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Telangana High Court hears Kaleshwaram commission pleas

Hyderabad: Chief Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh and Justice GM Mohiuddin of the Telangana High Court on Monday continued hearing a batch of writ petitions challenging the report submitted by the Justice PC Ghose Commission on alleged irregularities in the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project. Senior Advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for the State government, advanced arguments defending the validity of the Commission's proceedings and findings, contending that the principles of natural justice were fully complied with during the inquiry.

Stray dogs nibble body in postmortem room at Jadcherla government hospital

Mahabubnagar: In a shocking case of negligence in preserving bodies at a government hospital, stray dogs nibbled a body kept in the postmortem room at the Government General Hospital, Jadcherla.

Bheemesh, a resident of Nagashala, had accidentally fallen into a lake and drowned. His body surfaced on Monday and was shifted to the government hospital in Jadcherla for postmortem examination.

War engulfs Lebanon; 555 dead in Iran Indian killed in tanker strike

Dubai, March 2

The US-Israeli war against Iran engulfed Lebanon on Monday as Tel Aviv responded to strikes by Hezbollah even as the death toll in Iran crossed 555, while India reported its first fatality in the rapidly escalating hostilities across West Asia and the Gulf region. Three US F-15 fighter jets were mistakenly shot down by Kuwaiti defence system.

According to the Iranian Red Crescent Society, at least 555 people were killed across more than 130 Iranian cities since large-scale US-Israeli military strikes began over the weekend, marking one of the deadliest regional escalations in recent decades.

Iranian state-linked media, meanwhile, reported that Mansoureh Khojasteh Bagherzadeh, wife of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, succumbed to injuries sustained during recent strikes that had earlier killed Khamenei and several members of his family, developments that have deepened political uncertainty in Tehran.

Among the deadliest incidents in the past 48 hours was a strike on a girls' primary school in Minab in southern Iran, where Iranian media reported more than 160 fatalities, several of them students, triggering widespread international condemnation. Fresh bombardments were reported in Tehran and other major cities even as Iranian missile and drone retaliation expanded across Israel and multiple Gulf states. Explosions were reported in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha as regional air defence systems intercepted incoming projectiles, underscoring fears of a widening war theatre.

Israel simultaneously exchanged heavy fire with Hezbollah positions in Lebanon, opening an additional northern front and further complicating prospects for de-escalation.

India confirmed its first casualty linked to the conflict after an Indian mariner was killed when a bomb-laden drone struck an oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman, highlighting growing risks to commercial shipping lanes. An In-



dian national was also injured in missile strikes in the United Arab Emirates but remains out of danger.

The Ministry of External Affairs has activated emergency monitoring cells across Indian missions as thousands of nationals remain affected by airspace closures and transport disruptions.

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, in a presser in Washington DC, said intelligence guiding Operation Epic

Fury was "laser focused" on dismantling Iran's military capabilities.

3 US jets shot down mistakenly by Kuwait

Kuwait's air defences mistakenly shot down three US F-15 jets during active combat on Monday, the US Central Command said. All six crew members ejected safely and were in a stable condition. Kuwait acknowledged the incident and an investigation was on. Iran's state media earlier claimed that Iranian armed forces hit a

US plane that crashed in Kuwait.

Hegseth said US forces were targeting Iran's offensive missile arsenal, production facilities and naval assets while seeking to permanently block Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Describing the campaign as being conducted "surgically, overwhelmingly and unapologetically", he accused Iran of developing advanced missiles and drones to shield what Washington termed its nuclear ambitions.

He said US President Donald Trump, along with senior envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, had pushed for diplomatic engagement but claimed Tehran refused meaningful negotiations.

Iran's senior leadership, however, declared that the country "will not negotiate" with Washington under military pressure, signalling a prolonged confrontation.

Oil and gas infrastructure across the region has come under mounting threat. Following attacks on facilities operated by QatarEnergy in Ras Laffan and Mesaieed industrial zones, liquefied natural gas production was temporarily halted, sending global energy prices sharply higher and raising concerns for energy-dependent economies such as India.

Commercial aviation across large parts of West Asia remains severely disrupted, with multiple countries partially closing airspace amid continuing missile alerts and drone interceptions.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the situation as one of "grave concern" and said India was working with regional governments to ensure the safety of Indian citizens while urging an early cessation of hostilities through dialogue and diplomacy.

With Iranian retaliation continuing, Israeli-Hezbollah clashes intensifying and US military operations expanding, international agencies have warned that the conflict risked evolving into a full-scale regional war threatening global energy flows and maritime trade routes.

India, Canada ink \$2.6 bn uranium supply pact, vow to expand trade to \$70 bn

New Delhi, March 2

India and Canada on Monday announced a major expansion of cooperation in civil nuclear energy, including a long-term uranium supply agreement aimed at strengthening India's energy security and clean power transition, following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Canadian counterpart Mark Carney.

The agreement comes 51 years after India's 1974 Pokhran-I test, which used plutonium from the Canadian-supplied CIRUS reactor and led to a sharp diplomatic fallout between the two countries.

The two leaders welcomed the conclusion of a CAD 2.6 billion commercial agreement between Canadian nuclear major Cameco and India's Department of Atomic Energy for long-term uranium supply to support India's civil nuclear energy programme, along with cooperation in the development of small modular reactors (SMRs).

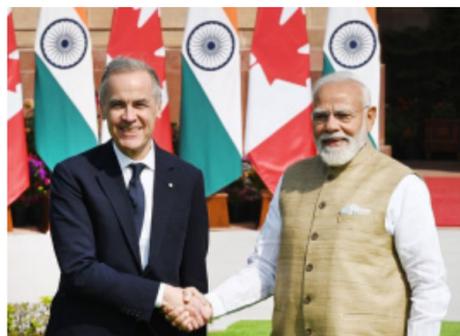
The agreement forms a key pillar of a renewed India-Canada Strategic Partnership, with both sides emphasising the role of nuclear energy in ensuring reliable, affordable and low-carbon power generation while advancing climate commitments.

In a joint leaders' statement issued at the conclusion of Carney's visit to India from February 27 to March 2—the first bilateral visit by a Canadian Prime Minister since 2018—the two countries agreed to deepen cooperation across clean energy, critical minerals, technology, defence and trade.

The leaders underlined that enhanced collaboration in conventional and clean energy, including civil nuclear cooperation, would contribute to diversification of energy supplies and long-term economic resilience. Both sides also agreed to advance an India-Canada Strategic Energy Partnership covering liquefied natural gas (LNG), crude oil, refined petroleum products and critical minerals essential for emerging technologies and energy transition.

Significantly, India and Canada also agreed to expand cooperation in the security domain. The leaders welcomed progress under the regular bilateral security dialogue held at the level of the National Security Advisers and endorsed a shared work plan to strengthen collaboration on national security and law enforcement priorities.

As pluralistic democracies, the two sides committed to deepen cooperation to address violent extremism, terrorism and organised crime, including the illegal flow of narcotics and fentanyl precursors, cybercrime, extortion, financial fraud, trafficking and transnational criminal networks. They supported the establishment of dedicated security and law-enforcement liaison mechanisms to streamline bilateral communication and enable timely in-



formation-sharing.

The leaders further agreed to enhance cooperation on cybersecurity and immigration enforcement in line with domestic laws and international obligations, and called for the early convening of the next meeting of the Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism.

The statement noted growing commercial momentum between the two economies, marked by the launch of negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), with both countries aiming to expand bilateral trade to CAD 70 billion by 2030.

India welcomed Canada's decision to pursue membership of the International Solar Alliance and its upgraded participation in the Global Biofuels Alliance, signalling deeper alignment on global clean energy initiatives.

The two leaders also agreed to strengthen cooperation in emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence, digital infrastructure, space technology and resilient supply chains, alongside expanding education partnerships and talent mobility programmes.

Meanwhile, senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh welcomed the agreement but credited its origins to earlier diplomatic efforts, noting that Canada had historically assisted India in establishing heavy water reactors such as those at Kalpakkam before cooperation was halted following India's peaceful nuclear explosion at Pokhran in May 1974.

In a post on X, Ramesh said the latest agreement had been made possible due to the landmark Indo-US Civil Nuclear Agreement finalised in October 2008 under former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, whose "insistence and persistence" enabled global civil nuclear cooperation with India despite political opposition at the time.

Toxic gas leak at Maha's Palghar chemical unit, 2,600 evacuated

Palghar, March 2

A major leak of hazardous oleum gas at a chemical unit in Maharashtra's Palghar district on Monday led to the evacuation of more than 2,600 people, including 1,600 school students, while three persons complained of minor eye irritation, officials said.

The leak of oleum (fuming sulphuric acid) occurred around 2 pm at a unit of Bhageria Industries Ltd in the Boisar MIDC area on Mumbai's outskirts. A dense cloud of white fumes spread rapidly due to strong winds, affecting areas within a five-kilometre radius and triggering panic among residents and workers in the industrial belt.

The cause of the leak was not immediately known. Palghar District Collector Dr Indu Rani Jakhar, who is monitoring the situation, said that the disaster management plan was activated immediately. "The leakage occurred from a 2,500-litre capacity oleum day tank. Due to the wind direction, the smoke spread to surrounding areas, impacting a radius of approximately 5 kilometres," the administration said in a press release.

As a precautionary measure, authorities ordered the immediate evacuation of 1,600 students from a local school, Tarapur Vidyamandir. In addition, more than 1,000 workers from Bhageria Industries and neighbouring firms were shifted to safer locations.



Teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and the Fire Brigade were deployed. Officials said the response teams initially faced difficulty in reaching the exact location of the leak.

"Due to the high smoke concentration in affected areas, response teams were facing difficulties in reaching the exact location of the gas leak," the official release noted.

Chemical experts and NDRF personnel later located the source and entered the premises using self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). Sandbags were placed around the leaking tank to help suppress the fumes.

Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan terms Telangana govt's Khammam demolitions as 'bulldozer raj'

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday alleged that the recently reported demolition drive in Telangana's Khammam district reflects "bulldozer raj" and accused the Congress government there of rendering hundreds of families homeless without prior notice.

In a statement, Vijayan said that after Congress-ruled Karnataka, the "bulldozer raj" has now surfaced in Telangana as well, which he described as a "matter of concern". Referring to reports from Velugumatla village in Khammam district, he claimed that around 700 houses built on "Bhoodan" land were demolished on February 25 in the early hours, allegedly without issuing any prior notice.

He alleged that nearly 3,000 people, who possessed identification documents, were rendered homeless in the drive carried out in the presence of the police.

The Left veteran said the houses demolished were located in Vinoba Nagar and had been allotted to landless families during the Bhoodan movement led by Vinoba Bhave.

He termed it "surprising" that the Congress in Telangana could not accept even the limited objectives of the Bhoodan movement, a land reform movement started in 1951.

The Chief Minister also referred to the alleged victims of a similar demolition action in Yelahanka in Karnataka, stating that they continue to live on the streets.

He sought to know how the Congress could lead and implement what he called "inhuman" measures.

Vijayan further said the Congress leadership in Kerala, which he alleged claims to uphold Left values, should respond to the developments in Telangana.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Harman's Angels cast a spell for ages

Call it a superstition or by any other name, number 13 is generally presumed to be an unlucky number. But to the Indian women cricketers it was the 13th edition of the ICC Women's World Cup 2025 that provided the icing on the cake; the realisation of a decades-long dream. In many ways, the crème-da-la-crème was much like the historic day (June 25, 1983) when Kapil Dev's 'nowhere in the hunt' unsung team gave a major push to cricket back home with a stunning showing that propelled India into the big league. It is likewise with November 2, 2025, which will go down in history as a momentous day for Indian cricket, thanks to the stunning exploits of Harman's Angels (we can't think of a better sobriquet to Kapil's Devils). It was the providential third time lucky for Indian women. Poetic justice was rendered in Navi Mumbai on a magnificent Sunday after the 'so near so far' syndrome had jinxed the team twice over in the 2005 and 2017 finals of the Women's World Cup. Meanwhile, unlike the men, Indian women had to fight two adversaries -- their opponents and the naysayers. Their coming on top in the first category will hopefully silence the naysayers and the prophets of doom, once and for all.

Based on past performances vis-à-vis World Cup outings, India had the psychological edge while going into the championship clash considering that their opponents South Africa were in the finals for the first time and India was playing its third and that too on home soil. Now that Indian women have proved that they are second to none, including in the game's shorter version, and once the euphoria sinks in, the players must start regrouping themselves rather than basking in the new-found glory. After all, uneasy lies the head that wears the crown.

Towards this, they must hit the ground after they are through with a well-deserved break. It is quite ironic that the team began to blossom somewhere in the middle of the championship and peaked in the matches that mattered the most, the semifinals and the championship clash in which they came up with a clinical performance that dashed the last hurrah hopes of South African captain Laura Wolvaardt and took India to the pinnacle of glory.

Meanwhile, the BCCI has done well by announcing an overwhelming Rs 51 crore to Harmanpreet and her girls for lifting cricket's most cherished trophy. Beginning tomorrow, the nation will be baffled to notice how opportunistically calculating can men players, celebrities and politicians be. The very people who shunned women cricketers all these years will go all out to be 'seen' with them and be captured in photographs with the newly crowned queens. A redeeming feature was at the DY Patil stadium that was packed to capacity. However, barring former India captains Sachin Tendulkar and Rohit Sharma, there was no celebrity worth the name to cheer for the Indian gladiators among the audience. It was only Sunil Gavaskar who pepped up the team's morale while assuring a jamming session with the star of the semifinal conquest of defending champion Australia, Jemimah Rodrigues if India wins their maiden World Cup.

A touching moment in the post-match event was Harmanpreet's thanksgiving bow to coach Amol Majumdar. Having scripted a new chapter after breaking the barrier, the girls must concentrate on consolidating their position hereafter. Diana Eduljee, was undoubtedly speaking for millions, with her remark, "I've waited for this since 2017... This is the 1983 moment for us...". Hope springs eternal.

Collector Chitra Mishra inspects Inter exam centres, stresses malpractice-free conduct.

Khaja Sikander Mohiuddin Staff Reporter, Indian Chronicle Karimnagar, Mar 02 : District Collector Chitra Mishra inspected the Intermediate first-year public examination centres in Karimnagar district on Monday and directed officials to ensure the smooth and malpractice-free conduct of the examinations.

During her visit to the Government Science Wing College at the district headquarters and Alphores College in Bhagath Nagar, where examination centres have been set up, she reviewed the facilities provided to students, including seating arrangements, drinking water and other basic amenities.

The Collector examined the CCTV surveillance sys-



tem installed at the centres and enquired about the students' attendance percentage. She also reviewed the verification of hall tickets and the security arrangements made at the centres.

Stressing that there should be no scope for malpractice, Ms. Mishra instructed officials to take stringent measures and maintain strict vigil. She directed them to ensure that students write their examinations in a peaceful and conducive atmosphere without facing any inconvenience.

Senior officials accompanied her during the inspection.

Collector warns officials against delay in disposal of Prajavani petitions

Khaja Sikander Mohiuddin Staff Reporter, Indian Chronicle Karimnagar, Mar 02 : District Collector Chitra Mishra on Monday directed officials not to keep Prajavani petitions pending and to ensure their prompt disposal, stating that grievance redressal must be treated with utmost priority.

Addressing officials during the Prajavani programme held at the Collectorate auditorium, Ms. Mishra said every petition received from the public should be examined at the field level and resolved within the stipulated timeframe. She instructed officers to take responsibility at their respective levels and avoid unnecessary delays.

The Collector made it clear that she would conduct department-wise reviews of the number of petitions received, disposed of and pending. "Applications should not remain pending at your level. Ensure that grievances are addressed after thorough inquiry," she told the officials.

During the programme, the Collector personally received representations from members of the public and issued directions to the concerned departments for appropriate action.



As many as 345 petitions were received at Monday's Prajavani.

Additional Collectors Ashwini Tanaji Wankhade and Lakshmi Kiran, Municipal Commissioner Prapul Desai, Revenue Divisional Officer Maheshwar, and other district officials were present.

Leaders pay homage to Duddilla Sripada Rao on 89th birth anniversary



Khaja Sikander Mohiuddin Staff Reporter, Indian Chronicle Karimnagar, Mar 02 : The 89th birth anniversary of former Assembly Speaker Duddilla Sripada Rao was observed with solemnity and grandeur at the District Congress Committee office and at various places in the town on Sunday.

Commissioner Gaush Alam calls for peaceful, lawful Holi celebrations

Khaja Sikander Mohiuddin Staff Reporter, Indian Chronicle Karimnagar, Mar 02 : Karimnagar Police Commissioner Gaush Alam on Monday urged citizens to celebrate Holi in a peaceful and responsible manner, warning that stringent action would be taken against those violating the law.

Extending greetings to the people of the district on the occasion of the festival of colours, he said Holi symbolises harmony and brotherhood and should be celebrated in a spirit of mutual respect and communal unity. To ensure maintenance of law and order, the Commissionerate has issued detailed guidelines.

Stressing the need for eco-friendly celebrations, Mr. Alam advised the public to use only natural colours and avoid chemical-based products that could harm the skin and eyes. Throwing colours or water on others without their consent would be treated as an offence, he said, adding that misbehaviour, especially towards women, children and the elderly, would invite strict legal action.

The Commissioner made it clear that drunk driving would not be tolerated under any circumstances. Special teams will conduct checks across the city, and vehicles involved in drink-and-drive cases, triple riding, over speeding or performing stunts will be seized. Cases will be registered against offenders as per law.

To ensure women's safety during the festivities, special police teams, including SHE Teams, have been deployed at sensitive locations to prevent eve-teasing and harassment under the guise of celebrations.

Mr. Alam also cautioned organisers against using DJ sound systems without prior permission and directed them to adhere to prescribed noise limits. Those planning to conduct Holi events have been instructed to obtain advance permission from the local police station.

Uppal Congress In-Charge Parameshwar Reddy Distributes Exam Kits to SSC Students



---Under the leadership of Former Medchal-Malkajiri District Youth Congress President Kandi Shrawan Reddy "KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 2 (Indian Chronicle): "Under the leadership of former Medchal-Malkajiri District Youth Congress President Kandi Shrawan Reddy, exam materials were distributed to 10th class (SSC) students studying in

government schools at Habsiguda. The SSC examinations are scheduled to begin on the 14th of this month. "The exam kits were distributed by Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-Charge Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy. Each student received an exam pad, pen, pencil, sharpener, eraser, and scale." Speaking on the occasion, Parameshwar Reddy stated that the State Government is providing all necessary infrastructure facilities to government schools to ensure better academic results. He said the government is taking several initiatives to develop government schools on par with private institutions. He further mentioned that students who secure top ranks in the SSC examinations will be encouraged and supported by the government to pursue higher education through well-planned programs. "The program was attended by Habsiguda ZPHS School Principal Pushpa; senior Congress leaders and former councillor Kandi Aggi Reddy; Division President Vijay Kumar; General Secretary Dharmendra Nayak (Dharma); A-Block Secretary Murali Krishna Mudiraj; Youth Congress President Vasu Nayak; Habsiguda Division Ramalayam Chairman Chintala Babu Rao; senior Congress leader Nursing Rao; ST Cell leader Mallu Nayak; Indiramma Committee member Gundu Rajanna; Division Secretary Suman Javeed; and others including Nayak, Sai Kiran, Lakshminarayana, Adi Gangadhar, Khaleem, Raju, and Sai.

Grand Farewell After Long Years of Service: District Collector Anudeep Durishetty, District Collector Participates in Retirement Felicitation Ceremony of Four Government Employees

"Arvapalli Nagesh khammam Staff Report March 2, (Indian Chronicle): "District Collector Anudeep Durishetty expressed special gratitude and extended a warm farewell to government employees who retired after rendering long years of public service. A retirement felicitation ceremony was held at the Collectorate for four



employees who retired in February 2026. The District Collector, along with Additional Collector P. Srinivasa Reddy, attended the program and appreciated the services of the retiring employees. The retirees included V. Malleswari, who served as a Veterinary Livestock Officer in the Animal Husbandry Department; Shaik Jani Miya, Typist in the Panchayat Raj Department; P. Anjamma, who worked as a cook in the Social Welfare Department; and Girija, who served as an Office Subordinate in the Medical and Health Department. Speaking on the occasion, the District Collector stated that the officers and staff had rendered uninterrupted public service for nearly 30 to 35 years and conveyed his heartfelt appreciation for their dedication. He wished them a peaceful, healthy, and happy life after retirement. "Later, the retired employees were felicitated in a grand manner. "SDC M. Rajeswari, ZP CEO Deeksha Raina, district officials, family members of the retirees, and others participated in the program.

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Ensure speedy justice to victims, SP Ashok Kumar directs officials

"Jagityal Town/ Boragalla Lavanya, March 2 (Indian Chronicle): "Jagityal District SP Ashok Kumar instructed police to ensure speedy justice to victims and not to show laxity in dealing with complaints. "As part of the Grievance Day, SP Ashok Kumar met with 15 petitioners from



various parts of the district at the district police headquarters on Monday and enquired about their problems. He directed the concerned officials to take immediate action on the complaints and ensure justice to the victims. "The SP said they are working to bring the police department closer to the people and resolve their issues. He added that the police are receiving petitions from complainants who visit the police station with dignity and are taking prompt action on the complaints after verifying them at the field level to ensure justice to the victims."

Establishment of a national level OC Commission

The OC JAC leaders, Kishan Reddy and Rajanna, demanded

“Jagtlial Staff Reporter, March 2 (Indian Chronicle):” the establishment of a national-level OC Commission to study the conditions of OCs and support the poor among the forward castes. They also demanded amendments to allow only OCs to contest in general reserved seats in local bodies. “The leaders, Ennam Kishan Reddy, State Vice President of OC JAC, and Mahankali Rajanna, Jagtlial District Convener, spoke at a press conference in Jagtlial. They stated that OCs are mostly poor and don't receive government welfare schemes. They have been protesting peacefully for 14 years. “The leaders demanded that the government recognize the social and economic inequalities faced by forward castes and provide justice. They also demanded constitutional amendments to allow only OCs to contest in general reserved seats. “The leaders mentioned that the recent dharna at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi was successful and increased pressure on the central government. They suggested that revenue officials issue EWS certificates as per norms and increase the income limit for EWS certificates to 10 lakhs. “They also demanded that the state government increase the age limit for farmers' accident insurance to



70 years and connect agriculture to the employment guarantee scheme. “The leaders appealed to OC youth, women, farmers, and employees to unite and fight for their rights. “Leaders Pulluri Sathyanarayana, koppera Venkat Reddy, chandhra shekar, devarasetti Janardhan and others.

Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Extends Rs 6 Lakh Financial Assistance to MBBS Students

Cheques Distributed by Uppal Deputy Commissioner Raju



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 2 (Indian Chronicle):” “Bandari Lakshma Reddy, MLA of Uppal constituency, provided financial assistance of nearly ₹6

lakhs to 11 MBBS students belonging to the Uppal constituency. The cheques were distributed at the Uppal Deputy Commissioner's office by Godhumala Raju. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy stated that education is the most powerful tool that paves the way for a brighter future. He said that the BLR Charitable Trust stands in support of talented students coming from poor and middle-class families. He expressed his hope that the students, who are pursuing medical education, will grow into dedicated doctors and serve society in the future. Former Corporator Devender Reddy, BRS State Leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, Uppal BRS leaders Pilli Nagaraju, Anya Balakrishna, Palle Narsinga Rao, Edulla Kondal Reddy, BSNL Raju, along with students, their parents, and party workers, participated in the program. “The MBBS students expressed their gratitude to MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy for his support.

