

## Telangana wins bronze in 7th South Zone Throwball Championship

Hyderabad: Telangana men's throwball team won the bronze medal in the 17th South Zone Throwball Championship in Tirupati.

In the league matches, Telangana defeated Karnataka by 15-12, 15-11 and Pondicherry by 15-06, 15-09. In another league match, Telangana lost to Andhra Pradesh in a closely contested game by 15-11, 13-15, 14-16.

## Speaker's ruling on BRS MLAs sparks debate over anti-defection law

Hyderabad: The Speaker's verdict on petitions seeking disqualification of ten MLAs who allegedly defected from the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has triggered a political and legal debate, with critics questioning whether the ruling could redefine the interpretation of the Anti-Defection Law.Geographic Reference

According to the ruling delivered by Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar, there was insufficient evidence to take punitive action against the ten BRS MLAs whose defection had created a stir in Telangana politics.

## Govt bars LPG refill for consumers with piped gas connection, resumes commercial supply

New Delhi, March 14

In a major move aimed at rationalising the distribution of cooking gas amid panic bookings across India, the Centre on Saturday barred domestic LPG connections for homes that already have piped natural gas (PNG) supplies.



In a parallel move, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said it had resumed commercial LPG cylinder distribution for select industries across states. This decision was taken after a high-powered panel set up by the government interacted with stakeholders and state governments and decided to restore commercial LPG supplies for certain sectors. The move is expected to ease the burden on several industries, especially the hospitality sector, which has been hit hard by LPG shortages.

Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary in the ministry, said the LPG supply remained a "matter of concern" amid the current conflict situation but "no stockouts have been reported so far".

Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri had on Thursday said that 20 per cent of the average monthly commercial LPG requirement would be allocated by oil marketing companies (IOC, BPCL and HPCL) in coordination with state governments to prevent hoarding or black marketing.

Meanwhile, the Centre amended the Liquefied Pe-

roleum Gas (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order, 2000, making households with piped natural gas (PNG) connections ineligible to retain or obtain domestic LPG connections. The move is also aimed at better channelling essential cooking gas supplies.

Households with PNG connections have been asked to surrender their domestic LPG connections. The amendment seeks to prevent duplication of subsidised domestic fuel connections, sources said.

The ministry notified the amendment under Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, which was invoked on March 9 to enable regulation in the distribution of natural gas.

The original order was issued to regulate the supply, distribution and use of LPG in the country. Since then, it has been amended several times to reflect changes in the energy distribution system and consumer access to cooking fuel.

The latest amendment reflects the expansion of PNG networks across urban areas and aims to streamline domestic fuel usage by discouraging households from holding both PNG and LPG connections simultaneously.

Any person who already has a PNG connection and also holds a domestic LPG connection will now be required to immediately surrender the LPG connection. Such consumers will not be allowed to obtain refills of domestic LPG cylinders from government oil companies or their distributors.

The notification also bars individuals with existing PNG connections from applying for new domestic LPG connections or obtaining LPG refills in the future.

It further places restrictions on government oil companies. Under the revised Schedule-I of the order, oil companies will be barred from issuing domestic LPG connections or supplying cylinder refills to consumers who already have piped natural gas connections.

Officials said the move was intended to prevent duplication of domestic cooking fuel connections and ensure more efficient distribution of LPG, particularly in areas where piped natural gas infrastructure was already available.



## TMC shielding infiltrators, its days numbered, says PM

New Delhi, March 14

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday addressed a rally in Kolkata and said the ruling Trinamool Congress was shielding infiltrators and that its days were numbered.

"Politics of intimidation and fear has become a weapon for the TMC. Voters are threatened during elections, critics of the government are threatened, the media is threatened and the Opposition is threatened. The entire country should know the atmosphere of fear that they want to create in Bengal," Modi said while addressing crowds at the historic Brigade Parade Ground.

He said such politics would not continue for long.

"The days of TMC's hooliganism are coming to an end. The countdown for the departure of the TMC government has begun. After the formation of a BJP government in Bengal, everyone will be held accountable," the PM announced in Kolkata.

He added that the TMC had been protecting illegals and was resisting citizenship certificates to Hindu refugees because they were not its vote banks.

Raising concerns about the political atmosphere in the state, the Prime Minister said, "The dangerous demo-

graphic changes in Bengal have made the state insecure. Today, open threats are being made. It is being said that people of a particular community will come together to eliminate others. Sitting in constitutional positions, such threats are being issued against crores of Bengalis. I want to ask -who are these people who claim they can eliminate crores of citizens at the signal of the TMC government?" asked Modi.

He said infiltration in many parts had transformed Hindu dominated areas into Hindu minority areas.

"Due to infiltration, Bengal's 'roti, beti and mati' are under threat. Jobs of local people are being snatched away, the security of our daughters is at risk and illegal encroachments are taking place. I assure the mothers and sisters of Bengal that under a BJP government, women will be safe and criminals will be behind bars," the PM said.

He said first the Congress, then the Communists and now the TMC kept coming one after another, filling their pockets while development work in Bengal remained stalled.

He also gave a call: "Paltano Dorkaar, Chai BJP Sorkaar." (Change is imminent).

## Assam Cong workers allege crores sought for poll ticket, seek Priyanka's intervention

Twelve grassroots Congress workers in Assam have written to Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, alleging that senior party leaders Jitendra Singh Alwar and Prithviraj Sathe demanded money worth crores in exchange for allocating the party ticket for the Srijangram Legislative Assembly Constituency (LAC).

In a memorandum addressed to Priyanka Gandhi, who is heading the candidates' scrutiny process, the workers questioned the selection of Nurul Islam as the Congress candidate for the upcoming Assam Assembly election, claiming the decision was influenced by money rather than merit.

The letter, signed by 12 grassroots workers and supporters from the constituency, sought her intervention in what they described as alleged irregularities in the candidate selection process.

"Complain regarding alleged irregularities in the selection of candidate for Srijangram LAC for the upcoming Assam Assembly Election," the letter read.

The workers alleged that during the recent visit of party leaders to the constituency, discussions around the ticket involved financial considerations.

"It has come to the knowledge of the grassroots workers of the party that two high-profile leaders of AICC, namely Jitendra Singh and Prithviraj Sathe, who have been entrusted with a visit role in the process of selecting candidates for the upcoming Assam Assembly Election, have allegedly collected a huge amount of money from under qualified candidate namely Nurul Islam," the memorandum said.



According to the complainants, Islam was selected despite lacking political standing in the constituency. They alleged that the candidate had "strong money power" and that this had influenced the decision. The workers urged Priyanka Gandhi to examine the issue and take corrective steps.

## CM directs Ministers to coordinate with Centre

Amaravati: Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday directed Ministers to coordinate with the Government of India to ensure adequate supply of cooking gas cylinders in Andhra Pradesh and take requisite steps to prevent inconvenience to the public.

The Chief Minister held a teleconference with Ministers to review the gas supply situation in the State. He asked them to engage with stakeholders, including representatives of the hotel industry, and take decisions based on ground realities.

Following the Chief Minister's directions, a Group of Ministers' meeting was held. Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav and Agriculture Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu attended in person, while Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar joined virtually. Representatives of oil companies and Civil Supplies officials were also present.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, the Ministers said there was no need for the public to panic. They acknowledged that global conflicts had caused some disruptions in gas supply chains but assured that measures were being taken to ensure that domestic consumers do not face shortages. An "Action Team" has been constituted to monitor the situation and coordinate with oil com-



panies. The Ministers said the Centre has increased domestic gas production and that priority will be given to hospitals, hostels, and essential services. Officials said anxiety among consumers had led to a surge in advance bookings. Currently, bookings have risen to 70-80 per cent, resulting in waiting periods of around 25 days in urban areas and up to 45 days in rural regions. The Ministers also warned oil companies against black marketing and said strict action would be taken against violators. No LPG cylinder should be delivered without OTP verification, ensuring transparency in distribution, they added.

## BRS not against Musi rejuvenation, but land grab attempts will be thwarted, says KTR

Hyderabad: Stressing that the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) was not against the River Musi rejuvenation project, BRS working president and former Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister KT Rama Rao said any attempt to grab lands and loot public resources in the name of the project would be strongly opposed.Geographic Reference

The BRS working president said that the Congress government's proposed Musi River project was not a genuine beautification initiative but a massive land grab scheme along the river.

"When the Namami Gange project was executed at a cost of Rs.42,000 crore, why was the Congress government planning to spend Rs.1.5 lakh crore for developing just 55 kms of the River Musi," Rama Rao asked at the "Musi Rejuvenation - PowerPoint Presentation vs Public Point" programme held at Himayat Sagar here on Saturday.

He said the River Musi could be developed without causing harm to the public or demolishing houses. The previous BRS government had already developed nearly six kilometres of the River Musi stretch in Uppal and Nagole successfully without demolishing a single house and with Rs.6 crore, he said.

According to Rama Rao, the BRS government had prepared a comprehensive Musi development plan with an estimated cost of nearly Rs.16,000 crore, which included an expressway along the river and several infrastructure improvements. Plans were also made to bring fresh water into the Musi through the Kaleshwaram project at an estimated cost of around Rs.1,100 crore.

"The Congress government is ignoring these practical and cost-effective plans. Instead, it is pursuing a massive project aimed at benefiting real estate interests along the river," Rama Rao alleged.



# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## Don't play around with BCCI

In what can be called as a 'better late than never' initiative, the National Sports Governance Bill 2025 that was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, appears, at least on paper, like a panacea for many of the ills besetting the sports fraternity in the country.

Although, this raises a glimmer of hope for all and sundry, the fact of the matter is that this ambitious attempt wherein the buck stops with the government, has to reckon with challenges one too many if the proposed norms are to become relevant and meaningful. Barring those into cricket and perhaps golf and the many who have relocated to foreign bases to make a name and pocket millions like some chess players, Indian athletes have forever remained an accursed lot, poor cousins of the stinking rich cricketers, if one goes by the meagre support from the government. The landmark Bill may help regulate the administrative set-up and prioritise athletes' interests, but it lags way behind when it comes to meeting the needs, especially as regards infrastructure and financial support, overseas exposure and hiring foreign coaches that can collectively be a morale-booster for every budding athlete.

The truth is that there has been an abysmal promotion of sports for decades together. One must also note that the administration has never been transparent, the entire system has been ridden with internal power struggles and an overwhelming political involvement that has rendered more harm than good. The tone of the Bill appears like it will address all issues and bring about a hitherto absent accountability and a legal framework to rejuvenate the entire administrative apparatus like mandating inclusion of athletes in every decision-making committee; National Sports Federation (NSF) to put in place an independent Ethics and Grievance Redressal Board; establishing an independent National Sports Board, a National Sports Tribunal and a National Sports Election Panel.

So far, so good! Alas the pitfall is that the government appears to be obsessed with the Olympics and focussing on the disciplines that figure in the global extravaganza. One should not forget that many such earlier attempts have ended up as non-starters, futile exercises or have boomeranged on the authorities. Ace paddler Achanta Sharath Kamal, who has welcomed the Bill, was bang on. "I think this athlete-centric bill has been much-awaited, not just by the players but also by all stakeholders involved in Indian sport. There are a lot of pending cases that are affecting the growth of a sports person and, thereby, the growth of Indian sports." The biggest problem that the government faces is in bringing the prized money-spinner, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) under its ambit.

It would be a herculean task to beard the world's richest cricketing body or force its authorities to follow any foolhardy diktat. Hoping to bring cricket under its control just because the sport is to debut as an Olympic event at Los Angeles in 2028 is nothing but Utopian daydreaming. Football has been an Olympic sport for ages but basketball, for all its much-hyped inclusion in Olympics, does not really attract the participation of the contemporary crème de la crème. Making cricket an Olympic sport is one thing and bringing the BCCI under the government ambit is quite another for the simple reason that the Board does not take any government funding. Moreover, trying to boss over the BCCI may result in a backlash by the players and millions of fans nay voters.

## Janasena Party's 13th Formation Day Celebrations

Aswaraopeta, March 14: On the occasion of the Janasena Party's 13th Formation Day, celebrations were held at the 'Amma Seva Sadan' (Old Age Home) in Aswaraopeta. Under the leadership of Janasena leader Muiyaboyina Umadevi, a cake was cut, and fruits were distributed to the elderly residents. Speaking on the occasion,



she asserted that in the upcoming elections, the Janasena Party flag would be seen fluttering in every street and corner of the Aswaraopeta constituency. She further clarified that the party would be strengthened, and unwavering support would be extended to all party workers. She noted that the membership enrollment drive is progressing at a rapid pace under the leadership of Vemula Karthik, the Janasena Party President for the Bhadradi Kothagudem district. She affirmed that they would provide their fullest cooperation to achieve the targeted membership goal. Gummalaposi, Ramakrishna, Pamidi Prasad, Bhanu, and others participated in this program.

## Iftar Dinner Held at Qutub Shahi Mosque Faheem Qureshi, Parameshwar Reddy Attend as Chief Guests



KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 13 (Indian Chronicle): "An Iftar dinner was held grandly at the Qutub Shahi Mosque in Ramanthapur on Friday evening. The event was organized under the leadership of

Ramanthapur Division Congress Party President Rafeeq. The program was attended as chief guests by Mohammed Faheem Qureshi, President and Vice Chairman of the Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions Society, and Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, Congress Party In-charge of the Uppal constituency. Speaking on the occasion, Faheem Qureshi and Parameshwar Reddy stated that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is implementing several initiatives for the welfare and development of minorities. They emphasized that the Congress Party has always been committed to working for the upliftment and welfare of minority communities. Among those who participated in the event were TPCC representative Taufiq, ST Cell District Chairman Ganesh Naik, Garika Sudhakar, former Youth Congress District President Kandi Shraavan Reddy, Uppal Youth Congress Assembly President Akarapu Arun Patel, Sandeep, Bhaskar, Bhaskar Gangaputra, Jilla Buran, Arun Sai, Nayeem, Shabbir, and several Congress leaders from Ramanthapur.

## The colours of summer are enchanting in Adilabad countryside



S. Harpal Singh, Adilabad, March 14: "Not many know that Adilabad district is equally enchanting in the summer months. The forests here boast of a plethora of flower bearing tree species which make the place beautiful during the spring season. One of the species which adds colour to the picturesque landscape is the modugu or palash tree (Butea monosperma). This tree is abundant in the forests of Adilabad and can be seen while travelling through any part of the united district. The resplendent flowers in red and orange colours are a treat to the eyes. Braving the severe heat of summer, many visitors come to this place during February and March to see the trees in full bloom. The palash also has a species called tella



modugu or the yellow palash found sparingly in the forests and sometimes by the side of the road. This is a rare species and has great medicinal value. According to an estimate there are only about five tella modugu trees in the district. The population of the regular palash, however, is estimated to be about five lakh across the erstwhile district. There is also a curious mahua or ippa tree (Madhuca indica and M. longifolia) which catches the eye of the passerby. The tree shows foliage or leaves of two different colours, i.e. red and green. According to botanists, the peculiar phenomenon could be due to different time of leafing on the same tree. This ippa chettu is located near Heerapur on the Utnoor-Hasanapur road.

## Ramzan Gift Kits Distributed by Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy - Ramzan gift kits distributed at Jama Masjid in DAE Colony and Mohammadiya Masjid in Krishna Nagar



NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 14, (Indian Chronicle): "KAPRA: Uppal Constituency Congress Party

In-charge Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy distributed Ramzan gift kits to members of the Muslim community on Saturday. The distribution programme was held at Jama Masjid in DAE Colony of A.S. Rao Nagar Division and Mohammadiya Masjid in Krishna Nagar Colony of H.B. Colony Division. Parameshwar Reddy attended the event as the chief guest and extended Ramzan greetings to the community. Former corporators Dhanpal Reddy, Bonthu Sridevi, Sitaram Reddy and Anji Reddy, along with former councillor Rajender, participated in the programme. Other leaders present included Vittal Naik, Nagilla Bal Reddy, Peddi Nagaraj, Peddi Srinu, Aziz, Battula Srikanth, Srikanth Reddy, Basha, Lingam, Malla Reddy, Prakash Reddy, Narendra, Santosh Chary, Kranthi, Tillu, Gopal Yadav, Chowdary, Guna Shekar, Raju and Hiralal Naik. Members of the HB Colony Division Masjid Committee, including Saleem, Taher, Pasha and Akbar, were also present. Local leaders such as Division President Polepaka Anjaiah, Kapra Saikiran Goud, Rayani Uday Kiran, Srinivas Mudiraj, Anil Gupta, Subbu, Suresh Goud, Venkat, Apparao, Malleshham, Samayya, Ganesh, Ramesh, Josh, Moosala Srinivas Reddy, Rupender Reddy, Krishna Naik, Mujeeb, Johnny Boy and Balaraju attended the programme.

## Media Should Function Impartially: Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy



NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 14, (Indian Chronicle): "Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy said that the media should function impartially and responsibly in society. He inaugurated the Telangana State Head Office of Metro Udayam Telugu and English daily newspapers along with Metro Udayam TV at Kushaiguda on Saturday. Speaking on the occasion, Lakshma Reddy stated that the media acts as a bridge between the government and the people and should work for the welfare and upliftment of poor, backward, and weaker sections of society. He said that true recognition for the media comes from highlighting public issues and contributing to their resolution. He appreciated the efforts of Metro Udayam newspapers for working in this direction. Former Cherlapally Corporator and former GHMC Standing Council Member Bonthu Sridevi Yadav said that media and politics share a direct relationship. She noted that the Bonthu family has played a significant role in the development of the city and added that the growth of political leaders is possible with the support of the media. Former Kapra Corporator Kotha Ramarao, BRS state leader Singireddy Somashekar Reddy, TRP Telangana State General Secretary Vadde Janayya Yadav, Vishwabrahmana Sangham Telangana State Women Secretary Sujatha, Metro Udayam Chairman Lakshminarayana, Deputy Chairman Satyanarayana, Telangana State In-charge CH Srihari, Honorary Presidents Ramamurthy and Bhadrappa Chary, Medchal Agricultural Market Committee Director Nagilla Bal Reddy, Congress Party Cherlapally Division President Singireddy Venkata Reddy, The Adarsh Bank Manager Srinivas, Kapra Press Club President Merugu Chandramohan, General Secretary Muthyam Mukesh Goud, Advisor Belide Ashok Gupta and others attended the event.

## CC road construction with Rs 8 lakh: MLA Chinta Prabhaka

Sangareddy Indian Chronicle Correspondent: March 14: "Sangareddy MLA and BRS District President Chinta Prabhakar inaugurated the CC road construction work in the village with 'NREGS' funds in Anantasagar village of Kondapur mandal in Sangareddy district on



Saturday. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Chinta Prabhakar said that the CC road construction work has been undertaken in the village at a cost of Rs 8 lakh. MLA Chinta Prabhakar assured that they will continuously work for the development of the villages. Kondapur BRS Mandal President Vitthal and locals participated in the program.

## Jana Sena Celebrates 13th Foundation Day with Enthusiasm in Sirpur Constituency

Indian Chronicle (Taj Khan), March 14: "The 13th Foundation Day celebrations of the Jana Sena Party were held with great enthusiasm under the party's leadership in Sirpur Taluka of Komaram Bheem District. Speaking at the event, Alluri Sai Kumar, Ad-hoc Committee Member of the United Adilabad District Youth Wing, along with district leader Eerla Sunil, said that the party would work



with dedication in the coming days to ensure that the Jana Sena flag flies high in the Sirpur constituency. During the program, several individuals were enrolled as active members of the party. The leaders also urged Jana Sena supporters to become active members before the membership registration deadline on the 17th of this month. They explained that the membership provides benefits such as insurance and accident coverage, which can be useful for common people.

## Rs 8.36 Lakh Funds Sanctioned for Development Works in Ramanthapur and Venkat Reddy Nagar Divisions

BRS cadres celebrate under the leadership of former corporator Gandham Jyotsna Nageshwar Rao

Residents express special thanks to former Mayor Vijayalakshmi and MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy for their efforts. Kishore Vaddepalli, Uppal, March 14 (Indian Chronicle): "Residents of Ramanthapur and Venkat Reddy Nagar have expressed happiness over the sanctioning of funds for several important development works in their areas. Local people conveyed their gratitude to former Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi, who sanctioned the funds, and Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, who



made efforts to secure these works. A total of 15 development works worth 8.36 lakh have been approved for Ramanthapur and Venkat Reddy Nagar divisions. These works include drainage construction, CC roads, box drains, community facilities, and development of burial grounds. Once completed, these projects are expected to significantly improve basic infrastructure and provide better facilities to residents of the colonies. The people of Ramanthapur and Venkat Reddy Nagar expressed special thanks to former Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi for sanctioning the funds and to MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy for his efforts in bringing these works to the area. On the occasion of the sanction of funds, BRS leaders and party cadres celebrated in Ramanthapur Division on Saturday under the leadership of former corporator Gandham Jyotsna Nageshwar Rao by bursting firecrackers. BRS leaders Pasula Prabhakar Reddy, Koppu Narsing Rao, Suram Shankar, Chand Pasha, Shankar Anna, Ken Chari, Manish, Apple Srinivas, Ale Ramesh, Faiyaz, Sameer, Sammadh, Mahender, Madduri Srinu, Sagar, Muthyala Madhu, Ravi, Maruthi, Laddu, Ramakrishna, Baburao, Rakesh, along with women participants Sandhya, Lakshmi, and others took part in the celebrations.

## Former Uppal Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy Distributes Ramzan Tohfes

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 14 (Indian Chronicle):“Former Uppal Division Corporator Mandamula Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy distributed Ramzan Tohfes at the Qutub Shahi Grand Mosque in Uppal. The distribution program was held on Saturday during an Iftar gathering organized by senior Congress leader Khaja Maulana. Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy attended the event as the chief guest and distributed Ramzan gift packages to members of the Muslim community. Speaking on the occasion, Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy extended her advance Ramzan greetings and said that minorities should celebrate the holy festival of Ramzan with joy and harmony. Several local leaders and community members participated in the event, including Division President Bakaram Laxman, Eega Anjaiah Mudiraj, Bazaar Jagannath Goud, Telkala Mohan Reddy, Lingampally Ramakrishna, Tummala Devi Reddy, Boosam Raghunath Reddy, Aslam, Ajiu, Allah Basha, Jaleel, Kasim, Asif, Anwar Pasha, Afzal, Ishad, Saleem, Minaz, Nagoor Basha, Khaja, Rasool Mohammed, Ashraf, Moulali, Jangir Jabbar, Bazaar Naveen Goud, Rangula Shekhar Mudiraj, Zubed, Mohsin, Wayed, along with members of the Qutub Shahi Uppal Grand Mosque Committee, Muslim brothers, and local residents who attended the Iftar gathering.



## BJP Senior Leader Vallapu Jagan Yadav Distributes Essential Supplies to Accident Victim's Family



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 14 (Indian Chronicle):“BJP senior leader Vallapu Jagan Yadav visited the residence of Raju, a resident of Srinagar Colony in Venkat Reddy Nagar Division, who was recently injured in an accident. After learning about the incident, he visited the family on Saturday and provided them with essential groceries and daily necessities. Speaking on the occasion, Vallapu Jagan Yadav said that the supplies were distributed with the intention of extending support to the family affected by the accident. He stated that he is committed to addressing the issues of people in Ramanthapur and Venkat Reddy Nagar divisions as soon as they come to his notice. He further mentioned that he is making efforts to resolve such problems by bringing them to the attention of the concerned officials and also to the notice of former MLA N.V.S.S. Prabhakar. Satish, Ramesh, Venkat Reddy, Bikshapathi, Upendar, Anand, Srinivas, Ramabrahmam, Bucchibabu, and others participated in the program.

