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Every woman should participate in the Amrutha scheme and plant saplings as their responsibility:- Bhuvanagiri Municipal Chairman Tangallapalli Srivani Ravikumar

“(Mandava Srisaillam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.... Indian Chronicle....March 11):- As part of the ambitious “Public Governance – Progress Plan 99-day Action Plan” program undertaken by the Telangana State Government, today, as part of the program from March 6th to March 15th, saplings were planted in the 14-acre SLNS Urban Park open space at the local Bhuvanagiri Cheruvu Katta as part of the MaAmrutha Mitra Women for Tree program by Honorary Chairperson Tangallapalli Srivani Ravi Kumar. Speaking on the occasion, they called on every woman to participate in this Amrutha scheme and plant saplings as their responsibility. Ward members Jaligam Vignesh, T.M.C. Shyamala, CO Suvarna, women and others participated.



Telangana sets up Rythu Discom, liabilities of Rs 71,964 crore shifted

Hyderabad: The Telangana government has issued orders establishing a third power distribution company, Telangana Rythu Power Distribution Company Limited (TGRPDCL), bringing agricultural and bulk water supply power connections under a separate entity. The new Discom will handle power supply to agriculture, lift irrigation schemes, Mission Bhagiratha, Hyderabad Metro Water Board and other government water connections. Meanwhile, the creation of the new Discom has triggered fears of the State government scrapping the free power scheme to the agriculture sector, if not immediately, in a phased manner.

A first: SC allows passive euthanasia for man in vegetative state for 13 yrs



New Delhi March 11

In a historic verdict, the Supreme Court on Wednesday allowed the first-ever passive euthanasia in India to end the life of a 32-year-old man who has been in a vegetative state since 2013 after falling from a building.

A Bench of Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice KV Viswanathan passed the order on a petition filed by Ashok Rana seeking permission to remove all life-sustaining treatment being given to his son Harish Rana.

The Bench — which had reserved its verdict on the contentious issue on January 15 — passed the order for withdrawal of clinically assisted nutrition and hydration (CANH) to Harish Rana in terms of its 2018 judgment in the Common Cause case (as modified in 2023) which recognised the fundamental right to die with dignity.

The Supreme Court had in 2018 issued guidelines on passive euthanasia which were simplified in 2023. According to the 2023 guidelines, a primary and a secondary medical board will have to be formed for an expert opinion on the withdrawal of artificial life support for a patient in a vegetative state.

The Bench took note of the fact that two medical boards constituted by the court had already concluded that Harish Rana had no chance for recovery. “It’s a very sad report. We cannot keep this boy in this stage,” the Bench had said on December 18, 2025, after perusing a report containing Harish Rana’s medical history filed by a secondary medical board of doctors from All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here.

This is the first case of the top court’s directions in the Common Cause case being judicially applied to end the agony of a person in a vegetative state. In 2011, the top court had turned down activist Pinki Virani’s petition seeking passive euthanasia for Aruna Shanbaug — a nurse at KEM Hospital, Mumbai — who remained in a vegetative state at Ward No. 4 of the hospital for more than four decades after being sexually assaulted by a ward boy on November 27, 1973. She died on May 15, 2015

“Our decision today does not neatly fit within logic

and reason alone. It sits in a space between love, loss, medicine and mercy. This decision is not about choosing death, but is rather one of not artificially prolonging life. It is the decision to withdraw life-sustaining treatment when that treatment no longer heals, restores or meaningfully improves life. It is allowing nature to take its course when medicine can only delay the inevitable because survival is not always the same as living,” the Bench said.

Holding that the CANH currently being administered to Harish constituted “medical treatment”, the Bench said the continued administration of the CANH was no longer in his “best interests”. “In light of the unanimous consensus arrived at by the parents/next of kin and the constituted medical boards respectively, we are of the opinion that the medical treatment ought not to be prolonged any further,” the top court said.

Emphasising that “the right to die with dignity is inseparable from the right to receive quality palliative and end of life (EOL) care,” the Bench said, “It is imperative to ensure that the withdrawal process is not marred by pain, agony or suffering.”

Following the “best interest principle”, it ordered that “the medical treatment, including CANH, being administered to the applicant shall be withdrawn and/or withheld.”

In the peculiar facts and circumstances of the case, the Bench chose to waive the reconsideration period of 30 days as all stakeholders were unanimous in their opinion that the medical treatment being administered to Harish be withdrawn and/or withheld.

The top court urged the government to consider bringing in a comprehensive law on passive euthanasia noting that this would “provide clarity, coherence and certainty in matters that are deeply practical and emotionally sensitive”. It noted that despite the profound constitutional, ethical and medical dimensions involved, the field continued to remain largely unregulated by law in India.

Minister Ponnam Prabhakar inspects Karimnagar dumping yard; relocation process to begin soon.

Khaja Sikander Mohiuddin Staff Reporter, Indian Chronicle Karimnagar, Mar 11: The State government has initiated steps to relocate the Karimnagar dumping yard following complaints from residents about severe inconvenience and health hazards caused by the facility.

State Minister Ponnam Prabhakar on Monday inspected the dumping yard and reviewed the situation with officials and public representatives. He said the issue had been brought to the attention of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, who had earlier assured residents during a public meeting at Choppadandi that the dumping yard would be shifted.

Minister Prabhakar said the government was committed to permanently relocating the facility as residents of Karimnagar had been facing serious problems due to the accumulation of waste over several decades. The dumping yard, he said, has led to respiratory ailments and other health issues among people living in nearby areas.

The Minister said the proposed relocation site would be identified between Karimnagar and Warangal, ensuring that the waste management system functions effectively without causing inconvenience to residents of either city.

Referring to the waste management component of the Smart City project, Minister Prabhakar said adequate measures had not been implemented earlier to address the growing problem of waste disposal. Acting on the Chief Minister’s directions, officials had begun assessing the existing dumping yard and preparing a plan for its phased relocation.

The government would formulate a policy to handle both the daily waste generated in the city and the large quantity of waste that has accumulated at the site over the



past 40 years. Since the process involved the transportation and management of a massive volume of waste, the relocation could not be completed immediately, he said, adding that the government aims to complete the exercise within a year.

A voluntary organisation has reportedly come forward to assist in the process of waste transportation.

MLA Medipalli Satyam, SUDA chairman Komatireddy Narendra Reddy, Municipal Commissioner Prapul Desai, former MLA Arepalli Mohan, and several corporators and local leaders were present during the inspection.

As Promised... Within 15 Days!

Minister Ponguleti distributes house pattas to Velugumatla displaced families along with Deputy CM Bhatti and Minister Tummala “ In the Indiramma government, pattas for the poor; suffering under previous rule

“Those who demolished houses have no moral right to preach,” says Minister Ponguleti targeting opposition
Sharp criticism over “Red Book” remarks; asks opposition not to daydream



“Arvapalli Nagesh khammam Staff Reporter March 11 (Indian Chronicle): “Politics is not about sitting on the throne and ruling like feudal lords. It is about wiping the tears of the poor. On the 1st of this month, from this very stage, I promised that the problem would be solved within 15 days. As promised, even before the deadline, I feel proud to see the victims as beneficiaries today,” said Telangana Revenue, Housing and Information Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy. “On Wednesday, at a program held at IDOC in Khammam, he, along with Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka and Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao, distributed house pattas and sanction letters to 311 displaced families of Velugumatla. “Blind to the Suffering of the Poor” Minister Ponguleti strongly criticized the failures of the previous government. “He said that since 2017, women in the colony had been living without drinking water and suffering among snakes and insects, but the previous government failed to notice their plight. He accused them of acting like people who have eyes but cannot see. “When the same colony was about to be demolished in 2023, the poor resisted and you backed off. Now you speak about the poor? Where is the moral right for that?” he questioned. “Criticism on ‘Red Book’ Remarks” Responding sharply to opposition lead-

ers who spoke about writing a “Red Book,” Ponguleti said they were daydreaming in broad daylight. “Don’t imagine yourselves as current or future chief ministers. Your ‘Red Book’ and revenge politics will never happen because the people of Telangana will not give you that opportunity. Your feudal attitude will not continue,” he warned. “Eligibility is the Only Criterion” The minister clarified that there would be no political vendetta. “Even those who criticized us were given pattas if they were eligible. This is a people’s government blessed by the poor,” he said. “He added that 311 beneficiaries received house sites and pattas at Velugumatla, while another 101 families who already have land in their villages were issued Indiramma housing sanction letters. “He also directed the police commissioner to take strict action against anyone who looted public money and ensure it is recovered. “Model Colony to be Developed” The minister assured that the government would not stop with distributing pattas. Within a week, drinking water would be provided, and the colony would be developed with roads, drainage, a school, a function hall, and a shopping complex. “MLC Teenmar Mallanna, District Collector Anudeep Durishetty and others participated in the program.

Press Information Bureau “Govt of India, Hyderabad

PIB Hyderabad Organises ‘VARTA’ Media Interaction Session on ‘No Smoking Day’
Tobacco fuels the TB epidemic; addressing tobacco use is essential for achieving tuberculosis elimination” – Dr. G. Srigana, WHO Consultant



“Hyderabad, 11 March 2026: “Press Information Bureau (PIB), Hyderabad organised a ‘VARTA’ Media Interaction Session on the occasion of ‘No Smoking Day’, with the theme “A Smoke-Free Life Starts with a Smoke-Free Day”, at CGO Towers, Hyderabad on Wednesday. The programme aimed at raising awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco use and encouraging people to quit smoking. “In her inaugural address, Smt. Shruti Patil, Additional Director General, PIB Hyderabad, highlighted the importance of awareness and collective efforts in promoting a smoke-free lifestyle. She also encouraged the media to play a key role in spreading the message of a tobacco-free society. “Underlining the importance of ‘No Smoking Day’, Dr. Manas Krishnakanth, Deputy Director, PIB Hyderabad, said that the nation observes No Smoking Day on the second Wednesday of March every year to remind smokers to quit smoking. He noted that the observance is not limited to cigarette smoking but includes all forms of tobacco use. In this regard, PIB Hyderabad organised ‘VARTA’, an interactive session with journalists on No Smoking Day to create awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco consumption. He further urged the media to take the campaign to the masses and help make India a smoke-free country. “Addressing the journalists, Dr. G. Srigana, WHO Consultant, who attended the event as the guest speaker, said that smoking directly increases the risk of tuberculosis (TB). He noted that India accounts for nearly 25 per-

cent of global TB cases, and therefore quitting smoking is essential in reducing the burden of the disease. He added that interactive sessions like ‘VARTA’ help create awareness and strengthen campaigns at the grassroots level. “He further emphasised that “Tobacco fuels the TB epidemic, and addressing tobacco use is essential for achieving tuberculosis elimination. “Highlighting the role of the media in taking campaigns such as ‘No Smoking Day’ to the grassroots level, Jithender, IEC Officer, said that passive smoking is equally dangerous as active smoking. He stressed that the media plays a crucial role in spreading awareness about the harmful effects of smoking and its prevention. “Ragunandan Maachana, Tobacco Control Hero Awardee, along with senior journalists, and officials and staff from PIB, CBC and other organisations, participated in the event.

LOSS OF DOCUMENT

I, Powar Srikanth, S/o Powar Gajanan, aged about 30 years, residing at H.No. 2-23, Chichidhari, Adilabad Rural, Adilabad District, hereby inform the general public that my original Mortgage Registration Document vide Document No. 8980/2024 has been lost/misplaced. The document was lost while travelling from the Collector chowk to RTC Bus Stand, Adilabad. A complaint regarding the loss has been lodged at Adilabad-II Town Police Station through MeeSeva.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Was cricket the casualty in Asia Cup final?

As a final, there could have been nothing better. Firstly, the Indo-Pak cricket matches have been top draws for decades, wherever and whenever they have been held. Secondly, the Indian cricket supporters were convinced that having beaten the neighbouring team twice in succession, it was a mere formality for the World No one team to do it one more time. That too in a highly anticipated showdown featuring the arch-rivals 41 years after the Asia Cup was launched.

After a set of self-inflicted pressure points as they began their innings, Indians did go on to win the final and retain their supremacy over their competitor, setting off waves of joy and celebrations among the die-hard fans across the world. Viewed from the sporting point of view, the Indian cricket team, which was under enormous pressure trying to justify their participation in the Asia Cup after Operation Sindoor, was not seen playing the game in the way the 'gentleman's game' was supposed to have been played. Especially, the ever-hyper social media was not very happy despite the Indians doing the politically correct things by not getting too 'friendly' with their opponents, at least in public. Pakistan captain, Salman Agha, who said that his Indian counterpart Surya Kumar Yadav shook hands with him in private and interacted normally but refused to do so in public lends credence to the view. After the match was over, another dimension to this show of real rivalry between the two nations showed up.

As neutral observers of the game, opinions by a few readers in the media raised this point pertinently. As one game lover wrote: 'India's refusal to accept the winner's trophy for the Asian Cricket Council Chairman Mohsin Naqvi became the latest trending topic. The post-match presentation ceremony passed off without the trophy, in material form, received, lifted and showered with kisses by the winning team and it all verged on the farcical.' One may agree or disagree, but the reader's opinion hoped that there could have been a different ending to the post-match proceedings. 'Those who booed and jeered Pakistanis after India's win should have been satisfied with the national glory it brought and avoided jingoistic screams.

While hailing the victory, Prime Minister Narendra Modi likened the final in Dubai to Operation Sindoor, obviously to whip up a surge of nationalist sentiment. One is not quite sure if an analogy can be drawn between a cricket match and military action. It was sad and disappointing to see cricket players doubling up as proxy soldiers. It halved the joy of watching some fine cricket.'

Municipal Initiative Promotes 'Women for Tree' Campaign

"Indian Chronicle (Taj Khan), March 11," "SHG Women Plant Trees Under 99-Day Action Plan" "As part of the Public Governance-Progress Plan and the 99-Day Action Plan, a tree plantation drive titled "Women for Tree" was organized today at Gandhi Park under the leadership of Municipal Commissioner B. Tirupati. The saplings were planted by Self-Help Group (SHG) women as part of the environmental initiative. "The programme was attended by Municipal Chairperson Mrs. Shaheen Sultana, Vice Chairperson Dr. Kothapalli Anita, along with municipal staff. "Polished Media Version" "Under the Public Gov-



ernance-Progress Programme and its 99-Day Action Plan, a tree plantation initiative named "Women for Tree" was conducted today at Gandhi Park under the supervision of Municipal Commissioner B. Tirupati. "The plantation drive was carried out by Self-Help Group (SHG) women, highlighting women's participation in environmental protection. Municipal Chairperson Mrs. Shaheen Sultana, Vice Chairperson Dr. Kothapalli Anita, and municipal staff members took part in the programme.



Proposal for an Off Stream Closed Loop Pumped Storage Hydro power generation gathering dust



"S. Harpal Singh, Adilabad, March 11" "The proposal to establish an off-stream closed loop pumped storage hydro power generation unit on the hills of Jhari village in Talamadugu mandal in Adilabad district is gathering dust. There is no progress in this regard after initial surveys were conducted by the government in 2024, point out

activists from both the ruling party and the opposition. "The project, which is said to suit hilly areas and is considered to be least impacting in terms of environment destruction, is already operational in the hilly districts of the North-East. The Jhari project is designed to generate 750 MW (4,545 MWh). The estimated cost of the project was Rs. 4,700 crore two years back. "The last known status of the proposed power generation unit was a feasibility survey ordered in the year 2024. The survey pertained to availability of water for power generation. "Thereafter there is no word on it," observed Goka Ganesh Reddy, former Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency member from Talamadugu. "The project envisaged construction of two storage tanks. One of them would be on top of a selected hill with a dead storage capacity of 0.320 tmcft and the other at the foot of the hill with a live storage capacity of 0.352 tmcft and dead storage of 0.025 tmcft. A one time drawal of 0.424 tmcft of water from the Ruyyadi stream would be done into the lower tank. "This water would be lifted into the upper tank during day time and released into a power generation turbine at night. This would be a continuous process which would result in less loss of water. "The government also had proposals to set up the



closed loop projects at Swarna project in Nirmal and Kumram Bheem project in KB Asifabad districts. Mr. Ganesh Reddy appealed to the government to take up the project at the earliest.

Foundation Stone Laid for CC Road Development Works Worth Rs 28 Lakhs in Beerappa Gadda Division by Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy

Former Corporator Bannala Geetha says MLA fulfilled his promise



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 11 (Indian Chronicle): "Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy on Wednesday laid the foundation stone for several CC road development works worth 28 lakhs in Sri Raghavender Nagar Colony, Raghavendra Nagar and East Kalyanpuri Colony of Beerappa Gadda Division as the chief guest. "Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said that several development works have already been undertaken in the newly formed Beerappa Gadda Division and as-

sured that the remaining works will also be completed gradually. He stated that efforts are being made to transform all mud roads into CC roads so that the division will have proper infrastructure. "Former Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen said that development works worth about 126 crores have been taken up in the division, out of which nearly 90 percent have already been completed. She added that the remaining 10 percent of the works will also be completed with the support of MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy and emphasized that they are committed to fulfilling every promise made during the elections. "TRS party state leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, senior leaders Eddula Kondal Reddy, Kokonda Jagan, Bannala Narayana Reddy, Muddam Srinivas Yadav, Balakrishna Goud, Masa Shekhar, MD Shafi, MD Hanif, MD Ghouse, Shyam, Jillella Praveen, Balu, Marka Seenu and others participated in the program. "Also present were Raghavendra Nagar Colony Welfare Association President and Secretary Mohan Reddy, Professor Ramulu, along with Ajay, Mukund Rao, Dr. Gavali, Rajendra Prasad, Gopi, Janaki, Sharada, Sudesh Singh, Ranjith, Ashok, Srinivasa Rao, Gangadhar Goud, Sudhakar Reddy, Sandeep, Murali Krishna, Kiran, Madhav Rao and several residents.

Safety Awareness Rally Held in Kagaznagar Under 99-Day Plan

"Indian Chronicle (Taj Khan), March 11," "As part of the "Praja Palana - Pragathi Pranalika" initiative and the 99-Day Action Plan, and in connection with Safety Day celebrations, a safety awareness rally was organised in Kagaznagar following the guidelines of the Factories Department to create awareness among the public on workplace and industrial safety. "Mr. A.K. Mishra, Vice President (Works), Mrs. C.H. Lakshmi Kumar, Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories, Nizamabad, Mr. M.S. Giri, GM (HR & IR), Mr. Srinivas, Manager (Safety), along with department heads and employees participated in the rally.



Illegal Use of Subsidized Cylinders Detected at Bus Stand Area



"Indian Chronicle (Taj Khan), March 11," "Enforcement Team Seizes LPG Cylinders from Tiffin Centres "Kagaznagar: Enforcement officials Raj Kumar

and Srinivas conducted a surprise inspection in the bus stand area of Kagaznagar town on Wednesday and seized seven domestic LPG cylinders that were being used illegally. "During the inspection, the officials found that four cylinders were being used at Shekhar Tiffin Centre and three cylinders at Kanakaraju Tiffin Centre, in violation of regulations. All the cylinders were seized by the enforcement team. "Officials warned that strict action will be taken against anyone involved in illegal activities such as refilling domestic cylinders, creating artificial shortages for black marketing, or storing cylinders unlawfully in violation of regulations.

Will strive to resolve Sai Krishna Nagar issues: Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy

— Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy visits Sai Krishna Nagar "KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 11 (Indian Chronicle): "Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy visited Sai Krishna Nagar Colony under Venkat Reddy Nagar Division in Uppal constituency. During his visit, he interacted with the residents of the colony and listened to their problems. "The locals brought several civic issues to the attention of the MLA, including problems related to roads, drainage, and street lights. After patiently hearing the concerns of the residents, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy assured them that he would speak with the concerned officials and take necessary steps to resolve the issues at the earliest. "The MLA stated that addressing the problems of the people is his primary goal and that he will always strive for the development of the Uppal constituency. "Colony President Balakrishna, BRS party leaders, local leaders, residents of the colony, and party workers participated in the program.



Arrived on 24th February by Gulf Air as Tourists, Supposed to Departure on 28th Feb at 2:30pm local time... we are above to clear the check in.. suddenly air strikes was targeted on US Naval based in Bahrain. "Goneh Solomon Raj "Vijaya Bhaskar Deverkonda "Paul Raju Kaligithi "Kanapala Vinnaiiah "Benjiman Samuel Marpu "Prem Kumar Jonnakuti "No proper response from Indian embassy neither from Gulf Airways. "Unknown Telugu settled families are extended their support to us by providing food. "Now we are staying at The Infinity Suits hotel at Adliya Avenue, Manama, Bahrain. "We find more than 100 Telugu speaking people in airport... their whereabouts not known.

BJP Leaders Protest for Special Ambulance Facility

"Arvapalli Nagesh Khammam Staff Reporter March 11, (Indian Chronicle): "BJP leaders staged a protest demanding a special ambulance facility for Chintakani Hospital. Chintakani Mandal BJP President Konda Gopi organized a dharna in front of the government



hospital. Speaking on the occasion, Konda Gopi said that despite submitting several petitions, the government authorities had not responded, which forced them to hold the protest. He stated that people in the mandal are facing serious difficulties due to the lack of a special ambulance facility. He also criticized that even in the constituency of Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, the Chintakani Mandal headquarters does not have a dedicated ambulance service. He demanded that the issue be resolved immediately, warning that otherwise they would stage a protest in front of the Collector's office. Konda Gopi further alleged that the police attempted to stop the protest by force. "Chintakani Mandal BJP General Secretary Goda Mangayya, Immadi Satyanarayana, Koripalli Srinu, Siddharth, Bakka Satyamurthy, Sattenapalli Gopi, Gopal Krishna, Vemula Ellayya, Dodda Ramakrishna, and several party workers participated in the protest.

Grant Puskar Ghats, Minister Laxman Kumar requested by Jagtial MLA

Jagtial Town, March 11 (Indian Chronicle): "Jagtial MLA Dr. Sanjay Kumar submitted a petition to State Welfare Minister Adhuri Laxman Kumar, requesting new Puskar Ghats and repairs to existing ones for the convenience of people during the Godavari Pushkaram. The MLA requested the minister to approve repairs to Puskar Ghats in Bornapalli and Kammunuru villages, and new ghats in Rangsagar, Mangle, Chitravenigudem, Rekulapalli, and Chinna Kolwai."

Chess game improves brain function, says Jagtial MLA Sanjay Kumar

"Jagtial Staff Reporter, March 11 (Indian Chronicle): Chess game enhances memory, analytical problem-solving skills, and expertise, said Jagtial Legislative Assembly member Dr. M Sanjay Kumar. "On Wednesday, at Jagtial Old High School, MLA Sanjay Kumar attended the



distribution of 200 chess boards to 48 government district parishad schools in Jagtial urban mandal, supported by Greater Atlanta Telangana Society president Gandla Venkataramana Rao. "Speaking on the occasion, MLA Sanjay Kumar said that chess game teaches patience, tolerance, and discipline. He added that chess improves brain function. He also mentioned that government schools provide better education. "Jagtial Municipal Chairperson Sameendla Vani Srinivas appreciated the members of Greater Atlanta Society of Telangana for conducting the event in government schools. "The program was attended by Mandal Education Officer Chandrakala, Chess Network Founder Sudhir, Councilor Arava Lakshmi, PRTUTS District President Boyini Pelli Anand Rao, Secretary Yalla Amarnath Reddy, committee members Suresh, Sectoral Officer Mahesh, former co-option member Srinivas, and others."

