. Like anywhere in the country, a nightly curfew from midnight to 5 a.m. reminds residents and visitors alike that the conflict is never far from daily life. Yet, as in cities across the world, the youth have adapted: new cafés have opened, cultural spaces continue to emerge, and the rhythms of urban life persist with quiet defiance. The city's architecture, layered with medieval, imperial, Soviet, and modern influences, is a living archive of Eastern Europe's turbulent history. Beyond the immediate danger to human lives, one cannot help but fear the colossal loss to human civilization itself if this architectural heritage were to be damaged. Kyiv, after all, is not just a capital under siege but it is a repository of memory, identity, and centuries of cultural evolution. Mindful of the vulnerabilities created by the ongoing conflict, one can spot that the city administration has moved to protect its key monuments, encasing them in protective coverings and barriers designed to withstand potential missile or drone attacks. Even amid the uncertainties of war, art installations appear in unexpected corners, and the city's legendary parks remain alive with families, students, and elderly couples who refuse to surrender public life to fear.

How luxury hotels in India are championing homegrown culinary stories



A couple of months ago, over 150 litres of water were sent by road from Punjab to The Leela Palace Bengaluru — accompanied by vadis, rajma and Amritsari aam paapat. All this, just to capture the flavours of Punjab as faithfully as possible for the hotel's new regional pop-up series. Called *Citrus In The Spotlight*, the ongoing series is helmed by Executive Chef Simran Singh Thapar, who opened with a Punjab showcase — the first in the line-up. "Hotels bring in external specialists to showcase their culinary skills. We decide to look for talent within our hotels, and this is how *Spotlight* came into play," he says. The concept is simple: each month, one in-house chef presents food from the State they come from. The result — themed menus shaped by over 100 chefs.

So far, their popups have showcased cuisine from Kongu nadu, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand, and Simran intends to take *Spotlight* to all Leela properties across the country. At Vivanta Chennai, IT Expressway — under the umbrella of The Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) that helms Taj properties — a recent Rajasthani food festival had Chef Pankaj Meghwal from Umaid Bhawan Palace, Jodhpur, at the forefront. Pankaj brought with him traditional sweets, and the menu comprised dishes such as Mathania mirchi murg ka soola cooked in a traditional clay oven; murg Jodhpuri, churma, and more.

Simran also brought in mini pressure cookers to serve mutton curry, and designed family tables to make the Punjabi pop-up experience more intimate. "The water was brought from Punjab to ensure dishes like the rajma maintain their authentic taste. We also got homemade masala prepped in Amritsar, and set up an entire pickle pantry, an element that featured in all pop-ups," says Simran. He explains how every household has pickles and chutneys through the year, and for the first event, they started prep almost one-and-a-half months in advance, making khata meetha achar, gajar gobi shalgam achar, green chilli with mustard oil, and a range of chutneys, salads, and relishes. For the Uttarakhand pop-up, Chef Jashbeer Singh, sous chef, Jamavar, sourced ingredients such as jakhiya, bal mithai, and stinging nettle from the State, whereas Chef Hitendra Singh, sous chef at Citrus, brought jowar flour, ker sangri, seer fish, and khichiya paapat from his hometown, Udaipur. The trend has propelled an exchange of chefs within hotel branches across the country. The concept of in-house chef-led popups at IHCL aims at showcasing the "magic of our celebrated kitchens across India and beyond to our guests, allowing them to experience authentic flavours from other regions without having to travel," says Ian Dubier, area director, Operations, Tamil Nadu, and general manager, Taj Coromandel, Chennai. Recent popups include the Sri Lankan Odyssey at Vivanta Chennai, IT Expressway, that was curated by Chef Prasanna Rathnayake from Taj Samudra, Colombo. "His menu transported guests to Sri Lanka with dishes like the Jaffna-style crab curry, kalupol chicken curry, egg hopper with sambal and kiri hodi, among others," says Ian, adding that in a similar fashion, Thomthong Sungkaha, also known as Chef Lily, of Taj Holiday Village, Goa, brought in her signature flavours to Chennai's Taj Wellington Mews. At The Chambers at Taj Coromandel, Chennai, the *Rendezvous — Conversations and More* series, that launched in 2021, took this concept further with immersive

evenings. "Guests sat down to curated five-course dinners by chefs from IHCL hotels across Gurugram, Goa, and Hyderabad," explains Ian. At Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel, Executive Chef Ho Chi Ming says they wanted to provide their cooks "a stage to display culinary history and home cuisine." He adds, "Our chefs' enthusiasm for highlighting Himalayan and Uttarakhand cuisine was incredibly motivating. They procured essential ingredients from their hometowns in addition to creating authentic menus." The chefs are now cross-hosted across their parent company Marriott's 158 hotels spread across over 42 cities. Upcoming popups at IHCL include chefs from Southern Spice and Golden Dragon from Taj Coromandel, Chennai, taking their South Indian and Chinese menus respectively to Bengaluru and Kerala. Cuisine from the South ranks high on the list with several menus based on cuisines from Tamil Nadu, Chettinad and Andhra Pradesh, and more. At the Southern Spice pop-up at Taj Palace, New Delhi, Chef M Rajendran from Taj Coromandel, plated the flavours of Tamil Nadu, honed through years of working across Chettinad, Thanjavur, and Chennai. Rajendran's menu featured dishes such as royyala iguru, prawns simmered in a rich coconut, cashew, and Andhra spice blend, kozhi melagu curry, chicken in a fiery black pepper and fennel gravy, meen pollichathu, and more.

How do the chefs ensure that these popups are different from those led by external chefs and home cooks? Kiron Kumar, director, operations, at The Park, Bengaluru, says they kickstarted in-house popups three years ago. "They are creative laboratories where our chefs are encouraged to break boundaries, explore new ideas, and craft new dining experiences. Unlike popups hosted by external chefs or home cooks, which often showcase individual expertise or niche styles, our internal pop-ups are deeply collaborative and rooted in the identity of the hotel itself," he says, like their popular 'The Forgotten Greens' pop up, which reimaged indigenous greens in modern dishes. "The creative ownership is where the biggest difference is found," says Ho Chi Ming, who plans on showcasing South Indian and East Indian cuisine in the future. Moreover, these events serve as a powerful tool for team development, says Kiron. "By challenging our chefs to think differently and work outside their comfort zones, these events stimulate creativity. They also foster a sense of pride and ownership," he adds. Upcoming events include a celebration of Cantonese cuisine, and a reinvention of classics from around the world. The coming weeks at Sheraton Grand Pune Bund Garden Hotel will see chefs exploring regional and seasonal flavours. The Tamil Table by Chef Shankar Devendra will showcase recipes from his grandmother's kitchen, coastal seafood, and classic Chettinad spice blends, and the Winter Menu will celebrate Maharashtra's seasonal ingredients. Sagar Kulkarni, director, Food and Beverage at the hotel, says these events were introduced two years ago. "In-house popups focus on authenticity and storytelling, whereas visiting chefs bring fresh perspectives, innovative techniques, and unique interpretations of global cuisines. By hosting both types of experiences, we combine the best of both worlds."

At The Leela Bengaluru, upcoming *Spotlight* popups in January will spotlight food from Coorg, Hyderabad, and the Malabar region, and while Simran led the first one and created a framework, he is hopeful of this trend picking steam. "You can represent any cuisine: each individual has their roots, home rituals, and skills. Food is just one part of these meals."

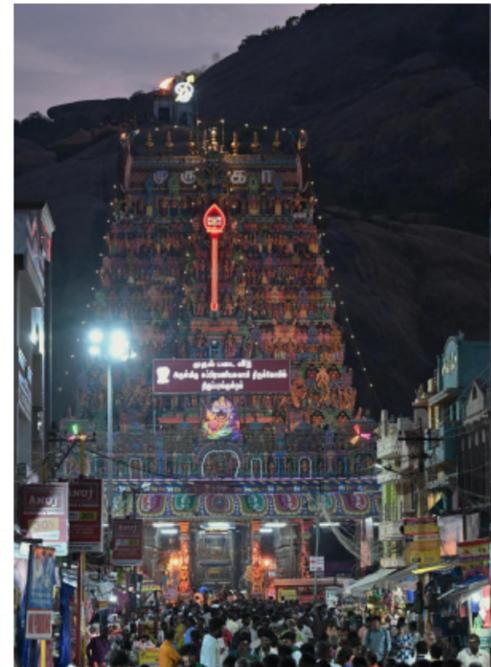
Thiruparankundram 'deepam' row: Tamil Nadu government seeks early hearing in Supreme Court, respondents accuse state of playing drama

The Supreme Court on Friday (December 5, 2025) saw a mercurial few moments when a Tamil Nadu State counsel's effort for an early listing of an appeal challenging a Madras High Court order allowing worshippers of the Arulmighu Subramaniya Swamy Temple to light lamps at the Deepathoo (stone lamp pillar) atop the Thiruparankundram hill, located close to a dargah, was resisted by the rival camp as an attempt to create "drama".

The oral mentioning happened as soon as the Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant assembled in the courtroom in the morning. The tension triggered by the High Court decision spilled over into the Supreme Court on Friday morning, shortly after a lawyer appearing for Madurai District Collector K.J. Praveenkumar and police chief J. Loganathan, IPS, urged the Chief Justice to list the petition.

The petition was filed late on December 4, a few hours after the High Court passed its order. The mentioning took an adversarial tone as advocate P.V. Yogeswaran, for the respondents, intervened strongly, accusing the State of playing drama in the Supreme Court. "The State is only trying to convey to the High Court that it has moved the Supreme Court," Mr. Yogeswaran interjected. The State counsel said he was merely trying to get a listing in the case. The Chief Justice asked the lawyers to calm down, saying "It is only 10.30 in the morning".

The CJ then turned to the State counsel and said the plea for listing would be considered in due course. On December 4, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court declined a State plea challenging a Single Bench order for the lighting of the lamp under Central Industrial Security Force cover.



The push to globalise Indian storytelling



In Bengaluru, Megha Gupta runs a small gaming studio, Wala Interactive, with a workforce of half a dozen people. They are working on Spook-A-Boo, a ghost-hunting “couch co-op” game in which multiple players work together to trap an evasive group of ghosts across a series of levels with progressively challenging layouts. Gupta started the studio in 2017, but this will be its first game for personal computers (PCs) and gaming consoles, and one of just a few of its original titles. Most of the work her team has done over the last few years has been relatively invisible: developing mobile games for “hypercasual” game publishers who hire firms like Wala Interactive to develop the gaming ideas they come up with.

“We actually developed over 50 games in two and a half years with a team of four,” Gupta says over a phone call. Those games involved over 70 different mechanics — a wealth of experience. They earned the studio a small fortune that she chose to invest in Spook-A-Boo, a “bootstrapped” game that she is self-financing with \$200,000. It appears to be in an advanced stage of development, given that her firm has released its demo on the PC gaming storefront, Steam. Wala Interactive is part of a growing movement within India’s creative industries — animation, video games, comics, and more traditional entertainment industries — to progress from being a supplement to the world’s major Hollywood studios and game publishers’ low-cost workforce to actually ideating and therefore owning intellectual property (IP) and selling it to audiences around the world. Occasional hits

India doesn’t have a breakout franchise that has resonated worldwide despite having firms that work behind the scenes for many global franchises. There are occasional titles that have had some success such as the Telugu blockbuster RRR, which benefited from a re-release in the United States that carried it to the Oscars, where it made history by winning the Academy Award for Best Original Song for the track Naatu Naatu. Actor Aamir Khan’s films generally do well in China when authorities permit their screening under the annual quota for foreign theatrical titles. However, Indians’ creative endeavours are yet to yield a steady stream of cultural production and the financial gains it entails. One hurdle is finding an audience at home itself. Gupta points out that PC and console gaming are “practically non-existent” in India, while mobile gaming is big enough to garner global attention — Battlegrounds Mobile India (earlier known as PUBG Mobile) has been downloaded over 240 million times, giving its Korean developer, Krafton, Inc., a scale that only China can rival. For gaming on larger screens, the numbers are far dimmer: industry estimates suggest that India has fewer PlayStation 5 consoles than gram panchayats. Only around 10% of households have a desktop PC or a laptop. “It will always be that 10% of the audience and we have to fight for that 10% of audience’s time,” Gupta says, which explains the decision to go global by design. The global video gaming industry is worth hundreds of billions of dollars and much of that value comes from players spending significant sums on PC and console titles. The market for those lucrative segments is thriving abroad, though limited in India. Abeer Kapoor and illustrator Ujan Dutta who have published a graphic novel, Zoraver and the Lost Gods. Abeer Kapoor and illustrator Ujan Dutta who have published a graphic novel, Zoraver and the Lost Gods. There is a recognised gap between Indian artists’ work on games, movies, and other big-ticket content and the scale of globally resonating creations originating in the country. A major effort by the Union government to bridge this gap was the establishment of the National Centre of Excellence for Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics, and Extended Reality (AVGC-XR), targeting the very sectors where Indian expertise is already leveraged.