## Development Works Worth Rs 80 Lakh in Lakshminarayana Colony

— Underground Drainage Works with Another Rs 42 Lakh  
Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy Inspects the Works“

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 14 (Indian Chronicle):“Development works are progressing rapidly in Lakshminarayana Colony under Uppal Division. To resolve the long-standing drainage issues near Noble Hotel in Lakshminarayana Colony, officials have been requested to undertake underground drainage construction works at a cost of ₹42 lakh. Former Uppal Corporator Mandamula Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy inspected the ongoing works. It was stated that after the completion of the pipeline construction works, CC road construction works will be taken up immediately with an estimated cost of ₹80 lakh. She informed that all these works will be completed at the earliest. Lakshminarayana Colony President Lucas, Venkata Reddy, Nageswara Rao, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Madhu Babu, Sandeep, Brahmachari, Bhaskar, Hari, Niranjana Rao, Ismail, Durga Prasad, RTC Kumar, Rajasekhar, Kranthi, Santosh, Keshav, Ramulanna, Venkateswara Rao, Yadagiri, Bhaskar,



Rama Rao, Basha, Sujatha, Swaroopa, and Shantamma participated in the program.

## Youth Must Fight Against Betting Apps: CPI Leader Chaya Devi

Women Leaders Attend Third Day of BPL Tournament



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 14, (Indian Chronicle):“CPI State Executive Member Chaya Devi called upon youth to fight against the growing menace of online betting apps. She attended the third day of the Bhagat Singh Premier League (BPL) cricket tournament being organized by the All India Youth Federation (AIYF), Hyderabad District Committee at the C Grounds of Osmania University, which is being held from March 12 to 17. Chaya Devi participated as the chief guest on the third day of the tournament and formally inaugurated the matches by interacting with and greeting the players. Speaking on the occasion, Chaya Devi expressed serious concern over the increasing influence of online betting applications among youth. She said sports help guide young people towards a healthy lifestyle, discipline, and a socially responsible path. However, she criticized certain online betting platforms for misleading youth by promoting false hopes of making quick money and ultimately ruining their future. She stated that encouraging betting culture in the name of promoting sports like cricket is dangerous for society. She urged youth to stay away from such fraudulent apps and instead dedicate their time to sports, education, and social responsibilities. Women's organization leaders also called upon youth to take inspiration from Bhagat Singh and stand against injustice and exploitative practices. They demanded that govern-

ments take strict action against illegal betting apps and protect the youth from such harmful influences. On the occasion, the women leaders congratulated the players participating in the tournament and said that sports activities like these help build positive thinking among young people. Among those present were Prem Pavani, State leader of the Shramik Mahila Forum; Kamatam Yadagiri, AITUC Hyderabad District General Secretary; Nerlakanti Srikanth, AIYF Hyderabad District Secretary; CPI Hyderabad District Committee member Chettukindi Srinivas; District Working President Shaik Mahmood; District Vice President Kalyan; and leaders Bhagat Singh, Mahesh, Anil Kumar (AISF Hyderabad District President), and Bhanu, along with players from 10 participating teams.



## Iftar Feast at Masjid-e-Noor-e-Madina, Chilkanagar

BRS State Leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj attends as Chief Guest  
Ramzan symbolizes patience, charity, and brotherhood:  
Bannala Praveen Mudiraj

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 14 (Indian Chronicle):“An Iftar feast was organized by the mosque committee at Masjid-e-Noor-e-Madina in Chilkanagar Division. BRS party State leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj attended the event as the chief guest along with local division leaders. Speaking on the occasion, Bannala Praveen Mudiraj conveyed advance Ramzan greetings to the Muslim community. He stated that during the holy month of Ramzan, Muslim brothers observe fasting with great devotion and discipline. He also emphasized that India is a nation where all religions are treated equally. He praised the communal harmony in Chilkanagar Division, stating that Hindus and Muslims live together with mutual respect and brotherhood in the spirit of “Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb,” which reflects the unique culture of the area. The Iftar gathering was organized under the leadership of mosque committee president Hanif and committee members. Among those present were committee members Abbu Bhai, Mahmood, Altaf, Shafi, Ghouse, and Pedda Kasim, along with BRS senior leaders Eddula Kondal Reddy, Masa Shekhar, Muddam Srinivas Yadav, Banti Goud, and Balu. A large number of minority community members also participated in the event.



## Illegals cut down huge trees in Chinnambavi mandal center

Who will stop illegal timber transportation within the mandal?

Forest officials ignored the news several times

“Wanaparthy Correspondent (Indian Chronicle):“The illegal timber trafficking business is going on in full swing in Chinnambavi mandal center of Wanaparthy district. The huge trees on both sides of the road near the rice mill, a stone's throw from the police station in the mandal center, have been cut down. Some middlemen are making money by illegally trading timber in the felling of these huge trees. In the past, when many huge trees were cut down in Chinnambavi mandal center, the forest officials kept saying that they would register cases but have not taken any action till today, which is causing the illegal traders to get angry. Even now, the people of the mandal are demanding that the forest officials of the Wanaparthy district set up a special committee at the Chinnambavi mandal center and protect the giant trees from illegal encroachers. The illegal encroachers who cut down the giant trees near this rice mill have cut down these trees next to the Tahsildar's office and the police station, but to this day, no one has responded to this problem except for the fact that no officials have noticed this problem. The Telangana state government is very ambitious in planting trees, making Telangana green, and saying that these trees are very useful for humanity, and is spending crores of rupees to grow trees along the roads and protect those trees, but on the other hand, due to the negligence of the government officials and the lack of action by the officials against anyone, large giant trees are being razed to the ground and illegal timber is being transported. Forest and Revenue Officers Illegal timber transportation with egg cartons Locals allege that this is happening. According to Walton's law, if a tree is cut down The government should take permission as well as 10 Although the law says to plant saplings Big trees with the help of officials Illegal construction work being carried out by razing the ground Locals are accusing them of doing so. Approximately 4 to 5 trees Cutting DCMs and tractors are becoming more common Loading and going. What is this When the locals asked the traders, Forest officials gave the usual They are saying that they are leading. Anyway The authorities responded and cut down the trees, Appropriate action should be taken against the agents and traders who are cutting Chinnambavi Mandal to take action The locals are accusing.



## ASHA Workers' Issues Must Be Raised in the Assembly

“Secunderabad Cantonment. March. 14 (Indian Chronicle):“Former Minister and Medchal MLA Malla Reddy stated that he would make every effort to ensure that the issues concerning ASHA workers are included in the Assembly Budget Sessions and subsequently resolved. In the state of Telangana, approximately 28,000 ASHA workers have been providing healthcare services to the poor for the past 20 years. All of these workers are women, and the vast majority of them hail from marginalized and weaker sections of society. To this day, they face numerous hardships due to the lack of statutory benefits. Citing the various difficulties they face—particularly the problems arising from irregular salary pay-

government made several promises. Subsequently, during the Assembly elections, the current Congress party included in its manifesto a pledge to increase the wages of ASHA workers and provide them with job security. It has been over two years since the Congress government assumed power; yet, to this day, wages have not been increased. Despite promises regarding insurance coverage of ₹50 lakhs, retirement benefits, and other assurances, these commitments have yet to be implemented. It was noted that dues related to PRC arrears, as well as payments for leprosy eradication, Pulse Polio, and election duties, have remained pending for years. Furthermore, monthly honorariums are not being dis-



ments—and requesting that these issues be taken up for discussion during the Telangana Assembly sessions, a delegation led by CITU leaders Padma and Vasantha met with former Minister and Medchal MLA Chamakura Malla Reddy on Saturday at his residence in Bowenpally and submitted a memorandum. Speaking on the occasion, CITU leader Padma urged the government to recognize the invaluable services that ASHA workers provide to public health at the grassroots level. She demanded that ASHA workers be paid a minimum wage of ₹18,000 and that the pending salary arrears for the past three months be released immediately. To press for the resolution of their issues, ASHA workers across the state staged an indefinite strike for 15 days—from September 25 to October 9, 2023. During this period, the previous

bursed on a regular basis. Consequently, ASHA workers are grappling with severe financial hardships. Numerous other issues also remain unresolved. Leaders stated that they have requested an increase in funding for the NHM during the Assembly budget sessions to facilitate the resolution of all these pending issues. They also urged the local MLA to raise these and other related concerns in the Assembly to exert pressure on the government. Leaders reported that MLA Mallareddy responded positively, assuring them that he would strive to resolve their issues and bring the plight of the ASHA workers to the attention of the government during the Assembly sessions. CITU leaders—including Vasantha, Mamatha, and Hemalathalong with representatives of the ASHA Workers' Union and others, participated in this program.

## Science Exhibition a Grand Success at Maharshi High School

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 14, (Indian chronicle).“JAWAHARNAGAR: A Science Exhibition was organized with great enthusiasm at Maharshi High



School, located in Santosh Nagar under Jawahar Nagar of Keesara Circle in Greater Hyderabad. The event was conducted under the leadership of school Correspondent Narasimhachari and under the supervision of Principal Lalitha. The exhibition was formally inaugurated by Correspondent Narasimhachari, who cut the ribbon and opened the Science Square. Students from LKG to 9th class actively participated in the exhibition and showcased their creativity and scientific understanding. More

than 200 exhibits were displayed during the event. Students explained their projects in a clear and simple manner so that every visitor could easily understand the concepts. Various models and demonstrations covered topics such as the correct use and writing of Telugu words, the functioning of the human body, and the importance of protecting organs like the lungs, brain, and kidneys. Several science-based models attracted visitors, including projects related to the ISRO rocket, stages of a baby's growth, Hindi language learning, and mathematical concepts. Parents who visited the exhibition were delighted and proud to see the talent and knowledge displayed by their children at different stalls. Speaking on the occasion, Correspondent Narasimhachari said that Maharshi Vidyaniketan focuses not only on academics but also on discipline

and good values. He said the institution is committed to shaping students into responsible citizens, emphasizing that today's children are the future of the nation. He added that the school is providing quality education that can compete with corporate institutions, while also teaching discipline, good manners, and moral values along with regular studies. Teachers of Maharshi School and a large number of parents attended the event and appreciated the efforts of the students and staff in making the exhibition a success.

## Taluka level Kabaddi competitions on the occasion of Ugadi festival at Chinnambavi Mandal Center

“Wanaparthi Correspondent (Indian Chronicle)“Taluka level Kabaddi competitions will be organized in Chinnambavi Mandal Center under Wanaparthi district to celebrate the Ugadi festival, the beginning of the Telugu year. The first winner of this Kabaddi competition will receive a cash prize of Rs. 30,000. The second winner will receive a cash prize of Rs. 15,000. Interested Kabaddi players can register their teams from 14/3/2026 and 15/03/2026 from 5 to 6:00 AM. The registered team will have to pay an entry fee of Rs. 500. The entry fee must be paid by 5:00 PM on 16/3/2026. The draw will be made on the same day at 6 PM and each team will be informed. The games will start on 17/3/2026, in the morning at Chinnambavi Mandal Center. The first Kabaddi match will start at 8:00 AM. The final match will be on the day of Ugadi festival. There will be a Best Rider, Best Catcher Shield for each match. And there will be a Kabaddi Man of the Series. Fee-paying teams Contact phone numbers 1) T Ugra Narasimha 7075422618, 2) Parimala Prakash 9052817433, 3) Jinkala Ramesh 9010099268, you can contact these numbers. Rules and Regulations 1) Every Kabaddi team must be punctual. Must be followed. The team that does not arrive on time will be crossed. 2) The final in the game The decision is made by the Kabaddi Umpire. 3) In the spirit of sportsmanship The team that behaved in a contrary manner was removed from the tournament by management intervention Removes. 4) Each team should display sportsmanship and continue playing Kabaddi with brotherly spirit. 5) If you have any doubts On behalf of the management, we request that each and every player take advantage of this opportunity and make an effort to participate by calling the phone numbers mentioned above and getting complete information.



## PIB Warthalaap Media Workshop in Sangareddy



“sangareddy Indian chronicle correspondent march 14th“ The Press Information Bureau (PIB) Hyderabad branch will organize a Warthalaap Media Workshop for Sangareddy district journalists on the 17th of this month. The program will begin at 10 am at the local ZP conference hall. District Collector P Praveenya will be the chief guest for the program. The workshop will provide awareness on gender-based violence against women, schemes implemented by the central government for women's welfare, and the use of artificial intelligence in journalism. Renowned journalist Sajaya Kakarla and fact check training expert Satya Priya BN will guide the journalists on these topics. The objective of this workshop is to strengthen coordination with journalists, educate them on various central government schemes, new changes in the field of journalism, and modern technology. PIB is requesting all journalists from Sangareddy district to participate in this program.

## Telangana SSC Examinations Begin



“Secunderabad Cantonment. March. 14 (Indian Chronicle):“The 10th Grade (SSC) public examinations commenced across the state of Telangana on Saturday. Against this backdrop, a bustling atmosphere prevailed at the examination centers in Bowenpally. In the Bowenpally area, examination centers for the 10th grade were established at the Government Boys' School, Government Girls' School, St. Peter's School, Mount Camel, and CMR High School. Students began arriving at the centers as early as 8:00 AM to locate their respective examination hall numbers. After verifying their hall tickets, the staff permitted the students to enter the premises. Officials strictly enforced the “one-minute rule,” denying entry to any students who arrived after 9:35 AM; consequently, many students were seen rushing frantically toward their examination centers. Senior officials from the Education Department and flying squads conducted surprise inspections at several centers. Officials have issued a warning to students appearing for upcoming exams to safeguard their hall tickets carefully and to refrain from bringing electronic watches or mobile phones to the centers. Officials further informed that the next examination (Second Language) is scheduled to take place on March 18th. The first day of the examinations concluded peacefully.

## 'SSC exams peaceful on first day in the 'Sangareddy district'

“Sangareddy Indian chronicle correspondent March 14th“The 10th class exams across Sangareddy district began peacefully on Saturday. A total of 2,45,53 students appeared for the exams, of which 41 students are failed to attend the exam. The attendance percentage for the exams was 99.83, DEO Venkateshwarlu said in a statement. On this occasion, District Additional Collector Pandu inspected several exam centers. “End

## Massive Protest in Uppal Against Gas Price Hike and Shortage – Irshad Khan (Uppal Khan) Participates

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 14 (Indian Chronicle):“In response to the continuous increase in LPG cylinder prices and the alleged shortage of gas supply, which has been causing severe difficulties for common people, a massive protest was organized at Uppal Ring Road under the leadership of Uppal Constituency Youth Congress President Akarapu Arun Patel. The protest program was attended by Telangana State Youth Congress President Jakkidi Shivacharan Reddy and Medchal-Malkajgiri District Youth Congress President Bommak Ajay as chief guests. They strongly criticized the Central Government's policies, accusing it of implementing anti-people measures that have increased the burden on poor and middle-class families. The leaders highlighted the hardships faced by ordinary households due to the continuous rise in gas prices. A large number of local Youth Congress leaders, Congress party workers, youth, students, and residents participated in the protest and expressed their strong opposition. Irshad Khan (Uppal Khan) also took part in the demonstration and stated that he would always stand at the forefront in fighting for public issues. He appreciated the support extended by Youth Congress leaders, students, and local residents in making the protest program successful. During the protest, the leaders demanded that the Central Government immediately with-



draw policies that place additional financial burdens on the public, reduce gas prices, and ensure proper and uninterrupted supply of LPG cylinders.

## CPI Observes 143rd Death Anniversary of Karl Marx

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 14, (Indian chronicle):“The Communist Party of India (CPI) Uppal Constituency Committee observed the 143rd death anniversary of Karl Marx on Saturday. The programme was held at Neelam Rajasekhara Reddy Bhavan in ECIL, where CPI leaders and party activists paid floral tributes to the portrait of Karl Marx. Speaking on the occasion, CPI State Secretariat Member V.S. Bose and CPI State Committee Member G. Damodar Reddy said that the ideas and theories of Karl Marx have continued to inspire social movements and revolutions across the world even after his death. They stated that Marx dedicated his life to the awakening and empowerment of the working class and labouring masses. They described Karl Marx as a great philosopher, economist, social thinker, socialist revolutionary and the pioneer of communist ideology, who introduced the world to the principles of equality and social justice. They added that Marxism continues to guide and inspire millions of workers and oppressed people striving for a more just and equitable society. AIYF Medchal District Secretary T. Satya Prasad, AISF Uppal Constituency leader Vikas Reddy, Uppal constituency leaders Vijay and Harish, along with other party activists, participated in the programme.



## Mass Protest by Uppal Youth Congress on Uppal Ring Road with Firewood Stove and Empty Gas Cylinders Against Central Government

State Youth Congress President Jakkidi Shivcharan Reddy Participates



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 14 (Indian Chronicle):“The Youth Congress staged a massive protest on the Uppal Ring Road under the leadership of Uppal Youth Congress President Akarapu Arun Patel, expressing strong opposition to the alleged shortage of LPG cylinders and steep price hikes by the central government. As part of the protest, Youth Congress leaders and activists displayed empty gas cylinders and symbolically cooked food on a firewood stove set up on the road, highlighting the difficulties faced by common people due to rising cooking gas prices and shortage of cylinders. They also burnt an effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to condemn what they termed as anti-people policies of the central government. Speaking on the occasion, State Youth Congress President Jakkidi Shivcharan Reddy criticized the BJP government, accusing it of supporting corporate interests while burdening poor and middle-class families. He warned that the Youth Congress would continue its agitation until LPG cylinders become affordable and easily accessible to the common people. Later, Uppal Youth Congress President Akarapu

Arun Patel said that the protest from Uppal was a clear warning to the central government. He stated that if LPG cylinders do not become affordable for the common people, the public will teach the government a lesson in the coming days. He demanded an immediate reduction in gas cylinder prices and an end to the artificial shortage. He further said the Youth Congress would not stop its struggle until the government responsible for the hardships of poor families is removed from power. Among those who participated in the protest were Medchal-Malkajgiri District President Bommak Ajay, Telangana State General Secretary Gurrum Shyam Charan Reddy, General Secretary Ram Reddy, Secretary Srividya, Quthbullapur Constituency President Mounish Yadav, Medchal District General Secretary Sachin, Ishad Khan (Uppal), division presidents Ashok Jayanth Goud, Prashanth Goud, Vasu Nayak, Shahid, and several Youth Congress leaders including Kapra Arun, Vineesh, Bapireddy, Bhanu, Bazaar Naveen Goud, Ram, Raj, Gautham Shekhar, Shiva, Rajesh, along with a large number of Youth Congress activists and members of Akarapu Arun's team.

## Electronic Waste Collection Drive Conducted in Boduppall Circle

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 14, (Indian chronicle):“BODUPPALL: As part of the Telangana State Government's flagship initiative “Praja Palana - Pragati Pranali” and the 99-Day Action Plan, an electronic waste collection drive was organized in Boduppall Circle under the directions of Chief Minister Anumula Revanth Reddy and the guidance of the Medchal-Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation Commissioner. The e-waste collection programme was conducted on March 14 and 15, 2026,

through four collection centres in Boduppall Circle (04). As part of the drive, a total of 1,295 kilograms of electronic waste was collected on the first day. The collection centres were inspected by Deputy Commissioner A. Shailaja along with DEE (SWM) K. Jahnvi Shashank to review the progress of the programme and ensure smooth implementation. Sanitary Inspector Praveen Kumar and sanitation staff also participated in the drive. The initiative aims to promote proper disposal and recycling of electronic waste, while creating awareness among citizens about environmental protection and responsible waste management.

## The U.S. established and extinguished multilateralism



The national interest of the U.S. now is self-sufficiency and containment of China's influence. The President of the United States, Donald Trump, is the visible part of the global transformation that is underway and the global trend supports India's re-emergence.

The current super power has marginalised the United Nations, and, with it, emasculated the collective bargaining strength of the Global South — there will be no going back. The U.S. is now engaging countries with strategic commerce-related bilateral deals that fragment the global order. The asymmetry of power is such that there was no opposition in the BRICS Summit in July 2025. The BRICS Declaration that comprised 31 pages and included 126 outcomes failed to note the rejection of multilateralism which required a focus on South-South cooperation. Essentially, unilateral tariffs are a means to bring individual countries to the table for seeking concessions, not global consensus. The U.S. shock

Mr. Trump is fully aware that 2025 is not 1950 and the U.S. cannot shape a new common global framework. The national interest of the U.S. now is self-sufficiency and containment of China's influence flowing from the world's reliance on its products, which is the other side of the coin. Over the last 25 years, the world has become interconnected and the spheres of influence, trade and financial sanctions provide a more effective management tool than leverage through global intuitions. As a result, no one really knows how to respond as 75 years of diplomatic history has been erased by raw power. Where does this state of flux leave India with its young population having the potential to be the third largest economy in 2027 and overtake the U.S. by 2075, with global influence based on leadership of the Global South? The answer lies in accepting the end of multilateralism. The answer lies in focusing on national prosperity and South-South cooperation. The glue binding the Global South can no longer be financial benefits of a voting bloc in the UN. India needs their support in elections and positions in various committees for global influence; it

has already lost the elected post of vice chair of the Executive Board of UNESCO to Pakistan. India needs to specify 'strategic autonomy' for what it is, namely, neutrality between major powers and enunciating its core interests in its own voting pattern. Second, the challenge for a continental size 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' of one billion people is to look east, and not west, for ideas. Trade concessions to the U.S. should be tuned to trade agreements with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Similarly, the loss of exports to the U.S., for example, steel, can be offset by a network of expressways, high speed rail, data centres with assured electricity and science universities reorienting consumption and exports. In 2013, China spent almost half its GDP on infrastructure; such scale alone makes for sustainable double digit growth. Third, India's intrinsic strength is being at the forefront of the fourth industrial revolution, a new chapter in human development. According to the World Intellectual Property Organization, India has overtaken the U.K. and Germany in the number of GenAI patents published, and has a strong foundation for endogenous growth and well-being. Fourth, the world over, military doctrines are being re-written for reliance on integrated air defence, satellites, missiles, drones and cyber. For the first time since independence, India is in a position to be a global leader in all domains, enabling a substantial reduction in costly ground forces and imported large platforms, giving flexibility in foreign policy and spin-offs for growth.

Fifth, India is already revisiting the way it has framed border issues leftover from colonialism and needs to push this to focus on growth. Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's assertion that India and China should not "remain stuck in the past", achieve trust and work on the goal of demarcation of an international border has been favourably received by China that is preoccupied with Taiwan and in responding to Mr Trump. The Indus Waters Treaty, where Pakistan is keen to engage, provides a new frame to achieve similar trust. An international border in eastern Ladakh will be a decisive step to settling the international border in Jammu and Kashmir.

The real lesson from 'Operation Sindoor' is the oldest one in military history — wisdom lies in knowing when to stop. In India's case, it is clear that there will not be a military solution. Last, the BRICS Summit in India in 2026 provides an opportunity to revitalise the Global South around cooperation jettisoning the multilateral practice of collective bargaining by the G-77 seeking benefits from the G-7. The future lies in sharing prosperity by reorienting tariffs and value chains to divert exports to meet growing consumption in the South. It should be possible at the low prices the South currently gets, and done in a manner that complements, not threatens, local production. Certainly a seismic shift, but so was multilateralism in 1950.