Telugu Families Express Heartfelt Gratitude to Central and State Governments for Successful Repatriation from Bahrain



"HYDERABAD – We extend our deepest gratitude to the Government of India and the Government of Telangana for their swift and compassionate intervention in facilitating the safe return of 60 Indian citizens from Bahrain. Our sincere thanks go to Shri Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, Union Minister for Civil Aviation, and Shri Rajnath Singh, Union Minister for Defence, for their instrumental roles in coordinating the logistics of this mission. We are equally grateful to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Telangana for his proactive support in ensuring our citizens were brought back home via a special flight from Dammam to Kochi. Thanking all Print and Electronic Media to make it possible to reach the Government's to convey our situation. The success of this mission was made possible by the seamless diplomatic coordination

of the Indian government, which secured essential Transit Visas from Saudi Arabia. We also wish to highlight the tireless efforts of the Bahrain Telugu Association (BTA) and Gulf Airways, who acted as vital intermediaries between the affected families and the government authorities. We are profoundly moved by the spirit of the Telugu community abroad. From February 28th to March 10th, local Telugu families and Churches in the region demonstrated extraordinary humanity by providing breakfast, lunch, and dinner for all 60 individuals during their time of need. We sincerely appreciate every member of the Telugu community in Bahrain for their selfless service, solidarity, and support during this challenging period. Goneh Solomon Raj, Joseph Kishore, Deevan Kumar, Sis. Mohana, Prem Sagar, Fenney, Benjamin & others

A Great Follower of Swami Ramdev Baba's Path

Tribute to Late Ramanatham "Following the path he showed is the true tribute to him"



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 11 (Indian Chronicle): On the occasion of the recent demise of Ramanatham, President of the Bharat Swabhimana Trust, Greater Hyderabad, Patanjali Yoga Parivar organized a condolence meeting on Wednesday at Srinivasa Nagar, Uppal. Members of the district executive committee remembered his service with deep sorrow and shared their memories. State Executive Member Devender said that even at the age of 78, Ramanatham remained very energetic and dedicated to his work. State Vice President Shivakumar stated that Ramanatham had vast experience in yoga training and used to teach in a simple and engaging manner. He added that Ramanatham trained a large number of disciples and inspired many people

through yoga. State Organization Secretary Nandanam Krupakar said that Ramanatham followed the path shown by Yoga Rishi Param Pujya Swami Ramdev Baba until his last breath and served as a great inspiration and guide to everyone. He emphasized that walking on the path shown by Ramanatham would be the true tribute to his life and service. District executive members Unnithan, Chandramouli, Prasad Reddy, Rajesh Mohan Rao, Ramesh, Shekhar Reddy, Satish, Kavitha, Lalitha, Sushila, Karuna, Gayatri, Bindu, Kavya, Urmila, Revathi, Supraja and several yoga practitioners and activists participated in the meeting. Ramanatham's son Madhusudan was also present and paid heartfelt tributes to his father.

State pushing skill-integrated degree courses in colleges: Yogita Rana.

Khaja Sikander Mohiuddin Staff Reporter, Indian Chronicle Karimnagar, Mar 11: Stressing the growing importance of skill-based education, Education Department Principal Secretary Dr. Yogita Rana on Wednesday said that students must acquire practical skills along with academic knowledge to secure better employment opportunities in the present competitive world.

job market. She urged students to make use of the Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programme (AEDP), which integrates academic learning with hands-on vocational and skill training.

She said the programme had been introduced in selected government and private colleges across the State and had already shown encouraging results.

Around 1,200 students completed the AEDP training last year and have secured opportunities in various sectors, she said, adding that the government has set a target of providing training to 8,000 students this year.

Dr. Rana advised colleges to introduce AEDP courses and said that special training sessions for faculty members would soon be organised. She also asked college principals to motivate students and ensure that all available seats under the programme are filled.

Higher Education Commissioner Devasena described teaching as a noble profession and urged faculty members to help students develop their potential across multiple fields. She emphasised that students should leave college not only with degrees but also with employable skills.

District Collector Chitra Mishra said the AEDP initiative provides a strong platform for students to combine academic learning with skill development and build stable careers. She encouraged students to utilise the opportunities provided through the collaboration with Satavahana University and gain expertise in diverse sectors. She also noted that the State government was giving high priority to strengthening the education system.

Satavahana University Vice-Chancellor U. Umesh Kumar said the university had convened a meeting with principals of affiliated colleges to expand the AEDP initiative and facilitate training for more students.

Additional Collector Ashwini Tanaji Wakade and Satavahana University Registrar Satish Kumar were among those who attended the programme.



nities in the present competitive world.

She was speaking at the Academic Empowerment Programme organised for Government Degree Colleges at Satavahana University. Higher Education Commissioner Devasena and Karimnagar District Collector Chitra Mishra were also present.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Rana said that marks alone would not determine success in the current global environment and that students with strong skill sets and technological competence would have an edge in the

Leaders and Cadres Should Be Ready for GHMC Elections BJP State Leader Nandanam Divakar

"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 11 (Indian Chronicle): A wide workers' meeting was organized at Nova Banquet Hall under the leadership of BJP Chilkanagar Division President Dappu Dattasai. BJP State Leader Nandanam Divakar attended the program as the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, he said that training workshops are being organized as part of the birth centenary celebrations of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, following the directions of the state and district party leadership. He urged party workers to attend the training sessions without fail and asked them to stay fully prepared for the upcoming GHMC elections. He emphasized that strengthening the party at the grassroots level is essential for success in the coming elections. Several BJP leaders and workers participated in the meeting, including contested corporator and former division president Gone Srikanth Mudiraj, senior leaders Gone Anjaiah, Pravesh Singh, Vaidyula Veerareddy, Kancharla Bharat Reddy, Gottam Gopal Reddy, Jagadish Joshi, Gottimukula Pradeep, along with general secre-



taries Tanniru Kondal Rao and Perumal Shivakumar. Other leaders present included Podishetti Srinivas, Kavali Narasimha, Madhaveni Mamatha, Donthi Prabhavathi, Pitla Srinivas, Madipadiga Srinivas, Ashwin Bhadra, Parupati Ram Reddy, Ekkaladevi Narasimha, Kottam Upendre Reddy, Polaju Srinivas Chari, Araganti Rajesh, Seekuri Krishna, Gurralla Mallesh, Ganji Srikanth, Sriram Yadav, Singam Kavitha, Rachakonda Shivakumar, Suman Nayak, Pastam Suresh, Resham Manoj, Kongari Ramachander, Venkat Yadav, Ramaraju Mudiraj, Thammala Sai, Ramakrishna Goud, Nampally Ashok, Madhigonda Srikanth, Guvvala Bharat, James, Sahu, Karthik Reddy, Gunakar and many other leaders and party workers who attended in large numbers.

Awareness program for public representatives on Public Governance Progress Plan on 12th of this month

"Sangareddy, Indian Chronical correspondent March 11: A one-day orientation program will be organized for the municipal chairpersons, vice-chairpersons, village panchayat sarpanches and municipal ward councilors of the district to create awareness about the 99-day action plan of the Public Governance – Progress Plan being implemented by the Telangana government, District Collector P. Praveenya said in a statement on Wednesday. The state government has decided to implement the 99-day action plan from 06.03.2026 to 12.06.2026 through various departments, and in this context, an orientation program has been organized to create awareness among the public representatives about the objectives of the program, implementation method and government flagship schemes. This orientation program will be held on March 12 (Thursday) at 10:00 am at L.N. It will be held at the Convention Center. The District Collector requested that the municipal chairpersons, vice chairpersons, village panchayat sarpanches, and municipal ward councilors in the district must attend this program.



Hundi Counting at Sri Abhayanjaneya Swamy Temple



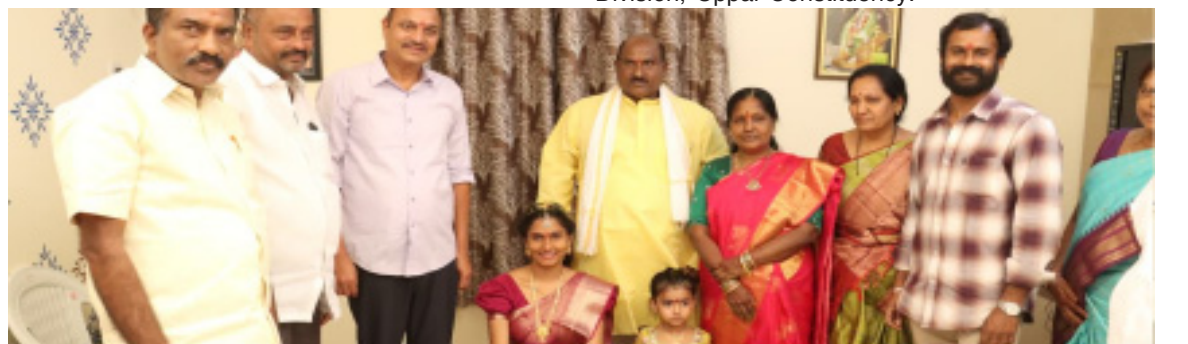
"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 11 (Indian Chronicle): The hundi (donation box) counting was conducted on Wednesday at the Sri Abhayanjaneya Swamy

Temple located at NGRI, Habsiguda. Temple officials stated that a total of ₹2,67,000 was collected in the hundi. The temple Executive Officer (EO) and Inspector informed that the collected amount will be deposited in the Endowments Department. Those who participated in the programme included Temple EO Venkanna, Inspector Ravinder, temple committee members Bikku Malla Anjaiah Gupta, Dharmendra Naik (Dharma), chief priests Ravinder Sharma and Santosh Sharma, Garika Rajeswari, volunteers, and others. On this occasion, EO Venkanna requested devotees to extend their support and cooperation for the development of the temple. He also stated that arrangements are being made to ensure that devotees do not face any inconvenience during the temple programmes.

Case Filed Over BC Bandh Protest, Says Activist Goggikar Shivakumar



"NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 11, (Indian chronicle): A case was registered against me and my team at the Kushaiguda Police Station based on a minor incident that occurred in the Kapra area during the BC Bandh held across the state on October 18, 2025, demanding justice and rights for the Backward Classes. It is unfortunate that a case has been filed for participating in a peaceful protest organized to seek the legitimate rights of the BC community. However, I want to make it clear that no matter how many cases are filed or how long the struggle continues, I will not step back from the fight for BC rights. I will continue to stand at the forefront and work for the unity and empowerment of the BC community. The movement for justice and equal rights for BCs will go on with greater determination. On this occasion, I sincerely thank the BC lawyers who are extending their full legal support in this case. — Goggikar Shivakumar, BC Rights Activist, Kapra Division, Uppal Constituency.



"Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy visited the residence of Movva Srinivasa Kumar and Anantha Lakshmi of Rukmini Puram Colony in Dr. A.S. Rao Nagar Division on the occasion of the wedding of their daughter Kalyana Padmavathi with Chaitanya. The MLA conveyed his best wishes and blessed the newly married couple. Neerukonda Satish Babu and others were also present on the occasion.

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF T.G. LIMITED
OPERATION : CYBERCITY CIRCLE
E-procurement-05/25-26 & Tender Notification No. 12/25-26
TGSPPDCI intends to float tenders and sealed bids are invited from various contractors/suppliers having experiences for E-Procurement 05/25-26 1) Bif. of 11KV Feeder in Kondapur Division Bids are invited from eligible bidders for: 1) 2Nos. Add. DTRs erections on span poles & Ext. of LT Supply works in Gachibowli Div 2) Bif. of 11KV feeder work in Gachibowli Div 3) 3Nos. Load & Unload of materials in RR Stores 4) 2 Nos. Erc. of Addl. DTR works in Ibrahimbagh Div. 5) Replacement & Renovation works of different office building and other various miscellaneous works in Cybercity circle by Civil wing and other various works in Cybercity Circle. For further details please visit www.tgsouthernpower.org & www.education.telangana.gov.in & www.e-procurement.telangana.gov.in
SE/OP/Cybercity
R.O. No.: 16864-PP/CLADVT/1/2025-26, Date: 11-03-2026
Rethibowli, Nanal Nagar X Road, Hyd-28

Construction of 'Indiramma' Houses Must Be Expedited: District Collector Ankit During Chandrugonda Mandal Tour.

“Kukkadapu Naresh Kumar, Bhadradi Kothagudem Staff Reporter, March 11, Indian Chronicle: As part of the "Praja Palana—Pragathi Plan" (People's Administration—Progress Plan)—a prestigious 99-day action agenda being implemented by the government—District Collector Ankit conducted an extensive tour of Chandrugonda Mandal in Bhadradi Kothagudem district on Wednesday. During this visit, he personally inspected various sites across the mandal—including Bandalapadu village—to review the construction progress of schools and Anganwadi centers, the ongoing work on 'Indiramma' housing units, the Ashram School, and sanitation activities at the bus stand; he subsequently issued several directives to the concerned officials. The District Collector also participated in an awareness program regarding the usage of safe drinking water, held at the primary school in Bandalapadu village, Chandrugonda Mandal. This event was organized under the aegis of 'Mission Bhagiratha' as part of the aforementioned 99-day action plan. On this occasion, he conducted practical demonstrations to explain to the public the differences in mineral content found in borewell water, Mission Bhagiratha water, and water purified through RO plants. He emphasized that the natural minerals present in drinking water are essential for the human body and warned that consuming only highly purified water could deplete these necessary minerals, potentially leading to health complications. He strongly advised the public to make it a priority to utilize the safe, fresh water being supplied through Mission Bhagiratha. Furthermore, he directed officials to conduct more proactive awareness campaigns to educate the public on the importance of consuming safe drinking water. Furthermore, he called upon everyone to compulsorily participate in the one-day training program scheduled for tomorrow for the newly elected Sarpanches and Ward Members, urging them to become active partners in the implementation of government welfare and development schemes. Subsequently, the collector paid a surprise visit to the primary school in Bandalapadu village. On this occasion, he interacted with the students in their classroom, inquiring about the midday meals they receive—specifically asking how many eggs are provided per week and assessing the quality of the food. He also observed the paintings displayed in the classroom and commended them. Later, speaking with the teachers, the collector gathered details regarding various aspects such as the total student enrollment, attendance percentage, the number of restrooms available, and their cleanliness. Noting the low attendance percentage despite the school having an enrollment of 120 students, the collector expressed his dissatisfaction with the situation. He pointed out that if students do not attend classes regularly, they run the risk of falling behind in their studies. He instructed the teachers to take special measures to ensure that every student attends school regularly. He further directed them to conduct counseling for parents, if necessary, to create awareness and encourage them to send their children to school. He inspected the restrooms within the school premises and advised that they be kept clean at all times. Finally, after inspecting the food ingredients and provisions stored in the kitchen, he instructed the officials to ensure that the students are provided with high-quality and hygienic meals. The collector inspected the ongoing construction works of 'Indiramma' houses in the village. He personally inspected the construction progress of several beneficiaries' homes and instructed officials to expedite the work to ensure completion within the stipulated deadline. He emphasized that quality standards must be strictly adhered to during the construction process. On this occasion, the collector interacted directly with the beneficiaries, inquiring about various aspects such as whether they had availed loans for house construction through women's self-help groups, the source of sand required for construction, and if they were facing any difficulties in carrying out the work. He directed officials to immediately



resolve any issues being faced by the beneficiaries. The collector also visited families who had already completed their Indiramma houses and were residing in them, inquiring about their well-being. The collector also inspected the newly constructed Anganwadi center building in Chandrugonda. He remarked that Anganwadi centers play a pivotal role in the physical and mental development of children in rural areas. He noted that Anganwadis serve as key centers for providing nutritional food and healthcare services to pregnant women and lactating mothers. Consequently, he ordered officials to expedite the construction of the Anganwadi building and make it available to the public at the earliest. He reiterated the importance of strictly adhering to quality standards during the construction work. The collector conducted a surprise inspection of the Ashram School in Chandrugonda. He comprehensively examined various facilities within the school, including classrooms, the kitchen, drinking water facilities, and the kitchen garden. He interacted with the ninth-grade students to inquire whether meals were being provided according to the prescribed menu and if they were facing any issues. The students informed him that there was a shortage of restrooms and that a physical trainer was needed to facilitate sports activities. Responding to this, the collector spoke with the ITDA project officer and assured them that the necessary restrooms would be constructed and a physical trainer would be appointed. He interacted with fifth-grade students, asked them to read from their textbooks, and assessed their proficiency in reading English. He also inspected "Uddeepakam," a book specifically designed by the ITDA. He inspected the kitchen shed and inquired whether meals were being prepared in strict accordance with the prescribed menu. Noting that externally sourced curd carries a risk of contamination, he advised that milk be boiled and curd prepared on the school premises itself before being served to the students. He instructed that food provisions be stored in a cool environment and emphasized that officials must maintain constant vigilance to ensure that students receive high-quality food. While commending the kitchen garden established at the school, he also suggested that a library be set up. The collector also visited and inspected the Chandrugonda bus stand. As part of the "Praja Palana—Pragathi Plan" initiative, he reviewed the sanitation activities being conducted in and around the bus stand premises. Sarpanch Islavath Rukmini brought to the Collector's attention the issue that buses were not entering the bus stand premises. Responding to this, the collector assured that he would speak with RTC officials and take necessary measures to ensure that buses enter the bus stand. Subsequently, he inspected the newly constructed community toilets at the bus stand and instructed officials to ensure they are maintained in a hygienic condition. CPO Sanjeeva Rao, Mission Bhagiratha EE Thirumalesh, Tahsildar Sandhya Rani, MPDO Ashok, MPO Khan, MPP Khan, Sarpanch Borra Lalitha Kumari, Sarpanch Islavath Rukmini, the MEO, school headmasters, teachers, officials from concerned departments, and villagers participated in these programs.



Collector Manu Chowdhary Visits Fine Arts Residential School, Emphasizes Student Recognition and Facilities

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 11, (Indian chronicle): “Medchal—Malkajgiri District Collector Manu Chowdhary visited the Telangana Social Welfare Residential Fine Arts School in Ghatkesar mandal on Wednesday. During the visit, he had lunch with the students and interacted with them to understand their needs and facilities. The Collector stressed that students' artistic talents should not remain unnoticed and suggested creating a new website to upload their paintings and artworks, providing wider recognition and opportunities for interested buyers to place orders. He also encouraged students learning music instruments to participate in government programmes to showcase their skills. During the visit, the Collector checked the menu to ensure students receive nutritious meals on time every day and inquired about the teaching quality and residential facilities. He also inspected departments including Kuchipudi, guitar, keyboard, and painting, and gathered information about the number of students and certificate courses offered. While having lunch with the students, he asked if they faced any difficulties or needed any additional resources. The students requested sports equipment such as football, chess, volleyball, and materials required for art activities. The Collector assured that all necessary items would be provided and suggested the school management send detailed proposals for the requested resources. Additionally, he inspected the school store room, advised checking expiry dates of items, and emphasized using only high-quality materials for students' meals and other activities.



“Bairi Srinivas Goud, Founder President of Green Peace Environment & Water Harvesting Foundation, met Medak MLA Mynampally Rohith Rao. On the occasion, the MLA called upon people to plant at least one sapling at their homes to protect the environment.

Mahila Jan Sunwai: Complaint Review and Redressal

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 11, (Indian chronicle): “As part of the 2026 International Women's Day celebrations, the National Commission for Women and State Women Commissions are conducting a nationwide "Mahila Jan Sunwai" from March 8 to 13, 2026. The initiative allows women to directly present their grievances and receive immediate solutions. On Thursday, March 12, 2026, a "Mahila Sunwai" will be held at the Malkajgiri Police Commissionerate in Medchal—Malkajgiri district, chaired by Vijaya Rahatkar, Chairperson of the National Commission for Women. During the programme, complaints and issues faced by women in Medchal—Malkajgiri district will be reviewed, and walk-in complaints will also be accepted. The District Collector of Medchal—Malkajgiri, Manu Chowdhary, encouraged women to use this opportunity to raise their concerns and get timely solutions.



Press Release “Telugu Families Thank Central and State Governments for Safe Repatriation of 60 Indians from Bahrain

“Hyderabad: Telugu families have expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Government of India and the Government of Telangana for their swift and compassionate intervention in facilitating the safe return of 60 Indian citizens from Bahrain. Goneh Solomon Raj, Joseph Kishore, Deevan Kumar, Sis. Mohana, Prem Sagar, Fenney, Benjamin, and others conveyed their sincere thanks to Shri Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, Union Minister for Civil Aviation, and Shri Rajnath Singh, Union Minister for Defence, for their crucial role in coordinating the logistics of the repatriation mission. Special appreciation was also extended to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Telangana for his proactive support in ensuring the safe return of the citizens through a special flight from Dammam to Kochi. The families also thanked the print and electronic media for highlighting the issue and helping bring their situation to the attention of government authorities. The successful operation was made possible through effective diplomatic coordination by the Government of India, which facilitated the issuance of transit visas from Saudi Arabia. The families also acknowledged the significant role played by the Bahrain Telugu Association (BTA) and Gulf Air, who acted as important intermediaries between the affected families and government authorities. The Telugu community in Bahrain also demonstrated remark-



able solidarity during the difficult period. From February 28 to March 10, local Telugu families and churches provided breakfast, lunch, and dinner to all 60 individuals, ensuring their well-being during their stay. The families expressed deep appreciation to every member of the Telugu community in Bahrain for their selfless service, compassion, and support during the challenging time.

Traders Struggle with Long-Standing Drainage Problem at Bonakal Mandal Center Sarpanch Banothu Jyothi Konda Takes Steps for Permanent Solution



“Arvapalli Nagesh khammam Staff Reporter March 11 (Indian Chronicle): “Traders at the Bonakal mandal headquarters have been facing severe difficulties for several years due to an unresolved drainage problem that has caused foul smells and unhygienic conditions in the main center area. According to local traders, the drainage works carried out during the previous Gram Panchayat administration were done without proper planning. As a result, dirty water has been stagnating in the area, spreading a foul odor and affecting business activities in the busy main center. The traders expressed concern that if the issue continues, their businesses may suffer serious losses. They appealed to the present Gram



Panchayat administration to take necessary steps to eliminate the foul smell and ensure a proper drainage system. In response, village Sarpanch Banothu Jyothi Konda, along with the Panchayat Secretary, has taken special initiative to address the issue and started drainage construction works aimed at providing a permanent solution. The Gram Panchayat has begun efforts to ensure that wastewater does not stagnate and that a proper drainage system is established in the mandal center. However, local traders allege that Bonakal village president Thotapalli Swami, along with some village leaders, has been creating obstacles to these development works. They stated that such interference may delay the resolution of the drainage problem. Traders in the main center have urged the authorities to complete the drainage works without any hurdles and provide a quick and lasting solution to the long-standing problem.

Appeal to Ensure Drinking Water Supply During Summer

- Tungathurthi Ravi Submits Petition at Boduppall Circle DC Office

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 11, (Indian chronicle): “Peoples should not face drinking water problems during the upcoming summer, and every household must receive safe drinking water, said Tungathurthi Ravi, President of the Congress Party in Peerzadiguda Municipal Corporation and Chairman of the RV Foundation. Keeping the approaching summer season in view, Ravi urged officials to ensure proper drinking water supply to every household in Medipally and Peerzadiguda divisions and to take strict measures to prevent wastage of water. On Wednesday, he submitted a representation at the Boduppall Circle Deputy Commissioner's office to Manager Kranthi along with residents from several colonies, requesting immediate steps to address water-related issues. Speaking on the occasion, Tungathurthi Ravi said the issue was brought to the attention of officials to prevent people, especially women, from facing hardships due to water scarcity during summer. He requested authorities to prevent pipeline leakages, monitor water distribution daily, and prepare special plans in advance to



ensure proper supply of water in every street. He also urged officials to arrange water tankers in areas facing higher demand for water to ensure uninterrupted supply. Medoju Ramabrahmam, Yerra Venkatesh, Mulupozu Mahesh, Kiran, Ramakrishna, Srinu, Rajalakshmi, Jayamma, Saraswathi, Lalitha, Padma, Narmada, Latha, Sukanya, Triveni, Venkatesh, Shailaja, Latha, Lakshmi, Mamatha, Gangamma and other colony representatives and party workers participated in the program.

Groundwater Conservation is Everyone's Responsibility: Additional Collector Faizan Ahmed



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 11, (Indian chronicle): “Medchal—Malkajgiri District Additional Collector Faizan Ahmed said that protecting groundwater resources to prevent water scarcity is the responsibility of every citizen, keeping future generations in mind. He was speaking as the chief guest at a one-day training programme on groundwater conservation held on Wednesday at the IDOC Conference Hall in Medchal—Malkajgiri district. The programme was organized by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. Engineers, field staff and technical assistants from various departments of the district participated in the training. Faizan Ahmed said that scientists conduct research on groundwater conservation and such training programmes help translate those findings into practical action at the field level. He stressed the need to create public awareness and implement effective measures to protect groundwater resources. He noted that after independence, the country constructed major irrigation projects to utilize river waters, and similarly, structures such as recharge pits, percolation tanks

and water ponds are essential to conserve and replenish rapidly depleting groundwater resources. He called upon officials and staff to work with dedication and sincerity to increase groundwater levels in the district by effectively utilizing the knowledge gained through such training programmes. CGWB scientist Dr. Pandit Madhunar explained that the main objective of the training programme is to provide technical knowledge on groundwater conservation and ways to address the challenges related to it. He emphasized the importance of involving the public in large numbers in groundwater conservation efforts to help prevent water scarcity in the future. Senior Scientist Dr. Sudhir Babu explained the importance of groundwater and its conservation in a simple and comprehensive manner with relevant examples, and also coordinated the programme. District Groundwater Officer M. Harish Babu presented a PowerPoint presentation on the groundwater status of Medchal—Malkajgiri district. On the occasion, the guests released the Aquifer Management and Groundwater Estimation Reports published by the Central Ground Water Board and the District Groundwater Department. CGWB scientists Madhav, Yadaiah, Rambabu and Aman Jain, along with officials from the Groundwater Department including Satyanarayana, Vamsi Krishna, Karthika Priya, Kamala Kumari, Karthik, Rakesh and Pawan Kumar, and District Rural Development Officer Sambasiva Rao, along with district officials and staff from various departments, participated in the programme.

