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Public Governance-Progress Planning Program rally

"Mandal MPDO Surma Adarsh God""Mandal Tehsildar Srinivas""Mandal MPO Ramaswami""Mandal APO Dhananjay Raj""Chinnambavi mondal (Indian Chronicle)""Friday as part of 99 days of Public Administration Progress Plan in Chinnambavi Divisional Centre. An awareness rally was organized on the first day. MPDO Surma Adarsh ??Goud, Tehsildar Srinivas, MPO Ramaswamy, APO Dhananjay Raj started the rally. From March 6 to June 12, various festivals were held for 99 days in various villages of Chinnumbavi Mandal. Officials said that programs will be organised.

Married Woman Reported Missing in Medipally

"NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 6, (Indian chronicle)""Medipally: A 34-year-old married woman has been reported missing from Swarup Nagar Colony under the Medipally Police Station limits. According to police, Kallu Keerthi, a resident of Swarup Nagar Colony, had been running a small clothing business for the past few years. In an attempt to expand her business, she had reportedly borrowed money from acquaintances. However, after facing financial losses in the business, she was unable to cope with the burden of debts.

PM 'compromised', ceded national interests: Rahul on Russian oil waiver

New Delhi, March 6

The Congress on Friday accused the Narendra Modi government of compromising India's foreign policy after the United States announced a temporary 30-day waiver allowing Indian refiners to buy Russian oil, triggering a sharp political exchange ahead of the second half of Parliament's Budget session beginning next week.

It would issue a short-term waiver permitting Indian refiners to purchase Russian oil. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the waiver was a "deliberately short-term measure" meant to facilitate transactions involving oil shipments already stranded at sea.

According to him, the 30-day relaxation would not provide any significant financial benefit to the Russian government as it only covers cargoes that are already in transit.

The Congress leadership echoed Rahul's criticism and alleged that India was gradually losing diplomatic space in international affairs. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the language used in the US announcement raised concerns about India's strategic autonomy.

"The US proclamation to 'allow' and grant us permission to buy Russian oil as a temporary 30-day waiver clearly demonstrates that the Modi government is continuously ceding diplomatic space," Kharge said in a social media post.

He said such wording was generally used for sanctioned states and not for a country like India that has historically maintained an independent role in global diplomacy.

At a press conference in New Delhi, Congress spokesperson Pawan Khara also questioned the authority of the United States in determining India's energy imports.

Referring to the one-month waiver, Khara asked whether India now needed permission from Washington to import oil. He said the trade agreement between India and the United States had not yet been finalised, yet restrictions and conditions were already being discussed.

Khara said Rahul had earlier cautioned that global powers could begin dictating India's energy choices, and the latest development appeared to support that concern.

He also referred to remarks made by US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau at the Raisina Dialogue, where Landau had said that the United States would prioritise the interests of its own people in trade negotiations. Khara said External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar did not respond to those remarks during the event.

Telangana High Court Orders Election for Kyatanapalli Municipal chairman

Hyderabad, March 6

The Telangana High Court has directed the state government to hold elections for the chairman and vice chairman of Kyatanapalli Municipal Corporation within three weeks.

The court heard the dispute over the municipality on Friday, following recent political developments in Kyatanapalli, Mancherial district, after the municipal elections. The election of the municipal leader was halted amid ongoing tensions.

BRS party leader and former MLA Balka Suman was arrested by police and subsequently remanded. He later applied for bail, which was granted.

Speaking to reporters at his residence in Kyatanapalli after his release, Suman made serious allegations against local MP Vamsi Krishna.



In a first, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh ban social media for children

In a historic move aimed at curbing the adverse effects of increasing screen time, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh on Friday became the first two Indian states to ban the use of social media for children in different age groups.

The Karnataka Government announced a ban on the

In January, Karnataka Electronics Minister Priyank Kharge had informed the Assembly that the state was holding consultations on measures to ensure the responsible use of artificial intelligence and social media, especially among children.

Following suit, the Andhra Pradesh Government said social media would be prohibited for children below 13 years of age. Speaking in the state Assembly, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said the social media restrictions would be in place for children under 13 in the state in the next 90 days. He added the government was deliberating whether the ban should be extended for teenagers between 13 and 16 years.

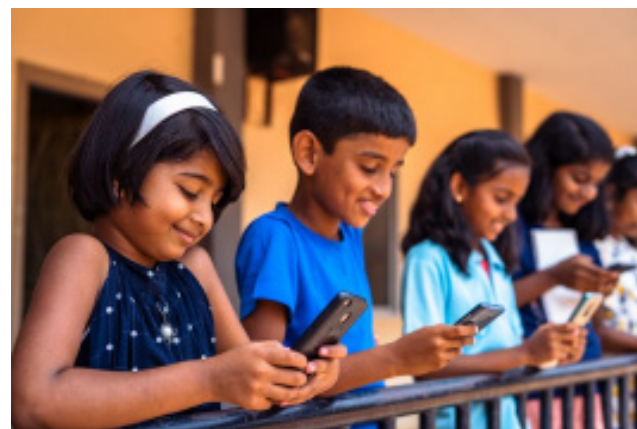
Referring to a proposal suggested by IT Minister Nara Lokesh, the Chief Minister said his government was committed to ensuring that children were not negatively affected by social media, and assured that steps would be taken to protect their well-being.

The Central Government's Economic Survey tabled in Parliament in January this year said age-based access to online platforms should be considered while also cutting down online teaching to avoid digital addiction.

BJP Rajya Sabha MP from the state Lahar Singh Siroya, however, welcomed the move in a social media post on 'X' saying he had raised this issue in Parliament.

"Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi had also spoken about securing the interest of our younger generations at the AI summit, recently. I had further asked for restrictions on smartphone use among children in my parliamentary speech. I hope this too will be looked into seriously," he said.

Australia and Indonesia have effected similar bans, amid a global debate over the need to safeguard children from the addiction to social media.



use of social media by children below 16 years. Presenting the Budget 2026-27 in the state Assembly, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said: "With the objective of preventing adverse effects of increasing use of mobile phones on children, social media will be banned for children under the age of 16."

Later, talking to the media, he said children below 16 years could keep a mobile phone, but they could not use social media. "We will ban social media for them," he said.

Responding to queries on how the use will be regulated in schools, colleges or at home, Siddaramaiah said, "We will formulate a programme for that. Once the programme is finalised, we will inform you."

Gurugram pilot among 2 killed in Assam Sukhoi crash

Squadron Leader Anuj Vashisth of Gurugram was among the two IAF pilots who died when a Sukhoi-30MKI jet crashed near Chokihola in Assam's Karbi Anglong district.

The IAF, in a post on Friday morning, said Squadron Leader Vashisth and Flight Lieutenant Purvesh Duragkar sustained fatal injuries in the crash. The jet was on a training sortie and disappeared from radar shortly after taking off from Jorhat airbase on Thursday.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said he "is deeply saddened" by the deaths of the IAF pilots. "Their courage and service to the nation will always be remembered. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families," he said in a post on social media.

The IAF operates around 260 Sukhoi-30MKI jets, which played a major role in Operation Sindoor, including the delivery of the air-launched version of the BrahMos missile on Pakistan's air bases on May 10.

There have been 13 accidents involving Sukhoi-30K jets between 2009 and 2026, and five pilots, including the two who died today, lost their lives.

A massive upgrade has been planned for the jets, including modern avionics, a latest-generation radar, better engines and a 78 per cent indigenous content. India aims to increase local components in the upgraded aircraft to boost domestic manufacturing and reduce dependency on foreign suppliers. The IAF is awaiting a final nod for upgrading of the fleet.

In February last year, Russia offered the engine that powers its latest stealth fighter jet, the Sukhoi-57, for the



upgrade programme of the existing Sukhoi-30MKI fleet. The Sukhoi-30MKI is currently powered by the AL-31 engine, which is less powerful than the AL-41 used in the Sukhoi-57. Russia's proposal includes replacing the existing engines with the more advanced AL-41.

The HAL, which holds the licence to produce the Sukhoi-30MKI in India, is set to sign the work-share contract for the upgrade.

The twin-engine multirole aircraft forms the backbone of the IAF's fighter fleet. In 2024, the Ministry of Defence placed an order worth Rs 13,500 crore with the HAL to produce 12 more Sukhoi jets along with associated equipment, replacing those lost in attrition over the years.

Proposed Adilabad Airport adds to confusion



"S. Harpal Singh, Adilabad. March 6""The proposal for establishment of an airport in Adilabad town has brought more confusion than cheer to locals. The questions that are haunting locals, especially the villagers who apprehend their farm lands to be acquired for the purpose, are the area where the land will be acquired, the extent of land that will be garnered by authorities and the quantum of compensation that will be fixed for the land parcels."A recent protest staged by villagers of Anukunta located towards the north-east of the existing aerodrome failed to get any further clarity on the issue though the Adilabad district administration did seem to be taking progressive steps in this regard. Among the demands centering around the land acquisition was the forceful plea by the agitating villagers to cancel any proposed plan to scrap the existing road that connects Adilabad district headquarter town with Anukunta."According to sources, however, the road is most likely to be closed once the proposal gets implemented.



"An alternate road connecting the two places will be laid eventually," the sources added."The circulation on social media of a purported plan for the airport runway has also not helped the local people when it comes to getting desired clarity. A plan of the purported runway, drawn apparently without any authority has evoked ire even among politicians of all hues."Adilabad has an existing aerodrome with a more than 500 mtrs airstrip of the World War II vintage. The place, spread over 369 acres bordering Khanapur locality towards the south of the town, was constructed by the then Nizam of Hyderabad but is now controlled by the Indian Air Force."In the year 2014, the IAF has proposed to establish a full fledged training centre by acquiring additional 1,600 acres of land in the contiguity. This proposal, nevertheless, did not see the light of the day thanks to the previous government.

EDITORIAL

Those who promoted myopically pro-EV policy must face consequences

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has rightly raised the issue of critical minerals' supply chains. Without naming any country (though he meant China), Modi told a BRICS session that countries should "work together to make supply chains for critical minerals and technology secure and reliable." He added that no country should use these resources "for its own selfish gain or as a weapon against others." Ironically, this is precisely what China has started doing.

Beijing did it systematically. It tightened its control over the rare earth industry through consolidation and quotas, transforming it into a powerful diplomatic tool. "By consolidating miners and processors into two state-owned giants and restricting access to production quotas, Beijing has curbed environmental damage and gained greater oversight", a report said. As Modi has raised this issue at the most appropriate forum, BRICS, it is incumbent upon the grouping, if it has any raison d'etre, to address it urgently and effectively. Otherwise, it will prove to be what many detractors accuse it of-a talking shop.

From the Indian perspective, BRICS membership will be worse than useless: we don't derive any benefit from it, while earning the wrath of the United States with President Donald Trump threatening to impose an additional 10 per cent tariff on any country aligning itself with "the Anti-American policies of BRICS." Further, Trump said in a Sunday night Truth Social post, "There will be no exceptions to this policy." At present, the Indian automobile industry finds itself at a precarious crossroads, with a looming crisis driven by the strategic actions of China. By weaponising its control over critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, and rare earth elements,

These minerals are essential for the batteries and motors that power EVs. India, like many other countries, had rushed headlong into the EV revolution, encouraged by the promise of green technology and reduced dependence on fossil fuels. But the reality of mineral dependency is now hitting hard. India's policymakers, who zealously promoted EVs without first securing access to these strategic resources, are reportedly re-evaluating their approach. However, a mere rethink won't suffice. There must be accountability for the short-sightedness that has placed a vital sector of the economy at the mercy of an adversarial power.

When governments push sweeping policy changes without a robust supply chain strategy, they risk endangering national interests. The EV push, though well-intentioned, was implemented with insufficient consideration for the geopolitical implications of mineral dependence. India does not currently possess large domestic reserves of critical minerals, nor has it built sufficient strategic partnerships abroad to ensure their steady import. Moreover, lack of adequate investment in research, alternative battery technologies, and domestic mineral processing capabilities has compounded the vulnerability. While China's tactic of mineral weaponisation may be unethical, it was not unforeseeable. The warning signs were evident—from China's past restrictions on rare earth exports to its belt and road investments in the mineral-rich African and Latin American countries. Those who fail to anticipate such risks and preemptively secure alternative supply routes should face the consequences of their recklessness. The Modi government should fix accountability of individuals, who push in an uncritical adoption of policies without evaluating long-term national security and economic sustainability.

Grand Celebration of Shiva-Parvathi Wedding Ceremony

“Jagtial Town, March 6 (Indian Chronicle):”“The annual festival of the 108 Sri Chakra Lalitha Mata temple in Polasa, Jagtial, concluded with the grand celebration of Shiva-Parvati wedding ceremony. The event was conducted by Vedic Brahmins under the guidance of Brahma Sri Tigulla Vishu Sharma on Friday.”“The 3rd annual festival celebrations were conducted with grandeur by Founder Chairman Chellam Swarupa, along with Vedic



Brahmins Madhav, Bharat, Ajay Sharma, Rakesh Mishra, Radhakrishna, and others amidst devotees' chanting of Shiva names.”“Initially, special puja was performed for Lalitha Mata, and women participated in large numbers to fulfill their vows. Women also recited Lalitha Sahasra Nama Parayana with devotion and dedication. Later, the Shiva-Parvati wedding ceremony was conducted amidst auspicious music.”“Founder Chairman Chellam Swarupa Sattayya stated that the festival concluded with the Mangala Shasana by Sriman Nambi Venugopal Charya, under the Vaidic guidance of Brahma Sri Tigulla Vishu Sharma.”“The event was attended by Uturi Kalyani, Pampatti Sulochana, Adi Vanaja, Peddi Ashwini, Katakam Rama, Shirisha, Uthuri Archana, Swapna, Mahender Mahesh, Sattayya, and others.

Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy inaugurates Praja Palana-Pragathi Pranalika programme at Uppal Primary Health Centre



participated in the programme.

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 6 (Indian Chronicle):”“As part of the Telangana Government's Praja Palana-Pragathi Pranalika 99-day Action Plan, which will be conducted from March 6 to June 12, the programme was inaugurated on the first day, Friday, at the Uppal Primary Health Centre by Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy.”“Under the supervision of Uppal PHC Medical Officer Dr. Souseelya Rani, a team of doctors including specialist doctors, gynecologists, orthopedists, ophthalmologists, pediatricians, dental specialists and general medicine doctors provided medical services to the people of Uppal.”“On the first day of the camp, 261 people received medical services. The medical team of Uppal Primary Health Centre rendered services under the leadership of Dr. Souseelya Rani.”“BRS party leaders and party workers also

99-Day Praja Palana – Pragathi Pranalika Programme to be Conducted: Govt. Homoeo College Principal Dr. N. Lingaraju

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 6 (Indian Chronicle):”“As part of the prestigious Praja Palana – Pragathi Pranalika programme initiated by the State Government, a cleanliness and shramadaan (voluntary service) programme was conducted on Friday at the Government Homoeopathic Hospital, Ramanthapur. The programme was attended by Government Homoeo College Principal and Additional Director Dr. N. Lingaraju, Superintendent Dr. Nomya, Deputy Superintendent Dr. Dasari Parthasarathi, Dr. Vinod, Dr. Geetha Rani, along with nursing staff, PG students and interns, who actively participated and made the event successful.”“Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Lingaraju said that as per the State Government's plan and directions, various activities will be conducted at the Homoeo Medical College and Hospital for 99 days under the programme. He stated that the Praja Palana – Pragathi Pranalika programme taken up by the government is highly beneficial for the public and



emphasized that everyone should participate and contribute to making the initiative a grand success.

Women Should Excel in All Fields and Become Role Models for Society — Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 6 (Indian Chronicle):”“On the occasion of World Women's Day, Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, along with BRS

senior leader Gudi Madhusudhan Reddy, celebrated the day in a grand manner by cutting a cake with women and GHMC women staff. As part of the celebrations, tiffin boxes were distributed to the women. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy said that women should progress in all fields and stand as role models for society. He also expressed hope that women would actively participate in politics and rise to leadership positions. “He further stated that more such programs will be organized in the future for the development and empowerment of women. Local women including Anasuya Reddy, Subhadra, Andalu, Lakshmi, Satyavathi, Suvarna, Renuka, Uma, Mounika, Chandrakala, Anjali, Sharada, Premalatha, Saritha, Venkatamma, Haseena Begum, Savitri, along with GHMC women staff and BRS senior leaders from Chilukanagar Division, participated in large numbers and made the Women's Day celebration successful.

‘Praja Palana – Pragathi Pranalika’ Programme Launched in Kagaznagar



“Indian Chronicle (Taj Khan), March 6,”“As part of the prestigious Praja Palana – Pragathi Pranalika initiative launched by the Telangana State Government, a 99-day Special Action Plan was inaugurated on Friday in Ward No. 18 of Kagaznagar Municipality.”“The programme was jointly launched by Municipal Chairperson Shaheen Sultana, Vice Chairperson Dr. Kothapalli Anita, and Municipal Commissioner Battu Tirupati.”“On this occasion, the officials, public representatives, and municipal staff collectively took a pledge to work with dedication for the development and progress of the town.”“Speaking at the event, the officials stated that the special action plan will be implemented continuously from March 6 to June 12, 2026.

They emphasized that the objective of the programme is to transform the municipality into a model town. Officials and staff were instructed to remain actively engaged at the ground level during the 99-day period to closely monitor and ensure effective implementation of development works. “They also urged citizens to cooperate with municipal authorities by reducing the use of plastic and supporting sanitation and development activities.”“The programme was attended by municipal councillors, officials from various departments, municipal staff, and prominent citizens of the town.

Uppal Congress In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy Participates in Sri Rama Rahitha Satyanarayana Swamy Rathotsavam

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 6 (Indian Chronicle):”“The Rathotsavam (chariot festival) of Sri Rama Rahitha Satyanarayana Swamy was celebrated with great grandeur and devotion on Thursday night as part of the Brahmotsavam festivities at Indira Nagar, Ramanthapur. The event was conducted in a magnificent manner and turned into a visual treat for devotees.”“Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy attended the Rathotsavam, offered prayers, and had darshan of Sri Satyanarayana Swamy. On this occasion, he performed special pujas to the



deity.”“Later, Parameshwar Reddy greeted the devotees and walked along with them, participating in the Rathotsavam celebrations with devotion and enthusiasm.”“Among those present at the program were EO Vijaya Bharathi, Temple Trustee Narsimha Reddy, Rafiq, Taufiq, Garika Sudhakar, Vallapu Srikanth Yadav, Bhaskar Gangaputra, Sandeep, Nam Raji Reddy, Upender Reddy, Bhaskar, Bullet Ashok, Ambika, Cheemakannala Jangaiah, Pooasa Satti Anna, Samuel, Chintu, Muthyala Babu, Sachin, Ram Raju, Kashmal Shankar, Nayeem, Swathi, and several others.

"All employees should participate in the progress plan" - "Public Administration" - ZP CEO Gautham Reddy in the Progress Plan Program

“Jagithyal Correspondent, March 6 (Indian Chronicle):”“ZP CEO Goutham Reddy inaugurated the 99-day "Praja Palana - Pragathi Pranalika" program at the district Zilla Parishad office. He emphasized that all employees should participate in the program as per the scheduled plan. The CEO inspected the office premises, cleanliness, and removal of unused items. He also sug-



gested clearing weeds around the office. Reddy urged employees to work together to make the program a success, ensuring a clear change is visible. Officials like Deputy CEO Pallikonda Nares, PREE Lakshman Rao, and others participated in the event.