“This national centre of excellence will also extensively focus on creation of India’s intellectual properties for domestic consumption and global outreach, overall leading to creation of content based on India’s rich historical and cultural heritage,” read a statement issued by the government last year. At the World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit in Mumbai in May this year, the government brought in speakers from firms such as YouTube and Netflix, as well as an array of Bollywood stars, to drive the aspiration to bridge this gap at home. In the run-up to the event, the government announced a \$1-billion fund to support the creative economy. Support like this is crucial for one major reason — content thrives in an ecosystem — and creators slugging it out amid a lack of appetite for risking money on creative endeavours understand this deeply. Abeer Kapoor has been running Civic Games Lab since 2018 from a converted residential flat in south Delhi. He has created board games like The Poll based on Indian elections and just published a graphic novel, Zoraver and the Lost Gods, with long-time collaborator and illustrator Ujan Dutta. Kapoor was able to finish many of his projects not because they held promise for investors, but because thriving ecosystems abroad and non-profit creative funds were available to him through supporters such as Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, Germany’s main foreign aid agency, and the Gates Foundation.

“We are a service delivery partner for international development organisations as game builders. And whenever we get an opportunity to build what we want, we do that,” he says. In Germany, where Kapoor has spent some time, he saw an ecosystem where “you’re able to let an idea germinate and take it to market” and a “variety of local and state-level funding, from private to public, that invests in the business of storytelling”. From the university and local government level to the highest reaches of the federal government, he says, Germany has a thriving AVGC-XR ecosystem — winning the country’s Spiel des Jahres (“Game of the Year”) board game award practically guarantees a boost in sales around the world. Beyond ecosystems, Kapoor says there is massive potential in existing IPs that he considers “incredibly untapped”. He points to the deal between game studio Ubisoft and action-adventure novelist Tom Clancy, in which the firm bought the rights to use his name for a series of games — a deal that runs into millions of euros. In India, Kapoor says, there is potential to do that with the fictional town of Malgudi in R.K. Narayan’s Malgudi Days. “We are deeply obsessed with the idea of Malgudi,” he says. “India needs to continuously create and recreate types of Malgudi... India has a static IP. There is no sharing of it as in the West. Let’s take Malgudi and Tom Clancy’s novels. Both of them are full of stories. Both of them have a set of characters, right? And fundamentally, both of them are beautifully built worlds.” The world of Malgudi could have been harnessed continuously but it hasn’t, he says. The country needs “ca-

nonical, referential works” because working with those “again and again and again is how you build a visual culture for a society”. Right now, Kapoor says, he is constantly speaking to the estate of Pran, the Hindi comic creator behind Chacha Chaudhary, trying to convince it to let him work on the property.

Leaning in to the mic during the interview, he says, “Abeer and Ujan want to be able to work on Indian IPs that are existing and old, including, but not limited to Chacha Chaudhary, Commando Dhruv, anything that is owned by Indrajal, Diamond Comics, anything. Please reach out.” Funding from abroad in Goa, at the office of the Department of Lore (DoL), set up by filmmaker Anand Gandhi and his long-time creative partner Zain Memon, over a dozen young people are developing an entire IP, Maya, a “transmedia” franchise they hope will resonate around the world. Like Kapoor, the team has relied largely on funding from abroad, raising funds through a campaign on the Kickstarter platform in which the majority of funds have come from U.S.-based contributors.

Memon, whose board game Shasn has been a breakout hit around the world, with strategy elements rooted in an interpretation of Indian politics, said in an interview at the DoL’s office that he and Gandhi had worked on the setting of Maya for four years, developing hundreds of pages of lore and “millions of years” of history. Seed Takes Root — the first novel (there are plans for multiple formats, including a board game and, if all works out, a movie) — is a David versus Goliath tale of an off-the-grid upstart’s early days in Neh, a planet with mystical trees that seven species are required to “connect” to in order to dream, allowing an AI-like simulation that almost always perfectly predicts the future. Maya has raised over \$420,000 from contributors on Kickstarter, surpassing its target of \$10,000. Memon a Gandhi exude confidence in the project’s international appeal, defying the funding caution that has held back projects like theirs. “For impact at scale, you need distribution at scale,” Memon says, explaining the crowdsourcing strategy before the book goes on sale next year. “For distribution at scale, money is not the end goal — money becomes a means to that end. If you stay independent, stay small, you start preaching to the choir.” He adds, “We need a cultural monument that gives adequate representation to the billions of people of the Global South on the world stage.” Timing and resources

Why hasn’t a franchise like this already captivated global audiences and why might one do so now? Memon says this is due to a combination of timing and resources: “For the first time, our generation has started with a privilege nobody else had — we grew up on the Internet, so we grew up with the best cultural capital of the West while also having access to the best cultural capital of the East. The markets have opened up for everything from venture capital to distribution, and in the post-Internet distribution world, we have truly seen a flattening of the playing field for those who can create a great game or a great film.” Gandhi, who has a reputation in film circles of being “ferociously cerebral”, spoke over a Zoom call from New York after attending three fantasy and comic conventions across the U.S. He says storytelling is at the heart of transmitting culture from one generation to another. “We have forgotten how powerful stories are, and we are using a nuclear reactor to make coffee,” he adds. Is it finally time for a franchise to break out of India? Without a doubt, he says. “We have been on the receiving end of a great monologue for a couple of centuries now — and it’s been an amazing monologue,” he says. “It’s a monologue that’s given us [Albert] Einstein and [Charles] Darwin and [J.R.R.] Tolkien and [Joseph] Campbell and [Steven] Spielberg. It has long been overdue to turn this inspiring and enlightening monologue into an inspiring and enlightening dialogue.”

New Delhi’s relative isolation, India’s tryst with terror

The current period might well be viewed, or termed, as India’s moment of reckoning. For one, India today — and despite its highly regarded diplomatic skills — increasingly appears more like an “outlier” than a major player in world affairs. It has been virtually sitting on the sidelines when it comes to issues involving peace and order in different regions of the globe, especially in West Asia and Europe. It is also a virtual onlooker as far as the emerging situation in the Indo-Pacific is concerned. Seldom indeed has India faced a situation of this kind.

If this was not bad enough, the entire South Asian region in which India is situated, appears to be in turmoil at present. Afghanistan and Nepal are among the countries on India’s periphery that appear to be most affected, but from the Maldives to Myanmar and further afield, India can hardly count on many friends and allies. This is a frightening scenario given that each day produces a range of new threats, including cyber. Currently, India has to contend with two openly hostile powers on its western and eastern flanks — Pakistan and Bangladesh, respectively. In the case of Pakistan, the threat level has been going up steadily, with a growing cacophony of voices being heard in that country to teach India a proper lesson. What is aggravating the situation further is the approval of the 27th Constitutional Amendment Bill by Pakistan’s Joint Parliamentary Committee of the Senate and National Assembly, which has altered the precarious balance between civil and military authority in that country. Also, a recent amendment has introduced the concept of a new “Chief of Defence Forces”, elevating Field Marshal Asim Munir as the nation’s military supreme, and the commander-in-chief of all three services, having sole control over Pakistan’s nuclear assets. The amendment has invested Field Marshal Munir with absolute authority to deal with enemies (such as India), removing the fig leaf of parliamentary restraint and posing a real threat to India on its western flank. Military dictatorships in Pakistan, as elsewhere, have traditionally proved to be extremely hostile to a democratic India, and the rise and rise of Field Marshal Asim Munir, with unfettered authority, represents a significant and direct threat to a democratic India. That such concerns are well merited, and that military dictators tend to be short sighted, is well known. Concentration of power encourages strategic adventurism. This, in turn, increases the chances of miscalculation in crises. Also, and in keeping with the general trend among military regimes, there is likely to be a tendency to turn local conflicts into spheres of proxy competition and inter-state confrontation. Hence, prospects of a lasting peace with Pakistan are unlikely. On the other hand, the risk of conflict has enhanced significantly. Thus, it would be wise for India not to ignore the possibility of yet another conflict with Pakistan in the near future and be prepared for all eventualities. This may as yet be in the realm of speculation, but the danger must not be ignored. India’s Pakistan problem is compounded by the fact that the interim government in Bangladesh to India’s east, is proving unfriendly, if not openly hostile, to it. To add to India’s discomfiture, Bangladesh is currently displaying a willingness to establish warmer relations with Pakistan.

Why has Airbus ordered upgrades to its aircraft? | Explained



The story so far: Airbus ordered software and hardware upgrades to an estimated 6,000 of its widely flown Airbus A320 family of aircraft across the world. This followed from an investigation of an inflight incident, on October 30, 2025, involving JetBlue flight B61230 from Cancun Mexico to Newark in the U.S., a distance of about 2,500 kilometres with a flight time of about three hours 30 minutes. The airline is a U.S.-based low-cost carrier.

What happened to the JetBlue flight?

Flight B6-1230 was in U.S. airspace at about 35,000 feet when the aircraft experienced what was termed as an inflight upset that left some of the passengers injured and in need of medical aid on the ground. The crew, who reported flight control issues, decided to land in Tampa, Florida about 25 minutes after the incident, which was identified as an “uncommanded pitch-down event even as the autopilot was engaged”. In investigations in the U.S., involving the Federal Aviation Administration as well as the National Transportation Safety Board, one of the aircraft’s two elevator aileron computers (ELAC) was identified to have been faulty.

What does the ELAC do?

The Airbus A320 family (like in the other Airbus aircraft families) has a fly-by-wire system, where flight crew moves/inputs through the sidesticks are converted to electronic signals. These are processed by the aircraft’s flight control computers. Of these, the ELACs control the elevator and aileron controls which make the aircraft pitch up or down or bank left or right.

What was the issue?

David Kaminski-Morrow, Air Transport Editor, FlightGlobal, told The Hindu that the issue relates to a possible vulnerability in a relatively new software update specifically developed for the A320 aircraft family. This software version is intended for the ELAC. The software update incorporates new protective features for the aircraft’s “flight envelope”, which is intended to assist the pilot during abnormal situations. Airbus believes that this system is susceptible to solar radiation where energetic particles entering the earth’s atmosphere can alter digital data and affect the avionics of aircraft, which, in turn, could corrupt information being transmitted by the ELAC flight-control computer and cause

unexpected consequences. The nature of the suspected vulnerability in this case has not been disclosed, he said. He said that Airbus feels that the software needs to be more resilient to such risks. The A320 operators affected have been instructed to ensure that the ELAC is in a particular configuration which, in most cases, involves uninstalling the new software and going back to using a previous version. On November 28, Airbus, through an Alert Operators Transmission, advised airlines operating the Airbus A320 family with ELAC B hardware (software version L104) to replace it with software version L103+. The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) also issued an emergency Airworthiness Directive highlighting the issue and recommendation.

What has happened in India?

India’s regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), moved quickly to ensure that Airbus operators in India — Indigo, Air India and its low-cost subsidiary Air India Express — complied with the directive. In a stringent order, it said that no aircraft should continue in service without meeting the required safety standards. The DGCA circular of November 29, put the number of affected aircraft in India at 338 jets: Indigo (200), Air India (113), Air India Express (25). In the case of Indigo, the upgrade was done at the airline’s base stations in Delhi, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad and Kolkata. For Air India, the aircraft affected were a mix of new and older Airbus A320 variants and the upgrade was done at its base stations in New Delhi, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Chennai. Air India Express had the “precautionary safety upgrade” done at base stations in Delhi, Bengaluru and Chennai. Contrary to expectations of major flight disruptions in India, the three operators completed the work quickly, with hardly any impact on schedules.

How has it been globally?

Aerospace firm Thales, the supplier of the ELAC, said that its hardware “complied fully with Airbus specifications and regulatory certifications, and that the vulnerable functionality involves software outside the company’s responsibility”. Globally, most airlines have completed the work, with estimates of the number of aircraft left to be 100 or less. Several airlines revised the number of planes impacted as well as the time it would take for the work to be completed, which Airbus had estimated to be between two to three hours an aircraft. One operator, Colombia’s Avianca, stopped flight bookings until December 8, but has revised the date to December 5, after receiving software support from France for its Airbus fleet. A media report said that the fix involved uploading the previous software version with a cable from a device called a data loader. In some instances, the delays to the upgrade have been due to airlines not having enough data loaders. In some older aircraft, the report said that new hardware would have to be installed, which would cause delays. An additional issue was airline maintenance capabilities as well as global supply chain issues.