Ben & Jerry's cofounder resigns citing loss of independence under Unilever



GNS News Agency, March 11

Ben & Jerry's cofounder Jerry Greenfield, whose name helped shape the popular ice cream brand, has quit the company, his partner Ben Cohen said on Wednesday (September 17, 2025), deepening the rift with parent Unilever. In an open letter addressing the Ben & Jerry community that was shared by Mr. Cohen on social media platform X, Mr. Greenfield said that the Vermont-based company has lost its independence since U.K. parent

Unilever curtailed its social activism. Unilever and Ben & Jerry's have clashed since 2021, when the Chubby Hubby maker said it would stop sales in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. The brand has since sued its parent over alleged efforts to silence it and described the Gaza conflict as "genocide," a rare stance for a major U.S. company.

Mr. Greenfield said he could no longer "in good conscience" continue working for a company that had been "silenced" by Unilever, despite a merger agreement meant to safeguard the brand's social mission. "That independence existed in no small part because of the unique merger agreement Ben and I negotiated with Unilever," he wrote in the letter. A Magnum Ice Cream company spokesperson said that it disagrees with Mr. Greenfield's perspective and has sought to engage both cofounders in a constructive conversation on how to strengthen Ben & Jerry's powerful values-based position in the world. Unilever did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment. Last week Ben Cohen said the brand had attempted to engineer a sale to investors at a fair market value between \$1.5 billion and \$2.5 billion amid tensions with Unilever but the proposal was rejected.

Israel opens new route out of Gaza City for 48 hours as tanks advance Nidal Al-Mughrabi, Alexander Cornwell, Steven Scheer



CAIRO/JERUSALEM, GNS News Agency, March 11

The Israeli military said on Wednesday it was opening an additional route for 48 hours that Palestinians could use to leave Gaza City as it stepped up efforts to empty the city of civilians and confront thousands of Hamas combatants. Hundreds of thousands of people are sheltering in the city and many are reluctant to follow Israel's orders to move south because of the dangers along the way, dire conditions, a lack of food in the southern area, and fear of permanent displacement. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. "Even if we want to leave Gaza City, is there any guarantee we would be able to come back? Will the war ever end? That's why I prefer to die here, in Sabra, my neighbourhood," Ahmed, a school teacher, said by phone. At least 40 people were killed across the Gaza Strip on Wednesday in Israel's latest strikes, including 30 in Gaza City, local health authorities said. They also reported a drone attack on a specialist children's hospital, which did not cause casualties but forced young patients and their families outside. Israel estimates about 400,000 people, or 40% of those who were in Gaza City on August 10, when it announced plans to take control - have already fled. The Gaza media office says 190,000 have headed south and 350,000 have moved to central and western areas of the city of its ground offensive to seize control of Gaza's main urban centre, tanks had moved short distances towards the city's central and western areas from three directions, but no major advance was reported. An Israeli official said military operations were focused on getting civilians to head south and that fighting would intensify over the next month or two. The official said Israel expected around 100,000 civilians to remain in the city, which would take months to capture, and the operation could be suspended if a ceasefire was reached with the Hamas militant group. The prospects of a ceasefire appear remote after Israel attacked Hamas political leaders in Doha last week, infuriating

Qatar, a co-mediator in ceasefire talks. Defying global criticism of the attack, including a rebuke by Israel's stalwart ally, the United States, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said Israel will strike Hamas leaders anywhere. The Hamas-run government's Ministry of Health said an Israeli drone had dropped grenades on one floor of the Rantissi children's hospital on Wednesday. No casualties were reported but the ministry said some 40 families took their children away.

Displaced Palestinians, fleeing northern Gaza due to an Israeli military operation, move southward after Israeli forces ordered residents of Gaza City to evacuate to the south, in the central Gaza Strip September 16, 2025. REUTERS/Mahmoud Issa/File Photo Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab "This hospital is the only specialist facility for children with cancer, kidney failure, and other life-threatening conditions - but even these gravely ill children are not spared from relentless bombardment," said Fikr Shalltoot, Gaza director at the UK-based charity Medical Aid for Palestinians. In leaflets dropped over Gaza City, the military said Palestinians could use the newly reopened Salahudin Road to escape towards the south and that they had until lunchtime on Friday to do so. But the situation remained chaotic and dangerous for civilians, who have been streaming away on foot, by donkey cart or in vehicles in recent days. Much of Gaza City was laid to waste early in the war in 2023, but around 1 million Palestinians had returned there to homes among the ruins. Forcing them out would mean confining most of Gaza's population to overcrowded encampments in the south where a hunger crisis is unfolding. The United Nations, aid groups and foreign governments have condemned Israel's offensive and the proposed mass displacement. In a separate response to the Gaza conflict in general, a U.N. Commission of Inquiry concluded on Tuesday that Israel had committed Israeli forces control Gaza City's eastern suburbs and have been pounding three areas in the southeast, north and northwestern coastal areas of the city, from which tanks have been pressing towards the centre and western areas. "Gaza is being wiped out. A city that is thousands of years old is being wiped out in front of the whole cowardly world," said Ahmed, the school teacher. In Nuseirat refugee camp in the enclave's centre, an airstrike destroyed a high-rise building on Wednesday, prompting residents of nearby buildings to flee in panic. Palestinian and UN officials say no place is safe, including in the southern area designated by Israel as a "humanitarian zone". On Tuesday, an airstrike killed five people in a vehicle as they were leaving Gaza City for the south. Hamas attacked Israel in October 2023, killing about 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages. Israeli tallies show. Israel's military assault against Hamas has killed over 64,000 Palestinians, Gaza's health ministry says. A senior correspondent with nearly 25 years' experience covering the Palestinian-Israeli conflict including several

Charlie Kirk killing suspect Tyler Robinson charged with aggravated murder, weapon, obstruction offences

GNS News Agency, March 11

The charge means Robinson could face the death penalty if convicted of killing Kirk last week at Utah Valley University in Orem, about 64 km south of Salt Lake City. "The murder of Charlie Kirk is an American tragedy," Utah County Attorney Jeff Gray said in announcing the charges. He said Robinson's DNA was found on trigger of the gun used to kill Kirk. Kirk was gunned down on September 10 as he spoke with students and died soon after. Prosecutors allege Robinson shot Kirk in the neck with a bolt-action rifle from the roof of a nearby campus building. A Utah Valley University police officer was watching the crowd from an "elevated position" and identified the roof of the Losee Center as a potential position for a shooter, Mr. Gray said. The officer found evidence on the roof immediately, he said, and spurred officers to direct their attention to surveillance video leading to the roof. Robinson, 22, also was charged with felony discharge of a firearm, punishable by up to life in prison, and obstructing justice, punishable by up to 15 years in prison. He was scheduled to appear on camera for a virtual court hearing Tuesday (September 16, 2025) afternoon.

It was unclear whether Robinson had an attorney who could speak on his behalf, and his family has declined to comment to The Associated Press. Robinson was arrested late Thursday (September 11, 2025) near St. George, the southern Utah community where he grew up. Investigators have spoken to Robinson's relatives and carried out a search warrant at his family's home in Washington, Utah, about 390 km southwest of where the shooting happened. Kirk, a dominant figure in conservative politics, became a confidant of President Donald Trump after founding Arizona-based Turning Point USA, one of the nation's largest political organisations. He brought young, conservative evangelical Christians into politics. His shooting raised fears about increasing political violence in a deeply polarised United States. While authorities say Robinson hasn't been cooperating with investigators, they say his family and friends have been talking. Utah Governor Spencer Cox said over the weekend that those who know Robinson say his politics shifted left in recent years and he spent a lot of time in the "dark corners of the internet". FBI Director Kash Patel said Monday (September 15, 2025) on the Fox News Channel show "Fox & Friends" that DNA evidence has linked Robinson to a towel wrapped around a rifle found near the Utah Valley campus and a screwdriver recovered from the



rooftop where the fatal shot was fired. Before the shooting, Robinson wrote in a note that he had an opportunity to take out Kirk and was going to do it, according to Mr. Patel. The FBI also is looking at "anyone and everyone" who was involved in a gaming chatroom on the social media platform Discord with Robinson, Mr. Patel said Tuesday (September 16, 2025) during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing in Washington. The chatroom involved "a lot more" than 20 people, he said. "We are investigating Charlie's assassination fully and completely and running out every lead related to any allegation of broader violence," Mr. Patel said in response to a question about whether the Kirk shooting was being treated as part of a broader trend of violence against religious groups. Investigators are working on finding a motive for the attack, Utah's Governor said Sunday (September 14, 2025), adding that more information may come out once Robinson appears for his initial Court hearing. Kirk was shot while taking a question that touched on mass shootings, gun violence and transgender people. Utah Department of Public Safety Commissioner Beau Mason said Monday (September 15, 2025) that Robinson's partner has been cooperative. He said investigators believe Robinson acted alone during the shooting, but they also are looking at whether anyone knew of his plans beforehand. In the days since Kirk's assassination, Americans have found themselves facing questions about rising political violence, the deep divisions that brought the nation here and whether anything can change. Despite calls for greater civility, some who opposed Kirk's provocative statements about gender, race and politics criticised him after his death.

A year on, Lebanese maimed in Israel's pager attacks on long road to recovery

GNS News Agency, March 11

BEIRUT, - Zainab Mustarah once spent her days running an events planning firm in Beirut. But for the last year, she has been in and out of surgery to save the remnants of her right hand and both eyes, maimed when Israel detonated booby-trapped pagers in Lebanon. On September 17, 2024, thousands of pagers carried by members of Lebanese armed group Hezbollah exploded simultaneously, followed the next day by booby-trapped walkie-talkies. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.

Thirty-nine people were killed and more than 3,400 wounded, including children and other civilians who were near the devices when they blew up but were not members of the Iran-backed group. Mustarah, now 27, was one of the wounded. She told Reuters she was working from home when the pager, which belonged to a relative, beeped as if receiving a message. It exploded without her touching it, leaving her conscious but with severe wounds to her face and hand. Her last year has been a flurry of 14 operations, including in Iran, with seven cosmetic reconstruction surgeries left to go. She lost the fingers on her right hand and 90% of her sight. "I can no longer continue with interior design because my vision is 10%. God willing, next year we will see which university majors will suit my wounds, so I can continue," she said. The exploding pagers and walkie-talkies were the opening salvo of a devastating war between Israel and Hezbollah that left the group badly weakened and swathes of Lebanon in ruins. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave the green light for the attacks, his spokesperson said two months later. A Reuters investigation found that Israel had concealed a small but potent charge of plastic explosive and a detonator into thousands of pagers procured by the group. They were carried by fighters, but also by members of Hezbollah's social services branches and medical services. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, said at the time that the explosions were "shocking, and their impact on civilians unacceptable." He said simultaneously targeting thousands



of people without knowing precisely who was in possession of the targeted devices, or where they were, "violates international human rights law and, to the extent applicable, international humanitarian law." Mohammed Nasser al-Din, 34, was the director of the medical equipment and engineering department at Al-Rasoul Al-Aazam Hospital, a Hezbollah-affiliated facility, at the time of the pager blasts. He said he had a pager to be easily reached for any maintenance needs there. At the hospital on September 17 last year, he spoke by phone with his wife to check in on their son's first day back at school. The blast cost him his left eye and left fingers and lodged shrapnel in his skull. He lay in a coma for two weeks and is still undergoing surgeries to his face. He woke to learn of the killing of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in a barrage of Israeli strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs, a turning point for the group and its supporters. But Nasser al-Din did not shed a tear - until his son saw the state he was in. "The distress I felt was over how my son could accept that my condition was like this," he said. Elias Jrade, a Lebanese member of parliament and eye surgeon who conducted dozens of operations on those affected, said that some of the cases would have to receive lifelong treatment. "There were children and women who would ask, what happened to us? And you can't answer them," he told Reuters.

U.K. rolls out red carpet for Trump, and hopes to avoid red faces



GNS News Agency, March 11

U.S. President Donald Trump formally begins his unprecedented second state visit to Britain on Wednesday (September 17, 2025) with the royal pomp a grand veneer to key diplomatic talks, and as difficult questions about Jeffrey Epstein linger. King Charles and the royal family will roll out the red carpet for the president when he arrives at Windsor Castle, the oldest and largest inhabited castle in the world and family home to British monarchs for almost 1,000 years, with a carriage procession, gun salutes, a military flypast and lavish banquet. Britain says it will be the largest military ceremonial welcome for a state visit in living memory. Mr. Trump, an overt royal fan, has made little secret of his delight at being not just the first U.S. leader but the first elected politician to be invited by a British monarch for two visits. "I Love King Charles," he posed on his Truth Social account in February. U.K. hopes visit will cement "special relationship" Prime Minister Keir Starmer is hoping to use that sentiment to Britain's advantage as his government seeks to use the trip to cement the two nations' "special relationship", deepen economic ties, secure billions of dollars of investment, discuss tariffs, and press the U.S. president on Ukraine. There have already been major announcements from the likes of Google and agreements on nuclear energy. "Basically I'm there also on trade. They want to see if they can refine the trade deal a little bit. We made a deal, and it's a great deal. And I'm into helping them," Mr. Trump said when he left the White House for Britain on Tuesday. "They'd like to see if they could get a little bit better deal, so we'll talk to them." A spokesperson for Starmer has described the state visit as "a historic opportunity" coming "at a crucial time for global stability

and security". Trump to be dazzled by pageantry Wednesday will be dominated by ceremony. Mr. Trump and his wife Melania will first be greeted by the king's "very handsome" son Prince William - as the president has called him - and the heir's wife Kate. A man in a Union Jack suit takes a selfie outside Windsor Castle ahead of U.S. President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump's arrival, in Windsor, Britain, September 17, 2025. A man in a Union Jack suit takes a selfie outside Windsor Castle ahead of U.S. President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump's arrival, in Windsor, Britain, September 17, 2025. | Photo Credit: Reuters Charles and his wife Queen Camilla will then join the Trumps on a carriage procession through the grounds of the castle, with the route lined by 1,300 British service personnel. The royals will show the president and first lady historical items from the Royal Collection relating to the U.S., before the Trumps visit St George's Chapel, the final resting place of Queen Elizabeth who hosted Mr. Trump for his first state visit in 2019, where he will lay a wreath on her tomb. Later there will be a flypast by military aircraft before the state banquet where the king and president will deliver speeches. Security will be tight, with a massive police operation in place in Windsor while 1,600 officers will be deployed in London to deal with a protest by the "Stop the Trump Coalition". Mixed emotions for King Charles For Charles himself, the visit might provoke mixed emotions. He has little obviously in common with Mr. Trump, from his 50 years championing environmental causes, seeking to bring harmony between religions to his recent steadfast support for Canada where he is head of state. But the occasion will also afford him the greatest global attention since his coronation. "I don't think anyone could seriously make a case that President Trump and King Charles III are naturally aligned in their views on really anything at all. And yet expect the king to play a consummately professional role," said historian Anthony Seldon. "If it goes well... I think this will go down as the most consequential event in his reign." On Thursday, the action will move to Mr. Starmer's Chequers country residence where the focus will be on geopolitics. The prime minister will hope that the royal glow will continue to help avoid any focus on issues such as free speech in Britain, which has drawn criticism from those within the U.S. administration, or fallout from the sacking of Peter Mandelson as UK ambassador in Washington. Mr. Mandelson was fired over his ties

EU Commission proposes suspending free-trade arrangements on Israeli goods

GNS News Agency, March 11

BRUSSELS, The European Commission on Wednesday proposed suspending a trade arrangement affecting about 5.8 billion euros (\$6.87 billion) of Israeli exports due to the Gaza war, although the measure does not currently have enough support among EU nations to pass.

EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas also proposed a package of sanctions on two Israeli ministers, as well as "violent" Israeli settlers and 10 senior members of Palestinian militant group Hamas. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. The two ministers are far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, an EU official said. Israel's nearly two-year offensive in Gaza and the worsening humanitarian situation has increased political pressure on European leaders to take action. The European Union is Israel's biggest trading partner, with trade in goods between the two amounting to 42.6 billion euros last year, according to the EU. If the free-trade arrangement is suspended, Israel would face duties at the same level as other countries without a trade accord with

the bloc. In Israel's case, that would affect exports worth approximately 5.8 billion euros, resulting in an estimated 227 million euros a year in duties, a senior Commission official told Reuters. Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said on X that the European proposals are "morally and politically distorted, and it is to be hoped that they will not be adopted", by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen last week, would require the support of a qualified majority of EU governments - 15 out of 27 EU members representing 65% of the EU population. EU diplomats told Reuters that it is unlikely that the proposal would get the necessary support, with much depending on Germany, which has so far been reluctant to impose EU penalties on Israel. A German government spokesperson said on Wednesday it has not yet formed a final view on the EU proposals and Germany wants to keep the channels of communication with Israel open. Diplomats say the proposed measures against the Israeli ministers are also unlikely to pass as they require unanimous support from EU members. Kallas said that although public opinion has been shifting due to suffering in Gaza, she believes "the political lines are very much in the place where they have been so far".

A failed attempt of train sabotage by railway employees in Madras in 1964



On the night of October 24, 1964, Rajagopal, an Engine Line Reference (ELR) gangman was on routine patrol checking the permanent track near Karunguli in Chengalpattu, close to Madras (now Chennai). To his horror, near the Thandalam bridge – lying between Padalam and Karunguli railway stations – he found the fish-plates and key missing. It was 10 p.m. Three south-bound express trains had passed the bridge, fortunately without any mishap. The last of the express trains, the Tuticorin Express, was due any moment. Rajagopal placed the danger light at the spot, ran in the direction of the approaching train and placed three detonators on the track to serve as a warning to the crew.

Heroic act However, when he returned to the bridge, he was shocked to find the danger light missing. With a quick presence of mind, he ran to the nearby Thandalam village for help. He and a Scheduled Caste leader Thangavelu, took a torch-light and cycle-lamp and returned to the scene as fast as they could. The Tuticorin Express was fast approaching. Rajagopal asked Thangavelu to take the cycle lamp covered with red cloth and run ahead to stop the train, while he stood near the scene with the torch-light turned red. As the train neared the bridge, Thangavelu vigorously waved the red lamp. The crew brought the train to a screeching halt, saving the lives of hundreds of passengers on board. The Railway Police registered a case. Subsequently, the case was entrusted to the Crime Investigation Department (CID). The breakthrough

The scene of the crime, being a desolate place, provided virtually no clue on the perpetrators. Investigators began questioning railway employees who were directly in charge of the track. "A patient and persevering enquiry proceeded. A breakthrough came when one of the officers contacted a nearby tea-stall keeper at Padalam railway station where the railway labourers used to gather for light refresh-

ments. The suspicion turned towards one Velu, a gangman," writes S. Nagalingam, Superintendent of Police, Special Branch, CID, Madras in the October-December 1965 edition of The Madras Police Journal. Investigators learnt there was a strike by gangmen when the Permanent Way Inspector mandated those engaged in relaying sleepers to replace six everyday as done in other sections instead of the three per day. Later, the Permanent Way Inspector had refused to take for duty those who organised the strike. Angered by this, three persons Narayanasami, Natarajan and Ramasamy, along with Velu "conspired to wreck the Permanent Way to bring disrepute and discredit to the Permanent Way Inspector." Plan execution As plotted, Narayanasami and Natarajan removed a pair of fish-plates from Thandalam bridge with the help of spanners. Ramasamy removed the keys while Velu kept a watch over the track. On seeing the night watchman Rajagopal, they hid themselves. Thereafter, Narayanasami and Natarajan took away the red lamp placed by Rajagopal on the Karunguli side when he was proceeding in the opposite direction towards Padalam. Nearly a month after the sabotage attempt, the police arrested Velu, who revealed everything about the plot. Following this, the other three were also arrested. The spanner and hammer used to remove the fishplates were recovered from the houses of the three persons. Trial "Velu gave a straight forward story of the circumstances under which the conspiracy was hatched and how finally the offence was completed. The motive for the offence, though [apparently] flimsy, only went to prove that when personal hardships enter, the finer sentiments of humanitarian attitude are given a clean go-by. The evidence of Velu was largely corroborated by other material and circumstantial evidence and his evidence was in no way rebutted. Evidence of persons seeing the accused and Velu under suspicious circumstances prior to the occurrence was available from other independent sources as well. The accused persons could not bring forth any substantial material either to discredit the evidence of their accomplice or the other witnesses," Nagalingam recounted in the article. "After the preliminary inquiry by the Sub Magistrate, Conjeevaram (Kancheepuram), the case was tried in the Sessions Court at Chingleput (Chengalpattu)," says the article. As many as 36 witnesses were examined on behalf of the prosecution. The defence examined a witness. In the end, all the three accused were found guilty of the offence under section 120 (B) IPC and 126 (b) of the Railway Act of 1890 and were sentenced to suffer imprisonment for a term of three years each.

GST 2.0 — short-term pain, possible long-term gain

Goods and Services Tax (GST) was introduced in India with a view to promoting consumption and production efficiencies with a tax system that was destination-based. The objective was to ensure that the tax incidence fell on final consumers and taxes paid on inputs were rebated. The way GST evolved in the presence of a complex compensation mechanism continued to suffer from multiple tax rates, inverted duty structure and considerable compliance cost.

The new rate structure, which takes effect from September 22, 2025, implies significant rate reductions for some categories of goods. In the revised GST rate structure, 12% and 28% rates have been discontinued. The rates of 0%, 5% and 18% have been continued with changes in the goods and services covered under these rates. There is also a demerit rate of 40% for sin goods and luxury items. Some other lower special rates below 5% have also been continued. Major beneficiary sectors include textiles, consumer electronics, automobiles, health and most food items. These are employment-intensive sectors where the benefits of lower prices would be quite broad based. On the production side, sectors that would benefit include fertilizers, agricultural machinery and renewable energy, where farmers would gain benefits through lower input costs. Out of a total number of 546 goods where rate changes have been brought in, more than 80% have been subjected to rate reductions and 20% to rate increases. Rate reductions along with corresponding reduction in post-tax prices, in percentage terms, are given in the Table.

GST revenues (R) are determined as the tax rate (r) multiplied by the tax base (E), which is final consumption expenditure. Tax base is the product of pre-tax price (p) and quantity (q). Thus, $R = r \cdot E = r \cdot (p \cdot q)$. Rate changes will have two effects on revenues: one, through the tax rate change, and the other through the impact on tax base. As the tax rates are lowered, post-tax prices are expected to fall, leading to an increase in the quantity demanded. The percentage fall in post-tax price would be much less than the percentage fall in the tax rate. Calibrations indicate that for all feasible ranges of demand elasticity, revenues would fall. Where the tax rates have been brought down to nil, irrespective of the level of expenditure, revenues will be zero. There are only limited instances of increase in the tax rate. In cases where the tax rate has been increased from 28% to 40%, pertaining to demerit or luxury goods, most of this change implies only the merger of the compensation cess into the tax rate. This does not constitute a genuine increase in the tax rate. There are some instances where goods may have been moved from 12% to 18%. Overall, our assessment is that substantial revenue reduction is involved due to the multiplicative effect of the fall in the tax rate. Various estimates of net revenue loss are available which include the one given by the Ministry of Finance — at ₹48,000 crore for a full year. Other estimates provide higher figures. Income augmenting effect

To the extent that the government has to bear a substantive amount of foregone revenues on account of these GST reforms, this benefit would accrue to the tax-payer and his disposable incomes would go up. Much of the benefit would accrue to consumers of goods in the 5% rate category, that are necessities. Elasticity of demand for this group of goods is low. As a result of an increase in disposable income, consumers would increase, relatively more, their demand for goods in the higher rate categories of 18% and 40% that are in the nature of comforts and luxuries. These effects would be revenue augmenting. However, the revenue loss would be immediate and revenue gains would emerge over time.