PM Jan Aushadhi Kendra Inaugurated at Dammaiguda

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 6, (Indian chronicle):”“Dammaiguda: A Pradhan



Mantri Jan Aushadhi Kendra was inaugurated at Dammaiguda by Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy. The centre was opened following an initiative by BRS party youth leader Pilli Sai Ram. Former Dammaiguda Chairperson Praneetha Srikant Goud, former Vice Chairman N. Narendra Reddy and BRS Kapra Division President Byri Naveen Goud attended the programme as guests. The Jan Aushadhi Kendra has been established with the objective of providing quality medicines to the public at affordable prices. It is expected to benefit a large number of people, especially the common public.

Exam Pads and Geometry Boxes Distributed to Students at St. Paul School

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 6, (Indian chronicle):”“With the Class 10 public examinations fast approaching, Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy distributed exam pads and geometry boxes to students

studying in Class 10 at St. Paul School as a gesture of encouragement and support. The study materials were arranged with the support of former Division President Vanjari Praveen Karipe

to help students prepare for their examinations with confidence and without any inconvenience. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA encouraged the students to

focus on their studies, remain confident and aim for good results in the upcoming examinations. He also wished them success in their academic journey and future careers.”“Former corporators Jeripothula Prabhudas,

Gundarapu Srinivas Reddy and Golluri Anjaiah were also present at the programme. They motivated the students to

work hard and make their parents and teachers proud by achieving good results. School management, teachers and students expressed gratitude to the organisers and guests for their support and encouragement.

Tenth students received pads, Pens KL Group Chairman Konda Laxman showed generosity

“Jagithyal Correspondent, March 6 (Indian Chronicle): “KL Group Chairman and industrialist Konda Laxman distributed pads and pens to tenth-class students appearing for exams in Jagithyal district, showcasing his generosity and earning everyone's praise.”“The annual exams for 10th class students at ZPHS High School in Allipour, Rayikal mandal, Jagithyal district, are set to begin on the 14th of this month. Under the leadership of KTM Ravi, Konda Laxman distributed exam pads and pens to students on Friday, wishing them well and hoping they achieve good marks and pass with flying colors.



Actions will be taken against illegal structures in graveyards.

“Secunderabad Cantonment. March. 6 (Indian Chronicle):“Cantonment Board Defense Estate Officer T Anil Kumar said that legal action will be taken against those who encroach on lands in Hindu graveyards and construct illegal structures. A person encroached on the Chinnathokatta G M Anjaiah Memorial graveyard in Bowenpally and constructed illegal structures. The members of the graveyard committee who noticed this recently complained to the Revenue, Cantonment Board and Defense officials. As a result, the said officials recently conducted a joint survey. The survey found that about 3 acres and 20 pits of land were uninhabited. As a result, the illegal structures were demolished on Friday under the supervision of Defense officials, Secunderabad Cantonment Board officials, Tirumalagiri Mandal officials and Boinappally Police Inspector Tirupati Raju. The officials completely removed the cattle feed.”He warned that strict action will be taken against those responsible if anyone tries to re-occupy this place in the future. He made it clear that legal action will be taken against those who encroach on the lands of the Defense Department. Officials said that it is not right to create problems by constructing other structures on the land allocated for the cemetery. The program was attended by Defense Estate Officer T. Anil Kumar, Board Officer D. Rajeshwar, MRI Tirumalagiri Mandal T. Sunil. Kumar, former Cantonment Board Vice Presidents Jampana Pratap Jakkula Maheshwar Reddy, Cemetery members Kondal Yadav, Vijay Babu, Sadanand, Ashok and others.



“Chinnambavi Mandal (Indian Chronicle)“Keeping the summer in mind in the Chinnambavi mandal center, the avenue plantation plants planted on both sides of the roads are not drying out. Employment Guarantee Watchers are watering the trees in the villages every day with water tankers. In the wake of the increasing intensity of the sun, measures are being taken to prevent the plants from drying out. Summer in Telangana is showing its glory early this time. The intensity of the sun, which usually increases in April, has increased this time in early March. People are facing difficulties as the temperatures have increased suddenly in the last few days. The maximum temperatures are already being recorded in many areas up to 37 degrees. The effect of the sun is also clearly visible in Chinnambavi mandal of Wanaparthy district. The government planted trees on both sides of the road. By tanker to prevent plants from drying out They are pouring water. The trees are not withering. These measures are being taken to protect Office staff said. weather According to the information of the department two more Temperatures at 40 degrees for three days There is a possibility of touching Mar. Morning The sun was intense at 11 o'clock. Out during the afternoon People are struggling to come. than usual for the past week Five to six degrees higher Temperatures seem to be rising.

Electricity Problems Resolved for Venkat Reddy Nagar Division Residents: Akarapu Arun Patel

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 6 (Indian Chronicle):““The electricity problems faced by the residents of Venkat Reddy Nagar Division have been resolved. Uppal Constituency Youth Congress President Akarapu Arun Patel stated that the installation of a new transformer will ensure that the residents who had been suffering from electricity issues will no longer face such problems.”Colony residents expressed their gratitude to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, and the concerned officials. The long-standing low-voltage problem in several colonies under Venkat Reddy Nagar Division has now received a permanent solution.”Keeping in mind the difficulties faced by the local residents, the Telangana Congress government responded promptly and completed the necessary work. After the issue was brought to the attention of the officials, a new transformer was immediately installed.”The residents and party workers of Venkat Reddy Nagar Division also extended special thanks to Uppal Constituency Congress Party President Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy for responding quickly to public issues and ensuring their resolution. Among those who participated in the program were colony residents B.V. Chari, Srinivas, Sunil, Vinay, Mukesh, Ismail, Youth Congress General Secretary Kishore, Hanuman Temple Director Raghunath, Venkatesh, Chicha, Rajesh, Sai, Chirumito Sumit, and several other residents.



Jawani Spiritual Hub Inaugurated at Raghava Kalyan Estate



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 6, (Indian chronicle):“KAPRA: A Jawani Spiritual Hub was inaugurated at Raghava Kalyan Estate in Chandragiri Colony under Kapra Division on Friday by Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said that such centres providing spiritual guidance are

highly beneficial for the youth and society. He stated that the Jawani Spiritual Hub will serve as a platform for spiritual guidance, personality development and social service activities for the public.”A large number of Jawani team members, spiritual gurus, followers and local residents participated in the programme. BRS Kapra Division President Byri Naveen Goud, Jawani Spiritual Hub founder Guru Vanitha Haribabu and members of the organising team were also present at the event.

Basti Bata in Every Colony of the Constituency Uppal Congress Party In-charge Parameshwar Reddy

“Nacharam, Indian Chronicle, March 6: ““ Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy stated that the Basti Bata program will be conducted in all colonies of the constituency.”As part of the program on Friday, he visited Brahmapuri Colony, JNNURM Colony, Chandia Nagar and other colonies in Mallapur United Division and Shakti Sai Nagar Division, where he directly interacted with the residents and enquired about their problems.”During the visit, residents brought to his notice several basic issues such as drinking water, drainage, and street lights. Parameshwar Reddy assured them that permanent solutions would be provided for drainage and road-related problems.”He clarified that the Basti Bata program has been taken up to visit bastis and resolve people's problems at the grassroots level.



Talasanani Orders Removal of Encroachments on Nala

“Hyderabad correspondent (KS Reddy) March 6, Indian Chronicle: Former Minister and Sanathnagar MLA Talasanani Srinivas Yadav on Friday directed officials to take immediate steps to remove encroachments on a nala in Gayatri Nagar under Ameerpet Division. Accompanied by officials from various departments, he inspected the ongoing nala development works and interacted with local residents to understand their concerns. Residents of Gayatri Nagar have been facing severe hardships every monsoon due to flooding caused by rainwater flowing from the upper areas. Recognising the gravity of the issue, the nala development and construction works were taken up during Talasanani's tenure as Minister. Reviewing the progress, the MLA said that over 80 per cent of the works have already been completed. He instructed officials to clear the silt in the open nala and install grills to prevent dumping of garbage. Talasanani expressed confidence that the flooding problem in Gayatri Nagar would soon be permanently resolved.



Even though the plants are being watered with tankers, the employment guarantee watchers



“Chinnambavi Mandal (Indian Chronicle)“Keeping the summer in mind in the Chinnambavi mandal center, the avenue plantation plants planted on both sides of the roads are not drying out. Employment Guarantee Watchers are watering the trees in the villages every day with water tankers. In the wake of the increasing intensity of the sun, measures are being taken to prevent the plants from drying out. Summer in Telangana is showing its glory early this time. The intensity of the sun, which usually increases in April, has increased this time in early March. People are facing difficulties as the temperatures have increased suddenly in the last few days. The maximum temperatures are already being recorded in many areas up to 37 degrees. The effect of the sun is also clearly visible in Chinnambavi mandal of Wanaparthy district. The government planted trees on both sides of the road. By tanker to prevent plants from drying out They are pouring water. The trees are not withering. These measures are being taken to protect Office staff said. weather According to the information of the department two more Temperatures at 40 degrees for three days There is a possibility of touching Mar. Morning The sun was intense at 11 o'clock. Out during the afternoon People are struggling to come. than usual for the past week Five to six degrees higher Temperatures seem to be rising.

CM Revanth Reddy appeals to government employees to work hard to strengthen the state economy

“Employees have the responsibility to curb irregularities and generate more income to the state”99 day action plan aims to reach the benefits of the schemes to the needy”“Previous BRS government distributed sheep, buffaloes and promoted the profession of stitching of shoes”“People's government is striving to encourage SCs to become doctors, engineers and IAS officers”“2023 elections was a fight between ' mighty ' BRS rulers and struggling Congress to dethrone the dictatorial regime in Telangana . “ We fought the elections with a strong desire to change the lives of the people in the assembly elections. In 2023, we did not have administrative machinery or illegal income. The BRS rulers foisted cases against the opposition leaders and dominated politics with money power . We fought and won the elections by not announcing packages but with grit and determination to service the people” . “The Chief Minister commended leaders from the Madiga community for their protracted struggle for special quota in the SC category. Some people lost their lives in the struggle and some sacrificed their lives in the quest to achieve it. The issue was also complicated due to various reasons and finally addressed the long pending demand of the Madiga community . The CM recalled that he along with other SC MLAs were suspended from the assembly when an adjournment motion on SC categorization moved in the house. ““Stating that he got the opportunity of becoming CM and helping people at his best , the Chief minister said that he adored the characters of Karna and Barbarikudu in Mahabharata. When Karna was insulted, he fought and fulfilled his duty as a friend. “ I also fulfilled my duty as a friend and stood by our people. Ghatotkachu's son Barbarikudu has the great characteristic of standing up for the weak and fighting. I also stood by the madiga community for justice through the SC categorization . Though there was political pressure, I stood by the Madiga community. I will feel real happiness only when I use the opportunity and help your nation”, CM Revanth Reddy remembered .““The Chief minister also said that his cabinet colleagues supported in adopting the SC sub categorization through an act in the Assembly. Telangana was the first state to implement SC classification after the Supreme Court's orders. The act may not solve all problems . promotions, higher education, lands, and protecting lidcap lands can be solved . ““CM Revanth Reddy sought the support of the Madiga community from political attacks while solving their problems

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At 17, Mumbai University among India's top 20 in QS World Ranking 2026



GNS News Agency, March 6

University of Mumbai QS Ranking 2026, Mumbai University global ranking, QS World University Rankings India 2026, top universities in India 2026, The University of Mumbai has moved up to the 664th position worldwide, from the 711-720 band last year. In a major academic milestone for the University of Mumbai, it has secured 17th rank in QS World University Rankings 2026, moving up its position among top 20 educational institutions in India. Last year it ranked 20th. This year, University of Mumbai holds the second spot among traditional universities in Maharashtra, only after Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) which ranks 14th nationally.

The prestigious world ranking for educational institutions, released by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), also shows that the university has managed a significant jump on the global rankings too. The University of Mumbai has moved up to the 664th position worldwide, from the 711-720 band

'Printmaking from India is gaining attention and is an exciting area to explore': Carol Huh of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art

GNS News Agency, March 6

The human form is, perhaps, among the most popular subjects for artists. Indian artists, being no exceptions, have time and again resorted to body politics to address human rights, gender discrimination, environmental concerns and technological evolution. An ongoing exhibition, at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art (NMAA) in Washington DC, titled *Body Transformed: Contemporary South Asian Photographs and Prints* (till August 17), revisits these concerns through the lens of photography and printmaking. Featuring works by Jyoti Bhatt, Jitish Kallat, Navin Kishore, Chitra Ganesh and Vivek Vilasini, among others, it locates "the place of the individual in contemporary society".

In *Yogini*, for instance, Pushpamala N photographs herself dressed as a goddess. The staged representation beckons a commentary on the contradictory perception of the feminine and the divine—one that is worshipped is also trampled upon. Women are also at the centre of Chitra Ganesh's prints. Her print, *A Delicate Line: Corpse She Was Holding* (2010), reveals different layers to the persona of a woman when viewed from different angles, suggesting "the ever-evolving state of the woman's body between disappearance and emergence, dissolution and creation".

Yogini, from the series, *Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs*; Photograph by N. Pushpamala (2000-2004); Chromogenic print on metallic paper Credit: Pushpamala N. and Clare Arni / National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian Institution. *Yogini*, from the series, *Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs*; Photograph by N. Pushpamala (2000-2004); Chromogenic print on metallic paper. For *Untitled (Black)* and *Untitled (Red)*, both made in 2002, Kallat extracts the images of anonymous people on Mumbai streets. He then makes them explode by distorting them to depict the "pressures and contradictions of life in the city". In *Jyoti Bhatt's Man and Machine* (1975), the two titular entities become one to create a sort of Frankenstein's monster, eerily preemptive of the AI evolution that we see today. Carol Huh, NMAA Associate Curator of Contemporary Asian Art, in an email interview, talks about how contemporary Indian artists use photography and printmaking to redefine notions of identity and agency. Excerpts: How did the idea of having an exhibition of prints and photographs by Indian artists at the Smithsonian come about? For over two decades, we have been engaged with photography from India; NMAA Archives and collections include works dating from the mid-19th century to the present, and one of the largest museum holdings of works by Raghuraj Singh (1942-1999). In recent years, gifts from the Umesh and Sunanda Gaur Collection have enhanced significantly the number of Indian artists represented at the NMAA, as well as introduced to the museum's holdings for the first time print works by Indian artists who have made important contributions to the field. The first exhibition drawing from the Gaur Collection, titled *Unstill Waters* (2022) featured photography, video and a few etchings. *Body Transformed* builds on that project by juxtaposing photographic works and a wider array of print techniques. The exhibition features works by Indian artists across generations, from Jyoti Bhatt to Jitish Kallat. What was it about the sensibility of Indian art that the exhibition was looking to showcase? The focus was rather on representations of the human form that are informed by South Asian social, cultural and aesthetic contexts. Both photography and printmaking are often not considered mainstream visual art practices. What was the intention behind turning the spotlight on these mediums? Photography as an artistic practice, and the contributions of South Asian artists, is well recognised generally, and at the NMAA in particular. Japanese prints are also a strength of the collections and curatorial expertise at NMAA. As such, printmaking from or related to India, which is beginning to gain attention, seemed like a fitting and exciting area to continue exploring. In this show, as the title suggests, the human body goes from being a subject to becoming a medium of cultural and societal change. Why do you think that the body assumes such significance for these artists? Social, political and technological developments of the twentieth century have had a profound impact on artistic approaches to the body as medium and subject. For each of the artists featured in this exhibition, the human form and the expressive power of photography and print media offer ways to examine the place of the individual in society. Works by Pushpamala N and Clare Arni, Vivek Vilasini, Ram Rahman and Naveen Kishore focus on the performing body to confront notions of social and cultural identity through photography, a medium that has played a complicated role in India since the nineteenth century. Jitish Kallat and Rashid Rana manipulate photographic images to simultaneously assert and dissolve the figure in jarring compositions that hover between reflections on the public being and the disquiet of the inner self.

last year. Mumbai University shows upward growth on the global platform in the past five years. From ranking beyond 1,000 in the year 2021, the varsity has jumped to rank 664 in QS World University Rankings 2026. According to the QS World University Rankings report, University of Mumbai has excelled in all areas, achieving the highest score of 91 in Employment Outcomes. This is followed by 53.7 in Citations per Faculty, 41.3 in Sustainability, 31.5 in Employer Reputation, 27.6 in International Research Network as well as remarkable performance in Academic Reputation, International students' diversity, and Faculty-Student Ratio.

Vice Chancellor of Mumbai University, Prof Ravindra Kulkarni, said, "These rankings are a testament to the dedicated and sustainable efforts made by every stakeholder of our university. We have launched a University Department Ranking Framework (UDRF) to further improve, and with growing international student numbers and ongoing faculty recruitment, we expect even greater achievements ahead." According to varsity administration, this rise in rankings reflects years of focused development. In recent years, University of Mumbai has signed several national and international educational Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and has started various professional and skill-based courses. At national level, it has excelled in sports, cultural and outreach activities. There is a 156% increase in the number of research papers published in international journals. Total 12 departments/institutes are recognized under various national programmes and more than 80 teachers are on various professional bodies. And 18 National/International awards have been won by teachers in the last five years. Every year, nearly 20 teachers visit abroad for academic activities.



Master print artists Krishna Reddy, Jyoti Bhatt and Chitra Ganesh experiment with provocatively carved lines and vivid colors unique to printmaking. Fragmenting, morphing and multiplying the figure, these artists incorporate various processes to explore representations of power, place and sexuality in today's world. Performing the Goddess Photograph by Navin Kishore (1999); Inkjet print on ultra smooth fine art paper Credit: Navin Kishore / National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of Drs. Umesh and Sunanda Gaur, Performing the Goddess The quotidian and the anonymous seem to be recurrent themes in this exhibition. What was the curatorial thought process while selecting the works? I was interested in showing different approaches to bodily imagery through particular mediums. As for curatorial approach, a number of factors shape an exhibition, including formal and conceptual relationships as one moves through the galleries, from one work to the next. Many works, including the ones by Naveen Kishore and Pushpamala N, look at the physical body vis a vis the metaphysical identity. For a viewer, both seem to appear at odds with one another. Your comments. In the examples by Pushpamala N. and Clare Arni, popularized images of the Indian woman are restaged using elaborate costuming, staging and painted backdrops in what Pushpamala N. calls "photo-performances". Yet elements of the compositions make apparent the disjunction between her photographed body and the artificially painted surroundings, and thus shift the viewer's attention from the subject to the performance in front of the camera. Altogether, these subtle disruptions subvert archetypes of the Indian woman and highlight the constructed nature of such representations. For Navin Kishore, I don't see the identities as being at odds. His work is an extended portrait that draws the viewer into an intimate experience of a profound transformation, and the performative dimension of identity.

SGPC urges Centre to ensure safety of gurdwaras, sacred Saroops in Iran, Israel

GNS News Agency, March 6

Amid the ongoing Iran-Israel conflict, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) on Thursday urged the Central Government to take urgent diplomatic measures to safeguard gurdwaras and Saroops, the sacred scriptures of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, located in the warring countries. In a statement issued in Amritsar, its SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhami said, "Sri Guru Granth Sahib holds the highest reverence for the Sikh community. Ensuring their respect and protection is of utmost importance."