The world of ChatGPT, ‘Mrs Funnybones’ returns, talking to Mahesh Rao and more

Stoppard’s absurdist play, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, about two minor characters from Shakespeare’s Hamlet and first published in 1967, was hailed for its “distinctive style combining serious ideas with comedy.” In the Grove Press edition (2017), Stoppard wrote in the Preface, “For fifty years now, on being asked what is Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead is about, I have stood pat on ‘It’s about two courtiers at Elsinore.’” But he was not averse to hearing more suggestive possibilities about what the play meant from people who watched it. “The one I liked best,” he wrote, “was by a Fleet Street journalist who was at the first night. ‘I get it,’ he said, ‘it’s two reporters on a story that doesn’t stand up.’” His brilliant play of ideas, Arcadia (1993), continues to pull audiences; his 2006 play, Rock ‘n’ Roll imagines Stoppard’s life if his family had not fled Czechoslovakia during the Nazi occupation; and The Coast of Utopia (2002) is about Russian intellectuals in exile in Europe and discussing everything from literature, dissonance to meaning of home and exile — just to give an example of his varied oeuvre.

Over a six-decade career, he wrote for the theatre, TV and radio, as well as film, winning multiple awards. There’s a story, not apocryphal, that he turned down the script of Steven Spielberg’s Jaws because he was writing a play for BBC Radio. In reviews, we read two books on Sam Altman and ChatGPT, a book on the Aam Aadmi Party and talk to Twinkle Khanna and Mahesh Rao about their new books.

Two recently released books, Keach Hagey’s The Optimist: Sam Altman, OpenAI and the Race to Invent the Future (W.W. Norton & Company), and Karen Hao’s Empire of AI: Dreams and Nightmares in Sam Altman’s OpenAI (Penguin), have reopened the conversation about Sam Altman, whose eventful stint as OpenAI CEO has been marked by controversies involving his personal and professional behaviour. In his review, Aditya Mani Jha says that Hagey’s book is laser-focused on Altman the person, following him from his troubled childhood and youth, all the way to his first startup Loopt and the inception of OpenAI. Hao captures the essence of Altman and also contextualises his rise amid Silicon Valley’s trajectory in the 21st century. Hao paints him as “a Machiavellian leader,” highly skilled at getting people to come around to his point of view. She likens OpenAI and its peers as “a sort of contemporary neo-colonial power structure,” for OpenAI and others like Perplexity insist that they have the right to access every book, song or movie ever written, and that they should get all of this free of cost because of some vague notion of collective scientific and technological progress.

The Aam Aadmi Party: The Untold Story of a Political Uprising and Its Undoing (Juggernaut) by Sayantan Ghosh traces the party’s rise and fall in Delhi and how it slowly moved away from many of its founding ideas. AAP lost the Delhi elections this year, and since then, party chief Arvind Kejriwal has been spending most of his time in Punjab. Ghosh, who was privy to the workings of the party and the Delhi government when he was a research fellow for the Delhi Assembly, gives readers a ringside view. The book, writes the reviewer, Nikhil M. Babu, is peppered with anecdotes and comments from insiders, which help to join the dots on why the AAP behaved in a particular way at a certain point in time, considering the sheer number of changes and U-turns the AAP has undergone in a considerably short span of time.

In Half Light (Penguin Hamish Hamilton), Mahesh Rao presents two men, Pavan and Neville, from different social backgrounds united by a desire that is shunned by society. He sets the story right before a part of Section 377 was outlawed, but have problems for a marginalised community disappeared even after the law changed? Asked what led



him to write the novel, he tells Saurabh Sharma that the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 2018 was a moment of great euphoria and relief. “But society does not always follow the lead of progressive judgments. The novel tries to embed these kinds of questions into the background of its narrative.” The book, he says, also would be as much about class as it is about sexuality and desire. “Class informs the way in which both these men conduct their closeted lives and is also a determinant of the way power shifts between them in the course of their relationship. In all my work [Polite Society, The Smoke is Rising], I’ve always been interested in mapping these areas of friction, where social strata collide against each other, resulting in tensions and conflicts that can be complex and unpredictable.”

Spotlight Twinkle Khanna has followed up her best-selling non-fiction book, Mrs Funnybones (Juggernaut), with a sequel. In her hilarious new book, Mrs Funnybones Returns, Twinkle Khanna delves into personal and political issues in a voice unique to her. A chronicler of the elite urbane family life in India, Khanna, through wit and candour, navigates “the unfair and relentlessly rigid nature of womanhood” in the country. In a conversation with Shrayana Bhattacharya (Desperately Seeking Shah Rukh), Khanna reflects on a host of topics, not least the power of laughter at a time of division. Read the interview here. Why is history so misunderstood in some circles? Veteran historian Romila Thapar and social critic Namit Arora decided to have a conversation, as Thapar writes in the Preface to Speaking of History (Allen Lane). From caste and gender to religion, they revisit contested terrain and ask what can we really know about our past and why it is so important to the present times. We Did Ok, Kid (Simon & Schuster) by Anthony Hopkins takes readers through the actor’s difficult childhood in a small Welsh steelworks town, where he grew up around tough men who eschewed all show of vulnerability. In his heartfelt and honest memoir, he writes about his childhood, his illustrious film and theatre career, and the hard path to sobriety.

Zubaan’s excellent series of women writing from the Northeast ends with Beneath Magnolia Skies: Writings from Sikkim and Darjeeling Hills. Edited by Mona Chhetri and Prava Rai, women writers, homemakers, teachers, activists speak up on a range of issues in this anthology from the hills. Some of the questions they attempt to answer include these two: As Himalayan women move between tradition and modernity, what shapes do inequality, violence and prejudice take? How do women claim space, agency and a voice within a society that keeps them on the margins? Rakshanda Jilil has edited and translated a collection of stories by non-Muslim Urdu writers. Whose Urdu is it Anyway? (Simon & Schuster) consists of 16 stories by writers who reveal the diverse issues they have dealt with. In his review, Chittajit Mitra explains the importance of the collection and why Urdu belongs to all. “Urdu belongs to me, a Bangla speaker by birth, even though I might not speak it in its ‘purest’ form, and so does Hindi or English.”

Five landmarks of Bihar politics, from Shri Babu to 'Sushasan Babu'



The state saw three decades of Congress dominance (1952–1990), with its first Chief Minister, Shri Krishna Singh, laying the foundation of modern Bihar. The Congress hegemony was challenged by socialist legend Rammanohar Lohia in 1967. Another leading socialist, Jayaprakash Narayan, led the 1974 Bihar Movement (the JP Movement), heralding the rise of socialist politics. Lalu Prasad and Nitish Kumar later cemented that legacy, ruling Bihar for 35 years, with the BJP sharing power with Nitish for about 17 of them. When the history of Congress in Bihar is written, it will likely be divided into two eras: with Shri Krishna Singh and after him. Singh, who also wrote his name as Sinha, served as Pradhan Mantri (Premier) of Bihar province from 1937 to 1939 and 1946 to 1952, and as Chief Minister from 1952 until his death in 1961.

Congress, dominated by upper-caste leadership since the 1930s, retained that hierarchy in power. The rivalry between Shri Krishna Singh (a Bhumihar) and his deputy Anugrah Narayan Singh (a Rajput) was well known, though marked by mutual respect. After the 1957 elections, when Anugrah staked claim to the CM's post, Shri Krishna Singh told him he would quit politics if he lost. Anugrah assured him it would not come to that — and it didn't. Shri Babu, as he was fondly called, is said to have wept in Anugrah's arms before taking oath again as CM, asking his deputy to choose the cabinet. Beyond such anecdotes, Shri Krishna Singh is remembered as the maker of modern Bihar. He laid the groundwork for industrialisation — setting up 13 industrial units in Begusarai alone and promoting sugar, jute, paper, and cement factories across the state. He also founded several educational and medical institutions, and the Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) was established during his tenure. Singh was instrumental in securing Dalit entry into the Baba Baidyanath temple in Deoghar (now in Jharkhand). Personally, he lived frugally. Journalist Surendra Kishore recalls that he resisted any attempt to bring his son into politics. But the Congress failed to sense changing social currents. In 1963, it missed a chance to make OBC leader Bir Chand Patel Chief Minister after Vinodanand Jha's removal under the Kamraj Plan (to retire ageing leaders). Instead, Satyendra Narayan Sinha, son of Anugrah Narayan Singh, backed KB Sahay as CM, preserving upper-caste hegemony.

In the following decades too, the Congress overlooked OBC leaders like Ram Laxhan Singh Yadav, Lahtan Choudhary, and Sitaram Kesari, rotating upper-caste Chief Ministers — Jagannath Mishra, Chandra Shekhar Singh, Bindeshwari Dubey, Bhagwat Jha Azad, Satyendra Narayan Sinha and again Mishra — between 1980 and 1990. Notably, no Congress CM after Shri Krishna Singh completed a full term. Veteran socialist and RJD national vice-president Shivanand Tiwari recalls being at Patna's Gandhi Maidan in 1965 with his father Ramanand Tiwari and Karpooori Thakur (later CM) when Rammanohar Lohia launched his anti-Congress campaign. Several leaders — including Ramanand Tiwari, Karpooori Thakur, Kapildeo Singh, Shivanand Tiwari and CPI leader Chandra Shekhar Singh — were injured in a police lathicharge. Lohia had merged the Socialist Party with the Praja Socialist Party to form the Sansyukta Socialist Party (SSP) and gave the slogan: "Sansopa ne baandhi gaanth, pichhda paave sau mein saath" (SSP pledges 60 per cent representation for back-

ward classes). His campaign paid off — Congress lost the 1967 Assembly polls in nine states, including Bihar.

The SSP emerged as the largest partner in the anti-Congress alliance with 68 seats, and Karpooori Thakur was expected to become CM. But Kamakhya Narayan Singh, leader of the smaller Jan Kranti Dal (26 seats), manoeuvred his party's Mahamaya Prasad Sinha to the top post, with Karpooori reluctantly accepting the deputy's chair against the wishes of his mentor, Lohia. This coalition, known as the Samyukta Vidhayak Dal (SVD), also ended the political isolation of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS). Between 1967 and 1972, Bihar saw seven chief ministers. Satish Prasad Singh became the first OBC CM, albeit for only five days, paving the way for B P Mandal. Others like OBC leader Daroga Prasad Rai, EBC leader Karpooori Thakur, and Dalit leader Bhola Paswan Shastri also had brief stints. It was the first real arrival of socialist politics in Bihar. In the early 1970s, inspired by Gujarat's Navnirman Andolan, Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) emerged from retirement to lead the students' movement in Bihar. The JP Movement ultimately led to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi imposing the Emergency in 1975. By the time Indira Gandhi lifted the Emergency in 1977, her government had become deeply unpopular. The Janata Party, a coalition of non-Congress forces, swept to power — marking a second wave of socialist ascendancy and bringing EBC leader Karpooori Thakur to the CM's chair in Bihar. In November 1978, Karpooori implemented the Mungerial Commission's recommendations, pioneering the classification of OBCs and EBCs and introducing reservations for women and the poor among upper castes. Of the 26 per cent quota, 12 went to EBCs, eight to OBCs, and three each to women and the poor. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 10 per cent EWS quota draws inspiration from Karpooori's "quota within quota" policy. The Janata experiment later collapsed, but it again exposed Congress's inability to read Bihar's social pulse. Barely a year after Karpooori Thakur's death in 1988, V P Singh became Prime Minister on the anti-Bofors wave. As Congress weakened, the 1989 Bhagalpur riots — in which over 800 Muslims and 200 Hindus were killed — pushed Muslim voters towards the Janata Dal. When Lalu Prasad became Chief Minister in March 1990, he seized the space opened by the clash between Mandal and Kamandal politics. He emerged as the new champion of Muslims and the garib-gurba (poor), marking the third socialist phase in Bihar politics. Lalu and later Rabri Devi's rule saw three defining shifts — the Mandalisation, secularisation, and Yadavisation of politics. During the Yadav-centric phase, Lalu began losing support among EBCs and Dalits. His tenure brought social empowerment but also notoriety: 38 caste massacres claimed 380 lives, and kidnappings and robberies eroded law and order. Amid this churn, another JP product, Nitish Kumar, spotted his chance.