The GST impact on growth arises from avoiding cascading and promoting better resource allocation. The new rate categories do not fully avoid cascading. For all goods and services which are being placed under the exempt category, no input tax credit would be available and the taxes paid on inputs would be loaded onto the price. Where goods are zero rated or even in the 5% category, many inputs may



be taxed at 18%; although input tax credit may be admissible, there may be considerable bottlenecks in claiming input tax credit (ITC). In this context, it is also important to note that the classification of goods under the various rate slabs should be determined by the nature of commodities and not by demand weakness at a certain point in time. Macro implications There may be some pressure on the Government of India's budgeted fiscal deficit for 2025-26. In Q1, the nominal GDP growth, at 8.8%, was well below the budgeted GDP growth assumption of 10.1%. With the Consumer Price Index and the Wholesale Price Index both remaining low, the expectation is that unless liquidity is increased in the system, nominal GDP growth may turn out to be well below the budgeted level of 10.1%. In the first four months of 2025-26, the direct taxes have contracted by (-)4.3% as compared to 33.6% growth in the corresponding period of the previous year. At the time the Budget was presented, a revenue foregone figure of ₹1 lakh crore was estimated, arising mainly from personal income-tax reforms. With substantial revenue reduction also anticipated in the GST revenues, the realised gross tax revenues may fall well short of Budget projections. To some extent, the Reserve Bank of India's higher dividends may help.

It is important to see how the government responds to the expected revenue shortfall in 2025-26. The option is to either reduce expenditure or to increase fiscal deficit. States may have to resort to higher borrowing or cut expenditures in view of the revenue losses that they may suffer. Both these options will have an adverse impact on real growth. Monetary initiatives through repo rate reductions or liquidity expansions may result in higher inflation, opening up the possibility of monetising some fiscal deficit. Clearly, there are limits to which this option can be exercised. Any strategy to support growth through demand stimulation spurred by tax rate reductions can be done only on a few occasions. More generally, growth will be driven by saving and investment rates. In fact, the potential growth rate would depend on the investment rate and the incremental capital output ratio.

Los Angeles: The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has confirmed the detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in a dairy cattle herd in Nebraska. In a statement on Monday, the USDA said the confirmed strain is H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b, genotype B3.13. The case was detected through state-led tracing and investigation following an initial finding from pre-movement surveillance milk samples, which are required under a federal order issued by the USDA in April 2024. This is the first known case of HPAI in cattle in Nebraska. Since the outbreak began in March 2024, dairy cattle infections have been reported in 17 states, though the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) noted that cases this year have re-

Amid rising obesity, children's exposure to ultra-processed foods increases



A recent UNICEF report, 'Feeding Profit: How Food Environments Are Failing Children', estimates that one in five children and adolescents between 5 and 19 years are 'living with overweight'. It highlights that children and adolescents are increasingly being exposed to "unhealthy food environments" through advertisements and food service facilities, and even lack adequate legal protections against such environments. The below chart shows the number (in million) of children and adolescents living with overweight by age group

Children between 5 and 9 years and 10 to 14 years make up the highest shares of children who are 'living with overweight.' The below chart shows the percentage of chil-

dren and adolescents with overweight, by age group, globally (in %) The report explores how the retail environment shapes what foods children are exposed to. UNICEF found a rise in the density of 'chain' outlets, which include convenience stores, supermarkets and hypermarkets with more than 10 outlets. The below chart shows the trends of chain and non-chain outlets over time by income classifications of countries. According to the report, chain outlets influence food access and diets by facilitating the widespread availability and promotion of unhealthy foods and beverages. But children's exposure to these foods does not stem from chain outlets alone. UNICEF's U-Report poll in 2023, which explored both the availability and marketing of foods in secondary schools across eight South Asian countries, showed that unhealthy foods and beverages were more commonly available in schools than fresh fruits or vegetables. The below charts show types of foods and beverages available in South Asia in 2023 (in %).

The report emphasised that mandatory national legal measures and policies are vital to creating healthy food environments. Data show that only 18% of the 202 countries analysed had mandatory nutrition standards for school meals, and only 19% have national taxes for both unhealthy foods and sugar-sweetened beverages. The below chart shows the share of countries with mandatory measures to protect children from unhealthy food environments.

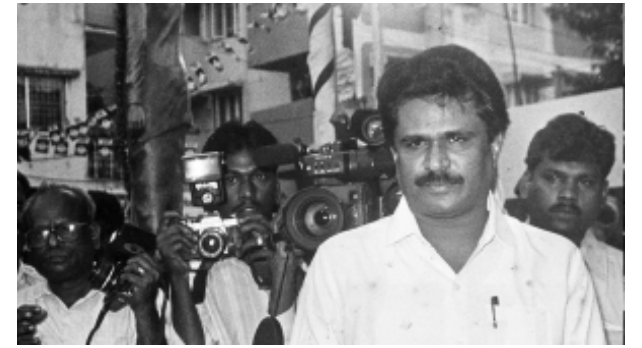
The anti-climax of Pudukottai Lok Sabha bye-election in 1995

Usually, April-May would be scorching in Tamil Nadu and the period of 'khatiri' or 'agni nakshatram' (meaning the spell of peak summer) would begin on May 4. But, in 1995, an uncommon sight unfolded in Chennai and many other parts of Tamil Nadu, as the State was experiencing the impact of a deep depression over the Bay of Bengal. Yet, the political temperature of the State was on the rise. The reason was that the Election Commission, on April 26, announced that Pudukottai and eight other Lok Sabha constituencies in India would face bye-election on May 27. Vacancy for Pudukottai arose in the wake of the death of the Congress' three-time parliamentarian N. Sundararaj in September 1994.

At that time, the mood of the people was gradually turning against the ruling All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) and Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, who, in March 1993, broke her party's ties with the Congress, which was ruling at the Centre. Even though there was no apparent unity among all the Opposition parties, some of them saw an opportunity in the scheduled bypoll for bringing all the anti-AIADMK forces together. In 1994, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) suffered a split with the formation of the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) led by Vaiko. The Communist Party of India (Marxist), which was an ally of the DMK in the 1991 Lok Sabha and Assembly polls, was inching closer to Mr. Vaiko. It was against this backdrop that Su. Thirunavukkarasar (then called Thirunavukkarasu, who ran an independent party, MGR ADMK) wanted a common candidate of the Opposition to be nominated, and sought an opportunity to be given to his party at a meeting held by the DMK's chief M. Karunanidhi with friendly parties. The Hindu reported on April 27, 1995. But, based on a consensus arrived at the meeting, it was decided that the DMK would contest the bye-election. At the same time, former TNCC(I) president Vazhapadi K. Ramamurthy, who was briefly a Union Minister of State for Labour in 1991 during the Congress government led by P.V. Narasimha Rao, and leaders of other fraternal parties had constituted a six-member committee for the purpose of eliciting the views of Opposition parties on the scope for a consensus candidate for contesting the bypoll. Former Assembly Speaker and Minister in the Cabinets of Karunanidhi and M.G. Ramachandran, K. Rajaram, was the convenor of the panel, which had eventually zeroed in on Mr. Thirunavukkarasar.

In the meantime, the ruling AIADMK had announced the MGR Youth Wing's Pudukottai district secretary R. Raja Paramasivam, as its nominee; DMK named its Pudukottai district secretary and former MLA A. Perianan; and the MDMK announced former Minister K. Chandrasekaran as its candidate. Even as the situation was evolving, the then chief of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) Kumari Anandan, in the company of Rajaram, Mr. Thirunavukkarasar, and the Leader of the Congress Legislature Party-Leader of Opposition S.R. Balasubramanian, announced, on the eve of the final date for filing of nominations, the name of Mr. Thirunavukkarasar as the "common candidate." This was done on the night of May 2 after "prolonged parleys among leaders of the Congress(I), the MGR ADMK, the UCPI [United Communist Party of India], the Indian National League, the Thayaga Marumalarchi Kazhagam, the Christian Democratic Front and the Tamil Nadu Muslim League, said a report of The Hindu on May 3. TNCC(I) president Kumari Anandan announcing S. Thirunavukkarasu (right) as the common candidate of Congress(I) fraternal parties for the Pudukottai bye-election, as S.R. Balasubramanian, Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, looks on.

TNCC(I) president Kumari Anandan announcing S. Thirunavukkarasu (right) as the common candidate of Congress(I) fraternal parties for the Pudukottai bye-election, as S.R. Balasubramanian, Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, looks on. Making it clear that the agreement for a common candidate was arrived at in response to an appeal made by Rajaram and other senior political personalities for putting up a joint fight against the ruling party, the



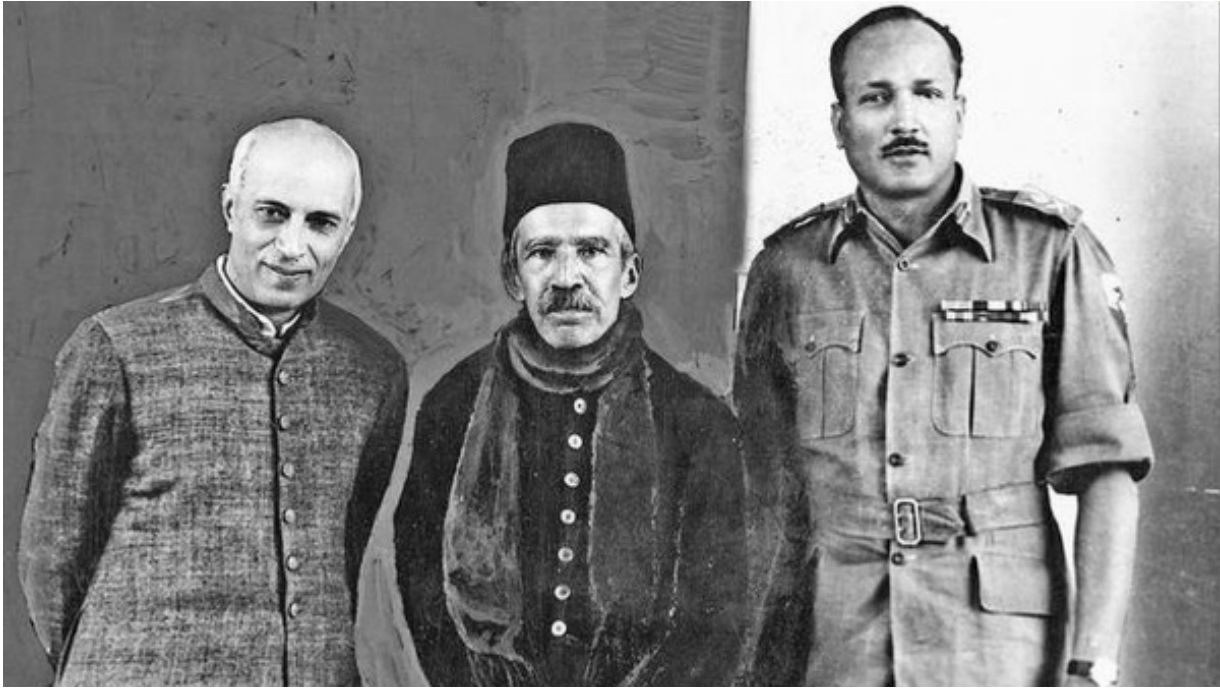
TNCC chief appealed to all political parties opposing the "anti-democratic attitude of the AIADMK" to extend support to Mr. Thirunavukkarasar "in the larger interest of the State." But, there was a serious hitch to the idea of supporting the candidate sponsored by the Congress, as the two Communist parties and the Janata Dal (JD) were critics of the national party at the all-India level. Consequently, Rajaram issued a statement, asserting that it was wrong to say he was sponsored as a common candidate by the Congress and its fraternal parties. After a meeting presided over by Anandan at the Satyamurti Bhavan, the headquarters of the national party, in which the panel members and leaders of other fraternal parties took part, a resolution was adopted, describing the meeting as an all-party meeting. At no place TNCC(I) was mentioned in the text of the motion as the sponsor of the meeting, the veteran leader clarified. At one stage, it was stated that the main reason for the Congress to come forward to support the "consensus candidate" was to eliminate the perception that the party was still soft towards Jayalalithaa even after the latter had snapped ties. No support from Karunanidhi Karunanidhi had a reason not to support Mr. Thirunavukkarasar as the common candidate. A news item of The Hindu on May 4 that year quoted him as having said that in the absence of a consensus for nominating a common candidate, he had no other option than fielding his party's nominee. He told the six-member committee that the DMK was ready to fall in line if the chosen nominee was a non-party candidate or one supported by all the Opposition parties. The suggestion was accepted by the committee but there was no favourable response from the committee subsequently. The DMK chief had also pointed out that leaders of the Communist Party of India (CPI) and JD, when contacted, expressed their inability to support Mr. Thirunavukkarasar sponsored by the Congress as a common candidate. The former TNCC chief Ramamurthy, who had originally mooted the idea of putting up a joint fight against the AIADMK, had felt that Anandan did not handle the matter properly. All the major candidates had filed their nomination papers but what eventually happened was anti-climatic. The day before the date of withdrawal of nomination papers, the Election Commission (on the night of May 5) cancelled the proposed bye-elections to Pudukottai and eight other Lok Sabha constituencies. The reason cited by the panel was a communication from the then Union Home Secretary, K. Padmanabhaiah, expressing the desire of the Centre for conduct of the next general elections in February 1996. The communication had argued that bye-elections to Lok Sabha at this juncture "would not serve any useful purpose," this newspaper reported on May 6, 1995. "The decision of the Commission heeding the request of the Union Home Secretary is indeed strange as it had turned down only last week the request made by all the major national political parties last fortnight for cancellation of the bye-elections on the same grounds," the daily added. Thirunavukkarasar with M. Karunanidhi on his 90th birthday celebrations at DMK headquarters in Chennai on June 2013 The Pudukottai episode, according to Mr. Thirunavukkarasar, had caused a considerable gap between him and the DMK leader, who did not call him subsequently for alliance talks in the run-up to the 1996 Assembly election. This was why he, in the words of Mr. Thirunavukkarasar, had to return to the AIADMK then. However, three years later, Karunanidhi and the MGR ADMK chief patched up and the latter went on to become an MP of Pudukottai.

US confirms highly pathogenic avian flu in Nebraska dairy herd

Los Angeles: The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has confirmed the detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in a dairy cattle herd in Nebraska. In a statement on Monday, the USDA said the confirmed strain is H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b, genotype B3.13. The case was detected through state-led tracing and investigation following an initial finding from pre-movement surveillance milk samples, which are required under a federal order issued by the USDA in April 2024. This is the first known case of HPAI in cattle in Nebraska. Since the outbreak began in March 2024, dairy cattle infections have been reported in 17 states, though the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) noted that cases this year have re-

mained confined to a small number of states. APHIS said it is working closely with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture to conduct further on-farm investigation, testing, and epidemiological analysis to understand the detection and prevent further spread. The agency also urged all dairy farms to strengthen biosecurity measures, particularly as the fall migratory bird season approaches. The USDA stressed there is no risk to consumer health or the safety of the commercial milk supply. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) confirmed that pasteurisation effectively inactivates H5N1, ensuring pasteurised milk products remain safe. The US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said that H5N1 viruses circulating in birds and US dairy cattle are believed to pose a low risk to the general public. However, it warned that individuals with occupational or recreational exposure to infected birds or mammals are at higher risk and should take appropriate precautions. HPAI is a highly contagious transboundary disease with zoonotic potential, affecting both animals and humans. It causes variable clinical signs and high mortality rates in wild and domestic bird populations. Current H5 outbreaks have severely impacted countries worldwide, leading to losses of rare wild bird species, livelihood losses, egg shortages, and economic strain on poultry-related businesses due to culling and movement restrictions.

When India sent a ₹6 crore bill for the annexation of Hyderabad



The road into Hyderabad forks just outside Chandanagar, where a gleaming flyover now carries impatient motorists toward Miyapur. Traffic slows, then surges, as cars and scooters climb onto the bridge and speed into the city. Few among today's motorists would guess that this exact spot once witnessed the dramatic finale of a princely State. On a hot September afternoon in 1948, a line of Indian Army tanks and jeeps halted here. A jeep bearing the Divisional Commander's pennant rolled ahead. From the opposite direction came a Buick staff car, stopping within 30 yards of the column. The war, if it could be called that, was over. At 4.30 p.m. on September 18, Commander of the Hyderabad State Army Major General Syed Ahmed El Edroos surrendered unconditionally to Major General J. N. Chowdhury, leading India's forces.

The two men, once acquaintances when Gen. Chowdhury was posted in Secunderabad, then drove together to the cantonment. At the Secunderabad Club today, portraits of both generals still gaze down from the Colonnade Bar, reminders of the quiet dignity with which the Asaf Jahi dynasty's 224-year reign ended. Like the fractured narratives of Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon*, the story of Hyderabad's annexation appears different depending on who tells it. Some remember betrayal, others liberation, still others the ruthless pragmatism of power. Yet beneath the political speeches, diplomatic manoeuvres, and rhetoric lies the stark military reality — the Indian Army's 'police action' was brief because it had been meticulously set in motion for over six months. The one-year Standstill Agreement was signed on November 29, 1947 but India moved its armed columns within four months in March 1948. Confidential files preserved in the National Archives reveal that Operation Polo was not a sudden thrust but the climax of a patient buildup. The first unit to reach Hyderabad's 644-kilometre border on March 1, 1948 was the 740 Goods and Personnel Transport Company. Other units soon followed, pouring in from far-flung corners of India — Miransahib, Nawanshahr, Kirkee, Ambala, Kathua, even Srinagar. Hyderabad's Prime Minister Mir Laik Ali dismissed such a mobilisation as impossible. India, he reasoned, was too distracted by war in Kashmir and by the chaos of Partition to spare such resources. He was wrong. So too was General Roy Bucher, the British officer serving as Independent India's first Commander-in-Chief. On March 15, 1948, Gen. Bucher had advised caution. "The launching now of a comparatively large-scale and long-range offensive into Hyderabad State, on the lines of Operation Polo, in addition to all existing commitments, will constitute an over-burden, and will be strategically imprudent, to say the least of it."

But Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his government pressed ahead. On March 31, 1948, the 1 Bihar Regiment reached the Hyderabad border. On May 5, the 9 Dogra Regiment joined. By May 20, the 2 Sikh Light Infantry, re-deployed from embattled Srinagar, were also in position. The massed troops numbered 28,017 by August 1, 1948. Defence Ministry and Finance Ministry records show the care with which each troop movement was documented. While the Air Force was deployed, strict instructions forbade targeting civilian airports, including Begumpet. India wanted a swift victory, but not at the cost of civilian casualties.

Razakars menace Earlier, events within Hyderabad provided India with ample justification for action. The Razakars, a paramilitary force loyal to the Nizam and his Majlis-e-Itehadul Muslimeen supporters, had spread terror across the Dominion. Their raids and reprisals struck not only rural opponents but also urban residents of Secunderabad and Hyderabad. One chilling account survives in Defence Ministry records. J. Iyyuloo, a waiter at the upscale Percy's Hotel in Secunderabad, lived with his family in Nallagutta near fashionable James Street. On May 8, 1947, his three sons volunteered at a public meeting addressed by a leader advocating Hyderabad's accession to India. Enraged, a mob of 75 Razakars stormed Iyyuloo's house. They demolished it, looted valuables worth ₹4,000, beat his brother-in-law Anjaiah to death, and grievously injured several other relatives, including his daughter. Such stories underscored the breakdown of civil order and the brutality of the Razakar campaign. By mid-June 1948, India's patience had worn thin. 'Operation Kabaddi' was quietly set in motion, station-

ing elements of 1 Armoured Division along the Ahmednagar-Tungbhadra line. This was also against General Roy Bucher's May 1948 appreciation that specifically warned: "The move of HQ 1 Armoured Division and 1 Armoured Brigade to the south will weaken considerably our strategic reserves in the event of a deterioration of the situation between India and Pakistan." Operation Kabaddi soon changed to Operation Polo and which was again changed to 'Operation Caterpillar' due to security reasons. Balancing strategy and morality For India's leaders, the decision to act carried both strategic and moral weight. Defence Minister Baldev Singh made the government's position explicit in a speech at the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun on September 11, 1948: "It was not the intention of the Government of India to wipe out the State. If, however, the State was wiped out, the Nizam's Government would be responsible for it. What they wanted was a responsible Government in the State, the same way as in other States. All people in Hyderabad should have equal rights." Counting the costs Hyderabad surrendered on September 18, 1948. On September 23, just five days after Maj. Gen. El Edroos laid down arms, the Defence Ministry issued instructions to track extra expenditure linked to Operation Polo.

By March 1949, meticulous tallies were complete. The Defence and Finance ministries together calculated that the "expenditure incurred by the Defence Services in connection with Hyderabad police action" was ₹598.76 lakh. This included ₹23 lakh spent on the Air Force, Nepalese contingents ₹34 lakh, and Provincial Defence Battalions. The total, roughly ₹6 crore, covered deployments from May 21 to September 18, 1948. In the five days of fighting, 42 Indian soldiers were killed, including one officer. Twenty-four others were reported missing. Officials in Delhi argued that Hyderabad, not the Union budget, should bear the cost. The Defence Secretary justified this approach clearly: "In so far as the Hyderabad action is concerned, it seems to me justifiable to charge expenditure on some of the Defence Battalions which had to be raised and also expenditure which we had to incur on the loan of the Nepalese Battalions." As this debate was going on the Hyderabad government paid ₹3 crore as per a secret letter dated December 13, 1949. The Military governor of Hyderabad had earlier asked for more time as there was a shortage of Indian Government currency in Hyderabad. A war that was over before it began. When the final order to advance was given in September 1948, the outcome was never in doubt. The Indian Army's months-long preparation had assembled an overwhelming force. Hyderabad's forces, poorly trained and politically riven, could not mount a serious resistance. Within 108 hours, the Nizam's Army surrendered. The cost to Hyderabad was more than the ₹6 crore bill it received. The Asaf Jahi dynasty, which had ruled since 1724, lost its sovereignty. For the rest of the money, the Indian government gave the option of it to be paid in installments. "As you will see, it was agreed that the Hyderabad Government would pay ₹1 crore in 1948-49 and I understand it was later agreed that another ₹1 crore would be paid in 1949-50. The exact figure is ₹599 lakh. This, however, does not include any portion of the maintenance cost of the forces remaining in Hyderabad after 18th of January 1949," wrote B.B. Ghosh, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Defence in a secret missive to M.K. Vellodi, who would go on to head the first civilian government of Hyderabad. Then there is a finesse to the demands being made by India. While one set of officers wanted the whole expense of stationing soldiers and movement of troops to be recovered, another group of officers did not want such a course of action. "After the termination of the actual action, i.e. 18th September 1948, only the cost of units in Hyderabad should be taken into consideration for purposes of recovery... Personally I thought this refinement was unnecessary, but Brigadier Maneckshaw and Mr. Ghosh said that there was no justification for charging the cost of troops outside Hyderabad State after 18.9.49," wrote K.S. Sundara Rajan, Deputy Financial Advisor in the Ministry of Finance. Legacy of Operation Polo The annexation of Hyderabad is often remembered for the drama of its military sweep, the political theater of the Nizam's appeals to the United Nations, or the communal violence that scarred its aftermath.

The sitar is silent in the play Enchantment, which traces Pt. Ravi Shankar's journey

It was the story of an artiste who strode the world of music like a colossus. His creativity and musical acumen shaped the imagination of an entire generation and continues to inspire young musicians. Credited with placing the sitar on the global map, Pt. Ravi Shankar's journey was traced in the play *Enchantment*, staged recently at the Museum Theatre. Written and directed by Gowri Ramnarayan and presented by JustUs Repertory, the production was a fundraiser for REACH, a non-profit organisation dedicated to tuberculosis care and prevention.

Encapsulating the many facets of a phenomenal artiste — whose persona and music continue to resonate in public memory — within the framework of a short play is no easy feat. Gowri chose a linear narrative mode to highlight the defining moments of Pt Ravi Shankar's life. "Artists are here to enact his life story, not recreate his persona," said Gowri Ramnarayan at the outset, addressing any misgivings about the play's approach. Clad in a kurta-pyjama and jacket, Yohan Chacko portrayed the sitar maestro, while Aarabi Veerarghavan took on the role of the sutradhaa.

Enchantment began with Ravi's childhood days in Benaras, then his travel to Paris, his stint with elder brother and celebrated dancer Uday Shankar's company, where he explored and developed his musical skills, alongside dancing and acting in productions, Ravi's intense training in gurukul parampara under the legendary musician Allaadin Khan at Maihar, his marriage to the guru's daughter Annapurna Devi and their troubled relationship. It also touched upon his love for dancer Kamala Shastri and his eventual marriage to Sukanya. All these formed a significant part of the narrative. Towards the end, *Enchantment* spoke about his phenomenal success in the West (apparently, he was uncomfortable with the label of 'world musician'), playing at the Woodstock Festival and collaborating with the likes of George Harrison of the Beatles and violin virtuoso Yehudi Menuhin, his rivalry with Vilayat Khan and his composing music for the film, *Anuradha*. All these aspects unfolded mostly through conversations between the protagonist and the sutradhaa. The narrative was interspersed with projected images, dance sequences and rendition of songs.