Utukuri Kalyani Pays Courtesy Visit to Khammam MP Ramasahayam Raghurama Reddy



“Arvapalli Nagesh khammam Staff Report March 2, (Indian Chronicle):” “Khammam Parliament Member Ramasahayam Raghurama Reddy was courteously met by Utukuri Kalyani, who brought several issues related to Peddagopathi Gram Panchayat to his attention. She requested that the existing 11 KV power line passing through the middle of Peddagopathi village be shifted outside the village limits. She explained that relocating the power line would enhance public safety and help prevent potential accidents. She also submitted a petition seeking the provision of drainage facilities in Anantharam, Batlakunta, and Peddagopathi villages under the Peddagopathi Gram Panchayat limits. She urged the MP to take necessary steps towards the development of the villages. MP Ramasahayam Raghurama Reddy reportedly responded positively and assured that he would discuss the issues with the concerned officials and take appropriate action. Konijerla Mandal Congress Party leaders Utukuri Ranjith, D. Prakash, Choppadandi Mahesh, Rambabu, Ajay, Raghu, Naveen, Naresh, Chandu, Ramana, and others participated in the program.

Not Even a Single Leprosy Case Should Be Missed Without Treatment – Additional DMHO Dr. B. Chandu Naik



“Arvapalli Nagesh khammam Staff Report March 2, (Indian Chronicle):” “During the Monthly Leprosy Review Meeting held on 26.02.2028 at the Prerana Meeting Hall, Additional DMHO (Leprosy & AIDS) Dr. B. Chandu Naik participated and addressed the gathering. The meeting was organized under the supervision of Leprosy Paramedical Officer B. Bhoja for staff working as nodal officers in the leprosy wings of Primary Health Centres across the district, along with DPMOs and APMOs. Dr. B. Chandu Naik stated that during the Sparsh Leprosy Awareness

Campaign conducted from January 30 to February 13, suspected leprosy cases should be confirmed as positive in the presence of the Medical Officer at the nearest Primary Health Centre and treatment should be initiated immediately. He emphasized that early detection of leprosy prevents complications and that timely treatment offers a 100% chance of complete cure. He instructed Deputy Paramedical Officers to attend ASHA Day meetings every month to create awareness about leprosy and to regularly visit Primary Health Centres to provide health education on the disease. After identifying a case and completing six months of treatment, patients should be examined to confirm recovery. For PB (Paucibacillary) cases, follow-up should be conducted within two years, and for MB (Multibacillary) cases, within five years. “He further directed that whenever a new case is registered, a focal survey should be conducted covering at least 300 households around the patient's residence to detect additional cases. Leprosy-related activities should be carried out daily, and awareness programs should be organized regularly in villages. DPMOs Afzal Miya and G. Bhadr, Physiotherapist K. Venkat, Doop Singh, and leprosy nodal officers participated in the program.

Former MLA N.V.S.S. Prabhakar Participates in Sri Rama Sahitha Satyanarayana Swamy Annual Brahmotsavams



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 2 (Indian Chronicle):” “The annual Brahmotsavams of Sri Rama Sahitha Satyanarayana Swamy are being celebrated grandly at Indiranagar, Ramanthapur. On Monday, former Uppal MLA N.V.S.S. Prabhakar, former Corporator Bandaru Sreevani Venkata Rao, and Ramanthapur Division President Vangala Santosh Gupta participated in the special pooja ceremonies held as part of the festivities. On the occasion of the annual celebrations, the temple Executive Officer Vijayabharathi honored the dignitaries and presented them with Theertha Prasad. “Senior BJP leaders including Revu Narasimha Kuruma, Vallapu Jagan Yadav, Thalla Balakrishna Goud, Ulugonda Narayanadasu, Poreddy Maheshwar Reddy, Thammali Ravi, Kalma Kalla Lingam, Bodduballi Lingam, Swarna Sande, Veena, Keerthi, and several other party leaders participated in large numbers.

New District Committee Formed to Strengthen RTI Implementation in K.B. Asifabad

“Indian Chronicle (Taj Khan), February 2, “Dr. Kondagurla Kamalakar, State Vice President of the Right to Information Protection Act 2005 Society, stated that the Right to Information (RTI) Act is a constitutional blessing for the common citizen. “Acting on the recommendations of State Appointments In-Charge Chandamalla Sudhakar, Dr. Kamalakar issued appointment orders for the newly constituted district committee of the Komaram Bheem Asifabad district. “Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Kamalakar emphasized that every activist must work like a soldier to ensure the effective implementation of the RTI Act. He noted that transparency and accountability in government offices can be achieved only through the proper enforcement of the law. “He cautioned that the RTI Act should not be misused under any circumstances and must be utilized strictly for lawful purposes to contribute to societal development. The Society, he added, will continue to coordinate with government officials to ensure effective implementation of the RTI Act and to see that government welfare schemes reach people down to the village level. “ “Newly Appointed District

Committee – Komaram Bheem Asifabad” District President: Vangari Praveen (elected unanimously) • Vice President: Namani Rajalingu • General Secretary: Jaji Praveen • Joint Secretary: Akhilesh • District Treasurer: Gajjala Tirupati • Chief Advisor: Ram Tainki Krishna • District Legal Advisor: Gajelli Santosh • District Legal Co-Advisor: Dheeraj Bhoumik • District Political Convener: Pantham Suresh • District Organizer: Gogarla Rajesh • District Publicity Secretary: Durgam Srinivas • District Media Convener: Tirupati • District Student Convener: Kiran • District Youth Convener: Kishore • District Committee Members: Naitam Kiran, Kummari Lingayya, Chandragiri, Tulasidas, Mahesh • “Asifabad Constituency Committee” • President: Jaji Ravidas • Secretary: Srinivas • Treasurer: Srinath • “Sirpur Constituency Committee” • President: Madasu Nagesh • Secretary: Kummari Lingayya • Treasurer: Prabhakar • Dr. Kondagurla Kamalakar confirmed that the above appointments have been formally made under the Right to Information Protection Act 2005 Society.

Massive Funds for Uppal Division

Rs 40 Lakhs Sanctioned for CC Road Construction

Proceedings handed over to colony residents by Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 2 (Indian Chronicle):” “Uppal Constituency In-charge Mandumula

Parameshwar Reddy stated that substantial funds have once again been secured for the Uppal Division. He said efforts are being made to develop Uppal Division as a model division within GHMC. “As there were no CC (Cement Concrete) roads in Sri Shakti Colony of Uppal Division, frequent accidents were occurring. To address this issue, ₹40 lakhs have been sanctioned for the construction and repair of CC roads in Sri Shakti Colony. On Monday, Parameshwar Reddy handed over the official sanction proceedings to the representatives of the Colony Association. Speaking on the occasion, Parameshwar Reddy said that with the support of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, necessary funds are being secured to develop Uppal Division in an exemplary manner. He added that the people of Uppal are expressing happiness over the prompt sanctioning of funds whenever local issues are brought to the attention of the Chief Minister. The residents of Sri Shakti Colony specially felicitated and thanked Parameshwar Reddy for securing the funds. The program was attended by Sri Shakti Colony Association President C. Srinivasulu Reddy, Working President Varun Kumar, Vice President E. Shankaraya, General Secretary T. Kamalakar, along with Raju, Venkata Subbarao, C.H. Prakash Rao, Mamindla Mallesham, and others.



Praja Vaani Applications Must Be Resolved Promptly: District Collector Anudeep Durishetty

District Collector Receives Public Petitions at Praja Vaani

“Arvapalli Nagesh khammam Staff Report March 2, (Indian Chronicle):” “District Collector Anudeep Durishetty has directed district officials to resolve Praja Vaani applications promptly. On Monday, during the Praja Vaani program held at the Collectorate meeting hall, the District Collector, along with Additional Collector P. Srinivasa Reddy, received petitions from the public. Amaralapudi Bhaskar Rao from Diddupudi village of Konijerla mandal submitted a petition stating that his land is located in Survey Nos. 82 and 83. He explained that their land in Survey No. 81 was earlier allocated for a substation, but due to a pending High Court case, the location was changed. However, despite a High Court order stating that no surveys should be conducted at the same site, the municipality has now allocated the land for a dumping yard. He requested correction of the issue and issuance of pattadar passbooks in his name. The Collector instructed the Tahsildar to take necessary action. Tribal residents of Pedda Thanda in Muthapuram village of Nelakondapalli mandal submitted a petition stating that the previous government had allocated six acres of land to them in Survey No. 663. They requested that land be allotted from the same for construction of a Banjara Bhavan and Seval temple. The Collector directed the Nelakondapalli Tahsildar to take appropriate action. Lakshmi Priya from Pandillapalle village of Chintakani mandal submitted a petition stating that she owns agricultural land in Survey No. 181 under the Ananthasagar revenue limits. She also mentioned that she has been cultivating an additional one acre in Survey No. 182 as inherited property and requested that the details be entered in her pattadar passbook and that a passbook be issued. The Collector instructed the Chintakani Tahsildar to take necessary steps. SDC M. Rajeswari, ZP CEO Deeksha Raina, district officials, and others participated in the Praja Vaani program.



Take Action Against Chiluka Nagar Model Graveyard Contractor and Complete Pending Works with a New Contractor: MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 2 (Indian Chronicle):” “Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, along with BRS Party State Leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, submitted a representation to Uppal Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta demanding immediate action against the contractor of the Model Graveyard in Chiluka Nagar Division. Speaking to the Zonal Commissioner, the MLA stated that ₹2 crore had been sanctioned for the development of the Chiluka Nagar Model Graveyard. Although the contractor was given a work order to complete the project within six months, nearly 18 months have passed and the works are still incomplete. “He further pointed out that despite receiving part payments, the contractor has failed to complete the project. Even after the GHMC Engineering Department issued three notices, the contractor has allegedly not responded or resumed the work. The MLA urged the Commissioner to take strict action against the contractor and appoint a new contractor to complete the pending works at the earliest, ensuring that the graveyard is made available for public use without causing inconvenience to residents. Responding positively, Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta immediately instructed the GHMC Engineering officials to take necessary steps to ensure the completion of the works and to initiate action against the contractor without delay. “BRS Party Division leaders Edula Kondal Reddy, Jalli Mohan, Kokonda Jagan, Muddam Srinivas Yadav, Banti, Shyam, Balu, and others were present at the program.



AIMIM Marks 68th Foundation Day with Flag Hoisting in Kagaznagar

“Indian Chronicle (Taj Khan), February 2, “The 68th Foundation Day of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) was celebrated with enthusiasm in Kagaznagar town on Sunday. On the occasion, AIMIM Kagaznagar Town President Abdul Mubeen, along with Joint Secretary Mohammed Abid Qadri, Mohammed Niyaz Uddin, Sajju, Syed Mohammed Nayeem, AIM Azgar, and Azgar S.K., hoisted the party flag at Sirsilk Chowk. Active members including Amar Sayeed, Deepankar Das, Abdul Hafeez, Ritesh Munna (MRPS), Srinivas, Mantri Malesh, and several others participated in the celebrations. Party leaders extended greetings to



cadre and supporters, reaffirming their commitment to the party's principles and public service initiatives.

New Municipal Leadership Takes Office in Asifabad

“Indian Chronicle (Taj Khan), February 2, “Asifabad: Mangre Akash formally assumed charge as the Chairman of the Asifabad Municipality on Monday. Alongside him, Ahmed took charge as the Vice Chairman. The oath-taking and assumption of office ceremony was conducted by Municipal Commissioner Gajananand. Local MLA Kova Lakshmi congratulated Chairman Akash, Vice Chairman Ahmed, and the municipal councillors on the occasion. Addressing the gathering, the MLA advised the newly elected leadership to focus on resolving civic issues in the town and to remain accessible to the public at all times. She expressed hope that they would deliver good governance and earn the appreciation of the people. Several leaders and well-wishers felicitated Chairman Akash and Vice Chairman Ahmed with shawls and extended their best wishes. Councillors Chiluvuru Venkanna, Bala Krishna, Nagababu, Salam Bin Haimad, Dudala Lakshmi, Jeba Shaikh, and others were present at the event.



Complaint Filed Seeking Disciplinary Action Against Temple EO and Chairman

“---Petitions Submitted to Endowments Commissioner and Uppal Police Station” KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 2 (Indian Chronicle): “Serious allegations have been raised against the Executive Officer (EO) and Chairman of the Sri Rama Sahitha Satyanarayana Swamy Temple in Ramanthapur. A formal complaint has been submitted to the Endowments Commissioner and the Uppal Police Station demanding disciplinary action against them. Under the leadership of former Corporator Bandaru Sreevani Venkata Rao, a representation was submitted to the Endowments Commissioner Hanumantha Rao and the Uppal Police authorities. The complainants alleged inappropriate behavior by the temple Chairman, including making objectionable remarks against women and allegedly entering the temple premises under the influence of alcohol, which they



said has hurt the sentiments of devotees. They further alleged irregularities in temple administration, including the disappearance of materials meant for prasadam preparation, neglect of public representatives, and giving undue preference to members of a single political party. These issues, they stated, have raised serious concerns about the transparency and integrity of the temple's management. The complainants emphasized that the temple, which holds significant antiquity and spiritual importance, is facing reputational damage due to these alleged actions. They demanded a comprehensive inquiry by the concerned authorities and appropriate disciplinary measures to protect the faith and sentiments of devotees. Those who participated in the submission of the complaint included Bandaru Venkata Rao, Revu Narasimha, Santosh Gupta, Jagan Yadav, Thalla Balakrishna, Ambati Bhagyalakshmi Narayanadasu, Thalla Manga, Veena, Swarna Shinde, Lingam Mudiraj, Keerthi, and others.

Incomplete Roads in Beerappagadda Must Be Completed – Beerappagadda Welfare Association President Rachakonda Shivakumar



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 2 (Indian Chronicle): “Residents of Beerappagadda Division are facing severe inconvenience as road works that were started two months ago have been left incomplete midway. In this regard, Beerappagadda Welfare Association

President and BJP youth leader Rachakonda Shivakumar, along with local residents, submitted a written complaint to the officials during the Prajavani program at the GHMC Uppal office on Monday. Speaking on the occasion, Rachakonda Shivakumar stated that development works undertaken with public tax money have been abandoned halfway. He demanded that the authorities immediately resume the works and complete them within the stipulated time. Failing which, he warned that they would launch an agitation along with the local residents. He urged the officials to resolve public issues at the earliest and assured that he would continue to strive for the development of the area. Local residents stated that accidents have increased due to the potholes, and the situation has worsened as water has stagnated in the pits. They demanded that officials address the issue immediately. The residents appreciated Rachakonda Shivakumar for bringing their grievances to the attention of the authorities. On this occasion, Chilkanagar Division BJP Vice President Pitla Srinivas Mudiraj, along with Narsimha, Mallesh, Saikumar, Katti Praveen, Madduri Shiva, Vamsi, Karthik Reddy, Pawan, Judson, Kashi, Charan, and other colony residents participated in the program.

Duddilla Sripada Rao, a person who constantly fought for public issues:

Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Anurag Jayanti

“(Mandava Srisailam..Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... March 2):- Duddilla Sripada Rao, a person who constantly fought for public issues, said Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Anurag Jayanti. On Monday, former Legislative Assembly Speaker Duddilla Sripada Rao participated in the birth anniversary celebrations at the Collectorate meeting hall along with the District Collector, Revenue Additional Collector Venka Reddy, and Local Bodies Additional Collector Bhaskar Rao and paid tribute to his portrait by garlanding it. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that his services as an MLA and Legislative Assembly Speaker, who constantly fought for the solution of the problems of the poor people, are unforgettable. He praised his services on this occasion for his immense contribution to the upliftment of the people. ZP CEO Shobharani, District Revenue Officer Jayamma, District Rural Development Officer Nagi Reddy, A. O. Anji Reddy, officers and staff of various departments of the Collectorate and others participated in this program.



Applications received in Prajavani should be resolved promptly without any pending issues:- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Anurag Jayanti

“(Mandava Srisailam..Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... March 2):- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri

District Collector Anurag Jayanti has instructed the concerned officials to resolve the applications received in Prajavani promptly without any pending issues. On Monday, at the Prajavani program held at the Collectorate Conference Hall, the District Collector along with Additional Collector of Local Bodies Bhaskar Rao and Additional Collector of Revenue Venka Reddy received 62 applications received from time to time and resolve them at the field level without any pending issues. Out of which, 37 were from the Revenue Department, 7 from the Rural Development Department, 5 from the Municipality, 4 from the Housing Department, 2 from the MPDO, 2 from the Panchayat, 2 from the Zilla Parishad, 1 from the Electricity Department, 1 from the Forest Department, 1 from the Education Department, and 1 from the RTC Department. The concerned officials were instructed to immediately examine and resolve the applications related to various departments in the State Prajavani and to process the files only through e-office. DRO Jayamma, ZP CEO Shobha Rani, Rural Development Department Officer Nagi Reddy, and district officials of various departments participated in this program.



Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta Receives 10 Public Grievances at Prajavani in Uppal Zone

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 2

(Indian Chronicle): “The Prajavani grievance redressal program was conducted on Monday at the Uppal Zonal Office. The program was held under the supervision of Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta, where petitions from citizens regarding various public issues were received. During the program, a total of 10 applications related to different civic issues were submitted by the public. These included 1 grievance related to Revenue, 7 related to Town Planning, 1 concerning Engineering, and 1 pertaining to other municipal services. All the petitions received were duly registered and forwarded to the respective departmental officials for immediate action. Speaking on the occasion, Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta directed the concerned officials to prioritize the resolution of public grievances and ensure necessary action within a stipulated time frame. The Zonal Commissioner, departmental heads of the zone, and staff members participated in the program.



Authorities should work to procure paddy from farmers for Rabi 2025-26:

Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Additional Collector Venka Reddy

“(Mandava Srisailam..Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... March 2):- Honorable Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Additional Collector Venka Reddy held a meeting regarding the procurement of paddy for Rabi 2025-26. Speaking on the occasion, he said that farmers should be ensured to procure paddy through token method without any hassle at the procurement centers. He suggested that the purchase centers should be set up after checking the height and valleys. He suggested that proper infrastructure, i.e. weighing machines, automatic paddy cleaners, tarpaulins, and gunny bags should be prepared in the purchase centers. It was suggested that at least 50 tarpaulin sheets should be provided to each purchasing center. Similarly, in view of the summer, basic facilities like drinking water, shade, sheds, tents, chairs etc. should be provided to the farmers, managers and staff without any hassle. It was suggested that all PPC centers should get weighing machines and moisture meters certified by the concerned authorities by March 15. District Civil Supplies Officer, District Manager of Civil Supplies Organization, District Cooperation Officer, District Rural Development Officer, District Agriculture Officer, District Marketing Department staff and others participated in this program.



Farmers should register online for free for 'Farmer Identity Card' and avail government farmer welfare schemes:- Barre Pujita- Jahangir Councilor Barre Pujita- Jahangir has set up free online registration in ward 23 with the help of AEO

“(Mandava Srisailam..Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... March 2):- Farmers in ward 23 of Bhuvanagiri Municipal Town who have a Pattadar passbook should register online for free for 'Farmer Identity Card', said 23rd ward councilor Barre Pujita Jahangir. He revealed that the online application has been set up free of cost from Monday, March 02 under the leadership of AEO Venkata Rao. Due to this registration, the Aadhaar link farmer registration card, which is useful for the welfare programs of the central and state governments for farmers, the government can use the farmer identification card for various types of agricultural implements, subsidies, loans to farmers and other schemes that are useful for the benefits of farmers. He appealed to the farmers to use the facility of free registration by the agricultural officers without going to private online centers. Along with the Pattadar passbook, Aadhaar card xerox copies and the mobile number linked to Aadhaar, farmers should go to the online center set up in the ward and complete the farmer registration process. He advised the farmers to take the advice and suggestions of the AEO if they have any problems. He said that a farmer's identity card is required for the deposit of PM Kisan cash and for the application of other government schemes. Farmer leaders Karkala Pochayya, Pokala Nagaraju, Dargai Bhaskar, Bhushapaka Yadagiri, Pembarthi Raju Ward Congress Party leaders Bhushapaka Eshwar Babu, Ailapuram Babu, Barre Narender, Bhushapaka Mallesh, Barre Kranthi, Karkala Ramesh, Bandaru Shivakumar and others participated in this program.



Trump says Hamas must disarm or be disarmed, perhaps violently



GNS News Agency, March 2

U.S. President Donald Trump said that he had communicated to Hamas that the militant group must disarm or it will be forced to. On Monday (October 20), Hamas freed the last living Israeli hostages from Gaza, and Israel sent

home busloads of Palestinian detainees under a ceasefire deal brokered by Mr. Trump, but Hamas has not publicly committed to downing its weapons. "If they don't disarm, we will disarm them. And it will happen quickly and perhaps violently," Mr. Trump said during a meeting at the White House with Argentine President Javier Milei. Mr. Trump said he communicated this to Hamas and they had agreed to disarm, as his 20-point peace proposal stated. "I spoke to Hamas, and I said, you're going to disarm, right? Yes, sir, we're going to disarm. That's what they told me," Mr. Trump said, later clarifying that he passed the message through intermediaries. The outlook for Mr. Trump's peace plan has darkened since he returned from a visit to Israel and Egypt on Monday. Israel restricted aid into Gaza and kept the enclave's border shut on Tuesday, while re-emergent Hamas fighters demonstrated their grip by executing men in the street. Mr. Trump downplayed Hamas killing members of other gangs as it reasserts its grip on security.

Peru's President Jose Jeri declares state of emergency in Lima to tackle surging violence

GNS News Agency, March 2

Peru's new President declared a state of emergency in the capital in the government's latest attempt to stem a surge in violence that has stirred protests and contributed to the recent downfall of his predecessor. Peru has seen an increase of killings, violent extortion and attacks on public places in recent years. Between January and September, police reported 1,690 homicides, compared to 1,502 during the same period of 2024.

Former President Dina Boluarte was removed from office by Peru's Congress on October 10, 2025, after an impeachment process in which lawmakers said she had been unable to tackle the crime wave. She was immediately replaced by Jose Jeri, the legislative body's leader. In a televised message, Mr. Jeri said the emergency in Lima will last 30 days, and added that the government is considering steps including deploying soldiers to help police and restricting some rights, such as the freedom of assembly and movement. His government published later a decree formally declaring the emergency. "Wars are won with actions, not words," the President said in the address. He said



he's planning to a new approach to fighting crime that he described as going "from defence to offence." Peru has seen major protests against violence and corruption led by Gen Z activists. Protesters rallied in Lima on Thursday (October 16, 2025) to demand the resignation of the new President. The demonstration turned violent, leaving one civilian dead and around 100 people injured, including police officers and some journalists. Mr. Jeri said that same day that he wouldn't resign.