Nitish Kumar, who co-founded the Samata Party in 1994 as a Janata Dal breakaway, began with modest success — winning only seven seats in 1995. He later reworked his social arithmetic and convinced George Fernandes to join the NDA in 1996. Though the RJD emerged as the largest party in 2000, the NDA was invited to form the government. Then Prime Minister AB Vajpayee asked Nitish to take charge as CM. Knowing he lacked a majority, Nitish resigned within a week, but his political stature rose sharply. This one move also relegated BJP's Sushil Kumar Modi to the second rung. Nitish finally became CM in 2005 and, except for a nine-month interlude under Jitan Ram Manjhi, has remained in power since. He layered Bihar's caste politics with a developmental narrative, reshaping its political grammar. Nitish is a rare figure in Indian politics — a leader from a community comprising less than three per cent of the population (OBC Kurmis) who has remained CM for nearly two decades, breaking Shri Krishna Singh's record as Bihar's longest-serving Chief Minister.

Excessively low commodity prices may not be good for manufacturers in India: RBI MPC member Saugata Bhattacharya

Saugata Bhattacharya, one of the three external members of the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), has cautioned that excessively low commodity prices may actually not be good for manufacturers in India, since this hurts their profits and discourages them from investment in new capacities. Bhattacharya, who is also a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, in an interview with The Indian Express said, "while the lower headline inflation (both CPI and WPI) certainly provides room for further policy cuts at some point in time, growth by most accounts still remains resilient." Edited excerpts: How do you assess India's GDP growth in the coming months? What are the factors that are likely to influence it? Against the backdrop of the current uncertain tariffs and trade environment, and the pending free trade agreements with the USA and EU, I will go along with RBI's growth forecast of 6.8 per cent for FY26 (after 7.8 per cent recorded for Q1 and forecast for the next three quarters at 7.0 per cent, 6.4 per cent, and 6.2 per cent, respectively). Even the recent IMF and World Bank forecasts are similar. This is not at all bad, given the general low growth predicted for most countries in 2025 and a further deceleration in 2026.

What are the major risks to the economy over the next six months to one year?

The risks are largely from India's merchandise and services exports. Demand from the domestic economy not directly linked to export intensive sectors still seems to be resilient, helped by the multiple stimulus measures (fiscal, monetary, regulatory, procedural, industrial, etc.) — particularly the infusions of govt policies for MSMEs. How much will be the medium-term hit from an export slowdown into domestic activity and demand, adjusted for these stimulus measures, needs to be monitored.

Do you think trade tensions with the US and China, together with FPI withdrawals, will impact India's current account deficit?

If tariffs on India's exports to the US remain at the punitive 50 per cent, it will hurt certain export sectors which are also labour intensive. However, some exports like electronics, auto components, generic pharmaceuticals remain exempt from the tariffs and will help to maintain some trade flows. However, overall, lower exports to the US will have a negative impact on India's trade deficit, although the extent of diversification to other countries remains unclear.

You mentioned that at this point a moderation in inflation rate is not a compelling reason to cut the policy rate. In your view, what are the factors that will lead to a further policy rate cut? While the lower headline inflation (both CPI and WPI) certainly provides room for further policy cuts at some point of time, growth by most accounts remains resilient. Media



reports suggest a strong lift in consumer spending during the recent festive season, particularly for automobiles and consumer durables. Credit growth is ticking up, even segments of corporate credit. Most of this is the cumulative result of the tax cuts (both direct income and GST rates) as well as the repo rate cuts and strong liquidity infusion by RBI. Rate cuts will also not help with the central risk of our exports slowing (except maybe for some lower trade finance costs). Rate cuts might actually impede some capital inflows. Both RBI and the Government of India have announced multiple measures to boost economic activity. Let's wait and watch how these play out.

How do you expect the GST cut to play out in the economy in the coming quarters?

As mentioned earlier, the initial demand response to the GST cuts seem to be quite positive. Let's see (for) how long the demand and consumer expenditures sustain.

You said that the cumulative effects of fiscal and monetary stimulus measures implemented so far need monitoring. Could these measures push inflation higher in the coming months?

I don't really see significant risk of a demand revival feeding significantly into core (the non-food and fuel) inflation at this point. Manufacturing capacity utilisation, going by RBI surveys, still allows for some increase in production to meet potential consumer demand without the economy "heating up" and increasing core inflation. One of the positive outcomes of the tariff wars is that global commodities and metals prices have remained very stable, particularly due to the threat (latent or real) of China dumping its excess capacity on non-US countries. In fact, I'd go a little beyond this to suggest that excessively low commodity prices may actually not be good for manufacturers in India, since this hurts their profits, and discourages them from investment in new capacities, which is a major policy focus in India right now.

China's heatwaves threaten to dry up supply of yummy hairy crabs



The last three years have been the toughest for Xie Dandan and her family during more than a decade cultivating one of China's most esteemed culinary delicacies, the "hairy crab", named for its furry claws. "From 2022, it feels like the weather has been getting worse every year," said the 34-year-old, standing amid tanks filled with the crabs, coveted for their sweet flesh and golden roe, while she wrapped some in straw to prepare them for customers. "We've come to mentally prepare for these losses."

Xie is among the farmers at Yangcheng lake in the eastern province of Jiangsu being forced to devise new ways to keep the crustaceans alive as unusually high temperatures and longer-than-expected summers have disrupted breeding cycles since 2022. The Chinese mitten crabs, as they are also known, can sell for hundreds of dollars when exported in sets of four to countries such as Singapore and Japan. "Those who work in agriculture are at the mercy of the sky," said Xie, whose community reeled last year from losses caused by the strongest typhoon to hit the east coast since 1949, ripping out nets and shutting

down oxygenation systems. Higher temperatures than usual spell a triple threat for the crabs by slowing their growth, reducing the amount of oxygen in the water and boosting growth of bacteria, said Kenneth Leung, a marine environment expert at the City University of Hong Kong.

Hopes for a bumper harvest this year were crushed by summer temperatures around the lake in Suzhou city famed for some of the tastiest crabs, which stayed above 30 degrees C until late October, delaying their maturity. The labour-intensive cultivation of the crabs begins with farmers growing their larvae in ponds for about a year before they are moved to fenced farms within the lake for the creatures to molt, or shed their outer shells, as they grow. Molting happens about five times between March and the traditional end-September start of the harvest, Xie said. But stronger heat can kill crabs as they shed their shells, in addition to the delay in maturity caused by longer summers. In 2022, farmers dumped blocks of ice into the water to cool it, Xie said. Some of eastern China's hottest and longest summers in the last three years have brought temperatures of 40 degrees C or higher on consecutive days.

In September, weather officials said this year's summer was China's hottest since 1961, while northern rains were the longest in the same period, bringing disruptions that scientists have linked to climate change. Leung suggested selective breeding as a possible solution, by choosing crabs with a greater tolerance of higher temperatures for breeding. Authorities expect the lake to yield a harvest of 10,350 metric tonnes this year, roughly in line with previous years' figures, except for 9,900 tonnes last year. While crab farmers may pray for better weather next year, they know they ultimately have little control, Xie added. "We only can see whether the hairy crabs will be able to adapt, and if they can't, then maybe this industry will just be eliminated."

U.S. warship arrives in Trinidad and Tobago, near Venezuela



GNS News Agency, Feb 23

A U.S. warship arrived in Trinidad and Tobago on Sunday (October 26, 2025) for joint exercises near the coast of Venezuela, as Washington ratcheted up pressure on drug traffickers and Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro. The U.S.S. Gravelly, whose upcoming arrival was announced Thursday (October 23) by the Trinidadian government, docked in the capital, Port of Spain. It is set to remain in the small Caribbean nation until Thursday (October 30) during which time a contingent of U.S. Marines will conduct joint training with local defense forces. The exercises are part of a mounting military campaign by U.S. President Donald Trump against drug-trafficking organizations in Latin America, which has targeted Trump's arch-foe Maduro in particular. U.S. forces have blown up at least 10 boats they claimed were smuggling narcotics, killing at least 43 people, and Mr. Trump has also threatened ground attacks on suspected cartels in Venezuela. Mr. Maduro, a longtime Mr. Trump foe whose re-election last year was widely rejected as fraudulent, has accused the United States of "fabricating a war" aimed

at toppling him. The standoff escalated sharply on Friday (October 24), when the Pentagon ordered the deployment of the world's biggest aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. Gerald R Ford, to the region. Mr. Trump has also authorised CIA operations against Venezuela. The standoff has pulled in Colombia's Gustavo Petro, a sharp critic of the American strikes who was sanctioned by Washington on Friday (October 24) for allegedly allowing drug trafficking to flourish. Washington has accused both Mr. Maduro and Mr. Petro of being "narcoterrorists," without providing any proof of the allegations. In August, Washington deployed a fleet of eight U.S. Navy ships, 10 F-35 warplanes and a nuclear-powered submarine to the region for anti-drug operations — the biggest military build-up in the area since the 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama. "Getting a lash"

In Trinidad and Tobago, a laidback twin-island nation of 1.4 million people, some welcomed the nation's show of support for the U.S. campaign but others worried about getting caught up in a conflict between Washington and Caracas. "If anything should happen with Venezuela and America, we as people who live on the outskirts of it ... could end up getting a lash any time," 64-year-old Daniel Holder, a Rastafarian who wore a white turban, told AFP. "I am against my country being part of this," he added. Victor Rojas, a 38-year-old carpenter who has been living in Trinidad and Tobago for the past eight years, said he was worried for his family back home. "Venezuela is not in a position to weather an attack right now," he said, referring to the country's economic collapse under Maduro. Trinidad and Tobago, which acts as a hub in the Caribbean drug trade, has itself been caught up in the US campaign of strikes on suspected drug boats. Two Trinidadian men were killed in a strike on a vessel that set out from Venezuela in mid-October, according to their families.

Digital tools are changing how we remember and forget information

When our memory starts to feel strained, we instinctively turn to the world around us — writing, sorting or rearranging things to help us think better. This is known as cognitive offloading. While humans are good at this and have been doing it for a long time, a new review in Nature has reported that offloading strategies have become even simpler thanks to the technologies available at our fingertips these days. These strategies can be a range of activities like setting reminders for events, using Google Maps for directions, or asking ChatGPT to write emails. This in turn, has raised questions and concerns about whether the risks of offloading 'in excess' could be becoming more pronounced. Changes in cognitive offloading

"I think it's possible that people expect technology-based offloading to be more reliable than other non-technological forms of offloading," Lauren Richmond, associate professor of psychology at Stony Brook University and one of the authors of the study, said. For example, she continued, setting a reminder for an event on the calendar app in our phones is easier than noting it in a physical calendar. We may not check the calendar on time but we're unlikely to miss the notification on our phones. Over time, humans have been offloading more and more information, and this is only expected to increase with the advent of artificial intelligence (AI). "What's changed in the digital age is its form. For example, we spend less effort storing facts in our heads, and more on learning where to find information and how to evaluate it," Sam Gilbert, a professor at the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience at University College London, said. (He wasn't involved in the review.) In several studies, scientists have found that cognitive offloading improves an individual's performance on memory-based tasks. "For people with developmental challenges/disabilities and lower working memory capacity, cognitive offloading is extremely useful," Arpan Banerjee, a neuroscientist at the National Brain Research Centre, Gurgaon, said. However, counting on offloading to help ease mental stress has costs. Research has found people showing poorer internal memory performance when the notes they'd offloaded suddenly became inaccessible. The Nature review added that in these contexts, people's performance was lower than those who didn't use cognitive offloading strategies at all. "One big message about how to avoid the costs of cognitive offloading, based on what we know now, is not to lose access to information that you have offloaded," Dr. Richmond said. This means ensuring your phone is fully charged when you step out or downloading your notes to your computer in case the WiFi goes off. Researchers have also found that people aren't generally able to say if their notes have been manipulated,



which raises the possibility of them inducing false memories. "The creator of the store is more likely to accept the inserted item as part of the initially offloaded information and will do so with high confidence," Dr. Richmond said. "This seems to have particular relevance for how we might accept modifications that could be made by others in shared files as part of our own memory for information contained in the file." Finally, studies have also reported a "Google effect". Per Dr. Gilbert, "The effect refers to the way that we tend to forget information once we've written it down or stored it in a digital device." For example, we may not actively make efforts to remember the meaning of a word because we can get the answer in a few seconds with a search online. Dr. Gilbert also said this isn't always harmful because such forms of offloading help free our minds to focus on other information. Impact on children Researchers are also interested in how the tools that make cognitive offloading possible today are affecting children — since they're becoming incorporated more and more into classrooms and learning materials. For instance, in one Massachusetts Institute of Technology study in June, student participants were divided into three groups and asked to write an essay: one group using a large language model (LLM), one using a search engine, and one without any assistance (i.e. on their own). When the participants were later switched to other groups, the researchers found that those writing essays from memory had the strongest, most distributed neural networks while the LLM users had the weakest, least distributed ones. Over the next four months, the LLM-using students also fared worse at tasks that tested their neural, linguistic, and behavioural mettle. "Over-reliance on any piece of technology can lead to lower working memory capacity over time," Dr. Banerjee said. "However, this is totally dependent on the individual and is under one's control." For these reasons, experts have said that children growing up around a plethora of digital tools need to be trained to critically question the output of machines.