Yohan Chacko, was impressive in his portrayal, adding strength to the dramatisation of the artiste's journey. How-



ever, what irked many in the audience was the disproportionate focus on Ravi Shankar's personal relationships. Even if this was a deliberate choice, the portrayal lacked emotional depth. It raises the question: how much creative liberty can a writer or director take in a biographical play? Moreover, some of the lines used to convey this side of Pt. Ravi Shankar could have been subtle and dignified. The humour, at times, felt caricatured. The depiction of the imitable guru Allaadin Khan, too, left much to be desired — particularly in a brief sequence when Aarabi played the Ustad by just wearing a shawl over her top. Another sore point in *Enchantment* was its portrayal of Annapurna Devi. It largely focused on her personal traits such as being insecure and jealous of the women in her husband's life and tyrannical towards son Shubhendra. At the time, Annapurna was the only woman surbahar player and was regarded as a musician of equal, if not greater, calibre than Pt. Ravi Shankar. But these aspects were overlooked. From Ganga arathi in Benaras and Balasaraswati's 'Krishna nee begane' to Pt. Ravi Shankar's iconic song from the film *Anuradha*, the dance sequences by Bharatanatyam artistes Renjith and Vajna ran parallel to the narrative rather than being a part of it. The musical score relied more on well-known vocalist Bombay Jayashri Ramnath's singing. The sound of the sitar, the real protagonist of the evening, was hardly heard. Besides Vidhya Subramaniam in a cameo role, Renjith and Vajna's students were part of the play. The recorded music also featured singers Aditya Prakash, Chaitra Sairam and Vignesh Ishwar.

'Judicial experimentalism' versus the right to justice



The Supreme Court of India, in Shivangi Bansal vs Sahib Bansal (July 22, 2025), endorsed the guidelines by the Allahabad High Court, in Mukesh Bansal vs State of U.P. (2022), to prevent the misuse of Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (now Section 85 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita). The High Court had introduced a two-month 'cooling period' for any coercive action after the registration of a first information report (FIR) or complaint to the magistrate. During the 'cooling period', the matter will be referred to a Family Welfare Committee (FWC). However, both the introduction of the 'cooling period' and the referral of the matter to the FWC undermine a victim's right to prompt access to justice and affects the functional autonomy of the criminal justice agencies. The basis of the checks

The enactment of Section 498A was with the objective of punishing various forms of cruelty against women in a matrimonial setting. Be that as it may, the courts, in a series of cases, have lamented the increasing tendency by women to misuse the law when it concerns FIR registrations and subsequent arrests. Courts have accordingly established procedural safeguards to protect the 'innocent' husband and his family. The Supreme Court of India, in Lalita Kumari, has put cases arising out of matrimonial disputes in the category of 'preliminary inquiry' before the registration of the FIR. The recent criminal law reforms also place cases of cruelty by husband in the domain of 'preliminary enquiry' before registration of the FIR.

In addition to these checks to prevent the registration of an FIR in false or frivolous complaints, the courts have also addressed another area for potential abuse in case of Section 498A — rampant arrests of husbands and their family members. The power of arrest was rationalised at two levels. First, by bringing a statutory change to the Code of Criminal Procedure in 2008, and the second, by judicial dictum in Armesh Kumar (2014). The 2008 amendment introduced the 'principle of necessity' in the matter of arrest. In Armesh Kumar, the Supreme Court effectively plugged the unbridled exercise of arrest powers by the police in cases that saw the use of Section 498A cases, by introducing a

checklist and enforcing 'notice for appearance'. In Satender Kumar Antil (2022), the Court further strengthened these institutional checks by directing the release of a person on bail if arrested in non-compliance of the directions in Armesh Kumar.

The National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) report, 'Crimes in India', suggests that Section 498A has remained among top five 'highest arrest' offences till 2016. Thereafter, it was within the top 10, which suggests that the steps taken at statutory and institutional levels have had an impact. Although the registered offences under this provision rose from 1,13,403 in 2015 to 1,40,019 in 2022, arrests declined from 1,87,067 to 1,45,095, as in NCRB data during the same period. This was suggestive of safeguarding the liberty of the accused without making compromises with a victim's right to her access to justice. The proposal to introduce a quasi-judicial committee, alongside a restriction on arrests during a designated cooling period, might prove to be an ambitious step on paper. It may be attributable to the absence of a statutory authority to implement these directives as well as the undefined scope of their jurisdictional applicability. The recent ruling undermines a victim's pursuit of justice by denying her the opportunity to have her complaint addressed in a timely manner. Despite filing an FIR/complaint, no action can be taken until the "cooling period" concludes, thereby exacerbating the victim's plight even after lodging the complaint. The idea of introducing a 'cooling period' and referring the complaint to the FWC falls outside the ambit of the statutory and institutional framework. This reminds us of another instance of judicial experimentalism. In 2017, the Supreme Court, in Rajesh Sharma, gave similar directions for constituting FWCs and the forwarding of complaints to such FWCs. The one-month period provided to FWCs, in Rajesh Sharma, is akin to the 'cooling period' devised by the Allahabad High Court. We should not forget that the directions in Rajesh Sharma were not welcomed by the society at large. These were termed 'regressive' and beyond 'judicial competence'. This resulted in the rollback of the directions by the Supreme Court within a year. A three-judge Bench, in Social Action Forum for Manav Adhikar (2018), overturned the directions in Rajesh Sharma and restored the victim's right to prompt access to justice and the supremacy of the criminal justice functionaries in the reporting of crimes and the dispensation of justice. Revisit the ruling it becomes crucial for the Supreme Court to revisit its ruling as the apprehension surrounding the misuse of the law by the victim and the abuse of power by the police has been addressed through legislative and judicial measures. The act of forwarding complaints to FWCs is beyond legislative intent, against the functional autonomy of the criminal justice agencies and, most importantly, dents the victim's pursuit of justice.

Supreme Court finds 2025 Waqf law paved with good intentions but pockmarked with arbitrariness

The proviso embodied arbitrariness by denuding a Waqf property of its status the moment someone alleges it to be an encroachment on a government property. The proviso is silent on whether prior notice or an opportunity for hearing would be granted to the manager of the Waqf or Mutawalli before the freeze is imposed on the property. Secondly, once the Waqf is frozen, a designated officer of the government would be assigned to conduct an inquiry into whether the property concerned was government or not — "provided that such property shall not be treated as Waqf property till the designated officer submits his report". The amended statute does not contain any timelines or fix a reasonable period for the probe. The officer could drag it on endlessly, leaving the Waqf, which may consist of schools, hospitals and charitable institutions, "high and dry", maybe for years together. Again, Section 3C(3) of the Amended Waqf Act empowers the designated government officer, ranked above District Collector, to determine the title of the property, which is strictly a function

of a competent court or tribunal with room for appeal to the higher courts. The statute is again mum on whether the aggrieved Waqf management or its representative would be given a fair opportunity to be heard during the inquiry. To make matters worse, the proviso allows the officer to change the revenue records, thus altering the status of a Waqf property into a government asset, paving the way for fair accomplishment if the Waqf management takes the litigation route in future. Moreover, Section 3C(4) clothed the State Government, after the officer submits the inquiry report determining the property as a government one, with power to instruct the State Waqf Board to delete the property from their records. The Court found the proviso "totally unconstitutional" and prima facie arbitrary. Chief Justice of India (CJI) B.R. Gavai, who wrote the judgment, termed the entire process of depriving Waqfs of their status and valuable properties "unilateral". The judgment said the process, with no means for a judicial application of mind, amounted to an encroachment into the Courts' domain and a violation of the doctrine

of separation of powers, which is part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution. Staying the implementation of the proviso of Section 3C(2) and its sub-sections (3) and (4), the judgment held that the status of the Waqf property would remain intact till the dispute is finally decided by a Waqf Tribunal in proceedings, subject to further orders of the State High Court. The management would neither be dispossessed of the Waqf property nor any changes made in the revenue of Waqf Board records. On the other hand, the Mutawalli was also barred by the Court from alienating the property any time between the commencement of the inquiry and the final decision by the Tribunal. This balances the right. The public, after all, cannot fall prey or suffer loss if the Waqf property was indeed proved to be an encroachment on public land. Similarly, the Court has reinforced the Minority community's right to religious observances in a Waqf property even if it is declared a 'protected monument'. The judgment has also confirmed the intention of the Amendment Act to protect the rights of tribal communities from

encroachment into or alienation of their protected lands. The Court has also, in a way, found a way to revive Section 104, which was introduced through a 2013 amendment in the Waqf Act of 1995. The provision allowed non-Muslims to donate their property to create or support Waqfs, including mosques, idgahs, imambaras, dargahs, khangahs or maqbaras and even Muslim graveyards. The judgment found a way around the deletion of Section 104, by allowing non-Muslims to create or support trusts for the very same purposes listed in the provision. The judgment is in tune with the Supreme Court's landmark judgment authored by Justice P.S. Narasimha in Kolkata Municipal Corporation versus Bimal Kumar Shah, which described the right to property as a "net of intersecting rights". While noting that the 44th Constitutional Amendment of 1978 saw the right to property drift from being a fundamental right to a legal right under Article 300A, it was still a "human right" which has to be protected against the state's "arbitrary acquisitions, hasty decision-making and unfair redressal mechanisms."

Portable ion chromatograph brings real-world practice to classrooms



Ion chromatography, or the process of separating ions from a sample by passing it through a long column, is usually carried out in a laboratory using expensive, sophisticated equipment. Now, scientists at the University of Tasmania in Australia have devised a simpler way to perform the technique out in the field — one that could benefit science classrooms, too. Working with second-year undergraduate students, the scientists helped them analyse soil pore water, or water in between soil particles, immediately after collecting it using a portable ion chromatograph called Aquamonitrix. The students used it to separate and analyse concentrations of nitrate and nitrite ions in the sample as both these ions are known to be harmful for the environment in high concentrations. Then they took the samples back to the lab and analysed them using a conventional chromatograph. Based on their findings, published in *Journal of Chemical Education*, the portable chromatograph produced results comparable to that of a conventional device in the lab. Chemistry out of the lab

"One of the things we're always interested in is taking our chemistry out of the laboratory [and] into the field," said Brett Paull, a professor of chemistry at the University of Tasmania and the senior author of the study. "So that the students don't only learn that analytical chemistry is something you do in the lab, but it's something that you can do anywhere." The 2023 ACS Guidelines for Undergraduate Chemistry Programmes says "hands-on" experience in separations and chromatography should be incorporated into the undergraduate chemistry lab coursework. While performing ion chromatography using lab equipment does help students get experience with handling experiments, it still doesn't equip them to apply their analytical skills in a real-world scenario. Paull and his team collaborated with Aquamonitrix, the company that manufactures the portable ion chromatograph of the same name, to help young undergraduate students analyse samples in the field. "Portable instruments give us the opportunity to go out into the field and do actual measurements there," said Dr. Paull. Simplicity to its benefit. The students first obtained the soil pore water by extracting it from the soil using a portable vacuum pump. Then they filtered the water on-site and directly injected it into the chromatograph. Aquamonitrix works as a simple, low-pressure ion chromatograph that can separate anions along a relatively short column. The solution used to carry the

sample into the chromatograph and facilitate the exchange of anions with the column contains only sodium chloride, thus keeping the process environmentally friendly. To specifically detect nitrate and nitrite ions among all the anions, the device contains a low-cost absorbance detector that uses UV light. Because both these anions absorb UV light, the students were able to see two peaks in the chromatogram corresponding to the presence of the two anions. "Nitrite and nitrate absorb quite reasonably in that low UV region, and we don't get any interference from any other anions," Dr. Paull explained. "So [its] simplicity is to its benefit, because we don't get a big messy chromatogram with all the other material."

A simpler specialist. When the students brought the sample back to the lab and measured nitrate and nitrite levels using a conventional, commercial ion chromatograph, they found the numbers produced by the portable device were similar. This suggested the portable method provided accurate results — and for less money and time. The lab-based ion chromatograph is "much more complicated, much more expensive and advanced," Dr. Paull said, and works using longer columns and high-pressure pumps. It may also detect many other anions and produce a more complex chromatogram. "We don't want to do everything," he added. "It's not possible to take a \$100,000 laboratory instrument and just take it out to the greenhouse and use it. What we do is develop a \$10,000 instrument which actually can do one or two things very well, can be run by a battery, and can be used by a student who's not highly trained or highly skilled. We're not trying to replicate the lab in the field; we're trying to develop low cost, versatile instruments that can be taken into the field." The scientists have also worked on another similar instrument that they say can measure ammonia levels in the field. "So, nitrite, nitrate, and ammonia and then, [eventually] you can look at the complete nitrogen cycle in, say, water treatment plants or in soil chemistry," Dr. Paull said. The team is also working on a similar instrument to detect arsenic in contaminated soils and agricultural areas. The presence of this toxic element in the soil is a major concern in countries like India and Bangladesh, where groundwater extraction is high. "By allowing students to perform both field and laboratory analyses, [the portable device] provides a comprehensive learning experience that combines theoretical concepts with practical applications," Vipul Gupta, a lecturer in chemistry at Deakin University in Victoria, Australia, said. "The hands-on nature of the experiment, coupled with the opportunity to address real-world environmental challenges, fosters curiosity and interest in analytical chemistry." Dr. Gupta expressed belief the exercise can be extended to a more long-term continuous monitoring on the field as well. "Moreover, I believe the use of such portable systems would encourage students in future to develop their own innovative analytical chemistry projects," he added. "I think getting students enthusiastic about analytical chemistry [is] hard if they're always enclosed within the lab," said Dr. Paull. "If you actually take them outside of the lab and show them you can actually do analytical measurements in that real world situation, outside in the environment, it makes it a much more enjoyable situation for the students."

PM at 75: Rising from margins, he rewrote Indian politics. Now, it is about his legacy shaping the future

Seventy-five is the flavour of the season. After RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat turned 75 last week, it is Prime Minister Narendra Modi's turn to reach this milestone on Wednesday. And the PM at 75 presents an occasion to look at the strength of our democracy as well as the challenges it faces today. That somebody from humble beginnings, the son of a tea-seller, could rise to the pinnacle of power bespeaks the strength of our democracy. For all the fault lines in our democracy, every time this happens, it is a strong message about its resilience. One of Lalu Yadav's associates once told me that during the RJD leader's visit to Pakistan, ordinary people would ask him how a "gwala", a cowherd, had become the Bihar Chief Minister.

Modi represents the devolution of power to communities that have been historically on the margins, such as the Other Backward Castes (OBCs). H D Deve Gowda was also an OBC PM, but he was in the saddle for only a few months in 1996-97. Modi is from the Modh-Ghanchi community in Gujarat, who are considered to be backward among even the backwards and while numerically large, had been nationally leaderless. Modi's elevation as PM has contributed to the OBC-isation of politics. Gone are the days when the BJP was known only as a Bania-Brahmin party. It has not left other groups untouched, with Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi centering the Congress's politics on the "OBC-plus" factor. His vigorous espousal of the caste census is an indication of his thinking, very different from that of his grandmother Indira Gandhi who put the Mandal Commission report recommending affirmative action for OBCs on the back burner in 1980. Or even his father Rajiv who opposed it stridently in 1990.

Even the RSS's thinking on caste and social justice has changed over the decades, from the days of the conservative sarsangchalak M S Golwalkar to the "mainstream-ist" Balasaheb Deoras, when the change began, and now to the moderate Mohan Bhagwat. Unlike in 2015, when he had called for its review, the current Sangh chief stoutly defended the continuation of reservation only recently. Modi has displayed a rare mastery over sensing the pulse of the people, which is one reason why he is in his third term in office. Before others got into the game, even as Gujarat CM, he was into using social media, the latest communication and PR techniques available in world capitals, and understanding the importance of optics in amplifying the message.

Apart from understanding popular sentiments and communicating the message, the PM has been known for a single-minded pursuit of his goals. Minutes after his victory in the 2012 Gujarat Assembly polls, he headed straight to the home of his rival Keshubhai Patel instead of celebrating at the party office. He knew that Keshubhai's support would be key to a larger footprint. Modi has also displayed a penchant for going for the "bhavya", the grand, though the big strokes were often not accompanied by the requisite detailing that the policy initiatives called for, such as in the case of demonetisation or the Goods and Services Tax. The tasks ahead. The tasks before the country and the PM can be summed up in two words: safeguarding and celebrating "diversity" and "dissent" — in their most expansive sense. Early last year, it used to be said by those who should know that Modi would be "more inclusive" in his third term because he would like to "leave a legacy". The recent events in Nepal, where Gen Z street protests in Kathmandu sent the government packing within hours — and earlier in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh — show, through contrast, how India's diversity, robust political contestations, stability of the governments at the Centre and state, and a growing economy en-



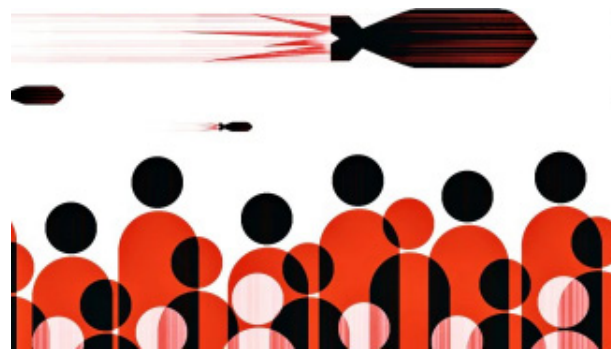
sure that pressure valves function when it comes to expressing resentment.

But this should not be taken for granted. The country can no longer afford to have dissatisfied minorities — not just religious but any group that is vulnerable in both numbers and power. This is more relevant today than in the past. Bhagwat reached out to the minorities recently, saying they were culturally "one of us", and repeatedly emphasised they were free to follow their religion. Like the Sangh, the BJP too may have to shift gear and avoid the politics of polarisation even if it is tempting electorally in the short run. From the BJP's perspective, the "Hindu-isation of Hindus" has taken place and there may be diminishing returns in playing this card again and again. Now, many expect the PM to focus on governance and bring a new energy and freshness to his ministerial team as well as the party organisation, starting with the appointment of a new party president. The importance of dissent in a plural, diverse country such as ours is not just about the freedom to criticise the government and hold it accountable, important though that is. It is also about building healthy and vigorous institutions that keep a check on the excessive use of power, that ensure the PM's feedback loops are clear, that he can even hear what he may not wish to. That will be possible only if institutions, be it the media, judiciary, Parliament, or civil society, do not feel the pressure they are now under. Dissent is also important for another reason. To be able to disagree is a prerequisite for the generation of new ideas, so essential in educational institutions and to generate new research.

Cannabis use may spike risk of diabetes by 4-fold: Study

New Delhi: People using cannabis may be four times more at risk of developing diabetes, according to a large study of over four million adults on Monday. Cannabis use is increasing globally, with an estimated 219 million users (4.3 per cent of the global adult population) in 2021, but its long-term metabolic effects remain unknown. While some studies have suggested potential anti-inflammatory or weight management properties, others have raised concerns regarding glucose metabolism and insulin resistance. The magnitude of the risk of developing diabetes hasn't been clear. The research showed that new cases of diabetes were significantly higher in the cannabis group (2.2 per cent) compared to the healthy group (0.6 per cent). Statistical analysis showed cannabis users were at nearly four times the risk of developing diabetes compared to non-users.

Gaza should haunt us



Gaza, Gaza conflict, Gaza Israel conflict, Hamas Israel conflict, Benjamin Netanyahu, Gaza Palestine, Israel and Palestine, Israel Palestine conflict, Israel Palestine relations, Israel-Palestine talks, Palestine-Israel relations, India news, Indian express. It is ethically perverse to regard any juristic or humane concern with the plight of the Palestinians as "antisemitic"; rather, it calls for a renewed enterprise in the vein of Levinas to understand the "difficult freedoms" that we all have. A flotilla of 34 boats carrying 500 tons of humanitarian aid and 600 people from 45 countries, including Italy, Greece, Spain and Tunisia, is now poised to reach Gaza. This initiative is unique in that it includes, among others, members of the European Parliament such as Italians Annalisa Corrado and Benedetta Scuderi, Emma Fourreau from France, and Ireland's Lynn Boylan, who is accompanying the Flotilla to document any "possible breaches of human rights or international law". Although "scared", they insist they are not "intimidated". As Scuderi put it: "I think it's normal to be afraid of facing the Israeli government, which sets no limits in its destructive actions, acts contrary to international law, and has already stated it wants to treat us as terrorists [...] But we will not be intimidated." She adds that this is a mission "worth making oneself available for, even if the consequences may be heavy or difficult to manage. I cannot even imagine the fear Palestinian children feel under the bombs or when being amputated of their limbs without anaesthesia."

This haunting spectacle of human suffering brings to mind the 16th-century jurist Hugo Grotius, who argued that pain and suffering must be minimised even amidst warfare. Avoiding "unimaginable" surplus suffering is central to modern human rights principles. Yet, Gaza today faces "the largest humanitarian blockade of the 21st century", which has placed 2,44,000 people in famine conditions under IPC Phase 5, the most severe category of food insecurity. Israel's National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir has already announced that "activists will be designated as terrorists, imprisoned, and denied special privileges such as television, radio, and choice of foods". Governance becomes a tool for repression, part of a global process of "democratic backsliding" — a euphemism for righticide and democide, where even a modicum of human rights activism is recast as terrorism.

Against this backdrop, 142 nations recently voted in favour of a resolution introduced by France, with 10 against and 12 abstaining. The resolution urges "peaceful settlement of the Palestine issue and implementation of the two-state

solution". Those who voted against it include Argentina, Hungary and, unsurprisingly, Israel and the US. That India has thrown its support behind the resolution, despite growing strategic and industry/trade ties with Israel, is a happy sign. The resolution prescribes "a single roadmap" to a two-state solution, entailing an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the release of hostages and the establishment of a Palestinian State "that is both viable and sovereign". Crucially, it calls for "the disarmament of Hamas and its exclusion from governance in Gaza", the normalisation of ties between Israel and the Arab countries, as well as collective security guarantees. Far from being a "one-sided" declaration and "hollow gesture", as Israeli Ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon has claimed, the resolution explicitly condemns the Hamas attack of October 7, 2023, and calls for the disarmament of Hamas. To reject it as a victory for Hamas reeks of the arrogance of hard power. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his war cohorts would do well to read with care the work of the great Jewish theologian and philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, who spoke of the two Torahs — one being the transcendent voice of God, and the other concerning everyday human ethics. Both constrain the lust for violence and destruction and, in different ways, lead us away from "ecology" towards "responsibility toward the Other." As Rabbi Israel Salanter observed in 1850: "The material needs of my neighbour are my spiritual needs." Yet, beyond the neighbour lies the distant third — all too often construed as a monstrous third who inspires the "temptation to murder", a passion for killing which often results in war and renders "morality derisory" and leads to "the diabolical criminality of absolute evil" seen in genocide and other "horribly perfect" forms of racism (Levinas). The foundational violence of necropolitics — the use of political power to decide who lives and who dies — must now cease. (See Jothie Rajah's *Discouraging Lives: Necropolitical Law, Culture and the Long War on Terror*). Most read: Israel is now combating the indictment of "genocide" before the International Court of Justice. Although the Court has never found sufficient evidence for deliberate and systematic killing or persecution of a large number of people "from a particular national or ethnic group with the aim of destroying that nation or group," Article 6 of the Genocide Convention enacts the duty of states to prevent and punish preparation for genocide.

The Court must now arrive at a sound juristic construction on the materials and arguments pressed before it. Already noted (in the context of Israel's military offensive in Rafah, which has led to the exodus of approximately 800,000 Palestinians) is that the steps for the security of civilians in the Gaza Strip are "insufficient". Further, Israel must now act to "take effective measures to prevent the destruction" of the relevant evidence and to ensure any UN-mandated body "unimpeded access" to the Gaza Strip. Considering the "catastrophic situation in Gaza," the ICJ has ordered the provision of "urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance," and reiterated its "grave concern over the fate of the hostages" held by "Hamas and other armed groups", calling for their "immediate and unconditional release". It is ethically perverse to regard any juristic or humane concern with the plight of the Palestinians as "antisemitic"; rather, it calls for a renewed enterprise in the vein of Levinas to understand the "difficult freedoms" that we all have.