IRA in the making: Ghazwa-e-Hind rhetoric, 8,850 trainees at seven camps in Bangladesh

New Delhi: The disclosure by a senior adviser to the Muhammad Yunus government in Bangladesh clearly suggests that the first phase to set up the Islamic Revolutionary Army (IRA) is underway. On October 20, Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain, an adviser to the interim government, said on social media that recruitment and training were being imparted to 8,850 individuals across several centres. He said that these individuals would undergo training in martial arts, firearms instruction, taekwondo and judo. This revelation confirms what the Indian agencies have been saying for a couple of months. The Yunus government, labelled as a puppet of the Jamaat-e-Islami and ISI, has been planning the IRA for several months now. The idea is to replace the existing army with the IRA.

The IRA, according to Indian officials, would be on the lines with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). The IRA would be a highly radicalised institution, which would help the establishment convert Bangladesh into an Islamic state. It would be used for moral policing, like one gets to see in Iran, officials add. However, the bigger target would be India, and this would mean that once the IRA is set up, the tensions along the border would be very high.

Recently, Dr Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher, a Jamaat leader, said in New York that five million Jamaat youth were ready to fight against India. He said that if India enters Bangladesh, the bad name that was given in 1971 will be wiped out. We will prove ourselves as true freedom fighters, and one part of the Jamaat's five million people will engage in guerrilla warfare, while the rest will spread inside India to implement Ghazwa-e-Hind. Analysts say that the developments and statements clearly indicate that the ISI has taken over Bangladesh. It has been the wish of Pakistan to get Bangladesh back to the pre-1971 situation, and since the ouster of Sheikh Hasina, it has been working relentlessly on this plan. Currently, seven training camps cater to 8,850 individuals. All these people are being trained by retired Bangladesh Army officials who are pro-Pakistan. Plans are afoot to set up more such camps in the future. The plan would be to train over 160,000 individuals, which is the current strength of the Bangladesh Army. Further, these camps are frequented by both the Pakistan army and ISI officials. They are the ones who are providing the



funds and equipment.

Since the sea route was opened up to Pakistan by Muhammad Yunus, arms and ammunition have come to Bangladesh in large numbers. All these are currently being stored in the universities, which are largely controlled by the Jamaat. As per the requirement, these arms and ammunition are being transported openly to these training camps. The Jamaat-backed institutions are also open about their intentions where the IRA is concerned. In December 2024 itself, a group called the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, which comprises students close to Yunus, had announced the launch of a militia called the IRA. In a Facebook post, the organisation had called upon the youth to gather at the Dhaka University for enrolment. The plan was to set up training camps, and during the initial phase, there would be a martial arts session followed by a month-long military style training. They said that this would be conducted by the army and paramilitary forces. These developments clearly indicate that the Yunus administration, at the behest of the Jamaat and ISI, is looking to shut down both the army and DGFI in Bangladesh. There have been rumours of a rift between the army top brass and the ruling dispensation. Courts have been passing orders to arrest many army and DGFI personnel. While the courts have said that these persons have indulged in atrocities, in reality, all these persons who have been targeted are perceived to be close to Sheikh Hasina. These developments have caused a deep rift within the Bangladesh Army, officials say, while adding that many are in favour of the IRA being set up.

Man crashes car into White House security gate, taken into custody

GNS News Agency, March 2

Washington: A man was taken into custody after crashing his vehicle into a security gate outside the White House in Washington, according to local media reports. The incident occurred around 10:37 p.m. on Tuesday (local time) at the intersection of 17th Street and E Street NW, near the southwest perimeter of the presidential complex. According to the US Secret Service, the driver rammed his car into the secured gate, prompting an immediate response from security personnel.

Agents quickly arrested the suspect on the scene, deploying a heavy security presence in the area, reports Fox News. Armed officers were seen securing the perimeter, while forensic teams examined the damaged vehicle. Authorities have not yet released details about the suspect's identity, possible motive, or the circumstances leading to the crash. Visuals circulating on social media show Secret Service officers surrounding the vehicle, conducting measurements, and photographing the scene. Following the collision, access to the area was temporarily restricted while officials assessed the situation. The White House itself was not placed under lockdown, but the road leading to the gate was closed until the vehicle was towed away. No injuries have been reported. The Secret Service said it is reviewing surveillance footage and other evidence to determine the



driver's intent. Some media reports also suggested that US President Donald Trump was inside the White House at the time of the crash. The site of the incident lies southwest of the main residential complex, close to the headquarters of the American Red Cross. This is not the first time a vehicle has breached security near the White House. In January 2024, a driver crashed into an outer gate and was detained by law enforcement. A few months later, in May 2024, another vehicle struck a security barrier near the complex, resulting in the driver's death. In both cases, the Secret Service ruled out any broader threat to public safety.

When it comes to Ukraine peace negotiations, it's all over the map



Virginia: Donald Trump is reportedly "sick" of seeing maps of the front line in Ukraine. Indeed, according to one European official's account, he tossed aside Ukrainian delegation maps during his latest meeting with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the White House on October 17, 2025. Instead, Trump is said to have aggressively pushed Zelenskyy to accept Russia's terms to end the war and surrender all of the Donbas region in Ukraine's east to Russian President Vladimir Putin. A political geographer who has studied Eastern Europe and post-communist states, knows how crucial maps are to the dynamics of territorial conflicts and peace negotiations. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, maps were central to the ethnic cleansing that took place in the early 1990s, driving visions of creating mono-ethnic space through violence, and also to the ending of the war. Similarly, in the Caucasus, cartographic fantasies of homogeneous territories have underwritten campaigns against ethnic others in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh. And it is no surprise that maps are a critical part of negotiations now to end the 3½-year conflict in Ukraine.

Drawing partition lines on maps has always been a feature of stalemated territorial conflicts. US negotiators in 1995 forged the agreement that brought Bosnia's war to an end through last-minute cartographic adjustments ensuring that the settlement conformed to an already agreed-upon 49-51 percentage split of the territory between Bosnian-Serb forces and those representing the Bosnian Federation. Dividing territory in percentage terms, however, goes against the grain of how most people view their territorial homelands. In his famous account of nations as "imagined communities," the Anglo-Irish historian Benedict Anderson described how states create nations through the widespread circulation of a common territorial map. In this way, map images became a type of state logo. Nations not only imagined themselves as a community but as belonging to a particular recognisable space, a familiar territorial homeland. Territories in today's world have become instantly recognisable shapes on posters and T-shirts and in textbooks. Yet they are also experienced as something alive and personal – a "geo-body," in the words of Thai historian Thongchai Winichakul. It is part of what leads citizens, and nations, to feel deeply connected to their state's territorial boundaries. And it helps explain the generally persistent resistance of Ukrainians to territorial concessions to Russia – even though there are signs that popular sentiment is beginning to shift after 3½ years of war. Fighting and dying for a homeland, as Ukrainian soldiers have done in their thousands, adds to the emotive power of territory. To many Ukrainians it isn't property they are being asked to concede but sacred and indivisible land paid for with blood. This understanding of territory is quite different from that of Trump and his handpicked cadre of "deal guys" who treat international conflict like short-term business transactions. This pursuit of a deal over other considerations has a downside and can lead to missteps. Trump's special envoy for peace missions, Steve Witkoff, believed he had achieved something of a breakthrough during a meeting with the Russians in early August when looking at areas where Russia might withdraw on the map. German newspaper Bild reported that

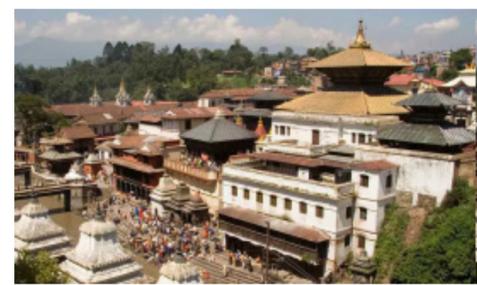
Witkoff, who does not speak Russian and didn't have his own translator, misunderstood Putin's demand of a "peaceful withdrawal" of Ukrainians from Kherson and Zaporizhzhia as an offer of Russia's "peaceful withdrawal" from those regions.

Because it led to the postponement of new US sanctions and a summit proposal, the Russians went along with the misunderstanding, according to the Bild's reporting. Similarly, the subsequent Alaska summit was not the breakthrough Trump envisioned. Putin got the red-carpet treatment on US soil but nonetheless subjected Trump to a lengthy historical lecture on why Russia owns Ukraine. Putin was unwilling to give Trump the ceasefire deal the US president desired. Putin did, however, make a territorial proposal that kept Trump interested in continuing to play the peacemaker: If Russia acquired all of the territory of the two oblasts that made up the Donbas, then Russia would consider freezing its lines in Zaporizhzhia and Kherson. Hagglng over percents This provided the background for an extraordinary meeting in the White House on August 18, 2025, when seven European leaders joined Zelenskyy in meeting Trump to discuss a possible endgame to the war. The Ukrainian delegation was pictured entering the White House with what looked like a rolled-up map. In the Oval Office, however, they were confronted with the White House's own rigid board depicting a map of the "Russia-Ukraine Conflict." It featured a choropleth display with the estimated territory under Russian occupation coloured in orange and quantified as a percentage figure of each oblast's territory. The map indicated that Russia occupied 99 per cent of Luhansk and 76 per cent of Donetsk. Putin wanted 100 per cent of both – a demand that required Ukraine to surrender the fortified territories safeguarding central Ukraine. What the Oval Office map meant to Trump was clear the following day in a phone interview on "Fox and Friends." Referring to the map, he said that a "big chunk of territory is taken," implying it is now lost to Ukraine. In other words, the map recorded the score in real estate terms from a regrettable war between a small state and a much larger one. Zelenskyy tried to argue for a different approach to map issues, one that affirmed the symbolic and strategic importance of keeping Ukraine's territorial integrity alive as an ideal for Ukrainians and the international community. He made some progress. After meeting Zelenskyy at the United Nations on September 23, Trump suggested that Ukraine could succeed in its fight to "take back their country in its original form." Battlegrounds as real estate With Trump seemingly drifting toward supporting Ukraine with long-range missiles, Putin seized the initiative by phoning Trump. In an extensive phone call prior to Zelenskyy's White House visit on October 17, the Russian leader updated his offer for peace, suggesting his forces would withdraw from Zaporizhzhia and Kherson in return for all of the Donbas region. This set the stage for the latest reported Trump-Zelenskyy shouting match and the tossing aside of front-line maps. Afterward, Trump posted on social media: "... it is time to stop the killing, and make a DEAL! Enough blood has been shed, with property lines being defined by War and Guts. They should stop where they are." This is Trump's current position on map issues. Backing off pressuring Ukraine to give up all the Donbas in public, he believes that Ukraine and the Donbas should be "cut up" along the current battlelines. Asked in a Fox News interview on October 6 whether Putin would be open to ending the war "without taking significant property from Ukraine," Trump responded: "Well, he's going to take something. They fought and he has a lot of property. He's won certain property." This gets at how Zelenskyy and Trump seemingly see different things when they look at front-line maps. The Ukrainian leader sees a painful reality, his country's geo-body violently cut apart by an invading, occupying power. Trump comments indicate he sees it as a property dispute in which the strongest power has accumulated some territorial winnings and now needs to cash them in.

Nepal celebrates New Year as per indigenous calendar

Kathmandu: The people of Nepal celebrated New Year's Day on Wednesday according to the indigenous Sambat calendar, with various programmes being organised on the occasion. The Nepal Sambat, an indigenous calendar, belongs to the Newar community, mainly from the Himalayan nation's capital, Kathmandu. Vice President Ramsahay Prasad Yadav extended best wishes to all Nepalis at home and abroad on the occasion of the Nepal era New Year 1146.

In a message, he wished peace, prosperity and happiness, adding that Nepal Sambat has helped nurture tolerance, reconciliation and fraternity in the country. Various programmes were organised on the occasion. Meanwhile, the government announced that the Nepal Sambat date will be printed on Nepali banknotes starting this year. Members of the Newar community also observed the Mha Puja or self-worship on the fourth day of the Deepawali festival, coinciding with the New Year. Mha Puja is linked to self-awareness, and is said to purify the mind and body before stepping into a new year. The Nepal Sambat or calendar year



was introduced by Shankhadhar Sakhwa, a trader from Kathmandu, by relieving the people of Nepal from debt during the reign of Lichchhavi King Raghavdev in 880 AD. Recognising the contribution of Shankhadhar Sakhwa to the country and people, the government declared him a national luminary in November 1999.

Why Prince Andrew is still a prince and how his remaining titles could be removed

London: A small group of MPs is calling for the government to formally remove Prince Andrew's titles. SNP Westminster leader Stephen Flynn has tabled an early day motion asking the government to take legislative steps to remove Andrew's dukedom. At the time of publication, only 14 MPs have signed and there is no obligation for the government to act. But it is an opportunity for MPs to vocalise their desire for action. And it highlights that there are routes by which Andrew could be stripped of his titles.

He has already announced that he will no longer use his title, Duke of York, or honours such as holding a knighthood of the Order of the Garter. This takes further his ostracism from public life due to his associations with the convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. His announcement came the week before the publication of a posthumous memoir by Epstein victim Virginia Giuffre, who had long accused Andrew of sexually assaulting her when she was a teenager. He denies the accusations. Giuffre died by suicide in May of this year.

In 2019 after the now infamous Newsnight interview, Andrew "stepped back" from his work as a public-facing royal. In 2022, it was announced that he would defend a lawsuit against him from Giuffre (that he later settled) with

confirmation that he would not return to public duties. His remaining military positions and royal patronages were returned to the queen to be redistributed to other working members of the royal family. He also announced that he would no longer use his HRH status. Andrew has now voluntarily stopped using his remaining titles but will continue to use his princely status. This is significant – Andrew placed great stock in his titles. Yet for the public, this maybe insufficient. Though the titles have effectively been placed into abeyance, they legally still exist. When faced with what to do, the king is in a difficult position. The monarch must act within the confines of the law – but the law is not designed to easily allow someone to become an ex-royal. The assumption is that all titles and honours are for life. For every scandalous development in Andrew's life, Buckingham Palace has done the minimum necessary to head off each particular media storm, each time just going a little further. Andrew's honours, such as his Knighthood of the Order of the Garter, can be removed by the king. However, to remove some of his other titles, an act of parliament is required. The precedent for this is the Titles Deprivation Act 1917. This 1917 law was enacted during the first world war to remove titles from British princes or peers who sided with the enemy.

Unreliable air and noise data, real-time deception



Policy is only as strong as the credibility of the data it rests on. In recent months, two failures in India's environmental monitoring systems have raised disturbing questions of governance — Delhi's Real-Time Air Pollution Network and Lucknow's National Ambient Noise Monitoring Network. Both were launched with fanfare, but their scientific weaknesses erode not only public trust but also India's international credibility. For decades now, it has been evident that the air in Indian cities is unfit to breathe, with Delhi ranked as the worst. Yet, audits and inquiries, including the recent Comptroller and Auditor General of India report reveal flaws in the monitoring network at multiple levels. Several sensors are placed under tree cover, behind walls or obstructions. More recently, the Delhi government has proposed installing sensors in relatively less polluted locations. Official data often report air quality as "moderate", while citizens gasp for breath in toxic smog. This is not a matter of technical deficiency alone but raises a fundamental question of governance. When evidence itself is unreliable, on what basis can public pollution policy stand? The importance of sound data

Every action plan for Delhi, whether on stubble burning, vehicular restrictions or industrial emissions, must rest on robust and scientifically sound data. If the very data are not representative or distorted to understate pollution, it is not only the policies but also their direction that stands compromised. Weak monitoring risks India's global commitments (Paris Agreement, World Health Organization (WHO) Air Quality Standards), and priorities in the process. In Lucknow, the situation is no different. In 2017, the average noise pollution levels in seven Indian cities exceeded the limits set by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). In 2017, the former Environment Minister, Anil Madhav Dave, in the Rajya Sabha, highlighted serious flaws in India's urban noise-control policy. The noise monitoring network was flawed from the outset, with sensors failing to capture actual decibel levels. India continues to rely on the outdated Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000, which has been criticised as being inadequate. The decibel limits fall short of WHO guidelines, enforcement is weak, and penalties carry little deterrence. Technology is deployed as spectacle without scientific discipline. Shiny hardware without rigour breeds opacity. Misleading data downplay hazardous

levels as merely "moderate." In a democracy, misleading the public on health is deeply troubling. Governance becomes a contest between citizens and industries: flawed numbers favour inaction and the voices of citizens demanding protection under the right to health and life are suppressed. In Delhi, misleading Air Quality Index often delays judicial intervention. In Lucknow, inaccurate noise data weaken fundamental rights under Articles 19 and 21. The judiciary too has begun to acknowledge this. In a recent order, the Supreme Court of India transferred pleas highlighting noise pollution around Delhi Airport to the National Green Tribunal, underscoring that such disputes demand specialised adjudication. This recognition makes it clear that noise is no longer a nuisance but a constitutional and public health issue. The CPCB does have clear guidelines on sensor location, calibration and periodic audits. But enforcement is lax by design, political pressures abound, and independent scientific scrutiny is nearly absent. The irony is glaring. Class-1 quality sensors for air and noise monitoring are installed at enormous public expense by the CPCB under the aegis of the Environment Ministry. There is no independent panel to review monitoring systems as in international norms. Without third-party audits and transparent processes, public trust in official data will continue to erode. The latest Air Quality Life Index report (Energy Policy Institute) shows that if Delhi's air met WHO standards, average life expectancy could rise by 8.2 years. Across India, pollution silently erodes life expectancy by close to five years. The jugglery by agencies with misleading data diverts focus from accountability. This debate is not about devices but about people's health. Fresh scientific evidence shows that exposure to pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) weaken lungs and accelerate myopia. When air quality indices misrepresent reality, children with asthma are exposed to unsafe air. Likewise, flawed noise monitoring leaves infants and the elderly unprotected. Behind every misleading index or incomplete dataset lies preventable harm. Science as the foundation for monitoring to inspire trust, science must guide its foundation. Install sensors strictly according to standards with independent experts. Keep raw data open, enable routine third-party audits and create formal citizen oversight. The experiences of Delhi and Lucknow are a warning: environmental monitoring cannot be treated as a bureaucratic formality. Real-time technology is meaningful only if it reflects reality. In India's rapid urbanisation, environmental data will shape policy, inform the public and represent the nation globally. If the data regime is misleading, the price will be paid not in reports but in children's lungs and the sleepless nights of citizens. Scientific rigour, transparency and public trust must be the bedrock of India's environmental monitoring revolution. Otherwise, real-time networks will turn into real-time deception. Rohan Singh is an independent journalist covering urban environment, governance and urban public health in India. Kushagra Rajendra currently heads the Environment and Sustainability domain at Amity University, Haryana

Lokpal wants to buy seven BMW cars, draws Opposition ire

GNS News Agency, March 2

Anti-graft ombudsman Lokpal has floated a tender to procure seven luxurious BMW cars, collectively worth around ₹5 crore, drawing condemnation from opposition parties and anti-corruption activists who questioned the institution's priorities and performance record. "According to the tender and the manufacturer's website, the long-wheelbase sedan has an on-road price of approximately ₹69.5 lakh per unit in Delhi. It is described as the longest and most spacious car in its segment, designed for outstanding comfort in an extremely luxurious cabin." "The Lokpal of India invites open tenders from reputed agencies for supply of seven BMW 3 series 330Li cars to the Lokpal of India," read the tender floated on October 16 which specifically mentioned procurement of the 'M Sport' model with "long wheelbase" and in white colour.

The procurement aims to provide a vehicle for each of the institution's current members, including Chairman Justice A M Khanwilkar (ret'd) and six other members. The sanctioned strength of the Lokpal is eight. The Lokpal's tender mandates that the selected vendor must conduct a comprehensive seven-day practical and theoretical training programme for the anti-graft ombudsman's drivers and designated staff for which the cost will be borne exclusively by the vendor. This training, which must be completed within 15 days of the vehicles' delivery, is required to cover "familiarisation with all controls, features and safety systems", "emergency handling", and a minimum of 50 to 100 kilometers of on-road practice for each driver. The last date for bid submission is November 6, with an earnest money deposit of ₹10 lakh required from bidders. Delivery is sought "preferably two weeks but not later than 30 days" from the supply order date, according to the tender. Congress leaders and well-known activists have condemned the move, branding it as a display of extravagance that undermines the very mission of the institution. Critics are not just questioning the expense but using the luxury car tender to attack the effectiveness and independence of the anti-corruption body itself. Public interest lawyer Prashant Bhushan, a central figure in the India Against Corruption (IAC) movement, launched a scathing attack over the issue, accusing the government of weakening the institution. "The institution of Lokpal has been ground to dust by the Modi government, by keeping it vacant for many years & then appointing servile members who are not bothered by graft & are happy with their luxuries. They are now buying 70L BMW cars for themselves!" Mr. Bhushan said in a post on X. The Congress questioned the anti-graft body's track record and linked it to the protest movement that preceded the government's formation. "Lokpal wants to buy 7 luxury BMW cars worth ₹5 crore for itself. This is the same institution that was supposed to fight corruption after the so-called 'India Against Corruption' movement — a movement backed by the RSS and designed only to bring down the Congress government," Congress spokesperson Shama Mohamed wrote on X. Congress leader Saral Patel challenged the institution's performance saying, "Lokpal of India is buying 7 luxury BMW cars worth Rs 5 crore... Has this Lokpal acted on even a single case in the last 11 years?" The party's Kerala unit issued a statement, turning the spotlight onto the legacy of the Anna Hazare-led IAC movement from which the current Lokpal was eventually established. The statement accused the original proponents of the movement of "misleading the entire nation" and lamented the current state of the watchdog. "The very Lokpal, once projected as the ultimate anti-corruption watchdog, is busy indulging in luxuries and remains a silent spectator to the large-scale corruption and plunder happening across the country. Democracy is destroyed... And Anna Hazare and team are dead silent," the statement said. TMC's Rajya Sabha MP Sagarika Ghose highlighted the poor public perception created by the move



while drawing attention to the Lokpal chairperson's judicial tenure. A tender has been placed for SEVEN luxury BMW cars by the Lok Pal. Instead of investigating corruption, Lok Pal seems to be indulging in extravagance. Terrible optics. Important note: Lok Pal is Justice A.M Khanwilkar whose last judgement before retiring gave ED sweeping powers... "A tender has been placed for SEVEN luxury BMW cars by the Lokpal. Instead of investigating corruption, Lokpal seems to be indulging in extravagance. Terrible optics. Important note: Lokpal is Justice A.M Khanwilkar whose last judgement before retiring gave ED sweeping powers in PMLA cases," she said in a post on X.

Why pigeons are significant for public health managers

On July 3 this year, the Maharashtra government ordered the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) of Mumbai to immediately shut down all 51 kabutarshanas in the city, citing health hazards arising out of pigeon droppings and feathers. The BMC subsequently banned public feeding of pigeons, leading to legal challenges in the Bombay High Court. The Court did not stay the order, but said a committee of experts could study if the old kabutarshanas should continue, while stressing that "human life is of paramount importance". The Corporation's decision, however, triggered opposition from sections of the Jain and Gujarati communities who consider feeding pigeons a daily act of compassion. The disagreement has moved beyond civic hygiene to questions of health communication, faith, and evidence. Large cities create stable conditions for pigeon colonies. Continuous feeding at kabutarshanas and open markets ensures an uninterrupted food supply for pigeons. Modern buildings provide nesting ledges and shaded ducts. The absence of predators and the surplus food grain availability further support survival. In densely-populated neighbourhoods, this output accumulates on rooftops, ducts, balconies, and public squares. The droppings dry into fine dust and are dispersed through the air or during cleaning. The organic matter in them supports bacterial and fungal growth.