## Giant rats help sniff out land mines in Cambodia

GNS News Agency, March 14

Siem Reap: Rats may send some squealing, but in Cambodia, teams of the not-so-little critters have become indispensable in helping specialists detect land mines that have killed and maimed thousands in the Southeast Asian country. The African giant pouched rats, which can grow up to 45 cm (around 18 inches) and weigh up to 1.5 kg, are on the front line, making their way nimbly across fields to signal to their handlers when they get a whiff of TNT, used in most land mines and explosive ordnance. "While working with these rats, I have always found mines and they have never skipped a single one," said Mott Sreymom, a rat handler at APOPO, a humanitarian demining group that trains and deploys rodent detection teams across the world. "I really trust these mine detection rats," Mott said while working on a land mine field in the province of Siem Reap.

After three decades of conflict in the previous century, remnants of war littered approximately 4,500 square kilometers of Cambodian land, according to a survey by the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) in 2004. This affected all 25 Cambodian provinces and nearly half of the country's 14,000 villages. As of 2018, CMAA reported 1,970 square kilometers remain uncleared. The rats have a keen sense of smell, making them a favourite at APOPO, which also employs land mine-detecting dog



teams. "Dogs and rats are better compared to other animals because they are trainable," said Alberto Zacarias, a field supervisor of APOPO's technical survey dog teams, adding that they are also friendly and easily learn commands. Since demining officially began in Cambodia in 1992, more than 1.1 million mines have been cleared, as well as approximately 2.9 million other explosive remnants of war, according to a 2022 government demining progress report. And the African giant pouched rats are doing their part. "We work with them almost daily, so we get closer," Mott said. "They are very friendly and they don't move around and get scared. They are like family."

## NATO Chief Threatens Secondary Sanctions Against India, China, Brazil Over Russian Energy Trade

GNS News Agency, March 14

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte delivered a stark ultimatum to three major global economies on Wednesday, threatening unprecedented economic penalties if they maintain their energy trade relationships with Russia. During discussions with US senators, Rutte specifically targeted the leadership of China, India, and Brazil, warning them of severe consequences should they continue their current course. The NATO chief's message was unambiguous in its directness. He emphasized that leaders in Beijing, Delhi, and Brasilia must leverage their influence to pressure Russian President Vladimir Putin toward genuine peace negotiations. Rutte made it clear that failure to do so would result in comprehensive secondary sanctions reaching 100 percent coverage. The warning extends beyond mere economic threats, as Rutte urged these three nations' leaders to directly contact Putin and demand serious commitment to peace talks. He stressed that the economic repercussions would be massive and could significantly impact these countries' economic stability. This diplomatic pressure comes in the wake of recent announcements from US President Donald Trump, who unveiled additional military assistance for Ukraine while simultaneously threatening extensive tariffs against Russia and its trading partners. The new aid package includes sophisticated weaponry such as Patriot missile systems, which Ukrainian officials consider essential for defending against Russian aerial assaults. Trump's economic strategy involves implementing severe tariffs on Russian exports, with rates potentially reaching 100 percent. Additionally, he has outlined plans for secondary sanctions targeting countries that continue purchasing Russian oil, with a strict 50-day deadline for achieving a peace agreement. The American president clarified that these secondary measures could be enacted without requiring congressional approval. Congressional support for these measures appears robust, with Reuters reporting that 85 out of 100 senators endorse legislation granting Trump authority to impose tariffs as high as 500 percent on nations providing assistance to Russia. The implications are particu-



larly significant for India, China, and Turkey, which represent the largest purchasers of Russian crude oil in the current market. Should these threatened sanctions materialize, these countries could face substantial economic disruption, especially India, which has become increasingly dependent on Russian energy imports. The potential implementation of such measures could create widespread disruption in global energy markets, potentially driving up costs during a period when international prices remain volatile. This economic pressure strategy reflects the West's intensified efforts to isolate Russia economically and force a resolution to the Ukrainian conflict. Russia's response through Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov indicated willingness to engage in negotiations with Trump while firmly rejecting ultimatum-based approaches. Russian officials emphasized that threats and ultimatums would not yield productive results in diplomatic discussions. The current situation represents a critical juncture in international relations, where economic leverage is being deployed as a primary tool for conflict resolution. The success of these threatened measures will largely depend on how effectively they can influence the targeted nations' policy decisions regarding their energy partnerships with Russia. As global leaders navigate this complex diplomatic landscape, the coming weeks will likely determine whether economic pressure can achieve the desired outcome.

## Trump to put tariffs of over 10% on smaller nations, including those in Africa and the Caribbean



GNS News Agency, March 14

President Donald Trump told reporters on Tuesday that he plans to place tariffs of over 10% on smaller countries, including nations in Africa and the Caribbean. "We'll probably set one tariff for all of them," Mr. Trump said, adding that it could be "a little over 10% tariff" on goods from at least 100 nations. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick interjected that the nations with goods being taxed at these rates would be in Africa and the Caribbean, places that generally do relatively modest levels of trade with the U.S. and would be relatively insignificant for addressing Mr. Trump's goals of reducing trade imbalances with the rest of the world. The President had this month been posting letters to roughly two dozen countries and the European Union that simply levied a tariff rate to be charged starting Aug. 1.

Those countries generally faced tax rates on the goods close to the April 2 rates announced by the U.S. president, whose rollout of historically high import taxes for the U.S. caused financial markets to panic and led to Trump setting a 90-day negotiating period that expired July 9. Mr. Trump also said he would "probably" announce tariffs on pharmaceutical drugs at the "end of the month." The President said

## Trump says any 'credible' Epstein files should be released

GNS News Agency, March 14

Donald Trump said on Tuesday the U.S. Justice Department should release all "credible" information from its probe into notorious sex criminal Jeffrey Epstein as he sought to douse a firestorm of criticism from his supporters over his handling of the case. The president is facing the most serious split of his political career from his famously loyal right-wing base over suspicions that his administration is covering up lurid details of Epstein's crimes to protect rich and powerful figures they say are implicated.

"The attorney general has handled that very well," the Republican leader said of Pam Bondi, who leads the Justice Department, when he was asked about the case at the White House. Mr. Trump repeated his claim that the Epstein files were "made up" by his Democratic predecessors in the White House -- even though he said multiple times during the election campaign that he would "probably" release them. "She's handled it very well, and it's going to be up to her," Mr. Trump said. "Whatever she thinks is credible, she should release." Mr. Trump's latest comments mark a softening of his stance, after he voiced frustration in the Oval Office and online about his support-



ers' fixation on Epstein and pleaded with them to move on. The president's "Make America Great Again" (MAGA) movement has long held as an article of faith that "Deep State" elites are protecting Epstein's most powerful associates in the Democratic Party and Hollywood.

Mr. Trump has faced growing outrage since his administration effectively shut down Epstein-related conspiracy theories, which have become MAGA obsessions. The Justice Department and FBI said in a memo made public earlier this month there is no evidence that the disgraced financier kept a "client list" or was blackmailing powerful figures. They also dismissed the claim that Epstein was murdered in jail, confirming his death by suicide, and said they would not be releasing any more information on the probe. "Let the people decide" it marked the first time Mr. Trump's officials had publicly refuted the stories -- pushed for years by numerous right-wing figures, notably including the FBI's top two officials, before Mr. Trump hired them. Beyond angering supporters, the issue has opened a schism within his administration, sparking a fiery blow-up between Ms. Bondi and Deputy FBI Director Dan Bongino, who is said to be considering resigning. Trump's attempts to take the sting out of the controversy have largely failed, with far right influencers continuing to criticize him online. Even his daughter-in-law, Lara Trump, a Fox News host, has called for "more transparency" from the administration. Mr. Trump's most powerful ally in the U.S. Congress, House Speaker Mike Johnson, pushed on Tuesday for the administration to release more information about the case, and his stance has been echoed by multiple Republicans. "We should put everything out there and let the people decide," he told MAGA influencer Benny Johnson's internet show, calling on Bondi to "come forward and explain" apparent discrepancies in her statements about the case. Ms. Bondi told Fox News in February a list of Epstein clients was on her desk for review, before backtracking and saying that no such list existed. Epstein died by suicide in a New York prison in 2019 after being charged

with sex trafficking. Mr. Trump -- who has denied visiting the U.S. Virgin Islands home where prosecutors say Epstein sex trafficked underage girls -- said ahead of his election he would have "no problem" releasing files related to the case. Asked whether Bondi had told him if his name appeared in a file related to Epstein, Trump said

he would start out at a lower tariff rate and give companies a year to build domestic factories before they faced higher import tax rates. Mr. Trump said computer chips would face a similar style of tariffs.

## U.N. says malnutrition in Gaza has doubled as health officials say Israeli strikes kill over 90 people

GNS News Agency, March 14

Malnutrition rates among children in the Gaza Strip have doubled since Israel imposed sharp restrictions on the entry of food in March, the U.N. said on Tuesday (July 15, 2025). New Israeli strikes killed more than 90 Palestinians, including dozens of women and children, according to health officials. Hunger has been rising among Gaza's more than 2 million Palestinians since Israel broke a ceasefire in March to resume the war and banned all food and other supplies from entering Gaza, saying it aimed to pressure Hamas to release hostages. It slightly eased the blockade in late May, allowing in a trickle of aid.

UNRWA, the main UN agency caring for Palestinians in Gaza, said it had screened nearly 16,000 children under age 5 at its clinics in June and found 10.2 per cent of them were acutely malnourished. By comparison, in March, 5.5 per cent of the nearly 15,000 children it screened were malnourished. One strike in the northern Shati refugee camp killed a 68-year-old Hamas member of the Palestinian legislature, as well as a man and a woman and their six children who were sheltering in the same building, according to officials from the heavily damaged Shifa Hospital, where the casualties were taken. One of the deadliest strikes hit a house in Gaza City's Tel al-Hawa district on Monday evening and killed 19 members of the family living inside, according to Shifa Hospital. The dead included eight women and six children. A strike on a tent housing displaced people in the same district killed a man and a woman and their two children.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military on the strikes.

Gaza's Health Ministry said in a daily report on Tues-



day afternoon that the bodies of 93 people killed by Israeli strikes had been brought to hospitals in Gaza over the past 24 hours, along with 278 wounded. It did not specify the total number of women and children among the dead. The Hamas politician killed in a strike early on Tuesday, Mohammed Faraj al-Ghoul, was a member of the bloc of representatives from the group that won seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council in the last national elections, held in 2006. The Israeli military says it only targets militants and tries to avoid harming civilians. It blames civilian deaths on Hamas because the militants operate in densely populated areas. But daily, it hits homes and shelters where people are living without warning or explanation of the target. UNICEF, which screens children separately from UNRWA, has also reported a marked increase in malnutrition cases. It said this week its clinics had documented 5,870 cases of malnutrition among children in June, the fourth straight month of increases and more than double the around 2,000 cases it documented in February. Experts have warned of famine since Israel tightened its long-running blockade in March. Israel has allowed an average of 69 trucks a day carrying supplies, including food, since it eased the blockade in May, according to the latest figures from COGAT, the Israeli military agency in charge of coordinating aid. That is far below the hundreds of trucks a day the U.N. says are needed to sustain Gaza's population. On Tuesday, COGAT blamed the U.N. for failing to distribute aid, saying in a post on X that thousands of pallets of supplies were inside Gaza waiting to be picked up by UN trucks. The U.N. says it has struggled to pick up and distribute aid because of Israeli military restrictions on its movements and the breakdown in law and order.

Israel has also let in food for distribution by an American contractor, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. GHF says it has distributed food boxes with the equivalent of more than 70 million meals since late May at the four centres it runs in the Rafah area of southern Gaza and in central Gaza. More than 840 Palestinians have been killed and more than 5,600 others wounded in shootings as they walk for hours trying to reach the GHF centres, according to the Health Ministry. Witnesses say Israeli forces open fire with barrages of live ammunition to control crowds on the roads to the GHF centres, which are located in military-controlled zones. The military says it has fired warning shots at people it says have approached its forces in a suspicious manner. GHF says no shootings have taken place in or immediately around its distribution sites. Israel has killed more than 58,400 Palestinians and wounded more than 139,000 others in its retaliation campaign since Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

Just over half the dead are women and children, according to the ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and militants in its tally. In a separate development, U.S. Ambassador Mike Huckabee called on Israel to investigate the killing of a 20-year-old Palestinian-American whose family said was beaten to death by Jewish settlers over the weekend in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. "There must be accountability for this criminal and terrorist act," Huckabee wrote on X. Seifeddin Musalat, born in Florida, and a local friend were killed Friday. Musalat was beaten to death by Israeli settlers on his family's land, his cousin Diana Halum told reporters. The family had called on the US State Department to investigate his death and hold the settlers accountable.

## 'We were not dying': Russian woman rescued from Gokarna cave defends natural lifestyle with children



Kutina, who had been living with her daughters in a cave near Gokarna, defended her lifestyle and rejected the claims made about her situation. "You give already a lot of lying information. We have big experience to stay in natural, in jungle, and we were not dying, and I did not bring my children, my daughters to die in jungle. They did not feel bad, they were very happy, they swam in waterfall, they lived, had very good place for sleeping, a lot of lessons with art making, we made from clay, we painted, we ate good, I was cooking with gas, very good and tasty food," she said.

Dismissing suggestions of neglect or danger, she added, "They have everything best, they were happy, and dressed, and sleeping good, and art lessons, and lessons about how to write and read, and they were not dying from hunger, never, everything not true. I have a lot of websites like social net, my profile has a lot of video about our life experience, and a lot of years, different country, like near 20 countries I live, different forest, because we love natural." Kutina stated that they had been taken to the hospital, but her children were in perfect health. "Today they brought us to hospital for doctors, it was the first time my daughters were in hospital, they are full of health, not one pain they have, and not one time in their life they were sick." She also defended the cave they were living in, calling it safe and near a village. "Because we love living natural,

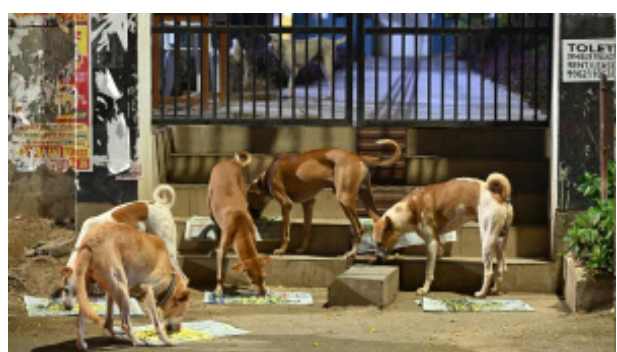
it's just one reason, and this cave was not in like in big big forest, far far from all, and we could probably buy food or anything, it's very close to village, and it's very big and beautiful cave, and not small, and it's like it has window to look to ocean." A 40-year-old Russian woman, staying in an isolated cave along with her two children in the forests of Gokarna in Uttara Kannada district, has been rescued by the Gokarna police. Her visa expired in 2017, said the police. The police sent the trio to the Foreigners Restriction Centre for Women in Tumakuru until repatriation. | Video Credit: The Hindu "It's not a dangerous place, every tourist three minutes can come at place, and snakes for all time we live, yes we saw a few snakes, but same time in grove, Gokarna grove, people put a photo about snakes come to home, to kitchen, to toilet, to everywhere, it's same same." Regarding visa issues, Kutina admitted their documents had expired but disputed reports that they had overstayed since 2017. "It is lying, because they found my old passport, and they decide what it's like, they did not check if it's real true. We don't have our visa, valid visa, our visa finished, but it was short time ago. After 2017, we already were in four countries, leave and then come back to India." She also explained her continued stay in India after her son passed away.

"After I had my son, big son, he died, died, and because it happened, and it brought what my new visa, I stayed little more, but not so much, how they tell." Kutina said she was born in Russia but hadn't lived there for 15 years. "After that I was travelling a lot of countries, Costa Rica, Malaysia, Bali, Thailand, Nepal, Ukraine." Rejecting the narrative that spirituality alone motivated her, she clarified, "It is not about spiritually how they write, it's not about it, we just like natural because it gives us health... it's very big health, it's not like you live in home." She maintained that her daughters were comfortable and happy. "Very comfortable. I have telegram canal where for all time what we stay in cave, we have photo, video, what we do inside, how we cook tasty food, what we eat, how we make lessons, art, painting and clay... all what we do, you can look at."

## 'Why don't you feed them in your house?' SC asks petitioner over feeding of strays

The Supreme Court while hearing a plea alleging harassment over the feeding of community dogs in Noida, asked the petitioner, "Why don't you feed them in your own house?" A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta told the petitioner's counsel, "We should leave every lane, every road open for these large-hearted people? There is all the space for these animals, no space for humans. Why don't you feed them in your own house? Nobody is stopping you." The plea related to a March 2025 order of the Allahabad High Court.

The petitioner, the counsel said, was subjected to harassment and was unable to feed community dogs in line with the Animal Birth Control Rules. Rule 20 of the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023 deals with feeding of community animals and puts onus on resident welfare association or apartment owner association or local body's representative of the local area to make necessary arrangements for feeding of community animals residing in the premises or that area. The top court, however, said, "We give you a suggestion to open a shelter in your own house. Feed every dog in the community in your own house." The petitioner's counsel claimed compliance with the rules and said the municipality was creating such places in Greater Noida but not in Noida. He said feeding points could be made at a place not frequented by people. "You go on cycling in the morning?" the bench asked, "try doing it and see what happens". "Walkers at risk, cyclists at greater risk" When the counsel said he goes on morning walks and sees several dogs, the bench said, "Morning walkers are also at risk. Cycle riders and two-wheelers are at greater risk." The bench then tagged the plea with a separate pending plea on a similar issue. In the High Court, the petitioner sought directions



to the authorities to implement provisions of the rules with due care and caution keeping in view the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. "While protection of street dogs would be warranted in accordance with the provisions of the applicable statute, at the same time, the authorities will have to bear in mind the concern of common man, such that their movement on streets are not hampered by attacks by these street dogs," the High Court said. The High Court, therefore, expected the state authorities to exhibit "due sensitivity" to the concerns of the petitioner and the common man on the streets. The High Court said the observation was necessary because there were many instances of attacks by street dogs on people of late, which has resulted in loss of lives and grave inconvenience to pedestrians. It disposed of the plea with a direction to the authorities to ensure that concerns highlighted by the court were duly taken care of and appropriate measures were taken to ensure protection of strays besides ensuring interest of people on the streets was not jeopardised.

## In 'Millennium City' Gurugram, problem isn't flooding or infrastructure — it's the rural state of mind

The so-called Millennium City's waterlogging problems are in the news again. In Gurugram, flats and houses that sell for prices that compare to real estate in Western countries and rentals that might equate starting salaries of many white-collar professionals have become islands surrounded by surging rain-induced floods. As a result of the waterlogging, there were also sustained cuts to the electricity supply as the privately owned transformers that kick in when the government supply fails also went underwater. There was, reasonably enough, an outcry over the state of infrastructure in a locality that is home to the offices of many Fortune 500 companies and a citizenry that has achieved wealth in many walks of global activity and expects a certain level of an "international" lifestyle.

But Gurugram's problem is not primarily physical infrastructure. It is one of the mental attitudes through which our cities are built and occupied. Physical infrastructure is not so difficult to build and operate. How we choose to live in urban environments — that are supposed to rid us of "backward" rural attitudes — has always been a more complex task. It is made more complex in places such as Gurugram because new urbanism has simply built upon old attitudes rather than changing them. The most fundamental of these is the idea of publicness or the distinction between the private and the public. When we think of contemporary urbanisation in India, the easy way out is to blame its ills on privatisation and that largely meaningless concept of "neoliberalism", where the state is supposed to have ceded ground to private capital. Public interest would have been much better served, it is frequently suggested, had public authorities looked after the welfare of citizens. This gross oversimplification overlooks the history of publicness in our everyday lives, one that also lies at the heart of the state of Gurugram and other such urban developments.

The first "licence" for private development was issued to the Delhi Land and Finance (DLF) corporation on April 21, 1981, under the Haryana Development & Regulation of Urban Areas Act of 1975 in the village of Chakkarpur in Gurgaon district. Everyday social life in Chakkarpur, as in all villages around it, was organised through the arrangements of caste: Public life was entirely expressed through caste hierarchies and beliefs. Who could say what, pray where and clean the garbage were matters of caste. There was no generalised public life but, rather, one that was entirely expressed through the personal attributes of caste. You looked after your own. "New Gurgaon" has simply built on that, keeping the old social attitudes alive while giving off the idea of newness. New highways, metro stations and shopping plazas appear to speak of a new public life, but that is a mirage. Urban life in

Gurugram is largely organised through the idea that there is no public except that which belongs to one's family, caste and class circuits. It is this that also lies at the heart of what passes for urban planning. If, for example, it is considered personally beneficial to cement over a waterway or clear a forest area for a private residence, then that activity comes to pass. The wider ramifications are rarely considered as there is really no sense of a public and hence, public welfare beyond the immediate circles in which people live. This, however, has little to do with the privatisation of urban development in cities such as Gurugram. It is fundamentally connected to a ruralism practised by the urban well-to-do.

At the present time, the most significant urban development in Gurugram is taking place in what were earlier its rural hinterlands, the areas furthest away from Delhi. Lands are being bought, sold and cleared for residential, commercial and infrastructure purposes. It is not difficult to see how, while multiple modern technologies are being used for mapping and digitising records to make land market-ready in these areas, the state, private capital and citizens have combined to further the ends of private benefit through wilfully rejecting the idea of publicness and public welfare. Land consolidation and rectangularisation (chakbandi and kilabandi) are important for the rationalisation of holdings that might otherwise be scattered or irregular lands that prevent the construction of roads and other infrastructure. However, in most cases, these are also contexts when panchayat lands — meant for general benefit — are appropriated for personal use and profit. The assistance of a variety of government officials — able to bend GIS technologies that are meant to produce transparency to the needs of private benefit — is, of course, crucial. As urbanisable land is built upon and becomes urban, the attitudes towards publicness displayed in appropriating public lands for private benefit simply scatter in different directions. The re-fashioning of rural spaces into urban ones is not accompanied by a different attitude towards publicness and public welfare. Gated residential enclaves, where the problems of public life are simply pushed out to the spaces and people beyond the walls, are not really a dramatically new phenomenon. They are merely the concrete manifestations of mentalities that linger under the appearance of change. The roads and underpasses that surround the luxury apartments and which get routinely flooded and engulfed by rainwater do so because of the mental infrastructure through which city planning and design happens. That rural state of mind that appropriates public lands for private profit is simply reproduced within urban spheres where the idea of the public — if it ever existed — has largely disappeared.

## Run, Fauja, Run: The man who never stopped running



Fauja Singh was 100 when he became 'the oldest man to run a marathon' — clocking 8 hours and 11 minutes at the Toronto Marathon in 2011. Some years earlier, when he was a sprightly 95, and soon after he had finished a marathon, Fauja Singh, resplendent in a big, black turban paired with a matching satin shirt, had told a group of journalists gathered around him in Chandigarh: "Zindagi inni sohni hai ki maran nu te jee hi nahin karda (Life is so beautiful that I just don't feel like dying)." His eyes twinkled and his face creased into a wide smile.