‘Weakening rupee the perfect medicine for problem of elevated tariffs’: HSBC India economist Pranjul Bhandari



A weakening rupee is the “perfect medicine” to counter the problem of elevated tariffs currently, according to PRANJUL BHANDARI, HSBC’s Chief India Economist/Strategist and ASEAN Economist. In an interview to The Indian Express after the rupee breached the 90-per-dollar mark for the first time on Wednesday, Bhandari said the shock of the US’ 50 per cent tariff on India is reflecting in the trade deficit and a combination of a widening current account deficit and weak capital inflows is exerting pressure on the Indian currency. However, a trade deal with the US and the Indian government becoming “very serious about multiple reforms” could be important catalysts and provide positive triggers for inflows and the rupee. Edited excerpts:

There are a lot of factors (behind it) and a lot of them have had to come together, but what’s different right now is the trade deficit. In October, it was \$42 billion and ... it has been north of \$30 billion for a few months. So, the current account deficit (CAD) widening after a very long time has played a big role (in the rupee’s slide). On the capital flows side, net foreign direct investment (FDI) has been weak and portfolio inflows haven’t been very exciting. So, you have both — a widening trade deficit and capital flows that have been weaker than people would have liked. This has made the balance of payments a little more fragile and that’s what’s really bearing on the rupee right now.

You have said that a gradually weakening rupee is the best shock absorber for high tariffs. Could you elaborate? The 50 per cent tariff is over double of what has been put on ASEAN countries, which puts India at a relative disadvantage and the trade deficit is reflecting that as our exports are weakening quite a lot. This has been a global exogenous tariff shock. Whenever you have such shocks, they need to be addressed. I think the best way to do this is to allow the currency to depreciate. When the currency depreciates, exports become more competitive. Tariffs make your exports uncompetitive and your currency depreciating counters that. So, in a way, it’s the perfect answer to the problem.

In all the work that we have done in the past, we have noticed that exports of both goods and services react positively to currency depreciation; in fact, services exports respond even more than goods exports. Given that services exports have been our comparative advantage lately and we are not seeing protectionism in services trade the way we are seeing in goods, letting the currency depreciate could also be quite good for our services exports going forward... This is the perfect medicine to the problem of elevated tariffs at this time. From that perspective, I would agree with the Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran that I am not overly worried about a gradual depreciation.

What is the way forward? Is a trade deal with the US the only trigger and what sort of an upside could that provide to the rupee?

We would have to see when the deal happens and its details. But if it’s announced one month down the line and the tariff rate falls from 50 per cent to, say, 15 per cent, that would be a bigger reduction than markets have priced in and could lead to a step appreciation in the currency for both direct and indirect reasons. The direct reason would be that the export drag would soften, while the indirect reason is that FDI might improve again. Over time, if on the back of the trade deal India’s growth improves and foreign investors start putting money back into the market, that could again sustain some positive sentiment around the rupee. So, the trade deal could be an important catalyst. But there are other things that can also go right — for example, if the government suddenly becomes very serious about multiple reforms. We have already seen the labour codes being announced. If that is followed up by other reforms — there is a deregulation drive that’s going on — and if there is some impact from them, they would also be a positive trigger for inflows and therefore the currency.

Do you have a forecast for the rupee for end-2026?

I can’t comment about the end of next year because there are so many moving parts. If there is no trade deal, then gradual depreciation could continue from these levels.

If there is a deal, the rupee could quite easily come below 90-per-dollar again. Till about two weeks ago, when people were asking me about my forecast for the rupee, I was saying 87-91 per dollar for the next few months — 91 per dollar if we don’t get a trade deal and a jump up to 87 per dollar if there is one. Considering a deal hasn’t been announced so far, it’s not a surprise the rupee has crossed 90 per dollar. In such situations, people get carried away. But the truth is that there’s a lot of mean reversion. If you were to take the real effective exchange rate (REER) and plot it, you’ll see that it mean-reverts in a major way. And that is the beauty of why we call the currency a shock absorber or automatic stabiliser. For the last 20 years, if there is something that has not failed me, it is the mean reversion of the REER. It gives me the confidence that the currency never moves in one direction and it successfully plays the role of an automatic stabiliser.

Imported inflation is usually the biggest risk from a weakening currency. But inflation is almost zero currently. So, is this a good time for the rupee to depreciate?

Absolutely. If inflation was a bit elevated right now, everybody would be very worried about inflation and whether the RBI would be able to cut interest rates. But because inflation is very low, the RBI can still continue with rate cuts despite currency depreciation. So, low inflation is really giving us a lot of space. Even if currency depreciation adds to inflation — which it will, if it’s for a sustained period — my sense is inflation will remain below the RBI’s 4 per cent target not just in FY26, but I would argue even in FY27. This is because some of the drivers of disinflation this time around are quite structural and sticky.

What about growth? A weaker currency boosts exports and therefore GDP growth. But are there any downside risks we need to be watch out for?

GDP growth did come in at 8.2 per cent in July-September. But my sense is that there are several deflator issues which may have overstated it. My own back-of-the-envelope calculations to clean for these issues give me the sense that GDP growth was closer to about 7 per cent. On its own... it is a very strong number. By my calculations, India’s potential growth is 6.5 per cent; so, if you’re growing at 7 per cent, you’re actually doing very well. But I must also add that we shouldn’t just be fixated on the growth number that we saw in July-September and also think about where it’s likely to go from here. My sense is that by the March quarter, we could start seeing growth soften for two reasons. One, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate cuts in the run-up to Diwali — that lovely period that we had where there was a lot of spending and retail sales — would peter out a little bit by March. Second, the government will have to tighten up its spending in the final quarter of this fiscal year because it’s got a fiscal deficit target to meet. And once it tightens up spending, then growth will start to look a little weak. From that perspective, I do think the RBI should be cutting the repo rate on Friday not just because inflation is very low and likely to remain so, but also because growth may need a helping hand down the line. And transmission of interest rate cuts takes time.

Has the change in the leadership at the RBI played a role too? We have seen the exchange rate move more freely under Governor Sanjay Malhotra. There are two paths to currency movements. One is through the economic fundamentals, which includes the balance of payments, the trade deficit, and inflows. The other is any RBI intervention that comes in the way. But it’s very difficult to ascribe a motive to intervention because the RBI’s policy is that it does not interfere with the direction of the rupee, but ensures its movement is smooth. How every governor defines smooth can vary from situation to situation. So, it’s very hard to compare two personalities because there are a lot of factors involved. A big driver this time around are the economic fundamentals. The fact the trade deficit has widened and flows are weak are probably the main reasons why the rupee is going where it is. What I did notice in the October trade number was, of course, gold imports being very high. That’s not because volumes are going up but the price of gold is increasing. And I think that will be in the (import) numbers for a while. Then there are exports, which fell. Interestingly, in September, we saw exports to the US fall, but exports to other countries rise. But in October, exports to both the US and the rest of the world fell. I am watching this carefully. It’s possible that (was) because we had a lot of Diwali holidays in October and, therefore, data for November will be better. But, generally speaking, as long as there is a 50 per cent tariff on India’s exports, the data will be weak. All of this could keep the trade deficit wide for the next couple of months as well. From that perspective, the currency depreciating actually reflects those changing economic fundamentals.

the rupee depreciation. FPIs have sold Rs 1.52 lakh crore of shares so far in calendar year 2025. In the first three days of December, they have offloaded Rs 8,369 crore equities. Forex market participants said the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was active in the market to moderate the fall in the rupee, though its intervention was limited. “The RBI has consistently stated its focus is on managing rupee volatility. It intervened in the market today but did not defend any specific exchange rate level,” said an analyst. The rupee’s slide beyond the 90 mark has increased hedging costs, with forward premiums jumping as both corporates and leveraged traders rushed to secure protection against further weakness. The one-year USD/INR forward premium rose another 7 basis points (bps) on Tuesday — over 12 bps in just three sessions. The one-month tenor slipped to a seven-month high near 19.5 paise. “The move reflects a mix of genuine hedging demand and expanding speculative positions, underpinned by the growing perception that the RBI may allow a deeper adjustment after the currency broke below the previously defended 88.80 level,” said Dipti Chitale CEO Meckl Financial Services Pvt Ltd. The depreciation has also widened the India-US 10-year yield spread to nearly 250 bps, the largest in almost a year. Investors are demanding a higher cushion for currency risk as foreign appetite softens amid tariff uncertainty and a heavy domestic bond-supply calendar, she said. According to Bank of Baroda’s Chief Economist, Madan Sabnavis, a depreciating rupee will help exporters at the margin but is not good for importers or inflation. Rupee to remain under pressure Nilesh Shah, Managing Director, Kotak Mahindra AMC, said: “It is very difficult to figure out whether the rupee will bottom out at 91 or 92 or 93, but we think a depreciation of 2-3 per cent of the rupee is needed to maintain our export competitiveness.

Prateik Smita Patil reveals he once broke a TV set and was ‘ashamed’ for not having his parents in his life: ‘I overdosed a couple of times, and rehab didn’t work for me’



Actor Prateik Smita Patil has long lived under the weight of legacy and loss. Born to two legendary actors — Raj Babbar and Smita Patil — he’s spoken often about the complex emotions tied to growing up without his mother and feeling disconnected from both parents. In a recent interview with Zoom, Prateik opened up about a deeply personal chapter in his life, one shaped by unchecked rage, addiction, and shame. “My experience with depression came much later; in my childhood I dealt with a lot of anger,” he said. “I was angry all the time, and I was filled with rage. I remember watching the television, and one of my mother’s movies was playing. I was angry that she wasn’t there with me, and I picked up the TV and broke it. I even took a baseball bat to (break) all the pictures in the house.” Prateik also spoke about struggling with drug addiction, being labelled and isolated by society, and eventually seeking help: “I overdosed a couple of times, and rehab didn’t work for me... I was ashamed of my family situation and not having parents with me.”

How can unresolved grief in children manifest as destructive behaviour?

Psychologist Anjali Gursahaney tells indianexpress.com, “Unresolved grief in children often mani-

fest as destructive behavior because children lack the emotional vocabulary and coping mechanisms to process complex feelings like loss, abandonment, or sadness. When a child experiences grief, especially related to parental absence or trauma, it can trigger intense emotions such as anger, frustration, and confusion. These feelings may be expressed externally through tantrums, aggression, or destruction of property, as in Prateik’s case with the TV set.” Gursahaney adds that some healthy ways adults can support children include providing consistent emotional availability, validating their feelings without judgement, and teaching them safe ways to express and regulate emotions. Creating a secure environment where children feel heard and supported can help them process grief constructively. Therapeutic interventions such as play therapy or counseling tailored to a child’s developmental stage can also facilitate emotional healing.

How does shame tied to one’s family circumstances affect a young person’s self-esteem and relationships later in life?

Shame tied to family circumstances can have a profound and lasting impact on a young person’s self-esteem and interpersonal relationships. “When children internalise feelings of shame because of their family situation — such as lacking parental presence or experiencing instability — they may develop beliefs that they are somehow flawed or unworthy. This internalised shame can lead to chronic self-doubt, social withdrawal, or difficulty trusting others,” explains Gursahaney. Over time, the expert mentions that it can create barriers to forming healthy attachments, as the individual might fear judgment or rejection. This shame can also fuel a persistent need to hide or dissociate from one’s background, making authentic connection challenging. Addressing this shame openly, often through therapy or supportive relationships, is crucial to rebuilding self-worth and fostering resilience.

From the Northeast to the West: The many breakfasts of India

Last week, I was in Indore for a couple of days and was introduced to the craze that is Indori poha, which drove home India’s love for a hearty, solid breakfast. At 9 am, markets in the Madhya Pradesh city were dotted with people eating various hot, fried breakfast dishes. The Indori Poha is the quintessential breakfast to kickstart the day — slightly sweet, but full of textures, flattened rice is topped with onion and sev and a squeeze of lime, a touch of sugar, and served with a hot jalebi. There was another stall which was frying khopra patties — potato patties with a coconut filling. But it’s not just Indore that loves its breakfast or naashta preparations. And this, to me, is an untapped restaurant idea — the breakfasts of India. Never has a country offered up a more diverse and interesting range of breakfasts for its people. Not necessarily healthy, but definitely tasty. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari and Goa to Nagaland, you will be spoilt for choice if you just make a meal of the breakfasts available in each region. The Northeast’s fare

Many of the breakfast delicacies you find in the Northeast are made from simple ingredients that also provide an energy boost. While I’m not a fan of Khasi food, I do remember the local breakfast served to me in Shillong, which is eaten in various forms by the Khasis, Jaintias, and Garos, the three main tribes in this region. Putharo resembles a pancake and is made with rice flour, coconut and jaggery, and baked in an earthen pot. It was served to us with a spicy pork curry. They also make pukhlein, a sweet bread made with jaggery and rice flour.