Pigeon droppings are known reservoirs of Histoplasma capsulatum and Cryptococcus neoformans. Inhalation of these spores can lead to respiratory illness, particularly in people with weakened immunity. Chlamydia psittaci may cause psittacosis, and enteric bacteria such as Salmonella and E. coli have been detected on contaminated surfaces. Workers who clean terraces or monuments often face repeated contact with accumulated droppings and may inhale fine particulate matter carrying microbes, which could potentially cause illnesses. Health effects arise primarily from allergies rather than infections. Proteins from pigeon feathers and droppings can trigger hypersensitivity pneumonitis in some people. The immune response produces inflammation in the alveoli and surrounding lung tissue. Over the

We need a law to protect domestic workers



In January, the Supreme Court directed the Union government to enact a comprehensive law to stipulate the rights of domestic workers and set up a committee to look into setting up a framework for it. The Court directed the committee to submit a report in six months. Whether this has been done or not remains unclear.

Status of domestic workers in India is estimated to have 4 million-90 million domestic workers. A majority of them are women and girls and most of them are from Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities, rendering them particularly vulnerable to structural power differences. The Court's recent directive was issued as part of criminal proceedings involving the confinement and trafficking of a female domestic worker from a ST community from Chhattisgarh to Delhi. These proceedings bring attention to several considerations that are important in devising rights and protections for domestic workers. Workers toil in the homes and workspaces of other people, which has the effect of atomising them. Inspections into workplace conditions become nearly impossible. These workers may be subject to harassment, abuse, and segregationist practices. Child labour is rampant in this sphere. Exploitative employment agencies and brokers frequently mediate relationships between employers and employees. While some workers labour full time in a single household, others work across multiple households for a few hours each day. This can make the stipulation and enforcement of minimum wages, work hours, and leave entitlements tricky. Many workers are migrant workers who need protections across State borders. Workers also routinely come in from neighbouring countries. The absence of a separate national-level legislation to look into protections and benefits hurts workers in multiple ways. In recognition of their contributions to the global economy, the International Labour Organization passed a Convention (no. 189) in 2011 to ensure the rights and protections of domestic workers. While India voted in favour of the convention, it is yet to ratify it. As noted by the Court, there have been multiple attempts to pass legislation at the national level from the 1950s. The National Platform for Domestic Workers (NPDW) was formed in 2012 specifically to demand a comprehensive

Central legislation for domestic workers. The NPDW drafted a Domestic Workers (Regulation of Work and Social Security) Bill in 2017, but this Bill was never enacted into law. While the Court's new directive is welcome, the fact that the Court directed various ministries to constitute a committee comprising "subject experts" with no representatives of domestic workers is a matter of concern. In Tamil Nadu, where there are about 2 million domestic workers, a welfare board has been set up under the Tamil Nadu Manual Worker Act, 1982. Through it, registered workers receive benefits, including pensions, maternity benefits, educational assistance for children, and accident relief. However, a very small number of workers are actually registered. While minimum wage is stipulated at ₹37-39 per hour, workers tend to make much less. They are seen as "part-time" workers because they may not work full time in a single household. In response to a plea filed by a domestic worker in Dindigul, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court directed the State government to consider enacting a special legislation to protect domestic workers.

Meanwhile, the Karnataka government announced the introduction of the Domestic Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Bill, 2025, which looks to regulate the working conditions of domestic workers. It requires that employers compulsorily register domestic workers with the government and commence employment with a written contract that includes an agreement on wages and work hours. It entitles workers to minimum wages, overtime pay, and weekly holidays. Importantly, it requires employers to contribute 5% of wages to a welfare fund that will distribute welfare benefits to domestic workers. What should be done

Tamil Nadu is one of only 12 States that stipulates minimum wages for domestic workers. These wages must be updated and increased, while all States must be required to stipulate minimum wages for domestic workers. In addition to the already-mentioned provisions in the NPDW draft Bill and the Karnataka legislation, the NPDW recommends that all employers, employment agencies, and workers be compulsorily registered with the State government. A workbook must be issued to each employer through a tripartite board constituting employers, employees, and the State. This must be maintained by each employer and employee and endorsed each month. Women workers have reported not being able to access local complaints committees set up at the district level under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act. These complaints committees must be set up at panchayat and urban local bodies. Housing is another critical consideration for domestic workers. While workers in Tamil Nadu received some assistance during the pandemic-induced lockdowns in 2020 and 2021, several could not pay rent. Rather than intermittent relief in the event of a "crisis", structural solutions are imperative to protect the women in this critical workforce.

Mangling Chennai's street names and distorting history

The regulars at Madras Musings are having a field day discussing the latest name change announcements of the government. Is it necessary, ask many. Some argue that it is all an eyewash with no change at ground level as far as attitudes to caste are concerned. I subscribe to that theory and believe that even the removal of caste suffixes in the 1980s served only to erase history. B. Narasimham, in my view, is not the same person as B.N. Reddy. But it was Ramesh C. Kumar who sent in what would be a prize-winning response. What is the purpose in renaming streets he asked, when even existing street names cannot be printed properly on signboards by the Chennai Corporation? He cites Rajachar Street in T. Nagar as an example. It is spelt in three different ways on the signboards of the Corporation at three intersections he writes — Rajachar, Rajachari and worst of all, Raja Sir. The signboard of Rajachar Street in T. Nagar put up by Chennai Corporation at the intersection with Ramarao Street All three signboards were made at the same time and this is despite the earlier painted wall signs still surviving, all correct. After chuckling over this email (what else can we do?), I applied to Karthik Bhatt who immediately came up with who the person behind the street name was. S.N.V. Rajachar was his name, and he was from Coimbatore. Born in 1869, he studied at the Madras Christian College and joined government service as a clerk in the



Nellore collectorate and from there rose rapidly, becoming, in 1917, a Presidency Magistrate in Madras, a position he served till 1920. He also acted as the Chief Presidency Magistrate for a while. Awarded the Rao Sahib in 1921 and the Rao Bahadur in 1922, he was made Dewan of Venkatagiri estate and later served as Collector, South Kanara and Additional District Magistrate Thanjavur. In 1925, he was Dewan of Bobbili. Retiring in 1929, he passed away in 1935. If we are to go by the latest decision of the government, this road will soon be either Raja Sir (no caste here, only a colonial title) or plain Raja Street. If the former is chosen, it will commemorate either Raja Sir Savalaji Ramaswami Mudaliar or Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar.



Mumbai. Multiplying by their average annual droppings gives a load of several hundred tonnes of droppings across the city each year. The droppings contain uric acid, nitrates, and organic debris that decay and release ammonia and other gases. Rainwater mixes with droppings and washes residues into drains. When dry, they become airborne, contributing to fine particulate matter. Although their share in air pollution is minor, local exposure near dense colonies is significant. Maintenance costs for cleaning and restoration of building surfaces rise proportionally. Droppings deposited on monuments and facades react chemically with stone and metal. Over time, they erode surfaces and increase corrosion. On the ground, nutrient enrichment changes soil composition and plant diversity. Accumulated nests attract mites and fleas that can enter nearby homes. Combining aesthetic nuisance, material damage, and microbial growth makes pigeon control an environmental rather than a purely medical issue. Ecologists note that cities with high pigeon density also show lower diversity of native birds, suggesting competition for nesting sites. Communicating the risk of allergic disease is challenging because it is selective, not universal. Unlike an infectious outbreak, where transmission affects all community members, allergic reactions depend on host susceptibility. People with certain genetic markers or a background of asthma and atopy are more likely to react to pigeon antigens.

How Janaki Ramachandran became the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu after MGR's demise



Looking back at the events immediately after former Chief Minister and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) founder M.G. Ramachandran's (MGR) demise in December 1987, veteran politician 'Panruti' S. Ramachandran recalls that it was Janaki Ramachandran who decided on her own to succeed her husband who was the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu from 1977 to 1987. Any discussion on the current state of affairs in the AIADMK invariably witnesses references to the brief stint in politics of Janaki Ramachandran (JR).

The episode was highlighted during recent interviews given by prominent personalities to certain social media channels. Industrialist Palani G. Periasamy spoke of the circumstances in which MGR died on December 24, 1987, and how Janaki Ramachandran succeeded him. Mr. Periasamy recalls that two days after MGR's demise, he was surprised when Janaki Ramachandran informed him that she was going to become the Chief Minister. Janaki Ramachandran conveyed she had been "greeted" by 'Panruti' Ramachandran, ranked third in the MGR Cabinet, who held portfolios such as Electricity and Food. Congress' former law-maker and ex-chief of the Tamil Nadu Minorities Commission S. Peter Alphonse mentioned about the then President India R. Venkataraman's advice to a Congress delegation on the rationale behind supporting the short-lived council of ministers led by Janaki Ramachandran. Not oblivious to her health and age, the President had told the delegation to impress upon the Congress to support her instead of much younger Jayalalitha (then spelled as Jayalalitha), who had then aspired to make it to the top in the AIADMK. Admitting that he and his wife met Janaki Ramachandran, Mr. Ramachandran, in a conversation with this correspondent, however denies the suggestion that the purpose of his call was to congratulate her. "After MGR's funeral, we went there [Ramavaram Gardens, the residence of the former Chief Minister] to convey our moral support to her. But, when she told me she had decided to succeed her husband as the Chief Minister, I had the shock of my life," Mr. Ramachandran recalls. The occasion was such that he did not say anything before taking leave of her. As a temporary measure, Mr. Ramachandran favoured the idea of letting the 'acting' Chief Minister V.R. Nedunchezian to continue with all the Ministers that MGR had at the time of his death. At that time, another senior Minister R.M. Veerappan (RMV) too had nursed the ambition of becoming Chief Minister.

Janaki Ramachandran handing over to P.U. Shanmugham, then Health Minister, a statement announcing her decision to become the Chief Minister, on December 31, 1987. Also seen is R.M. Veerappan (seated on her right), Local Administration Minister. Janaki Ramachandran handing over to P.U. Shanmugham, then Health Minister, a statement announcing her decision to become the Chief Minister, on December 31, 1987. Also seen is R.M. Veerappan (seated on her right), Local Administration Minister. | Photo Credit: The Hindu Archives "A group owing allegiance to Veerappan was under the impression that I was also in the race," the former Electricity Minister says, adding he had the support of Ministers such as Su. Thirunavukkarasu (then S. Thirunavukkarasu) and K.K.S.S.R. Ramachandran (now a Minister in the DMK government). Jayalalitha was a key member of the group that wanted Nedunchezian to become the Chief Minister.

It was no wonder that the group had later declared her as the party's general secretary. When Janaki Ramachandran was sworn in as the Chief Minister on January 7, 1988, Mr. Ramachandran was not in her Cabinet. The veteran leader observes that even in 1984 when MGR was hospitalised in the U.S., the AIADMK's nominees for the Assembly election were finalised by Janaki Ramachandran and Veerappan, a point that a couple of others do not agree with. J.C.D. Prabhakar, Villivakkam's former MLA, who contested unsuccessfully in the 1984 Assembly poll; R. Kannan, who authored the biographies of C.N. Annadurai and MGR, and an aide of MGR at the Chief Minister's office, deny this point. They, however, agree that RMV had played a huge role in the selection of candidates.

A high-powered panel, which had consisted of senior Ministers, had formally zeroed in on the candidates. Mr. Prabhakar, who was the then undivided Chengalpattu district secretary of the party covering 17 Assembly constituencies, however, says most of the district secretaries were "RMV's men." When they were interviewed by the panel, they had naturally promoted RMV's proteges. "This was why 90-odd MLAs [out of 131] were with Janaki Ramachandran when the confidence motion was taken in January 1988," he points out. The former legislator, who sided with Janaki Ramachandran's faction in 1988 and contested again in Villivakkam during the 1989 Assembly elections only to lose, asserts that if she had really involved herself in the party ticket distribution in 1984, she would not have opted to retire from politics soon after the 1989 Assembly polls. "In fact, during the merger after the 1989 polls, she was offered the post of chairperson of the party presidium but she declined," recalls Mr. Prabhakar, who was elected from Villivakkam for a second term. Janaki Ramachandran remained unmoved despite her former bête noire Jayalalitha's appeal to her to reconsider her decision to quit politics. Though the aide recounts that MGR's many well wishers had advised Janaki Ramachandran not to take the plunge into politics, he suspects she had come to the conclusion of herself becoming the Chief Minister, after she had a one-to-one meeting with a senior office bearer of the Congress who hailed from north India. Venkataraman, in his "My Presidential Years," records that Janaki Ramachandran was "initially reluctant to take up the leadership but was persuaded when cautioned that her rival, Jayalalitha[a], might take control of the party if she did not agree." A publication on the MGR's widow, brought out by her grandnephew Kumar Rajendran in 2019, carries an interview of hers in March 1988 to a Tamil journal Kalki, in which she had stated that she had joined politics only to ensure unity in the party. In fact, the "unity card" was played by her even before becoming the Chief Minister. In a statement on the eve of taking charge, Janaki Ramachandran, in a statement, appealed to all the 131 AIADMK MLAs to "bury the hatchet", forget their differences, and rally round and extend their whole-hearted support and cooperation to her, according to a news report of The Hindu on January 7. She had accepted the plea of party cadre to bear the burden of the Government on her shoulders "in the interest of maintaining unity" and to prevent the organisation founded by MGR from disintegrating, the report added. However, even in 1986, there were whispers of interference from Janaki Ramachandran and other members of MGR's family. They grew so loud that "the government ran two paid advertisements in the chief minister's name in June. The first, issued on 13 June, directed civil servants not to oblige his wife or other close relatives vis-a-vis official matters. Apparently, a police constable owed his appointment to Janaki," writes Dr. Kannan in his book "MGR: A Life." The Janaki Ramachandran regime, which lasted 24 days, was dismissed after the Assembly witnessed pandemonium on the day of confidence motion on January 28, 1988. She remained in politics for one year. When she lost miserably during the 1989 Assembly poll in Andipatti, a constituency her husband represented during 1984-87, she realised she was not cut out for electoral politics. Her announcement of quitting politics was out on January 31, 1989, within days of the declaration of the poll results.

Foreign carriers 'poaching' Indian pilots would be disturbing: Elbers

Poaching of Indian pilots on a large scale would be "disturbing" as public and private players in the aviation sector were making big investments in adding new planes and developing airports, said IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers. The CEO was explaining the rationale behind a working paper presented by the Indian government before the UN's aviation safety body, International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), calling for a mechanism to curb poaching of Indian pilots by foreign carriers. Government sources said the paper was presented at the behest of the industry and was primarily about Indian aviation professionals migrating to Gulf carriers.

"Both IndiGo and Air India are making massive investments in buying new planes, and now we are collaborating with schools. There are both public and private sector investments in developing airports and other infrastructure. In that context it would be a bit disturbing if you have large groups of people being poached and moved away," Mr. Elbers told The Hindu in an exclusive interaction earlier this month. On whether attrition was a concern for IndiGo, Mr. Elbers said it "goes a bit up and down," but emphasised the need for "stability" to enable long-term planning as airlines were investing in planes for the next 20 to 25 years. The working paper titled 'Practices Impacting Orderly Conduct of International Civil Aviation' called for a "code of conduct" among Member States to regulate cross border staff recruitment on the ground foreign airlines recruiting skilled personnel from Indian carriers that include pilots, engineers, technicians, and cabin crew disrupted the planned growth of domestic players. The paper was submitted to the ICAO in August ahead of its General Assembly meeting in the last week of September to be taken up for discussion. "The impact is particularly severe for specialised roles such as AMEs [Aircraft Maintenance Engineers] and type-rated pilots [pilots trained on specific aircraft types], where replacement training can take months or even years. This practice creates an unfair competitive disadvantage where Indian carriers effectively subsidise the training costs of foreign airlines while bearing the operational disruption costs themselves," the paper asserted. However, India's proposal failed to garner majority support at ICAO. Against labour market

"While the Commission expressed appreciation for the issues raised in the working paper, it noted the majority of States did not support the action items presented in the paper as these were considered to undermine the core principles of labour market competition. The Commission agreed with the views expressed by several States that these issues should be dealt with at a national level and do not fall within the purview of ICAO," according to a source from International Federation of Air Line Pilots Associations,



which also presented a counter paper. Pilot groupings have contested India's stance and said the proposal violates fundamental rights by restricting Indian professionals from seeking lawful employment overseas and fails to diagnose the root cause for pilots migrating due to dissatisfaction over poor working conditions, lack of contractual security, limited upward mobility and a lack of standardised pay structure. Duopoly dynamics

"This proposal risks institutionalising a form of bonded labour in a duopoly environment, where Indian pilots may be locked into employment with a single airline under unilateral and ever-changing service conditions," said Air Line Pilots' Association-India which is affiliated with IFALPA. The collapse of Jet Airways and Go First over the past six years has left most aviation professional, including pilots, with limited options, primarily IndiGo and Air India. Of which Air India has introduced new employment terms for pilots to reduce their minimum guaranteed pay; and where salaries remain unchanged the nature of flying has become more demanding as in the case of IndiGo, including more night flights. These conditions mean Indian pilots continue to seek better-paying airlines offering tax free opportunities in nearby regions that actively hire international crew. Some candidates seeking employment with Emirates speak of undue delays by DGCA officials in issuing final clearances required by their new employers, suggesting possible behind-the-scenes resistance. There already exists an unspoken agreement between Air India and IndiGo that together enjoy over 90% of the market share to not to hire pilots from each other, allege pilot groups. While proposing a Code of Conduct, the Working Paper references the DGCA's 2017 rule where the regulator for the first time determined notice period for pilots imposing one year for pilots-in-command and six months for first officers. This was until then only part of employment contracts with 3-6 months of notice period being the norm.

India's travails in negotiating a friendless world



For India, the challenge of adapting its foreign policy to emerging global realities is proving to be highly daunting for its foreign policy mandarins. Steeped in the traditions of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, they seem unable to come to terms with current realities. Adapting India's foreign policy to new global realities is, however, an urgent necessity. With the advent of President Donald Trump in the United States, multilateralism or even plurilateral ways of advancing foreign policy, seem to have lost all meaning. India, however, is yet to demonstrate the necessary flexibility to deal with a seemingly friendless world, in its neighbourhood and well beyond. As days go by, India's trust deficit only seems to be growing, and the consequences can be serious. The view about India

At one level, it would appear that India is losing its 'geopolitical relevance' despite the best efforts of its foreign policy establishment. Undoubtedly, Mr. Trump's pyrotechnics are aggravating the situation and his constant shifting of goal posts clearly demands extreme nimbleness on the part of the foreign policy establishments. For the present, India's foreign policy mandarins are finding themselves out of step, and increasingly isolated in the comity of nations. That we should find ourselves in this difficult situation is unfortunate. U.S. policy alone cannot be the reason, for there is much more happening across the world with India increasingly being seen as an 'outlier' when it comes to situations and events. All this at a time when India's economic heft is growing and it is among the top five economic powers of the world. Two recent events bring this out in stark detail. Even as the world celebrates the new Gaza peace settlement — a critical breakthrough in the troubled politics of this region which was largely orchestrated by Mr. Trump and the U.S., with the support of Türkiye, Egypt, Qatar and a few other nations, India's absence or exclusion from the process smacks of its growing irrelevance in the politics of West Asia. That countries such as Türkiye, which demonstrate a degree of hostility towards India, should have been critical to the process of settlement adds further grist to India's growing irrelevance.

India appeared to compound this situation even further by sending the lowest level of representation for the grand reconciliation held to celebrate the end of the Gaza conflict and the return of peace to West Asia, at which most world leaders were present. For Indians across the world, this should be a wakeup call, something that needs to be remedied sooner rather than later. Closer home, another signal event where India was a conspicuous absentee was the Gen Z revolution in Nepal that seemed to spiral out of control. It only seemed to further demonstrate that India's foreign policy lacked both depth and content, even where its vital interests are at stake. The revolution, on India's doorstep, may have followed a slightly different pattern than the youthful dissent seen in Bangladesh and Indonesia previously, but the fact that India found itself helpless and a mere bystander when tumultuous events were taking place on its doorstep, should make discerning observers of the scene sit up and take notice. Additionally, there is a disconcerting strategic angle to India's displacement from the driving seat, with this space being filled by countries not so well disposed, if not inimically inclined, towards India. Türkiye is a case in point, for during the recent India-Pakistan conflict, it was seen siding with Pakistan. Recently, Türkiye along with countries such as Egypt and Iraq were the toast of West Asia even as Mr. Trump spread benediction across the entire West Asia. Additionally, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan

have signed on to a Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement to treat aggression against one as against both, which only seemed to confirm India's position as an outlier in a region where previously Indic influence reigned supreme. All this would suggest that India's foreign policy has not demonstrated adequate ingenuity and flexibility to deal with the many vicissitudes and problems that afflict the region. The situation in the neighbourhood

India cannot afford to be complacent. In its immediate neighbourhood, the Afghanistan-Pakistan conflict threatens peace across a swathe of India's northwest. India may tend to view the attacks by the Afghan Taliban on Pakistani cities as retributive justice, but this would be shortsighted. Since Field Marshal Asim Munir effectively took over the reins of power in Pakistan, the threat that Pakistan poses to India and the region has gone up significantly. There is every need to 'unfang' the Pakistani dragon to ensure peace in the region. Being satisfied with the Afghan Taliban's attacks on Pakistan's rear can provide cold comfort at best. India's efforts should be on how best to create a conducive atmosphere where wars remain the last resort. The rest of India's neighbourhood also remains in turmoil, and the challenge before India's diplomats is how to persuade countries such as Bangladesh and Nepal, which are currently perceived as hostile to India, to retrace their steps and make it worthwhile for them to maintain better relations with India. India-Sri Lanka relations are seen like an enigma wrapped in a mystery. While outwardly, India-Sri Lanka relations are on an even keel, it would be a mistake to underestimate the intrinsic potential of countries such as China to muddy the waters. Vis-à-vis China, while India's diplomacy may look like 'work in progress', it appears more an effort to patch over differences. This is especially so in the context of what may be termed as the current India-China bromance. Since Tianjin (August 2025), there has been a tendency in India's diplomatic circles, and possibly within the political establishment as well, to gloss over the June 2020 Galwan episode as a 'mere blip' in long-standing China-India ties. This willingness to ignore the realities of a long-standing and fast-festering China-Indian border problem appears intended to give an impression that 'peace is at hand'. Little, however, has changed on the ground and the current diplomatic and military exchanges clearly lack candour.

Indians have seldom been able to comprehend Chinese elliptical thinking on global and regional issues, and even more so in its diplomatic manoeuvres. China-India ties today have not returned to the period that existed in 1988, following Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's highly successful visit to China. There is, hence, every need for India to be cautious; India would do well to acknowledge that China is a conundrum that is not easily cracked. China's President Xi Jinping is much less a statesman than his predecessors Deng Xiaoping and Hu Jintao, and India cannot be too careful in its dealings with Xi's China. China and the U.S. are, without doubt, presently engaged in a 'cat and mouse game' on tariffs, and Mr. Xi's gambit, viz., immediate and tangible concessions for long-term gains (including entering into deals with regard to the resumption of exports on rare earth materials to the U.S.) cannot possibly be the model for India to follow or adopt.