"The Government of India must engage with the governments of Iran and Israel to ensure that no harm comes to the gurdwaras or the Saroops of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, and that their sanctity is fully preserved. It is the responsibility of governments of both countries to ensure the safety of gurdwaras and the sacred Saroops there," he stated. He also appealed to the Sikhs living in Iran and Israel to remain in contact with local authorities and officials concerned to ensure the protection of the gurdwaras and the Saroops.

Dhami has asked the Central government to use international platforms to communicate with authorities in Iran and Israel. The SGPC chief said the current conditions in Iran and Israel require urgent diplomatic intervention. He noted that the committee is monitoring the developments in Iran and Israel and expects the Central Government to act promptly and sensitively on this critical issue. The relation between India and Iran worsened on June 13, when Israel launched airstrikes towards Tehran, Iran's capital, targeting multiple nuclear and military facilities, and killing several senior military officers and scientists under what Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called 'Operation Rising Lion'.

Kolkata puja committee says police 'targeted' them over 'theme of Op Sindoor' by issuing safety notice



GNS News Agency, March 6

Controversy has erupted between a prominent Durga Puja organising committee in Kolkata and the city police, with the organizers alleging harassment over their puja theme of Operation Sindoor and the police citing serious public safety concerns based on last year's experience. BJP leader Sajal Ghosh, one of the organisers of the Santosh Mitra Square Sarbojanin Durgatsav, said on Wednesday that the Muchipara police station sent a two-page letter to the club's secretary after they announced Operation Sindoor as this year's puja theme. "We did not put up any advertisement or billboard regarding our theme. It was only a Facebook post on Sunday, and we received a two-page letter on Monday. This is nothing but a disturbance," Ghosh alleged. He questioned whether other puja organizers in West Bengal had received similar notices, suggesting that Santosh Mitra Square was being singled out. "It is very unfortunate. I don't think any other big puja has got this notice. Those who have an allergy to the term 'sindoor' are the ones sending this notice," he said.

TMC leader Debangshu Bhattacharya defended the police action, stressing the importance of preventive measures to ensure public safety. "If the police feel there is a possibility of an incident and take preventive action, that too becomes political these days. We saw how people lost their lives at the Kumbh due to a lack of crowd manage-

ment. We do not want a repeat of what happened during the Kumbh or the RCB celebration," Bhattacharya said. He added, "After Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee came to power, UNESCO recognised Durga Puja. Fortunately, there has been no major incident here despite large-scale celebrations. If the club is being called for a discussion to improve crowd management, it should cooperate instead of criticising." The letter from Muchipara Police Station to the Santosh Mitra Square Sarbojanin Durgatsav committee, a copy of which is with The Indian Express, outlines specific directives to ensure public safety during the 2025 puja celebrations. It states, "During last year's celebrations, a massive influx of devotees gathered at the venue. Due to non-compliance with the issued guidelines, public safety was compromised. A near-stampedede situation arose, endangering lives." It also mentions that a case had been registered under various sections including 221 (obstructing public servant), 223 (disobedience to order), 324 (6) (mischief), and 61 (2) (criminal conspiracy).

The puja organisers have been asked to submit a detailed mitigation plan covering some directives, and to arrange a meeting with police officials by June 25. These directives include maintaining a proper passage inside the pandal for crowd movement, banning all light and sound shows, laser displays, or similar events inside or outside the pandal, and prohibiting stalls and hawkers near the exit gate. The exit gate must also be wider than the entry gate. Additional safety measures include displaying clear directional signage from BOI More to the pandal, installing a minimum of six CCTV cameras with recording capabilities and a monitoring screen at the Police Control Room, keeping the KMC-adjacent gate inside Santosh Mitra Square open, and deploying at least 250 volunteers during peak hours and 100 during off-peak hours. Other directives include setting up strong barricading from the pandal to BOI More, installing a public address system for police announcements, banning Ferris wheels or amusement rides inside the Mela premises, sharing the puja theme in advance with police for planning, banning any overhead structures between

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Iran and Israel and expects the Central Government to act promptly and sensitively on this critical issue. The relation between Israel and Iran worsened on June 13, when Israel launched airstrikes towards Tehran, Iran's capital, targeting multiple nuclear and military facilities, and killing several senior military officers and scientists under what Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called 'Operation Rising Lion'. As Iran and Israel continue missile attacks against each other, casualties have been mounting on both sides. Amid tensions, around 100 Indian students have been evacuated from Iran amid Israeli airstrikes under the government's 'Operation Sindhu'.

Delhi Police bust cyber scam network with Chinese links, 3 held from Jaipur

GNS News Agency, March 6

According to the police, the case came to light when a man named K Kant filed a complaint stating that he had been defrauded of more than Rs 15 lakh by people who wanted him to write "positive reviews" of hotels and restaurants. According to the police, the case came to light when a man named K Kant filed a complaint stating that he had been defrauded of more than Rs 15 lakh by people who wanted him to write "positive reviews" of hotels and restaurants. The Delhi Police busted a cyber scam network Wednesday with the arrests of three people following multiple raids in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The operation of the network involved the use of Telegram accounts, fake hotel reviews, and fraudsters transferring money to an unidentified Chinese national, said the police. Mahender Singh Rajawat, 25; Ariph Khan, 25; and Laxmi Narayan Vaishy, 23, were arrested from Jaipur for allegedly cheating people by promising money for hotel reviews and then transferring the defrauded money to a Chinese national. The accused would convert the defrauded money to Tether (USDT), a cryptocurrency, within 20 minutes of receiving it and then transfer it into the crypto wallet of the accused Chinese, with whom they were in touch through the Telegram app, said the police. According to the police, the case came to light when a man named K Kant filed a complaint stating that he had been defrauded of more than Rs 15 lakh by people who wanted him to write "positive reviews" of hotels and restaurants. Kant was allegedly approached on Telegram by an individual account for posting reviews online.



"Initially, the complainant received small payments for such tasks. However, he was soon deceived into transferring over Rs 15.8 lakh under various false pretences such as 'welfare tasks', 'account unfreezing', and 'credit score improvement', said Amit Goel, Deputy Commissioner of Police (South West). The police then checked the complainant's WhatsApp and retrieved the bank account link sent to him by the fraudsters.

The money trail led the police to Jaipur, where they had their first arrest. "Accused Mahender Singh Rajawat was the first to be apprehended after a raid at DCM road in Jaipur. Interrogation revealed the identities and roles of co-accused Ariph Khan and Laxmi Narayan Vaishy," DCP Goel said. Ariph Khan and Laxmi Narayan were subsequently arrested from the main market and the Jagatpura areas of Jaipur, respectively, the police said.

Delhi riots larger conspiracy case: Judge hearing case brought back after transfer

GNS News Agency, March 6

Arguments on charge in the 2020 Delhi riots larger conspiracy case will not be heard afresh as the judge, who was hearing the case for a year and a half, was brought back to the Karkardooma Court Wednesday after he was transferred. Additional Sessions Judge Sameer Bajpai was hearing arguments on charge, after the conclusion of which the trial of the case will begin, since September last year. Judge Bajpai was transferred to Saket Court at May end, and Additional Sessions Judge Lalit Kumar replaced him to hear arguments on charge afresh. On Wednesday, a new notification published on the Delhi High Court website stated that ASJ Kumar had been transferred to Saket Court, and ASJ Bajpai was brought back to Karkardooma Court, where the larger conspiracy case is pending. The Delhi Police told ASJ Bajpai on September 4 last year that they had com-

pleted their investigation. After that, ASJ Bajpai ordered that arguments on charge would commence the next day. While ASJ Bajpai heard arguments on charge for seven months, he was transferred following a reshuffle of 135 judges across Delhi on May 30 this year. ASJ Lalit Kumar, who replaced ASJ Bajpai, heard the case for the first time on June 2. He directed the Delhi Police and the accused to furnish their schedule regarding the time frame and manner in which they would address the arguments. ASJ Kumar also stated that arguments on charge must be "expedited". The Delhi Police Special Cell started investigating the alleged conspiracy behind the riots soon after they broke out. The police booked the 18 accused under relevant provisions of the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and Indian Penal Code (IPC).

Thailand Court suspends Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra over leaked phone call



GNS News Agency, March 6

Thailand's Constitutional Court suspended Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra from office pending an investigation over a leaked phone call with a former Cambodian leader. The judges voted unanimously Tuesday (July 1, 2025) to take the petition accusing her of a breach of ethics, and voted 7 to 2 to suspend her from duty.

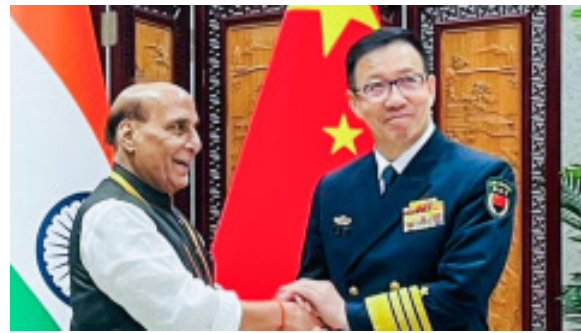
Ms. Paetongtarn has faced growing dissatisfaction over her handling of the latest border dispute with Cambodia, involving an armed confrontation on May 28 in which one Cambodian soldier was killed. The leaked phone call while she engaged in diplomacy over the border dispute set off a string of complaints and public protests. Ms. Paetongtarn said on Monday (June 30, 2025) she would accept and follow the court process although she didn't want to see her work interrupted. "If you ask me whether I'm worried, I am," she told reporters. Earlier in the day, Thailand King Maha Vajiralongkorn approved the appointments of new Cabinet members in the coalition government shaken by a major party's departure over the Prime Minister's leaked phone call with Cambodia's former leader. The reshuffle came during speculation over whether the Constitutional Court will take a petition accusing Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra of a serious breach of ethics over the leaked call. The court could suspend her from office pending the investigation. Ms. Paetongtarn said she would accept and follow the process although she didn't want to see her work interrupted. "If you ask me whether I'm worried, I am," she told reporters Monday (June 30). The endorsement of her

new Cabinet by King Maha Vajiralongkorn was published in the government gazette. The reshuffle replaced former Deputy Prime Minister Anutin Chavvirakul, leader of the Bhumjaithai Party, which had held several Cabinet positions but left the coalition over the leaked call. Mr. Anutin was replaced by Phumtham Wechayachai, who had been Defence Minister for the past year and also will lead the Interior Ministry. The Defence Ministry post was left blank with the Deputy Minister becoming the acting Minister instead. Ms. Paetongtarn took the position of Culture Minister. She said she wanted to promote Thai culture on a global scale. Before she became Prime Minister, Ms. Paetongtarn had promoted Thailand's "soft power," highlighting its food, culture and sports. The Constitutional Court last year removed her predecessor over a breach of ethics. Thailand's courts, especially the Constitutional Court, are viewed as a bulwark of the royalist establishment, which has used them and nominally independent agencies such as the Election Commission to cripple or sink political opponents. Ms. Paetongtarn also faces investigations over an alleged breach of ethics by the Office of the National Anti-Corruption Commission, whose decision could also lead to her removal. Outrage over the call mostly revolved around Ms. Paetongtarn's comments toward an outspoken regional army commander and her perceived attempts to appease Cambodian Senate President Hun Sen to ease tensions at the border. Thousands of conservative, nationalist-leaning protesters rallied in central Bangkok on Saturday (June 28) to demand Ms. Paetongtarn's resignation.

Border dispute with India complicated, takes time; ready to discuss delimitation, says China

GNS News Agency, March 6

China on Monday (June 30, 2025) said the boundary dispute with India was complicated and would take time to settle, but at the same time, it expressed its readiness to hold discussions on the delimitation of the border and keep it peaceful. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, in his meeting with Chinese counterpart Dong Jun in Qingdao on June 26, proposed that India and China should solve the "complex issues" under a structured road map comprising steps to de-escalate tensions along the frontiers and rejuvenate the existing mechanism to demarcate the borders. Mr. Singh and Mr. Dong held bilateral talks on the sidelines of a conclave of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in the Chinese port city of Qingdao, with a focus on maintaining peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Asked for China's reaction to Mr. Singh's remarks, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said, "What I can tell you is that China and India have established the Special Representatives (SRs) mechanism on the boundary question and reached the Agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the China-India Boundary Question". The two sides have diplomatic and military communication mechanisms at various levels, she said. "China stands ready to maintain communication with India on issues, including delimitation negotiation and border management, jointly keep the border areas peaceful and tranquil, and promote cross-border exchange and cooperation," she said. Questioned about the prolonged delay in resolving the border issue despite 23 rounds of the SR-level talks, Ms. Mao said, "The boundary question is complicated, and it takes time to settle it". "The positive side is that the two countries have already established mechanisms at various levels for thorough communication. We hope that India will work with



China in the same direction, continue to stay in communication on relevant issue and jointly keep the border areas peaceful and tranquil," she said. First meeting of SRs The 23rd round of the meeting of the SRs, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, was held here in December last year. It was the first meeting of the SRs since frictions had emerged in the Western Sector of the India-China border areas in 2020. The SRs in their meeting positively affirmed the implementation of the latest disengagement agreement of October 2024, resulting in patrolling and grazing in relevant areas. In his meeting with Mr. Dong, Mr. Singh had emphasised the need to create "good neighbourly conditions" to achieve the best mutual benefits and called for "taking action on the ground" to bridge the "trust deficit" resulting from the 2020 eastern Ladakh border stand-off, according to an Indian readout. Mr. Singh also briefed Mr. Dong on the Pahalgam terror attack targeting innocent civilians, and India's Operation Sindoor to dismantle the terrorist networks in Pakistan. The Singh-Dong meeting came amid efforts by both New Delhi and Beijing to reset their ties following an understanding last October to end the military stand-off along the LAC in eastern Ladakh.

Iran-linked hackers threaten to release Trump aides' emails

GNS News Agency, March 6

Iran-linked hackers have threatened to disclose more emails stolen from U.S. President Donald Trump's circle, after distributing a prior batch to the media ahead of the 2024 U.S. election. In online chats with Reuters on Sunday (June 29, 2025) and Monday (June 30, 2025), the hackers, who go by the pseudonym Robert, said they had roughly 100 gigabytes of emails from the accounts of White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, Mr. Trump's lawyer Lindsey Halligan, Mr. Trump's Adviser Roger Stone and porn star-turned-Mr. Trump antagonist Stormy Daniels. Robert raised the possibility of selling the material but otherwise did not provide details of their plans. The hackers did not describe the content of the emails. U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi described the intrusion as "an unconscionable cyber-attack." The White House and the FBI responded with a statement from FBI Director Kash Patel, who said: "Anyone associated with any kind of breach of national security will be fully investigated and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law." Ms. Halligan, Mr. Stone, a representative for Ms. Daniels and the U.S. cyberdefense agency CISA did not respond to requests for comment. Iran's mission to the United Nations did not return a message seeking comment. Tehran has in the past denied committing cyberespionage. Robert materialized in the final months of the 2024 presidential campaign, when they claimed to have breached the email accounts of several Mr. Trump allies, including Mr. Wiles. The hackers then distributed emails to

journalists. Reuters previously authenticated some of the leaked material, including an email that appeared to document a financial arrangement between Mr. Trump and lawyers representing former presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. - now Mr. Trump's Health Secretary. Other material included Mr. Trump's campaign communication about Republican office-seekers and discussion of settlement negotiations with Ms/ Daniels. Although the leaked documents did garner some coverage last year, they did not fundamentally alter the presidential race, which Mr. Trump won. The U.S. Justice Department in a September 2024 indictment alleged that Iran's Revolutionary Guards ran the Robert hacking operation. In conversations with Reuters, the hackers declined to address the allegation. After Mr. Trump's election, Robert told Reuters that no more leaks were planned. As recently as May, the hackers told Reuters, "I am retired, man." But the group resumed communication after this month's 12-day air war between Israel and Iran, which was capped by U.S. bombing of Iran's nuclear sites. In messages this week, Robert said they were organizing a sale of stolen emails and wanted Reuters to "broadcast this matter." American Enterprise Institute scholar Frederick Kagan, who has written about Iranian cyberespionage, said Tehran suffered serious damage in the conflict and its spies were likely trying to retaliate in ways that did not draw more U.S. or Israeli action. "A default explanation is that everyone's been ordered to use all the asymmetric stuff that they can that's not likely to trigger a resumption of major Israeli/U.S. military activity," he said. "

Prada-Kolhapuri controversy: Can a G.I. tag prevent cultural misappropriation?

The story so far: On June 25, at its Spring/Summer 2026 menswear show in Milan, Italian luxury brand Prada unveiled footwear inspired by India's Geographical Indication (GI)-tagged Kolhapuri chappals, sparking accusations of 'cultural misappropriation'.

What is a geographical indication?

It is a form of 'intellectual property' that identifies goods as originating from a specific country, region or locality, where their distinctive qualities, characteristics, or reputation are essentially linked to that 'place of origin'. In India, there are currently 658 registered GI-tagged goods, including Chanderi sarees (Madhya Pradesh), Madhubani painting (Bihar), Pashmina shawls (J&K), Kancheepuram silk (Tamil Nadu), and Darjeeling tea (West Bengal). Importantly, GIs serve as a powerful marketing tool, driving rural development, boosting exports, enhancing consumer confidence, and preserving 'cultural knowledge' of local communities, farmers and indigenous groups. Unlike trademarks, which are owned by enterprises, GIs are public property belonging to the producers of the concerned goods and cannot be assigned, transmitted or licenced. The legal protection of GIs stem from international instruments like the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (1883), and later gained a clearer definition under the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement, 1995. India, as a TRIPS signatory, enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, which came into force in 2003. The Act provides for GI registration, enforcement of rights, prohibition of unauthorised use and penalties for infringement.

How can infringement be tackled?

The registered proprietor or authorised users may initiate infringement action when an unauthorised user misleads the public about the origin of goods, causes unfair competition or passing off, or falsely represents goods as originating from a GI-registered region. However, it is important to note that GI rights are primarily 'territorial' and consequently limited to the country (or region) where protection is granted. At present, no automatic 'world' or 'international' GI right exists. Nevertheless, several mechanisms



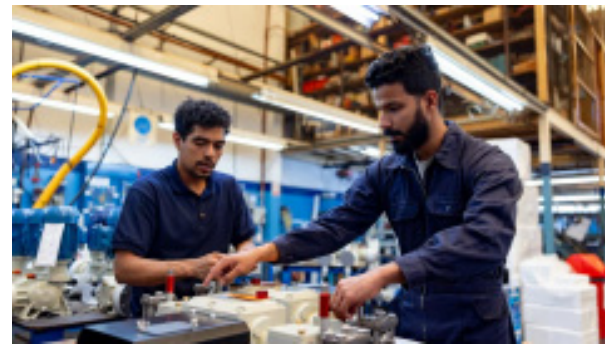
exist for cross-border protection. GIs can be protected internationally by first securing recognition in the country of origin, as many jurisdictions require this as a precondition and then obtaining protection directly in the jurisdiction concerned.

Is this the first such case?