Assam has a no-cooking breakfast, much like cereal with fruit and milk, but much healthier. Jolpaan is usually a mixture of soaked, flattened, and puffed rice, which is served with curd and jaggery. Paani pitha is made from a mixture of wheat and onion with either salt or sugar. The Mizoram staple breakfast is quite the winner — rice is served with a mixed vegetable stew called bai, which is cooked with cabbage, brinjal, mustard leaf, potatoes, green chillies, and fermented pork, along with a dash of baking soda. No salt or spices are added to the dish. The Manipuri break-



fast is, in a way, similar to the Bengali breakfast, which is now usually made on weekends. A roti or puri called tan is usually served along with black tea or changang. Tan is a flatbread which is deep-fried and served with potato curry called aloo kangmet. Nagaland has 16 tribes, each with its own version of breakfast. Fermentation is an essential cooking process in the Northeast to ensure food does not spoil easily. The Sema tribe usually eat dried pork cooked with either akhuni (a fermented soybean chutney) or yam leaves, along with steamed vegetables. The Aao tribe prefer to eat pork with anishi (fermented yam leaves) for breakfast. breakfasts of india, south indian breakfast Parathas and puris and dosas and idlis have been given undue importance, especially in hotel breakfast buffets. (Photo: Freepik) My favourite breakfast In West Bengal, while families like mine preferred toast and Marmite, or toast and an egg and fruit for breakfast, the traditional breakfast is luchi (deep-fried puffed bread made from flour) and chenchki. Chenchki is made with diced or sliced potatoes, sometimes with cauliflower, pumpkin, potol, or pointed gourd, and is simply sautéed with green or red chillis and nigella seeds, or with panch phoron, Bengal’s five-spice powder. This is by far my favourite breakfast, but because I love my heart, I rarely eat this unless on holiday. In our ancestral village in Bengal, we get kochuri and alu, which are made in the sweetshops and run out by 9 am. The kochuris are flattened puris served with a slightly runny, sweet-and-spicy curry of potatoes, sometimes with a few chickpeas. Bengal also loves having shingara or samosa for breakfast — the filling is a turmeric-laced potato mixture with a few peanuts, and is a mix of sweet and spicy. Heaven! Of

course, in simpler homes across rural Bengal, chire bhaja or roasted flattened rice with chopped chillis and peanuts is a staple — both filling and tasty. Tripura has its own version of sweet poha, made by cooking flattened rice into a porridge with yoghurt, nuts and mango. Called phale, it is often served with a special type of cheese.

Of Rajasthan’s spicy, fried varieties There’s a marked change in breakfast when you hop across to Rajasthan, and one of the joys of travelling through the desert state on holiday is that you can tuck into their very spiced-up and deep-fried breakfasts — while reminding yourself that you’re allowed to do so on holiday. I’ve often started the day with these large green chillis, resembling jalapeños, that are stuffed with spicy mashed potato, then dipped in besan (gram flour) and deep-fried. Called mirchi bada, it is the perfect spicy kickstart to the day. Bedmi puris, pyaaz kachori, moong dal pakodis — there’s a reason why many Rajasthanian breakfasts are deep-fried and carbohydrate-heavy. They were not made for tourists like me. They were made to either provide heat in Rajasthan’s biting cold winters or fuel to battle the day in the desert climate. There is, of course, besan ka chilla, which is a savoury crepe made from gram flour. All these are served with a selection of spicy chutneys — ranging from garlic to freshly ground coriander-chilli and mint. Bajra khichdi is very common as well, and is essentially a porridge made from pearl millet and moong dal, usually prepared in winter. The Kashmiri bakeries! I’m purposely steering clear of mentioning parathas and puris and dosas and idlis, because they have been given undue importance, especially in hotel breakfast buffets. While I’m a big believer in the fact that idlis are the healthiest and wisest Indian breakfast to have while on the road, let

me tell you about one more state’s breakfast, which I love. Take a walk in Srinagar, especially around the two lakes, and you will be spoilt for choice. The Kashmiri bakeries, kandurwans, and their plethora of breads, which are ready by 7 every morning. Noon chai, which I’m not a fan of, is an acquired taste but a great delicacy. It’s called noon chai because it’s flavoured with noon or salt, and is pink in colour. Green tea leaves are brewed with milk, salt and baking soda in a traditional metal kettle called a samovar. The baking soda is what brings out the pink colour. My favourite is the kahwa, though. It’s a beautiful pale golden liquor tea made with green tea leaves, and boiled with saffron, cinnamon, cardamom, and rose petals. Slivered almonds are also added to the cup before serving — if you’re lucky. Kashmiri bread, Kashmiri breakfast The Kashmiri bakeries, kandurwans, and their plethora of breads, which are ready by 7 every morning.

What you will find at the kandurwans, and even in homes and hotels, which usually buy the bread from the bakeries early in the morning, is the range. Try the chhir chot, which is a traditional Kashmiri pancake made from rice flour and carrom seeds. There’s girda, a tandoor-baked bread made with dough fermented overnight, resulting in a crisp exterior and a soft, fluffy interior. You’re encouraged to slather some butter on the hot bread and eat it.

Winter becomes more bearable when you try the rich meat curry, harisa, which is usually served with a savoury fried pancake called tzir chot. It’s made with rice flour, cumin and green chillies. Roth is another sweet bread flavoured with dry fruits, cardamom, poppy seeds and sugar and ghee. The sheermal you get in Kashmir is very different from what we are used to in Delhi or elsewhere. It’s a dry, crumbly, sweet bread made to last for even a week without refrigeration.

Ruturaj Gaikwad learns the mid-overs momentum game from maestro Kohli



GNS News Agency, Feb 23

Having moved up the ranks from a debutant to a captain in six years at MS Dhoni's CSK, Ruturaj Gaikwad knows how to live and grow under the shadow of a legend. By his own admission, he might be an IPL leader but "there is just one boss in Chennai." Gaikwad is used to playing second-fiddle and his efforts going under-appreciated. The story was the same in the second ODI at Raipur. Gaikwad took fewer balls and scored more runs than Virat Kohli in their close to 200-runs partnership, but it wasn't his name that the fans were chanting in the aisles. They weren't being unfair on the youngster, the gulf of class between the master and the apprentice was stark.

After the game, the 28-year-old would call his 83-ball 105 – first ODI hundred – the best knock of his career. But there certainly was scope for improvement. When batting with the greatest, the flaws stand out. Kohli would play the field, find the gaps and play risk-free cricket. Gaikwad would have his struggles at the start of the innings. He would speak about the experience and the tips he got while batting with Kohli. "I was trying to be in my zone and not really think about how he is batting or how he is able to score runs. But the chat in between was very clear. We had spoken about maneuvering the gaps or how to hit those boundaries, how we can rotate strikes. So, I think the chat was around that and I think we had really good running between the wickets as well," he said.

In years to come, Gaikwad will compete with the likes of Shreyas Iyer, Tilak Verma, and even Kohli, to retain his place in India's ODI side. His hundred at Raipur would keep him in contention for the 2027 World Cup. But will he grow to be a playing XI regular in two years' time, like he did at CSK? This will prove to be a tougher challenge. The first ball he

faced would have given him an idea of the steep ascent that he had to climb in international cricket. This was just after South Africa's deadliest pacer – the tall Marco Jansen – had exposed Yashasvi Jaiswal's ability to fend a rising ball. Jaiswal's knock of mishits and misjudgments would end with him pulling a Marco rising ball into the hands of the short square-leg fielder. The South African pacer would test Gaikwad too with a similar ball that would shoot into the ribs of the batsman, after bouncing. The ball would hit the batsman's gloves and fly over the wicket-keeper's head. The South Africans would throw up their hands and grimace. There were a few more close shaves, many of those would ironically get him runs. Another Marco lifter would climb to the helmet, Gaikwad, with his head down, would swish the bat. The ball would fly over fine-leg for a six. He would try pre-meditation but that too didn't work. The fielders on the off-side were in the circle and the bowler would pitch the ball on the off-stump. A regular cover drive, like the one Shubman Gill hits, would have fetched him a boundary. But Gaikwad had made plans to hit the off-side ball over mid-wicket. There was a struggle to pinch singles with risk-free shots, something that Virat was doing effortlessly. Gaikwad would try to tap the ball to third man but ended up playing too square and not fine enough.

He spoke about the difficulties of dealing with the middle-overs and how watching Kohli helped him. "In one-dayers a lot of experience is required on how to play those middle overs. You can see Virat bhai doing it for so many years. Whenever you need to put your foot on the accelerator, we try to do it. The one-day format is completely different to T20. You cannot go in just one flow and bat in just one direction. You have to adapt to whatever situation is there and make sure you set a good total or you try and chase whatever it is," he said.

It was perhaps not until he reached his fifty that he really settled down. In the 26th over, came a peach of a shot when he leaned well forward, stayed beside the line of a flighted delivery from Keshav Maharaj to unfurl a fine inside-out drive over covers. Soon, he swept, lofted, and pulled Maharaj as the spinner lost his bearings with the variety of attacking shots that forced him to keep changing his lengths. He then drove Bosch into disarray on either side of the pitch, before pulling him to reach his hundred – and Kohli acknowledged the knock that changed from ugly duckling to charming prince with a generous bear hug. Gaikwad flashed this big smile, and held his bat aloft as he soaked up the cheers.

Joe Root's father recollects how wife went into labour listening to commentary of 1990 Melbourne Test from Ashes



GNS News Agency, Feb 23

After Joe Root finally managed to score a century in Australia in what was his 15th Test Down Under, his parents revealed how the Ashes was something that was in their son's consciousness before he was even born. Root scored a century on the first day of the Pink Ball Test at the Gabba. It was cause for celebration for the England star because he had previously gone 12 years and 29 innings without scoring a ton. During the first day of the Gabba Test, Root's parents joined the TNT Sports panel to talk about their son finally scoring a century.

There, Root's father Matt revealed how his son was almost born to play cricket. When a panelist asked the parents what Joe was like as a kid and whether scoring an ashes century in Australia was a bucket list item for the young Joe, his mother Helen said: "He just loved playing cricket. He had a bat in his hand ever since he could walk. He was just constantly playing cricket." To this, Matt revealed: "35 years ago, when she was in labour we were listening to the Melbourne Test, weren't we?" Joe Root was born on December 30, 1990. That was also the fifth day of the Ashes Test in Melbourne where England had lost by eight wickets. David Gower had scored a ton in the first innings for England, while Wayne Larkins had scored half centuries in both innings. But with Bruce Reid taking 13 wickets across two innings for Australia, the hosts had won the Melbourne Test in 1990 on the fifth day, which is also the day that Root was born. Talking about her son finally getting a century in Australia, Helen said: "Everybody has been talking about this monkey on his back (not scoring a century in Australia). That kind of thing. But this century will really only matter to him, it will be the most important, only if England win the Test."

"I was nervous when Starc was swinging the ball all over the place and England were two wickets down for single figures. But with Joe he gets out a lot more before he gets to 10 runs than he does in the 90s. So I am a little bit more nervous when he goes into bat. But it was great for him to get over the line (and score a century in Australia)," said Joe Root's father. In a different interview, with Kayo Sports, when asked by England great Michael Vaughan how they had celebrated the century, Matt said: "Last night we had some kebab and a bottle of wine." When Root got to the century, he celebrated with a shrug that indicated that he wasn't sure what all the fuss had been about him not getting a century in Australia. When Matt and Helen were asked if there was any pressure on Joe himself with all the conversation about him not getting a ton yet on Australian soil, the father said: "You could tell from the gesture he made when he got to his century. Almost like a 'what's all the fuss about?'" After Joe Root finally managed to score a century in Australia in what was his 15th Test Down Under, his parents revealed how the Ashes was something that was in their son's consciousness before he was even born. Root scored a century on the first day of the Pink Ball Test at the Gabba. It was cause for celebration for the England star because he had previously gone 12 years and 29 innings without scoring a ton.

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asked the parents what Joe was like as a kid and whether scoring an ashes century in Australia was a bucket list item for the young Joe, his mother Helen said: "He just loved playing cricket. He had a bat in his hand ever since he could walk. He was just constantly playing cricket." To this, Matt revealed: "35 years ago, when she was in labour we were listening to the Melbourne Test, weren't we?" Joe Root was born on December 30, 1990. That was also the fifth day of the Ashes Test in Melbourne where England had lost by eight wickets. David Gower had scored a ton in the first innings for England, while Wayne Larkins had scored half centuries in both innings. But with Bruce Reid taking 13 wickets across two innings for Australia, the hosts had won the Melbourne Test in 1990 on the fifth day, which is also the day that Root was born. Talking about her son finally getting a century in Australia, Helen said: "Everybody has been talking about this monkey on his back (not scoring a century in Australia). That kind of thing. But this century will really only matter to him, it will be the most important, only if England win the Test."