Also, what India needs to be concerned about is that, friendly or not, China is steadily expanding its influence across much of the region to India's east, and adopting devious ways, including proliferation of small businesses at one level to a growing presence in universities, research centres and in cyber space at another, to establish its dominance and eclipse India's influence across this region. India's needs to be wary and it is increasingly becoming evident that as the U.S.'s influence wanes across much of the world and is steadily being eclipsed in large parts of Asia, a new China-led order is emerging in East and South-east Asia. This article, hence, should be seen as a wakeup call. Reiteration of the old adage that 'eternal vigilance is the price of liberty' is important. India's future is assured, but it also depends on how much effort is made to protect its brand of civilisation. It is quite distinct and different from that of China, the West, the Persian/Arab variety and other forms of democracy that had held sway over the years.

India-Japan ties are vital for Indo-Pacific peace, says Modi as he congratulates new Japan PM

Ties between India and Japan are "vital" for regional and global peace, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi, congratulating Japan's newly elected Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on Tuesday (October 21, 2025). Officials said the two leaders are expected to speak over the telephone in the next few days, and are likely to meet as early as this weekend, on the sidelines of the upcoming Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit and the East Asia Summit (EAS). Mr. Modi is expected to travel for the summits, although the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has not made an announcement yet. Ms. Takaichi, 64, was elected by the Japanese Parliament or Diet, making her the first woman Japanese Prime Minister, weeks after she won the leadership of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). In a message on social media, Mr. Modi said he looked forward to working closely with Ms. Takaichi to further strengthen the India-Japan 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership'. "Our deepening ties are vital for peace, stability, and prosperity across the Indo-Pacific and beyond," Mr. Modi added.

The change in government in Japan comes just weeks after Mr. Modi visited Tokyo to hold the 15th India-Japan summit with then-Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba on August 29. The two sides had signed a number of agreements including an Economic Security Partnership, including cooperation on building critical mineral industry capacity, and an upgraded Strategic Partnership. Experts say Ms. Takaichi is expected to continue the upward trend in India-Japan ties, and strengthen them further. Ms. Takaichi is also known for a "hawkish" position on China, and more militaristic foreign policy, and may be expected to seek a closer strategic engagement with Indo-Pacific partners. "Ms. Takaichi is a protégée of former PM Shinzo Abe, whose tenure in office (2012-2020) is seen as the golden period for India-Japan ties," former Ambassador to Japan Deepa Wadhwa told The Hindu. "As a result, she will likely continue to focus on the Indo-Pacific as Mr. Abe did, and we can expect her to be more proactive about the Quad engagement as well," Ms. Wadhwa added, referring to Mr. Abe's initiation of the U.S.-India-Australia-Japan grouping that earned him the name "Quadfather".

In particular, all eyes this weekend will be on whether Ms. Takaichi will play a more proactive role in shoring up the Quad partnership by playing a bridging role between India and the U.S. Tensions between India and the U.S. over trade and tariffs have held up the scheduling of the Quad Summit, meant to be held in November this year. U.S. President Donald Trump and Australian Prime Minister



Sanae Takaichi, elected as first woman PM in Japan, is known for hard-line views on China, militaristic foreign policy

Anthony Albanese are expected to be at the ASEAN meet in Malaysia and it remains to be seen whether a date for the Quad Summit can be expected soon.

New Delhi has also invited all the leaders for an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Summit in Delhi in February 2026, and Mr. Modi had personally invited Mr. Ishiba to attend the summit when they met in Tokyo. While Ms. Takaichi's election is expected to have a positive impact on ties with India in other respects, some experts cautioned that Ms. Takaichi's more right-wing stance on immigration may upset mobility partnership plans between the two countries. In August, Mr. Modi and Mr. Ishiba had signed an "Action Plan for India-Japan Human Resource Exchange and Cooperation" that aimed for a two-way exchange of 5,00,000 personnel in five years, including "50,000 skilled personnel and potential talents from India to Japan". This plan could run into headwinds, the experts warned, given that Ms. Takaichi won the primary vote in Parliament due to support from the Ishin Party, or Japan Innovation Party, that shares her more hard-line views on national security, defence spending and immigration. Last month the more moderate Komeito party, which has been a coalition partner of the Liberal Democratic Party since 1999, pulled out of the 26-year old partnership over its differences with Ms. Takaichi's views.

Why is a spectre of empty classrooms looming? | Explained



The story so far: The State of Tamil Nadu has sought a review of a Supreme Court judgment requiring in-service teachers from Classes 1-8 in non-minority schools across the country to clear the Teachers' Eligibility Test (TET) in two years or be "compulsorily retired". Other States have equally voiced concern about the September 1 judgment and its harsh lesson to lakhs of teachers validly employed in government, aided, unaided and private schools mentioned under Section 2(n) of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009. They are likely to follow Tamil Nadu to the top court.

What is the situation in Tamil Nadu?

Tamil Nadu alone employs 4,49,850 teachers in government and aided schools, of whom 3,90,458 are not TET-qualified. The States have argued that if the judgment is implemented, the entire school system faces the imminent prospect of collapse, with mass disqualification of teachers and denial of classroom instruction to millions of children. Tamil Nadu argues that the judgment provokes a direct conflict with Article 21A (fundamental right to free and compulsory education for children aged six to 14) of the Constitution. The State has sought a balance between ensuring quality of education and safeguarding the right to education.

What did the judgment mandate?

The two-judge Bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Manmohan is not unaware of the ground realities. Justice Datta, who authored the September 1 judgment, acknowledged the contributions of non-TET qualified teachers appointed prior to the RTE Act. The court agreed that dislodging elementary school teachers was a "bit harsh" as they have taught students for decades without any serious complaints. Hence, the court, invoking Article 142 of the Constitution, has exempted teachers with less than five years left to retire from taking the TET. However, they would have to clear the TET if they seek promotion. But teachers who have more than five years of service must mandatorily qualify for the TET within two years from the date of the judgment. If they fail, they would have to quit service or be retired with terminal benefits. Future appointments or promotions for teachers in non-minority schools would necessarily require TET qualification. Further, the two-judge Bench judgment referred to a larger Bench the question whether minority edu-

cational institutions ought to be also included under the purview of the RTE Act. The court noted that the minority status was being misused by school managements to circumvent the mandate of the RTE Act to have TET-qualified teachers conduct elementary education. The judgment was based on a batch of appeals questioning school education departments' insistence on faculty clearing the TET in minority institutions. The two-judge Bench criticised a 2014 Constitution Bench judgment in the Pramati Educational and Cultural Trust case, which took minority institutions entirely outside the ambit of the RTE Act. The September 1 judgment made a strong pitch to bring schools run by minorities — whether religious or linguistic — into the RTE fold as the 2014 judgment had "unknowingly jeopardised the very foundation of universal elementary education". It said the exemption of minority institutions from the RTE Act has led to "fragmentation of the common schooling vision and weakening of the idea of inclusivity and universality envisioned by Article 21A".

What do the review petitions argue?

Review petitions filed by Tamil Nadu and a Kerala-based teacher's union, Deseeya Adhyapaksha Parishad (NTU) Kerala, argues that "even if the objective of enhancing teaching quality is accepted as legitimate, compelling pre-RTE Act appointees to pass TET on pain of disqualification is manifestly disproportionate". Tamil Nadu recommended "less intrusive alternatives" like in-service training, capacity building, refresher courses, or bridging programmes to achieve the same goal without destabilising the education system. At the centre of the controversy is the interpretation of Section 23 of the RTE Act. As per 23 (1), the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has laid down minimum qualifications for a person to be eligible for appointment as a teacher in Classes one to eight, through its notification on August 23, 2010. An essential qualification is passing the TET conducted by the appropriate government. The rationale for including the TET is to bring national standards and the benchmark of teacher quality in the recruitment process. In its review petition, Tamil Nadu contended that Section 23(1) would apply only to future recruitment of teachers. The State refers to Section 23(2) which empowers the Centre, through notification, to relax the minimum educational qualifications for appointment of teachers for a limited period not exceeding five years in case States have to deal with contingencies of dearth of teachers or institutional shortages.

A proviso appended to Section 23 also makes it clear that any teacher who, at the commencement of the RTE Act, did not possess the minimum qualifications (TET) must acquire such qualifications within a period of five years. Section 23 does not call for a "blanket mandate" for TET nor could the interpretation of the provision be stretched to retrospectively disqualify teachers who were validly appointed before the notification of minimum qualifications (TET), Tamil Nadu submitted in its review plea. The State said the September 1 judgment raises the spectre of "empty classrooms" and distracted teachers scrambling to save their livelihood for the next two years.

How is India responding to crowding disasters? | Explained

The story so far: On September 27, a political rally by actor and Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) founder Vijay in Tamil Nadu's Karur district ended in a fatal crowd crush in which 41 people were killed. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin appointed a one-person commission headed by retired judge Aruna Jagadeesan to examine the tragedy's causes. He said rules for public events would be framed once the commission submitted its report.

What happened in Karur?

The event was part of Mr. Vijay's first State-wide political tour. TVK organisers initially presented a list of four central business locations in Karur for the rally, but the police rejected them as they were too congested and instead granted permission for Velusampuram on the Karur-Erode road, where other political parties had previously held events. The organisers said Mr. Vijay would speak at 12 p.m., and supporters began assembling from 9 a.m. He was delayed however, and as the day wore on, the crowd grew steadily, with several thousands gathering in the evening. By the time Mr. Vijay reached Karur from Namakkal around 6 p.m., his convoy could not access the meeting spot because of the crowd. The congestion worsened when the gathering was forced to make way for his vehicles. Witnesses described having no space to move. Residents also recalled younger people climbing poles and transformers to get a glimpse of the actor while others said the event's timing coincided with evening wage disbursements for textile workers, adding to congestion in the area. As the programme began around 7.20 p.m., people started fainting in the crowd. When the situation deteriorated further, Mr. Vijay departed from the spot and ambulances began to arrive soon after, taking injured people to government hospitals in Karur, Namakkal, and Tiruchi. By nightfall, dozens were reported dead and scores injured. Many of the 41 people who died were young adults aged 18-30.

What has India done to manage crowds?

At the national level, the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) published its most recent Comprehensive Guidelines on Crowd Control and Mass Gathering Management in June 2025. These guidelines, intended for police and other law enforcement agencies, emphasise scientific crowd management practices. The National Disaster Management Authority has maintained its "Managing crowd at events and venues of mass gathering" guide since 2020 alongside "suggestive frameworks" for crowd management plans. These documents recommend advance risk assessment, detailed site layout plans, predetermined ingress and egress routes, real-time monitoring, and communication protocols. The National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) has run training modules to handle large congregations as part of its capacity-building programmes. After the crowd crush at a New Delhi railway station in February, the Indian Railways updated its manuals for around 60 stations with high footfall by introducing holding areas, better dispersal zones and crowd monitoring, among others. These measures are mostly advisory, however, and not statutory.

What measures have States introduced?

Following a deadly stampede outside M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru in June 2025, the Karnataka government tabled the Crowd Control (Managing Crowd at Events and Venues of Mass Gathering) Bill, 2025. This instrument covers political rallies, conferences, cultural programmes, and other events, and fixes responsibility on organisers. It also empowers district magistrates to cancel or redirect events, regulate the use of loudspeakers, and impose fines

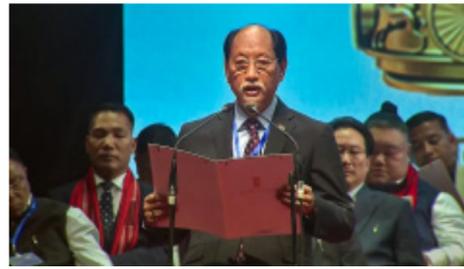


and imprisonment for violations. The Uttar Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority issued the Guidelines for Managing Crowd at Events of Mass Gathering, 2023 — a document that formalises measures for religious and cultural events. The Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management prepared training materials that include technical instructions on calculating site capacity, planning exits, training volunteers, and ensuring first aid and fire safety. After a stampede at the Mansa Devi temple in Haridwar in July, the Uttarakhand government ordered safety arrangements at major temples to be updated and directed authorities to remove encroachments around shrines. The Maharashtra government introduced a Bill in 2025 empowering the Nasik-Trimbakeshwar Kumbh Mela Authority to authorise temporary townships and bypass certain urban planning norms so that facilities can be created for large gatherings. Local enforcement agencies have supplemented these steps with operating protocols. After the Bengaluru incident, for instance, the Karnataka police circulated a new Standard Operating Procedure to control crowds at public functions and detailed responsibilities for coordination between departments, medical preparedness, and fire safety. In many districts across States, the police have also directed organisers of large religious or political gatherings to prepare crowd management plans, limit crowd size, deploy medical teams, set up temporary barricades, and divert routes. These orders are still only administrative and aren't backed by a law. Most State-level initiatives have also been introduced after specific accidents: the Uttarakhand directives followed the Haridwar stampede; Tamil Nadu's announcement after the Karur rally deaths; Karnataka's Bill after the stadium incident; and Maharashtra's Bill after incidents related to the Prayagraj Kumbh Mela.

What is scientific crowd control?

According to prevailing scientific wisdom, safely navigating a crowd depends on controlling its density and side-stepping hazardous flow patterns. Modelling studies have shown that the risk of a deadly crush escalates when crowd density approaches 5 persons per sq. m. Since cameras on drones linked to computers on the ground can continuously monitor crowd density, not using such technologies to manage crowds is seen as a shortcoming. Second, crowds should never be channelled into bottlenecks, slopes or counter-flows because they magnify pressure and destabilise movement. In a moving crowd, individuals are advised to move diagonally, towards the less dense edges, and to avoid resisting the flow. Because compressive asphyxia rather than trampling is the main cause of fatalities, individuals should keep their forearms across the chest to protect their breathing space and maintain balance with staggered footing. If one is knocked down, rolling to the side and shielding the head and neck while attempting to rise quickly is recommended.

What is Nagaland's job quota issue? | Explained



The story so far: On April 26, an organisation of five "advanced" tribes in Nagaland set the Neiphui Rio-led government a 30-day deadline to revise the job reservation policy for the State's Backward Tribes (BTs). The government formed a panel on September 22 to examine the job quota policy, but the five-tribe body found fault with its nomenclature.

What is the job reservation policy?

Almost four years after it attained statehood in December 1963, Nagaland introduced a policy to reserve 80% of State government jobs for all indigenous Scheduled Tribes. The government identified 11 BTs in 1977 and apportioned for them what came to be known as "reservation within a reservation". In August 2024, Chief Minister Neiphui Rio told the 60-member Nagaland Assembly that 37% of non-technical and non-gazetted jobs are currently reserved for BTs. He said this quota is divided into 25% for seven BTs in eastern Nagaland comprising six districts — Kiphire, Longleng, Mon, Noklak, Shamator, and Tuensang — and 12% for the remaining four BTs. An April 2011 notification from the State's Personnel and Administrative Reforms Department said the Chakhesang and Pochury tribes inhabiting Phek district will be clubbed together for half the 12%, while the Zeliang tribe will have 4% of government jobs reserved for them, and the remaining 2% will be reserved for the Sumi tribe in Kiphire district. Beyond Kiphire, the Sumis are among the five non-BT communities along with the Angamis, Aos, Lothas, and Rengmas.

Why do the tribes want this policy revised?

In September 2024, the Five Tribes Committee on Review of Reservation Policy (CoRRP) submitted a memorandum to the State government, requesting an assessment of the job quota system. The members of this committee are representatives of the apex social bodies of each of these five tribes. The committee argued that the policy was rel-

evant in 1977, but no longer reflects the prevailing socio-economic and educational landscape of the State. Its secretary, G.K. Zhimomi, said that the CoRRP's core demand was to "either scrap the reservation policy altogether or allocate the remaining unreserved (20%) quota to the five tribes." He also said the government went back on a move to review the policy in 1987 and issued an order two years later, stating that the quota slabs would continue until further notice. The CoRRP set its first 30-day deadline on April 26 for the government to act on its demand for a review. "We are not against any tribe benefiting from the reservation policy. A review of this 48-year-old policy is long overdue because of the vastly different scenario now," they said.

How did the government respond?

Reacting to the CoRRP's demand, student and social organisations of the BTs listed as beneficiaries of the job quota opposed any potential revision, arguing that the dilution of the current policy would disproportionately harm the State's marginalised communities. Wary of a backlash from these tribes, the government chose to tread carefully. The CoRRP launched its initial phase of agitation after the expiry of its 30-day ultimatum. It was suspended after Deputy Chief Minister Yanthungo Patton assured them that a commission to review the policy would be constituted by June 17. However, Mr. Rio remarked that any significant administrative reforms, including those related to reservations or delimitation, should be undertaken only after the national Census exercise scheduled for 2027. On August 6, the State Cabinet approved the constitution of a seven-member Job Reservation Commission to be headed by a retired IAS officer of the Nagaland cadre. The following day, government spokesperson and Minister K.G. Kenye cited official data to claim that the five non-BT tribes hold 64% of the government jobs while the BT tribes hold 34%. He indicated that the status quo needed to be maintained.

Why does the stalemate continue?

The CoRRP criticised the first commission announced in August as it accommodated a member each from the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation, the Central Nagaland Tribes Council, and the Tenyimi Union Nagaland. They insisted that this commission lacked neutrality as these three organisations represented the BTs wholly or partially. The CoRRP also found fault with the second commission the government announced on September 22. They said that the government deviated from an agreement to name this panel 'Job Reservation Commission' instead of 'Reservation Review Commission', thus implying it was not serious about reviewing the existing quota system. The difference over the panel's nomenclature is yet to be resolved.

When a Chennai-based influencer and her partner drugged and killed her children in 2018

When Vijay, a bank loan mediator, and Abirami got married in September 2011 and moved into their modest home near Kundrathur, everything seemed calm, with no hint of the storm that would one day tear their lives apart. In the years that followed, the couple had two children and settled into what appeared to be an ordinary family life. Meanwhile, Abirami began gaining popularity online as a local social media 'reels star', nicknamed 'Biryani Abirami' for her food-related content. But things began to change when she met Meenakshi Sundaram, a biryani delivery agent at a shop frequently visited by her and her family. On August 30, 2018, Abirami's neighbour saw her leave home on her two-wheeler, with Meenakshi Sundaram on the pillion. The neighbour recalled overhearing him tell Abirami: "Give them the tablets and inform me when it is done."

When questioned later, Abirami, then 25, told the neighbour that her children were unwell and that Meenakshi Sundaram had been referring to their medicine. However, the neighbour remembered seeing him at Abirami's house on at least two occasions previously. At the time, Abirami had introduced him as a family friend. Still, something about the exchange that day did not sit right, the neighbour later recalled. What no one around them yet knew was that Abirami and Meenakshi Sundaram were entangled in a relationship, one that would soon culminate in the tragic deaths of her two children, at the hands of their own mother. A premeditated crime.

That same night, after Vijay, then 30, returned home from work, Abirami brought him a glass of milk, the same milk she had already given to their two children, Ajay, 6, and Kamika, 3. When Vijay took a sip, he found it bitter. Abirami said it was because she had forgotten to add sugar, but Vijay, already tired, said he did not want it anymore and went to bed. He woke up later than usual the next day. As he hurried to get ready for work, he asked why Abirami had not cooked anything yet. She told him that she and the children were going to her mother's house in Periyapanicheri, and they would eat there. Before leaving, Vijay asked what their youngest was doing; Abirami said she was asleep. Normally, Vijay would kiss his daughter goodbye before heading to work, but that morning, when he approached her, Abirami pulled him back, saying the child had been coughing all night and had not slept well, and that he should not disturb her. At that moment, their son was sitting in front of the television. Vijay looked at him and said, "I will go and come back, son," before heading out for the day.

Around 3.30 p.m., Abirami called Vijay and told him they were heading to her mother's house. She also reminded him that it was his birthday, and asked him to come over. In the meantime, according to police records, Abirami went to a pawn broker's shop, hoping to pledge a gold chain. The broker told her he could offer only ₹12,000, but she insisted she was unwell and urgently needed money. She then asked him to buy the chain outright, and he paid her ₹17,000 in cash.

Vijay, meanwhile, had to work through the day and night. On the morning of September 1, 2018, he tried calling Abirami several times, but there was no response. Concerned, he contacted her younger brother, who told him that neither Abirami nor the children were at their mother's house. Worried, Vijay left for Periyapanicheri. About 20 days earlier too, Abirami had gone missing from home. At the time, Vijay had no idea where she was, but their son Ajay had told him that she often visited a house nearby, belonging to "an uncle" named Meenakshi Sundaram. Ajay also said he could identify the house. With the boy's help, Vijay had tracked Abirami down and brought her back home. This time, suspecting a similar situation, Vijay went to Meenakshi Sundaram's house in Kundrathur, accompanied by his brother-in-law. However, Abirami was not there. When they returned to Vijay and Abirami's house near Kundrathur, they found the door merely latched, not locked. Inside, both children were lying on the bed, tucked under the bedsheets up to their necks.



At first, they appeared to be asleep. But when Vijay tried to wake them, it slowly dawned on him that they were no longer alive. How the case unfolded Vijay rushed to Kundrathur police station and lodged a complaint that his children were dead and their mother was missing. Then Inspector of Police, Kundrathur, Charles, began the investigation after sending the bodies of children for post-mortem. The police noted that Abirami's two-wheeler was missing from the house. On the same day, the police scrutinised call records and went to the two-wheeler parking lot located behind the Koyambedu bus stand. They checked the CCTV footage recorded between 4.42 p.m. and 5 p.m. on August 31, 2018, the previous day. The footage showed Abirami bringing the vehicle inside, and later boarding a bus. The police investigation revealed that Abirami had travelled to Nagercoil and attempted to take a room in a hostel there.

Based on information of her return, on the morning of September 2, as a police team lay in wait at the parking lot — her scooter in view — Abirami and Meenakshi Sundaram turned up, and she tried to ride away with him on the pillion. When the police chased them, they fell off the vehicle and were caught. According to the police, Abirami confessed to murdering her children. Her mobile phone and two-wheeler were seized as part of the investigation. During interrogation, Abirami told officers that she had met Meenakshi Sundaram, who worked at a biryani shop, about two months earlier. Wanting to live with him, she said she decided to kill her husband and children. Both Abirami and Meenakshi Sundaram were arrested.

The police charged the two accused with premeditated criminal conspiracy, alleging that the plan was carried out under the instigation of the second accused, Meenakshi Sundaram. According to the charges, the first accused, Abirami, mixed sedatives into the milk given to her children. Both were later remanded to judicial custody. The post-mortem report said the children appeared to have died of systemic absorption of the drugs consumed. Charges under Sections 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) were filed against the first accused Abirami, and under Sections 302, read with 109 (abetment), against the second accused Meenakshi Sundaram. The case was taken up by the District Mahila Court, Chengalpattu, on November 29, 2018, and during the trial, 25 witnesses were examined and 23 exhibits were marked. The case was later transferred to the Principal District Sessions Court, Kancheepuram. At the conclusion of trial, Principal District Sessions Judge P.U. Chemmal pronounced the judgment in July this year.