He ran some more, before he finally hung up his boots in 2013, when he turned 102. But Fauja Singh never gave up on life — or his shoes. He collected at least 100 pairs and much later in life, ditched his kurta-pyjama for joggers and fancy suits. "I love clothes too," he told The Indian Express that afternoon in Chandigarh, volunteering to open his suitcase to display his collection. At 114, Fauja Singh died too soon. For a man who led a remarkable life, the end was abrupt, almost staccato — hit by an unidentified vehicle while crossing the road. Fauja Singh was 100 when he became 'the oldest man to run a marathon' — clocking 8 hours and 11 minutes at the Toronto Marathon in 2011. Some years earlier, when he was a sprightly 95, and soon after he had finished a marathon, Fauja Singh, resplendent in a big, black turban paired with a matching satin shirt, had told a group of journalists gathered around him in Chandigarh: "Zindagi inni sohni hai ki maran nu te jee hi nahin karda (Life is so beautiful that I just don't feel like dying)." His eyes twinkled and his face creased into a wide smile. He ran some more, before he finally hung up his boots in 2013, when he turned 102. But Fauja Singh never gave up on life — or his shoes. He collected at least 100 pairs and much later in life, ditched his kurta-pyjama for joggers and fancy suits. "I love clothes too," he told The Indian Express that afternoon in Chandigarh, volunteering to open his suitcase to display his collection. Chandigarh-based writer Khushwant Singh, who wrote a 2011 biography of the marathoner, recalls that when he first met him in 2005, Fauja was wearing an electric blue suit, a tie that read "Marathoner" and a pair of shoes with "Fauja" on one and "Singh" on the other. If Fauja first ran, it was to escape a personal tragedy. Villagers in his Beas village in Jalandhar district say Fauja was building a dhaba for his son Kuldeep when the roof collapsed and killed the youngster, the fifth of his six children. That was in August 1994, just two years after his wife, Gian Kaur, died. Devastated, Fauja lost all will to live. His youngest son Harvinder Singh remembers seeing him mourning for hours at the cremation ground. That's when Sukhjinder, the eldest of his sons who lived in England, took him along. In London, he went on long walks. "I had nothing to do at home. My son told me to take a bus to the local gurdwara, but I decided to walk instead," he would recount. A chance encounter with Harmander Singh, a marathon coach who met Fauja at a neighbourhood park just six months earlier, would lead to the 89-year-old running his first marathon in April 2000, at age 89. He ran 6 hours, 54 minutes to finish the 26-mile (41-km) run. And soon, he was famous. Adidas appointed him as its brand ambassador and his billboards appeared across London. He was also a torchbearer for the 2012 London Olympics. Khushwant Singh says Fauja was once invited by Queen Elizabeth II, a meeting for which he was briefed extensively for two days. "They told him, 'Don't try to hug her, just shake her hand,'" he says. "The best part was the affection that came my way," Fauja told The Indian Express in an earlier interview. "Even the memsahibs would call me grandad." Soon, Fauja was a jet-setting marathoner, greeted aboard flights with public announcements. A British Airways crew even printed "World traveller, centurion marathoner" on his boarding pass, and Fauja beamed. In 2011, after running nine full marathons in 11 years, he ran the London Marathon, his last when he clocked 7 hours, 49 minutes and 21 seconds. He later transitioned to the shorter 10-km category in marathons. At the 2013 Mumbai Marathon, Fauja rubbed shoulders with actors John Abraham and Gul Panag, jogging with one and cooking pasta with the other. When a reporter asked Abraham how it felt to be with Fauja, he replied: "Ask me how it feels to be with Fauja Singh ji."

The same year, Fauja ran in the 10-km category in the Hong Kong marathon — his last international run. Khushwant Singh, who spent two years writing Fauja's 2011 biography Turbanned Tornado, recalls how he interviewed the marathoner on foot in East London: "He said, 'I can either walk or sleep.' So walk we did". Fauja Singh, Fauja Singh centenary, Punjab centenary, Toronto Marathon, Harmander Singh, Queen Elizabeth II, remembering Fauja Singh, Fauja Singh obit, Fauja Singh obituary, Indian express news, current affairs Chandigarh-based writer Khushwant Singh, who wrote a 2011 biography of the marathoner, recalls that when he first met him in 2005, Fauja was wearing an electric blue suit, a tie that read "Marathoner" and a pair of shoes with "Fauja" on one and "Singh" on the other. Soon, Fauja was a jet-setting marathoner, greeted aboard flights with public announcements. A British Airways crew even printed "World traveller, centurion marathoner" on his boarding pass, and Fauja beamed. In 2011, after running nine full marathons in 11 years, he ran the London Marathon, his last when he clocked 7 hours, 49 minutes and 21 seconds. He later transitioned to the shorter 10-km category in marathons. At the 2013 Mumbai Marathon, Fauja rubbed shoulders with actors John Abraham and Gul Panag, jogging with one and cooking pasta with the other. When a reporter asked Abraham how it felt to be with Fauja, he replied: "Ask me how it feels to be with Fauja Singh ji." The same year, Fauja ran in the 10-km category in the Hong Kong marathon — his last international run. Khushwant Singh, who spent two years writing Fauja's 2011 biography Turbanned Tornado, recalls how he interviewed the marathoner on foot in East London: "He said, 'I can either walk or sleep.' So walk we did". Khushwant says Fauja's accomplishment as the "oldest marathoner" was not recognised by the Guinness World Records because he did not have a birth certificate to prove his age. Fauja, he says, had a British passport that showed his date of birth as April 1, 1911, while a letter from Indian government officials stated that birth records were not maintained in 1911. Khushwant, who once travelled with Fauja to Australia, recalls how he never lost his humility or his large heart, not even when fans from the expat Sikh community thrust dollars into his palm at gurdwaras, "On the way back, he would quietly put all the money into the gurdwara's gullak," he says. Khushwant says that when Nestlé asked for Fauja's address for a sponsorship cheque, he gave the name of an Amritsar-based charity organisation. Back home in Punjab, Fauja was courted by politicians, yet was never dazzled by authority. In 2011, in a meeting with then CM Amarinder Singh, he quipped, "Bibi Bhattal (former CM Rajinder Kaur Bhattal and Amarinder's rival) speech badi takri dendi hai (Bhattal gives very powerful speeches)." How Amarinder took the quip isn't part of the records. Around three years ago, Fauja finally moved back from London to his home in Beas, where he lived with his youngest son Harvinder's family. "He never sat still," says Bhanjit Kaur, Fauja's daughter-in-law in Beas village. "From room to courtyard to street, he was always on the move." Once awake, he wouldn't stop. He would start his day with a desi pinni (a laddoo made with flaxseed or dal and dry fruits), followed by a light brunch of chapati and a sabzi. He loved ghiya (bottle gourd), tinda (apple gourd), and was "crazy about mangoes. Even till the end, he would eat a kilo a day," smiles Bhanjit. The trees in the family compound bore fruits from the seeds he once planted. At 3 pm, he would have a cup of tea, after which he walked for hours through the village. "Jis din reh gaya, ussi din baith jaunga (The day I skip my walk is the day I give up)," he told The Indian Express once. On July 14, too, he was walking. He was crossing the highway to visit a small roadside eatery named after his late son, Kuldeep Singh, when an unidentified vehicle struck him down. The house of veteran marathon runner Fauja Singh, who died after being hit by an un-

identified vehicle while out for a walk in his native village, in Jalandhar district, Tuesday, July 15, 2025. (PTI Photo) Chandigarh-based writer Khushwant Singh, who wrote a 2011 biography of the marathoner, recalls that when he first met him in 2005, Fauja was wearing an electric blue suit, a tie that read "Marathoner" and a pair of shoes with "Fauja" on one and "Singh" on the other.

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## Woman kills husband, portrays it as road accident

Hyderabad: A woman, along with two other persons, was arrested by Rachakonda police for allegedly killing her husband and trying to mislead the police by portraying it as a road accident. The arrested are Vasthapa Swathi (35), along with Gunti Sai Kumar (33) and Pottepa Mahesh (33). According to the police, Swathi was married to Sri Vasthapa Swamy of Palleria village in Athmakur mandal. The woman, a few months ago, learnt that her husband was having an extramarital relationship with one Savitha, who is the wife of Mahesh. On learning about it, Mahesh warned Swamy to stay away from his wife and informed Swathi too. Angered over it, Swathi confronted her husband, who then started harassing and abusing her.

## Erdogan's neo-Ottoman foreign policy



Türkiye, a long-standing Cold War ally of the West, has significantly expanded its presence and influence across West Asia and the Caucasus in recent years. Under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Ankara has pursued an Islamist-leaning foreign policy aimed at building stronger ties with Muslim-majority countries and repositioning Türkiye as a regional power — all while maintaining its alliance with the Western bloc. The rise to power of the Islamist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in Syria has helped Ankara expand its reach close to the Israeli border. Türkiye already maintains a military presence in Qatar, the rich Sunni Gulf kingdom, underscoring its growing strategic footprint in the region.

During the recent flare-up between India and Pakistan, Türkiye stood by Islamabad. Is this blend of Islamism with a pro-Western tint helping Türkiye remake itself in a volatile world?

When the Republic of Turkey was established in 1923 on the remains of the Ottoman Empire, the country's new rulers adopted sweeping reforms aimed at democratising polity, secularising society and conciliating foreign policy. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of modern Türkiye, adopted a 'peace at home, peace in the world' foreign policy. After the Second World War, Türkiye joined the western bloc. Its geographical location as a Black Sea basin country with access to West Asia, the Mediterranean and the Caucasus made Türkiye a strategically important ally for NATO. All Turkish leaders, both military dictators and elected leaders, followed this establishment consensus on foreign policy — until the rise of the Islamists. Mr. Erdogan's AK Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) that came to power in 2002 also followed this path in the initial years. The AKP came to power after years of political and economic instability, and Mr. Erdogan's immediate focus was to stabilise the economy. Mr. Erdogan, then Prime Minister, sought close cooperation with the U.S. and integration with the European Union. In the immediate aftermath of the U.S.'s illegal invasion of Iraq in March 2003, Mr. Erdogan wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* that "My country is your faithful ally and friend". Türkiye would take a more ambitious foreign policy turn in the early 2010s — with the onset of the Arab Spring protests to be precise.

Ittihad-i Islam (Unity of Islam) was a declared foreign policy doctrine of the Ottoman Sultan Hamid II who reigned from 1876-1909. During this period, Constantinople sought Muslim unity against enemies in the West. The Islamists in Kemal's Türkiye, who were more or less politically marginalised until the rise of the AKP, had always advocated for stronger ties with Muslim nations. Before Mr. Erdogan's rise, perhaps the most influential Islamist voice in Türkiye's politics was that of Necmettin Erbakan (1926-2011). Erbakan, who had served as Prime Minister briefly in 1996-97 and was later banned from politics by the Constitutional Court for violating the country's secular laws, argued that Türkiye should protect its religious values, build closer relations with Muslim countries and combat western imperialism. For him, the European Union was "a Christian club". Erbakan formed different political parties (of which the Welfare Party was the most prominent one) but never managed to break through Türkiye's political and foreign policy consensus. When the Welfare Party was banned, Islamist politicians formed the Virtue Party in 1997. One of the leaders of the Virtue Party was Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The AKP was formed in 2001 after the Virtue Party was found unconstitutional. In the 2002 election, Mr. Erdogan did what Erbakan couldn't — he brought the Islamists to power. It was only a matter of time before the AKP turned to Erbakan's foreign policy doctrine.

"The people's calls and their most humane demands" must be paid attention to, Mr. Erdogan said in February 2011 amid a mass uprising in Egypt against the rule of Hosni Mubarak. By openly backing the protesters, Mr. Erdogan risked unsettling Türkiye's relationship with Arab countries. But when the Mubarak regime fell, Türkiye suddenly found strategic depth in its new approach, and it started seeing street protests in Arab countries as a vehicle for ittihad-i Islam. Then Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu put this policy tilt in a historical perspective in March 2011, saying the mass protests could break "the template drawn by Sykes-Picot" (the Sykes-Picot Agreement was a treaty between the U.K. and France in 1916 where it was decided to divide the ter-

ritories of the Ottoman Empire following World War I) and bring power to the parties "that truly represent the people" of the region. Türkiye started backing these parties, hoping that their revolutionary ascent could open corridors of influence for Ankara in a region which was ruled by the Ottomans for hundreds of years.

When the Muslim Brotherhood, another Islamist party with which the AKP shares ideological and political similarities, came to power in Egypt, Mr. Erdogan's doctrine was put to practice. When protests broke out in Syria in 2011 against the regime of President Bashar al-Assad, Türkiye backed anti-Assad groups — first the Free Syrian Army and then different Islamist outfits. In Libya, which was divided between two governments — one based in Tripoli in the west and the other in Tobruk in the east — Türkiye supported the Tripoli government dominated by Islamist groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood, after the Gaddafi regime was toppled by a NATO invasion in 2011. Mr. Erdogan did not blindly follow ittihad-i Islam. He mixed his Islamist ideology with pragmatism. He was aware of Türkiye's limitations.

It is no longer the Caliphate and doesn't enjoy any politico-religious command over the Muslim world. Geographically, it is only a fraction of what used to be the Ottoman Empire. It is also a treaty ally of NATO. It hosts several Western military bases, including U.S. nuclear weapons at Incirlik. While Mr. Erdogan was ready to risk some friction in Türkiye's ties with the West, he was cautious not to lead those frictions to a break. At the same time, he saw Türkiye's support for Islamist groups as an opportunity to rebuild the country's influence in the Islamic world. Syria is a case in point. When Mr. Assad, backed by Russia and Iran, started turning the tide of the civil war in 2016, Türkiye offered protection to the HTS, the anti-Assad Islamist group that had taken over Idlib. HTS was formerly Syria's al-Qaeda branch. But Türkiye strongly opposed any military action against HTS. It entered into an agreement with Russia to maintain order on the Turkish-Syrian border. It carved territories on the border, creating a buffer between the Turkish Kurdish regions and the Syrian Kurdish province. And in November 2024, when the Syrian regime was reeling under repeated Israeli strikes, HTS launched an offensive and captured Damascus within 12 days. This further raised Türkiye's profile in West Asia.

Azerbaijan is yet another example. When Armenia and Azerbaijan went to war in 2023, Türkiye backed Azerbaijan against Armenia, a Russian treaty ally. When Russia, preoccupied with its own war in Ukraine, was unable to help Armenia, Azerbaijan, with Turkish support and Turkish-made drones, made quick gains. Türkiye supplied drones to Ukraine, but refused to enforce sanctions on Russia. Its decision to buy Russia's S400 missile defence system had irked Washington. But Mr. Erdogan managed to reset ties and extract concessions from the U.S. when he supported the accession of Sweden and Finland into NATO. Mr. Erdogan has thus been playing a tricky game — balancing between the West and its rivals through traditional diplomacy, while at the same time reasserting itself in the Muslim world using Islamist foreign policy.

While Türkiye's geographical location, its membership in NATO and its Islamist foreign policy allow the country to portray itself as a major force, its Achilles heel is the economy. Mr. Erdogan, who delivered on the economic front in the first decade of his rule, has ever since struggled to keep the ship afloat. Türkiye has experienced a prolonged period of hyperinflation, and the Turkish lira has depreciated significantly in recent years. Amid high inflation and high unemployment, social unrest has spread, frequently leading to violent crackdowns. Mr. Erdogan, who changed the Constitution turning Türkiye's political system into an executive presidency from parliamentary democracy, has amassed huge powers in his own hands. He has suppressed political opponents, independent media, and other voices of dissent. Earlier this year, Turkish authorities arrested Ekrem Imamoglu, the popular Mayor of Istanbul, who is the opposition's candidate for the 2028 presidential election, which Mr. Erdogan can't contest under the current Constitution. While on the foreign policy front, Mr. Erdogan's bets have paid tactical results as of now, it is to be seen how Türkiye is going to build on these gains for long-term strategic dividends. True, the regime change in Syria is a huge advantage for Ankara, but Syria is far from being stable. So is Libya, where violence resurfaces frequently. In the Gulf, Qatar is Türkiye's powerhouse partner. While Ankara has improved ties with Saudi Arabia and the UAE in recent years, old mistrust still lingers. And in the Caucasus and the Black Sea, Türkiye will have to take Western and Russian sensitivities into consideration in its foreign policy decisions. Its support for Pakistan provides Ankara some legroom in South Asia, but Türkiye remains an insignificant player in the subcontinent. While Türkiye seeks to expand its strategic footprint in different directions, with a neo-Ottoman tilt and within the framework of the western security umbrella, it also risks turning itself into an authoritarian Islamist regime with a weak economy and political instability.

## Sensitive German experiment sets new limit on maximum neutrino mass

The city Deggendorf in Germany is about 350 km by road from Karlsruhe. Yet when the spectrometer of the Karlsruhe Tritium Neutrino Experiment (KATRIN) was constructed in Deggendorf in 2006, it took an 8,600-km detour to Karlsruhe. Of this, only 7 km was by land, transported on a truck with great care and police protection. For the rest of its journey, it floated on the Danube, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Rhine. Such elaborate measures had to be taken because the spectrometer — the core instrument of the experiment — was a 200-tonne affair, making land transport dangerous.

Why make such a massive detector? For that is what it takes to attempt to determine the mass of the hardest-to-detect subatomic particle in the universe: the neutrino. Recently, the KATRIN collaboration published an upper limit on the sum of the masses of the three known neutrino types using 259 days of measurements recorded across five data-taking runs between March 2019 and June 2021. The collaboration said that this sum couldn't exceed 8.8 x 10<sup>-7</sup> times the heft of the electron — a 2x improvement on the previous best constraint. This is a significant feat. Physicists are so keen to study neutrinos because since their discovery in 1938, these particles have confronted them with one puzzle after another about nature. Here are some central questions pertaining to neutrinos' masses that drive research today. 1. How much does a neutrino weigh? Neutrinos come in three types. It has been established, through a phenomenon called particle oscillations, that at least two types of neutrinos have more than zero mass. It was an experimental triumph so intricate with profound theoretical implications that the physicists who led the discovery teams won the 2015 Nobel Prize for physics for making such a seemingly diminutive observation. Unfortunately, particle oscillations can only measure the differences in the squares

of the neutrino masses, not the masses themselves. Measuring the actual masses is more challenging. This is what sophisticated devices like KATRIN are designed to attempt. 2. A neutrino's mass is so small that in almost every situation it travels nearly at the speed of light (a particle that does travel at the speed of light, the photon, is massless). It is this unbearable lightness that makes their weight difficult to pinpoint in an experiment. Also, physicists don't understand why neutrinos are so light. 3. In the Standard Model — the current best framework scientists have to explain the ways particles interact with each other — there is no way to theoretically confer masses to neutrinos. Said differently, neutrinos are predicted as massless, in conflict with the Nobel-winning oscillation data. This implies the presence of new, hitherto unseen forces and particle species in new Nature — the clearest index yet that something lurks beyond the Standard Model. What is that something?

4. Are neutrinos their own antiparticles? They certainly fit the bill. The antiparticle of a particle type carries opposite charge, so the first criterion for a self-conjugate particle is that it must be electrically neutral — which neutrinos are. As far as physicists can tell, it's also an elementary particle. This is unlike, say, a neutron, which is electrically neutral but composed of charged quarks. As antiquarks are distinct from quarks, an antineutron is distinct from a neutron. To seal the deal, physicists need to confirm a third requirement: whether the neutrino has a Majorana mass or a Dirac mass. These terms refer to the mechanism by which a neutrino gets its mass: if it follows the Majorana process, then a neutrino would be confirmed to be its own antiparticle. To settle this, physicists are looking for a very delicate natural process called neutrinoless double beta decay: one way that it can occur requires two neutrinos to mutually annihilate themselves. However, a neutrino is dreadfully hard to catch.

## Delimiting by electors rather than population offers a fairer approach



Several recent articles in the mainstream media suggest that a delimitation exercise — if carried out with population as the primary criterion for allocating parliamentary constituencies (PCs) — would disproportionately disadvantage the southern States. Proponents of this view argue that the southern States, having adhered more rigorously to family planning norms than their northern counterparts, would either receive comparatively fewer PC seats or could even be left with less seats than what they have currently.

But the broader question that has not been adequately discussed is: what is the most rational criterion for allocation of PCs: population or the number of electors? Electors in a constituency are not always a subset of the population. Many electors may live outside their registered PCs, or may have failed to register. Census records are sensitive to migration, as they are based merely on a stay of six months or more (or even an intention to stay), without even requiring any proof of residence or registration in the voter list.

Migrants also generally avoid/delay transferring their voter registration for various reasons. Furthermore, variations in the age structure — such as a higher proportion of under-18s — may also lead to large differences in elector numbers between PCs with similar populations. Importantly, the principle of 'one person, one vote, one value' aligns more closely with electors than the population. Using elector data avoids the wait for a Census and offers a more accurate measure of representation. The value of a vote can be considered inversely proportional to the number of electors in a PC. Data shows that vote value has varied significantly across regions and over time. Union Territories (UTs), hilly States, and north-eastern States have consistently had a disproportionately high vote value from 1951 to 2024, due to geographical considerations and the minimum representation requirement from each State.

When comparing the southern States with other States, we find that they started with a higher vote value in 1951. However, this trend reversed, and they recorded a lower vote value in 1961, 1971, 1980, 1991, and 1999. The trend reversed once again, with the southern States registering a higher vote value in 2009, 2019, and 2024. It shows a mixed

pattern, with the percentage difference in the average number of electors between the southern States and other States ranging from -10.5% to +5%. Importantly, the southern States began with a higher vote value per parliamentary constituency when the first Parliament was formed in 1951. This initial advantage may have potential long-term implications for government policies and initiatives, development outcomes, and more. Moreover, among the five largest and five smallest PCs (excluding hilly/UTs/north-east) in terms of electors, four in each group are from the southern States. The value of a vote in Idukki is 4.5 times higher than in Malkajgiri and 2.6 times higher than in Bangalore North. This indicates that rationalisation of PCs is more needed in the southern States. According to the elector data for 2024, the southern States account for just 22.45% of India's electors, yet they hold 23.8% of Lok Sabha seats. Their representation in the Rajya Sabha is even more skewed, at 24.4%, exceeding both their share of electors and their Lok Sabha seat share.

The pattern is reversed for the other States. Although they comprise 71.2% of India's electors, they hold only 67.4% of Lok Sabha seats and just 64.4% of Rajya Sabha seats. In particular, Tamil Nadu has 39 Lok Sabha seats which is lower than Bihar's 40 or West Bengal's 42; but it has 18 Rajya Sabha seats, which is more than the 16 seats allotted to both Bihar and West Bengal. The fairer approach is to allocate seats based on electors. In the table, column 4 shows the proposed PC seats if the total number of seats is raised to 800. To avoid penalising smaller States and UTs, their current seat count is preserved, which results in a total of 810. The table shows that among the large States, Rajasthan (76%), Karnataka (60.7%), and Telangana (58.8%) would see the highest percentage gains in seats.

The current narratives — that PCs are allocated solely on the basis of population, and that the potential reduction in seats in southern States is primarily due to their strict adherence to family planning policies — are not entirely accurate. First, constituency allocation has never been based purely on population. Other considerations, i.e., geographical challenges and minimum representation, have always played a role. Second, linking political representation to population control sets a dangerous precedent. By that logic, similar claims could be made for representation based on religion or caste. For instance, Jains, among all religious groups, and upper castes, among all social groups, have the highest adherence to population control, while Muslims and Scheduled Tribes have comparatively higher fertility rates. Third, when the criterion of using population for the formation of PCs was originally adopted, the consequences of the population enumeration method and the impact of large-scale migration were not anticipated. Therefore, the principle of 'one person, one vote, one value' in a true sense is more closely aligned with the number of electors rather than the population across PCs.

## A Chennai man's honeymoon murder in Munnar and striking parallels to the Meghalaya case

On the night of June 16, 2006, Anantharaman, a 30-year-old resident of Shankar Nagar, Pammal, and Vidyalakshmi, 24, whom he had married just nine days earlier, boarded a train from Chennai to Thrissur, Kerala, for their honeymoon. The following morning, the couple offered prayers at the famed Guruvayoor temple. They then travelled in a tourist taxi to the scenic hill station of Munnar and checked into Sterling Resorts.