R Ashwin on Washington Sundar: 'He'll keep searching who he is...'

Similar to the Test series against South Africa earlier, Washington Sundar's role in the ODIs, too, is not defined clearly. If he batted at three in the Kolkata Test and then was pushed down in the Guwahati one in the ODI series, he got to bat at five and six respectively in Ranchi and Raipur, but with the ball, he bowled seven overs. Former Indian cricketer R Ashwin, though, has said Sundar needs to be treated as a bowler who can bat; if you go the other way, he will be searching for who he is. "Once you have decided to play Washington Sundar, you've to treat him as a bowler who can bat. You've to bowl out his overs. Only if he keeps bowling, he'll have the mindset of a bowler who can bat. Otherwise if he just bats and bowls a few overs, he'll keep searching who he is. So don't leave him in the searching space. Instead, the team should arrive at giving him the proper role clarity," said Ashwin on his YouTube channel. Sundar played a stoic hand in his two innings at number three, albeit in a losing cause for India in the Eden Gardens Test against South Africa. On a crumbling and creaking Kolkata pitch, Sundar emerged in the unlikely role and succeeded with control rather than most of his peers during an embarrassing 30-run defeat. Former India wicket-keeper Dinesh Karthik, however, cautioned against the decision to put Sundar at No. 3 as a long-term move. The Tamil Nadu all-rounder replaced state his teammate Sai Sudharsan in the order, with India opting for four spinners on a rank turner.

Devang Gandhi questions workload management of Mohammed Siraj: '...you can play domestic cricket but not the international matches?'



Devang Gandhi questions workload management of Mohammed Siraj: "...you can play domestic cricket but not the international matches?" "Suppose on the eve of a game, one of the three quicks gets injured or indisposed. Who do you play then?" asked former Indian selector

India, in the ODI series against South Africa, has opted to play with an inexperienced seam attack in Arshdeep Singh (13 ODIs), Harshit Rana (10 ODIs) and Prasad Krishna (20 ODIs). On Wednesday, defending 359 runs, the Indian bowling looked toothless and ended up conceding the massive total. Former Indian selector Devang Gandhi slammed the management for not having Mohammed Siraj in the series and questioned the purpose of Siraj playing the Syed Mustaq Ali trophy. "Why is Mohammed Siraj not playing this ODI series, especially after his growth in stature since the England series? Okay, you have rested Jasprit Bumrah because of his workload. Now then, if that's the reason with Siraj as well, then how is he playing in the ongoing Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy (for Hyderabad)? Does workload

management imply you can play domestic cricket but not the international matches?" the former selector told Telegraph India.

"Does workload management imply you can play domestic cricket but not international matches?" short article insert "Suppose on the eve of a game, one of the three quicks gets injured or indisposed. Who do you play then? You don't have enough (ODI cricket) experience in your pace group in the first place, and then you could be forced to include (seamer all-rounder) Nitish Kumar Reddy, who will neither bat in the top six nor give you too many overs with the ball. The presence of an experienced guy like Siraj could seriously have helped in such a situation," he added.

Another former player former Harbhajan Singh, too, felt that the lack of experience in the lineup also hurt them. Jasprit Bumrah has been rested, but Harbhajan stated that India had to pick either Mohammed Shami, who has been in good nick in domestic cricket this season and hasn't played for India since March this year. "Where is Shami? I don't know why Shami is not playing," said Harbhajan on his YouTube channel after the 2nd ODI. "I get it, you have Prasad, he is a good bowler, but he still has a lot to learn. You had good bowlers, and you have slowly sidelined them. With Bumrah, this is a different bowling attack, and without Bumrah, it is entirely different attack altogether. We have to learn the art of winning games without Jasprit Bumrah."

"In England, without Bumrah, Siraj was unbelievable, fantastic. India won all the Tests where Bumrah did not feature. But, in shorter formats, we need to find people who can win you games, whether it be fast bowling or spin. Find spinners who can come in and take wickets. There is Kuldeep, but what about the rest?" he added.

'Never has Ben Stokes needed Root more...': Atherton showers his praise on Joe Root's maiden Test hundred in Australia



GNS News Agency, Feb 23

With his knock of 138 runs against Australia in the second Test of The Ashes at the Gabba in Brisbane, England batsman Joe Root scored his 40th hundred in Test cricket. It was Root's first hundred against Australia in Australia and with his first Test century in Australia, Root has answered critics as well fans across the world. The England batsman, who is currently placed second in the all-time run getters list in Test cricket behind Sachin Tendulkar, took 30 innings in Australia to score his maiden Test hundred in Australia. With England placed at five for 2 when Root came out to bat on Thursday, former England captain Michael Atherton has termed Root's innings as "innings of his life." "What matters to him more than anything, is scoring crucial runs at a critical time. He was in for the 16th ball of the innings, at 5-2, so it could have gone horribly wrong.

With Mitchell Starc knocking back (Ben) Duckett and (Ollie) Pope for ducks, all those memories of Perth flooding back, but then England's greatest run-getter played the innings of his life – because everything is on the line here. You listen to Ben Stokes, he was asked that question at the

toss, 'is this your most important game as England captain?' He said it is, and never has he needed Root more." Atherton said on Sky Sports Cricket's 'Ashes Daily' Podcast. Prior to The Ashes this year, Root had scored a total of 892 runs in 14 Tests in Australia with an average of 35.68 in Australia, his lowest of any country where he has batted in more than twice in his career. With Root taking 30 innings to score his maiden Test hundred in Australia, it also meant that Root is now the fifth cricketer in the world to take 30 or more innings to score a Test hundred in Australia with Ian Healy (941), Bob Simpson (36), Steve Waugh (32) and Gordon Greenidge (32) in that list. It was also the fourth time that Root scored a hundred on the opening day of an Ashes Test during his Test career. Root scored his 40th Test hundred with a boundary off the bowling of Scott Boland on Thursday and the England batsman celebrated his hundred with his parents applauding from the stands. "It's been a long time coming. The reaction when he got to a hundred, I thought it was such a fantastic moment of theatre. The whole ground stood to him, Aussies and English people, and the decade of disappointment put to one side. It was a rather funny reaction from Root, almost as if to apologise for having taken so long to get the hundred," Atherton added. Out of his 40 Test hundreds, Root has scored 14 hundreds on the opening day of a Test match and sits only behind former Australia batsman Ricky Ponting (17) in that list. While Australia media had termed Root as 'Average Joe' in the run-up to The Ashes, former England captain Nasser Hussain showered his praise on Root and termed Root as 'far from average'. "He was far from average Joe today. Let's get it crystal clear, he is one of England's all-time greatest batters and he deserved that moment, that day today. I very rarely get nervous watching present-day cricket, but I did get nervous today. He's got 39 Test hundreds before today, and none of those I was worried about, but I was worried about this one, simply because of its significance, because of the hype, because of the chat." Hussain said on the podcast.

After streak of 1,297 NBA games spanning 18 seasons, LeBron James scores in single digits, but gives game-winning assist

When LeBron James scored eight points in the Los Angeles Lakers' NBA clash with the Toronto Raptors, a long streak ended for the basketball legend. For the first time after 1,297 successive regular season games (not including playoffs), LeBron had scored less than double digit figures. But LeBron left the arena happy after assisting Rui Hachimura for a three-pointer which turned out to be the game-winning shot in the Lakers' 123-120 win rather than shoot himself to try and get to the double-figure mark. The streak started on January 6, 2007. It was the longest such streak in NBA history by a country mile: Michael Jordan had 866 consecutive double-digit scoring games, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar had 787 and Karl Malone had the fourth-longest run at 575. According to data pulled out by AP Sports, during his streak, there were 1,266 times when the NBA future hall of famer had reached the 10-point mark by the start of the fourth quarter.

When journalists asked LeBron for his thoughts on the streak ending, he replied: "None. We won." Later, while explaining his process, LeBron said: "Just playing the game the right way. You always make the right play. That's just been my M.O. That's how I was taught the game. I've done that my whole career." Lakers coach JJ Redick was full of praise for his ageing star. "LeBron is acutely aware of how many points he has at that point. He did it like he's done so many times," he said. "The basketball gods, if you do it the right way, they tend to reward you." "I always just make the right play. That's automatic, win, lose or draw," LeBron said. "You make the right play, the game gods are always giving back to me." The Lakers star missed the entire preseason and has so far played in just six games of the regular season due to an injury. On Thursday, he missed his first six shots.

LeBron has also been criticised in his career in the past for passing the ball in big moments. "I remember everything that's been negatively said about me and my game through-



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out my career," LeBron said. "And that aspect has been one of the most foolish things I've ever heard as far as making the right pass, making the right play. We are in the business of winning basketball games and my whole life I've just played the game that way. I've taught the game that way. I've won at every single level I've played at by playing the game that way."

Divya Khosla, married to T-Series boss Bhushan Kumar, answers if they're divorced: 'Bollywood has crocodiles all around'



Reddit can be merciless, especially to Bollywood people. Actor-filmmaker Divya Khosla Kumar — who had recently taken on filmmaker Mukesh Bhatt and leaked their private conversation on social media — now did an Ask Me Anything session on Reddit, taking questions on being a part of Bollywood and what is her marital status with husband Bhushan Kumar, who owns the T-Series' behemoth. She also shared videos on Reddit to prove that it was indeed she who was taking the questions and not her PR team. Divya called 'Bollywood full of crocodiles' after a user asked her about the perceived toxicity in the industry. "How do you maintain your mental health amidst all the toxicity in Bollywood, pressure to look a certain way and many such stuff? You always seem very positive and childlike innocent

to me," they asked. Replying to the question, Divya said, "I myself feel that Bollywood is a place where there are crocodiles all around and you feel like you are navigate your way through it (sic).

"I think the most imp thing is to remain true to your own self. I will never sell my soul to get work. Hota hai toh theek hai nahi hota toh bhi theek hai (If it happens fine, if it doesn't happen, it's still fine), and what's more important is when you reach up you should have good slate of karma to carry with you," she added. "Media wants my divorce with Bhushan Kumar" When asked by a user if she and Bhushan Kumar, who is the chairman and managing director of T-Series, Divya denied it. "No, But the media really wants it," she said. Answering if she has gone under the knife and has got any surgery done, Divya said, "Nai baba, no surgery". She also replied to comments that she has altered her age to appear younger. She dismissed the negativity, saying, "What should I do? Put it on Instagram". In answer to another question, she called her recent release Savi her most favourite. "Has to be Savi. The most amazing shoot in the UK was almost minus 10 degrees for 42 days non-stop. But the production was so well organised that it set a benchmark for me to compare Savi set experience with all my other movies," she answered. She also addressed her Koi Chatur Naar co-star Neil Nitin Mukesh. "He is very down to earth and a great co-star. My first meeting with him was at CM's house at Ganpati last year. He really praised my work in Savi and I was very thankful to him for that." She also remarked on her film Satyamev Jayate 2 co-starring John Abraham. "Ma'am while acting in movies don't you actors realize that the script lacks in a lot of ways??? I feel Satyamev Jayate 2 could have been better story wise so that's why I'm asking!" Her answer was; "There's a lot that happens on the edit table, at times there's a difference between the script and the final product."

The year of Shah Rukh Khan: 25 Years of Indian Cinema

To say that 2023 was the year of SRK is a no-brainer. It was also the year that Bollywood proved that it wasn't going to go under the South juggernaut which had nearly steamrolled over it in the past two years, with Kantara, RRR and KGF, coasting on their larger-than-life computer-graphics-heavy tales. January began with Pathaan, in which we were asked to tighten our seat belts: 'kursi ki peti' has never been as sexy. The YRF-produced, Sidharth Anand-directed spy actioner which touched down on global hotspots before whizzing off to the next destination delivered mad spoofy silly fun.

Atlee's Jawan was SRK basically showing us everything he'd got, in a father-and-son double role. It was a messy masala movie in the Atlee mould, which meant that at every turn you have scenes-and-dialogues meant for taalis-and-seetis. And of course, there was that line: bete ko haath lagaane se pehle, which brought the house down.