Indian traditional products have time and again suffered exploitation by global corporations. In 1997, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) controversially granted a patent to Ricetec Inc., a Texas-based company, for novel "lines and grains" of Basmati rice. After significant Indian legal efforts, the USPTO disallowed the patent holder from using the name "Basmati". Similar challenges arose with 'turmeric' when the University of Mississippi medical centre was granted a patent in 1995 for turmeric's wound-healing properties — a use long known in Indian traditional medicine. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research contested the claim, leading to the revocation of the patent. Likewise, the European Patent Office in 2000 revoked a patent granted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and a multinational firm W.R. Grace, for neem-based antifungal formulations, as the therapeutic use of neem was already part of Indian knowledge systems. To prevent such cases in the future, one could start by expanding the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library to include wider traditional grassroots expressions. Making a 'searchable database' would allow brands to conduct due diligence and searches to identify right holder communities for collaboration.

Preserving conventional engineering programs while embracing AI, Data Science

GNS News Agency, March 6



At many private engineering colleges, the number of batches for conventional B.E. or B. Tech programs such as Electrical, Mechanical, Chemical, and Civil Engineering are being shut down. The reasons is there's less demand from students and parents for these courses. As a result, several faculty members from Electrical, Chemical, Mechanical, and Civil Engineering departments at such institutes may well have to resign sooner than later. At the same time, several batches in B.E. in AI and Data Science and B.E. in AI and Machine Learning programs have been introduced. New programs in AI are meant to secure more capitation fees for these institutes. Instead of this approach of closing entire

programs, students need to be encouraged to take three or four courses in AI, ML, Natural Language Processing, and databases in every branch of conventional engineering. The Computer Science and Engineering program should be strengthened through specialisations in AI, DS, and ML. B.Tech (CSE) can be offered as an honours degree with additional courses in AI, ML, and DS. Students should be well educated in AI fundamentals, going beyond merely using ML code. Department closures in the report put out by the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) on approved institutions with progressive closed courses for the academic year 2021-2022, 387 departments of Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Electronics, and Instrumentation were closed for the admission of first-year students. Similarly, in 2020-2021, 639 departments closed, and for 2019-2020, 661 departments closed for the admission of first-year students. From 2016 to 2019, 950 departments were closed. From 2013 to 2016, 1,003 departments were closed. Within the subsequent two years, all the faculty in these 3,640 departments could be asked to resign. The impact

The closures of such conventional engineering programs can affect the industrial and human resource growth of our country. It will also be tough for these experienced faculty members to survive without jobs. If an engineering program admits no students in the first year, it won't have students for the program in subsequent years till the final year. Hence, the department could be closed. Faculty could be asked to leave the college accordingly. This has already started. The faculty-to-student ratio is fixed. Hence, faculty members are being asked to leave year-wise. The country requires capable Mechanical Engineers, Electrical Engineers, Civil Engineers, Chemical Engineers, and Computer Science Engineers for its industrial growth. Hence, it is not a good idea to discontinue these programs. At the IITs and NITs, the conventional engineering programs continue to be offered. One of the key components of the technical education system in India is that it comprises a large number of private engineering institutions, about 6,000 spread over various parts of the country, with around 20 lakh students, and about six lakh faculty members. It is not necessary to introduce new and exclusive programmes on AI and Machine learning; they can be offered as modules in existing conventional programmes. The AICTE and the Ministry of Higher Education guarantee should ensure that conventional engineering programs continue to be taught in private engineering colleges.

Pakistan Army Chief describes terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir as 'legitimate struggle'

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Pakistan Army Chief Asim Munir has described terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir as a "legitimate struggle", saying his country would always stand by the people of Kashmir in their struggle. Field Marshal Munir also warned India of a "befitting response" in case of any future attack, weeks after the two nations briefly locked horns in a dangerous conflict.

"What India labels as terrorism is, in fact, a legitimate and lawful struggle for freedom, recognised by international law," Mr. Munir said while addressing a passing out ceremony at Pakistan Naval Academy, Karachi, on Saturday (June 28, 2025). "Those who have tried to suppress the Kashmiri people's will and pursue conflict elimination instead of resolution have only made the movement more relevant through their own actions," he claimed. He said that Pakistan would always stand by the people of Kashmir in their struggle for the right to self-determination. "Pakistan is a strong advocate for a just resolution of the Kashmir issue in accordance with United Nations resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people," he added. In the past, Mr. Munir had described Kashmir as Pakistan's "jugular vein".

India has repeatedly told Pakistan that the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh "was, is and shall forever" remain an integral part of the country. The ties between the two countries nosedived after India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, and bifurcating the State into two Union Territories on August 5, 2019. In his address, Mr. Munir also claimed that Pakistan proved itself as a "net region stabiliser" after having repelled the Indian military attack twice. He was apparently referring to the 2019 Balakot strike

after the Pulwama terror attack and the recent Operation Sindoor following the Pahalgam terror attack. "Pakistan, despite grave provocations, acted with restraint and maturity and demonstrated its commitment to regional peace and stability, which has led to Pakistan's role as a net regional stabiliser,"

he claimed. "As we steadily, but surely, build our comprehensive national power, any enemy acting on the perceived vulnerability of Pakistan under the illusion of strategic impunity or miscalculation, would get a swift and a very befitting response," he said. The army chief also said that undeterred by the efforts by adversaries, Pakistan would continue on the path of progress, development and prosperity.

Delays in admissions, irregularities in PhD entrance process: Teachers' body raises concerns over 'chaos' in JNU

Days before Jawaharlal Nehru University re-opens for the new academic year, its teachers' association has raised sharp concerns over what it calls the "chaos and mess that has become typical of the JNU of today". In a statement released on Monday, the Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers Association (JNUTA) slammed the administration for delays in admissions, irregularities in PhD entrance processes, and what it termed the Vice-Chancellor's "undemocratic" functioning. According to the academic calendar, continuing students are scheduled to begin registering on July 2, with classes starting on July 9.

In a perilous world, India must read the tea leaves well



India's foreign policy is currently facing an existential crisis. The second term of the Trump administration, which had previously been welcomed by India, has upset India's carefully crafted foreign policy. The recent India-Pakistan conflict should also be viewed as a 'wake-up call'. As details of the extent of China's military connections to Pakistan and of equipment transfer tumble out, India must take notice. Next to the China-Pakistan nexus in the region, it is India's approach to events in West Asia and the Israel-Iran conflict that clearly need a relook. India has tried, not very successfully, to sit on the fence as far as the current Israel-Iran war is concerned, but it probably needs to think through what is best in its interest. The stakes have become higher with the United States involving itself directly in the Israel-Iran conflict, which saw it using, for the first time, its GBU-57 bunker buster bomb to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities at Fordow, Natanz and another embedded nuclear site. Neutrality is no longer an option, and despite the announcement of a ceasefire, the possibility of an all-out war is a distinct possibility. A term that is no longer taboo

With the use of the GBU-57 precision guided bombs, the conflict in West Asia has clearly attained a new dimension. The dreaded 'N word' is no longer taboo. Hence, the question that India needs to answer is whether it can continue to keep up its stance of neutrality. The situation is turning increasingly complex and it is no longer a mere wake-up call for India and countries across the globe. The threat has become all too real.

It may be too far-fetched to assert that a neutral India is 'friendless' in the world of today. A look at the state of affairs that concerns India would suggest, however, that this could well become the case — and that it could continue for quite some time in the future. India's professed leadership of the Global South and its patronage of nations across West Asia brought it no dividends during the recent India-Pakistan conflict. Instead, India has since been reminded — if this was needed — that it confronts two hostile nuclear powers in its neighbourhood, both of whom would have no moral compunctions in utilising nuclear weapons, if the opportunity arose. Hence, India cannot, any longer, afford to believe that its current policies are bearing fruit. A correct reading of 'the tea leaves' as they exist at present is essential for India's present and its future. Donald Trump's 'Make America Great Again' (MAGA) policies are today adversely impacting India at levels other than just trade and economics. The U.S. President's claims to have effected a ceasefire between India and Pakistan, following the short India-Pakistan conflict in May — something that India contradicts, but which Pakistan's 'Maximum Leader' Field Marshal Asim Munir, has publicly endorsed — sets India on a collision course with the U.S. President and his Administration. Mr. Trump's lurch for Field Marshal Munir and the fact that Prime Minister Narendra Modi chose not to respond to Mr. Trump's invitation to visit Washington (while returning from the G-7 meeting in Canada), is again likely to be played up by elements in the U.S. and across the world who favour Pakistan against India. The Israel-Iran conflict is yet another situation in which India finds itself as an 'outlier'. 'Neutrality', in the compelling circumstances of today, is out of sync with reality as also the situation on the ground. India's tilt towards Israel in recent times, it would appear, has become something of an albatross around India's neck. India's Iran policy today has few takers beyond India's borders. Its policy of maintaining an equidistance between Israel and Iran has proved to be of little use in so far as extolling the virtues of

non-alignment are concerned. Admittedly, we live in perilous times. Today's situation does not seem to favour India's long-held policy prescriptions. Israel's premeditated attack on Iran's nuclear sites — aided by the U.S. dropping bunker buster bombs — has seen little condemnation across the world. Iran, which needed a strong voice of support like that of India's to counter the narrative of Israel, the U.S. and the West, will find little comfort in India's 'calls for restraint' on all sides. India's support and voice, based on its moral strength, would have mattered were it seen to support the victim of the attack, rather than maintain an equidistance between Israel and Iran. It is true that in today's world, it is fashionable to denigrate consensus in favour of 'might'. For instance, at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore in May, the emphasis seemed to be on the criticality of 'hard power' as against 'soft power', with dialogue taking a back seat. The stage was set by the U.S. Secretary of Defence, Pete Hegseth, who declared that a 'free and open Indo-Pacific' was a sine qua non for peace in the region, and that China's 'calls for hegemony' in Asia were untenable. He reminded the Singapore audience that 'any unilateral attempt to change the status-quo in the South China Sea and the First Island Chain by force or coercion is unacceptable'. This disturbed the normally placid atmosphere seen at the Shangri-La Dialogue, and produced a strong repartee from the Chinese delegate present. Subsequently, a Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman warned that the 'US must never play with fire on the Taiwan question'.

What India needs to do hence, it would be wise in the circumstances for India to prepare for future eventualities of every kind. To start with, there needs to be a detailed study of the growing China-Pakistan military connection as the India-Pakistan conflict in May this year has merely hit the 'pause button'. More importantly, India must try and better understand how deeply China's military capabilities have been meshed with those of Pakistan, the critical role being played today by Chinese weaponry in Pakistan's defence plans, and how Pakistan has managed to integrate Chinese systems with its own defence plans and procedures, including its claims of being able to lock on to hostile targets to counter an attack. Additionally, India needs more details regarding the numbers of J-10Cs and JF-17 fighters in Pakistan's inventory. As a part of its preparations for a future conflict, India would also do well to examine whether it has the necessary wherewithal for conflicts of longer durations. The United Kingdom, for instance, recently undertook an in-depth study of its defence capabilities which helped highlight areas of critical weakness, including that of ammunition stockpiles, the need to set up a new National Armament System, and a new Cyber and Electromagnetic Command to oversee networks and electronic warfare. For India to prepare for a two front war, it should, apart from learning lessons from the Russia-Ukraine war, refine its policies on many such aspects as well. Undoubtedly, Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be a national priority. Aspects such as electromagnetic manoeuvres to neutralise drones, loitering munitions and glide bombs that dominate the skies today in periods of conflict, should again have high priority.

China's white paper While India remains preoccupied with Pakistan, it would also do well to read the fine print in China's recently published white paper on "National Security in the 'New Era'". This has a clear enunciation of Chinese strategic thinking today and mentions that 'development and security are like two wings of one body'. The white paper reads like a 'testament' on the importance of maintaining scientific and technological security at all times, and the importance of ensuring maintainability of supply chains. It also has a mention of the situation prevalent in the areas neighbouring China, underscoring the fact that these pose threats to China's borders. To conclude, it might bear mentioning that if China intends to reinforce its strategic objectives in Asia, specially in South Asia, the criticality of its alliance with Pakistan to encircle India must not be underestimated. Also at a time, when the 'N word' is being openly bandied about, India must reckon with the fact that China has more than a 3:1 advantage over India in terms of deploying nuclear warheads, and an almost 5:1 advantage if the nuclear warheads of China and Pakistan are combined.

Why the prestige of doctors is eroding

Every July 1st, India observes National Doctor's Day, to honour the legacy of Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy. However, in recent years, this commemoration has become overshadowed by more visible policy events such as the roll-out of the Goods and Services Tax in 2017 and the implementation of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita in 2024. This erosion of a symbolic space reserved for doctors is symptomatic of a deeper shift: a slow and complex erosion of the moral authority, public trust, and professional respect that physicians firmly held. Epidemiological transition

This decline is not due to a failure of medicine; rather, it is due to its extraordinary success. To understand this shift, we must look beyond day-to-day grievances and dive deep into what public health scholar A. Omran (1971) described as the 'epidemiological transition'. He describes how societies evolve in their disease patterns. As populations move from poverty to prosperity, the dominant health threats shift from infectious diseases and nutritional deficiencies to chronic, non-communicable diseases and eventually to a complex coexistence of both. Superimposed on this is the demographic transition, marked by falling birth and death rates, ageing populations, and shrinking family units. Together, these transitions radically redefine both the public's expectation of medicine and the role of doctors. In medieval times, the social role of the healer was mediated not by scientific inquiry but by moral authority, religious education, and ritual purity. Medical advice was as likely to come from clergy or spiritual figures as from trained physicians. That changed rapidly with the dawn of scientific breakthroughs during the Industrial Revolution. From Pasteur's germ theory to Koch's postulates and from the discovery of anaesthesia to the isolation of penicillin, medicine acquired a cloak of rationality and predictability. Before the Victorian era, surgeons had the same social standing as barbers. They were elevated to professional status when the knife, supported by chloroform and antiseptics, began to promise not agony but a cure. These were the fruits of an age driven by the curiosity of lone experimenters; public laboratories; and academic idealism. After these discoveries, doctors were seen as saviours and miracle workers, wielding tools that bent nature. But this golden era, too, was transitional. Science becomes commerce

Stage four of the epidemiological transition (currently ongoing in many countries) is marked by delayed degenerative diseases. It has brought about a longer life but not a necessarily better one. The quality of life deteriorates even as costs escalate. In stage five, with emerging and re-emerging diseases (such as the COVID-19 pandemic), uncertainty rules again. Today, as India (and the world) faces this dual burden of infectious and chronic diseases, the expectations from medicine are more fraught than ever. Dengue persists



alongside diabetes. Tuberculosis coexists with obesity-related disorders. While infections are largely controllable (at a cost), chronic diseases are relentless. The treatment of hypertension, depression, or autoimmune illnesses offers no clear endpoint. There is no one-size-fits-all solution; instead, we are handed complex risk algorithms, lifestyle prescriptions that defy modern abundance, and therapies that offer more probability than certainty. In this climate, doctors are no longer seen as custodians of miraculous cures but as gatekeepers of advice that is often unaffordable, frequently incomprehensible, and occasionally ineffective. Statistics have replaced certainty. Protocols have replaced personalisation. A physician today must recommend less salt, less screen time, and less red meat, which contradicts the freedoms of the modern consumer life. It is hard to respect the messenger when the message feels like moral policing. Caught in the crossfire What worsens this fracture of public trust is that the discoveries once driven by individual scientific curiosity have become institutionalised commerce. The fruits of medicine are no longer shaped by academic purity but monetised by conglomerates, wrapped in patents, and rationed as commercial products. What began as a public good has become a market offering. Doctors serve as foot soldiers in an industrial healthcare complex, absorbing public frustration that cannot reach corporations or policymakers. Lifestyle changes, now central to chronic disease care, require moral discipline that institutions cannot enforce. Political freedom and personal autonomy often clash with behavioural mandates. Obesity developed through constant ordering from food delivery apps, and insomnia developed through endless scrolling on social media, cannot be fixed by medicine. Doctors are left prescribing restraint in an age of indulgence and are expected to deliver miracle outcomes in a world where both disease and cure are entangled in sociopolitical contradictions beyond their control. Modern medicine no longer offers the clarity or fairness the public expects.

The widening grip of intolerance



Navigating the cultural landscape these days is akin to treading a minefield. It is becoming evident that the most innocuous creative expressions can blow up to become heated controversies. Over the past week in Kerala, everything from a character named Janaki in a film to Zumba dance performances by school students has angered some section or the other. Religion happens to be the common thread running through most of these controversies.

What's in a name?

Though the regional office of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) cleared the film Janaki v/s State of Kerala starring Union Minister Suresh Gopi, the CBFC headquarters in Mumbai demanded a change in the title as well as of the name of the titular character, Janaki, which is another name for goddess Sita. They told the filmmakers through unofficial channels that a survivor of sexual violence cannot be named after Sita. The makers of another film, Token Number, were also forced to change the name of a character from Janaki to Jayanthi after the Board objected to a character with that name having a relationship with a man named Abraham. Given such arbitrary directives, it will likely become impossible to use a common name in a film's title or for a character. These instances show a disturbing tendency of the CBFC taking over the duties of the 'hurt sentiments' group and widening the scope of censorship. The Kerala High Court has pulled up the CBFC, while film bodies in Kerala are up in arms against the body. Questioning moral values

While these two controversies raged on, joyful videos of school students of all ages dancing together in Zumba classes filled social media timelines in the State. The Kerala

government launched Zumba sessions in schools and colleges this academic year as a part of its efforts to reduce stress and channelise the interests and energy of students away from drugs into positive alternatives. However, even this made a section of people unhappy. Ultra conservative Islamist groups including Wisdom Islamic Organisation and the Sunni Yuvajana Sangham, the youth wing of the Samastha Kerala Jamiyyathul Ulama, opposed the plan, branding the aerobic dance workout practice as a degradation of "moral values" and a violation of Islamic religious values. Some clerics claimed that students will be made to wear "skimpy clothes" while performing Zumba even though the students were seen wearing their school uniforms in all the videos on social media. Such opposition to a relaxing workout revealed the misogyny of the clerics as well as their fears about the inter-mingling of genders. In the past, citing religious reasons, some of these Islamic organisations have opposed the government's decision to introduce a gender-neutral uniform in schools and to do away with separate benches for girls and boys.

The ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF) government has refused to back down on its Zumba plan. The General Education Minister, V. Sivankutty, said that the stand taken by these groups will only help fuel majority communalism. The CPI(M) General Secretary, M.A. Baby, who as the State Education Minister in 2008 faced a controversy over a rationalist lesson in a textbook, said that religious organisations can comment on educational issues, but they cannot dictate terms. Curiously, the Bharatiya Vichara Kendram, a Sangh Parivar think tank, also criticised the State government for promoting "foreign practices" such as Zumba. It claimed that the government's agenda was to sideline yoga trainers. Beyond the cultural sphere, the campaigns of orthodox Islamic groups against vaccination have had dire consequences. Two days ago, a one-year-old child died of jaundice in Malappuram after his parents, both practitioners of alternative medicine, allegedly denied him vaccination and treatment. They also buried the child in mysterious circumstances. Worrying trend in Kerala, there are an increasing number of fundamentalist voices from different sides of the religious spectrum. Their narrow dictates on creative expressions as well as on issues that are beyond the boundaries of their understanding on religion does not augur well for a State that takes pride in its general progressive, secular outlook. The government and civil society need to push back with all vigour to isolate such intolerant voices.

How do unsafe cancer drugs reach patients? | Explained



ity brands of a childhood cancer drug used in Brazil.

What's WHO doing to ensure safety?