The next day, they visited the Kundala Dam, a popular tourist spot. The couple hired a pedal boat but returned to the jetty earlier than scheduled. They then proceeded to a secluded area near the dam. Sometime later, a visibly shaken Vidyalakshmi ran to their taxi driver and told him that two men had attacked them, strangled Anantharaman to death, and fled with cash and valuables. The driver immediately alerted the police. Elsewhere, two young men — Anand and Anburaj — were travelling from Kundala Dam to Hotel Arafa in an autorickshaw. They grew nervous when they saw police jeeps rushing past them in the opposite direction. The men told the driver they wanted to leave Munnar at the earliest. Sensing their anxiety, the auto driver became suspicious. Later, while the men were at the hotel, he shared his concerns with friends and informed the police. The police quickly brought the two men in for questioning. Vidyalakshmi was already at the station. According to a report in *The Hindu* dated June 20, 2006, "The complaint preferred by Ms. Sreevidya [Vidyalakshmi, then wrongly identified] said her husband went into the woods where the assailants attacked him and robbed her of her jewellery." She likely did not expect to come face-to-face at the police station with the very men who had helped kill her husband. Soon, the truth began to unravel — a secret love affair, a honeymoon, and a cold-blooded murder. Back then, few would have imagined that this sensational case would find eerie echoes 19 years later in Meghalaya, where Raja Raghuvanshi, a man from Indore, was murdered during his honeymoon — a plot allegedly hatched by his wife, Sonam.

What happened in 2006?

Returning to June 2006: at the police station, officers found a handwritten travel itinerary in Anand's possession, tracing a route from Chennai to Munnar. Under interrogation, he admitted that Vidyalakshmi had given him the itinerary. Investigations revealed that Anand and Vidyalakshmi had been in love since their school days in Chennai. But Anand's financial instability and his caste background led Vidyalakshmi's parents to oppose the relationship. Eventually, they arranged her marriage with Anantharaman — a match she accepted, but with ulterior motives. The police learnt that Anand and Anburaj had travelled in an unreserved compartment on the same train as the newlyweds. Anand was originally to be joined by another accomplice, who backed out at the last moment. Anburaj was brought in instead. At Guruvayoor, the two men briefly met Vidyalakshmi while her husband was away. When the couple continued to Munnar, Anand and Anburaj followed them and unsuccessfully tried to check in to the same resort. They then found a room at nearby Hotel Arafa. From there, they made their way to Kundala Dam, where Anantharaman was strangled with his own camera strap. After confirming the attackers had fled, Vidyalakshmi fabricated her story and alerted the driver. Interestingly, she told a different version to Anantharaman's brother — that the taxi driver had killed her husband. This contradiction later helped the prosecution build a case against her and her co-accused. The police also found minor bloodstains on the clothes of all three accused — stains that matched Anantharaman's blood group.

It came to light that Vidyalakshmi had been in constant touch with Anand throughout the honeymoon, using her husband's phone, without his knowledge. When Anand reached Kundala Dam and faced poor mobile phone re-



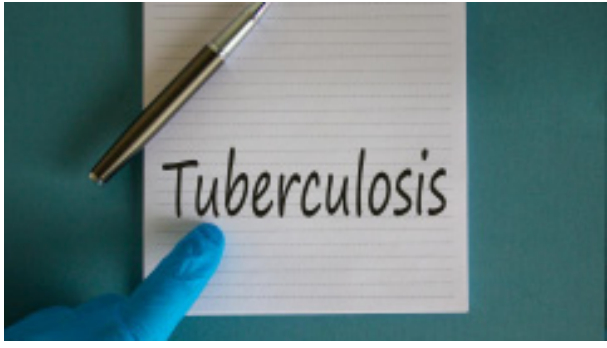
ception, he used the autorickshaw driver's phone to get last-minute directions from her. All three were arrested and lodged in Devikulam Sub-Jail. A year later, the trial court found them guilty. Anand and Vidyalakshmi were sentenced to double life imprisonment, and Anburaj to life imprisonment. The three appealed to the Kerala High Court. But in January 2012, a bench comprising Justices R. Basant and P.Q. Barkath Ali dismissed their pleas. "The learned counsel for A1 (Anand) and A3 (Vidyalakshmi) want this Court to accept that the relationship had come to an end in 2004. Evidently, the love letters are not dated and this affords them the opportunity to advance such a contention," noted the judges. "We have satisfactory evidence about the telephonic contacts between A1 and A3 after the marriage was fixed — immediately before and after," they added. As to why Vidyalakshmi married Anantharaman despite wanting to be with Anand, the court speculated: "May be more mischievous ideas crept into her cranium and she may have thought that as a widow there may have been better chances of having a life with A1." Pivotal witness in this case was solved on the same day as the murder — unlike the Meghalaya case, which took a week — much of the credit goes to the alert autorickshaw driver who sensed something amiss and acted swiftly. His testimony as "Prosecution Witness Number Two (PW2)" was pivotal. As the Kerala High Court observed: "The assessment and response of PW2, to crown all other circumstances, is eloquent about the manner in which A1 and A2 behaved and reacted on that crucial day."

## Jio BlackRock receives Sebi approval to launch advisory business

New Delhi: Jio BlackRock Investment Advisers Pvt Ltd, a 50:50 joint venture between Jio Financial Services Ltd (JFSL) and US-based BlackRock Inc, on Wednesday said it has received regulatory approval from markets regulator Sebi and leading exchange BSE to commence operations as an investment adviser.

This follows the announcement on May 27, 2025, of regulatory approval from Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) for Jio BlackRock Asset Management Private Ltd to commence operations as an investment manager for its mutual fund business in India. With this license, Jio BlackRock Investment Advisers will now focus on developing a digital-first product designed to meet the evolving needs of investors, Jio BlackRock Investment Advisers said in a statement. Jio BlackRock Investment Advisers also announced the appointment of Marc Pilgrem as its Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO). As Indian investors increasingly seek personalized, insight-driven financial solutions, this joint venture is poised to democratise access to world-class advisory services, JFSL MD and CEO Hitesh Sethia said.

# The need for universal and equitable health coverage



India has made substantial and tangible progress in Tuberculosis (TB) care, adopting new strategies to detect, treat and prevent TB. Some key areas of progress include the expansion of molecular testing for rapid detection of TB and drug-resistance; the introduction of the shorter, all-oral BPaLM regimen (a combination of four drugs Bedaquiline (B), Pretomanid (Pa), Linezolid (L), and Moxifloxacin (M)); doubling of the entitlement under the Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana (NPY) for nutrition support to ₹1,000 a month; roll-out of TB preventive therapy; and an expanded role for communities through the involvement of TB survivors and Champions. The impact of the roll-out of these strategies can be seen in the 17.7% decline in TB incidence in India, from 237 per 1,00,000 population in 2015 to 195 per 1,00,000 population in 2023, in tandem with a 21.4% reduction in TB-related deaths.

Since Independence, India's public health system has delivered disease control services through primarily vertical health programmes, such as the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP). While this vertical nature has allowed for concentrated focus and brought benefits in many ways, it has also been limiting. Integration of TB services within the broader public health system is key to India's pursuit of equitable, universal health coverage (UHC) for all. Decentralising TB care for all

The ambitious Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Scheme was launched in India in 2018 to provide UHC for the Indian population. Today, TB has been integrated within both key components of Ayushman Bharat: the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), considered the world's largest insurance scheme, and the Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs, formerly known as Health and Wellness Centres), which provide a comprehensive basket of primary health-care services in rural and urban India. From the perspective of a person with TB symptoms, the best experience would be accessing consistently high-quality services at the first point of contact. The integration of TB services at the AAM primary care level is designed to meet this need, bringing together diagnostic, treatment and preventive care under one umbrella. AAMs serve as sputum collection centres, where people with TB symptoms can give samples for testing. The NTEP has also been optimising sample collection and transportation methods through a diagnostics network optimisation exercise. A person diagnosed with TB at a secondary or tertiary care facility can undergo treatment at the health centre closest to their residence, again minimising time and costs. In the first two months when people with TB are weak and drop outs as well as mortality is highest, community health officers positioned at the AAMs and their teams must be trained to identify and refer such patients for admission. While TB services have been free within the public health system, over 50% of all people with TB symptoms continue to seek care in the private sector. Uneven standards of care across the vastly heterogeneous private health sector has led to delays in diagnosis and contributed to poor outcomes as well as significant out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE) for families. It is imperative to strengthen referrals from the private to the public health system, particularly for those who cannot afford to incur substantial expenditure on health and who may not be aware that TB services are freely available in the public health system. It is equally essential to ensure that the AB-PMJAY provides full insurance coverage for those who seek care for TB in the private or public sector,

particularly those who are severely ill. Equitable and decentralised care for all. What does the road to equitable TB care look like? There are five key steps we can take to accelerate our progress towards TB elimination and universal health coverage (UHC).

First, while we work to achieve decentralisation, we must strengthen person-centred care approaches, and deliver them at scale. There have been model interventions in several States that have assessed people with TB for social and clinical vulnerabilities and linked them to care. In Tamil Nadu, the Tamil Nadu Kasanoi Erappila Thittam (TN-KET), or "TB death-free project", has been successful in achieving reduced TB mortality through a robust system of identifying those most vulnerable or sick, and referring them for a brief period of admission. Similarly, there have been other interventions focusing on tribal communities, migrants, and homeless populations. One clear pathway to achieving UHC and increased utilisation of the public health system is by strengthening investment in the traditional 'inputs' for health and streamlining their functioning — human resources, supplies and infrastructure. Second, we must develop mechanisms to recognise intersectionalities. Multiple factors such as gender, age, caste, disability, socio-economic status, and occupation determine health seeking intent and access to health and TB services. The intersection of these aspects of identity can both positively and adversely impact TB outcomes. The NTEP has adopted the national framework for a gender-responsive approach to TB, recognising that women, men, and LGBTQIA persons experience TB differently. Improving understanding of gender will take time, and inevitably challenge personal behaviours and norms, but is essential to equitable care. Similarly, there has been some early work to better understand TB and disability, which must be built upon.

Third, integrated care remains a challenge for India's health system, as we continue to build our primary care services. How do we ensure that someone who comes with TB symptoms is tested for Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or asthma? How can a person with TB be screened for depression or hypertension and linked to appropriate services and counselling? We must adopt models of integrated general health screening in community settings, for example, test for TB and COPD through validated Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enabled chest x-rays and upfront molecular testing, along with screening of common non-communicable diseases through blood pressure, blood glucose, and body mass index (BMI) monitoring. Fourth, UHC approaches are centred around minimising OOPE, thereby eliminating health-related debt. Schemes such as the NPY have helped alleviate the financial burden on families, by providing monetary support for access to nutritious food. Case-finding approaches, such as the ongoing '100 Days' campaign, can help reduce OOPE prior to diagnosis. However, there are still several significant indirect costs that remain. Expanding social protection by extending nutrition support to the family, piloting wage-loss schemes to offset a loss of income during TB treatment and introducing livelihood programmes for TB survivors are potential future actions. Lessons from COVID-19, communication. Finally, equity in terms of access to information and knowledge is critical. TB remains severely misunderstood. Recall how swiftly we were able to ensure public understanding of COVID-19, through a flood of science-based information using a multitude of platforms. We need similar approaches for TB, to encourage people to seek care and adopt simple measures to reduce transmission within homes and communities. Promoting knowledge about drug-resistant TB, in the context of growing anti-microbial resistance (AMR) is vital. Decimating TB stigma is critical to ensuring early detection and successful treatment outcomes for people with TB. An equitable TB programme is one where every individual receives the highest quality of person-centred care that takes into account individual needs. Equity is a cornerstone of health care, and is essential to achieving TB elimination and universal health coverage. India's TB response is well poised to define global standards and benchmarks. Applying the equity lens will only accelerate our progress.

## In Tiruchi, smartphone addiction among children causes concern



An increasing number of school children are displaying signs of addiction to their smartphones and other electronic devices, mental health experts in Tiruchi have said. A senior official at the District Early Intervention Centre, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Government Hospital said that children who are spending over 14 hours on their phones are being referred, at least once or twice a week, at the Tiruchi facility. "We have seen young boys and girls who become aggressive and even threaten suicide when their phones are taken away from them. This is becoming a common issue among children across all ages with access to smart devices," the official told. Approximately three to four children exhibiting symptoms of smartphone addiction are being reported on a daily basis at the Athma Mind Care Hospital (AMCH) in Tiruchi.

"Mobile phones are used as a babysitting device in many homes. As the eye-to-screen time increases, over time, children feel a compulsion to use the mobile phone for pleasure. Parents, teachers and friends play a role in how a child uses the smartphone. Addiction can develop due to factors such as a low intelligence quotient (IQ), undiagnosed learning disability or lack of parental affection. Overuse of phones can make children take up online gambling or even procure drugs through the dark web," said M. Rajaram, consultant psychiatrist, AMCH. Medical intervention and long-term residential care are required to break the habit in some of the more severe cases, said Dr. Rajaram.

With most schools adopting online tools such as WhatsApp and their own proprietary software to stay in touch with students, parents however, said that mobile phones have become an essential part of the learning module. "Though my daughter's school does not allow mobile phones on campus, the only way to find out about upcoming assignments and other events is through their

WhatsApp group. My daughter spends at least four hours on her phone after school, both for study and to relax. We argue about it, but we cannot control children for too long, because as grown-ups, we also use our phones constantly," said a parent.

## Maruti, Mahindra and hyundai cars set to get costlier from this April

New Delhi: Cars are set to get costlier from April, with various automakers like market leaders Maruti Suzuki, Mahindra & Mahindra, and Hyundai, announcing price hikes due to rising input costs and operational expenses.

Maruti Suzuki India, which leads the domestic passenger car segment in the country, plans to hike prices of its entire model range by up to 4 per cent from next month. The auto major currently sells various models, ranging from the entry-level Alto K-10 to the multiple-purpose vehicle Invicto in the domestic market, with prices ranging from Rs 4.23 lakh to Rs 29.22 lakh, respectively (ex-showroom Delhi). Its rival Hyundai Motor India said it will increase car prices by up to 3 per cent from April 2025, owing to rising raw material and operational costs. Similarly, Tata Motors intends to increase the prices of its passenger vehicle range, including electric vehicles, from April 2025, for the second time this year. Mahindra & Mahindra said it will hike prices of its SUVs and commercial vehicles by up to 3 per cent from April. Kia India, Honda Cars India, Renault India and BMW have also announced to hike vehicle prices from the next month. Deloitte Partner & Automotive Sector Leader Rajat Mahajan said carmakers usually have two price hike cycles in India, one at the beginning of the calendar year and another at the start of the financial year. "The reason for the extent of hike varies, could be related to currency fluctuations where we need more rupees to import the same product, commodity or component," he stated. Over the last six months, the US Dollar has appreciated by almost 3 per cent against the rupee, which affects high import-dependent categories that may have a direct or indirect impact on input costs. Besides, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) with a complete knockdown (CKD) footprint are likely to experience an even greater effect.

## 5 years after Covid: 'I am happy if I can climb to the second floor without feeling breathless'



Five years have completely upended the life of 45-year-old Parminder Malhotra. From a robust fitness enthusiast, he struggles to climb to his second-floor apartment in West Delhi's Tilak Nagar, his oxygen levels sometimes plummeting to 80 per cent. He's breathless and needs oxygen support whenever pollution levels soar in Delhi and keeps an oxygen cylinder and concentrator on standby. An electrical engineer who vetted construction sites, he now runs an electrical appliances store. Still, he has managed to move on from Covid and two rounds of being on a ventilator. "As long as I can breathe in fresh air from my balcony, I am okay," says the long Covid survivor.

Malhotra has been a regular visitor to the long Covid clinic at AIIMS, Delhi, ever since he contracted the Delta variant of the virus in 2021. That led to lung fibrosis, a condition characterised by scarring and thickening of lung tissue, making it difficult for the patient to breathe and absorb oxygen. It's a progressive condition that worsens over time, and while there's no cure, treatments can help manage symptoms and slow down their progression. He now gets a CT scan done every three months to see if he is doing any better. Or worse. "On a routine check-up last week, the doctor told me that I still had patches in my lungs," says Malhotra. Now his biggest challenge is to climb to the third floor of his apartment block and not feel breathless. "Till date, I feel uneasy for almost 10 minutes after climbing two flights of stairs," he adds. So he does spirometry exercises and yoga regularly. As part of a test exercise at the AIIMS clinic, he has to blow about 30 balloons one after another.

According to Dr Anant Mohan, professor and HOD, Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine, Malhotra had a severe Covid infection that had damaged a big portion of his lungs. "We didn't know how to deal with Covid in the initial days. So we don't know much about the future of patients who had severe infections then and had to be hospitalised. But what we can do is to monitor them, treat them like any other interstitial lung disease (a condition marked by inflammation and scarring of tissue) case and help them with pulmonary rehabilitation," he says. They need follow-ups and corrective lifestyle measures for a lifetime. "These patients should maintain good lung hygiene, do breathing exercises, vaccinate for pneumonia, get regular check-ups and follow changes in medication if required," adds

Dr Mohan. In October 2024, Dr Mohan published a study after observing and treating patients at the AIIMS long Covid clinic. Malhotra was a test case too. It showed that a third of the patients who came to the clinic weren't breathing properly or getting sufficient oxygen from the air to their blood. The study is significant because it shows that after-effects can be quite severe and last beyond two years after initial Covid diagnosis. This was common in women, the elderly, those who had severe infection and smokers. "It is one of the first studies from a low- and middle-income country (LMIC) to report long-term pulmonary sequelae (after effects) of COVID-19. Some of them still need oxygen support occasionally," says Dr Mohan.

Malhotra needed oxygen support throughout 2022, a year after being diagnosed. He started tapering it off in 2023 but required it during Diwali that year after an intense coughing bout left him gasping for breath. Parminder Malhotra with his wife Parminder Malhotra with his wife. According to Dr Garima Shrivastav, who was one of the researchers on long Covid, the infected lung tissue undergoes a healing process but some of it leaves a permanent scar in the recovery phase of the Covid infection. "This stiffening tissue makes it difficult for patients to breathe in and breathe out. Their oxygen flow is reduced," she says. Malhotra, a non-smoker and occasional drinker, was surprised that his body could give in and lungs collapse so easily. "We have had many young patients who had high viral loads and severe scarring without any co-morbidity. Remember that the vaccine was not out back then, so their immunity took a severe beating. Their bodies didn't have any shield," adds Dr Shrivastav.

"Covid changed our lives," says Malhotra as he shares throwback moments. His wife Anjali, who was the primary caregiver for Malhotra and the children, had to battle trauma of another kind. "Given his health status that required him to be constantly in and out of hospitals, he was out of work for almost two years. We had to struggle hard to make both ends meet," she says, having to manage the stress of keeping her husband alive and be the pillar of strength to her school and college-going kids. Recalling April 2021, Malhotra says he developed severe breathing difficulties within three days of developing symptoms. "The doctor suggested a CT scan which showed severe lung damage. Oxygenated blood was not reaching my extremities and my toes had gone black. It took me two hours to climb down the stairs that day," he says. He was immediately rushed to a Covid centre in Chhattarpur and was put on a ventilator. He stayed there for over a month but his condition did not improve. So he was admitted to the AIIMS Trauma Centre where he needed a ventilator and remained under medical care and supervision till July. When he was finally discharged and signed up for rehabilitation, Malhotra could not keep his job as an electrical engineer with a Gurgaon construction firm as his job entailed site visits and construction dust was anathema to his weakened lungs. For the last year, he has been running an electrical appliance shop near his house, managing orders and rostering employees for field duties. However the couple chooses not to look back and have chosen a disciplined lifestyle to stay healthy for their children and their future. "There is no option but to move on. A new life means it has to be lived better," says Malhotra.

## Buttermilk or kanji? Which fermented home-made drink is best for the gut?



The lactic acid bacteria present in buttermilk can ease digestion, prevent bloating and restore the balance of gut microbiota. The lactic acid bacteria present in buttermilk can ease digestion, prevent bloating and restore the balance of gut microbiota. As the season warms up, it is the time for including probiotics (the good gut bacteria) in our diet. While commercial probiotic drinks like flavoured yogurts and packaged kefir are readily available, they contain added sugar and chemical additives that you can do without. Home-made probiotic beverages offer a more natural, cost-effective and chemical-free alternative and can be easily incorporated throughout the day.

1. Buttermilk (Chhaas): This is rich in lactic acid bacteria, calcium, potassium, vitamin B12, and proteins. It can be low in fat and calories when made from skimmed curd. The lactic acid bacteria present in buttermilk can ease digestion, prevent bloating and restore the balance of gut microbiota. Additionally, the presence of calcium and vitamin B12 supports bone health and energy production.

2. Fermented Rice Water (Panta Bhat/Kanji): This is high in resistant starch and short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), contains vitamins B1, B6, minerals like magnesium and is rich in good bacteria like Lactobacillus and Bifidobacteria. Since it is rich in prebiotics and probiotics, it enhances digestion, prevents constipation and tames acid reflux due to its alkaline nature. The resistant starch in fermented rice feeds good gut bacteria, promoting a balanced microbiome. SCFAs keep the gut lining intact.

3. Beetroot Kanji: This is made by soaking beetroot and mustard seeds in water with a pinch of salt. During fermentation, Lactobacillus species thrive in the mixture, making it a powerful probiotic drink that supports gut flora. The fibre content in beetroot also acts as a prebiotic, feeding beneficial bacteria in the gut. This is also high in antioxidants, iron, vitamin C, and nitrates which detoxify the liver and enhance cardiovascular health. The natural nitrates in beetroot improve blood circulation and stamina.

4. Sweet Potato Kanji: This lesser-known drink, prepared by fermenting boiled sweet potatoes in water, often with mustard seeds and spices, has good concentrations of Lactobacillus bacteria, which aid digestion and reduce inflammation in the gut. Additionally, the complex carbohydrates in sweet potatoes act as a fuel source for beneficial bacteria. They have fibre and the immunity-boosting vitamin C and beta-carotene.

5. Coconut Water Kefir: This is a fermented drink made

by adding kefir grains to coconut water, allowing beneficial bacteria like Lactobacillus, Saccharomyces and Bifidobacteria to multiply. The fermentation process also breaks down sugars, making it a gut-friendly and low-calorie drink. This refreshing probiotic beverage helps balance the gut microbiome, reduces bloating and supports hydration. The high electrolyte content also makes it ideal for post-workout recovery. Unlike processed probiotic drinks which whittle down the efficacy of good bacteria during manufacturing, home-made fermented drinks are host to a wider variety of probiotic strains. Choose for your gut health wisely.