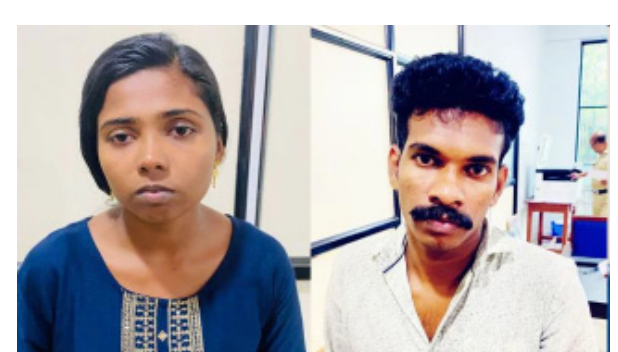
Young Kerala couple's twisted 'revenge plan': Send a friendly invite, then dish out brutal torture

A couple in Kerala's Pathanamthitta district have been arrested for allegedly luring two youths, with whom the woman had purportedly been maintaining a relationship for some time, to their home before torturing and robbing them, police said. Pathanamthitta police registered a case last week after a 29-year-old man alleged that he was assaulted by his girlfriend's family. However, finding gaps in his statement, the police looked further into the matter and found that the accused couple was allegedly behind the attack. Police said the couple, after allegedly torturing him, threatened him to make up a story about being beaten up by his girlfriend's family. On Friday, police from the Aranmula area arrested Malayil Veetil Jayesh, 30, and his wife Reshmi, 25, both from Koipuram village. Apart from the 29-year-old, the police found that a 19-year-old was also similarly attacked by the couple.

According to police, both men had worked with Jayesh in Bengaluru and had been friends with the couple. Police claimed that Reshmi had maintained a relationship with the two men and that eventually, Jayesh found her chats with them on WhatsApp. Angered, he planned to take revenge on the two men and even roped his wife into the plan, officers said, adding that she agreed to this as part of a truce with her husband. "The couple robbed their victims, with one of the youths losing Rs 20,000. Besides, while torturing the victims, the couple behaved in a perverted manner. The victims feared that the couple were performing black magic on them. However, the real motive of the couple has to be ascertained after detailed questioning," said a police source. Pathanamthitta district Superintendent of Police R Anand said a special team will probe both cases of assault. "Both cases are at their preliminary stage. We have to look into whether the accused persons have committed more crimes in the same fashion. A detailed scientific probe is required as the accused are not cooperating with the police," he said. As per the statements given to the police, the 29-year-old victim, a native of Ranni in Pathanamthitta, said, "Jayesh wanted me to come to his home on day of Onam (September 5) and join the celebrations. When I reached his house, Jayesh greeted me with pepper spray and thrashed me without any provocation. Both my hands were tied and I was hung from a wooden pole overhead. Reshmi brutally attacked me with various objects, including iron rods."

"While Reshmi tortured me, Jayesh recorded it on a mobile phone. My privates were stapled several times. At around 8 pm that day, the couple took me on Jayesh's scooter and abandoned me at a location called Puthumon. As I was brutally assaulted, I was seated between Jayesh and Reshmi in the scooter. Before dropping me, they threatened me and said that I should tell others I was attacked by the family of the girl whom I love," he said. When locals found the seriously injured man, they took him to hospital and the police were informed. However, he initially told police that he was attacked by his girlfriend's family as per the instructions of the couple. "The couple had threatened the youth that he would be killed if revealed anything about the torture. Hence, he gave the wrong version of events. He later recounted the horror from the couple," an officer said. While interrogating them, the police learned that they had tortured another man in a similar manner on September 1. Based on the details collected from the accused couple, police traced the other victim, a 19-year-old from Alappuzha. He had also kept the incident to himself.

He told police that he was invited to the couple's house and Jayesh picked him up on a two-wheeler from the



Maramon area on September 1. At the house, he was allegedly tortured and stripped. He claimed that Jayesh switched on the camera of the mobile phone and asked him to act like he was performing sexual acts on Reshmi, and that when he refused, he was assaulted. Both his hands were tied with a shawl and he was hung by that shawl to a wooden beam on the ceiling, he said. He was then allegedly beaten all over the body and pliers were used on his fingers. The couple took Rs 20,000 from his wallet, but gave a Rs 1,000 back for his travel expenses, he told police, adding that he was then dropped off at a nearby autorickshaw stand. They also threatened that he would later be killed. At Koipuram, a neighbour of the couple said they (Jayesh family) led a "secluded life" at an isolated location in the village. "They rarely interacted with others. Jayesh used to work as an operator of an earthmover while his wife had been doing odd jobs with a catering firm. But the woman used to always complain about financial constraints and hand-to-mouth existence," said the neighbour, who did not want to be named. Jayesh had faced a POCSO case years ago, and had been jailed. He later got married to Reshmi and the couple have two children, the neighbour said.

Nagaland University's new research to aid advancement of quantum tech for devices, algorithms

New Delhi: Making significant strides in the field of quantum technology, researchers from Nagaland University have replicated the complex patterns of fractals found in nature — such as snowflakes, tree branches, and neuron networks — in the quantum world.

With India already committed to advancing next-generation technologies through the National Quantum Mission, the new research could contribute meaningfully to the development of future quantum devices and algorithms, said the team. Fractals are not just mathematical curiosities, but blueprints found across nature — from the branching of rivers and lightning strikes to the growth of plants and neurons.

By bringing these naturally occurring patterns into the quantum realm, the research bridges the gap between fundamental physics and practical technology, demonstrating how lessons from nature can inspire the next generation of computing and electronics.

Focus turns to security guarantees after Ukraine summit leaves path to peace unclear



LONDON/KYIV, EMS News Agency, Sept 30-Ukraine and its European allies have been buoyed by Donald Trump's promise of security guarantees for Kyiv to help end the Ukraine war but face many unanswered questions, including how willing Russia will be to play ball. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hailed Monday's extraordinary summit at the White House with Trump as a "major step forward" towards ending Europe's deadliest conflict in 80 years and towards setting up a trilateral meeting with Russia's Vladimir Putin and the U.S. president in the coming weeks. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.

Flanked by the leaders of allies including Germany, France and Britain at the summit, Zelenskyy's warm rapport with Trump contrasted sharply with their disastrous meeting at the Oval Office in February. But beyond the optics, the path to a lasting peace remains deeply uncertain and Zelenskyy may be forced to make painful compromises to end a war that analysts say has killed or wounded more than 1 million people. And despite the temporary sense of relief in Kyiv, there was no let-up in the fighting. Russia launched 270 drones and 10 missiles in an overnight attack on Ukraine, the Ukrainian airforce said, the largest this month. The energy ministry said Russia had targeted energy facilities in the central Poltava region, home to Ukraine's only oil refinery, causing big fires. "The good news is that there was no blow-up (at the White House). Trump didn't demand Ukrainian capitulation nor cut off support. The mood music was positive and the trans-Atlantic alliance lives on," John Foreman, a former British defence attache to Kyiv and Moscow, told Reuters. "On the downside, there is a great deal of uncertainty about the nature of security guarantees and what exactly the U.S. has in mind." Zelenskyy said on Tuesday his officials were working on the content of the security guarantees. Russia has made no explicit commitment to a meeting between Putin and Zelenskyy. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Tuesday Moscow did not

reject any formats for discussing the peace process in Ukraine but that any meeting of national leaders "must be prepared with utmost thoroughness".

President Putin has warned that Russia will not tolerate troops from the NATO alliance on Ukrainian soil. He has also shown no sign of backing down from demands for territory, including land not under Russia's military control, following his own summit talks with Trump last Friday in Alaska. Trump has not specified what form U.S. security guarantees could take, and backed away from insisting that Russia agree to a ceasefire before any peace negotiations kick off in earnest. The U.S. president has also told Ukraine to forget about regaining control of Crimea, which was annexed by Russia in 2014, or joining NATO. "It is hard to imagine there being any deal today that is acceptable and that respects the red lines of the Ukrainians and Europe as well as the red lines of the Russians," said Matthias Matthijs, senior fellow for Europe at the Council on Foreign Relations. Europe's dealings with Trump are similar to the fraught negotiations on tariffs, Matthijs said: "Having avoided the worst outcomes, they come to some sort of agreement. It's better than they feared, but it's always worse than the status quo." Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said Zelenskyy and his allies had "failed to outplay" Trump. "Europe thanked & sucked up to him," Medvedev wrote on X. The last direct talks between Russia and Ukraine took place in Turkey in July while Putin also declined Zelenskyy's public invitation to meet him face-to-face in May. "President Trump has now opened the door to the negotiating room for him, and Putin must now enter it," German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl told the Deutschlandfunk radio broadcaster. If not, he said, sanctions must be intensified. Ukraine's allies will hold talks in the so-called "Coalition of the Willing" format on Tuesday to discuss the way forward. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, who also attended Monday's talks, said NATO membership for Ukraine was not under discussion but that there was a discussion on "Article 5"-type security guarantees for the country. Article 5 of NATO's founding treaty enshrines the principle of collective defence, in which an attack on any of its 32 members is considered an attack on all. "There is, of course, the question of what Russia will accept. But also, what western countries are willing, and able, to do for Ukraine," said a note by Eurointelligence. Orysia Lutsevych, a research fellow at Chatham House, said the worst case scenario "of Trump selling Ukraine out to Putin was avoided" at Monday's talks, but she added: "A bilateral with Putin is dangerous for Zelenskyy. Even if it happens, which is highly unlikely, Putin will blame him for obstructing peace, being unreasonable. In such a case, the question is: who Donald Trump will trust and blame for his failed peacemaking efforts." Graphic: Map of Ukraine shows the eastern oblasts and the areas under Russian control

Israel studying Hamas reply to Gaza ceasefire proposal

JERUSALEM/CAIRO, EMS News Agency, Sept 30-Israel is studying Hamas' response to a Gaza ceasefire proposal, two officials said on Tuesday of a potential deal for a 60-day truce and the release of half the Israeli hostages still held in the battered enclave. Efforts to pause the fighting gained new momentum over the past week after Israel announced plans for a new offensive to seize control of Gaza City, and Egypt and Qatar have been pushing to restart indirect talks between the sides on a U.S.-backed ceasefire plan. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.

The proposal includes the release of 200 Palestinian convicts jailed in Israel and an unspecified number of imprisoned women and minors, in return for 10 living and 18 deceased hostages from Gaza, according to a Hamas official. Two Egyptian security sources confirmed the details, and added that Hamas has requested the release of hundreds of Gaza detainees as well.

The proposal includes a partial withdrawal of Israeli forces, which presently control 75% of Gaza and the entry of more humanitarian aid into the enclave, where a population of 2.2 million people is increasingly facing famine. Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Majed Al Ansari said the 60-day truce deal would include "a pathway to a comprehensive agreement to end the war." Israel had previously agreed to the outline, advanced by U.S. special Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, but negotiations faltered over some of its details. The last round of talks ended in deadlock in late July. Israel's plans to seize control of Gaza City in the heart of the Palestinian enclave have since stirred alarm abroad and among the estimated one million people presently living there. On the ground, there were no signs of a ceasefire nearing as Israeli gunfire, tank shelling and airstrikes killed at least 20 Palestinians on Tuesday, according to Gaza health officials. Tanks completed taking control of the Zeitoun suburb, an eastern neighbourhood on Gaza City's outskirts, and continued to pound the nearby area of Sabra, killing two women and a man, medics said. Local health authorities said dozens of people had been trapped in their houses because of the shelling. The Israeli military said it was checking the report. On Friday, it said its forces were operating in nearby Zeitoun to locate weapons, tunnels and gunmen. "It has been one of the worst nights in Sabra and Gaza City as the explosions are heard throughout the city," said Nasra Ali, 54, a mother of five, who lives in Sabra.



"I was planning to leave my house when I heard there is a possible ceasefire. I might stay for a day or two, if nothing happens, then I will run away with my kids," she told Reuters via a chat app. Thousands of people are estimated to have fled the area in the past few days. In Israel, the threatened offensive prompted tens of thousands of Israelis on Sunday to hold some of the largest protests since the war began, urging a deal to end the fighting and free the remaining hostages held in Gaza. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was expected to convene discussions about the ceasefire proposal soon, the two Israeli officials said. A response was expected in the coming two days, a Palestinian source close to the talks said. Netanyahu faces domestic political pressure from his far-right government partners who object to a truce with Hamas. Ministers Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir have demanded to keep the war going until Hamas' defeat, and annex Gaza. Hamas official Izzat El-Reshiq said that the truce proposal it has agreed to is an interim accord that would pave the way for negotiations on ending the war. A source close to the talks said that, unlike previous rounds, Hamas accepted the proposal with no further demands. But prospects for agreeing an end to the war appear remote, with gaps remaining on the terms. Israel is demanding the group lay down its arms and its leaders leave Gaza, conditions which Hamas has so far publicly rejected. The war began when Hamas-led fighters stormed into Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages. Israel's offensive has since killed more than 61,000 Palestinians, plunged Gaza into humanitarian crisis and displaced most its population.

Canada opposition leader Poilievre wins seat, to take on Carney over tariffs

GNS News Agency, March 11

OTTAWA, Aug 19 (Reuters) - The leader of Canada's official opposition Conservatives, Pierre Poilievre, secured a return to Parliament and a chance to grill Prime Minister Mark Carney over U.S. tariffs, staging a comeback after unexpectedly losing his seat in an April election. Unofficial results from Elections Canada on Tuesday showed Poilievre had easily won a special election on Monday in the parliamentary constituency of Battle River-Crowfoot in the western Canadian province of Alberta, a Conservative stronghold. The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here. Poilievre, who accuses the Liberal government of botching its handling of U.S. relations, will be able to confront Carney when the House of Commons returns on September 15. Carney, who took over as prime minister in March, secured a strong minority government in April's federal election, while Poilievre lost the Ottawa-area seat he had held for 21 years. Carney won on a promise to stand up to U.S. President Donald Trump but has since moderated his ap-

proach even as Washington imposed more tariffs. "Mark Carney has been failing. He's failed, he's backed down, he's made concession after concession vis-a-vis the Americans," Poilievre told a press conference last Thursday. Carney, however, is in no immediate danger politically. Although the Liberals fell three seats short of a majority in April, they should be able to rely on the support of smaller parties to survive confidence votes. A Nanos Research poll earlier this month put the Liberals at 44% popular support compared with 33% for the Conservatives. Carney has pulled the Liberals more to the center and Poilievre will find it harder to draw a sharp contrast, said pollster Nik Nanos, CEO of Nanos Research. "Poilievre needs to articulate what he learned from the last federal election and how his government would be different than a Carney government," he said via email. At the start of the year the Conservatives looked set for a crushing election victory over the Liberals of then-Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who were far behind in polls after more than nine years in power.

Somalia faces diphtheria surge amid vaccine shortages and aid cuts



GNS News Agency, March 11

MOGADISHU, Diphtheria cases and deaths have risen sharply this year in Somalia, where the response has been curtailed by vaccine shortages and U.S. aid cuts, Somali officials said. More than 1,600 cases, including 87 deaths, have been recorded, up from 838 cases and 56 deaths in all of 2024, said Hussein Abdulkar Muhidin, the general director of Somalia's National Institute of Health. Keep up with the latest medical breakthroughs and healthcare trends with the Reuters Health Rounds newsletter. Sign up here. Diphtheria, a bacterial disease that causes swollen glands, breathing problems and fever and mostly affects children, is preventable with a vaccine that became widely available in the mid-20th century. Childhood immunisation rates in Somalia have improved over the past decade, but hundreds of thousands of children are still not fully vaccinated.

After fleeing fighting between government forces and Islamist militants in the central Somalia town of Ceeldheere three months ago, all four of Deka Mohamed Ali's children, none of whom was vaccinated, contracted diphtheria. Her 9-year-old daughter recovered, but her 8-year-old son died and two toddlers are now being treated at a hospital in the

capital Mogadishu. "My children got sick and I just stayed at home because I did not know it was diphtheria," she told Reuters from the bedside of her 3-year-old son Musa Abdullahi whose throat was swollen to the size of a lemon from the infection. Health Minister Ali Haji Adam said the government had struggled to procure enough vaccines due to a global shortage and that U.S. aid cuts were making it difficult to distribute the doses it had. Before President Donald Trump cut most foreign assistance earlier this year, the United States was the leading humanitarian donor to Somalia, whose health budget is almost entirely funded by donors.

"The U.S. aid cut terribly affected the health funds it used to provide to Somalia. Many health centres closed. Mobile vaccination teams that took vaccines to remote areas lost funding and now do not work," said Adam. Muhidin separately echoed his comments about the closures. Overall U.S. foreign assistance commitments to Somalia stand at \$149 million for the fiscal year that ends on September 30, compared with \$765 million in the previous fiscal year, according to U.S. government statistics. "The United States continues to provide lifesaving foreign assistance in Somalia," a U.S. State Department spokesperson said when asked about the impact of its aid cuts in the country.

"America is the most generous nation in the world, and we urge other nations to dramatically increase their humanitarian efforts." Aid group Save the Children said last month that the closure of hundreds of health clinics in Somalia this year due to foreign cuts has contributed to a doubling in the number of combined cases of diphtheria, measles, whooping cough, cholera and severe respiratory infections since mid-April. Besides the U.S., Britain, France, Germany and other major Western donors are also cutting aid budgets. Somalia's government has also faced criticism from doctors and human rights activists for its limited funding of the health sector. In 2024, it allocated 4.8% of its budget to health, down from 8.5% the previous year, Amnesty International said. The health ministry did not respond to a question about that criticism. It has said it is planning to launch a vaccination drive but has not given details when.

China pledges to address India's rare earth needs, Indian source says

GNS News Agency, March 11

NEW DELHI, There is an upward trend in India-China relations and Beijing has promised to address New Delhi's needs on rare earths, a top Indian official and a source said on Tuesday, as the neighbours rebuild ties that were damaged by a 2020 border clash. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is visiting India for the 24th round of border talks with Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and is also due to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, days before Modi travels to China for the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. "There has been an upward trend. Borders have been quiet. There has been peace and tranquillity," Doval told Wang as he opened the talks. "Our bilateral engagements have been more substantial." The new environment that has been created has helped us in moving ahead in the various areas that we are working on," he said. Wang told Doval that "the stable and healthy development of China-India relations is in the fundamental interests of the two countries' people," according to a read-out of the meeting released by China's foreign ministry. The two sides "should enhance mutual trust through dialogues and expand cooperation," Wang said, and should aim for consensus in areas such as border control and demarcation negotiations. Earlier on Tuesday, an Indian source said that China had promised to address three key Indian concerns. Wang, the source said, had assured Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar that Beijing is addressing India's need for fertilisers, rare earths and tunnel boring machines. The Indian foreign



and mines ministries did not respond immediately to Reuters requests for comment. China's commerce ministry also did not immediately respond to a request for comment. It was not immediately clear whether China had agreed to approve export licenses faster or grant blanket exemptions for India. China has previously committed to speeding up export licenses for Europe and the U.S. without actually dismantling the control regime. China's exports of rare earths and related magnets jumped in June after these agreements and as the commerce ministry worked through a huge backlog of applications. However, rare earth magnet exports to India were still down 58% compared to January levels, according to Chinese customs data. June is the last month for which country-level data is available. India has the world's fifth-largest rare earth reserves, at 6.9 million metric tons, but has no magnet production and relies on imported magnets, mainly from China.

Bay Area marks India's 79th Independence Day with grand 'Swades' Parade and cultural festival



GNS News Agency, March 11

The streets of downtown San Jose turned into a vibrant tapestry of color, music, and tradition as the Association of Indo Americans (AIA), in partnership with Bolly 92.3, hosted Swades 2025 to celebrate India's 79th Independence Day. The daylong festivities drew an estimated crowd of over 25,000, making it one of the largest Indian American gatherings in Silicon Valley this year. A parade of culture and unity

The highlight of the celebration was the grand India Parade, featuring more than 75 floats supported by over 50 community organisations. Each float showcased the cultural richness of India's states — from traditional dances of Gujarat and Haryana to depictions of Ramayana and Kerala's temple arts. Participants dressed in colourful attire brought the streets alive with patriotic songs, drums, and folk performances. Flag hoisting and dignitaries The ceremonial flag-hoisting was led by popular Indian actress Ameesha Patel, who served as Grand Marshal, along with Srikanth Bolla, Founder of Earth Cleanse, and Rakesh Adlaka, Deputy Consul General of India in San Francisco. San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan hoisted the American flag and praised AIA's efforts, calling the event "a growing tradition that will only get bigger in the years to come". More than 50 elected officials across Silicon Valley, including Mayors, Council members, and State representatives, attended to show solidarity with the Indian American community. Music, dance, and festivities The festival continued late into the night with Vijay Bharat, a cultural showcase featuring classical and contemporary dances, a live concert by Jhoom Productions,

and patriotic music performed by BATA/AIA karaoke singers. A special Dhol-Tasha performance set a powerful rhythm, drawing crowds into celebration. The evening concluded with fireworks that lit up the San Jose skyline. Community spirit and recognition Throughout the day, stalls offered regional delicacies, handicrafts, and games like carrom and chess, while children took part in traditional dance competitions. On stage, community leaders honored volunteers and sponsors whose support made the event possible. AIA extended thanks to its sponsors, including Sanjiv Gupta CPA (Grand Sponsor), Lavanya Duvvi (Platinum Sponsor), Travelopod, and ICICI Bank, along with media and cultural partners. Looking ahead With Swades marking another successful milestone, AIA announced preparations for its next flagship event, the Dussehra Diwali Dhamaka, scheduled for October at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton. The program will feature a grand Rath Yatra, Mahamangala Aarti, fireworks, and the dramatic burning of a 35-foot effigy of Ravan. Preserving heritage abroad For the Bay Area's Indian diaspora, Swades has become more than just a parade. It's a living reminder of their roots, a platform for youth to embrace culture, and a bridge of friendship with the wider American community.

HCL Tech to offer TechBee to Hyderabad students

Hyderabad: HCLTech, a technology company, plans to offer its TechBee Early Career Programme to high school graduates in Hyderabad and give them the opportunity to build careers in the technology industry. TechBee is an initiative designed for high school graduates. It offers a unique 'earn while you learn' model that blends hands-on technology training with access to higher education. It equips students with industry-relevant skills and enables them to pursue academic advancement, laying the foundation for global careers in technology. The programme is set to introduce specialised tracks in Generative AI and Cybersecurity, developed in collaboration with premier educational institutions. These initiatives are designed to expand access to high-quality technology careers across India, a press release said.

GoM backs Centre's plan for GST rate rationalisation; states raise revenue loss concerns



The Group of Ministers on Rate Rationalisation gave its in-principle support Thursday to the Centre's proposal to overhaul the Goods and Services Tax (GST) design, even as member states raised concerns about potential revenue loss on account of the rate rationalisation. Six days ago, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his Independence Day address, announced the next big phase of reforms under the GST regime by Diwali, a gift for the common man, small entrepreneurs and MSMEs, in terms of reduced tax burden. The Centre has suggested replacing multiple slabs – 5 per cent, 12 per cent, 18 per cent and 28 per cent – with a broad two-slab structure – 5 per cent and 18 per cent – in addition to a 40 per cent special rate for sin and demerit goods.

Meeting in the Capital Thursday, state ministers who are part of the GoM said all members supported the "pro-people" proposal. Two specific concerns, however, stood out: whether there will be any institutional mechanism to compensate states for revenue loss; and whether the benefits from GST rate cuts will percolate to the ultimate beneficiary – the common person. States said they do not oppose the "pro-people" proposal, but it may result in revenue losses that will ultimately leave them with less resources to spend on common people in their regions.

While Bihar's Deputy Chief Minister and GoM convener Samrat Choudhary spelled out the panel's support for the GST overhaul proposal, he said observations made by states will be referred to the GST Council. Detailed discussions on items will be taken up in the Council, he said. "We have deliberated upon the Centre's proposal to remove the two GST slabs, we have given our support and recommendations. Now, the GST Council will decide. All states gave their views, there were some observations by some states. Those will be referred to the GST Council," Choudhary said. The differing views and observations of states on revenue loss and concerns over possible profiteering by manufacturers and companies will be part of the note that the GoM will send to the Council along with the Centre's proposal.

Some states were also of the view that the work done by the GoM over the last few years will now essentially be wasted as they would be simply handing over the Centre's proposal to the GST Council. "We have neither approved nor rejected it. Centre cannot give its proposal directly to the Council, so we will be just handing over the Centre's proposal to the Council," a top state government official told. States are learnt to have sent their suggestions for the GoM's note on a mechanism to compensate states that will address their revenue loss concerns. States are anticipating annual revenue loss of Rs 6,000-10,000 crore, the official said. West Bengal's Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya echoed a similar view and said they are "okay with the pro-people proposal" but it is not an agreement. The Centre's proposal has not outlined the figure for revenue loss on account of the GST rate rationalisation and the proposal

should not move ahead without detailing a mechanism for compensating states for revenue loss, she said.