The World Health Organization (WHO) maintains a rapid alert system for dangerous drugs. After a concern has been raised, the WHO assesses it and an alert is then sent out to all member governments. However, this system only catches problems after harm occurs. In addition, many regions lack facilities to test drugs. Only seven countries in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, have laboratories that have been approved as meeting WHO standards. The WHO has put several mechanisms in place to keep a check on drug safety in low and middle-income countries. One is the Global Benchmarking Tool: a tool that assesses and rates national regulatory systems on a scale of 1 (least mature) to 4 (most mature). In 2023, 70% of WHO member countries were rated level 1 or 2, meaning they have limited capacity to check drugs coming into the country. Then we have the Essential Medicines List: a list of medications that are considered to be the safest and most effective for meeting the most important health system needs. While generic versions of drugs on this list could still be fake or substandard, the existence of the list helps countries prioritise limited resources. Third, there are prequalification programs which are lists that contain laboratories, specific drugs and sources of active pharmaceutical ingredients that the WHO has inspected, evaluated, and confirmed to be acceptable for use. This helps governments and national regulators procure safe medicines. Fourth, is the Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) certification which ensures that pharmaceutical products are consistently produced and controlled to quality standards. Most countries will only accept the import and sale of medicines that have been manufactured by internationally recognised GMPs. It is used by pharmaceutical regulators and the pharmaceutical industry in over 100 countries. And finally the WHO certification scheme. A Certificate of Pharmaceutical Products (CoPP) can be requested by a country that wants to import a medicine, and it would be issued by the exporting country according to the WHO guidelines. It acts like a passport for medicines, proving the item is approved and safely made in the exporting country. These measures certainly provide some protection against dangerous drugs, but the protections they offer simply aren't enough. Without the level of oversight seen in countries like the U.K., these measures often fail to prevent substandard drugs from reaching patients. For example, a paper published this year revealed the results of testing of 84 drugs intended for shipment from India to Nigeria. All 84 held CoPPs. All 84 failed testing.

No fuel for old vehicles: Delhi begins crackdown using AI cameras

New Delhi: In a major step toward combating vehicular pollution, the Delhi government has begun enforcing strict new rules on End-of-Life (EOL) vehicles starting Tuesday.

As per the directives issued by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), all petrol pumps across the National Capital Territory (NCT) will deny fuel to old vehicles identified through AI-powered Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras. From Tuesday onwards, EOL vehicles, those that have exceeded their legal age limit of 10 years for diesel and 15 years for petrol vehicles, will not be allowed to refuel at petrol or diesel stations. These vehicles will also be liable for hefty fines if found in public places. Four-wheeler owners found violating the rule will be fined Rs 10,000, while two-wheeler owners will face a penalty of Rs 5,000. AI-enabled cameras installed at petrol stations will automatically identify outdated vehicles using number plate data. Once recognised, these vehicles will be flagged in the system, preventing fuel issuance. Petrol pump operators have expressed cautious optimism about the implementation. Sanjay Dedha, manager of a petrol pump in Vivek Vihar, said, "The Delhi government has installed the system. Let's see from today, if vehicles within that category come. We are waiting to see if the system works fine. If there are any server-related hiccups,

The story so far: A major new investigation by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism published by The Hindu has revealed that bad cancer drugs have been shipped to more than 100 countries around the world. Before a cancer drug reaches a patient, they would have already undergone a long, complicated journey. Once the raw materials have been sourced, a typical drug will be manufactured, packaged, shipped, locally distributed and finally put to use. It will travel through factories, storage facilities, transport systems, hospitals and pharmacies. And at every stage of this process, the drug's quality must remain unharmed. Relatively innocuous events — a change in temperature or poor handling — can have critical effects. And unlike wealthy nations with robust tracking systems, low and middle-income countries often lack the infrastructure to monitor the journey.

What are the risks in manufacturing?

One of the biggest dangers is contamination. Ensuring that cancer drugs are sterile is the ultimate responsibility of the manufacturers. Every action must be tightly controlled. Staff working without proper disinfection processes can carry contaminants. Even a technician moving too quickly in a clean room can create air movement that spreads bacteria. Everything is sanitised right down to the pens and paper. The process is unforgiving: if raw ingredients aren't tested adequately, if equipment isn't cleaned properly, and if water isn't filtered thoroughly, these lifesaving medicines can become lethal.

How do countries ensure such safety?

About 80% of NHS prescriptions in England are generic drugs, identical copies of branded drugs that can be made once a drug's patent expires. About two-thirds of those come from abroad. To try to ensure that these drugs are safe, the following measures are in place — every batch undergoes two rounds of quality testing, at the manufacturing site, and then on entering the U.K.; during each of these rounds of tests, 20 different markers of drug quality are checked; only specific experts, for example those registered with professional bodies like the Royal Society of Chemistry, are qualified to verify each batch; and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency regularly inspects manufacturing facilities, both in the U.K. and abroad. Such testing systems are the gold standard. Many low- and middle-income countries, however, face significant challenges. In Nepal, for example, limited resources and expertise mean that there is no effective testing and monitoring of imported medicines. Many countries also lack the ability to track drugs through supply chains and, like Nepal, do not have any verified experts or facilities to check drug quality. These shortcomings, combined with corruption issues and porous borders, all mean that bad and potentially counterfeit drugs can enter healthcare systems.

What are the consequences?

Time is of the essence for any cancer patient undergoing chemotherapy, so for that reason alone a substandard or ineffective drug will affect their treatment. Drugs that have not been manufactured properly can be toxic or contaminated — and put a patient in immediate danger. There are numerous examples of this having happened during recent years. In 2019, five young patients from Saudi Arabia developed a high fever, and one died, after taking an Indian-made medicine given at the same time as chemotherapy drugs. In the same year, four children died and more than a 100 fell ill in Colombia when given the same type of drug. In 2022, at least 10 children in Yemen died after receiving methotrexate, a critical chemotherapy drug used to treat leukaemia and other cancers, that had been contaminated with a deadly bacteria. In 2023, the Bureau uncovered a dozen poor-quality

North Chennai residents, experts to propose alternatives to waste-to-energy plant in Kodungaiyur



As the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) advances the ₹1,268.38 crore Integrated Solid Waste Processing Facility (IWPF) in Kodungaiyur, residents of North Chennai have roped in experts to propose alternatives to the Waste-to-Energy (WtE) plant planned for the area. Residents, under the aegis of the Federation of North Chennai Residents' Welfare Associations, have opposed the project since its proposal. T.K. Shanmugam, president of the federation, stated that during a recent meeting with Chennai Mayor R. Priya, she said the project could not be scrapped. "She asked us to propose alternative plans and mentioned that, if a suitable and less invasive plan is developed in consultation with experts, it could be considered," he said. Alternative proposal D.K. Chytheny of the Centre for Financial Accountability (CFA) has confirmed that the CFA is preparing a proposal for an alternative.

He noted that a study is being drafted in consultation with experts who have worked with the Kerala government on decentralised waste management. The alternative model under preparation includes zero-waste strategies, such as biogas production and enhanced public participation in waste segregation. The first draft is currently under preparation. Carnatic singer T.M. Krishna at a signature campaign organised by the Federation of North Chennai Residents, demanding the scrapping of the Kodungaiyur incinerator project in May 2025. Carnatic singer T.M. Krishna at a signature campaign organised by the Federation of North Chennai Residents, demanding the scrapping of the Kodungaiyur incinerator project in May 2025 | Photo Credit: B. Jothi Ramalingam. According to another expert involved in developing alternative proposals, cities that work in partnership with communities are implementing cost-effective methods, biomethanation, composting, recycling, and proven combinations of less-invasive approaches that function effectively upto the Panchayat level. For example, in the Philippines, 90% of waste is reportedly managed through recycling and composting, with only 10% sent to landfills. These systems employ significant manpower, thereby generating local employment. Similar decentralised models have also been documented in India, the expert added. Gaps flagged in Delhi incinerator

Earlier, the CFA had authored a related study on WtE

operations in Delhi. It had said Delhi currently operates four WtE plants, located at Okhla, Ghazipur, Bawana, and Tehkhand. These facilities incinerate a total of 7,250 ton of municipal solid waste (MSW) per day, amounting to 66% of the city's daily waste. By 2027, authorities plan to increase WtE capacity to handle 14,250 ton per day, it had stated. According to this study, the combustion process in WtEs releases residual heat into the environment through multiple pathways, including flue gas, hot bottom ash, condensers, and storage pits. Each ton of incinerated waste produces around 5,500 cubic metres of flue gas at 200°C. Collectively, the four plants emit an estimated 3,98,75,000 cubic metres of flue gas and 12,325 ton of CO₂ daily. Residents under the Federation of North Chennai Residents Association form a human chain at Kodungaiyur in May 2025.

The report also noted that, as per Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data submitted to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in April 2025, regular monitoring of WtEs had not occurred between 2020 and 2024, with sampling outsourced and infrequent. Opposition continues in a letter dated June 23, 2025, to the GCC, the Federation of Residents Welfare Associations stated that the current dump yard at Kodungaiyur is situated within an 'Institutional Use Zone', as defined in the Second Master Plan for Chennai Metropolitan Area, 2026. Referring to Development Regulation No. 19, the association noted that the dumping and storage of waste in this zone is a prohibited activity and urged for the immediate removal of the dump yard. The letter further highlighted that continued operations at the site have resulted in "severe respiratory, cancerous and innumerable irretrievable diseases" among the local population, composed largely of wage-earners and those living below the poverty line. Residents under the Federation of North Chennai Residents Association form a human chain at Kodungaiyur in May 2025. Residents under the Federation of North Chennai Residents Association form a human chain at Kodungaiyur in May 2025 | Photo Credit: B. Jothi Ramalingam. No plans to scrap project. A senior official from the GCC's Solid Waste Management Department, meanwhile, confirmed that there were no plans to scrap the WtE project. The GCC recently floated a tender worth ₹85.3 crore for the appointment of an independent engineer to oversee the project's implementation, including infrastructure development at the dump yard. The IWPF project is expected to come up adjacent to the Kodungaiyur dump yard, and comprises a WtE power plant, an automated material recovery facility (MRF), a composting unit, and a bio-CNG plant. The WtE and MRF units account for ₹1,026.41 crore of the total cost, while ₹142.97 crore and ₹99 crore have been allocated for the composting and bio-CNG facilities, respectively. The capital outlay for Phase I stands at ₹53.20 crore, with Phase II projected at ₹41.18 crore. Processed waste will be treated at the site, with residual matter transported to a designated sanitary landfill.

When does the gender gap emerge with respect to mathematical abilities?

Across the world, women are under-represented in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Their absence has consequences: it narrows perspectives in STEM, potentially hinders progress in research, and perpetuates gender differences at the workplace. This inequality stands in stark contrast to the fact that boys and girls begin school with the same mathematical abilities. A gender gap begins to emerge only after boys and girls start learning the subject formally in school, that is, during the first year. These are the findings of a study published recently in Nature by researchers in France. Understanding this data and the underlying reasons are crucial as they can help policymakers intervene at the right time and in the right ways to narrow the gap. Findings of the study

In the past, educationists, economists, sociologists, psychologists, and others have conducted several studies. One study in the U.S. showed that a maths gender gap favouring boys emerged within the first few years of schooling. Another study that followed 2,633 children in France found that a maths gender gap was absent in kindergarten but became favourable to boys by ages 7-8. The latest study in Nature reinforces what other studies have found in the past, but by using "an exceptionally large and exhaustive dataset," according to the researchers. The researchers studied 26.53 lakh children aged 5-7 years in France over four years. They analysed four consecutive cohorts from 2018 to 2022. All these children took the EvalAide, a nationwide battery of tests given to first and second grade students to assess their language and maths abilities. When boys and girls entered school, their average maths performance was nearly identical in 2018. There were more boys clustered among the top and bottom performers. However, just after four months of schooling, the researchers found a small but highly significant gap emerging, which favoured boys. By the next year, there were twice as many boys as girls among the top 5% of performers. Importantly, this gap was found in every cohort across the four consecutive years. This meant that it was not due to any specific societal, economic, or curricular changes in a particular year. The gap was found in each region of France, in schools serving communities at both high and low socio-economic levels, in private as well as public schools, and regardless of family composition.

Curiously, the gap between boys and girls was wider if the children were from high-income families — a phenomenon not found for language. It was also larger among high-income families where both parents held scientific occupations. Analysing the gender gap. Since the children had similar abilities when they started formal education, we can conclude from the data that the gap is not related to any fundamental gender differences in aptitudes. So what explains the gap? First, a few caveats. Researchers write that since the data is descriptive in nature, it can't be used to pin down causes. Second, a study conducted at intervals prevents any evaluation of the potentially continuous effect of school exposure or the effect of vacations. Third, the tests were not strictly identical at all points of time during the study. Fourth, the data is limited to one country. Nevertheless, they offer some explanations consistent with their findings. Maths problems are solved in a particular time frame and in a competitive setting, and these are conditions that girls are taught to fear. Their consequent anxiety could be exacerbating the gap. The researchers say this explanation is congruent with their finding that greater test difficulty enhances the gender gap.

Stereotypes that boys are better at maths could also be widening the gap. The researchers write that "maths-related activities or exercises (for example, counting and subtracting) start to be more clearly identified as belonging to the maths domain" in primary school. They believe that this "sudden labelling of maths-related activities as 'maths'



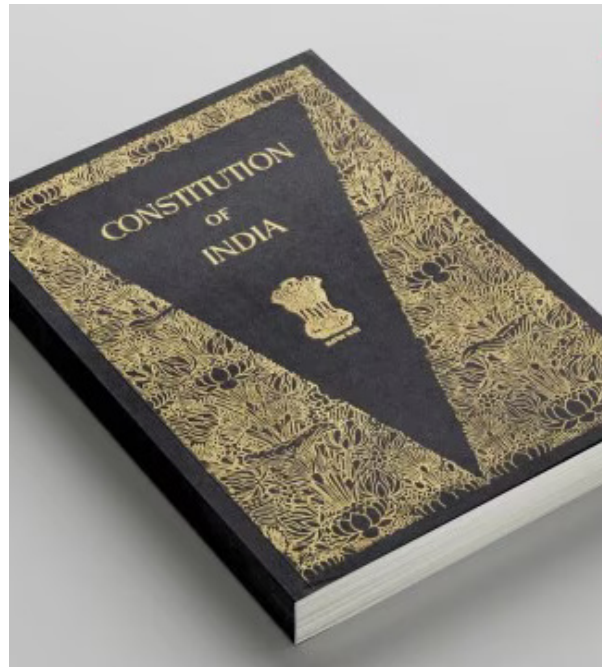
(whereas language activities start earlier in preschool) might give space for gender stereotypes surrounding maths to emerge, to be internalised by children and, eventually, to affect their self-concept and performance. The attitudes of primary school teachers may be a factor as well. For example, teachers may encourage girls to read more and boys to do more division and subtraction. That is, they may attribute intellect to boys and diligence to girls. Parents may also have such assumptions about aptitudes. Suggested interventions. As the problem begins after children start schooling, the researchers believe improving teacher training will be a crucial intervention. If teachers are encouraged to question girls and boys equally often during maths and science classes, and also to focus equally on the talents and efforts of children of both genders, it could lead to improved outcomes. Also, if teacher training in maths is increased to improve their confidence and interest in this topic, it could effectively reduce the gap. This, the researchers say, is especially true of a country such as France, where most primary school teachers are female. Interventions could also be directed towards children. For boys and girls to become convinced that maths is worth the effort, they should be exposed to both male and female role models with whom they can identify. The researchers also suggest that girls should be provided with ways to cope with anxiety related to competition. They suggest implementing self-affirmation tasks. They also express belief that accentuating an incremental view of intelligence — that is, emphasising that abilities and intelligence are malleable and can be developed through effort and learning — would help. In short, it takes just a few months for a gender gap to emerge, so quick interventions could help close the gap effectively.

Jaishankar refutes Trump's claim of using trade to force India-Pakistan ceasefire

New York: With his firsthand account of the talks between New Delhi and Washington, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar has dismissed the claims of US President Donald Trump that he used trade to force India and Pakistan to accept a ceasefire.

He said on Monday that he was with Prime Minister Narendra Modi when US Vice President JD Vance spoke to him by phone, and there was no linking of trade and ceasefire as far as India was concerned. "I can tell you that I was in the room when Vice President Vance spoke to Prime Minister Modi on the night of May 9, saying that the Pakistanis would launch a very massive assault on India," he said. "We did not accept certain things," he said, "and the Prime Minister was impervious to what the Pakistanis were threatening to do."

What makes the Indian Constitution 'secular', even without the word in the Preamble



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar on Saturday called the Emergency-era addition of expressions "socialist" and "secular" to the Constitution's Preamble a "sacrilege to the spirit of Sanatan". Leaders such as Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, and RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale have echoed the VP's critique in recent days. The words "socialist" and "secular" were added to the Preamble through the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act of 1976, which made wholesale changes to India's founding document. While the Janata government reversed most of these changes through the 44th Amendment in 1978, the Preamble was left untouched.

The Preamble is a vision statement to the Constitution, or as the Supreme Court described in its 1961 ruling in *In Re: The Berubari Union*, "a key to open the mind of the makers" of the Constitution. In 1950, when the Constitution was adopted, the Preamble read: "We, the People of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic" that would secure to all its citizens "Justice... Equality... Liberty... and Fraternity". The 42nd Amendment in 1976 changed this to "...Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic..." and added the expression "integrity" to the description of fraternity as a right, which now reads "assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation...". These were just a few of a whole host of changes made by the 42nd Amendment, which introduced the chapter on Fundamental Duties, added new Directive Principles on State Policy, diluted powers of judicial review, and froze delimitation. These changes reflected Indira Gandhi's political objectives during the Emergency, a 21-month period during which the Prime Minister ruled by decree.

* Since the 1950s, the tussle between Parliament and the judiciary had revolved around land reform: the political class saw the Court's upholding of fundamental rights, especially the right to property, as placing individual rights over collective rights of people. With Indira Gandhi taking an explicit leftward turn — she nationalised banks in 1969, abolished privy purses in 1971, and romped to victory in Lok Sabha polls later that year with "Garibi Hatao" ("End Poverty") as her campaign slogan — the inclusion of "socialist" was to indicate the Constitution's alignment with the Prime Minister's economic roadmap. As the 42nd Amendment's Statement of Objects and Reasons read, the addition was meant to "make the directive principles more comprehensive and give them precedence over those fundamental

rights which have been allowed to be relied upon to frustrate socioeconomic reforms...". The reason for adding "secular" to the Preamble was not as explicitly spelled out. But it came at a time when the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, predecessor of the BJP, was emerging as a potent political force.

In the 1967 general elections, the Jana Sangh had won 35 seats, its best performance till then, and the Congress tally dropped to 283. While the Congress bounced back in 1971, the Jana Sangh nonetheless remained among Indira Gandhi's foremost political opponents through the Emergency, when a number of its leaders, including Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L K Advani were jailed. "The founding fathers of our Constitution and of our country had intended Indian society to be secular and socialist... All we are doing now is to incorporate them in the Constitution itself for they rightly deserve to be mentioned there," Indira had told Lok Sabha. "The word 'integrity' was brought into the Preamble at a time when Indira's political rhetoric — and justification for imposing the Emergency — centred around 'forces dividing the nation'." "When we talk of integrity, it is really the quality or the state of being undivided... Whereas a nation is composed of the people and the country, when we talk of the integrity of the country, we talk of... maintaining the indivisibility of the country along with the unity of the nation," then law Minister H R Gokhale had said in the Parliament while speaking on the Bill.