## Health benefits of jackfruit

If the mango is described as the king of fruits, then the jackfruit will be the doctor of all fruits. Jackfruit (Artocarpus heterophyllus) is a plant known in India and the Middle East for a long time and has been used in Ayurveda and Unani systems of medicine as a health aid. Known as 'kathal' in Hindi, 'pala' in Tamil, 'kanthal' in Bengali, and 'chakka' in Malayalam, the plant and its parts are used in cooking in Southern and Northeastern States of India, while it is eaten more as a fruit elsewhere. It is abundant in Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, from where it is exported to the Middle East. The jackfruit tree is large, and the fruit does not hang down from branches, but grows directly from the trunk and limbs. This helps it to grow to enormous sizes, the record being a 42 kg specimen from Kerala. The ripe fruit is sweet and tasty. Unripe jackfruit has many culinary uses. It is even used as a substitute for meat, since it has lower fat and cholesterol levels, and tastes just as good as meat! Jackfruit biryani is a tasty vegetarian alternative, as is jackfruit curry. The tree has many other uses. Southeast Asian monks wear robes dyed with jackfruit bark for a radiant, sunlit yellow that is reminiscent of honey. This colour also imbues a pleasing texture to furniture made from jackfruit wood, which is hardy and termite resistant. But it is as a superfood that the jackfruit has been gaining global popularity. A comprehensive review from Cleveland University, U.S. points out that jackfruit is rich in proteins, vitamins, minerals and plant-based chemicals, and elements such as potassium, magnesium and phosphorus. In Duke University's site, scientist Brianna Elliott highlights the nutritional benefits of jackfruit. She points out that sliced jackfruit is nutritionally superior to apples and mangoes.

## At Lord's, Jadeja played as much with his heart as with his head



Lord's was hot, and seeing Ben Stokes virtually bowl himself into the ground was tiring just watching from the stands. It was a final day tempered with the heat of Stokes and treated with the ice of Ravindra Jadeja. Exhaustion is not a feeling, it is a physical state; yet at the end of the day, exhaustion was the key emotion as Mohammed Siraj sank to the ground, bowled almost unfairly by a ball trickling onto the stumps, to be forever haunted by the question: could he have kicked it away if he had reacted quickly? Joe Root who ran to console him, appeared relieved it would remain a rhetorical question. Yet, for all of Stokes's heroics and England's sense of purpose, the man who dominated the day in his understated way was Jadeja. His fourth 50 of the series must count as one of India's great innings in a lost cause. For 22 overs, Jasprit Bumrah kept him company, the batters suggesting they might get them in singles. The fast bowler would defend and then shadow play the stroke he might have played — a perfect cover drive, for instance — had the circumstances been different. There was a calmness about the pair that contrasted with the hectic activity around as bowlers ran in, fielders spread out or closed in, and the crowd raised its decibel levels.

No boundaries and few runs — yet you couldn't take your eyes away. Test cricket was demonstrating it doesn't need the artificiality of bang-bang cricket, that spectators can gasp and cheer at a defensive stroke, and when apparently nothing is happening, everything is. Sitting on the edge of the seat through five hours can be a rewarding if painful experience. Jasprit Bumrah and Ravindra Jadeja run between

the wickets during the fifth day of the third Test at Lord's. Jadeja turns 37 this year, and despite his record, he was never in the frame for captaincy, and few cared for his cricketer opinions. He came, he saw, he did his job while the focus remained on the more glamorous. Yet, as a left-arm spinner he has more wickets at a lower average and better strike rate than Bishan Bedi; as a left handed batter a better strike rate than Sourav Ganguly, and as an all rounder a better batting average and both average and strike rate than Kapil Dev. Jadeja wouldn't automatically replace any of these players in an Indian team, but however misleading statistics might be, you have to acknowledge them. He has also been one of India's finest fielders, bearing comparison with Mohammed Azharuddin. At Lord's he managed India's tail with all the assurance of a V.V.S. Laxman, unselfishly and without ego. At one point, it was England who looked ragged. Stokes, who bowled 20 overs on the day, was so tired he occasionally forgot he was captain and the fielders seemed uncertain where to go. Too tired even to wave his arms to move them, Stokes merely looked around and hoped for the best. There were eight men on the fence with only two wickets remaining, at times there was no slip. Jadeja, the support act to leading batters, was now the main feature as the wickets fell. At 112 for eight at lunch, it looked done. Yet, Jadeja kept the hopes of a nation alive, with an innings of rare intelligence and courage. Few Indian batters could be accused of throwing it away; none did so on the final day. Rahul had shown in his stint how stout defence might win the day, there was enough time.

Many struggled. Joe Root, the best of them, made a century and a forty, but played and missed too many times and seemed out of sorts, finally getting bowled sweeping. Rahul's century in the first innings was more fluent, but it was left to India's No. 7 to play the innings of the match. Of the many might-have-beens is the question of extras. India conceded 63 in the match, 32 of them in England's second innings 192. They lost by 22 runs. Go figure, as Americans might say. In the final analysis, cricket is an individual sport. There is the bowler and there is the batter. Stokes's belief as bowler negated Jadeja's spirit as batter; everything else was secondary. England can be proud. So can India.

## A coalition clash in Tamil Nadu

Though Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced in April that ties between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) had been restored, there has been no attempt by either party to conceal the apparent contradictions between them. At a press conference held jointly with the AIADMK general secretary, Edappadi K. Palaniswami, Mr. Shah said, "We will fight the elections under the leadership of Edappadiji." He also added that there would be a "coalition government" in the event of a victory. The AIADMK did not react positively to this announcement. It is not just the AIADMK; even the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) has always been averse to the idea of a coalition government in Tamil Nadu.

In the 1980 Assembly elections, the DMK-Congress combine failed to capture power. The constituents of the coalition contested an equal number of seats. After a round of wrangling with the DMK, the Congress finally agreed that the then DMK chief, M. Karunanidhi, would be projected as the chief ministerial candidate. However, the coalition did not click at the hustings. Instead, the AIADMK, which won only two seats in the Lok Sabha elections earlier that year and subsequently lost power in Tamil Nadu, staged a spectacular comeback in the Assembly polls. In 2001, when the AIADMK contested the Assembly elections from 141 seats — the lowest number it has ever contested — in view of coalition compulsion, political circles discussed whether the party would be able to obtain a simple majority of its own. The AIADMK needed to secure 118 seats in the House of 234. The AIADMK founder M.G. Ramachandran and his successor Jayalalithaa never favoured the concept of sharing power in the State. However, the party had no reason to worry as it won 132 seats.

In 2006, the DMK fell short of a simple majority as it won only 96 seats. Yet, it refused to share power with its

allies. Karunanidhi and the then Congress chief, Sonia Gandhi, shared such a good rapport that the DMK patriarch managed to form the government without sharing power with the Congress. After making that comment in April, Mr. Shah reiterated his position in many interviews to the media. However, the AIADMK is clearly not on the same page. Alluding to the Union Minister's stand, AIADMK spokesperson Vaigaichelvan said that the concept of a coalition government would "never ever" find acceptance among the people of the State. Similarly, Mr. Palaniswami, who launched a State-wide tour from July 7 in the run-up to the 2026 Assembly elections, has been asserting that the AIADMK will form the government after gaining a majority on its own. When asked to comment on Mr. Shah's position, he said he interpreted them as an endorsement of single-party rule in the State. Despite the conflicting views of the two parties, the BJP State president, Nainar Nagendran, and Union Minister of State L. Murugan participated in Mr. Palaniswami's campaign launch. In one interview, Mr. Shah said that the nominee for the post of Chief Minister would be from the AIADMK; he did not mention Mr. Palaniswami's name. This did not go unnoticed in the DMK circles. The party sought to corner the AIADMK general secretary and saw Mr. Shah's statement as a lack of confidence in Mr. Palaniswami's leadership qualities. Eventually, it was left to Mr. Nagendran to clarify that the AIADMK leader would head the government. Yet, speculation is rife that the Union Minister may have in mind former Municipal Administration Minister in Coimbatore, S.P. Velumani. About three weeks ago, the AIADMK strongman shared the stage with Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat and senior BJP leaders at the birth centenary celebration of the pontiff of Perur Mutt, Shanthalina Ramasamy Adigalar. He later explained that he attended the event, which he termed as "apollitical", only as a local legislator. Prior to the announcement on the tie up between the two parties, there were reports of differences of opinion between the AIADMK chief and some of his senior colleagues, including Mr. Velumani. As the debate over the nature of government could spoil the narrative for the Opposition parties, it would be in the interest of the alliance to sort out the issue soon. Having said that, it remains inexplicable that this debate is even raging given that the composition of different alliances has not even been finalised yet.

## Searching for alien life means asking the right questions first



Since the 1990s, scientists have discovered hordes of planets outside the solar system together with tantalising hints of life — or more accurately hints of hints of life. So far, however, there exists no proof that there's life anywhere in the universe except on the earth.

Does that mean our quest for alien life has failed?

A team led by researchers at the Institute for Particle Physics and Astrophysics at ETH Zurich, in Switzerland, recently offered a more nuanced answer to this question — one reminiscent of an important attitude to have when doing research at the cutting edge. Writing in a recent paper in *The Astronomical Journal*, the team contended that a "no signs of life detected" conclusion can also offer valuable information to guide and refine future exoplanet studies. More broadly, the team emphasised the importance of recognising that every observation carries with it a degree of uncertainty and that it is important to ask the right questions. Nothing is something. With the ultimate goal of assessing the habitability of exoplanets and finding potential signs of life, researchers have used a statistical method called Bayesian analysis. "It's a way of updating our understanding or beliefs based on new evidence," Daniel Angerhausen, a scientist in the Department of Physics at ETH Zurich and lead author of the new paper, said.

This is like making a first guess based on what one already believes, then fine-tuning it. For example, you could start by assuming life is very common in the universe. When you observe a hundred exoplanets without finding signs of life, you adjust your guess to accommodate factors that might explain how life can be common yet not found on these worlds. As you continue this process over time, your answer to "how common is life?" acquires a more informed shape. In the new paper, the team explored how different starting assumptions affect final estimates of how common life might be.

The researchers simulated observations of 100 exoplanets, ranging from 1 to 100, to determine the minimum number of exoplanets that must be examined to conclude how many worlds are possibly habitable. Their work suggested that if scientists examine between 40 and 80 exoplanets and find no evidence of life, they can confidently conclude that fewer than 10% to 20% of similar planets are

likely to support life. That is, life would be relatively rare. If the prevalence of life is indeed low, around 10-20%, it would be understandable for no signs of life to be found in a sample of 40-80 planets. But if life was more common, scientists should expect to observe some indications of it in that same sample. At least, this is the team's argument. Need for better questions. This key finding suggests the number of planets observed so far may suffice to establish an upper limit on the number of potentially habitable worlds. However, the authors were careful to note that "ideal" results are likely impossible because every observation has some uncertainty. This uncertainty can manifest in many ways (e.g. a false negative occurs when a significant sign of life is overlooked) and is related to the challenges in the questions researchers ask when they set out to find life signs.

Angerhausen explained that the question "does this planet have life?" itself carries a significant risk of false positives. For example, a planet may have a small biosphere that doesn't alter its atmosphere in a way that can be detected from a distance. In contrast, stipulating whether "this planet has a temperature within a specific range and concentrations of certain molecules above a defined threshold" could provide more informative data.

When selecting which planets to investigate, the paper advises the importance of asking clear and specific questions. For example, instead of posing a vague question, one might ask, "of all the rocky planets in the habitable zone, how many show signs of water vapour, oxygen, and methane?" This would help create clear selection criteria for exoplanets as well as help experts avoid misinterpreting data from an alien world. When observations are filled with uncertainty, the conclusion "no life detected" can be meaningless. But if the questions are thoughtfully designed, even null results can serve as powerful tools in the search for extraterrestrial life. In sum, the effectiveness of a search depends on asking the right questions and not (solely) on the number of exoplanets observed. If scientists lack clarity on what specific indicators of life they should focus on, even the best telescopes could yield misleading results. Angerhausen also stressed that in addition to the technological sophistication in upcoming projects like the Large Interferometer for Exoplanets (LIFE) and the Habitable Worlds Observatory (HWO) — which aim to observe dozens of earth-like planets — "our study shows that there is still a lot of work to be done on the theoretical side" and on the foundations of their knowledge. That is, how do we know a certain signal is truly a sign of life? Or what counts as dispositive evidence of a habitable planet? The LIFE and HWO projects plan to study exoplanets for signs of water, oxygen, and other molecules that may indicate the presence of life. Angerhausen himself expressed optimism about the potential to discover habitable worlds. He said that for the first time in human history, humans will soon have the technology to systematically search for life in our cosmic neighbourhood. In the final analysis, the new paper asserts that the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence — as long as we allow the right questions to lead us.

## ANRF unveils PM Professorships to bolster research in State universities



fellowships, the new initiative is also open to overseas scientists, including Non-Resident Indians, Persons of Indian Origin, and Overseas Citizens of India. Additionally, professionals from industry and experienced Professors of Practice with a "distinguished record" of research and innovation are eligible to apply. A key distinction of the new programme is that recipients must be based at State universities that qualify as "spoke" institutions under Category A of the recently introduced Promoting Advanced and Inclusive Research (PAIR) programme of the ANRF.

The PAIR initiative links universities with nascent research ecosystems to top-tier institutions in a mentorship arrangement. Select Central Universities, National Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Information Technology have been classified as "spoke" institutions, while institutions ranked 25 or below in the National Institutional Ranking Framework are designated as "hubs". The selected Professors are expected to relocate, if necessary, to the host university and provide "sustained academic and research support to faculty and students in institutions with emerging research capacity". "Applicants with strong research credentials must be actively involved in research and innovation activities, and demonstrate a strong commitment to mentor faculty at the eligible State universities where research and innovation is still at a nascent stage," stated a note from the ANRF announcing the fellowship.

To tap into the expertise of retired scientists, the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) — the newly constituted body for funding scientific research — has announced the Prime Minister Professorships. Each selected Professor will receive an annual fellowship of ₹30 lakh, along with ₹24 lakh as a research grant for consumables, domestic travel, contingencies, equipment and other expenses. An overhead of ₹1 lakh per annum has also been provisioned.

The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), now subsumed under the ANRF, had earlier administered the SERB Distinguished Fellowship for retired scientists. That scheme offered a research grant of ₹20 lakh per annum and a monthly fellowship of ₹60,000. Unlike previous

## When the Tamil Nadu Professional Courses Entrance Examination came under fire

The seemingly impeccably designed Tamil Nadu Professional Courses Entrance Examination (TNPCEE), which was once the State's single window system of intake of students to professional courses like engineering, medicine, pharmacy, veterinary, agriculture and other allied ones, was not bereft of controversies and legal wrangles. In 2004, Anna University, the nodal agency which was tasked with conducting the TNPCEE on behalf of the State government since its inception in 1984, decided to not value 22 questions in different subjects. The break up went like this: seven out of 90 questions in Mathematics were omitted, three out of 60 questions in Physics, 10 out of 60 in Chemistry, and 2 out of 140 in Biology were not valued. It all began when, soon after the exam, there were widespread complaints from candidates and their parents over ambiguity in the answer keys of some of the questions. They said some of the questions were out of syllabus, for some questions the answer keys were wrong and for some other questions, there were multiple correct answers. Anna University was quick to act: it set up an expert panel to evaluate the ambiguous questions and offer a solution. The committee advised deletion of these questions and redistribution of the marks for these questions to the other questions. This invited a flurry of court cases, which stalled the entire admission process for close to two months. Petitioners contended these questions carried 8.8 marks and the entire merit list got exhausted within the range of 2-3 marks from the first candidate to the last one. Soon after the decision of Anna University was known regarding the ambiguous questions, scores of candidates approached the Madras High Court with various pleas, including setting up of an expert committee to find an acceptable solution and calling for re-examination. The cases were bunched together and heard by a single judge, Justice Prafulla Kumar Misra. After hearing senior counsels representing many of

the candidates, Justice Misra directed Anna University to revalue all answer papers while laying down guidelines for valuing a few specific questions. Justice Misra's order stated that "question numbers 27 and 33 in Biology question paper (version code MA-7) and question numbers 11, 64 and 77 of physical science (version code BS6) shall not be deleted and mark should be awarded to any student who has indicated any of the correct choices". These questions were deleted on the ground that they had more than one correct answer. Similarly, the judge ruled that question number 105 (MA-7) is to be revalued and option number 4 should be taken as the correct answer and not option number 3 as indicated by the committee. This question was: Highly concentrated mineral in the cerebro-spinal fluid is: (1) Potassium, (2) Sodium, (3) Magnesium, (4) Chlorine. The petitioners, the judgment said, contended that option 4 was the correct answer, which was also the option indicated by the paper setter as the correct answer. The expert committee, however, had suggested that option 3 was the correct answer. In the counter affidavit by Anna University, the committee was stated to have opined that that chlorine being a gas in its natural form could not be considered as mineral and, even though Potassium and Sodium could be classified as minerals, those were not stable in free form and they react violently and become other compound; hence, the only other choice is Magnesium. They have referred to textbook P-239 in support of their opinion. "A perusal of the relevant pages as indicated makes it crystal clear that the question has been set by the paper setter with reference to the discussion relating to chlorine," the judgment asserted. While some petitioners appealed against Justice Misra's judgment, there were a few pending writ petitions before the High Court against considering improvement candidates on par with regular Plus Two students.

## India submits letter of request to U.S. for co-production of Javelin missiles



EMS News Agency, March 13

India has submitted letter of request to United States for co-production of Javelin anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs) in the country. A top defence source who has confirmed the development said that India has shown interest and submitted the proposal to the U.S. authorities for co-production of javelin missile. The development is also aligned with 'Make In India' initiative of the NDA government.

"It will ensure operational readiness and reduce the dependability on foreign support. The talks are in advance stage," the official added. Javelin is one of the most advanced third-generation ATGMs in the world. Amid growing urgency to replenish and add new weaponry, the official said that they were already in touch with the United States for procurement of javelin missiles under emergency procurement. Considering India's strategic imperatives, particularly the need to counter evolving threats from both Pakistan and China, the Javelin missile system presents a strong case for bolstering India's anti-tank warfare capabilities, the official added. Priority for weight-less missile systems. Defence forces are looking at shoulder-fired missile systems that are less in weight and can be carried in

difficult terrain by troops without engaging too many of them to carry it. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh recently held a phone conversation with U.S. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth to review ongoing and forthcoming initiatives aimed at enhancing defence cooperation between the two countries. Javelin is developed and produced jointly by American defence majors Raytheon and Lockheed Martin.

## What is a black hole merger?

A: A black hole merger happens when two black holes — extremely dense objects with gravity so strong that not even light can escape — get close and start orbiting each other. Over time, they lose energy by sending out invisible ripples in spacetime called gravitational waves. As they spiral closer together, their orbit shrinks until they finally crash and combine into a single, bigger black hole. This moment releases a huge burst of gravitational waves, which can be detected on the earth by special observatories like LIGO in the US, Virgo in Italy, and KAGRA in Japan. Think of the phenomenon like two figure skaters spinning toward each other and then grabbing hands to spin faster as one, except in extreme physical conditions. Catching these events allows scientists to learn new things about black holes and the universe. In fact, on July 10, an international collaboration of scientists reported discovering an especially massive black hole merger, named GW231123. LIGO, Virgo, and KAGRA had detected gravitational waves from the merger on November 23, 2023. In this event, two black holes, about 137x and 103x the mass of the sun, crashed together, forming an even bigger black hole. This was unusual because black holes in this mass range are thought to be rare. The discovery suggests large black holes might form when smaller ones merge, not just from dying stars. GW231123 also showed both original black holes spinning really fast, which challenges existing theories of their existence.

## US and China agree to a trade truce, but Beijing seems to be gaining the upper hand



The US and China said they have agreed in principle to a framework for dialling down trade tensions between the world's two biggest economies. After a meeting in London, the second time in a couple of months that two sides have met since US President Trump's sweeping tariff onslaught on its trading partners, there were indications of a reconciliation. What is beginning to get clearer, though, after the second meeting, is that this is perhaps not how America imagined the trade war to unfold. China is beginning to dictate the direction of these bilateral talks, with the US almost seen as requesting for much-needed concessions on the resumption of supplies of critical inputs.

In the first round of talks in Geneva, the US delegation led by Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent had asked the Chinese to cut its tariffs in tandem with theirs, primarily because the Americans were facing the heat back home from the early fallout of the high tariffs, including empty shelves at US grocery stores and surging prices of daily use commodities. Now, in London, the American side has asked the Chinese to "suspend or remove" restrictions on rare earths magnets, which has forced a supply-chain crunch that is visible in sectors such as auto manufacturing and electronics assembly. The London meeting follows a call between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping on June 5, which was initiated by the White House. After the London talks, US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said the deal should result in restrictions on rare earth minerals and magnets "being resolved". Both sides said they would now take the plan to their country's presidents for approval.

"We have reached a framework to implement the Geneva consensus," Lutnick said after the talks. "Once the presidents approve it, we will then seek to implement it," he said. "The two sides have, in principle, reached a framework for implementing the consensus reached by the two heads of state during the phone call on June 5th and the consensus reached at the Geneva meeting," the BBC quoted China's Vice Commerce Minister Li Chenggang as saying. Chinese export controls over rare earth minerals were

really high on the agenda of the meetings. While Beijing has not imposed an outright ban on the export of rare earth magnets, the process has been made very difficult, which could take up a long time to source and pose shortage risks in the meantime. Rare earth magnets, especially neodymium-iron-boron (NdFeB) magnets, are crucial for EV manufacturing, particularly in electric motors. They provide the strong magnetic fields needed for efficient and powerful electric motors, including traction motors that drive EVs. These magnets also play a major role in other EV components like power steering systems, wiper motors, and braking systems. China has a virtual stranglehold over these rare earth magnets.

Washington and Beijing had agreed a temporary truce over trade tariffs after the Geneva talks in May, but both countries have since accused the other of breaching the deal. The US has said that Beijing has been dragging its feet on opening up exports of rare earth metals and magnets while the Chinese claim that Washington has restricted its access to American goods such as semiconductors and other related technologies linked to artificial intelligence. US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer had said China had failed to rollback restrictions on exports of rare earth magnets. In the run up to this week's talks, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce said Saturday that it had approved some applications for rare earth export licences. In May, talks held in Geneva led to a truce after the tit-for-tat tariff increases by both sides, which led to duties that peaked at 145 per cent. Trump called the outcome of the talks in Switzerland a "total reset", which brought US tariffs on Chinese products down to 30 per cent, while Beijing cut duties on US imports to 10 per cent. Both sides also agreed to a 90-day deadline to try to reach a trade deal.

The problem for Washington DC is that the Chinese side has wrested some advantage ever since then, especially by leveraging its strategy of weaponising its dominance in key sectors. Rare earth minerals and magnets is one such area, where the US is now desperate for concessions. Both sides have since claimed breaches on non-tariff pledges, but clearly the Americans seem more eager for a reconciliation given the impact of the Chinese blockade on its key manufacturing sectors that are struggling to cope with the restrictions on critical inputs such as rare earth magnets. These Chinese trade blockades are already impacting companies in other geographies. Hamamatsu-based small car maker Suzuki Motors, for instance, said last week it plans to suspend the production of its flagship Swift compact hatchback due to China's rare earth restrictions, becoming the first Japanese automaker to be impacted by the export curbs. There are similar worries among other manufacturing entities across the world, including in the US.

## Week after UK deal, EU and India wrap up IPR, talks on carbon tax left

A week after India announced its trade deal with the UK amid tariff threats from US President Donald Trump, the European Union and India have made significant progress in their trade talks between May 12 and May 17, closing as many as five chapters including the challenging area of intellectual property rights (IPR), a status report released Tuesday by the EU said. The conclusion of the UK deal is an "important factor" in Delhi's trade negotiations with Brussels, a government official told The Indian Express, since UK's exit from the EU single market in 2020 had given rise to tensions between London and Brussels over new checks, paperwork and delays that particularly affected goods trade between the two partners. India has given market access to several product categories in which the EU and the UK are competitors, particularly spirits, medical equipment, and cars. An early deal with India has already given the UK a first-mover advantage in the Indian market.