Is it feasible to blend isobutanol and diesel? | Explained



The story so far: On September 11, Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari said the Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) was exploring the possibility of blending isobutanol with diesel. Isobutanol is an alcoholic compound with inflammable properties and is used as a solvent in several industries, including painting. Mr. Gadkari said ARAI was studying the possibility of blending isobutanol with diesel, after efforts to blend ethanol with diesel was unsuccessful.

Is isobutanol better suited for diesel?

The discussion on the potential use of isobutanol primarily stems from the assumption that the alcoholic compound blends better with diesel, and after the blending experiment with diesel and ethanol failed. Ethanol, however, is available in surplus; as a biofuel, it is being seen as an important contributor to the government's objective of scaling the net-zero emission target by 2070. At the annual conclave of the India Sugar and Bio-Energy Manufacturers Association (ISMA), Reji Mathai, director of ARAI, explained how isobutanol blended better with diesel compared with ethanol. "There was no need to add any complement [for efficiency], and isobutanol's properties are better than ethanol for blending diesel. This is one [area] where studies are to be taken up," he said. More importantly, as Mr. Mathai pointed out, the flash point, or the lowest temperature at which isobutanol yields a vapour igniting a momentary flash, is higher than ethanol. A lower flash point was among the reasons that ethanol was not considered ideal for blending with diesel. Fuels with lower flash points are more volatile and entail a higher risk of catching fire. The other aspect relates to diverting some of the raw material required to produce ethanol to make isobutanol, as there is already a surplus of ethanol. According to an ISMA note, even after catering for industrial use in different States, the potential for ethanol supply is "more than 50% of the requirement" for the one-fifth blending with petrol. In addition to this, the sugar manufacturers' association has also urged the government to revise the procurement prices for ethanol produced from cane juice/syrup or B-heavy molasses. The prices have not been changed since Ethanol Supply Year (ESY) 2022-23, while the Fair and Remunerative prices (FRP), or the minimum price sugar mills are required to pay farmers for sugarcane has increased by 16.5% during the period. "This im-

balance has eroded economic viability, discouraged ethanol production and risked a build-up of surplus sugar in the domestic market," it stated. Thus, the proposed blending also opens another avenue for the surplus production to be used.

How economical is it to make isobutanol?

Isobutanol can be produced from the same feedstock required to produce ethanol, such as sugarcane syrup and molasses and grains, among others. ISMA's Director General Deepak Ballani explained the process to The Hindu, "Natural sugars are fermented by specially designed microbes under sterile conditions, unlike conventional yeast that produces ethanol; these engineered microbes are tuned to produce isobutanol." On the aspect of costs, Mr. Ballani, taking the example of a sugar refinery, pointed out that producing isobutanol from biomass would require retrofitting a fermentation tank, and a distillation tank to separate ethanol from isobutanol. "A plant with a production capacity of 150 kilo litres per day (klp/d) can easily produce 125 klp/d of ethanol and 20 klp/d of isobutanol without a lot of changes to the overall infrastructure," he stated.

What are some of the issues to consider?

Mathew Abraham, an automobile consultant and researcher who has previously worked with blending fuel types, noted two potential concerns emanating from isobutanol's significantly lower cetane number compared with diesel, and about flash points. At the foremost, according to Mr. Abraham, isobutanol and diesel may have issues on miscibility (ability of two substances to mix to form a homogenous mixture) though it can be sorted out by mixing biodiesel to the blend. The latter refers to the fuel manufactured from non-edible vegetable oils, used cooking oil and/or animal fat. Further, another point to note is the impact of the blend on the cetane number, which is a measure of combustion quality. An ideal combustion translates to rapid ignition and the fuel combusting completely to produce the necessary energy. Mr. Abraham notes the alcoholic compound's significantly lower cetane number compared with the base fuel, diesel, would reduce the blend's overall cetane number. Also, a lower cetane number raises concerns about '[diesel] knock' which can result in reduced power and can potentially damage engines. 'Knocking' occurs when the fuel burns unevenly and/or prematurely in the vehicle's fuel cylinder, also generating an audible sound. However, Mr. Abraham added that the cetane value can be restored through proper additives which would entail incremental costs. Mr. Abraham further stated that the proposed blend would have an impact on reducing emission and help with import substitution, but the riders must be addressed, and proper studies should be initiated encompassing varied vehicle classes and types. More importantly, he emphasised, "No more than 10% blending [of isobutanol] should be considered, else it could have an impact on engines." The blending paradigm is still being studied and the pilot project would take about 18 months to complete, according to Mr. Mathai. If successful, India would be the first country to have blended isobutanol with diesel.

Alzheimer's is not 'just old age': early diagnosis is crucial for treatment and management



GNS News Agency, Oct 4

Every year, September 21 is observed globally as World Alzheimer's Day. It is a day dedicated to raising awareness about Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, which together affect millions of people worldwide. More than just a date on the calendar, this day is a call to action—a reminder of our collective responsibility to understand, support, and work towards defeating this growing public health challenge. The theme of this year is 'Ask about dementia Ask about Alzheimer's'. Dementia is an umbrella term for a collection of symptoms that are caused by disorders affecting the brain and have an impact on memory, thinking, behaviour and emotion. The most common of these disorders is Alzheimer's disease, which affects about 50 to 60% of people with dementia.

Our brains are made up of over 86 billion nerve cells—more than the stars in the Milky Way. Dementia damages nerve cells, resulting in impaired functioning. The specific symptoms a person living with dementia experiences will depend upon what parts of the brain are affected and/or the specific disease that is causing their dementia. Symptoms may include: loss of memory, difficulty in finding the right words or understanding what people are saying, difficulty in performing previously routine tasks, personality and mood changes. A global movement: The observance of World Alzheimer's Day began in 1994. Since then, it has grown into a global movement. The day plays a vital role in dispelling myths, breaking stigma, and spreading accurate information. Too often, dementia is misunderstood as "just old age", delaying diagnosis and treatment. The World Health Organization estimates that over 55 million people currently live with dementia, with a new case of dementia occurring somewhere in the world every 3 seconds. The number of people living with dementia is predicted to rise sharply to 78 million by 2030 and 139 million by 2050. Dementia will be the third leading cause of death globally, by 2040. Developing nations, where resources for elderly care are limited, will bear the greatest burden. Alzheimer's not only affects health but also has significant social and economic consequences. Families face emotional exhaustion, and the cost of long-term care places an enormous strain on healthcare systems. One of the most important messages of World Alzheimer's Day is the recognition of caregivers. Spouses, children, and even neighbours often become the silent heroes of dementia care, sacrificing time, energy, and financial stability. Yet, caregivers frequently feel isolated and overwhelmed. Although there is no cure for Alzheimer's yet, specific actions to reduce dementia risk include: Education: Ensure good quality education is available for all and encourage cognitively stimulating activities in midlife to protect cognition. Assistive devices: Make hearing aids accessible for people with hearing loss and decrease harmful noise exposure to reduce hearing loss. Mental health: Treat depression effectively. Road safety: Encourage the use of hel-

metts and head protection in contact sports and on bicycles.

Physical activity: Encourage exercise because people who participate in sport and exercise are less likely to develop dementia. Avoiding tobacco: Reduce cigarette smoking through education, price control, and preventing smoking in public places and make smoking cessation advice accessible. Lifestyle-related conditions: Prevent or reduce hypertension, and maintain systolic blood pressure of 130 mm Hg or less from age 40 years. Detect and treat high LDL cholesterol from midlife onwards. Maintain a healthy weight and treat obesity as early as possible, which also helps to prevent diabetes. Alcohol reduction: Reduce high alcohol consumption through price control and increased awareness of levels and risks of overconsumption. Social connections: Prioritise age-friendly and supportive community environments and housing, and reduce social isolation by facilitating participation in activities and living with others. Screening: Make screening and treatment for vision loss accessible for all.

Early diagnosis remains crucial, as it allows better management and planning. Governments, healthcare providers, and communities must prioritize dementia research and policy reforms to make care accessible and affordable. World Alzheimer's Day is more than just an observance; it is a movement of solidarity and hope. It reminds us that while Alzheimer's may erase memories, it cannot erase dignity. By spreading awareness, supporting caregivers, and investing in research, we can move toward a future where this disease is better understood, managed, and ultimately cured. Let us use this day to pledge compassion, strengthen communities, and ensure that no one faces dementia alone.

Xiaomi launches biggest Diwali sale with up to 60% off on smartphones, TVs, tablets, and more

Hyderabad: Xiaomi India, a global technology leader, is ushering in the festive season with its largest-ever Diwali campaign, offering blockbuster deals across smartphones, smart TVs, tablets, wearables, powerbanks, air purifiers, and more. The campaign aims to make celebrations brighter for families by combining cutting-edge technology with unbeatable festive savings. Customers can enjoy discounts of up to 60%, making it the perfect opportunity to upgrade devices, gift loved ones, and embrace smarter living. The sale begins on 22 September 2025 across mi.com, Amazon, Flipkart, and Xiaomi's retail partners nationwide, available for a limited period. Smartphones remain central to festive celebrations, helping users capture memories, stay connected, and work on the go. Xiaomi and Redmi are offering a range of stylish and powerful devices at attractive prices: Redmi Note 14 Pro+ 5G: Features a 200MP AI-powered camera, ideal for capturing festive moments and family portraits. Redmi 15: Equipped with a 7000mAh battery for all-day use, perfect for travelers and on-the-go celebrations. Redmi 14C 5G: Combines stylish design with reliable performance, making it an excellent first 5G device for students and young professionals. Redmi A4 5G: Brings next-generation connectivity to everyone, ensuring seamless 5G experiences.

What is the significance of Saudi-Pakistan pact? | Explained



The story so far: Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have signed a mutual defence pact. The agreement formalises decades of informal military cooperation. Its timing, coming days after Israel's bombing of Qatar and amid doubts over U.S. security guarantees to the Gulf monarchies, signals a shifting regional order. With Israel's war in Gaza, Iran-backed Houthi flexing their military power, and America's retrenchment, Saudi Arabia is hedging its bets — and Pakistan, strapped for cash but rich in military manpower, is seizing the chance to present itself as a security provider.

What are the terms of the agreement?

The official text released in Riyadh and Islamabad declares that "any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both." This principle of collective defence effectively commits each side to respond to threats to the other. The two countries will establish permanent coordination mechanisms, including a joint military committee, intelligence-sharing arrangements, and expanded training programmes.

Pakistan has stationed military personnel in Saudi Arabia for decades. The mutual defence agreement takes the partnership into a formal treaty framework. Saudi Arabia had reportedly provided generous financial assistance to Pakistan's nuclear programme. In his 2024 book War, American journalist Bob Woodward writes about a conversation Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had with U.S. Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, which speaks of the close cooperation the countries have had. When MBS, as the Crown Prince is widely known, told Mr. Graham that Saudi Arabia planned to enrich uranium, the U.S. Senator asked whether the Saudis were planning to build a bomb with the uranium. "I don't need uranium to make a bomb. I will just buy one from Pakistan," MBS told Mr. Graham. While MBS's comments clearly show the close cooperation between the two countries, the agreement does not spell out whether Pakistan's nuclear capabilities extend to Saudi defence (though Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has said Saudi Arabia could access Pakistan's nuclear capabilities). But the symbolism is clear: Saudi Arabia is no longer satisfied with existing security ties and is letting Pakistan play a larger role in the Persian Gulf.

Why was the agreement signed now?

The timing is as significant as the content. Saudi officials said talks with Pakistan had been going on for more than a year. But its announcement — barely a week after Israel attacked Qatar — underscores how the Gulf's security environment is changing. Qatar is home to the Al-Udeid airbase, the largest U.S. military base in West Asia. As such a heavily defended ally came under Israeli attack without consequence, Riyadh seems to have concluded that it cannot rely solely on U.S. security guarantees. This sense of vulnerability is not new. In 2019, when Iran's allies attacked Saudi oil installations, the U.S. looked away. The U.S. doesn't want to get entangled in West Asia's conflicts any more as its strategic focus is shifting to East Asia. Moreover, Saudi's

calculus is further complicated by two other factors — the Gaza war and the Houthis. The October 7, 2023 Hamas attack in Israel, and Israel's devastating response in Gaza, derailed Saudi Arabia's plans to normalise ties with Israel under the U.S.-brokered Abraham Accords. Since then, Israel's war in Gaza has spilled over into the region, deepening the insecurity of Gulf kingdoms. The Houthis in Yemen have also steadily expanded their military capabilities. Their missile and drone strikes had disrupted Saudi oil facilities and shipping in the Red Sea. While there is a tenuous ceasefire between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis now, the Saudis continue to look at the Houthis as a challenge. The Saudis, the U.S. and Israel have repeatedly bombed Houthis, but they still remain a force in Yemen, controlling almost half of the country, including its capital Sanaa. Against this backdrop, Pakistan offers a practical option. It is a Muslim-majority country, and has long experience in providing security services to the kingdom. In return, Pakistan needs Saudi financial support to stabilise its battered economy.

What about West Asia's security landscape?

The U.S.'s pre-October 7 plan was to bring Israel and the Gulf kingdoms closer. But Israel's attacks in Gaza, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Iran and Qatar have alarmed Arab states. Post-October 7, Riyadh has said it would normalise ties with Israel only if Tel Aviv commits itself to the creation of a Palestinian state based on the 1967 border. Israel, on the other hand, says there won't be a Palestinian state. This means that the further expansion of the Abraham Accords is in doubt. By turning to Pakistan, Saudi Arabia is signalling to both Washington and Tel Aviv that it is diversifying its security alliances. The risks, however, are substantial. Pakistan could be dragged into Saudi Arabia's regional rivalries with Iran or into the conflict in Yemen. For Saudi Arabia, the deal could entangle it in South Asian instability, particularly if tensions between India and Pakistan flare up again. The pact does not resolve Riyadh's core vulnerabilities, such as Iranian missile strikes or Houthi drones, but it does provide a hedge at a time when America's reliability is under doubt and Israel's behaviour is destabilising the region.

How does India view the pact?

For India, the Saudi-Pakistan defence pact introduces complications on multiple fronts. Over the past decade, New Delhi has invested heavily in its relations with Riyadh, deepening energy ties, expanding trade, and securing cooperation on counter-terrorism. Roughly 2.6 million Indian expatriates work in the kingdom. India has also sought to balance these ties with its growing strategic partnership with Israel. But Indian policy in West Asia clearly has a pro-Israeli tilt. Now that Israeli-Saudi normalisation is not happening and Israel's unchecked militarism poses security threats to Gulf kingdoms, Saudi Arabia seems to have overlooked India's concerns by formalising the defence pact with Pakistan. If India can have a pro-Israeli tilt, Riyadh can have a pro-Pakistan tilt. It is what the Saudis seem to be conveying. As Arab monarchies diversify their alliances, they may be less sensitive to India's concerns. If Pakistan successfully positions itself as a credible security provider to the Gulf, India's influence in the region could come under question. At the same time, New Delhi must reckon with the broader structural shift: U.S. dominance in West Asia is no longer assured. Regional powers are recalibrating, and security arrangements once taken for granted are being reconfigured. India's interests — ensuring energy security, protecting its diaspora, and preventing extremist spillovers — are best served by stability and balance in the Gulf. New Delhi's best course lies in maintaining balance — deepening economic and political ties with Riyadh, while continuing to engage with other Gulf states, Iran, and beyond.

Amoebic meningoencephalitis | Conflated cases

It's an infection that has been documented in India since the 1970s. The first case of amoebic meningoencephalitis (AME) in two Indian children was reported by Pan et al. in 1971, and thereafter, several cases were reported from various parts of India. But AME has suddenly been making huge national and even international headlines because Kerala has now made it a serious business to aggressively test and treat all cases of AME, most of which may have otherwise been bracketed under the head of acute encephalitis (AES) syndrome with unknown etiologies. This strategy has had a huge downside, too. In a State where every health-related issue assumes huge political dimensions and comes under intense public scrutiny, Kerala's health officials are now having a hard time explaining to the public at large why there has been a sudden surge in AME cases, which are still considered to be rare.

The first case of AME was documented in the State in 2016, and till 2023, cases were sporadic and fatality was total. In 2024, AME cases suddenly surged to 39, but with just eight fatalities. This year so far, there have been 71 cases of AME — 24 cases diagnosed in September alone — and 19 deaths. Misleading headlines

Significantly, of the 110 cases of AME reported in Kerala in 2024 and 2025, only 11 were due to Naegleria fowleri, the "brain-eating" amoeba, which causes primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM), which has a fatality rate of 99%. Almost all of the remaining were cases of encephalitis caused by Acanthamoeba, another free-living amoeba. Thus, media headlines that Kerala is battling "brain-eating" amoeba are misleading.

Acanthamoeba, is a ubiquitous pathogen which is widely distributed in the environment in waterbodies, wells, overhead storage tanks, swimming pools and even treated tap water. It has been isolated from dust samples in dialysis units, air-conditioning and ventilation in hospitals. Acanthamoeba is so ubiquitous that 80% of the human population has natural IgG antibodies against it. There have also been documented cases wherein the colonisation of nasal mucosa by Acanthamoeba, without active infection, has been reported in immunocompetent individuals. It is in individuals with immunocompromising conditions, ranging from alcoholism and diabetes to cancer, that Acanthamoeba emerges as a huge health risk. While the commonest mode of exposure to this pathogen in the general population could be through waterbodies and nasal irrigation using tap/untreated water, in immunocompromised individuals, Acanthamoeba can also enter through skin wounds and reach the brain through the bloodstream. Clinicians treating AME cases in Kerala clarify that the majority of the patients are indeed immunocompromised individuals, such as renal patients on dialysis or cancer patients. They stress that the people are not up against a universal public health risk. Avoiding unclean waterbodies and risky habits such as nasal irrigation should protect the majority from amoebic infections.

In the case of infection by N.fowleri, usually there is a



Of the 110 cases of AME, only 11 were due to Naegleria fowleri, the 'brain-eating' amoeba; almost all of the remaining were cases of encephalitis caused by Acanthamoeba, another free-living amoeba

clear epidemiological link to waterbodies, or nasal irrigation and dramatic presentation of central nervous system infection in patients within a short incubation period of 5-14 days. However, in the case of encephalitis caused by Acanthamoeba, it is difficult to establish a clear epidemiological link as the source is often unknown and the incubation period could range from weeks to months. The confounding epidemiology of the disease is thus posing diagnostic challenges to clinicians, while making it harder for the health experts to dispel the public's conviction that they were up against a new public health threat. In India, not more than 25-30% of AES cases have a known etiology. But there have been many research studies from within the country in recent years, which point to the fact that central nervous system infections caused by Free-Living Amoebae (FLA) could be underdiagnosed because of a lack of awareness/clinical suspicion. In Kerala, after the Nipah outbreak of 2023, in all cases of Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) which are negative for viral diseases, the CSF samples are tested for amoeba, resulting in a surge in AME cases in the last two years.

This aggressive testing strategy has been saving many lives in the State. Early diagnosis followed by intensive management has helped Kerala bring down the mortality of AME to 24.5%, something that the clinicians are very proud of. Adopting a public health approach rooted in the One Health principle, a massive chlorination exercise has been launched across Kerala to clean its waterbodies. In a State which has 55,000 ponds and 55 lakh wells, this is a task which may not sound practical, but reducing water contamination in all waterbodies is important to reduce amoeba density. Last heard, the ICMR and other research institutions are stepping in to help Kerala analyse the epidemiological data and explore the routes in which amoebic infections are acquired.

Huge fee can potentially kill H-1B, but Delhi keeps its fingers crossed



JUST LIKE the 50% tariffs endangers Indian goods and merchandise exports to the US, the \$100,000 a year application fee for H-1B visas threatens to effectively kill the programme unless US President Donald Trump changes his mind and tweaks his order in the coming months. It is still early hours for the government and the IT industry to fathom the impact of Trump's new order. Describing it as another 'Black Swan' event, an IT company CEO, who did not wish to be named, put its scale in perspective. "If there are about a half-a-million Indians on H-1B visas, it's \$50 billion a year bill for employers," he said.

The government is clearly worried, and so are IT companies, both Indian and American. At this point of time, there probably are tens of thousands on H-1B visas, outside the US. "They have to return before the deadline on September 21, when the new rule becomes effective," said the executive. Employers including Microsoft, Meta and JP Morgan are asking those with H-1B visas to either not leave the US or return before the deadline to the US if they are outside the country. From technology and software to healthcare and biosciences, the move could severely disrupt a number of US industries, that rely on overseas workers. Similarly, it adversely affects most big Indian IT companies who have sent their engineers onsite to work with their global clients. "Big adjustments will have to be made in a short period," said another executive in a top software company. Sources in the industry said the immediate concerns revolve around the possibility of a huge influx of people who are unable to secure a visa due to the high cost, and if there would be enough avenues for them in India. The US Congress authorises a maximum number of H-1B visas to be issued every year. This "cap" or quota amounts to 65,000 H-1B visas annually, with an additional 20,000 visas reserved for those who have at least a master's degree from a US university.

Due to a high number of applications for the visas each year, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) uses a random lottery system to select applicants if the number of registrations exceeds the annual cap. Only those selected in the lottery can apply for a H-1B visa. The initial validity of the H-1B visa is up to three years. It can be extended once, for another three years, giving a total of up to six years in most cases. In its first reactions, IT industry body Nasscom said, "India's technology services companies will be impacted as business continuity will be disrupted for onshore projects which may require adjustments. The H-1B workers for these companies by no means are a threat to national security in the US." It is also important to note that India and India centric companies have been steadily reducing their reliance on these visas through increased local hiring in recent years, it said. People born in India are the largest beneficiaries of the H-1B program. Data from the

US government shows that Indians account for more than 70 per cent of all H-1B petitions approved each year since 2015. People born in China come a distant second, hovering at the 12-13 per cent mark since 2018.

Between October 2022 to September 2023, 72 per cent of the nearly 4 lakh H-1B visa petition approvals were for Indian nationals. During the same period, top four Indian IT majors with a presence in the US—namely Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HCL, and Wipro—got approvals for around 20,000 employees to work on the H-1B visa, as per latest US Citizenship and Immigration Services data. In fact, Indian IT companies have received more petition approvals compared to American big technology giants. In FY 24, Infosys was the number one Indian company in terms of receiving H-1B approvals for its workers, as it received 8,137 H-1B approvals, followed by TCS (7,566), a subsidiary of HCLTech (2,952), LTIMindtree (2,136), Wipro (1,636), and a subsidiary of Tech Mahindra (1,199). Infosys and TCS received more H-1B approvals than US giants like Google (5,364), Meta (48,440), Microsoft (4,725), and Apple (3,873). The government, however, believes the move could offer a further boost to the growing Global Capability Centres (GCC) push in India, as several American companies could open such centres in the country to tap into its vast engineer base. A senior government official said curbs on the H-1B visa primarily impacts American companies since they corner the maximum visas compared with Indian companies. The official said the government hopes these companies will now consider hiring people in India by establishing GCCs. "We see that as a silver lining to what's happened, that more GCCs will come up, as there are simply not enough skilled American workers that can replace Indians currently working in the country," the official said.