While symbolic, the additions to the Preamble made no substantive changes to the Constitution. As the SC had noted in *Berubari Union*, "[the] Preamble is not a part of the Constitution, and it has never been regarded as the source of any substantive power..." "Secularism is a theme that permeates through the Constitution in several other provisions. For instance, secularism is a key facet of the right to equality enshrined in Article 14 of the Constitution. Article 15 explicitly prohibits discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. Article 16 guarantees equality of opportunity in matters of public employment. These rights against the state make the Constitution inherently secular."

This view has repeatedly been emphasised by the Supreme Court. Even before the 42nd amendment altered the Preamble, a 13-judge bench in the landmark 1973 *Kesavananda Bharati* ruling held that secularism is a basic feature of the Constitution that cannot be done away with. The secular character of the state, according to which the state shall not discriminate against any citizen on the ground of religion only, cannot likewise be done away with," the ruling states.

In the 1994 *Bommai* ruling, that dealt with Centre-State relations, the SC again upheld secularism as a basic feature of the Constitution. In another landmark ruling in 1980, *Minerva Mills v Union of India*, which also debated more constitutional amendments made during the Emergency, the Court recognised "socialism" was a constitutional ideal for the framers. It cited Part IV of the Constitution, which deals with Directive Principles of State Policy, a non-enforceable policy outline for the state that has several socialist ideas. "We resolved to constitute ourselves into a Socialist State which carried with it the obligation to secure to our people justice — social, economic and political. We, therefore, put part IV into our Constitution containing directive principles of State policy which specify the socialist goal to be achieved," the ruling said. In November 2024, a two-judge Bench led by then Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna dismissed writ petitions challenging the addition of "secularism" and "socialism" in the Constitution. "The additions to the Preamble have not restricted or impeded legislation or policies pursued by elected governments, provided [they] did not infringe upon fundamental and constitutional rights or the basic structure of the Constitution. Therefore, we do not find any legitimate cause... for challenging this constitutional amendment..." the Bench said.

Why US Supreme Court decision makes it easier for Trump to implement controversial laws

The United States Supreme Court on Friday removed a significant roadblock to President Donald Trump's controversial executive order ending birthright citizenship for immigrants. The Court, in a 6:3 opinion, limited the powers of federal judges to issue nationwide injunctions. Now their decisions will apply only to parties in a specific case they are hearing rather than universally to other similar cases. The US Supreme Court is yet to rule on the legality of Trump's executive order issued on January 20, the very first day of his second stint as President. However, it has removed protections granted by federal judges which have thus far hindered the implementation of the law ending birthright citizenship.

A part of his larger anti-immigration policies, one of Trump's key poll promises was to end birthright citizenship for immigrants. Essentially, children born in the US to parents unlawfully present or present on temporary visas would not automatically be granted citizenship. Citizenship in the US is defined by the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution, ratified in 1868. The provision was introduced to extend citizenship to Black Americans, who had been excluded till then. It states: "All persons born or naturalised in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." The 14th Amendment also bars the state from making any laws that infringe the rights of any US citizens. These protections are similar to those in Article 14 of the Indian Constitution. Trump's executive order plays on the interpretation of the words "subject to the jurisdiction thereof" to hold that certain people — undocumented immigrants or those without legal status — are not covered by the 14th Amendment, and hence not automatically eligible for birthright citizenship. India has a unitary legal system. High Courts issue injunctions against the state but are, in some cases, limited by jurisdiction, while the SC's orders have a nationwide impact. That said, universal injunctions against non-state actors are common in certain kinds of orders, such as content takedown directions or in intellectual property disputes.

In contrast, the US legal system has a complex dual structure where both federal Courts (established under Article III of the US Constitution) and state courts (established by each state's constitution and laws) operate. The federal courts are a three-tiered system, with 94 federal District Courts, 13 Courts of Appeals over them, and at the top, the US Supreme Court. These federal courts are not limited by state jurisdiction. This is what allowed several federal district courts to immediately block the enforcement of Trump's January 20 order. On January 23 itself, a federal district judge in Washington issued a temporary restraining order, followed by a preliminary injunction on February 6. And those challenging the law include state governments — a collective suit by Washington, Arizona, Illinois, and Oregon got the first injunction — and advocacy groups. The US gov-



ernment made an appeal to the Supreme Court against relief granted in a suit filed by advocacy groups CASA de Maryland and Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project on behalf of pregnant women whose children could be denied citizenship.

Universal injunctions by federal courts have dealt a blow to several of Trump's policies — from a law requiring voter ID and proof of citizenship at the polls, freezing of federal funding to the states, to making federal funding to schools conditional on their removing all diversity and equity policies. The New York Times quoted a report by the research arm of the US Congress that currently "more than two dozen nationwide injunctions" are in place blocking Trump's policies. The White House appealed against the Maryland injunction, and the Supreme Court, which now has conservative judges (appointed by Republican Presidents) in majority, ruled in favour of Trump. The Court did this by limiting the power of federal judges to issue universal injunctions. Taking note of the argument that universal injunction "give[s] the Judiciary a powerful tool to check the Executive Branch," Justice Amy Coney Barrett said in her opinion, which is essentially the majority view in the case, that it is not for district judges to act as a check against the executive. Even when "a (federal) court concludes that the Executive Branch has acted unlawfully, the answer is not for the court to exceed its power," she wrote. The Supreme Court, however, said that the existing injunctions can be narrowly tailored to each plaintiff (the party who has moved court alleging violation of her rights) with standing to sue. The decision makes it difficult to block Trump's policies quickly, not just on birthright citizenship but any policy. District Courts are more accessible, and it is less time-consuming to get relief from them compared to waiting for a final verdict from the Supreme Court on controversial issues.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer waters down welfare cuts to quell Labour revolt



GNS News Agency, March 6

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has sharply scaled back planned welfare cuts to quell a damaging rebellion by lawmakers in his governing Labour Party. More than 100 Labour lawmakers had publicly opposed Mr. Starmer's reforms, which sought to shave 5 billion pounds (\$6.9 billion) per year off a rapidly rising welfare bill. They had argued that the plans failed to provide support for disabled people and those with long-term health conditions.

Faced with the prospect of a defeat in parliament next week — just a year after he won a landslide majority in a national election — Starmer's office confirmed that the cuts would be scaled back. "We have listened to MPs (members of parliament) who support the principle of reform but are worried about the pace of change for those already supported by the system," a spokesperson said. The reforms are set to be put to a vote in parliament on July 1. In a letter to lawmakers, work and pensions minister Liz Kendall said only new claimants would be subject to the planned tightening of eligibility for certain benefits payments. Existing recipi-

ents, some of whom had faced losing those benefits, would now be unaffected. "Our reform principles remain; to target funding for those most in need and make sure the system is sustainable for the future to support generations to come," Kendall said. Labour lawmaker Meg Hillier, who chairs an influential parliamentary committee and had spearheaded the efforts to water down the bill, welcomed the government's move as "a good and workable compromise." U-turn

However, opponents slammed the changes as another government U-turn following a reversal in cuts to winter fuel payments and a decision to hold an inquiry into grooming gangs. The opposition Conservative Party's work and pensions policy chief, Helen Whatley, said the decision was humiliating, and represented a missed opportunity to cut the welfare bill. "Starmer ducked the challenge - leaving taxpayers to pick up the bill," she said in a post on X. The government has argued that cutting the ballooning welfare budget is necessary to shore up the public finances and get more people into work. The government did not set out the cost of the change in policy. Care minister Stephen Kinnock said that details would come in the next budget, which is due in the autumn. Annual spending on incapacity and disability benefits already exceeds Britain's defence budget and is set to top 100 billion pounds by 2030, according to official forecasts, up from 65 billion pounds now.

But the plans to cut payments to some of the most vulnerable in society have proven particularly painful for lawmakers in the centre-left Labour Party, which founded the state-run National Health Service and traditionally sees itself as the protector of the country's welfare state built after World War Two. Despite Starmer's concessions, one Labour lawmaker, Peter Lamb, said after learning of the changes that he would vote down the bill "alone" if necessary.

China purges senior military official Miao Hua from top ruling body

GNS News Agency, March 6

China's top legislature has voted to remove senior military official Miao Hua from the Central Military Commission, its highest-level military command body, according to a statement published on Friday (June 27, 2025) by state news agency Xinhua. Miao, 69, was put under investigation for "serious violations of discipline" in November. The former political ideology chief of the People's Liberation Army was also suspended from his post. The Xinhua statement did not contain any other details, but the move marks another stage in President Xi Jinping's ongoing anti-corruption purge of China's military, in which over a dozen PLA generals and a handful of defence industry executives have been implicated.

Miao's photo had been removed from the senior leadership page of the Chinese defence ministry's website in recent weeks. He was also removed from China's national legislature for "serious violations of discipline and law," according to a communique released by the legislature last month. "The Political Work Department of the Central Military Commission held a military representative conference on March 14 this year and decided to remove Miao Hua from his position as a representative of the 14th National People's Congress," the statement said. Miao was stationed in the coastal province of Fujian when Xi worked there as a local official, according to his official biography. Mr. Xi personally elevated Miao to the Central Military Commission. Another Central Military Commission member and China's second-ranking general, He Weidong, has not



been seen in public since the March 11 closing ceremony of the annual parliamentary sessions in Beijing. Since then, he has not appeared at a series of high-level Politburo and military public engagements. He is the third-most powerful commander of the People's Liberation Army and is considered a close associate of President Xi Jinping, the army's commander-in-chief. China's defence ministry said in March it was "unaware" of reports he had been detained. His photo remains on the defence ministry's website. Two former Chinese Defence Ministers have been removed from the Communist Party for corruption. One of them, Li Shangfu, was suspected of corruption in military procurement, Reuters has reported. Last year, the Defence Ministry denied reports that Defence Minister Dong Jun was being probed on suspicion of corruption. Dong has continued to appear at public events, attending the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation defence ministers' meeting in Dagestan this week.

Brazil's outspoken First Lady is coming under fire, but she refuses to stop speaking out

GNS News Agency, March 6

In early May, an air of triumph filled a dinner in Beijing, where Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva celebrated a diplomatic victory: businessmen travelling with him said they had secured billions of dollars in investments as the veteran leader renewed his international prestige standing alongside his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping. But then Brazilian first lady Rosângela da Silva, better known as Janja, raised her hand. Although no one was expected to speak, Ms. da Silva addressed Mr. Xi, saying that Chinese social media company TikTok posed a challenge for leftists, claiming its algorithm favors right-wingers. China's President reportedly answered. The exchange was leaked to Brazilian media by the time dessert was served. Mr. Lula's government is grappling with unpopularity that has dented his credentials as the frontrunner for reelection next year. Some analysts, including members of his government, attribute this partly to his wife's perceived overstepping in what was once a ceremonial role. Ms. Janja, a 58-year-old sociologist, has drawn criticism for insulting tech billionaire Elon Musk, mocking the suicide of a pro-Jair Bolsonaro supporter and advising the President on how to use the military during the Jan. 8, 2023 riots in the capital, Brasilia. Still, she insists she will speak out whenever it serves the public interest. A Datafolha poll released June 12 found that 36% of Brazilians think the first lady's actions hurt the government, while 14% say they are helpful. It was the pollster's first measure of the First Lady's approval. The same poll showed Mr. Lula with a 40% job disapproval rating, an 8 percentage point increase from October 2024. Brazil's presidency said in a statement to The Associated Press on June 20 that Ms. da Silva adheres to the Solicitor-General's office guidelines, adding that she "acts as a citizen, combining her public visibility with the experience she has built throughout her professional career in support of relevant social issues and matters of public interest." Under guidelines published by the Solicitor-General's office, the President's spouse primarily fulfills "a symbolically representative role on behalf of the president in a social, cultural, ceremonial, political or diplomatic nature." For many of her critics, this does not grant her the authority to speak as a government representative. Brazilian media have reported that government Ministers, lawmakers and staunch leftist campaigners are privately raising concerns about the First Lady being a hindrance more than an asset. These worries have skyrocketed since the incident in China — even as Mr. Lula himself has praised his wife for speaking out. "It looks like Brazil is governed by a couple," said Beatriz Rey, a political science postdoctoral and research fellow at the University of Lisbon. "When (the First Lady) says there won't be any protocols to silence her, she disrespects our democratic institutions for she has no elected office, no government position. It is not about being a woman or a feminist. It is undue interference." Mr. Lula's first wife, Maria de Lourdes, died in 1971. His second, Marisa Leticia, died in 2017. Mr. Lula, 79, and Ms. Janja said they met in



2017 and started seeing each other frequently during the leftist leader's 580 days in jail in the city of Curitiba between 2018 and 2019. They married in 2022. Many supporters of Mr. Lula's Workers' Party partly attribute the criticism against the First Lady to misinformation and disinformation. In May, the party launched the "I am with Janja" social media campaign in her defense. But the week-long effort garnered less than 100,000 views and only a few hundred comments. "Ms. Janja is an asset because she rejuvenates Mr. Lula, everyone in the government understands that, even her critics," a Brazilian government source told the AP. "No one wants to alienate her. But many important people in Brasilia, friends and allies of Mr. Lula, do understand that by overstepping she brings some of her rejection to the President." The source, who spoke under condition of anonymity for lack of authorization to speak about the matter publicly, often travels with the President and the first lady. Adriana Negreiros, a journalist who profiled the First Lady for a 2024 podcast titled "Janja," said that allies of the President who criticize her do it with extreme caution. "(Ms. Janja) dances, sings, speaks out, appears at official events and meetings with heads of state. She insists on being present and vocal," Ms. Negreiros said. "There's a lot of sexism and misogyny directed at her, no doubt. But not all criticism is sexist." Ms. Da Silva said she doesn't go to dinners "just to accompany" her husband. "I have common sense. I consider myself an intelligent person. So I know very well what my limits are. I'm fully aware of that," she told a podcast of daily Folha de S. Paulo. Ms. Da Silva did, however, express remorse during the same podcast for the expletive she used against Ms. Musk in 2024, once a close ally of U.S. President Donald Trump. Many of Mr. Lula's adversaries say they want the first lady to remain in the spotlight. "The more she speaks, the more she holds a microphone, the more she helps the right wing," said Nikolas Ferreira, one of Brazil's most popular right-wing lawmakers. Mr. Ferreira, a prominent social media figure, claims the role of regulating social media is a matter for Brazil's Congress, not for the first lady to debate with foreign leaders like Mr. Xi. Ms. Da Silva is also expected to play as a keen hostess at the BRICS summit in Rio on July 6-7, a role her husband is almost certain not to oppose.

Telangana's medical college expansion: Built to heal, left to rot



GNS News Agency, March 6

On the otherwise quiet stretch of Road Number 4 in Telangana's Siddipet district, about 100 kilometres north of Hyderabad, one building stands out — not for its design, but for the activity it draws. Rickshaws, hatchbacks, private cars and ambulances are parked in a haphazard line along the narrow tar road. With little room for four-wheelers inside, the road outside becomes a makeshift parking lot for those visiting the Government General Hospital, Siddipet.

Step past the entrance and a rectangular lobby opens up. To the left, a queue snakes around the Outpatient Registration counter. To the right, rows of plastic chairs are packed with patients and attendants — women in saris fanning themselves, elderly men on walking sticks, young parents cradling toddlers. Though outpatient hours run from 9.30 a.m. to 2 p.m., the hallway is full by 11 a.m. Adding a splash of colour to this scene is a strip of Cherial painting across the top of the hospital walls — vivid red panels telling traditional tales, a nod to Telangana's folk art legacy. It is an oddly comforting juxtaposition: cultural flourish amid clinical fatigue.

Down the corridor is the duty doctor's room — a modest 15x8 feet, with two foldable metal beds lining opposite walls. What catches the eye isn't the squeeze, but the far wall, or the lack of it. In its place is a large corrugated metal shutter, the kind one would see fronting a kirana shop. Only two brick pillars frame it; a white ceramic washbasin clings to one side. Perched on a metal bed is a young doctor, white coat on, stethoscope around her neck. She speaks in a calm, practiced voice about juggling medical education with long government hospital shifts, her words painting a picture of exhaustion, resilience, and a system stretched thin.

"Though it is now a teaching hospital, Siddipet still runs on the infrastructure of its old identity: an area hospital with 780 beds. There is no space to add more. That is why a new 1,000-bed hospital was built nearby. But that is stuck in limbo — political disputes, budget delays, commissions. The building is ready, but has not been handed over," she says. She gestures towards what lies just five kilometres away — a gleaming new hospital building inaugurated with much fanfare by Siddipet MLA and former Health Minister T. Harish Rao in October 2023. Built adjacent to the Government Medical College, the new Government General Hospital is a sprawling, palace-like structure, strikingly similar to a high-end corporate hospital. But behind the glossy facade lies silence. One and a half years since its inauguration, the building remains non-functional, caught in bureaucratic limbo. When the first batch of medical students enrolled in 2018, they were promised an integrated campus: hospital, hostels and college, all in one place. That vision remains unrealised. What has arrived instead is a faculty crisis too big to ignore. "In some departments, there are 12 to 15 postgraduate students and only three faculty members — one professor and two assistant professors. So PGs end up doing everything: teaching, ward rounds, you name it. Recruitment has not happened. The Directorate of Medical Education keeps saying notifications will be issued, but they never do," the doctor says. She also points to a persistent safety concern — commuting after night duty. "The road to the college becomes eerie after dark. It is so unsafe that we have to ask the boys to escort us. There have been cases of women doctors being followed. It is frightening," she says.

Across Telangana's 34 government medical colleges, the same problems recur. Before 2014, the State had just five government-run medical colleges. Over the last decade, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi government pushed to open one in every district. By 2024, as many as 29 new colleges had come up as part of that ambitious expansion. "The rapid establishment of so many government medical colleges (GMCs) has resulted in impressive buildings that resemble fully functioning medical institutions. But inside, there are serious gaps — faculty shortage, insufficient clinical exposure and other systemic deficiencies," says a senior official from the State Health department. A system under strain at GMC Karimnagar, a second-year student sums up the classroom situation bluntly: "There is not enough space to sit. Two batches share one lecture hall; some of us stand or sit on the floor. The hostel is no better. It is overcrowded and temporary. We are still waiting for the promised building."

Over at GMC-Nalgonda, transportation is the biggest hurdle. "The hospital is seven kilometres away, but there are no dedicated buses. Our principal sent a request to the Director of Medical Education and even to our MLA, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, who is also a minister. He promised two to four buses, but not a single one has arrived," a student says.

At GMC-Asifabad, the problems cut deeper. "We don't have MBBS-qualified faculty. Our labs don't function. We are expected to learn without tools, without guidance," says a first-year student. Things are no better in Bhadradi Kothagudem, where a post-graduate student shares, "Departments like Anatomy and Biochemistry are run by non-MBBS staff. That is a direct violation of National Medical Commission (NMC) norms. We have raised complaints but nothing has changed. Most students here live in rented flats, often cramped and unhygienic. At Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences-Adilabad, the situation is downright bleak. "We stay in quarter clusters with no clean water, no streetlights. The mess food is inedible, the quarters stink, and there is no CCTV cameras or security. We are working 12-hour shifts and studying through the night in such conditions," says a first-year PG student.