It felt almost anti-climactic that SRK's third film of 2023, Rajkumar Hirani's Dunki turned out to be such a clunker. Given the star's ascendancy, and the director's penchant for giving us films that make us laugh and cry, this tracking-the-dunkey-route-to-the-promised-land should have been much better than it turned out to be. Sunny Deol returned to Gadar territory, and the sequel, also by director Anil Sharma, gives us a middle-aged Tara Singh, living happily with his beloved wife Sakeena, with a strapping son who goes missing. So it's back to bashing bad Pakistani generals, with young 'un losing his heart to a pretty Pakistani girl: and of course it's back to Sunny and his dhai kilo ka haath winning the battle. Karan Johar's Rocky and Rani Ki Prem Kahani got him back to his comfort zone of the rom com, with Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt playing the-Punjabi munda-and-the-Bengali-girl who fall for each other, who then have



to win their respective families over. What jhumka, went Alia, and everyone swooned. The film that had moviegoers deeply divided was Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Animal, starring Ranbir Kapoor with a violent guy with serious daddy issues, said daddy being Anil Kapoor. That Vanga has the ability to carry a scene is no dispute. That Ranbir has the ability to get into the skin of the character is in no dispute either. Zero surprises then that the film which gave its leading man the sort of animalistic tendencies which would put real animals to shame turned out to be one of the biggest hits of the year. The two best series of the year were Vikramaditya Motwane's sparkling Jubilee, which takes us back to the beginnings of the Bombay film industry, Jubilee, starring Prosenjit Chatterjee, Aparshakti Khurana, Aditi Rao Hydari, Ram Kapoor among others; and Sudip Sharma-Randeep Jha's Kohrra, a Punjab-set murder mystery which gave us actors—Suvinder Vicky, Barun Sobti, Manish Chaudhuri, Varun Badola and others— who looked as if they had sprung from the soil, and a story that kept us in its grip right till the very end.

Zeenat Aman reflects on Dostana scene with Amitabh Bachchan: 'The patronising attitude to women who defied convention...'



Veteran actor Zeenat Aman recently opened up about how movies back in her era came from a patriarchal mindset. She shared a scene from her superhit 1980 film Dostana, with Amitabh Bachchan, and sparked a conversation on women's rights and changing morality.

Taking to her Instagram handle, Zeenat posted a video from Dostana and reflected on the condescending attitude of men back in the 70s. In the scene, Zeenat's character, Sheetal, can be seen walking on a beach in a swimwear, when she gets harassed by a man. She then fearlessly drags him to the police station, where Inspector Vijay, played by Amitabh, takes the offender into custody. Zeenat Aman wrote in the caption of the video, "Every now and then I'll find myself flipping through clips from my old movies, in search of something to share with you. Today I found one from Great Gambler, one from Don, and then the algorithm offered me this. A scene so ripe for social commentary that it sent me into a spin!" The veteran actor added, "When one is young one thinks the

moralties of the time are set in granite. Absolute and unyielding; at best to be chipped at by one's own impotent acts of rebellion. Then the years turn, and one day you look up from your screen and think 'wow, everything changed.' Okay, perhaps not everything. The moral police is no doubt as vigilant as ever today, but the narrative has certainly progressed. "Later in the clip, Inspector Vijay questions Sheetal about her "revealing" clothes and asks her to reconsider her outfit choices. He suggests that she should dress more modestly, like women of the previous generation. Sheetal, however, challenges him, asking what was wrong with her clothing and asserting that her choices are entirely her own, firmly putting him in his place. Vijay then adds that he felt it was his duty to offer the suggestion. Zeenat's caption further read, "If you're a woman who watched this clip, let me make a few guesses — You were infuriated by the eve-teasing and resonated with Sheetal's discomfort and anger, having probably experience such a thing firsthand. You loved that she dragged her harasser to the police station, a triumph you probably never felt... And then you were incensed by our hero, Inspector Vijay's, condescending opinion and tone! Am I right? Well that opinion and tone were par for the course back in the day. The patronising attitude to women who defied convention, the barely veiled 'you're asking for it' gaze and that superior air!" Asking if women reading her post were furious about it or not, she wrote, "Oh, I am glad you're annoyed. That's what's changed. Back in the day your average woman would think Vijay to be a mighty upstanding gentleman because Sheetal deserved a reprimand just as much as her harasser. But the young woman I showed it to earlier today? She sneered at the poor Inspector and said 'What a loser.' I had a good laugh at that."

Jay Kelly movie review: Noah Baumbach's meditation on stardom shines in moments but never fully finds its soul



Jay Kelly movie review: There is a particular kind of weariness that settles over performers who have spent decades being looked at. It isn't visible at first glance, ageing stars learn to mask it with charisma and posture, but every now and then, a crack reveals itself. Jay Kelly, Noah Baumbach's latest, seems born from that crack. It opens with a Sylvia Plath quote about the burden of being oneself: "It's a hell of a responsibility to be yourself. It's much easier to be something else or nobody at all." The film proceeds to wonder whether a life lived under unbroken attention is really a life lived at all.

It suggests that some people never shake off this burden of being themselves, truly and without embellishment. And in the next two hours, Baumbach tries, not always successfully, to turn that burden into a meditation on fame, memory, and the making of a man who has lived so long in front of the camera that his own life feels like cinema. Jay Kelly is a portrait of loneliness dressed up in the comforts of wealth and adoration. George Clooney plays the titular actor as a man simultaneously swollen with success and hollowed out by it, wandering through Baumbach's version of Europe, a cliched, strangely postcard-like fabrication, all cobblestones and curated melancholy. The film follows Kelly after he wraps his latest project and decides to spend time with his daughter, Daisy (Grace Edwards), who is backpacking across Europe before leaving for college. News of the death of Peter Schneider (Jim Broadbent), the director who gave Kelly his first major break, becomes a turning point. Kelly had recently refused to attach his name to Schneider's new film to help secure financing. At the funeral, he runs into his old acting school roommate, Timothy (Billy Crudup), now a child psychologist. If Baumbach's film has only two unambiguous delights to offer, one is seeing Greta Gerwig back on screen, and the other is Crudup's electric bar scene with Clooney. Crudup dares you to look away, and you can't.

Old wounds resurface between Tim and Kelly, leading Kelly to drop out of his upcoming role and impulsively book a flight to Europe, ignoring the pleas of his manager, Ron Sukenick (Adam Sandler). Kelly hopes to surprise his daughter

ter during her travels and also attend a recognition ceremony in Tuscany. The movie then shifts into a travelogue, journeys through scenic Europe in search of purpose, clarity, and absolution. Clooney works hard to inhabit this meta-character, a version of a version of himself. He brings a softness, a tremor, to Kelly, an elegant man exhausted by his own myth. He confesses to feeling "all alone," admits that "all my memories are movies," and offers reflections on fame that are equal parts self-pity and self-awareness. Yet an inescapable "woe is me" fog clings to his arc, partly because the film keeps returning to the idea that being adored is its own tragedy. Baumbach attempts to interrogate that conceit, but too often the film indulges it instead. Kelly's pain is palpable, yet oddly remote: we are told he is suffering more than we are ever allowed to feel it. The film explains Jay Kelly to us rather than letting Jay Kelly reveal himself.

The real artery of emotion runs through Adam Sandler's Ron, the manager, the friend, the man who has spent years orbiting Kelly's gravity and paid the smaller, quieter price for it. Sandler anchors the film with a warmth that Clooney's character cannot access, and perhaps is not meant to. While Kelly contemplates the existential tragedy of stardom, Ron shoulders everyday sacrifices, the family time missed, the compromises made, the little heartbreaks endured because someone else's dream required it. In one scene, Ron says, "You are not Jay Kelly alone. I am Jay Kelly too." In that line lies the film's truth: the stardom we celebrate is rarely built alone, yet its rewards are almost always solitary. Adam Sandler in Jay Kelly Adam Sandler in a still from Jay Kelly

Baumbach, usually so deft with dialogue and nuance, feels uncharacteristically blunt here. Jay Kelly wants to be an emotional excavation, a Hollywood satire, a meta-commentary on fame, a European character study, and a Netflix prestige piece all at once. You can feel Baumbach wrestling with too many masters, the allure of a bigger budget, the pressure of awards momentum, the comfort of his own familiar thematic terrain, and the streaming platform's appetite for polish. The result is a film that is fitfully endearing but often curiously airless, experimenting enough to feel alive but indulging enough to feel unfocused. By the time we reach the ending, intended, presumably, to seal Kelly's reckoning with his life's choices, the film circles back to celebrating the career it has spent two hours critiquing. Instead of transcendence, we get something almost solipsistic — an emotional flourish that folds in on itself. It's a finale that wants to move you but ends up reaffirming that the movie understands Jay Kelly's myth far better than its humanity. The film boasts a stacked cast, Patrick Wilson, Riley Keough, and Laura Dern all appear. But the underuse of Dern should be considered an offence. Keough, as Jessica, the older daughter, gets limited screen time but makes the most of it. Jay Kelly is a strange one indeed: half confession, half performance, and somewhere in the middle, a movie that never quite figures out which one it wants to be. Jay Kelly Jay Kelly Cast — George Clooney, Adam Sandler, Laura Dern, Billy Crudup, Greta Gerwig, Patrick Wilson, Riley Keough Jay Kelly Director — Noah Baumbach Jay Kelly Rating — 2.5/5

Mortal Kombat and Tekken star Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa passes away at 75



the action game Mortal Kombat. With a career spanning over four decades, Tagawa became synonymous with overpowered villains and also with the franchises he helped take to the next level.

Apart from his menacing role as Shang Tsung, Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa was also known for his roles in films like the Tekken series, where he played the character of Heihachi Hishima, the man who started the famed tournament. He also appeared in films like John Glen's 007 flick Licence to Kill (1989), Rob Marshall's Memoirs of a Geisha (2005) and Bernardo Bertolucci's The Last Emperor (1987).

His voice roles also brought him a lot of fame, as he voiced characters for several animated series and games like Batman: The Rise of Sin Tzang and the much-celebrated Blue Eye Samurai (2023). Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa's manager released a statement post his demise. It read, "I had the privilege of representing Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa for many years as his long-time manager, but our relationship grew into something far deeper; he became like family. Cary was a rare soul: generous, thoughtful, and endlessly committed to his craft. His loss is immeasurable. My heart is with his family, friends, and all who loved him."

Fans on Reddit shared their favourite memories of Tagawa. One user wrote, "It was damn magical how good he did, Shang. He is this character when I play the game as far as I am concerned," while another said, "My day is ruined, and my discontent is immeasurable. I'm just happy that we had the chance to have him as Shang in Mortal Kombat 11; may he rest in peace." Many shared videos of his character's famous tagline, "Your soul is mine," and wrote RIP in the caption.

'My approach to life is very student-like,' says Aishwarya Rai Bachchan at Red Sea Film Festival

The most striking thing about Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, who must have lost count of the sobriquet 'the most beautiful woman in the world' has been used for her, is how grounded she comes across in person. One of the headliners of the 'In Conversation' section at the fifth edition of the Red Sea International Film Festival, which includes Adrien Brody, Dakota Johnson, Jessica Alba, and our own Kriti Sanon amongst others, Rai Bachchan lit up the room with her warmth, putting the moderator (Raya Abirached, Lebanese TV presenter) at ease as soon as she walked in, resplendent in black. The one-hour chat gave us a glimpse of the person behind the persona, which is so carefully constructed for the screen, with Aishwarya Rai Bachchan getting started by giving credit to the numbers of people who make up the village who, in turn, make the star, lauding 'the huge amount of talent and the hard work, so many technicians and artists come together to create those minutes of ours.' That set the tone of the conversation, which lasted an hour. As soon as a star whose image is so carefully constructed and curated all through their glittering public appearances and utterances acknowledges that the magic is all teamwork and they are just the faces, it makes them instantly relatable.

Aishwarya Rai Bachchan came into the movies after

winning the Miss World title in 1994: between her and Sushmita Sen's winning the Miss Universe title in the same year, nothing was ever the same. Yes, Praveen Babi and Zeenat Aman had won beauty contests, which paved their way into the movies back in the 70s, and their entry into conservative Bollywood suddenly caused a wave of body positivity, but Rai Bachchan and Sen took it to another level. Both were products of a liberalised India, and their win was cataclysmic in the way it opened up the doors for young girls all over the country: those moments with the two beaming, clutching their crowns, and its consequences, turned the once-reviled beauty industry into an aspirational space for vast swathes of middle-class India. For her, it wasn't just about winning beauty pageants, she said, it was about representing Indian women on the world stage. Did she always want to be a star? Not at all. She said, "I thought I'd become a doctor. I was a student of science, and I went into studying architecture in my formative years. Even today, my approach to life is very student-like. Life brought me into showbiz circumstantially. I did a couple of shoots of my professor, who was suffering from cancer, and I did it with a sense of respect and empathy, and it was from there that the world of showbiz opened up."