"It's not an agreement in that way. If it's there, it is okay. If it is pro-people, then it's okay. But it has to be discussed in the Council's meeting also. There is no benefit in discussing it item-by-item in the GoM meeting. It will be discussed item-by-item in the (GST) Council meeting. While presenting a report to the GST Council, they will give a note of what we have said," she said. Bhattacharya said no state had any issue in accepting the pro-people GST overhaul proposal. "All states are pro-people. There is no doubt about it. It's nothing to talk about in politics. They are pro-people, let us take it for granted. But when the states lose their revenue, that also ultimately goes back to common people. That has to be looked into. That is what we have said," she said. "Because to give relief to common people should not mean that there isn't much left to spend on them after that, we have to think about that. That's why we have said that while you give the presentation, you must quantify it (revenue loss)," she said. She also said that ministers from BJP-ruled states have concurred with the suggestions. "But we have said we are there, if it benefits people, we are okay. On the one hand it reaches people and on the other hand see what is the loss we (states) are facing. Ultimately if a state suffers any loss, that ultimately boils down to the suffering of the common man," she said.

Uttar Pradesh's Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna said the Centre's proposal was welcomed by all member states saying it is in the interest of the common person. "States were asking that they should be compensated for revenue loss. The revenue loss will be calculated. Ultra luxury goods and sin goods will attract 40 per cent," he said. While the GST overhaul plan entails removal of 12 per cent and 28 per cent slabs, states' revenue loss concerns stem mainly from the proposal which would see most items such as white goods, small cars shift to 18 per cent from the existing 28 per cent slab. The Centre plans to introduce a special rate of 40 per cent, which will apply only to 5-7 sin, demerit and luxury items. Some states have suggested amending the GST laws to allow for an additional levy going beyond the current cap of 40 per cent (20 per cent Central GST plus 20 per cent State GST). Some of the items right now attract GST of 60-70 per cent, West Bengal FM Bhattacharya said, adding that the law should be amended to ensure that the current tax incidence, especially on sin goods, remains at the current level. She said Section 9(1) of the GST law needs to be amended and a special schedule should be introduced in the law to allow for an additional GST levy beyond the 40 per cent cap. "I had raised this issue in the GoM on compensation cess. Section 9(1) needs an amendment and you put a special schedule there. Now, 20 per cent GST can be imposed by Centre and 20 per cent by states, therefore, not more than 40 per cent.

But, what about the goods that were paying 60 per cent rate or 70 per cent rate," she said. "So, a special schedule should be made, an amendment should be brought in the Act, then this matter can be solved. Therefore, that is what we have said and they have noted it. It is not an additional cess, it is an additional duty, full additional duty in that sense, on the select goods on which compensation cess is currently levied," she added. Section 9(1) of the Central GST Act provides for tax to be levied on intra-state supplies of goods and services at rate not exceeding 20 per cent. The corresponding section in State GST law also allows for a maximum levy of 20 per cent, hence, giving space for a maximum combined GST rate of 40 per cent.

Serena Williams becomes the new face of blockbuster weight loss drugs: How do they impact women and what caveats do they need to follow?



Tennis Grand Slam champion Serena Williams has not only admitted that a GLP-1 medication helped her shed 31 pounds (14 kg) after the birth of her child, she has also become a spokesperson for a healthcare company, professing that the drug helped her when nothing else did. "As an athlete and as someone that has done everything, I just couldn't get my weight to where I needed to be at a healthy place — and believe me, I don't take shortcuts," she says in the promotional video, while taking an injectable. Williams, a mother of two daughters, said she has been on a GLP-1 medication after the birth of her second child. "As a woman, you go through different cycles in your life... No matter what I did — running, walking, I would walk for hours because they say that's good, I literally was playing a professional sport... Then, after my second kid, it just even got harder. So then I was like, OK, I have to try something different," she was quoted as saying. Of course, the fact that her husband is one of the investors in the healthcare company sparked conversations online about whether it was a sales spiel and whether an athlete, used to regular workouts, really needed a weight loss drug. "Athletes often gain weight after they stop playing sports because they typically continue to eat a high-calorie diet but their significantly lower physical activity and reduced exercise regimen lead to a calorie imbalance and increased fat storage. That transition takes time. Besides, post-pregnancy, women are more prone to weight gain. Some even have genetic history," says Dr Richa Chaturvedi, endocrinologist at Apollo Hospital, Delhi.

What is GLP-1 medication?

This class of weight loss drug works by mimicking a hormone that the body produces after eating, leading to reduced appetite and feeling full more quickly. "The medications are also prescribed for diabetes because they trigger the release of insulin by the pancreas. Semaglutide has dem-

onstrated an average weight loss of about 12 per cent in clinical trials. Tirzepatide, which is a combination of GLP1 and the fat-regulating GIP mimic, has shown the highest average weight loss, 18 per cent and more," says Dr Chaturvedi. Williams had said sometime ago that she was taking Zepbound, which is made of tirzepatide, an injectable prescription drug.

Isn't a celebrity endorsing GLP1 medication through an advertisement normalising random use? Is this safe?

"Many celebrities have spoken of using weight loss medication. There is available literature on the subject. As long as the user goes into a regime with full knowledge of side effects and follows the guidance of their doctor, using such medication is safe," says Dr Chaturvedi. However, she warns that results are entirely individual and may vary from person to person, the medication is not a magic pill and needs intensive diet, exercise and sleep regime to support the weight loss. "Medication is the first push to shed weight, sustaining is your effort without which weight regain is a reality," she adds.

Do women respond better to weight loss drugs?

Yes, they do. A study found that women with heart failure lost more weight on semaglutide than men. "Why it happens is still under study but many experts believe women may have more subcutaneous fat compared to visceral fat, and GLP-1s could be more effective on one type of fat than the other. Some say higher levels of estrogen in women may play a role in enhanced weight loss," says Dr Chaturvedi. GLP-1 medication has shown positive effects on menstrual regularity and improvements in hormonal balance in women by enhancing insulin sensitivity and reducing androgen levels.

Can women with thyroid issues take GLP 1 medication?

Dr Chaturvedi says it is safe for those with common conditions like hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism as the drug doesn't directly affect thyroid hormone production. "However, those with a family history of thyroid cancer should not take it at all. If thyroid hormone levels are not well-managed, adjust your daily medication to do so before going on weight loss drugs," she says.

Any other guardrails?

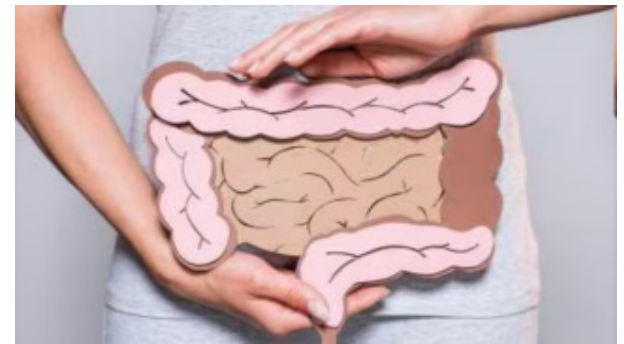
Watch out for muscle loss. "Most studies have varied the range of muscle loss from 15% to 40%. So have lean proteins in your diet and support the drug regime with strength training exercises," says Dr Chaturvedi.

Putin's poop box has lessons: Why doctors are studying what we flush

While memes overwhelmed the internet after Russian President Vladimir Putin's bodyguards were reportedly seen carrying his 'poop boxes' to the Alaska summit in the US, many overlooked their medical significance. While Putin's retinue has followed this practice to prevent other countries from obtaining information about his health, the truth is your stool or faeces tells a great deal about your body and its well-being. The stool is composed of undigested food particles, bacteria and other by-products, all of which can be early indicators of a developing condition that cannot be ignored. MAPPING GUT MICROBES

One of the growing areas of medical research is the study of the gut microbiome through stool samples. The gut is home to a vast number of bacteria, fungi, viruses and archaea that live in the intestines. These micro-organisms play an essential role in breaking down food, absorbing nutrients and regulating metabolism, including sugar levels. They also train the immune system to distinguish between beneficial and harmful organisms. When the balance of this microbiome is disturbed, the impact can be wide-ranging. Studies have linked such disturbances to diabetes, obesity and immune-related disorders. By studying stool, doctors and researchers are able to map the microbiome and understand how these imbalances occur. This knowledge provides direction for the development of new therapies such as targeted probiotics or dietary interventions that aim to restore microbial balance. It also offers possibilities for more personalised treatment strategies, tailored to the unique microbial environment of each individual. In this way, stool is becoming a simple yet powerful tool for advancing medical science.

DIAGNOSIS OF COLON CANCER Stool is important in the early detection of colon cancer, which continues to be a major cause of cancer-related deaths, but outcomes improve greatly with early diagnosis. A change in bowel habits, persistent diarrhea or constipation, changes in stool consistency, blood mixed with stool, or a change in shape such as narrow, ribbon-like stools are all signals that require evaluation. Noticing these features early and consulting a doctor can make a significant difference. Medical examination of



stool does not only rely on what can be seen. Tests are available that detect hidden blood or even specific molecular markers linked to cancer. These are simple, non-invasive tests that can be used for screening, especially in people at higher risk. Early identification allows treatment to begin when it is most effective and can reduce the need for more aggressive interventions later.

ASSESSING GUT DISORDERS Doctors may use stool tests to monitor the effectiveness of treatments for conditions like inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) or to ensure the eradication of infections like H. pylori. Undigested meat fibres in the stool may be caused by pancreatitis. A low pH may be caused by poor absorption of carbohydrate or fat. Stool with a high pH may mean inflammation in the intestine (colitis), cancer or antibiotic use. Blood in the stool may be caused by bleeding in the digestive tract. White blood cells in the stool may be caused by inflammation of the intestines, such as ulcerative colitis, or a bacterial infection.

TRACKING NUTRIENT ABSORPTION Stool analysis is useful in diagnosing malabsorption disorders. These occur when the body fails to absorb nutrients properly, leading to deficiencies in growth, energy, immunity and overall health. Stool testing can reveal whether fat or other nutrients are being lost in waste, giving doctors important clues and guiding further evaluation for corrective treatment.

Is this vitamin deficiency causing brain fog, vision and memory problems?

Sometimes, patients fear they have a serious complication when they report symptoms like confusion, fatigue, vision changes and worse, memory problems. They may even do all sorts of tests without realising that one possible but often overlooked cause could be a deficiency in vitamin B1, also known as thiamine. Thiamine is a water-soluble B vitamin that plays a key role in the body's ability to convert carbohydrates into energy. It's essential for the proper functioning of the nervous system, brain, muscles and heart. The body can't produce thiamine on its own and stores very little, so it needs to be obtained regularly from food or supplements.

What are symptoms of thiamine deficiency?

Thiamine deficiency can affect many systems in the body but it most commonly impacts the brain and nervous system. Symptoms may include Short-term memory loss, Mental confusion or disorientation, Difficulty concentrating, Irritability or mood changes

Fatigue or muscle weakness

Poor coordination or balance

Blurred vision or rapid eye movements If left untreated, severe deficiency can lead to Wernicke's encephalopathy, a medical emergency characterised by confusion, loss of muscle coordination and eye movement abnormalities. In some cases, this progresses to Korsakoff syndrome,



a chronic memory disorder.

How to test for deficiencies?

While blood tests can assess thiamine levels, they may not always be reliable or readily available, especially in resource-scarce settings. Some tests, like the transketolase activity test, indirectly assess thiamine status, but even these can be affected by other factors.

Who is at risk?

Thiamine deficiency is more common in certain groups, especially those with:

Chronic alcohol use – Alcohol interferes with thiamine absorption and use. Low dietary intake – Diets high in processed foods and low in whole grains. Older age – Reduced absorption and higher requirements. Diuretic use – These medications increase thiamine loss through urine.

RBI paper on monetary policy says raising inflation target above 4% could erode policy gains

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday released its keenly awaited discussion paper on the country's monetary policy framework, warning that raising the inflation target at the current juncture could be seen as a dilution of the framework and lead to the loss of policy gains made over the last decade or so. In its discussion paper, the Indian central bank has sought feedback by September 18 on four key questions: if monetary policy should target headline or core inflation, if the current 4 per cent target remains optimal to balance growth and stability, whether the tolerance band of 2-6 per cent needs to be revised or even dropped, and if the target rate of 4 per cent should be removed and only a range be maintained.

"However, raising the target at this stage – when the global economy is confronted with geopolitical uncertainty and geo-economic fragmentation – can be interpreted by global investors as a dilution of the IT (inflation targeting) framework thereby undermining policy credibility. It could erode the gains in policy and institutional credibility achieved through fiscal responsibility and external stability," the discussion paper said, adding that reducing the target rate below 4 per cent "may not be appropriate in case of India".

Last week, while upgrading India's rating to BBB from BBB-, S&P Global Ratings had praised the RBI, saying its record of inflation management had been blemished by headline retail inflation staying broadly within the 2-6 per cent target range. Low and stable inflation is crucial for foreign investors as sharp increases in prices can erode their investments, weaken growth and the domestic currency, and create social unrest – all factors that can lead to a rating downgrade. The RBI formally adopted the flexible inflation targeting framework in late 2016. As per the framework agreed with the central government, the target is valid for a period of five years, after which it must be reviewed. Since the framework's inception, the medium-term target for the RBI has been 4 per cent in terms of the Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation, within a band of 2-6 per cent.

The target, which is valid until March 2026, must be notified again for a five-year period starting April 2026. Earlier this month on August 6, Governor Sanjay Malhotra had said the RBI was preparing the discussion paper, with a final view to be taken by the government. "We will give our views to the government as to how we should move ahead in this regard," Malhotra had said in the post-policy press conference. Headline versus core inflation: The debate on whether monetary policy should target headline or core inflation – which is inflation without taking into account food and fuel items, whose prices can be rather volatile – came to the fore over the last year after the Economic Survey for 2023-24, tabled in Parliament in July 2024, said "it is worth exploring whether India's inflation targeting framework should target the inflation rate excluding food" on account of the high weight of food in the CPI.

In its discussion paper released Thursday, the RBI pointed out that almost all inflation targeting countries have chosen headline CPI inflation as the target, irrespective of their inflation target level and stage of development, with only Uganda targeting core inflation. "Food inflation, if persistent, can spill over to core inflation through higher wage costs, higher rents and higher mark ups. Empirical exercise in the Indian context suggests that non-core prices converge to core prices in the long run.



The RBI formally adopted the flexible inflation targeting framework in late 2016 with a 4 per cent target in a band of 2-6 per cent. The target is valid for five years, after which it must be reviewed.

leased Thursday, the RBI pointed out that almost all inflation targeting countries have chosen headline CPI inflation as the target, irrespective of their inflation target level and stage of development, with only Uganda targeting core inflation. "India's inflation targeting framework should consider targeting inflation, excluding food. Higher food prices are, more often, not demand-induced but supply-induced. Short-run monetary policy tools are meant to counteract price pressures arising out of excess aggregate demand growth," the Survey had argued. However, the RBI under the then governor, Shaktikanta Das, had fought back, saying that food prices could not be ignored by the monetary authority.

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There are also spillovers from non-core inflation to core inflation, possibly through the cost-push and expectation channels, implying that monetary policy cannot ignore second-round effects emanating from persistent supply-side shocks," the discussion paper said. Headline retail inflation as measured by the CPI slumped to an eight-year low of 1.55 per cent in July – its second-lowest print ever under the current inflation series, which is set to be updated in early 2026. Meanwhile, CPI inflation excluding food and fuel edged down to 4.1 per cent. Headline inflation has moved in a broad range of 1.5-8.6 per cent since January 2014, driven by CPI food inflation, which has ranged from -2.7 per cent to 14.2 per cent. Meanwhile, core inflation has been far more stable. "The conduct of monetary policy frameworks needs both policy certainty and credibility. This has become particularly important during the current environment of heightened uncertainty. It is, therefore, important that the basic tenets of the framework that have been tested and judged to be favourable are continued," the discussion paper said.

A handshake is just that, but one avoided is a lesson in cynicism



GNS News Agency, March 11

There is no rule which says that captains must shake hands at the toss in a cricket match. Just as there is no rule which says that captains must not punch each other in the face. Yet, sportsmen do the former (and not the latter) because that is the civilised thing to do.

To walk off at the end of a game, ignoring the opposition, is churlish. If the spirit of sport must take a backseat when a dastardly attack on innocent people is involved, as India's captain said, then have the guts to go the whole hog and refuse to play Pakistan anywhere. Pakistan haven't come up smelling of roses either. Their plea to sack the match referee is, like the Indian team's gesture, meant to appease the constituency back home. Governments want to have their cake and eat it too. It is to the advantage of politicians on either side to keep the kettle boiling. Hypocrisy is thus built into the relationship. Poor skipper Suryakumar Yadav, a gentleman cricketer. He had to come across as boorish and ill-mannered because his government which finds it more convenient to deal in symbolism than in forthrightness, didn't want to get its hands dirty. It is politics as performative art. For some years now it has seemed as if multi-team tournaments — the World Cups, Champions Trophy, Asia Cup — are held so India can play Pakistan twice each time, if not thrice. They are placed in the same group, likely to qualify for the next group, and if the prayers of the television gods are answered, meet in the final too. Part of the entertainment lies in

the way television anchors get apoplexy in the build-up. This time one such, overwound by the powers, frothed at the mouth while appealing to the likes of Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid to boycott the match. Haven't you made enough money, he asked of Sourav Ganguly, so why don't you take on the Board of Control for Cricket in India? It was hilarious. And pathetic. As he would have known, it is not the players past or current who decide if India play Pakistan. It is not even the Board of Control for Cricket in India, which in recent years has been an arm of the government anyway, but the government itself which gives the green signal. Still, when fake nationalisms clash, it is safest to pounce on individuals. In any case, surely a government that has taken credit for ending the continuing war in Ukraine can decide whether or not to play in a cricket tournament. Tendulkar can safely ignore the rant of His Masters Voice, but the Indian skipper can't go against the wishes of the governing body which thought up the wheeze of leaving hands unshaken, and eyes uncontacted. That way the cricket fans get their India-Pakistan match, and the bhakts have the symbolism to cheer. If India win — as they are likely to — further symbolism can be poured into the contest; some anchor somewhere might even tell us that beating Pakistan in a cricket match is compensation for losing a relative in the Pahalgam attack. Comparing apples and oranges is a television specialty. India have participated in sporting boycotts before. For decades they didn't meet South Africa in any sport owing to that country's policy of apartheid. In 1974, they forfeited the Davis Cup tennis final rather than play South Africa. Whether India should boycott Pakistan or not is not the burden of this column; official cynicism is. Pakistan know that regardless of how the loudmouths feel, India will find a way to play against them, even if they themselves have to swallow various insults, from shifts in venues to missing handshakes. Their cricket can't do without India. The reverse is not even remotely true. India don't need Pakistan except as a convenient 'other' and as a necessary cog in the wheel of television's most profitable rivalry. India's Pakistan policy in cricket might not be the most honest, but it has been lucrative, and celebrated as a happy compromise.

'Travesty when your name is lost among so many': Ex-India opener questions Rituraj Gaikwad's absence from IND A squads

GNS News Agency, March 11

Former India opener Aakash Chopra has questioned the absence of Maharashtra batter Rituraj Gaikwad from the multi-format India A squads recently announced by the national selection committee, lamenting that the Chennai Super Kings (CSK) captain's name has been lost in a vast emerging pool of batting talent. While Chopra had previously admitted Gaikwad's omission from the India A red-ball squad for the ongoing series against Australia A in Lucknow was "not due to selectors' favouritism or bias", he was surprised that the 28-year-old missed the cut for the three-match 50-overs games, due to begin in Kanpur from September 30.

After being ruled out of the IPL 2025 season with a fractured elbow in April, Gaikwad was benched for both games during India A's red-ball tour to England in June and later omitted from the set-up. Gaikwad returned to action earlier this month in the Duleep Trophy semi-finals, scoring 184 and 16 for West Zone. "The question is extremely important because he has scored runs. I agree he was injured for some time. However, he scored runs in the Duleep Trophy as well, where Rajat Patidar also scored runs. It's praiseworthy that two back-to-back IPL-winning captains lifted domestic trophies as well," Chopra said on YouTube. Chopra highlighted Gaikwad's white-ball prowess by recollecting his T20I century against Australia and his leadership abilities during India's victorious Asia Games campaign two years ago. "Shreyas Iyer did that, and Rajat Patidar has also done it. It seems like captaincy is suiting Rajat Patidar. Coming to



Rituraj Gaikwad, he scored a century against Australia in Guwahati and is a technically compact player. He was the captain in the Asian Games. We won the Asian Games under Rituraj's captaincy. He is a very, very good player," he added. "It's a slight travesty that your name gets lost among so many names. However, I can understand the Indian selection, but I feel it's not right if his name doesn't come for India-A both in multi-day and one-dayers," Chopra added. "His name should be there somewhere or other. He is too good a player to actually miss out completely from every single thing. That is what I feel," Chopra observed. With Gaikwad missing out on the India A games and is likely to not be considered at the start of the home Test season, he is expected to return to action only through the Ranji Trophy, starting October 15.

China Masters Super 750: Lakshya Sen's Hong Kong Open momentum frittered away as he loses in straight games against Toma Junior Popov

GNS News Agency, March 11

File image of shuttler Lakshya Sen during a training session at Indira Gandhi stadium in New Delhi during the Yonex-Sunrise India Open 2022. (BAI Photo) File image of shuttler Lakshya Sen during a training session at Indira Gandhi stadium in New Delhi during the Yonex-Sunrise India Open 2022. (BAI Photo) It's been a strange old season for Lakshya Sen. After two first-round exits to start the year, he played one of his best matches of the year at the All England Open to defeat Jonatan Christie in straight games, then promptly lost in the next round. Then a few more early exits followed, before he showed glimpses of returning to form at the Macau Open, reaching the semifinals. It seemed he was building up good momentum going into the World Championships in Paris, but then came the draw from hell as he was pitted against world No 1 Shi Yu Qi in the first round, where he lost despite playing a fairly decent match. Coming out of the Worlds disappointment, he put together a fine run at the Hong Kong Open last week to reach his first final since last November. But on Wednesday, that hard-earned momentum was lost once more as he tamely exited the China Masters Super 750 without much of a fight, losing 11-21, 10-21 against France's Toma Junior Popov in just 30 minutes. Popov made the better start to the match, opening up a 5-3 lead after a really tight net exchange, perhaps an area where Lakshya would have expected to control coming into the match. A big booming smash to Lakshya's backhand from the middle of the court saw the Frenchman take an 8-3 lead, followed by another down-the-line smash from the deep forehand corner, kissing the sideline for 10-3. Lakshya's attacks seemed to lack any zing, while he wasn't as sharp in defence as he was against Chou Tien Chen last week, going into the interval with a massive 3-11 deficit.

Out of the interval, Lakshya seemed to take more initiative; he missed a couple of shuttles when aiming for the lines to either flank of Popov, but at least now he was going for the lines, clawing his way back to 9-15 with an up-tempo midcourt exchange. But it happened to be only a flash in the pan as Popov ran away with the opening game. At 1-6 in the second game, Lakshya's frustration came out as he half-smashed, not the shuttle, but his racket after harmlessly sending a cross-lift beyond the baseline. Then, a moment of controversy. Popov's smash to Lakshya's backhand side



was seemingly called wide by the line judge (not visible on the one-camera broadcast setup for Court 3), and the Indian was celebrating the point. Popov looked mystified from the other end when it was called out and sought the intervention of the chair umpire, who gave the point to the Frenchman, leaving Lakshya confused and frustrated. There was more arching of the head backward soon after as he missed a bread-and-butter inside-out smash to trail 4-11 in Game 2. As Popov dominated the net to win a superb flat rally and go up 14-6, the writing was on the wall for Lakshya. On Sunday, Lakshya had spoken about building momentum on the tour after his impressive run to the final, taking out a couple of his national teammates, HS Prannoy and Ayush Shetty, and more importantly, coming through a thriller in the semi-final against Chou. "A good week... especially coming back from World Championships where things didn't go as planned, but I think we had trained well for it," Lakshya had told BWF. "Three weeks, four weeks we had put in a good work, so now it was time that I keep the momentum up because even at the World Champs it was a really good match (against eventual champion Shi Yu Qi), a close match that I lost. So, a lot of positives to take from this tournament, especially winning good matches in three-setters. A lot of positives to take, a lot of the things that I did back maybe two months, three months back are helping, so I just want myself to believe in myself more and keep going." It was perhaps the physical exertions from the long matches in Hong Kong — although that can hardly be an excuse when a veteran like Chou Tien Chen turns up week in and week out to beat younger players, as he showed against Ayush Shetty on Tuesday.