At GMC-Narayanpet, the daily commute is a risk in itself. "We lost our college bus last year. Now we travel eight kilometres at our own expense. Many of us live in distant, unsafe hostels. After 7 p.m., the road turns pitch dark. There is no fencing, no security," says a junior doctor. The conditions are equally grim at GMC Jangaon too. "We girls are put up in an old-age home. The boys are crammed into tiny rooms. There are no labs, no gym, no sports, nothing. And we are charged ₹1,000 a month for transport," says a student. The duty doctor room at Government General Hospital, Siddipet, having a large corrugated metal shutter in place of a wall.

In Maheshwaram, students attend classes on borrowed premises. "There are no proper labs. We do physiol-

ogy practicals in lecture rooms. The subsidised hostels they promised never came. We are paying ₹7,000 a month in rent for rooms infested with cockroaches and spiders," a student shares. At GMC-Kamareddy, the gap between college and hospital — just 3.5 kilometres — is a daily hurdle. "With no transport, we often miss clinical postings. Some of us even skip meals just to save time," a student says. Even at established institutions like Gandhi Medical College, cracks are showing. "We have only one assistant professor each in Radiology and Microbiology. Everything else is handled by postgraduates. Forget learning, we are barely surviving," says a student. The infrastructure hasn't kept pace either. "The elevators are constantly breaking down. There are water shortages, outdated pipelines and stray dogs keep biting students. This is not a campus, it is a battlefield." From broken hostels and pitch-dark roads to missing faculty and absent labs, the accounts echo a common story: of systemic neglect wrapped in glossy expansion. A postgraduate student from Vikarabad puts it plainly: "We are the face of public healthcare. But we are studying in the shadows of unfinished buildings, of missing mentors, of apathy." Telangana's 34 government medical colleges collectively offer 4,140 MBBS seats. The top three — Gandhi, Osmania, and Kakatiya Medical Colleges — have the highest intake at 250 seats each. The rest range between 50 and 175. In early June, the National Medical Commission issued show-cause notices to 26 of them, citing critical shortfalls in infrastructure, clinical material and faculty.

A vacancy list accessed by The Hindu, released by the Directorate of Medical Education in July 2024, lays bare the extent of the staffing crisis in Telangana's government medical colleges and teaching hospitals. Of the 3,143 sanctioned Assistant Professor posts, only 1,399 have been filled — leaving 1,736 positions vacant. The shortage extends to professors as well, a senior doctor confirms. "These gaps would not exist if the State government had a consistent, calendar-based recruitment process," says a doctor working as a contract Assistant Professor at a government medical college. "Even under contractual appointments, our salaries have not been paid this year because the contract itself has not been renewed. And this isn't just about Assistant Professors — it affects faculty across all levels."

The doctor warns that the system is nearing a breaking point: "Morale is low. Many are wondering how long they can go on without pay or clarity about their future. Some are seriously considering quitting altogether." Another doctor points to repeated delays. "Regular recruitment was promised last year. But after the SC sub-division notification came out, everything was put on hold. Even after receiving Cabinet clearance, officials keep saying the notification will come 'next week'. It has been over two months and nothing has moved." Fixing the cracks

Meanwhile, in response to the NMC's show-cause notice, the Telangana government has set up 10 Medical College Monitoring Committees to conduct field inspections and comprehensive assessments of all 34 GMCs and their affiliated teaching hospitals across the State. The move was formalised through a Government Order issued by Health Secretary Christina Z. Chongthu on June 19. The GO states that the aim is to develop a detailed action plan to ensure full compliance with NMC standards by June 2028. The committees are tasked with identifying on-ground challenges and recommending institution-specific, sustainable solutions.

Each committee includes officials such as district collectors, medical college principals and hospital superintendents. Their mandate covers a wide spectrum — from infrastructure and lab facilities to the availability of medical equipment, hostel conditions and academic spaces. They will also evaluate the clinical workload, including functioning of in-patient wards, operating theatres, diagnostics and emergency services. Staffing gaps, both teaching and non-teaching, will be mapped and recommendations made for recruitment through Medical and Health Services Recruitment Board, Telangana State Public Service Commission or local contractual appointments overseen by district administrations. The committees have also been asked to assess hostel safety, sanitation, food quality and the presence of support systems like anti-ragging mechanisms, grievance redressal cells and counselling services. Operational issues such as supply of essential drugs, food provisions, infection control and utility expenses are also under review. The functioning of systems such as the electronic Health Management Information System, biometric and facial recognition attendance, and CCTV surveillance — both academic and clinical — will be audited. The committees are expected to submit detailed field reports by June 30. Whether these committees will spark lasting reform or simply become another bureaucratic ritual remains to be seen. For now, thousands of young doctors continue to study, serve and survive in conditions far removed from the promises once made to them. In Telangana's grand medical expansion, it is not the buildings but the people inside them who are being tested the most.

Telangana to levy 1-2 per cent cess on gig services to fund workers' welfare board

Hyderabad: The State government is proposing a cess of one to two per cent on bills generated by gig platforms to mobilise revenue for the Gig Workers Welfare Board. This additional charge, to be borne by consumers, is part of the proposed Gig Workers Act, which is expected to be introduced shortly. A draft of the Act has already been prepared, and the Labour Department held discussions with aggregators and workers in Hyderabad on Friday. Briefing mediapersons, Labour Minister Vivek Venkat Swamy said the nominal cess was intended to generate funds for the board. "One to two per cent cess is nominal. It should not be a big burden on the consumers," he said.

There are nearly 4.5 lakh gig workers in the State. The draft Bill has been placed in the public domain for feedback. So far, 66 suggestions have been received from aggregators and workers' unions. This marks the first step towards introducing the Gig Workers Act. The initial phase would involve registration of workers, constitution of the board, and related measures, the Minister added. Workers have also demanded insurance coverage. On the issue of social security, the Minister said the board would take a call. "All these aspects will be incorporated in the final Bill, which will be sent to the Cabinet for approval. Hopefully, the Bill will be passed in the next Assembly session," he said.



A tightrope walk for Chittoor's mango farmers



When a middleman told Rajendra, a young mango farmer from Yadamarri mandal near Chittoor, that he could take his 'totapuri' mango stocks to an MNC pulp-making centre, he thanked his lucky stars. He had been trying to find takers for the produce from his modest 30 acre mango orchard on the Gudiyattam Road for quite some time and was worried his fruits might rot on the orchard itself.

Rajendra swiftly arranged for the labour to harvest and load six tonnes of his best mangoes. He could only pay part of the wages then, but promised the workers that he would pay balance amount after selling the produce. On June 12, he set out to the procurement centre located on the Chittoor-Puttur highway 30 km away, certain that 'one of India's largest pulp-making units' would take his produce. But as his tractor-trailer approached the unit, he began to notice trailers laden with mangoes parked on either side of the highway. Not one or two, around 30 of them. Rajendra's heart sank, for he knew what that meant: a queue, stretching for over two kilometres, and he was at the very end of it.

"You have to take a token, and the procurement will be in the last week of June," Rajendra was told at the factory gate. The worry returned, but this time there was no hope. He cannot take the produce back and store it for weeks. He had to sell them that day itself or ran the risk of incurring total loss. Rajendra, who had spent ₹15 lakh on his orchard this season, was one of the 3.5 lakh active mango growers in the combined Chittoor district who believed in the promise that mangoes would be the next agricultural gold mine, only to find a volatile business that keeps them on tenterhooks year after year. With a leaden heart, Rajendra turned his vehicle around and headed towards Bangarupalem mango market, where he sold his best picks for a paltry sum of ₹4 a kg. "I had expected a negligible profit of ₹20,000 for this shipment, excluding the cost of cutting and transportation and the year-long maintenance. Now, I have to rethink harvesting the remaining fruits," says Rajendra. For farmers like Rajendra, every season is a tightrope walk over a chasm of loss. The case of Suryaprakash, another farmer from Irala mandal, is not much different. He had broken 18 coconuts at a local temple to ensure a good outcome before taking his produce to a nearby pulp unit. Everything was fine until factory management shot their price point blank: "We can't give you more than ₹4 a kg. If you don't want to sell it at that price, you can return." After much pleading with the management, he settled for ₹4.5 a kg, still a far cry from the price he had expected.

Notably, the government had ordered pulp units in the State to offer farmers a minimum support price (MSP) of ₹8 a kg, on top of a subsidy of ₹4 a kg. However, even with just two weeks left of the pulp season, none of the 39 pulp units, including six belonging to MNCs, in Chittoor district has come forward to honour the order. Moreover, none of them began procurement as per schedule, from mid-May onwards; active procurement began only in mid-June, say farmers. Farmers resting underneath the trailer of a tractor laden with mangoes, on the outskirts of Chittoor. This queue stretched for over 2 km on both sides of the Puttur Road. Farmers resting underneath the trailer of a tractor laden with mangoes, on the outskirts of Chittoor. This queue stretched for over 2 km on both sides of the Puttur Road.

The yearly swing in mango prices is so steep that it can make or break a farmer in just a year. In 2024, totapuri yield was just 30%, which led to a high demand. Each kg was sold between ₹25 and ₹28 to the pulp units, that, too, without any government intervention. In contrast, 2025 witnessed a glut of over 75% of yield, with most fruits having developed well and being pulpy, thanks to the congenial winter and summer, sending the prices on a tailspin. According to official statistics, in the combined Chittoor district, which includes parts of Tirupati and Annamayya districts, registered a total yield of more than 10 lakh tonnes of totapuri and alphonso varieties this year. Of this, 6.21 lakh tonnes come from the new Chittoor district. The 39 pulp units, on the other hand, has an official processing capacity of 5.65 lakh tonnes. Till the first week of June, the farmers hoped that they would get an MSP of at least ₹20 a kg, but the district administration announced just ₹12, including the ₹4 in subsidy.

Despite assurances from Chittoor District Collector Sumit Kumar that the government would buy the entire produce and that the procurement would continue till August,

the farmers remain worried, and rightly so. "We are not talking about toys, but highly perishable goods. If the procurement goes up till August, what about the already ripe fruits about to fall? When loading is done, we have to unload the fruit within 24 hours, otherwise the stock would get damaged and would have to be thrown away," says Janardhan, a farmer at Karveti Nagaram. Senior mango farmer and BJP district leader Kothur Babu says they are in a dire situation. "We are headed for a disaster. The mango procurement should have begun in May. The pulp units have formed a syndicate and deliberately delayed the procurement. They know very well that the farmers would be the ultimate losers because our hopes are balanced on perishable goods," he adds.

Mr. Babu recalled how the district administration used to deploy senior officials at the entrances of pulp units. "Not even a single tractor went inside without the knowledge of the official. The procurement was on a first-come, first-served basis. Now, an illogical token system has been introduced. A farmer who obtained a token on June 16 should visit the factory with stocks on July 3. Can the perishable goods wait that long?" he said. "Fortunately, a good number of mango farmers have their sons and daughters as IT professionals in India and abroad. But for their support, many farmers would have ended their lives by now," he says grimly. Madhiredy Vijaysimha Reddy, a retired tahsildar and a senior mango farmer, says that though the district administration has the power to dictate terms to the pulp industry, "it's becoming more of a silent spectator year after year." The pulp units are getting several crores of rupees as a subsidy every year. "Minister for Agriculture Atchannaidu repeatedly said that the government has earmarked ₹168 crore as subsidy for mango farmers, but there is not a single word of assurance from the government that they would make the pulp industry procure the stocks at ₹8 a kg. Many pulp units are pressuring the farmers to sell their produce at ₹4 a kg," he alleges. War and fruit! Notably, some pulp-making units are blaming Russia-Ukraine war for the tepid procurement. K. Mani, a 62-year-old mango farmer from Palamaner mandal, says: "When I went to sell my produce a few days ago, a manager came up to me saying that owing to the Russia-Ukraine war, the mango beverage business was down and that the stocks were piled up. The manager said they were procuring the produce from us because they didn't want to make us unhappy. I was forced to sell 10 tonnes at ₹4 a kg as against the government price of ₹8 a kg." Field staff of the Agriculture and Horticulture departments say this strange situation of "mango panic" exists nowhere else in the country. The mango farmers in the Chittoor region say their counterparts in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are willing to sell their produce at the lowest possible price. Notably, a large number of farmers from Krishnagiri district of Tamil Nadu were said to have supplied premium varieties of 'Pulera' and 'Chandura' to pulp units in Chittoor district this year, at costs ranging between ₹4 and ₹6 a kg. These two table varieties are considered superior to totapuri in taste and shelf life and are also in high demand from international clients.

According to sources, Tamil Nadu registered a bumper yield this year, and its farmers took their produce to Chittoor to sell it at whatever price offered to them by the pulp units. A senior official from the Forest department, who sought anonymity, blamed the government for the "undue mango revolution" in Chittoor district. During the past one and a half decades, the departments of DRDA and DWMA distributed mango saplings of various varieties, particularly the totapuri and Alphonso, to farmers in Chittoor. "The officials, in most cases, are responsible for creating the impression that the mango is going to be the alpha and omega of horticulture in the future," the official adds. Meanwhile, the mango crisis has spurred a political reaction as well, with the YSRCP, the Left and the Congress organising protests, demanding a higher MSP for mango farmers and blaming the government for its "failure to check the of the highhandedness of the pulp industry and make them stick to the declared MSP."

What the pulp industry says Govardhan Bobby, chairman of All India Food Processors Association-South Zone and a representative of the Pulp Industry in Chittoor district, says mango orchards across the country witnessed a glut this season. "An important point is that mango is a biannual crop, that is, if it's a bumper crop this year, it will be a poor harvest the next year. Take the example of 2024, when the yield was below 30%. In 2025, the yield is over 75%," he says. Also, the COVID-19 waves, the Russian-Ukraine war and the present Iran-Israel conflict in West Asia has clobbered the pulp industry in Chittoor district. It has incurred a loss of over ₹1,000 crore since 2023. Govardhan Bobby says the pulp factories currently have a combined pulp stock of 1.75 lakh tonnes in their warehouses because the buyers (those who purchase pulp from the units) did not come forward in 2023 and 2024. After the disturbances in West Asia, the Red Sea route has been closed off or operated with limited schedules. Owing to this, the exporters have to depend on circuitous routes, passing around Sri Lanka and South East Asian countries. "This is eight times costlier compared to the Red Sea route."

A museum in search of a forever home in Telangana



Somewhere inside a forgotten room in Hyderabad, a crow with the hood of a cobra waits. Not a living creature, but a riveting brass totem with a story so rich, it can take hours to tell. Around it lie ghostly wind instruments made of hide and bone, leather bags that breathe music, and shadowy relics from India's ancient forest tribes. These are not just objects; they are echoes of long-lost worlds. And now, these artefacts, many of which once mimicked the wind, birds and rain, are in search of a home — a home in Hyderabad bordering the deep jungles and forest tract of central India, where these instruments were first born from ingenuity, ritual, and breath.

These have journeyed far to get here, collected over five decades by one man obsessed with memory and history: ethnographer Jayadheer Tirumala Rao. His treasure trove lies scattered across six rooms tucked deep within the Telugu University campus in Nampally. Here, between sunlit corridors and dusty alcoves, Rao moves like a man among old friends. The wide courtyard is littered with weathered cartwheels, carved doors, door frames, totem poles and what looks like a sculptor's madness — but each piece has its own story. "This is a hanging inkpot made with brass," the 75-year-old says, lifting a crouched, bull-shaped vessel with a hidden cap for dipping ink. "It was a gift from a student while I was teaching in Hanamkonda." There are 200 known varieties of hanging inkpots among Adivasi communities, and Rao has managed to collect 40 of them. The collector and his calling

It all began half a century ago in Warangal district of Telangana, when a young postgraduate student was nudged away from academia by his mentor, folklorist B. Ramaraju, and asked to take the tougher road — field work. Rao took off, hitchhiking, riding rickety buses and walking for miles through Telangana's interior in the mid-1970s, when roads were few and forests many. "I travelled by train, I travelled by bus. I mostly walked, as there were hardly any buses in 1975, to research and understand folk and Adivasi culture. I began collecting musical instruments that did not work," he recalls, sitting among his archive. "Once, I started walking from Charla in Bhadrachalam in the morning and by 8 p.m., I realised I was lost. I walked all night and somehow ended up at the same point I had started from. That was scary."

Gradually, however, those walks bore fruit. Rao's first acquisition was the 'Jamadika' in the 1970s — a haunting stringed instrument enclosed in a drum, played only by a sub-clan of the Madiga community. As he documented folk ballads and songs of the Telangana Peasant Rebellion (Rythuangu Poratam) and folk literature, Rao also began collecting objects from the communities he visited — musical relics, domestic tools and even pieces of performance history. One evening, during a visit to the Saradlu community about 30 kilometres from Kolanupaka, a village in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, he stayed back to listen to folk songs of the Telangana Armed Rebellion. The men invited him along for a hunt. That night, his dinner was roast garden lizards. "That was it. That was my meal," he says with a shrug. Then he holds up a brass object that looks like a bird. "This is a crow with a snake hood in the middle. It is a totemic object for a clan, called Kaki Padagala Varu. They keep it close during a performance of the Mahabharata, that may last for three days with music and old manuscripts," shares Rao. Part of his collection is the 'Thittini', a leather bag attached to a bamboo pipe used by a community called Kommuluvuru that hums like an ancestral bagpipe. And the rare 'Bruhat Kinnera' with 13 steps and three gourds, an instrument even older than the veena. "Very few are gifts. Most of them have been purchased," says Rao's wife, R. Neela, a homemaker who has shouldered the endless task of cleaning and caring for this vast, uncatalogued collection. The instruments and artefacts — totemic objects, musical devices, writing tools, masks, flags, household pieces — lie undocumented, without labels or timelines or the gentle touch of a museologist, in these six rooms of the Telugu University. Yet, they hold within them the pulse of India's earliest communities — the Gonds, Saradlu, Totis, Koyas, Gutti Koyas, Pradhans, Mauryas, Chenchus, Lambadis, and the clans of Manda Hechu, Bolla Pujari, Tera Chiralavaru Daccali, Chindu, Mastidu, Runjavaru and Maladasari. These communities, whose homelands once lay deep in the forested heart of central India, are now vanishing along with their cultures.

Over a century ago, Osmania University (OU) rose from a 2,500-acre expanse that once belonged to one of the

courtesans of the Nizam of Hyderabad. It became the first university in India to adopt Urdu as its medium of instruction, and its campus, dotted with ancient stepwells and serais, has since become more than just a seat of higher learning. It has been a crucible of protest, its student movements playing a pivotal role in the birth of Telangana in June 2014. It was here, amid this charged legacy of scholarship and dissent, that Rao's long-wandering museum collection was finally offered a space to rest. After decades of being crammed into scattered rooms in Telugu University, two disused bungalows nestled in a quiet, leafy quadrangle off the main road of OU were allocated for the museum. The move came with the backing of Telangana Chief Minister, A. Revanth Reddy. But the students of OU have other plans.