For Indian workers, however, the news marks a long period of uncertainty. "I just finished college, studying computer engineering in the US, and had managed to get a well-paying entry-level job at a top tech hardware company. Now with a \$100,000 cost to the H-1B, my employer may be unwilling to pay it, and I'd have to return to India. My current salary is \$100,000 and India will simply not have entry-level tech jobs that can pay as much. I have student loans to pay off too," said a person currently in the US, requesting anonymity. A senior industry executive said India may face challenges in absorbing people returning from the US in regular jobs. "If they want to start companies themselves, that's great, but regular jobs of the level of the US may be difficult to find here.

The ones to be most impacted by this would be mid-senior level workers. Besides, companies here may let go of current employees to hire those with some US experience," the executive said. Beyond technology, the US healthcare industry is also bracing for impact, as it is significantly dependent on the H-1B visa programme to fill specialised roles, particularly for nurses and physicians in underserved areas, due to consistent labour shortages in the United States. Given that the diktat has been issued by an executive order, many believe that there could be a legal challenge against it. Currently, the US government charges \$215 to register for an H-1B visa lottery and an additional \$780 for sponsoring employers, and the total costs can at times be as much as \$1,500. The move also comes just days before an Indian team, led by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, is expected to visit the USA to restart bilateral talks, but could now throw a wrench in the seeming relaxation of ties between India and the US.

NTPC looks to acquire uranium assets overseas to ensure fuel for future nuclear projects

New Delhi: Home-grown power giant NTPC, which is diversifying into clean energy generation, looks to acquire uranium assets overseas to ensure fuel availability for its future nuclear projects, according to a company official.

Established as a thermal-based power generator in 1975, NTPC Ltd (erstwhile National Thermal Power Corporation Ltd), has been increasing its capacity while diversifying into new modes of energy generation. The country's largest power generator has an installed capacity of 83,026 megawatt at group level based on fuel sources like coal, gas/liquid fuel, hydro, and solar, according to the NTPC website. To increase its non fossil fuel-based energy generation capacity, the company has plans to set up nuclear projects at various locations in India both through joint venture route and individually. "For fuel, we are exploring the possibility of acquiring overseas uranium assets. Our board has already approved a draft MoU (memorandum of understanding) with Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL) for joint techno-commercial due diligence of overseas uranium assets in this direction," the official said. Uranium, a naturally occurring metallic element, is used as fuel to power nuclear projects. NTPC is expected to soon enter the nuclear power business through Anushakti Vidhyut Nigam Ltd (ASHVINI), a joint venture with Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL), with 2,800 megawatt (MW) Mahi Banswara Nuclear Power Project at Rajasthan. The JV, in which NPCIL holds a 51 per cent stake and NTPC owns 49 per cent, was formed to build, own and operate nuclear power plants in India in accordance with provisions of the Atomic Energy Act. In January this year, NTPC formed its subsidiary NTPC Parmanu Urja Nigam Ltd (NPUNL) to explore individual nuclear projects. Besides, NTPC is col-



laborating with various nuclear technology providers and state governments to set up projects on its own. According to the official, the state-owned power company is also in discussions with US-based Clean Core Thorium Energy (CCTE) to explore development/deployment of ANEEL (Advanced Nuclear Energy for Enriched Life) fuel. The government aims to set up 100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047 to increase its share in India's energy mix. As of March 2025, the country's total installed energy capacity of 4,75,212 MW has only 2 per cent or 8,180 MW share of nuclear power. The official further said that while renewable energy sources like solar and wind have witnessed significant growth, their intermittent nature and substantial land requirements limit their ability to meet India's energy demand round-the-clock. "In contrast, nuclear energy presents a robust alternative, offering reliable, high-quality base load power with minimal carbon emissions," he said.

Severe nausea in pregnancy linked to 50% higher risk of mental health issues

New Delhi: Women with excessive nausea and vomiting (hyperemesis gravidarum) during pregnancy may be at a 50 per cent high risk of mental health conditions such as post-partum psychosis, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder, according to a study. Hyperemesis gravidarum (HG) affects up to 3.6 per cent of all pregnancies. HG is the most common cause of hospitalisation in the first trimester of pregnancy, and the majority of HG cases (but not all) resolve in the second trimester. Women with HG experience prolonged and severe nausea and vomiting, leading to dehydration and weight loss. In the study, published in The Lancet Obstetrics, Gynaecology, & Women's Health, UK researchers examined 24 neuropsychiatric and mental health-related outcomes reported within a year of diagnosis in 476,857 pregnant women. Whilst previous research had shown that women with HG are at an increased risk of anxiety, depression, and PTSD, the new study found over 50 per cent increased risk in 13 conditions, including post-partum psychosis and post-traumatic stress disorder. The risks were doubled for Wernicke's encephal-

opathy (a neurological condition due to vitamin B1 deficiency), refeeding syndrome (complications arising when food is introduced too quickly to someone who has been malnourished), eating disorders, and depression, particularly post-partum depression, which was 2.7 times more likely. "Many pregnant women experience nausea and vomiting, but for women with HG, this occurs at a level which is far from 'normal' and as such it can be profoundly debilitating. Many of these conditions would warrant urgent referral to specialist services for urgent assessment and treatment to ensure the safety of mother and child," said Dr Hamilton Morrin, Doctoral Fellow at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience at King's College London. In the ICD-11, the latest International Classification of Diseases by the World Health Organisation, HG is subcategorised into "mild HG" and "HG with metabolic disturbance". The latter is characterised by carbohydrate depletion, dehydration, or electrolyte imbalance. The researchers also examined whether this categorisation is correlated with mental health outcomes.

Why are women more prone to osteoarthritis than men?



Between men and women, osteoarthritis disproportionately affects post-menopausal women. They are more predisposed to the condition because of biology, genetics and hormones. While metabolic changes, caused by a poor diet and a sedentary lifestyle, trigger the genetic reprogramming of cells in the body and joints, the question arises — why women, and not men? Dr. Chethana D, Consultant — Rheumatology, Aster CMI Hospital, Bangalore told indianexpress.com that women are more prone to osteoarthritis than men mainly because of hormonal changes, especially after menopause when estrogen levels drop, which affects joint health. Women also tend to have less muscle mass and more flexible joints, which can put extra pressure on the bones and cartilage.

Dr Debashish Chanda, Director, Department of Orthopedics, CK Birla Hospital, Gurugram added that females also have wider hips, influencing knee alignment and putting more stress on weight-bearing joints. Also, having a lower amount of muscle mass than men gives less joint stability and support, and the higher probability of obesity, particularly following menopause, also plays a role in joint

irritation and pressure. Genetic susceptibility playing a part in predisposing women to osteoarthritis is also a contributing factor.

How can you prevent the onset of osteoarthritis?

Dr Chanda shared that making healthy lifestyle modifications will delay or even prevent the development of osteoarthritis. Here are a few lifestyle tweaks to make: Keeping a healthy weight is essential, as losing even a small amount of weight will dramatically reduce the load on hips and knees. Exercise regularly, especially low-impact activities such as swimming, walking, yoga, or cycling, keeps joints supple and aids the muscle tension that maintains them in alignment.

osteoarthritis More serious conditions where it interferes with activities of daily living may include replacement surgery of the joint. (Source: Freepik) A diet rich in anti-inflammatory foods, omega-3 fatty acids, calcium, and vitamin D maintains bone and joint health, and limiting excessive processed food and sugar can even reverse inflammation. Joint protection by maintaining good posture, using proper ergonomic support, and avoiding repetitive strain also lowers the risk of premature degeneration.

According to Dr Chanda, there is no cure for osteoarthritis, but there are many treatments that can provide relief and prevent further loss. "Self-care measures such as physiotherapy, stretching, and application of heat or cold packs relieve stiffness and pain. Medication such as NSAIDs, topical anti-inflammatory gel, or analgesics are the most frequently prescribed medications, whereas serious conditions include corticosteroid or hyaluronic acid injection to aid mobilization," he elaborated, adding that more serious conditions where it interferes with activities of daily living may include replacement surgery of the joint. With a treatment combining preventive interventions, early medical care, and life changes, women can lower their risk noticeably and enhance the quality of life with osteoarthritis present.

Smriti Irani doesn't experience 'FOMO' while Cillian Murphy has 'ROMO' — but what do these terms mean?



GNS News Agency, Oct 4

When Oppenheimer star Cillian Murphy was asked if he felt FOMO — fear of missing out — for not starring in Christopher Nolan's upcoming film adaptation of The Odyssey, he said, "I have ROMO— relief of missing out," impressing admirers with this lesser-known phrase, one that resonated with audiences worldwide. Explaining himself, Murphy said, "ROMO is the opposite of FOMO...let me clarify, what I meant was that it's a real gift to go and see Chris' films without having the terrible burden of looking at my own stupid head...so that's what is relief of missing out." His words have travelled far beyond Hollywood, inspiring not just the tech-savvy Gen Z but people across age groups. In India, politician Smriti Irani invoked the phrase at the NDTV Yuva conclave 2025, saying she "doesn't experience FOMO" about her Parliamentary life and citing Murphy's term ROMO to take potshots at rivals.

What does ROMO really mean?

Forbes India, in a 2022 article, described ROMO as

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

New Delhi: People using cannabis may be four times more at risk of developing diabetes, according to a large study of over four million adults on Monday. Cannabis use is increasing globally, with an estimated 219 million users (4.3 per cent of the global adult population) in 2021, but its long-term metabolic effects remain unknown.

While some studies have suggested potential anti-inflammatory or weight management properties, others have raised concerns regarding glucose metabolism and insulin resistance. The magnitude of the risk of developing diabetes hasn't been clear. The research showed that new cases of diabetes were significantly higher in the cannabis group (2.2 per cent) compared to the healthy group (0.6 per cent). Statistical analysis showed cannabis users were at nearly four times the risk of developing diabetes compared to non-users.

"As cannabis becomes more widely available and socially accepted and legalized in various jurisdictions, it is essential to understand its potential health risks," said lead author Dr Ibrahim Kamel from the Boston Medical Center, US. For the study, the researchers analysed electronic health records from 54 health care organisations across the US and Europe to identify 96,795 outpatients (aged between 18 and 50 years, 52.5 per cent female) with cannabis-related diagnoses (ranging from occasional use to dependence, including cases of intoxication and withdrawal) between 2010 and 2018.

They were matched with 4,160,998 healthy individuals (with no record of substance use or major chronic conditions) based on age, sex, and underlying illnesses at the start of the study, and followed for five years. "The new insights from reliable real-world evidence highlight the impor-

"the relief of being oblivious to an event or news item." Citing research from the United Kingdom and the United States, it explained that against the backdrop of "anxiety-provoking political, health and economic context, more and more internet users are turning away from the news. On the contrary, they will voluntarily avoid the media, as well as any digital technology that could provide them with news." Social media platforms, with their disappearing stories, group chats, and "seen" receipts, are designed to fuel FOMO. The pressure to respond instantly or stay perpetually updated has become an exhausting way of life. According to Oorvi Bhateja, consultant psychologist at LimbiQ Centre for Psychiatry and Child Development, Delhi, ROMO offers a healthier, gentler way of living. "Instead of feeling guilty for skipping a party or not answering that late-night work email, ROMO reframes it as a positive choice," she said. Research, she added, shows that constant digital pull increases anxiety, sleeplessness, and even low mood. "It's saying: I'm choosing peace over pressure. At home, it means more time for rest, family, or hobbies. At work, it's about protecting boundaries and avoiding burnout. In a world that pushes us to do more, ROMO reminds us that sometimes, doing less is healthier."

ROMO Relief of missing out" (ROMO) is a psychological concept describing the feeling of peace and well-being that comes from intentionally disconnecting from the internet. According to Bhateja, FOMO isn't just in our heads; it's baked into our apps. "Stories that vanish in 24 hours, presence indicators, and 'likes' that measure popularity all feed the fear of being left behind."

But she believes small steps can help us reclaim control. "Turn off non-essential notifications. Give yourself permission to say 'no' without over-explaining. Reframe missing out as gaining something else: a quiet evening, better sleep, or simply the joy of being present. Even putting your phone in another room during dinner can create relief pockets," she said. Research suggests high FOMO is linked with stress, compulsive phone use, and even neglecting face-to-face conversations, just to check updates. ROMO, on the other hand, can act as a reset, an escape from the noise. "Relief replaces apprehension, and space opens up for rest, creativity, and real connection. In a world where 'always on' has become the default, ROMO might be the permission slip we need to slow down and protect ourselves from burnout," Bhateja concluded.



A large study of over four million adults reveals cannabis use may increase the risk of developing diabetes by nearly four times, stressing the need for awareness, monitoring, and further research.

tance of integrating diabetes risk awareness into substance use disorder treatment and counselling, as well as the need for health care professionals to routinely talk to patients about cannabis use so that they can understand their overall diabetes risk and potential need for metabolic monitoring," Kamel said. The study's results have immediate implications for metabolic monitoring practices and public health messaging. The team stressed the need for more research on the long-term endocrine effects of cannabis use and whether diabetes risks are limited to inhaled products or other forms of cannabis, such as edibles. The findings will be presented at the ongoing Annual Meeting of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD) held in Vienna, Austria.

Rahul Dravid's son Anvay included in Under-19 Challenger Trophy squad



GNS News Agency, March 2

Rahul Dravid's younger son Anvay Dravid has been included in Team C for the BCCI's Under-19 Challenger Trophy to be played in Hyderabad from November 5 to 11. Earlier in 2024, Dravid's elder son Samit Dravid was included in India's Under-19 squad for the bilateral home series against Australia which was held in Pondicherry and Chennai. But because of an injury, Samit happened to miss the fixtures. And this time, his younger son has been included in one of the four Challenger Trophy teams.

With an eye on the next Under-19 World Cup set to take place in Zimbabwe and Namibia next year, the BCCI Challenger Trophy acts as a precursor to pick the squads

for the tournament. In the recently concluded Vinoo Mankad Trophy, Anvay Dravid captained Karnataka to a quarterfinal spot. In the six matches that he played, he scored 220 runs with a high score of an unbeaten 82 to go with another half-century in Dehradun. Karnataka won four of the five matches to finish second in the group stages before losing to eventual champions Hyderabad in the quarterfinal. Anvay, top score of 82 came against Himachal Pradesh, when he came in at No 4 and took Karnataka home in the chase of 236. In that knock Anvay's knock came off 93 deliveries including 6 boundaries and two sixes. His other half-century (63 off 75) came in their defeat to Chandigarh in the group stage. While Anvay has been picked as a wicket-keeper in Team C which also includes Saurashtra gloveman Yuvraj Gohil. So far in the current Under-19 cycle, there are two other wicketkeepers who are high in the pecking order. Left-handed batsman Harvansh Singh, also from Saurashtra, started in India's home series against Australia where he made a century in the four-day fixture. Apart from him, there is also Mumbai's Abhigyan Kundu, another aggressive batsman who has emerged as the first choice. Team A is captained by Vihaan Malhotra from Punjab with Kundu being the vice-captain. Vedant Trivedi will lead Team B with Harvansh being his deputy. Aaron George, who captained Hyderabad to Vinoo Mankad Trophy without losing a game, gets to lead Team C which has Punjab's Aaryan Yadav being the vice-captain. Chandrasahas Dash, a key performer for Bengal, has been put in charge of Team D.

Women's World Cup 2025 Team of the Tournament: ICC picks three Indians in XI, Laura Wolvaardt named captain

GNS News Agency, March 2

Opener Smriti Mandhana, key batter Jemimah Rodrigues, and Player of the Tournament Deepti Sharma were all included in the XI, with South Africa skipper Laura Wolvaardt named captain of the all-star side. Wolvaardt enjoyed an undisputed run as batter in the tournament, amassing a whopping 571 runs at an average of 71.37 to break the record for the most runs at any single edition of the Women's World Cup. Finishing as the second-leading run-scorer of the tournament, just behind Laura Wolvaardt, Mandhana picked up her form in a record-breaking year during the latter half of the tournament. The left-hander's standout moment was her 109 against New Zealand in Navi Mumbai, but her ability to perform against top opposition was also evident in her consecutive prior scores of 80 and 81 against Australia and England.

The ICC noted that Rodrigues' phenomenal unbeaten 127 against Australia in the semi-finals was the primary reason for her selection. The India No. 3 also contributed several other good scores throughout the tournament, including a vital 76 not out against New Zealand that helped secure India's spot in the semis. Meanwhile, all-rounder Deepti Sharma relished an all-time campaign, becoming the first



woman to record 200-plus runs and 15-plus wickets in a single World Cup. The veteran all-rounder also turned up for the side in the final, scoring a half-century and racking up five wickets. Australia, who reached the semi-finals, is represented by Annabel Sutherland, Ash Gardner, and leg-spinner Alana King. The only player named in the side who did not reach the final four is Pakistan's standout wicket-keeper, Sidra Nawaz. England also features prominently, with Sophie Ecclestone included for her strong efforts in helping the side reach the semi-finals, while her captain Nat Sciver-Brunt is named as the 12th player.

Yashasvi Jaiswal completes 1000 Ranji Trophy runs with 5th century for Mumbai on IPL home ground

GNS News Agency, March 2

Yashasvi Jaiswal cracked a blistering third-innings century for Mumbai in his first Ranji Trophy match since January 2025 against Rajasthan on his IPL home ground at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur. Resuming from his overnight half-century after Mumbai were flattened by Rajasthan's massive first-innings score of 617 for six declared, Jaiswal stormed to his century on Day 4 off 120 deliveries with 11 boundaries. The hundred was Jaiswal's fifth century for Mumbai in only 21 innings in Ranji Trophy since his debut in 2019. The southpaw has cracked 17 First Class centuries in total, including seven Test hundreds. The 23-year-old also reached 1000 Ranji Trophy runs during the knock, averaging over 57 in 10 matches. Additionally, Jaiswal had also rolled his arm over the previous evening, dismissing Rajasthan's top-scorer, Deepak Hooda, on 248. Jaiswal had flown back home from Australia where he was part of the Indian ODI team which lost the series 1-2 to Australia. He was benched for all three games. The ongoing Ranji contest is his first match for Mumbai, since his decision at the end of last season, to quit on Mumbai and a subsequent about-turn. Jaiswal is not part of India's T20I team which is currently playing a five-match T20I's series against



Australia in coming days. With the South Africa series to be played at home next month, Jaiswal is looking to get some match practice. The MCA selection committee will meet, after their ongoing Ranji Trophy game, against Chattisgarh. During the recently-concluded home Test series against West Indies, Jaiswal scored his seventh Test hundred at the Arun Jaitley Stadium. He became just the second batsman after South Africa legend Graeme Smith to have scored seven Test hundreds as an opener before the age of 24.

'Gutted': R Ashwin ruled out of BBL 2025 season after surgery setback



Ashwin's franchise, the Sydney Thunder, confirmed on Tuesday that the Tamil Nadu off-spinner had undergone surgery after having injured his knee while training in his home city. With no set timeline on his recovery, Ashwin had to forego the entire BBL|15 campaign. In September 2025, Thunder announced that the 39-year-old had committed for their entire BBL season. The club said that they, however, hope to bring Ashwin on board in a non-playing capacity. "Everyone at Sydney Thunder was devastated to learn of Ash's knee injury that has ruled him out of BBL|15, and we wish him well in his recovery," Trent Copeland, Thunder general manager, said in a statement. "From the moment we first spoke with Ash, his commitment to Thunder was clear. We are hopeful of welcoming him into our dugout for part of BBL|15, introducing him to our fans at events and building a long-term relationship. "While disappointing for the club, we have built two championship-contending squads and expect to continue the progress of recent seasons in WBBL|11 and BBL|15. We can't wait to get back in front of our fans in Western Sydney for two massive campaigns." Ashwin said he was gutted to miss the opportunity. "My focus now is recovery and coming back stronger," he said. "I'm grateful to the Thunder family and the fans for the warmth they've already shown me. Trent and the entire management made me feel part of the club from our very first conversation. "I will be watching every game (probably at odd hours in Chennai) and cheering for both our women's and men's teams. If rehab and travel line up, and only if the doctors are happy, I would love to be around later in the season and say hello in person." The spin veteran retired from international cricket last December during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test tour of Australia before announcing his Indian Premier League retirement in August.

GNS News Agency, March 2

Spin legend Ravichandran Ashwin's preparations to become the first capped Indian man to play in the Big Bash League in Australia was stalled after the 39-year-old suffered an injury setback recently in Chennai. Ashwin's franchise, the Sydney Thunder, con-

The 'chhorri' from Rohtak who dared to dream — and make a comeback



GNS News Agency, March 2

The father of Shafali Verma, the player of the Women's World Cup final, sums up her unforgettable night in an earthy tone. It's quite a comeback story, indeed. Not selected for the tournament, she played domestic cricket in front of untenanted stands, piled on runs, bowled more often than before, and kept training at the nets. And hoped for redemption. When it came — due to an injury to opener Pratikha Rawal — Shafali stamped her presence in a historic final against South Africa with both bat (76-ball 87) and ball (two game-turning wickets). Both these performances were her best returns in One-Day Internationals, helping script a 52-run victory at Navi Mumbai's D Y Patil Stadium as India became world champions for the first time. One person who isn't surprised by the 21-year-old's fierce resolve is her father, Sanjeev. Last year, Sanjeev was admitted at a hospital after a heart attack when Shafali learnt that she had been dropped from the Indian team. She didn't tell him for a week, as she feared for his health.

"It was a tough time for our family but she would not share with me that she had been dropped from the team," says Sanjeev, speaking to from their home in Haryana's Rohtak a day after the World Cup triumph. "Cricket has been a passion for me as well as her, and I don't know how she hid the news from me." Once he learnt about it, Sanjeev did what he had always done — took Shafali to the nets. "When the doctors gave the go-ahead, I made her practise in a session 10 days after my heart attack, just to show her that all was fine. So that she does not have to worry about me and be stressed about my health," he says. But the World Cup call from the selectors never came. And so father and daughter went hard at work. She had even begun to bowl more in

recent times, a fact that would play a big role in the World Cup final when she snared two vital wickets at a time when it seemed South Africa were on the ascendency in the chase. "When Shafali came in (to the squad), we saw that she was bowling a lot of overs in domestic cricket," skipper Harmanpreet Kaur would say. "So, Sir (coach Amol Muzumdar) and I spoke to her about it, and she said, 'Sir, I'm ready for 10 overs.'" The memory of that confidence prompted Harmanpreet to throw the ball to Shafali in the heat of the final. And the rest is "herstory". The father asserts that the confidence to bowl under pressure or bat a bit differently — more solid as compared to the all-out attack of the past — stemmed from Shafali's strong temperament. "It came from Shafali only. Itney bhi ups-and-lows dekhein hain Shafali ne, usne yahi seekha hai ki comeback usko hi karna padhega. (Through all her highs and lows, she has learnt that only she can make a comeback)," he says. Sanjeev helped by reminding her of all her past achievements. "I would talk about her winning the U-19 World Cup, taking the team to the 2020 T20 World Cup final and scoring the fastest women's Test double hundred. I told her bus apne main, aur Bhagwan main vishwas rakh (just trust in God and yourself). Bus tu taiyar rehna (You be ready)." Shafali Verma with her parents and siblings earlier this year. (Shafali Verma/Instagram) Shafali Verma with her parents and siblings earlier this year. In the days that followed after Shafali was dropped, in the BCCI One-Day Trophy, she amassed 527 runs at an average of 75.28, at a strike rate of 152.31. It included a knock of 197 in the quarter-final against eventual champions Bengal. She didn't stop there, tallying 414 runs at an average of 82.80 in the Women's Challenger Trophy, and following it up with 306 in this year's Women's Premier League. When she wasn't named in the World Cup squad, her father repeated his words, "Bus tu taiyar rehna (You stay ready)". "She had come home on Diwali between tournaments and we would talk about how she should not leave her aggressive style of play, which has been her strength since her junior days. I also told her 'shuru ke 2-4 over nikal diye, toh puri innings teri (If you stay for 2-4 overs, the full innings is yours)'. And when the call for the World Cup came, I told her that it was her hard work that had paid off, apart from our prayers," he says. As soon as she got the call for the World Cup, Sanjeev visited the Mansa Devi temple at Dehmi, in Rajasthan. He is now waiting for Shafali's return, so that he can accompany her on another trip there. "We will visit the Mansa Devi temple as well as our guruji, Sant Rajinder Singh ji Maharaj, in Delhi," he says.