Why a 16-year-old high-schooler from New Jersey started an online chess programme for schoolgirls from Madhya Pradesh's Betul



GNS News Agency, March 11

It's a Saturday evening and a Google Meet session is humming with frantic chess activity. A group of schoolgirls in a Madhya Pradesh town called Betul is hooked on to their cellphones from their homes. Chess pieces flit from one square to another on their screens as the instructor, Iris Mou, a Woman International Master (WIM) based in New York, pauses to ask the girls what their next logical move should be. For two months, as many as 75 schoolgirls have attended online sessions such as these for a programme called Checkmate Betul. The initiative is the brainchild of a 16-year-old high-schooler from New Jersey, Avika Shukla, who was struck by the gaping gender disparity in chess and decided to do something about it.

"The initial thought regarding Checkmate Betul came when I was playing in chess tournaments and realised that I didn't really have any female friends that played the sport. I realised this was a problem. When I used to play chess events in India — and then, even after moving to the US — I found the gender divide in chess very fascinating considering that it's a mental sport," says Shukla, currently specialising in electrical engineering and computer science at Edison Academy Magnet School in New Jersey. "There should be no reason for a gender divide. I did some initial research and figured out that only one in seven chess players are girls. In my own personal experience in tournaments, if there are maybe 100 players, there will only be about five girls." After moving to the US with her parents seven years ago, Shukla got involved with an organisation called Queens United Chess, an initiative that focuses on teaching chess to schoolgirls. "As part of that, we were teaching kids who were privileged and had other chess opportunities available to them. But while visiting Betul, I realised that similar opportunities were not there for girls. Kids there didn't really have a concept of after-school activities or after-school clubs like we have in the USA. That's how Checkmate Betul was conceived," Shukla tells The Indian Express. The idea was simple: get established women players to teach chess virtually across the year to schoolgirls in Betul — Shukla's hometown which she visits for a month or two with her parents every year.

Shukla calls the concept, "Girls teaching girls chess." What is remarkable about the programme is that many of the eight trainers or mentors in Checkmate Betul are teenagers themselves and hail from various corners around the world. Mou, a WIM from New York City, is one of the top youth players in the US. Then there's Woman Candidate Master Zara Majid, who hails from the Cayman Islands. There is also Christina Aziz, a FIDE arbiter and chess educator based in Gambia. The others who help with coaching are from New Jersey and California. So far, seven schools from Betul have signed up and a few more are likely to join

soon. The first session was held in July this year. Shukla first enlisted support from the principals of the seven schools to partner for the pilot project.

"We saw a great chance for girls from our school to get exposure to chess from good players. We saw many benefits for the girls. Learning the sport will help these girls with critical thinking skills as well," says Sister Jovina, the principal of Little Flower Convent School, which has 25 girls in the sessions. A regular online session for Checkmate Betul lasts for around 90 minutes with one of the mentors hosting the session where they explain basic concepts like pins, forks and checkmating patterns via Google Meet. A regular online session for Checkmate Betul lasts for around 90 minutes with one of the mentors hosting the session where they explain basic concepts like pins, forks and checkmating patterns via Google Meet. Shukla also started reaching out to female players around the world via social media asking if they would be interested in offering chess coaching to schoolgirls in India. Shukla says that since she plans to pursue engineering, her chess initiative will not directly help her earn any extra credits. But she's glad that running the programme has helped her with soft skills like leading an international team. The initiative also has assistance from Chess.com, which provided the schoolgirls premium subscriptions to the ChessKids app for use on their cellphones. A regular online session of Checkmate Betul lasts around 90 minutes with one of the mentors explaining basic concepts like pins, forks and checkmating patterns via Google Meet. It's an interactive session where the girls answer which move is the best based on the positions on the board. Tanishka Singh Verma, a Standard XII (PCM) student, a regular in the classes, says she knew a bit of chess, but after the sessions, has taken a bigger interest in the sport. "Getting to learn concepts from international players has been great. I've learnt something new in every class. The way of teaching in these classes is very helpful," she says. For the last two months, as many as 75 school girls from schools in Madhya Pradesh's Betul have attended online sessions for the Checkmate Betul programme. For the last two months, as many as 75 school girls from schools in Madhya Pradesh's Betul have attended online sessions for the Checkmate Betul programme. Rather than a session just being about chess, the girls are also encouraged to ask questions about their own lives and career paths. "The idea is to expose these girls to other role models, because part of the problem that we noticed in the girl chess community was that there was a lack of genuine role models that one can easily connect with," says Shukla. Each session ends with the girls being given 'homework' of puzzles, which they solve using the ChessKids app. The girls are divided into three batches around the week — Monday-Wednesday, Tuesday-Thursday, Wednesday-Saturday — based on their preference. After only two months of teaching, there is already talk of getting the players to compete in online tournaments from November. "The challenge was how we can take these girls from being beginners to playing their first tournaments soon. We have a few students that left us very pleasantly surprised with the promise they've shown, considering we started to teach them from square one," Shukla adds. There are also plans to expand the programme. Shukla says she's already been approached by Wisdom World School in Madhya Pradesh's Katni. But the ultimate goal is to try and expand past state borders. "We want to connect with girls in India who play chess to see if they can start their own 'Checkmate Chapters' in their schools with our curriculum to take this across India," says Shukla.

Juventus 4-4 Borussia Dortmund: Here's how the UEFA Champions League instant classic played out in Turin

GNS News Agency, March 11

For 51 minutes, there were no goals in the Uefa Champions League match between Juventus and Borussia Dortmund in Turin on Tuesday night. And then, the floodgates opened and how. In the next 40 minutes and change, a total of EIGHT goals flew in — some of them truly spectacular — as Juventus scored two late injury time goals thanks to Dusan Vlahovic and Lloyd Kelly, to snatch a 4-4 draw against German giants Dortmund. The hosts trailed 4-2 when substitute Vlahovic grabbed his second of the night in the fourth minute of stoppage time, before he set up Kelly two minutes later to secure a point. Man-of-the-match Vlahovic, who came on just before the hour mark, was disappointed not to have completed his hat-trick.

"To prove yourself you always need hunger. I'm never satisfied and tonight I wanted a third goal," he told Sky Sport. "The important thing is we didn't lose, so we keep moving forward."

Juventus scored four goals for a second straight match after their 4-3 league win over Inter Milan on Saturday, but coach Igor Tudor stressed the need for his side to tighten up defensively. "I've already had enough of this type of match," he told Sky Sport Italia. "We are conceding too many, at least we're scoring a lot too, but we cannot carry on like this. It was so difficult in the second half to keep the energy levels up three days after an incredibly tough match." The 4-4 result, according to Uefa, has equalled the record for the highest-scoring draw in the competition's history. According to the stat platform Squawka, the thriller in Turin was only the second Uefa Champions League game ever with 8 second-half goals. The previous instances was Bayern Munich 9-2 Dinamo Zagreb exactly one year back.

The first half gave little indication of the drama to follow, with Juventus going closest when Khephren Thuram's deflected strike forced a sharp save from Dortmund goalkeeper Gregor Kobel. Dortmund found the breakthrough eight minutes after the restart as Karim Adeyemi rifled a precise shot into the far corner from just outside the box. A fine strike, his first of the season, that set Dortmund on their way. They nearly doubled their lead when Serhou Guirassy was denied by a reflex stop from Juventus keeper Michele Di Gregorio. The hosts drew level in the 63rd minute through Kenan Yildiz, who collected the ball on the edge of the area, steadied himself and bent a superb shot into the far corner to ignite the Juventus fans. Yildiz, who had a sensational match for Juve, curled it perfectly over the Dortmund goalkeeper for undisputedly the goal of the match, prompting comparisons to another famous Juve strike against Dortmund, scored by the incomparable Alessandro del Piero. The celebrations were short-lived, however, as Felix Nmecha restored Dortmund's advantage barely two minutes later with a crisp first-time finish from distance. It was



another lovely side-footed curling shot on goal that the goalkeeper had no chance to save. The game's tempo showed no sign of slowing, and by the 68th minute, Juventus were level once more, Vlahovic racing onto a perfectly weighted pass to slot past Kobel. Vlahovic was starting to make his presence felt after coming on as a sub.

Eight Indian shooters qualify for ISSF World Cup Final 2025 in Doha

Hyderabad: Eight Indian shooters have secured their places in the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Final 2025, scheduled to be held in Doha, Qatar, from December 04-09, 2025. Double Olympic medalist Manu Bhaker, is the only Indian shooter to have made the cut in two events, the women's 10m air pistol and the women's 25m pistol, for the year ending ISSF showpiece, which determines the international Shooting season's best shooter, in each of the 12 individual Olympic events. Indian shooters have made the cut in five of the 12 events that will feature in the season-ending competition in Doha, an ISSF Prize money event. Besides Manu, leading the charge for India in Doha, will be teenager Suruchi Singh, who emerged as the breakout star of the year, dominating the women's 10m air pistol with three back-to-back gold medals in Buenos Aires, Lima, and Munich, not only qualifying for Doha, but also securing the number one rank in the world in women's air pistol which she holds currently. Olympian Esha Singh also qualified in the women's 10m air pistol event, with her gold medal winning performance in the fourth and final ISSF World Cup in Ningbo, China. Others who have qualified include former world champion Rudrankh Balasaheb Patil, who booked his spot in the men's 10m air rifle with a gold medal in Buenos Aires, while Olympian Arjun Babuta, ensured his presence in the same event, with a silver in Lima.

Ahaan Panday-Aneet Padda's Saiyaara tops Netflix global non-English films list with 3.7 million views, ahead of Inspector Zende and Kingdom



After ringing the cash registers at the box office during its theatrical release, Mohit Suri's Saiyaara is now ruling the OTT world as well. The film released on Netflix last Friday and within just five days, it has become the top most streamed non-English film on the platform. Saiyaara has garnered 3.7 million views and 9.3 million hours viewed. The platform shared a video featuring the film's lead actors — Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda. They said in the clip, "For giving Saiyaara all the love in the world, we love you forever and ever and ever. Saiyaara is trending globally on Netflix, only because of you. Thank you for watching and rewatching, and rewatching." The caption read, "Saiyaara is now trending at #1 globally in Non-English Films on Netflix ????. Watch Saiyaara, out

now on Netflix." Saiyaara was also the most-watched film in nine countries including Mauritius, Bangladesh, Bahrain, India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Oman, Pakistan and the UAE.

While Saiyaara made it to the top of the list, other Indian films like Manoj Bajpayee's Inspector Zende and Vijay Deverakonda's Kingdom also secured a spot in the global top 10. Inspector Zende stood at the 3rd spot with 6.2 million hours, while Kingdom was at the 9th spot with 2.5 million hours. Saiyaara even left behind German erotic thriller Fall For Me, which currently holds the 2nd spot with 6.5 million hours viewed. Like its theatrical performance, Saiyaara exceeded expectations on streaming too, as none of the major Hindi films released on Netflix this year managed to achieve this ranking. In fact, Vicky Kaushal's Chhaava had peaked at the 4th spot after its Netflix release. Theatrically, Saiyaara is the second highest-earning Hindi film of the year after Vicky Kaushal's Chhaava. The film made Rs 329.2 crore in domestic collections, while its lifetime worldwide collection stands at Rs 569.75 crore, according to Sacnilk. The Mohit Suri directorial had made a lot of noise upon its theatrical release and turned out to be the year's surprise hit. Starring two newcomers, the film struck a chord with youngsters across the country. It garnered favourable reviews and emerged as a blockbuster thanks to strong word-of-mouth promotion.

When Lokah star Kalyani's mother Lissy opened up about her 'ugly' divorce from Priyadarshan: 'Had a fierce, uncivilised battle on and off the courts'

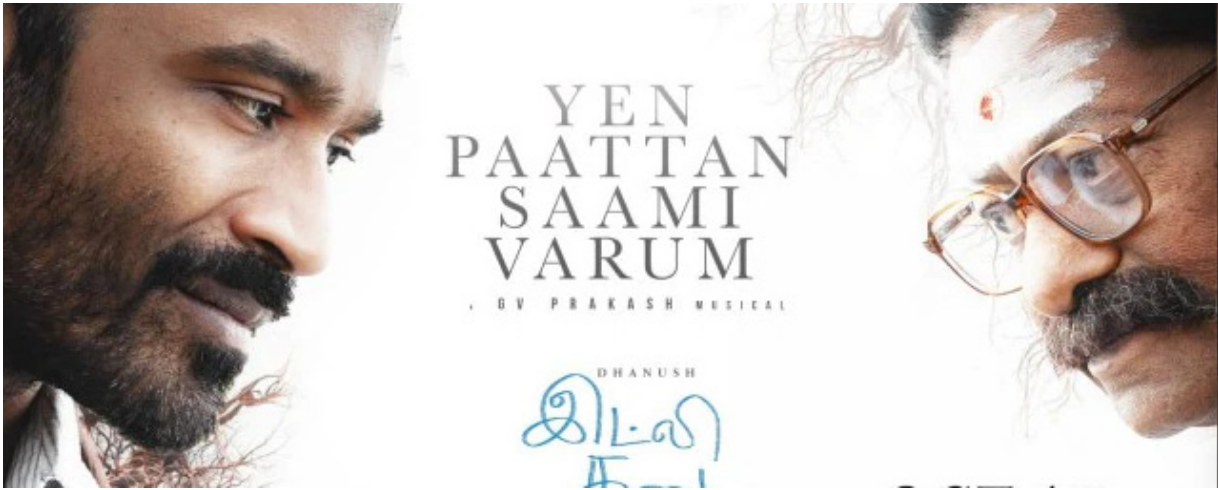
Kalyani Priyadarshan is probably on cloud ten right now — having soared well past cloud nine — as her superhero film Lokah Chapter 1: Chandra is gearing up to become the highest-grossing Malayalam film of all time. Reportedly, its current worldwide gross (Rs 252.9 crore) is just a few crores short of the industry hit L2: Empuraan (Rs 265.5 crore), starring Mohanlal in the lead role. For Kalyani, who had been facing intense criticism for the past few years over her perceived poor acting skills, the blockbuster success of Lokah is nothing less than a shot in the arm.

Subsequently, Lissy issued a statement to the media, wherein she mentioned that their divorce was as ugly as their marriage. "My marriage with Mr Priyadarshan officially ended today. We both signed the final papers at the Honourable Family Court here in Chennai. This has been a real ordeal. In recent times, all celebrity divorces — from Hrithik Roshan and Sussane Khan, Dileep and Manju Warrier, to most recently Amala Paul and AL Vijay — have been mutually agreed divorces. I am sure it also must have been painful to those couples, but whatever differences they may have had, they all decided to respect each other. Ours was the only exception where it was often a fierce and uncivilised battle on and off the courts until a compromise was reached at the Honourable High Court, Chennai. Perhaps the ugliness of our divorce proceedings says all about the kind of marriage we have had," Onmanorama quoted her as saying in the statement. She added, "Anyways, I feel relieved now. This is the end of a long and often very difficult road. All of us can now move on. I thank all my lawyers, friends and well-wishers for their unconditional support and prayers. I thank those friends in the media who have been kind with their words. I am grateful to both my children for all their love, affection and support. Above all, I thank God Almighty." In another interview, Priyadarshan cited "ego" as the reason behind their split. Talking to Grihalakshmi, he said, "The only reason for the problem in my family was ego. I was born and brought up in a conservative family, and in my mind, the model of a woman is my mother. When we marry, we should not expect our partner to have the same nature as that of our mother because it is not possible, as she is from a different generation." "My parents also loved Lissy more than my sister. All these years I was living in heaven, and now we are separated. But my house (in Chennai) still bears the same name: Priyadarshan-Lissy. I know that, irrespective of whatever has happened, she still respects me. It was just a problem of ego," he added. Priyadarshan also heaped praise on her parenting skills. "She is the best mother in the world. She brought up our children



in a very simple manner and instilled in them the values of life and money," he maintained. Kalyani also opened up once about her parents' divorce, stating that she was initially shocked upon hearing that they were planning to part ways. "It always takes a toll. It is not like divorce will never affect anybody. But I applaud my parents for they never really put us in hell. Whatever, emotionally, they were going through... they made sure they never took that out at home. Obviously, the divorce was a shock, but today we are all the happiest we could be... we are at peace, and I think my relationship with my parents is much stronger now. That is the most important thing," she told. Priyadarshan and Lissy tied the knot in 1990 while both were at the peak of their respective careers. However, following their marriage, Lissy gave up acting. Aside from Kalyani, they also have a son, Siddharth. Although Kalyani began her acting career in Telugu, playing the lead role in Hello (2017) opposite Akhil Akkineni, and appeared in two Tamil movies subsequently, it was her maiden Malayalam film Varane Avashyamund (2020) that brought her fame.

Idli Kadai song 'Yen Paattan Saami Varum': Dhanush's film debuts the best song of the album.



The third single from Dhanush starrer Idli Kadai came out recently. The lyrical video titled 'Yen Paatan Saami Varum', composed by G V Prakash Kumar, has vocals rendered by Anthony Dasan. There is a melancholy feel to this track, which is about hope. The lyrical video features Dhanush, Rajkiran, and the young actor playing Dhanush's childhood portions in the film. G V Prakash Kumar had expressed his desire to break free of the 'trend-based' song culture in Tamil cin-

ema, and all three songs released from the movie feel like a welcome change to rooted, rural songs based on the cultural specificity of the milieu in which the story of Idli Kadai takes place. The song is penned by Dhanush, who is also writing and directing Idli Kadai. The video also features some behind-the-scenes moments from the film's making with Dhanush directing Arun Vijay on set.

Big Boss 19's Tanya Mittal says she sold Re 1 matchbox at Rs 65, business gained 20,000 customers in 6 months: 'Young couples made me a millionaire'



Tanya Mittal began to make headlines the moment she walked into the Big Boss 19 house. The self-proclaimed millionaire became the centre of entertainment when she made over-the-top claims of owning 150 bodyguards, 800 staff and a seven star hotel like house in Gwalior. While she continues to entertain people in the reality show, she won the title of Miss Asia about six years ago. In an old TEDx Talk video, Tanya shared the secret of her success and the people who made her a millionaire.

Sharing her journey, Tanya shared: "When I was in school and college, I was not among the coolest children in the class. I didn't have any friend because after school I used to spend time with children from slums and learnt new things from them. I did a lot of speaking courses and today I master 53 crafts." Sharing the reason behind starting her business, Tanya shared: "When I started Handmadelove

(her gifting company), I thought there is a problem with people that they cannot make each other smile. There is so much sadness. When I entered with my business, I made them smile. I targeted youths who were in relationships. They were all couples, who bought my products for gifting. These young couples made me one of the millionaires in the country in just 2 years."

In the video, Tanya also shared her profit margin. "In Handmadelove, I sell matchboxes. It is my star product because it gives me my biggest profit margin. A match box is worth Rs 1. But I sell it for Rs 65 because I have mastered crafts, I draw something on it and I get Rs 64 for my idea and talent. This is 99% profit. I didn't have any workers in my company. I did everything single handedly. I made the product, packed the product and even couriered them. In 6 months, I had about 20,000 customers across India." However, things went downhill when she started to receive complaints from her customers. "This one time, about 30 parcels that I delivered were broken. All the customers called me up and yelled at me for poor packaging. My company was in loss, I had to return money to all these customers. I cried a lot, doubted myself. Next day, went to the courier office, asked them to teach me, paid them double and started again." Tanya also shared her episode of entering beauty pageants. She said: "When I went to the beauty institute, they turned me down."

They said I was fat. I told them, 'I was a millionaire', they said, 'So? You are still fat. You cannot participate in pageants or do modelling.' I said, 'Okay, I will come back to you in a week.' I lost 4 kgs because she said I can't do it." She claimed, "Today, I teach 300 children from slums and my parents are yet to believe that they have someone like me in their family." Previously, talking about the reason behind joining beauty pageants, Tanya shared: "I was in a relationship when my boyfriend broke up with me saying I was not pretty. I went into depression, then groomed myself and learnt how to put makeup."

Akshay Kumar refuses Navjot Singh Sidhu's praise after cricketer says Kapil Sharma 'can cause a riot' in a graveyard: 'Mujhe paise de do'

The Great Indian Kapil Show is all set to wrap up its third season on Netflix with a special episode starring actor Akshay Kumar. On Wednesday, the makers of the show dropped its trailer giving a glimpse of the episode which is dedicated to the stuntmen of Bollywood—a unit Akshay closely associates himself with. The video started with Akshay's grand entry which caught the attention of Kapil Sharma. He asked: "Why so many girls? Are you working in Kis Kis Ko Pyaar Karoon?" To this, Akshay Kumar replied: "This man received his first break after 15 years of struggle."

He then said: "Usually, you are punctual... but why are you so late to our show given it is our third season and last episode?" Akshay Kumar quipped: "Because you didn't pay me." Kapil Sharma then shared: "He is very impressive in actioners. But is there any course to learn romance or is it the personal experience that comes handy?" Akshay Kumar replied: "We do have a course for romance and also make use of personal experience and the person who teaches us this is our wives." He then asked the audience: "If you agree with me, please nod your heads in agreement." Akshay then joked: "All of you are cheaters here." He then introduced his friends from the stunt unit and shared: "I consider myself a stuntman first and then an actor." Akshay Kumar credited



the stuntmen for his career as he said: "Mere liye asli heroes yeh hai... inki wajah se mera career hai (They are my heroes. It is because of them that I have a career today)." They even took part in several activities on stage where Akshay Kumar performed stunts with Kiku Sharda, Sunil Grover and Krushna Abhishek, among others. At the end, Navjot Singh Sidhu praised Kapil Sharma as he regarded him as the only comedian who 'can raise a riot in a graveyard'. When he moved to Akshay to praise him, the actor quipped: "I don't need praise, please give me cash, I shall be fine."

'Abhishek Bachchan is an amazing actor, but lazy,' says Prahlad Kakkar as he's asked about controversial comment questioning actor's career despite 17 flops

Ad guru Prahlad Kakkar, who was once supposed to make his filmmaking debut with a project starring Abhishek Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai, reflected on his past controversial comments about Abhishek. Many years ago, Prahlad had wondered how Abhishek still has a career in films, after his poor track record at the box office. He said that Bollywood was a 'mom and pop business' more than an industry, implying that Abhishek was getting by purely on the power of his father Amitabh Bachchan's name. In a new interview, Prahlad said that he shouldn't have singled Abhishek out and kept his statement generic, but he proceeded to describe him as a 'lazy actor'.

In an interview with journalist Vicky Lalwani, Prahlad said that his planned feature filmmaking debut fell through because the producer he was collaborating with was a 'crook'. He also revealed that Aishwarya was never in favour of working with the man in the first place, as she had heard rumours about him being a 'wife-beater', and she didn't want to have anything to do with him. Prahlad said that Aishwarya was the 'queen bee' even during her pageant days, and that he had predicted she would become the next Madhubala. He said that he continues to admire Aishwarya for the dignity that she shows in the face of adversity.

But, when asked about Abhishek, he said, "I believe that Abhishek is a great actor, but he's just lazy. He's amazing, he's just lazy." Revisiting his old comments, he said, "The discussion was about the industry. And I said that it's not an industry. It's a mom-and-pop shop. How is it an industry? There's nothing professional about it. The only thing professional about it is the technicians. The actors, the directors, the families that produce are not technicians. They're not professionals. They're moody and haphazard; that's why films take two-three years to make. And they're so star-dependent. Everybody is picked from families; it's such a system of nepotism. I asked that if somebody else had 17 flops like Abhishek had, would he still be getting work?" Back when Prahlad made his comments about Abhishek, the actor took to social media to hit back. "I love Prahlad Kakkar, he should be a stand-up comic not an ad-filmmaker. Maybe



then someone will take him seriously! This coming from a man who makes commercials with his own son. Hmmm. Oh ya, Prahlad, I'm already in the Guinness book of world records and a very proud son. I hope you give your sons an opportunity to say the same someday," he wrote, making a reference to his Guinness recognition for doing the most number of promotional events in 12 hours, for Delhi 6. Prahlad said that he had a conversation with Abhishek, and that they buried the hatchet. "My mistake was taking his name. I shouldn't have. That was out of line. But there are so many cases of people in the film industry who are from families who are given chance after chance," he said, defending himself against Abhishek's allegation that he himself hired his son in his commercials. Prahlad said that he didn't, and that his son was chosen by the agency he worked for. He said that Abhishek called him and seemingly forgave him, but through it all, it was Aishwarya who stood up for him. She told her family that Prahlad is a 'motormouth', and that his comments shouldn't be taken seriously.