The EU report on the 11th round of talks between the two sides said that "good progress" was made in the trade in goods chapter and that the chapters on transparency, good regulatory practices, customs and trade facilitation, IPR, as well as mutual administrative assistance provisions, were closed. There are a total of 23 chapters being covered in the India-EU talks, out of which five have been wrapped up. While both sides made headway in tariff discussions on industrial products – with India and the EU "signalling their positions for industrial products" – talks on the agri-food sector continued "with the aim to enhance the level of clarity about both sides' positions," the report said. Negotiations on goods assume significance as an EU official had said that the trade deal with India hinges on Delhi's commitment to lowering duties on cars, amid an ongoing crisis in the European automobile sector. Moreover, the EU is seeking better access to India's wine and spirits market, in line with the access already granted to the UK.

However, the report on the 'Energy and Raw Materials' chapter said: "It had been agreed ahead of the round that discussions would be put aside for the time being." Negotiations on this chapter are significant as India's metal exports to the EU continue to face restrictions. Official data for April to June showed that the EU slashed India's quota for hot-rolled coil (HRC) by 23.7 per cent, sharply restricting access for a key export item. Data showed that steel and aluminium shipments to the EU dropped by 24.4 per cent – from \$7.71 billion to \$5.82 billion in FY25 compared to the previous financial year. "If these issues are not squarely addressed in the FTA, Indian exporters will continue to face



steep EU barriers, while EU goods could enjoy zero tariffs into India. India missed the opportunity to rectify this imbalance in the UK FTA; it cannot afford to make the same mistake with the EU. A fair FTA must remove discriminatory quotas, secure CBAM (carbon border adjustment mechanism) carve-outs or compensation, and preserve India's policy space to grow its industrial base," said Ajay Srivastava, former trade official and founder of the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI). Srivastava said that unlike the US – its recent 50 per cent steel and aluminium tariffs are harsh but clearly defined – the EU's trade barriers are complex and opaque. Under the EU's safeguard measures, Indian steel faces a strict country-specific tariff-rate quota (TRQ) system – where volumes beyond a narrow quarterly quota attract a 25 per cent out-of-quota duty, he said. On services and investment, the report said that negotiators discussed and made "substantial progress" in agreeing on the services text, as well as planning for an initial exchange of offers on services. Detailed text-based discussions were held on the liberalisation of investment in areas beyond services, the report said. Negotiators also made substantive progress on digital trade, particularly on digital trade facilitation provisions such as e-invoicing, e-authentication, e-contracts, paperless trade, online consumer protection, spam, digital identities and open government data.

The digital trade chapter in trade negotiations typically addresses rules and commitments related to online commerce and the cross-border flow of data and digital services. This part of the negotiations addresses 'cross-border data flows', where trade partners decide on commitments to allow the free flow of data across borders – crucial for e-commerce and global services.

of about 28.19 lakh. The increased railway line capacity will significantly enhance mobility, resulting in improved operational efficiency and service reliability for Indian Railways. These multi-tracking proposals are poised to streamline operations and alleviate congestion. The projects are in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a 'New India', which will make people of the region 'Atmanirbhar' by way of comprehensive development in the area, which will enhance their employment/self-employment opportunities, the official statement explained. The projects are the result of the PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan for multi-modal connectivity, which has been made possible through integrated planning and will provide seamless connectivity for movement of people, goods and services, the statement said. These are essential routes for transportation of commodities such as coal, iron ore, finished steel, cement, fertilizers, agricultural commodities, and Petroleum products etc. The capacity augmentation works will result in additional freight traffic of magnitude 49 MTPA (Million Tonnes Per Annum).

## Colon cancer survivors now have a surprise recovery tool: Study shows exercise prevents recurrence. What are takeaways?



Exercise has always been a key pillar of post-surgery recovery. Now a breakthrough global study has shown it can reduce chances of cancer recurrence, lower the risk of cancer patients dying by a third and can even be more effective than drugs. The study, involving patients from the US, UK, Australia, France, Canada and Israel, found that a structured exercise programme following surgery and chemotherapy for colon cancer reduced patients' chances of cancer recurring by 28% compared with patients given only health advice. The study also found that structured exercise reduced the risk of death from any cause by 37%. Drugs get approved for lesser efficacy and can even be toxic, the study authors said. The results were presented in Chicago at the American Society of Clinical Oncology annual meeting, the world's largest cancer conference, and published in the New England Journal of Medicine. According to Dr Amanjeet Singh, Senior Director, GI Surgery, GI Oncology and Bariatric Surgery, Gastro Sciences, Medanta, Gurugram, "Exercise improves patient tolerance to treatment and recovery after surgery. It improves the functioning of the gut and feeds beneficial gut microbes, reducing prolonged exposure to carcinogens in the colon." Regular physical activity positively impacts cell division and growth in our bodies that may influence cancer outcomes as well,

especially in colon cancer. Exercise boosts the good bacteria in the gut which repair the gut linings and barriers against pathogens. It improves metabolism, reduces body fat and can starve tumours by increasing glucose demand from internal organs. Exercise can help regulate levels of insulin in the body. Studies have shown the link between elevated insulin levels and the development of breast, prostate and colorectal cancers. Exercise further reduces systemic inflammation and boosts surveillance, which is a constant process by which the immune system looks for and recognises foreign pathogens such as bacteria and viruses or precancerous or cancerous cells in the body. This enables the body to better detect and destroy residual cancer cells.

How can a structured exercise programme be more effective than drug treatments?

Structured exercise is not a replacement for drug therapy. However, it offers systemic and long-term benefits that drugs alone cannot provide. While chemotherapy targets specific cancer cells, exercise improves the body's overall physiology. Together, they create an internal environment less favourable for cancer recurrence. So, exercise can be a powerful companion to conventional therapy.

How can an exercise regime be implemented for cancer patients and those with a family history of colon cancer?

For cancer survivors, exercise should be integrated into long-term care. Any programme should be tailored to the patient's condition and gradually intensified under supervision, especially in the early recovery phase. A mix of aerobic and strength training for 150 minutes per week is ideal. For individuals with a family history of colon cancer, an active lifestyle adopted early on can be preventive. Regular physical activity, combined with a balanced diet, reduced red meat intake and routine screening, can significantly reduce risk.

## How we regulated blood sugar in patient who loved mangoes: Here's a smart hack

Mangoes do cause blood sugar spikes but being a natural sugar will not trigger as sudden a rush as refined flour or rice. Mangoes do cause blood sugar spikes but being a natural sugar will not trigger as sudden a rush as refined flour or rice. One of my patients is a mango lover who kept on asking me the impossible, to be allowed to have the fruit. We just couldn't have his blood sugar levels go northward. So was there a way of satisfying his craving without a sugar rush? We planned out a smart regime to ensure that he could keep both his cravings and sugar levels in balance. Mangoes do cause blood sugar spikes but being a natural sugar will not trigger as sudden a rush as refined flour or rice. Besides, they are rich in fibre, which slows down sugar absorption, and antioxidants. What you need to do is consider the mango as a high-yielding carbohydrate and not as a fruit. As somebody living with diabetes, you have to keep to your total carbohydrate or calorie allowance of the day and to factor mango in that. Which means if you have a slice, half or full mango, then you will have to omit other fruits and foods that day to keep to your total calorie limit.



First, we measured the HbA1c (average blood sugar counts over three months) of our patient, which was 6 per cent. We do not allow patients with consistently high HbA1c levels between 6.5-8 per cent to have mangoes. The glycaemic index (GI) of mango, which measures how quickly a food raises blood sugar levels after eating, ranges from 51 to 60, considered moderately high. The glycaemic load (GL), which measures the sugar rush from the serving portion of carbohydrates, is approximately 18.9, which falls into the higher end of the medium range. To balance the sugar content of mangoes, we shuffled around with the order of eating – proteins, fibres and good fats first, then the mango.

## Heatwave grips North India: How to hydrate, what to drink, how much and what to avoid

As we are exposed to extreme summer temperatures, the real question is can we quantify the hydration needed to counter it? And since needs differ from person to person, depending on their activity, exposure and perspiration, a baseline is difficult to codify. "Still we can say that anybody without chronic diseases should have 2.5 to 3 litres of water or fluids every day or 40 to 50 ml per kg of body weight. If you are sweating profusely with heat exposure, then just add anything between 500 ml to one litre as extra," says Ritika Samaddar, regional head, Nutrition and Dietetics, Max Healthcare. Extreme heat easily sucks out water from a person's body, which reduces blood volume. This forces the heart to work harder to pump oxygenated blood to other organs. Dehydration in turn limits sweating, resulting in overheating of the body, triggering a heat stroke. "So the best way is to keep labelled bottles with water and electrolytes like sodium, potassium (which we lose rapidly while sweating) close to you. Electrolytes help our muscles and nerve cells function. Remember if water tastes flat, you can zest it up with fruit and herb infusions or lemon. This also tames hunger pangs," adds Samaddar.

When do we know we are dehydrated?

Thirst is not a measure because it is the last indicator of your condition. Our ability to sense thirst decreases with age. Besides medications like weight loss drugs can interfere with signalling. So that's why we go by urine output (once every two-three hours) to broadly understand if we are dehydrated or not. Keep sipping water at frequent intervals if having it at one go seems tiresome.

What do we mistake as water alternatives?

Caffeine and sugar, both of which end up dehydrating the body more, are the key ingredients of cold coffee. Caffeine is a diuretic. To worsen matters, we top our cold coffees and shakes with ice-cream. When you consume extra sugar, your body tries to balance the sugar concentration in your blood and draws water from your cells and tissues, dehydrating you. Even home-made pulped fruit juice is concentrated sugar. Avoid alcohol.

What are the best hydrating drinks?

Coconut water, which is naturally rich in the key electrolytes of sodium, potassium and magnesium. A glass yields 23 to 25 calories and, therefore, can be had once or twice a day. However, it isn't recommended for those with very high blood sugar and kidney disease patients (potassium can be harmful). Lemon water has just five calories per glass.

Protein-rich foods: Nuts, seeds or yogurt can help slow down the digestion of natural sugars. Fibre-rich foods: Combining mangoes with other fibre-rich foods like whole grains or leafy greens can help regulate blood sugar levels and delay sugar breakdown. Healthy fats: Adding healthy fats like avocado or nuts can help slow down the digestion of sugars while providing sustained energy.

A medium-sized mango contains approximately 100-150 calories. Which means a single slice can have approximately 45-50 calories. A serving size of 1/2 cup or 75 grams is not to be exceeded. Eating mangoes first thing in the morning on an empty stomach is not recommended to avoid a sudden spike. Have it as a mid-morning snack. You can also have mangoes 30 minutes to an hour after breakfast or lunch. Mangoes can be enjoyed 2-3 times a week, counting its calories and subtracting calories from other food sources those days. Do not use mangoes as toppings for desserts and make yourself a sugar bomb, which will cause a huge blood sugar spike and crash, making you hungrier.



Chaach or plain buttermilk is also a safe choice, with 98 calories per glass (240 ml). A 250 ml glass of bael juice contains around 140-150 calories along with minerals, fibre and is a great probiotic. One glass of watermelon juice contains 75 calories and is rich in fibre. Meanwhile, a glass of raw mango panna is around 180 to 200 calories and is best avoided by those with blood sugar. A cup of kokum juice contains around 60-95 calories but if you use a concentrate and dilute that with water, the calorie count will become lower.

## SBI hires 13,455 junior associates to enhance customer experience

New Delhi: State Bank of India on Wednesday said it has hired 13,455 junior associates to enhance customer experience at the bank's branches across the country. The recruitment aimed to fill vacancies across 35 States and Union Territories, making it one of the significant hiring efforts in the industry, SBI said in a statement. The selection process commenced with preliminary examinations held in February and March 2025 and the main examinations conducted in April 2025, it said. Following a rigorous and transparent evaluation, 13,455 candidates have been selected for appointment, it said. Speaking on the announcement, SBI Chairman C S Setty said the bank's total recruitment across categories is about 18,000 people, out of which around 13,500 will be clerical recruitment, 3,000 will be probationary officers and local-based officers.

## CCEA approves projects worth Rs 6,405 crore to double railway lines

New Delhi: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday approved two multi-tracking projects across the Indian Railways network, entailing an investment of Rs 6,405 crore. The first project relates to the doubling of the 133 km Koderma-Barkakana railway line, which passes through a major coal-producing area of Jharkhand. It also serves as the shortest and a more efficient rail link between Patna and Ranchi. The second project involves doubling of the 185 km Ballari-Chikijaur railway line, which traverses through Ballari and Chitradurga districts of Karnataka and Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh. The two projects covering seven districts across the states of Jharkhand, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, will increase the existing network of Indian Railways by about 318 kms and are expected to generate direct employment for about 108 lakh human-days during construction, the official statement said.

The approved multi-tracking project will enhance connectivity to approximately 1,408 villages, which have a popu-

## England docked points for slow over rate against India in Lord's Test, slip in World Test Championship table



EMS News Agency, March 13

England have been landed a blow as they were docked two ICC World Test Championship points in the 2025-27 standings for their slow over rate in their recently-completed match against India at Lord's. England were deemed to two overs short of the regulated over-rates at the end of the Test that they eventually by 22 runs in a thrilling Day 5 finish against India to take a series 2-1 lead after three matches. This came under Article 16.11.2 of the ICC World Test Championship playing conditions, by

which a side is penalised one point for each over short, and after time allowances were taken into consideration.

After the deduction, England's tally in the World Test Championship standings dropped from 24 to 22 out of 36 points, consequently reducing their point percentage from 66.67% to 61.11%. Consequently, England have slipped to the third spot as former champions Australia remained on top after their 3-0 thumping of West Indies in the Caribbean. Ben Stokes' men were also levied 10 per cent of their match fees for the offence. "England captain Ben Stokes pled guilty to the offence and accepted the proposed sanction imposed by Richie Richardson of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees. Due to this, there was no need of a formal hearing," an ICC statement read. New Zealand, Pakistan and South Africa are yet to play any matches in this WTC cycle. Defending World Test Champion South Africa beat Zimbabwe 2-0 in the recently concluded Test match series, but since Zimbabwe is not part of the current WTC cycle, the series was not counted in for the standings. England, who finished fourth in the inaugural WTC cycle in 2019-21, were docked 12 points for over-rate offences in the following edition. In the previous cycle where they missed a final berth for the third successive time, England lost 22 points to poor over-rates and finished fifth in the standings.

## 'You work whole life only to celebrate winning for few minutes': Watch Scottie Scheffler's amazing 5-minute-long response

GNS News Agency, March 14

Scottie Scheffler of the United States walks onto the 8th green in heavy rain during a practice round for the British Open golf championship at the Royal Portrush Golf Club, Northern Ireland, Tuesday, July 15, 2025. (AP Photo) Scottie Scheffler of the United States walks onto the 8th green in heavy rain during a practice round for the British Open golf championship at the Royal Portrush Golf Club, Northern Ireland, Tuesday, July 15, 2025. (AP Photo) Scottie Scheffler has given one of the greatest press conference responses of all time with a five-minute-long answer questioning the short-lived euphoria of winning golf's biggest tournaments. Talking to reporters ahead of The Open Championship at Royal Portrush, Scheffler questioned whether a true sense of meaning can be derived by hitting the white ball. For the record, Scheffler does an incredible job of hitting the little white ball: he is one of the hottest favourites to win the year's final major championship. In fact, Scheffler hasn't finished outside the top 10 in a golf tournament since The Players Championship. He has added three more trophies to his display during this run of form, including the Wanamaker Trophy from the PGA Championship.

But Scheffler is not very happy at the hard work to satisfaction ratio in the sport. Here's his long answer that's now gone viral: "It feels like you work your whole life to celebrate winning a tournament for like a few minutes. It only lasts a few minutes, that kind of euphoric feeling. To win the Byron Nelson Championship at home, I literally worked my entire life to become good at golf to have an opportunity to win that tournament. You win it, you celebrate, get to hug my family, my sister's there, it's such an amazing moment. Then it's like, 'OK, what are we going to eat for dinner?' Life goes on," Scheffler began. "Is it great to be able to win tournaments and to accomplish the things I have in the game of golf? Yeah, it brings tears to my eyes just to think about because I've literally worked my entire life to be good at this sport. To have that kind of sense of accomplishment, I think, is a pretty cool feeling. To get to live out your dreams is very special. But at the end of the day, I'm not out here to inspire the next generation of golfers. I'm not out here to inspire someone to be the best player in the world because, what's the point? This is not a fulfilling life. It's fulfilling from the sense of accomplishment, but it's not fulfilling from a sense of the deepest places of your heart. "There's a lot of people that make it to what they thought was going to fulfill them in life, and you get there, you get to No. 1 in the world, and they're like, what's the point? I really do believe that, because what is the point? Why do I want to win this tournament so bad? That's something that I wrestle with on a daily basis. It's like



showing up at the Masters every year; it's like, why do I want to win this golf tournament so badly? Why do I want to win The Open Championship so badly? I don't know because, if I win, it's going to be awesome for two minutes. Then we're going to get to the next week, hey, you won two majors this year; how important is it for you to win the FedExCup playoffs? And we're back here again. "So we really work so hard for such little moments. I'm kind of a sicko; I love putting in the work. I love getting to practice. I love getting to live out my dreams. But at the end of the day, sometimes I just don't understand the point. "I don't know if I'm making any sense or not. Am I not? It's just one of those deals. I love the challenge. I love being able to play this game for a living. It's one of the greatest joys of my life, but does it fill the deepest wants and desires of my heart? Absolutely not," said Scheffler in a remarkable response.

Watch: Scottie Scheffler's amazing 5-minute-long response Scheffler was not done. The golfer went on to add: "I love playing golf. I love being able to compete. I love living out my dreams. I love being a father. I love being able to take care of my son. I love being able to provide for my family out here playing golf," he continued. "Every day when I wake up early to go put in the work, my wife thanks me for going out and working so hard. When I get home, I try and thank her every day for taking care of our son. That's why I talk about family being my priority because it really is. I'm blessed to be able to come out here and play golf, but if my golf ever started affecting my home life or it ever affected the relationship I have with my wife or my son, that's going to be the last day that I play out here for a living. "This is not the be all, end all. This is not the most important thing in my life. That's why I wrestle with, why is this so important to me? Because I'd much rather be a great father than I would be a great golfer. At the end of the day, that's what's more important to me."

## 'Nitish Reddy was the most vocal on Day 3', 'chirpy' Sundar stoked trouble as England met 'fire with fire', say Buttler and Broad

GNS News Agency, March 14

Former England pacer Stuart Broad and limited-overs wicket-keeper Jos Buttler felt that India all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy and Washington Sundar invited trouble with their on-field antics on days three and four during the Lord's Test that eventually ended in heartbreak for the visitors. The 22-run defeat came after India off-spinner Sundar sounded confident of his side's win prior to the final day's play. Despite losing four wickets in a 193-run chase in a short burst before stumps on the penultimate day where he picked up four English wickets, Sundar said that India would wrap up the victory by lunch on the fifth day. "Definitely India winning, probably just after lunch..." Washington had told Sky Sports. "We are sitting pretty and we will come out positive. We have some solid batters in the dressing room. "We have all day but there needs to be the perfect plan. It is exciting in every way. Winning the Lord's Test would be amazing." The Tamil Nadu spinner's words would come back to bite him as a collective English unit led by Jofra Archer and captain Ben Stokes would reduce them to their second-narrowest defeat away from home by 22 runs. Walking in at 7, the left-handed Sundar fell for a duck as Archer completed a splendid catch of his own bowling. "There's a little clip of when Washington came out to bat and (Brendon) McCullum over the balcony, sort of you know telling everyone to raise it, it's the guy who's been chirping. You set yourself up, don't you? It's horrible. But you're like, no, everyone's all over me. I could have just come out here and tried to, you know, have a good game and try my best," said Buttler on the For the Love of Cricket podcast. "But now everyone knows that what I've said in the media last night, and this is going to be, everyone's after me. Even McCullum, possibly the only time he didn't have his feet up. He's leant forward to say, come on. Let's ramp it up for this guy." Buttler said the simple pep talk for England would have involved watching a replay of Sundar's interview. "I wonder if he's just sort of, you know, got his words out wrong, you know, hopefully we'll win. But it was the proper incredible confidence. Yeah, we're going



to win. Someone will have heard about that in the dressing room. It's almost like instead of anyone having to say anything this morning for England you could have just played that interview and that would have got people so fired up," said Buttler. Meanwhile, veteran Broad also picked up on how all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy faced a fiery spell from the English bowlers, led by the searing Archer as he came out to bat with India reeling at 82 for seven post Sundar's dismissal. Broad revealed that the fiery six-minute exchange between the Indian fielders and England openers Zak Crawley and Ben Duckett, spurred the home team on, with Nitish becoming a primary target after his vocal presence in the slips. Broad relayed Archer's revelation that it was a team plan to meet with 'fire with fire' after incident involving Crawley on Day 3. "Jofra bowled quick, bowled his fastest spell in England shirt, up the hill at the nursery end, flying through at 92 mile an hour. I said, 'God, I've never seen you like as fired up as that.' And he said, actually, it was a team plan. They've (India) had a go at Zach Crawley. We've got to meet fire with fire here. (Rishabh) Pant's dismissal was my favourite, but he bounced Reddy first ball and everyone came in. Duckett, (Harry) Brook, (Joe) Rooty, getting stuck into Reddy because reports came back from the middle when Crawley and Duckett were out there that Reddy was the most vocal," said Broad.

## 'Virat Kohli didn't have much of that': Brian Lara says he 'had enough shots to survive' in Tests, recalls 400\* against 'scared' England bowlers



GNS News Agency, March 14

Would West Indies legend Brian Lara employ the reverse-sweep that England opener Ben Duckett has perfected as one of his primary strokes in Test cricket if he were to play in the current era? Has he ever, during his playing days, had a go at one of those extravagant swipes across the line? Lara believes he never needed to think in that direction. Finishing with 11,953 runs, averaging 52.88 in 131 Tests with 34 tons, an underrated aspect of the Trinidadian's batting has been his swift scoring rates across his career, and of course, the appetite for the mega daddy centuries. Of the 19 batters to have scored 9,000 Test runs, the latest of which was former India captain Virat Kohli, none match up to Lara's 60.51 strike rate. When former England captain Michael Vaughan curiously asked if Lara would have brought out the unconventional sweeps if he were to bat today, the 52-year-old replied in the negative. He never needed them. "I have a little boy in

Australia who wants to play and that's all what he wants to do...smack the ball and do all the fancy stuff. First of all, I am happy in the period that I played in. Played a lot of Tests. Everybody would like to be in the T20s (now) with all the funds involved," said Lara in a chat on the Stick to Cricket podcast. Lara likened himself more to a Kohli than Duckett in terms of shot-making, sticking more to the traditional drift of the longest format. "At the end of the day, I think I had enough shots to survive. And I look at guys like Virat Kohli, they don't do much of that (reverse sweeps). So I think I would have been one of the players who would have, instead of playing a reverse sweep down to third man, would have hit them over extra cover," remarked Lara. Recounting his world record 400\*, which was considerably threatened by South Africa stand-in captain Wiaan Mulder who retired on 367 not out against Zimbabwe (partly in honour of Lara), West Indies' record Test run-scorer said he felt the England bowlers didn't quite want to bowl to him in that Test in Antigua in 2004. At the very same venue where he broke Garry Sobers' world record of 365 in 1994 against the same opposition with his 375, Lara said he wasn't in the process of targeting 400 with his team trying to stave off a 3-0 series white-wash against England at home. When I got to 100, I realised that (Steve) Harmison, who was the most dangerous, didn't want to bowl much. If you look at the stats, he was the only one who didn't go for 100, he came off at 92," Lara said as he recalled the iconic knock that reclaimed his status at the pinnacle of the Test batting board, after Australia opener Matthew Hayden had held the world record briefly with his 380 against Zimbabwe in 2003. You really think I was thinking about getting to towards 400?