Deepti, Smriti, Jemimah named in ICC Women's World Cup Team of the Tournament

GNS News Agency, March 2

HYDERABAD: Three players from the victorious India side — Deepti Sharma, vice-captain Smriti Mandhana and Jemimah Rodrigues — have been named in the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 Team of the Tournament. Deepti Sharma, the competition's leading wicket-taker who took a magnificent five for 39 in the final, is joined by teammates Smriti Mandhana and Jemimah Rodrigues. The trio are joined by three players from the tournament runners up, South Africa — Team of the Tournament captain, Laura Wolvaardt, Marizanne Kapp and Nadine de Klerk — along with the same number of Australians — Ashleigh Gardner, Annabel Sutherland and Alana King, according to an ICC communication on Tuesday. Two English players — Nat Sciver-Brunt and Sophie Ecclestone — and Pakistan's Sidra Nawaz complete the squad.



The selection panel consists of commentators Ian Bishop, Mel Jones and Isa Guha, Gaurav Saxena (ICC General Manager — Events and Corporate Communications) and Estelle Vasudevan (Journalist Representative). The openers were on opposing sides in the final, with Mandhana picked to partner Laura Wolvaardt at the top of the order. The pair finished comfortably as the leading run scorers in the competition, Wolvaardt topping the charts on 571 at an outstanding average of 71.37 — the leading individual run-scorer at an ICC Women's Cricket World Cup — including majestic, back-to-back centuries in the semi-final and final. Mandhana, who reached three figures herself against New Zealand in the league stage, finished the tournament with 434 runs at an average of 54.25. Mandhana's teammate Rodrigues slots in at three following her unforgettable match-winning knock of 127 not out which sent the hosts into the final at Australia's expense. Sharma is another Indian star selected after topping the bowling charts with 22 scalps, including her decisive spell in the showpiece. The Proteas are also well represented in addition to Wolvaardt. Marizanne Kapp takes her place in the side after another strong showing with bat and ball in recent weeks, scoring two half-centuries and taking 12 wickets. That tally featured five for 20 against England in the semi-final, which helped her become the leading wicket-taker in ICC Women's Cricket World Cup history. Her team-

mate, Nadine de Klerk also had an impressive all-round tournament, her unbeaten 84 from 54 balls helped her side down India in the league stage, while she also chipped in with nine wickets. Australian bowlers, Alana King and Annabel Sutherland both feature, after King made history by taking seven for 18 against South Africa in the league stage, the best bowling figures at any ICC Women's Cricket World Cup. Sutherland finished with 17 wickets, second only to Sharma, and contributed an unbeaten 98 to help her side past England in the round robin stage. She did so as part of a 180-run stand with Ashleigh Gardner, who compiled her second century of the competition in that match and is named in the middle order — she also took seven wickets for good measure. Sidra Nawaz takes the gloves after three catches and four stumpings for Pakistan, including a terrific take down the leg side to dismiss Harmanpreet Kaur against India and lightning quick reflexes to whip the balls off and remove Kim Garth in her side's clash with Australia. Sophie Ecclestone completes the 11 after taking 16 wickets at 14.25 apiece, including four-wicket hauls against Sri Lanka and South Africa, while her teammate Nat Sciver-Brunt, who contributed 262 runs and nine wickets, is selected as 12th player following an excellent first World Cup as captain. The team: Smriti Mandhana, Laura Wolvaardt (c), Jemimah Rodrigues, Marizanne Kapp, Ashleigh Gardner, Deepti Sharma, Annabel Sutherland, Nadine de Klerk, Sidra Nawaz (w), Alana King, Sophie Ecclestone, Nat Sciver-Brunt (12th player).

Mamatha to represent South Zone in Inter-Zonal T20s

GNS News Agency, March 2

HYDERABAD: Wicketkeeper-batter Madiwala Mamatha of Hyderabad picked to represent South Zone in the IDFC First Bank Senior Women's Inter Zonal T-20 Trophy to be played in Nagaland from November 4 to 14.

The teams: Central Zone: Nuzhat Parween (C & WK) (RSPB), Nikita Singh (VC) (MPCA), Simran Dilbahadur (RSPB), Neha Badwaik (CSCS), Anushka Sharma (MPCA), Vaishnavi Sharma (MPCA), Shuchi Upadhyay (MPCA), Ananya Dubey (MPCA), Mona Meshram (VCA), Suman Meena (RCA), Disha Kasat (VCA), Sampada Dixit (UPCA), Anjali Singh (UPCA), Amisha Bahukhandi (CAU), Nandani Kashyap (WK) (CAU)

East Zone: Mita Paul (C) (CAB), Ashwani Kumari (VC) (JSCA), Priyanka Luthra (JSCA), Dhara Gujjar (CAB), Tanushree Sarkar (CAB), Rashmi Gudhia (WK) (JSCA), Jintimani Kalita (Assam CA), Rashmi Dey (Assam CA), Tanmayee Behera (OCA), Sushree Dibyardarshini (OCA), Titas Sahu (CAB), Saika Ishaque (CAB), Arti Kumari (JSCA), Mamta Paswan (JSCA), Priyanka Acharjee (TCA)

North East Zone: Debasmita Dutta (C) (MECA), Nabam Yapu (VC) (ARCA), Kiranbala Haorungbam (MNCA), Lalrinfeli Pautu (CAM), Riticia Nongbet (MECA), Najmeen Khatun (WK) (NCA), Samayita Pradhan (SICA), Priyanka Kurmi (SICA), Vipeni (NCA), Nandika Kumari (SICA), Nabam Abhi (ARCA), Pranita Chettri (SICA), Solina Jaba (MECA), Primula Chettri (SICA), Ranjita Koijam (MNCA)



North Zone: Shafali Verma (C) (HCA), Shweta Sehrawat (VC) (DDCA), Deeya Yadav (HCA), Ayushi Soni (DDCA), Taniya Bhatia (WK) (UTCA), SM Singh (HPCA), Bharti Rawal (DDCA), Bawandeep Kour (JKCA), Mannat Kashyap (PCA), Amandeep Kaur (HCA), Komalpreet Kour (PCA), Ananya Sharma (JKCA), Soni Yadav (DDCA), Nazma (DDCA), Nandini (UTCA) West Zone: Anuja Patil (C) (MHCA), Sayali Satghare (VC) (MCA), Poonam Khemnar (BCA), Dharani Thappetta (SICA), Tejal Hasabnis (MHCA), Saima Thakor (MCA), Humaira Kazi (MCA), Ira Jadhav (MCA), Kiran Navgire (MHCA), Amrita Joseph (BCA), Keshna Patel (BCA), Arshia Dhariwal (GCA), Umeshwari Jethva (WK-SCA), Simran Patel (GCA), Ishita Khale (MHCA) South Zone: Niki Prasad (C) (KSCA), Sabbineni Meghana (VC) (ACA), Kamalini G (WK) (TNCA), Vrinda Dinesh (KSCA), Yuvashri K (CAP). (.)

Unni Mukundan delivered a flop that earned only Rs 1.4 cr in Kerala against Rs 9.99 cr budget, right after Rs 100 cr blockbuster



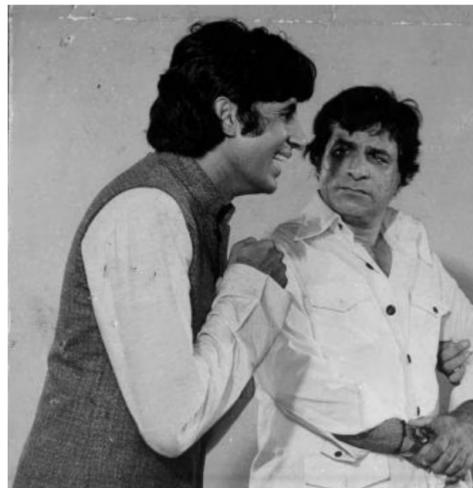
EMS News Agency, Nov 4

Despite hitting the screens weeks after the release of Marco, Unni Mukundan's biggest solo hit thus far, the film ultimately proved to be a box office disappointment. Unni Mukundan's first release of 2025 had bombed. Although it has been over a decade since he made his film debut, Malayalam actor Unni Mukundan has still not established himself as a bankable star who can guarantee at least a decent opening for his movies, let alone massive lifetime collections. While he has delivered a few blockbusters over the years, consistency has not been his strong suit, resulting in a career graph that has always fluctuated.

In December 2024, he delivered the biggest solo hit of his career thus far, Marco, directed by Haneef Adeni as a spin-off to his Nivin Pauly-led Mikhael (2019). Although the movie sparked massive controversy over its extremely grotesque and graphic depiction of violence, Marco re-

corded a worldwide gross of Rs 102.55 crore, according to industry tracker Sacnilk, and emerged as one of the highest-grossing Malayalam films of 2024. Marketed as "the most violent Indian film," Marco became a nationwide sensation and even eclipsed its box office rivals like Mohanlal's Barroz – Guardian of Treasures and Varun Dhawan's Baby John effortlessly. Soon, a massive PR campaign emerged from certain quarters, positioning Unni Mukundan as the latest "pan-Indian star." The film's performance in both domestic and overseas markets suggested that this might indeed be the case. However, the narrative proved to be ephemeral, and weeks after Marco's blockbuster success, Unni delivered a box office disappointment, Get Set Baby. According to a report released by the Kerala Film Producers' Association (KFPA) in March — revealing the budget of Malayalam movies released in February and the share of revenue each generated from theatres in the state — Get Set Baby was mounted on a budget of Rs 9.99 crore. However, the film, which hit the screens on February 21, managed to generate a theatre share of only Rs 1.40 crore from Kerala. Although the film was still in its theatrical run when the report was released in mid-March, it's unlikely that it managed to create wonders at the box office during this period, particularly since it coincided with the school annual exams season and Ramadan, when footfall at cinema halls is usually very low. In the third week of March, almost a month after the movie's release, Koimoi reported that the Unni Mukundan-starrer managed to collect only Rs 3.43 crore in India in 27 days. Even if this was the domestic nett collection, it's evident that the movie bombed big time, crushing the PR efforts surrounding the actor. Helmed by Vinay Govind, Get Set Baby also featured Nikhila Vimal, Shyam Mohan, Chemban Vinod Jose, Surabhi Lakshmi, Johnny Antony and Sudheesh in key roles. Marco, on the other hand, starred Siddique, Jagadish, Kabir Duhan Singh and Abhimanyu Shammi Thilakan alongside Unni Mukundan. Made on a budget of Rs 21 crore, according to Sacnilk, it had registered a domestic nett of Rs 60.27 crore. The actor's subsequent film, Mehfil, also made no waves at the box office. His next movie is Maa Vande, a biographical film exploring the life of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

'Call him Amitabh Bachchan sir': Kader Khan recalled how his bond with Big B soured after he became an MP, his 'behaviour changed'



Kader Khan, who moved to India at the age of one from Afghanistan with his parents, found great heights in the world of cinema. He became an overnight sensation after legendary actor Dilip Kumar noticed his theatrical talent. Impressed by his performance in a play, Dilip Kumar cast him in two of his films, which launched Kader's career in Hindi cinema. He quickly gained recognition both as a versatile actor and a prolific screenwriter. Kader, marked his industry debut in 1970 and soon developed a strong professional bond with Amitabh Bachchan who was just on his way to become the biggest star. The two collaborated on numerous films, with Kader contributing as both a writer and co-actor. From Benaam (1974) to Hum (1991), their association spanned nearly two decades—until a change in Amitabh Bachchan's demeanour caused a rift between them. Kader Khan, who would have turned 88 today, once shared the incident in an old interview.

Speaking with journalist Prashant Angre on Samay TV's show Dil Ne Phir Yaad Kiya, Kader Khan reminisced about their camaraderie and how it eventually ended. He began by praising Amitabh Bachchan, saying, "Amitabh Bachchan copied everything from Dilip Kumar, but he also had a great height and a powerful voice. It was his voice that elevated him—but he belongs to the school of Dilip Kumar." "After Indira Gandhi's death, her son Rajiv Gandhi invited Amitabh to join politics. He accepted, contested elections, and became a Member of Parliament. That created a lot of buzz. However, when he returned to the film industry with the 'MP' tag, his behaviour had changed." "Recalling a pivotal incident, Kader shared: "One day, a producer asked me, 'Did you meet sir?' I was confused and asked, 'Who sir?' He replied, shocked, 'Your friend, Amitabh Bachchan.' I said, 'Why would I call him sir? I have always addressed him as Amit.' The producer was visibly stunned and gestured to me, 'Please, don't ever call him by name—call him sir.'" Kader smiled as he said, "After that incident, our paths diverged. He became 'Sir ji', and I remained 'Kader ji'. My heart couldn't allow me to suddenly start calling a friend 'sir'. That man simply began avoiding me because I wouldn't use that title. It hurt me deeply because I had even left other film projects just because he wanted me to work on his. His changed behaviour didn't sit well with me, and our bond ended there." "Throughout their time together, Kader Khan had penned the scripts for many of Amitabh Bachchan's iconic films, including Benaam (1974), Amar Akbar Anthony (1977), Parvarish (1977), Muqaddar Ka Sikandar (1978), and Naseeb (1981), among others.

Ek Deewane Ki Deewaniyat movie review: Harshvardhan Rane, Sonam Bajwa film revives misogynistic toxicity of Darrs, Anjaams, Tere Naams

.Ek Deewane ki Deewaniyat movie review: It's been a few hours since I've finished cringe-watching 'Ek Deewane Ki Deewaniyat', and I still can't believe Bollywood is making these films in 2025. I had been hearing about the buzz around the film, and my show was nearly full, which is a change from the usual near-empty theatres I encounter on the first day of the film's release. And when it started, with Harshvardhan Rane and Sonam Bajwa, getting down to a romantic tangle, I thought I was in for something fresh and inviting. But I was so, so wrong. Vikramaditya Bhonsle (Harshvardhan Rane) plays an obsessive lover who refuses to take no for an answer, despite hearing it every time he encounters pretty actress Aadaa (Sonam Bajwa). The plot, such as there is, exists only to create non-meet-cute moments, him advancing, her withdrawing. How is it that this is being touted as a Gen Z love story, just the way Saiyyara was? I thought that was just Mohit Suri freshening up his favourite tropes for this gen, but that was way better as compared to this, which goes totally overboard in the overblown, overwrought, unbelievable stakes.

Does this demographic really think that falling in love is this dated and dangerous pile of cliches: Vikramaditya sees Aadaa walking down a red carpet, he holds out his hand, she gives him hers, and that accidental clasping is it — he's in love, and doesn't care who knows it. His best buddy (Shaad Randhawa) looks on bemusedly as Vikram keeps circling around the clearly reluctant Aadaa, pushing every chance he gets, ignoring her vehement protests which soon turn into active dislike. He hectors and smiles, sheds a ready tear (I haven't seen a leading man tear up as much this one does), and spouts poetic dialogue — all the deewaniyat, deewanapan, hadd paar ka jaana, mohabbat mein fanaa ho jaana — okay the last one's mine, but you get the point. She is allegedly a superstar, but apart from a secretary/manager, doesn't seem to have an insulating entourage or even a publicist to help her navigate stalkers such as Vikramaditya, who gets his notion of everything-I-want-is-mine from his thuggish politician dad (Sachin Khedekar). Her family — father (Ananth Mahadevan), mother, younger sister — is supportive to begin with, but even they begin wilting in the face of all the relentless pressure. Despite the sighs and the songs, the film does nothing but prop a flagrant red flag as a 'hero', forcing the 'heroine' to put out a preposterous proposal half way through the film, which is meant to be a shocker: maybe it would have been, if this whole thing hadn't been such a shocker itself. What this film is saying is that you can, with impunity, harass and browbeat a woman into saying yes, when she has been saying no for 99 percent of the movie. Even today. Hey, woke people, where are you when we need you most?

Kareena Kapoor must've been paid more than Rahul Bose in Chameli; about time Deepika Padukone is paid as much as her male co-stars, says Sudhir Mishra



Sudhir Mishra feels like Kareena Kapoor was supposedly paid more than her male co-star in Chameli, Deepika Padukone should also be paid more now. Sudhir Mishra feels like Kareena Kapoor was supposedly paid more than her male co-star in Chameli, Deepika Padukone should also be paid more now. Deepika Padukone has been rallying for fair treatment of women actors on film sets, from the work hours, working conditions to pay parity. She recently walked out of two big Telugu projects — Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Spirit and Nag Ashwin's sequel of Kalki 2898 AD — because the makers couldn't accommodate her demands, including eight-hour work shifts, which she claims many male co-stars have been following for years.

Now, filmmaker Sudhir Mishra, best known for Chameli (2004) and Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi (2003), has opened up on the issue of the lack of pay parity in the Indian film industry. "Parity means if the woman's part is as good as the man's then she should get paid as much. If it's more then she should get paid more. But it's also got to do with box office. One thing you've to understand is in cinema, you don't get paid, you get a share in the profits. In cinema, a star gets paid more because he brings in the box office. Now, sometimes, some stars are paid more than the money they bring in, and that's a whole another story," said Mishra. He argued that Deepika Padukone is as big a star

than most of her male co-stars so she should get paid as much. "Just leave alone this gentleman called Shah Rukh Khan who seems to never age, and seems to rekindle something in himself and in the audience all the time," pointed out Mishra on the Cyrus Says podcast. Deepika and Shah Rukh have starred together in her 2007 debut film Om Shanti Om, Chennai Express (2013), Happy New Year (2014), Pathaan (2023), Jawan (2023), and the upcoming King.

Mishra added that Deepika is the parallel lead in all the movies she did with director Sanjay Leela Bhansali, so it's "about time" she should get paid as much. Of the three movies Padukone has done with Bhansali — Goliyon Ki Raseela: Ram-Leela (2013), Bajirao Mastani (2015), and Padmaavat (2018) — she was paid Rs 12 crore for the latter, a couple of crores more than her male co-stars Ranveer Singh and Shahid Kapoor. Mishra recalled that Kareena Kapoor "must have been paid more than" her male co-star Rahul Bose in Chameli. "That was upto Pritish (Nandy, producer). I wasn't involved. Rangita Nandy (daughter) is the person that question should be asked to. But of course, she should've been paid more. That was her part," said Mishra. Mishra heaped praises on Kareena and said she was "just outstanding." "She'd come from popular cinema. So, she hadn't worked with a script before. And there was some genetic playing in her mind, with Raj Kapoor (late legendary filmmaker-actor, her grandfather), her father (actor Randhir Kapoor), and Babita (Kapoor, mother and actor). So, her instinct was amazing. One day, when I was shooting for her, she was so great I forgot to say cut. And she didn't stop. Then she did something that I never told her. So, I realized her professionalism as an actor, as Raj Kapoor's granddaughter, doesn't allow her to stop till the director says cut. So then, she stays on. She improvised. So, I changed the whole way of doing the film. I kind of followed her. It's just centred around this one person. And it worked," recalled Mishra. The filmmaker claimed Chameli "restarted" Kareena's career because at that time, the popular Hindi film industry "had gone away from her." Right before Chameli, Kareena had delivered a string of underwhelming films like Mujhse Dosti Karoge! and Jeena Sirf Merre Liye in 2002 and Talaash: The Hunt Begins... in 2003. However, after the success of Chameli, she was cast in critically acclaimed films like Mani Ratnam's Yuva and Govind Nihalani's Dev in the same year. Mishra also recalled how he came onboard Chameli by chance. After the original director, Anant Balani died of a heart attack while shooting Chameli, producer Pritish Nandy roped in Mishra. However, since Balani was mostly improvising from a "sketchy" script he had, Mishra requested for 15 days from Nandy to rewrite the script before starting the shoot.

Pavitra Punia announces engagement to US-based businessman after break-up with Eijaz Khan: 'Locked in, soon to be Mrs'



time. Sharing pictures from her engagement, Pavitra Punia wrote on Instagram, "Locked in, love made it official. Soon to be Mrs." She has even hinted at taking the plunge soon.

While Pavitra shared some romantic pictures with her beau, she didn't reveal his face. Recently, in an interview with Hindustan Times, Pavitra Punia confirmed finding love again. She had said, "Yes, I've found love again, and this year, Diwali is all the more special for me as I'll be celebrating it with his family. I will be travelling abroad as he and his family are there. I am a little sad that I won't be celebrating Diwali with my family, but also excited to be spending time with them. He is a businessman from the USA, not at all an actor. A wonderful person and kind. We've been going steady for quite some time now, and it feels right."

Before finding love once again in this mystery man, Pavitra Punia was dating actor Eijaz Khan. The two met and fell in love on Bigg Boss 14. In 2020, both Eijaz and Pavitra participated in Bigg Boss 14. Initially, they would often clash over issues on the show; however, they slowly grew fond of each other and eventually fell in love on the show. In fact, during one of the weekend episodes, Eijaz had also confessed his love for her. While the couple continued to date even after the show, in 2022, Eijaz and Pavitra had also moved in together. They would call themselves as good as married, and were going quite strong. However, in early 2024, Pavitra announced on social media that she had parted ways with Eijaz Khan, and a few months before announcing it publicly. She even stated that it wasn't religion, but a strong personality clash that caused issues in their relationship. Ever since then, both Eijaz and Pavitra have refrained from talking about each other. The last time Eijaz commented about Pavitra, he had wished her all the love and success in life.

Here's why Bill Gates will appear on Smriti Irani-led Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi 2's three episodes: report

Ekta Kapoor produced Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi 2, starring Smriti Irani and Amar Upadhyay in the lead roles, has consistently ranked among the top 5 shows on the TRP chart ever since it debuted earlier this year. During the Diwali week, the show's track gave fans a treat as Sakshi Tanwar made a guest appearance as Parvati on the show. The Tulsi-Parvati reunion track played out on Kahaani Ghar Ghar Ki's 25th anniversary, and the fans loved it. And it seems the surprise is not over yet, after an unexpected collab between Tulsi and Parvati, Ekta Kapoor is all set to bring Bill Gates on the show.

According to a report in The Times of India, Microsoft's co-founder will be making an appearance on Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi 2. As per the report, Bill Gates will appear on the show virtually. In the upcoming track, there will be a video call between Smriti Irani and Bill Gates, which will span across three episodes. In the latest episode, we saw that Tulsi received an invitation to attend her cook's baby shower ceremony, which is where the track with Bill



Gates will also begin. On the show, Bill Gates will be seen talking about his foundation with Melinda Gates.