## Andrew Flintoff picks 17-year-old son Rocky as wildcard pick for Northern Superchargers

GNS News Agency, March 14

Former England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff picked up his 17-year-old son, Rocky, in the Hundred draft on Tuesday to play for the Northern Superchargers, where he is the head coach. At the other end of the draft signing spectrum was a 43-year-old Jimmy Anderson, who will make his first appearance in the competition this summer. Flintoff senior has been the head coach of the Leeds-based Superchargers for two seasons after returning to cricket after his horrific crash while filming Top Gear. Flintoff has since worked as an assistant coach with the England senior men's squad and was recently part of the U-19 England Lions set-up, where he also oversaw the rise of his son, Rocky, over the last year.

Yet to play a professional T20 for his county side, Lancashire, also home to Anderson, Rocky was picked up as a wildcard signing. The wildcard draft lets teams consider player performance in the Vitality Blast, a competition Flintoff has never played in. Rocky was recently in action during the Lions' home series against India Under-19. He scored a century in the fourth Youth ODI before making a



mark in the first Youth Test in Beckenham over the weekend, scoring 93 and 11 in two innings of a drawn game. Meanwhile, Anderson has been picked by his home team, the Manchester Originals. This selection comes after a superb season with Lancashire in the Blast, where he's taken 14 wickets in seven games. This marks his return to white-ball cricket after nearly a decade.

## Stuart MacGill breaks silence after cocaine case: 'Don't care what people are saying about me, but I do care about what's happening to my kids'



GNS News Agency, March 14

MacGill, who took 208 from 44 Tests for Australia, said he is leaning on the skills learnt from playing cricket to try get his life back on track. MacGill, who took 208 from 44 Tests for Australia, said he is leaning on the skills learnt from playing cricket to try get his life back on track in his first interview after his conviction in the drugs case, former Australian legspinner Stuart MacGill has said that he gets "very anxious" and has been struggling to get work and is worried about the mental impact on his kids. "I don't care what people are saying about me, but I do care what was happening to the kids and I know it has been very difficult for them," MacGill told the Howie Games podcast.

MacGill had to serve a community sentence after being convicted for a cocaine deal. The 54-year-old MacGill had been accused of facilitating a cocaine deal between his partner's brother and a dealer. MacGill was the link for a \$330,000 exchange for a kilogram of cocaine and had ar-

ranged for a meeting under his restaurant on Sydney's north shore. However, the former Test leg-spinner had denied knowing that a deal would take place and admitted that he regularly purchased half a gram of cocaine for \$200 from the dealer. "I am very lucky because depression has never been a big thing for me. I get anxious. I won't lie about that. I get very anxious. People talk about the half-full half-empty situation - well, I've always said I'm neither of them, I'm completely empty. And the reason I say that is because if today is the worst day of your life, tomorrow is going to be slightly fuller." MacGill, who took 208 from 44 Tests for Australia, said he is leaning on the skills learnt from playing cricket to try get his life back on track. "If you hit rock bottom there is sunshine ahead," MacGill said. "If anything particularly bothers me, I just don't think about it. I learned that through playing Test cricket. If you have a bad day, don't buy a paper. If you have a good day, buy every paper in the stand." He worries about the mental impact of the legal troubles on his children. "My kids have had to put up with it. I can just turn the media off but... it is very difficult for kids to turn social media off." MacGill also spoke about the difficulties in finding a regular job, though he has got some work as a cricket coach. "I'm doing my coaching but other than that I'm not really working much which is a pain because I have a pretty active mind and trying to shut that off is hard work," he said. "Lots of TV. But I don't mind my own company, which is a good thing. I get lonely sometimes, but I think that's happened to a lot of people since Covid... My network used to be a big part of who I was. I knew a lot of people and I have closed that right down since I have needed to manage my own environment a little bit more carefully."

## After historic T20I triumph, India women ready to dominate England in ODIs

New Delhi: After sealing their first-ever T20I series win against England on their home soil, the Indian women's team are all set to dominate the hosts in the three-match ODI series, starting from Wednesday. With the ODI World Cup on home soil, scheduled to be played later this year, team India would like to carry the winning momentum from the historic 3-2 T20I series win to boost their morale ahead of the mega spectacle. Notably, the India women won their last ODI assignment in May when they clinched the tri-series against Sri Lanka and South Africa. Pratika Rawal, who remains the preferred opener alongside Smriti Mandhana for the upcoming ODI series against England, said the team has been playing a winning brand of cricket throughout this year and will continue this to dominate the hosts in upcoming ODIs. "We have played a brand of cricket throughout this year and we have been winning a lot and we would definitely want to continue this. We want to carry that momentum, we want to dominate them, we want to be ruthless in the field and just go for it," Pratika said in a video shared by BCCI women on X. Speaking about her preparation for the series, Pratika added that coming early to England helped her to

assess the conditions well. "I am holding my nerves, I am excited. I came on the 6th of July and it has been good 6-7 days here. I had my first net session in Manchester and when I was batting there, I sensed that the ball was skidding. Also the bounce was a bit more as compared to the Indian wickets. So I was able to assess in which areas I could place the ball, or maybe hit runs or score runs accordingly," said Pratika. "I had conversations with all the players. Also back home I was practicing in the indoor nets, I was practicing on Astro wickets so that I could get used to the bounce. Also, I had conversations with Harman di (Harmanpreet Kaur) Smriti di (Smriti Mandhana) and also with Amol (Muzumdar) sir, to assess the conditions more strategically, in which areas I could play, what my strengths are, and how I could use them in the match so I could counter the English pace bowlers," she added. Middle order batter Tejal Hasabnis, who is on her first England tour, also shared her excitement, saying, "It's my first tour to England and yes, obviously I am very much excited. Being early in England has helped me a lot, especially adapting to the wickets, because conditions and the way weather change, like it's not as same as we have in India."

## They won't let you watch the shadow-banned Santosh, so you should watch Tovino Thomas' blazing new film 10 times as revenge



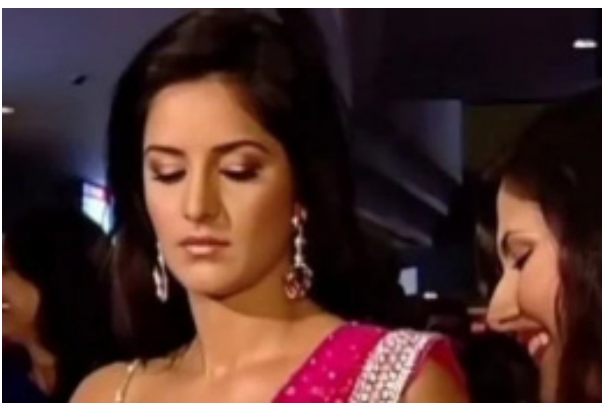
The Central Board of Film Certification's screening process can often be arbitrary. Only recently, Indian audiences complained about the CBFC's decision to have a 30-second kiss shortened in the film Superman. A person on social media pithily observed that the scene would've made the cut had Superman been slapping Lois Lane instead of making out with her. There is an element of truth to this, of course. It wasn't too long ago that the CBFC deemed Marco — a movie in which many children die cruel deaths — fit for public viewing. At the same time, they've stalled the release of films such as Honey Trehan's Panjab 95 and Sandhya Suri's Santosh. Sometimes, however, this chaotic approach to film certification allows certain movies to slip through the cracks. Narivetta is one of them. Directed by Anuraj Manohar and starring Tovino Thomas, the mere existence of the Malayalam-language film is enough to suggest that the movie gods have a sense of humour. The CBFC can block Santosh, but while they were abusing their power, Narivetta snuck under its nose. A more populist cousin to Santosh, the film fixates on many of the same themes. Narivetta is about the systemic oppression of minorities, and mass corruption in organisations meant to serve and protect; but more than anything else, Narivetta dares to raise objections about police brutality at a time when Rohit Shetty's cinema has basically coated the concept in Teflon. Like Shahana Goswami's character in that film, Varghese Peter in Narivetta had no intention of being a cop. He stumbles into the position, and makes it clear to everybody around him that it isn't his cup of tea. Even though Santosh carefully avoids drawing any overt parallels to real-life incidents, and goes to the extent of setting its drama in an unnamed Indian state, the movie has been shadow-banned by the CBFC for a centrepiece sequence in which the titular character essentially murders a Muslim murder suspect in a blind rage. It is made quite obvious that the suspect was innocent, and that Santosh's actions were influenced by her prejudices and peer pressure. Varghese goes through similar turmoil in Narivetta. When he raises his hand against a protester, he is told to rein it in. "Don't be an action hero," is the advice he gets from his bosses.

One of them, a man named Basheer, offers kindness instead. Played by Suraj Venjaramoodu — the husband from The Great Indian Kitchen — Basheer takes Varghese under his wing, and advises him to do his job with utmost sincerity. Narivetta goes out of its way to highlight Basheer's Muslim identity. You wonder why; there has to be a reason. And there is. Not too long afterwards, a platoon of cops including Varghese and Basheer is deployed in a nearby jungle, where a group of tribal folks is protesting against the government's encroachment over their land.

Tensions are high; the peaceful protest could erupt into violence at any moment. Basheer instructs Varghese to remain calm and follow orders. Their superiors tell them that the tribals are, in fact, being used by Maoist terrorists as proxies in their war against the government. They've hidden caches of weapons in the jungles; it's a trap! Two teams are sent to locate the artillery; Basheer and Varghese are separated. Only one of them returns, and that, too, empty handed. A concerned Varghese begs the bosses to send out a rescue party for Basheer, and after a while, they do. He's found in a river, tied to a chair, dead for hours. This gives the police enough of a reason to launch an all-out attack against the tribal protesters, many of whom are killed mercilessly in the ensuing massacre. Narivetta asks questions that perhaps never even crossed the minds of the people behind Kesari Chapter 2, a movie so blindly devoted to its masters that it was willing to manipulate the truth. Certainly, nobody behind the Cop Universe films would even want to consider the possibility of nuance. Why craft a real character when you can have them jump out of a car instead? In Narivetta, the police are shown to be no different from the stormtroopers in Star Wars, or the German infantry during World War II. They are the foot soldiers of authoritarian regimes built on the back of bloodshed. They are the villains who murdered one of their own — a member of the minority himself — just to find an excuse to commit an even more horrific crime. Varghese takes the role of a conscientious objector.

Varghese is shocked by his discovery; Basheer was sacrificed like a pawn in the government's scheme to quell the protest. The reluctant hero, mocked in the first act for being an aimless loafer, finally finds his purpose. In his trauma, he has a moment of clarity. Varghese is ridden by guilt for his complicity in the crime. He resolves to blow the lid on the operation, which was covered up — quite literally — by the cops in charge. The tribal protesters did nothing wrong, and yet, they were murdered for exercising their democratic rights. Disillusioned by his experience, Varghese confides in his girlfriend, who can't believe her ears. Not only is Narivetta critical of governments, it's also quite plainly suspicious of the institutions that serve under them. One of these institutions is the film industry itself. By dedicating thousands of theatres to slop,

## Katrina Kaif got trolled for her expressions while giving Zareen Khan an autograph; Veer actor clarifies why she posted video that stirred controversy



Actor Zareen Khan said that she didn't intend any malice when she shared a video of her 'fangirl moment' with actor Katrina Kaif. The video showed Zareen approaching Katrina for an autograph at a movie premiere, and seemingly being looked at with disdain. Zareen's looks were compared to Katrina's when she debuted in the film Veer; she was handpicked by star Salman Khan, who was said to be in a relationship with Katrina. Zareen said in a new interview that she didn't consider all this backstory when she asked Katrina for an autograph, and that she shared the video after a friend of hers sent it to her recently.

Appearing on the Hindi Rush podcast, Zareen said that the comparisons that were made between her and Katrina hurt her professionally, because 'nobody wants to live under anybody's shadow', and that it was worse for her because they belong to roughly the same generation. She said that she views the comparisons as a compliment, because

she considers Katrina to be extremely beautiful. Asked about the video she shared and the negativity it attracted, Zareen continued, "I found it so sad. I posted the video because it brought back a happy memory, but people are hungry for dirt, and that's what they did." Zareen continued, "In the video, I'm smiling from ear-to-ear like a fool. Katrina is a superstar. In those days, actors weren't as comfortable as they are now with blending in with their fans. It wasn't like everybody had access to stars earlier, so we can't expect to be treated like best friends. I was a fan, and she was the star. Maybe something was going on in her mind that we aren't aware of. It's only others who are pointing out her expression, but for me, it was a special moment. If Katrina got trolled, so did I."

Zareen said that she was accused of sharing the video out of spite for Katrina. She said that she would never do something like that. "I'm not a vicious person. If I was, I would probably be more successful. She might have had 50 other things on her mind, she might have signed so many autographs already. Who knows? Sometimes, you're not in a good mood because of some personal issues. I don't think there was anything negative." Sharing the video on Instagram earlier in July, Zareen had written on Instagram, "Come across this video and the memory is still so fresh. I clearly remember this moment... it's from the premiere of the movie RACE. Thanks to a friend who got us passes, we were able to experience the magic firsthand. At that point, I was just a wide-eyed fan, never imagining I'd one day be a part of the film industry. But Look at how happy I am in this video, a total fangirl... grinning from ear to ear, getting an autograph from the woman I thought was and is breathtakingly beautiful!" Zareen debuted with the film Veer, starring Salman Khan and directed by Anil Sharma. She went on to star in the erotic thriller Hate Story 2, and the comedy film Housefull 2.

## 10 Biggest Emmy snubs of 2025: Squid Game, Selena Gomez, The Handmaid's Tale and more

The 2025 Emmy nominations are out, and with them comes a long list of stars and shows who've been officially benched this year. While Severance, The White Lotus, The Studio, and Hacks lead the pack, the list, announced by Harvey Guillén (What We Do in the Shadows) and Brenda Song (Running Point), also came with some serious shocks. Fan-favourites were nowhere to be found, including Netflix's Korean juggernaut Squid Game and Elisabeth Moss for The Handmaid's Tale, among others.

### Squid Game season 2

The South Korean thriller starring Lee Jung Jae and Lee Byung Hun, which aired the franchise's finale this year, was among the most looked-forward sequels given the first season walked away with six trophies in 2022. But its second season, which dropped in December 2024, didn't score a single nomination. Fan-favourite character Thanos (played by T.O.P), who became a breakout hit, failed to clinch a nod. For a show that dominated the cultural conversation, this shutout was a disappointment. Hulu's hit Only Murders in the Building has always been an Emmy darling, with its lead stars rarely missing from the nominations. However, this time only Short was nominated, while both Martin and Gomez were left out. While HBO hit The White Lotus took several nods for the night, with almost everyone getting a nomination, Patrick Schwarzenegger's snub alone was the biggest shocker. Critics have praised his character, calling him the emotional heart of the season. Emmy voters missed that memo. Andor, the story of Rebel spy Cassian, did earn an Emmy nomination, a well-deserved Best Drama Series, but contrary to expectations, the lead star, Diego Luna, got nothing. Aside from him, co-stars Stellan Skarsgård and Genevieve O'Reilly were also left out despite giving one of their best performances to date. Critics have repeatedly praised Luna's brilliant acting chops in the Star Wars spin-off, but the Emmys didn't bite. Safe to say, Natasha Lyonne carried Poker Face on her back for two seasons. Yet despite being nominated last year, she didn't make the cut this time. The show did score two nominations, one of which is for Cynthia Erivo's multi-character guest role. But still, fans believe Lyonne's detective character is the show's entire spine. The Handmaid's Tale is one of the Emmy panel's favourites, having returned for nominations almost every year. However, for its final season, the show only picked up one nomination, and that too for Cherry Jones in a guest role. Moss, who had already earned an Emmy for the franchise as the lead, was left out completely. Even more surprising, she didn't land a directing nod either, despite strong behind-the-camera work this season.

Melanie Lynskey & Yellowjackets After a spectacular

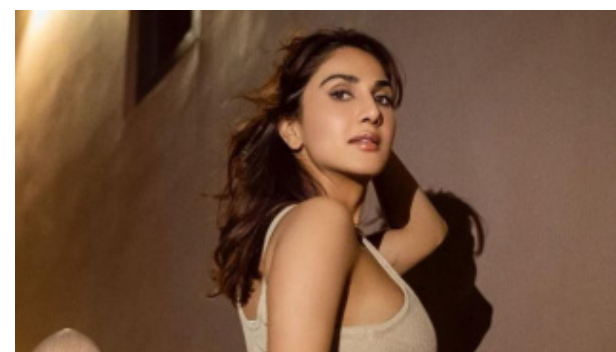


Emmy run in the past, clinching 10 nominations across Seasons 1 and 2, including multiple nods for Lynskey, Yellowjackets got none this year. Even with a darker, more complex third season, the survival thriller received zero nominations. Bridget Everett — Somebody Somewhere Somebody Somewhere, with its quiet yet superlative comedy, became a fan favourite on HBO and ended its three-season run to critical praise. Jeff Hiller got a nomination, and the show was solely recognised for its script. But Bridget Everett, the emotional anchor and the lead of the series, was snubbed. Given how much of the show's magic came from her grounded, quiet performance, this one's tough to ignore. There was plenty of buzz around Knightley's performance in Netflix's popular spy series, Black Doves. Speculations were rife that she would surely lead the nominations this year. But in a year where Slow Horses ate up all the spy-love, Black Doves was completely shut out, no acting, no writing, nothing. Ted Danson — A Man on the Inside Ted is an Emmy regular but didn't land a single nod this year. His show, A Man on the Inside, also went unnoticed across the board. For someone who's been an awards fixture since Cheers, the silent treatment is disappointing.

## Vaani Kapoor says it was 'hectic and heavy on social media' after Abir Gulaal controversy: 'Hope one can calm down on hate'

Vaani Kapoor wishes everyone "calmed down on hate" on social media. Vaani Kapoor wishes everyone "calmed down on hate" on social media. Actor Vaani Kapoor on Tuesday said social media has increasingly become a space filled with negativity and urged people to check the amount of hate they put out into the world. Vaani's comments come months after she faced criticism for sharing screen space with Pakistani actor Fawad Khan in the movie Abir Gulaal. The romantic film, which was set to arrive in cinema halls on May 9, was not allowed to release in India in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack in April.

"Last couple of months, years, everything became hectic and heavy on social media. So, I hope one can calm down on hate, create room for love and kindness. I know it doesn't sound very interesting. But what you give will come back to you. If you hate or troll somebody, it will someday get back at you, and it's going to sting you worse," Vaani said at the trailer launch of debut OTT show, Mandala Murders. "So, just be nice, kind, and try to be just as humans. I'm wishing we could be in a happier space, and be kinder to each other and ourselves," she added. Vaani didn't allude directly to the controversy, but said the above in respect to a question from the media on a varda (blessing) she'd like to choose for herself. She also echoed co-star



Surveen Chawla's wish that their show is a success. Mandala Murders is a mythological-crime thriller series that delves into ancient secrets, eerie symbols, and a trail of ritualistic killings. It is created and directed by Gopi Putran, known for his work on the Mardaani franchise. Manan Rawat serves as the co-director. Vaibhav Raj Gupta, Surveen Chawla, Shriya Pilgaokar, and Raghubir Yadav round out the cast of the show. Vaani, who also made her debut with Aditya Chopra's Yash Raj Films back in 2013 with Manish Sharma's romantic comedy Shuddh Desi Romance, has since appeared in several

## Ten years later, I still don't care why Kattappa killed Baahubali: Was SS Rajamouli's fantasy drama even that great?



Ten years later, I still don't care why Kattappa killed Baahubali: Was SS Rajamouli's fantasy drama even that great? Ten years later, I still don't care why Kattappa killed Baahubali: Was SS Rajamouli's fantasy drama even that great? Ten years ago, India had just one question on their mind, 'Why did Kattappa kill Baahubali?' I remember everyone being obsessed with the cliffhanger in Baahubali: The Beginning in 2015. I also remember being unmoved and indifferent. While Indian cinema celebrated the film's grandeur, I couldn't stop myself from asking a different question: Was it ever really that great? Well, fans of SS Rajamouli — and there are many — would beg to differ. From walking on waterfalls to slow-mo stunts, Baahubali left me disappointed. Unpopular opinion, but here's why I could never understand the hype around this film. Baahubali aka Prabhas lifted the Shiva lingam and walked on water in one of the scenes. Might have been a symbol of power for many, but for me, it was not at all convincing. Subpar VFX put me off at that moment itself. While I went in expecting Lord Of The Rings quality, it was like playing fantasy video games such as Uncharted and God Of War. We were quick to bash Adipurush's animation and visual effects, but not this? How did this film earn global fame?

Fantasy drama or fancy dress?

Thirty minutes in and I was already regretting my decision. Prabhas, Anushka Shetty, Rana Daggubati, Sathyaraj and Ramya Krishnan left no stone unturned with their acting skills, but their overdone look was a huge turn-off. The makeup was exaggerated for several characters, especially female actors — Devasena and Sivagami Devi. As a viewer, it made me lose interest in the entire concept and the reality of it. You can make a fantasy period drama that still looks realistic with added fantastical elements. There are several Hollywood and Bollywood examples to draw comparisons between their and Baahubali's presentation, including Jodha Akhbar, Game Of Thrones, Vikings, that did it beautifully. The film completely relied on the question: Kattappa ne Baahubali

ko kyu maara? The makers then released Baahubali: The Conclusion of the duology taking the intrigue forward. However, more than a narrative strategy, it felt like a marketing masterstroke to me. The emotional connect wasn't organic, but forced. Unfortunately, visuals can't fill plot holes. The story arc wasn't intriguing, funnily enough, the background score was. Without any moral complexity, the characters in the film were one-dimensional. For example, Amarendra is the glorified noble hero, Bhallaladeva is evil, Devasena is ethical, and Sivagami is aloof. It was the cultural influence of the movie that tried to grab eyeballs, and not the brilliant writing that swept the audience away. You can't win hearts with larger-than-life spectacles, there's more depth that a movie demands. The only feat the film had was opening doors for Pan-India films. In my eyes, it's not the cinematic breakthrough most people look at it as. While Baahubali: The Beginning collected Rs 650 crore worldwide and its second instalment Baahubali 2: The Conclusion became the highest-grossing Indian film at the time, grossing more than Rs 1,810.60 crore worldwide. Maybe I missed the magic, but it's worth thinking a decade later, was Baahubali even that great?

## It's a girl! Sidharth-Kiara announce birth of first child

New Delhi: Actor-couple Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani on Wednesday announced the birth of their first child together. The couple shared the news in a joint post on

with a Baby Girl," they posted on their respective Instagram pages.

The two actors had shared the news of Kiara's pregnancy in February this year. Malhotra, 40, and Advani, 33, tied the knot in an intimate ceremony at the Suryagarh Palace in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, in February 2023. The couple, who worked together for the first time on the acclaimed film "Shershaah" (2021), had kept their relationship private. Advani most recently starred in Ram Charan's "Game Changer". She will next be seen in "Toxic", headlined by Yash, and "War 2", opposite Hrithik Roshan and Jr NTR. Malhotra's next film is "Param Sundari" with Janhvi Kapoor.



Instagram, saying that they have become parents to a baby girl. "Our hearts are full, and our world forever changed. We are blessed