Construction work under way for a cultural museum on Osmania University campus in Hyderabad which were halted following student protests. Construction work under way for a cultural museum on Osmania University campus in Hyderabad which were halted following student protests. [Photo Credit: Nagara Gopal] The land where the museum is set to be established is OU land. It cannot be leased out to private individuals. The university used to have 2,500 acres. Now, it has shrunk to 1,300 acres. Once land is leased, the university never regains control," says Druhan, president of the OU unit of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), who is spearheading the protests against the establishment. Tensions escalated quickly. Work on the two bungalows came to a sudden halt after student leaders reportedly threatened the labourers and contractors at the site. They left in haste. The buildings now lie silent once again, caught in the crossfire between heritage and protest. "Why involve private parties at all," asks Raju, another ABVP leader from the university. "OU can run such a museum itself. Even Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy had once promised ₹10 crore for a museum, but that proposal was never taken up." Land within the university has long been a bone of contention, with student unions seeing themselves as its vigilant custodians. Over the years, various encroachments — some with questionable legitimacy, others with official paperwork — have eaten into the once-sprawling campus. And for student leaders, every new construction represents another line of defense to hold.

Back in 1994, a one-man commission led by Justice O. Chinnappa Reddy drew a firm red line around OU land. After reviewing years of land dealings, his report cited a crucial resolution passed by the University's Syndicate as far back as December 26, 1986. It read with finality: "There was a firm resolution of the Syndicate of the Osmania University, totally abandoning the practice of allotting University lands to outside agencies for whatever purpose, educational research or otherwise." In essence, the university had resolved to shut the door, permanently, on all outside claims to its land. Living culture, not just curios. But the question at the heart of the current standoff is this: can an archive of folk memory, painstakingly gathered over half a century, be seen as just another "outside agency"?

"This isn't a private collection to be locked up in a shelf at home," says journalist Ramachandra Murthy, one of the earliest and most vocal supporters of Rao's mission. "These cultural objects have travelled as far as Paris, were once displayed at the Rashtrapati Nilayam, and even spent time in the State Gallery of Art. They are not museum curios for personal gratification; they are pieces of living culture. This kind of collection cannot be managed by an individual. It needs institutional support," says Murthy. Many in the academic world agree. "The students protesting have been misled," M. Kodandaram, former professor and civil society activist, had been quoted as saying.

This collection could be of immense value to researchers working on tribal life, history, anthropology and music. It is not just about artefacts; it is about Telangana's cultural history. "Hyderabad, after all, is no stranger to personal collections becoming public legacies. It is home to perhaps the biggest cache of cultural artefacts acquired by one person — Salar Jung. These objects were the genesis of the Salar Jung Museum, one of India's largest and most visited institutions of national importance. Tucked into a quiet bylane of Domalguda is another legacy: the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, with its enviable spread of miniature paintings and manuscripts, a quiet cultural gem of the city. Rao's journey, however, has been less institutional and far more intimate. He recalls an early turning point, nearly four decades ago, when the full weight of his collection first dawned on him. "I was shifting houses in Chikkadpally area [of Hyderabad]. I had booked a small vehicle for three trips. But as the workers started hauling things down from the attic, they kept discovering more and more. Eventually, they got frustrated and demanded extra money. That is when I realised, this collection had grown larger than I imagined," he reminisces. Now, nearly 40 years later, Rao stands at another crossroads. His collection, born of long treks through forests, folk memory and fading oral traditions has once again outgrown its shelter. Will it finally find a permanent home within OU's storied grounds? Or will the struggle to shelter India's sonic and cultural past continue, one room — and one protest — at a time?

What do different cancer drugs do? | Explained

A major new investigation by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism published by The Hindu has revealed that cancer drugs shipped around the world to more than 100 countries have failed quality tests. But what are these drugs and how are they used? Cancer is a disease characterised by uncontrolled cell growth. It is caused by mutations in genes disrupting or inhibiting the normal ways in which cells divide or die. This causes cancerous cells to develop — and when a mass of cancerous cells grows, it can form a tumour. Chemotherapy drugs disrupt this process, and these medicines have transformed the landscape of cancer treatment, improving outcomes for millions of patients. The six types of drug in our investigation — cisplatin, oxaliplatin, cyclophosphamide, doxorubicin, methotrexate and leucovorin — are all chemotherapy treatments. While there are differences in exactly how these drugs work, most share a common goal: to target and kill cancer cells while minimising harm to normal cells.

What is cisplatin?

Cisplatin is a platinum-based drug that emerged in the 1960s from an unexpected discovery. Researchers found that a platinum-containing compound blocked the growth of bacteria, leading to the realisation that it could potentially be used to combat cancer. Cisplatin works by binding to the DNA of cancer cells, preventing them from growing and dividing. The drug is particularly effective against testicular, ovarian, bladder and certain lung cancers. Its introduction has significantly improved survival rates for many patients, whether used alone or in combination with other therapies. However, like all potent medications, cisplatin comes with side effects, including sickness, kidney dam-

age and hearing issues. Cisplatin also suppresses the function of the bone marrow, where new blood cells are produced. The resulting reduction in white blood cells has severe effects on patients' immune systems, leaving them vulnerable to infection.

What is oxaliplatin?

Oxaliplatin, like cisplatin, is a platinum-based drug. It also works by binding to and damaging the DNA of cancer cells. It is used mainly to treat the more advanced stages of colorectal cancer and following surgery for the removal of colon cancer, to wipe out remaining malignant cells. Oxaliplatin comes with broadly similar side effects to cisplatin.

What is cyclophosphamide?

Cyclophosphamide is another key chemotherapy drug, often used to tackle disease including breast cancer, some types of leukemia (a type of blood cancer), sarcoma (cancer of the connective tissues) and advanced lymphoma (cancer of the lymph nodes). Cyclophosphamide disrupts the DNA of cancer cells. This limits their ability to replicate and mutate. It also causes a drop in white blood cells and can also cause pain when passing urine due to inflammation of the bladder.

What is doxorubicin?

Often referred to as the "red devil" due to its striking colour and severe side effects, doxorubicin was derived from a type of soil bacteria called Streptomyces, and was initially explored as an antibiotic. Doxorubicin is effective against several types of cancer, including breast cancer, leukaemia, lymphoma and sarcoma. It works by interfering



with the cancer cell's DNA and disrupting the replication process. It is a staple in chemotherapy protocols, despite potential side effects including heart damage, risk of infection, skin changes and hair loss.

What is methotrexate?

Methotrexate is very effective against various cancers, including leukaemia, lymphoma and certain types of tumour. By inhibiting the protein responsible for creating new DNA molecules, it effectively stifles cancer cell growth. Methotrexate is often given in high doses, followed by leucovorin to help protect healthy cells from damage.

What is leucovorin?

Leucovorin, also known as folic acid (not to be confused with folic acid), is a form of vitamin B9. It differs from the rest of the drugs that were tested in the Bureau's investigation in that it is not technically considered a chemotherapy drug, but a companion to chemotherapy.

Ancient voyagers brought rice across 2,300 km of Pacific Ocean

GNS News Agency, March 6

Canberra: In a new study published in Science Advances, the earliest evidence of rice in the Pacific Islands was uncovered — at an ancient cave site on Guam in the Mariana Islands of western Micronesia. The domesticated rice was transported by the first islanders, who sailed 2,300 km of open ocean from the Philippines about 3,500 years ago. The discovery settles long-standing academic debates and satisfies decades of curiosity about the origins and lifestyles of early Pacific peoples. The case of the Marianas, located more than 2,000 km east of the Philippines and north-east of Indonesia, is especially intriguing.

These islands were the first places in Remote Oceania reached by anyone, in this case inhabited for the first time by Malayo-Polynesian-speaking populations from islands in Southeast Asia. For nearly two decades, scholars debated the timing and the overseas source of these first islanders, the ancestors of today's Chamorro people.

How did they come to Guam and the Marianas?

Archaeological research has confirmed settlement in the Mariana Islands 3,500 years ago at several sites in Guam, Tinian and Saipan. In 2020, the first ancient DNA analysis from Guam confirmed what archaeology and linguistics had suggested: the early settlers came from central or northern Philippines. Further ancestral links trace them back to Taiwan, the homeland of both their language and their genetics.

PM Modi on 10 years of Digital India: 'It has become a people's movement'



Narendra Modi Prime Minister Narendra Modi attends Centenary Celebrations of Jain spiritual leader Acharya Vidyand Ji Maharaj, at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on Saturday. (DD/ANI Video Grab) With the government's flagship 'Digital India' programme completing ten years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that it has not remained a mere governance scheme, but has become a "people's movement".

"While decades were spent doubting the ability of Indians to use technology, we changed this approach and trusted the ability of Indians to use technology," the Prime Minister wrote in a blog post on LinkedIn Tuesday. "In 2014, internet penetration was limited, digital literacy was low, and online access to government services was scarce. Many doubted whether a country as vast and diverse as India could truly go digital. Today, that question has been answered not just in data and dashboards, but in the lives of 140 crore Indians. From how we govern, to how we learn, transact, and build,

Digital India is everywhere," Modi added.

He said that in 2014, India had around 25 crore internet connections, which has today grown to over 97 crore. "Over 42 lakh kilometres of Optical Fibre Cable equivalent to 11 times the distance between Earth and the Moon now connects even the most remote villages," he said. The PM said that India's 5G rollout is among the fastest in the world, with 4.81 lakh base stations installed in just two years, with high-speed Internet reaching urban hubs and forward military posts alike including Galwan, Siachen, and Ladakh. "India Stack, which is our digital backbone, has enabled platforms like UPI, which now handles 100+ billion transactions a year. Around half of all real time digital transactions happen in India. Through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), over Rs 44 lakh crore has been transferred directly to citizens, cutting out middlemen and saving Rs 3.48 lakh crore in leakages," Modi said. The Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), a government-backed initiative to create a national e-commerce network, has recently crossed 200 million transactions, with the last 100 million in just six months, Modi said.

"From Banarasi weavers to bamboo artisans in Nagaland, sellers are now reaching customers nationwide, without middlemen or digital monopolies," he added. The Government e-Marketplace (GeM) has also crossed Rs 1 lakh crore GMV in 50 days, with 22 lakh sellers including over 1.8 lakh women-led MSMEs, who have fulfilled orders worth Rs 46,000 crore, Modi said. Through the \$1.2 billion India AI Mission, India has enabled access to 34,000 GPUs at globally unmatched prices at less than \$1/GPU hour making India not just the most affordable internet economy, but also the most affordable compute destination, the PM said.

India 'strategic ally', trade deal being finalised: White House

India-US Trade Deal News: The India-US trade deal could be announced soon, as the White House on Monday said that US President Donald Trump may soon declare the conclusion of the agreement with India. This comes as trade talks enter their final phase, with fewer than 10 days remaining until the reciprocal tariff pause expires. A deal would mean that Indian goods will no longer be subjected to the 26 per cent reciprocal tariffs that is set to come into effect on July 9. Responding to a question at a press briefing, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said: "India remains a very strategic ally in the Asia Pacific, and the President has a very good relationship with Prime Minister Modi — and he will continue to have that."

"The President said last week [that the US and India are very close to a trade deal], and it remains true. I just spoke to our Secretary of Commerce about it. He was in the Oval Office with the President. They are finalising these agreements, and you'll hear from the President and his trade team very soon when it comes to India," Leavitt said. While India-US trade talks appear to be progressing in the right direction, China has warned countries against negotiating deals at its expense. This comes at a time when Indian electric vehicle manufacturers are facing supply constraints due to disruptions in the distribution of rare earth elements from China. "If such a situation occurs, China will not accept it and will take resolute countermeasures to safeguard its legitimate rights and interests," China's Commerce Ministry warned.

Ajay Srivastava, head of think tank GTRI, said that with India's chief trade negotiator in Washington DC and the clock ticking, the next seven days could determine whether India and the United States settle for a limited "mini-deal" or walk away from the negotiating table — at least for now. Under such a deal, India is expected to cut MFN tariffs on a wide range of industrial goods, including automobiles — a persistent demand from Washington. In agriculture, India may of-



fer limited market access through tariff reductions and tariff-rate quotas (TRQs) on select US products such as ethanol, almonds, walnuts, apples, raisins, avocados, olive oil, spirits, and wine," Srivastava said. However, India is unlikely to budge on sensitive sectors, and tariff cuts are not expected for dairy products or key food grains such as rice and wheat, where farm livelihoods are at stake, he said. "These categories are politically and economically sensitive, affecting over 700 million people in India's rural economy," Srivastava noted. Beyond tariffs, GTRI said the US is expected to press India for large-scale commercial purchases — including oil and LNG, civilian and military aircraft from Boeing, helicopters, and nuclear reactors. "There may also be pressure on India to ease FDI restrictions in multi-brand retail — potentially benefiting firms like Amazon and Walmart — and to liberalise rules on remanufactured goods, currently subject to stringent import norms," he said. In return, the US will refrain from reimposing the controversial 26 per cent country-specific tariffs on Indian goods, which were unilaterally announced by President Trump on April 2. Instead, a 10 per cent baseline tariff may apply to most imports from India — but the US will not lower its own MFN tariffs on Indian exports, Srivastava said.

Neutral monetary policy stance retains an option for both pausing and cutting rates: RBI MPC Member Saugata Bhattacharya

Saugata Bhattacharya, a Member of the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), says that geopolitical tensions are unlikely to pose a "significant risk" to the RBI's growth-inflation forecasts, based on the current data and global environment. Several positive factors supporting India's economic momentum, including a favourable monsoon, strengthening rural demand, the possibility of monetary policy easing, and timely government initiatives — all of which bode well for a revival in growth, he says. In an interview with Hitesh Vyas and George Mathew, Bhattacharya — the lone MPC Member who voted for a more modest 25 basis points (bps) cut in the repo rate during the June policy review, as opposed to the 50-bps reduction backed by other members — emphasises that the committee's 'neutral' stance leaves room for both a pause and further rate cuts, depending on future developments. Bhattacharya currently serves as a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research.

Although I had some prior reservations on changing the stance from neutral to accommodative at the April '25 meeting, I had gone with the majority view on the shift. This was based on the clarification that the shift to accommodative signalled only that "a rate hike [was] off the table" and remained consistent with a pause, with the more probable future action, despite the then extreme uncertainty, being a cut, given the space opening up for policy easing with falling CPI inflation. The shift now back to neutral is simply a mild forward guidance that, post the steep 100 bps (and now front loaded) repo rate cuts over the space of 4 months together with the large surplus system liquidity, this was a time to pause, monitor the incoming data on a "meeting-by-meeting" basis, assess the effects on macro-financial data and proceed with further calibrated easing should economic conditions so warrant. The collective point was to emphasise that there would be no further pre-committed policy easing in this cycle.

A neutral stance still retains an option for both pausing as well as cutting rates. Given the present, evolving and likely continued elevated levels of uncertainty, rate actions will have to be based on incoming data and an assessment of the associated macro-financial environment. It is very difficult to provide guidance at this point. This change of stance, once again, in no way precludes the possibility of further easing if actual inflation undershoots forecasts and opens up further space for policy easing. RBI Governor has already articulated this succinctly. With recurring geopolitical tensions that pose a risk to inflation, do you expect domestic inflation to remain in the RBI's comfort zone for the entire FY26? I don't think, given our present information set, vari-

ous geopolitical tensions are likely to be a significant risk to RBI's forecasts of the growth-inflation balance. To my mind, more worrying is the evolving series of bilateral trade deals with multiple countries, which will define the relative export competitiveness of India. More importantly, the eventual outcomes will define an eventual equilibrium of supply chains, investments, trade flows, which will have a more profound effect on India growth prospects. Given the challenging global environment, especially tariff issues, do you think we will be able to meet the real growth rate of 6.5 per cent in FY26

Due to the continuing elevated uncertainty regarding global trade, the continuing spillovers into financial markets volatility and the prospects, extending well into the medium term, of adverse economic shocks on growth, economic forecasts at this point, to my mind, are only indicative in nature, conveying merely a sense of the direction of travel. As of now, most high frequency indicators suggest continued resilience in economic activity. Prospects of a good monsoon and improving rural demand, combined with the monetary policy easing and various well-timed Government initiatives, augur well for growth revival.

What key triggers are required for India to achieve its aspirational growth target of 7-8 per cent?

As RBI Governor has stated, monetary policy is a necessary but not sufficient condition for stimulating growth. MP is a component of a coordinated policy response. The thoughtful personal income tax rate cuts in the Budget, higher targeted budget capital outlays, trade deals and negotiations, manufacturing incentives, regulatory and compliance rationalisation, all have to interlock. When do you expect the consumption-boosting measures announced in Budget 2025-26, along with the 100-basis-point repo rate cut, to begin translating into tangible increases in aggregate demand? The effects of the coordinated stimulus measures are likely to begin to see traction sooner rather than later. Transmission of the repo rate cuts plus the abundant liquidity infused by RBI will help accelerate transmission more quickly than in the past. The dip in personal income tax collections in Q1 FY26 suggests that tax paying households are already seeing an increase in their disposable incomes. This too will accelerate over the next quarters. Other price and income support measures will also help boost demand. The transmission of monetary policy in India has often been delayed or uneven. What structural reforms do you think are necessary for better pass-through, and can policy be truly effective without them? Transmission of repo rate cuts and surplus liquidity in FY26 is likely to have been faster than in previous easing cycles.

Silent saviours: the crucial role of obstetric anaesthesiologists in reducing maternal mortality



Maternal mortality is a key indicator of healthcare quality. According to the Sample Registration System's (SRS) 2019-21 data, India's Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) has dropped from 130 (2014-16) to 93 (2019-21). States including Kerala (20), Maharashtra (38), and Telangana (45) have already met the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target. However, others like Madhya Pradesh (159) and Bihar (100) continue to lag, despite some progress made. As nations strive to meet the SDG of reducing maternal deaths to fewer than 70 per 100,000 live births, the contribution of obstetric anaesthesiologists is indispensable. The role of obstetric anaesthesiologists

While obstetricians often stand at the forefront of maternal care, a less visible but equally vital figure operates behind the curtain — the obstetric anaesthesiologist. Obstetric anaesthesiologists are highly trained physicians who specialise in providing safe and effective anaesthesia and pain relief during pregnancy, labour, and delivery, particularly in high-risk obstetric cases. Their role extends far beyond the operating theatre, integrating deeply with emergency obstetric care and intensive maternal monitoring. As maternal healthcare systems evolve to handle increasingly complex pregnancies, these specialists are proving instrumental in reducing maternal mortality and ensuring safe delivery outcomes. High-risk pregnancies are rising due to factors like advanced maternal age, IVF and multifetal pregnancies, obesity, hypertension, diabetes, and pre-existing cardiac conditions. In such cases, anaesthetic management becomes a matter of life and death — not just comfort.

Obstetrics is the only specialty where emergency surgical procedures far outnumber elective and planned surgeries. Of these emergencies, 6-7% are stat surgical pro-

cedures that demand the highest of skills and clinical algorithms. In emergency caesarean sections, postpartum haemorrhage, or preeclampsia cases, anaesthetic decisions must be swift, safe, and tailored to the mother's physiology. Delayed or inappropriate care by the team can lead to complications such as cardiac arrest, aspiration, or uncontrolled bleeding — all major contributors to maternal deaths globally. Another critical service provided by obstetric anaesthesiologists is labour analgesia — the management of labour pain through techniques such as epidural anaesthesia or several alternative options like IV - PCA (patient-controlled analgesia) using safe medications. Not only does this improve the birthing experience, but studies have shown that well-managed labour pain can reduce maternal exhaustion, lower the incidence of emergency interventions, and even decrease the rate of postpartum depression. Importantly, labour analgesia also allows high-risk women — including those with cardiac or neurological disorders — to undergo delivery with reduced physiological stress. Modern obstetric care increasingly adopts a multidisciplinary model, where trained anaesthesiologists in critical care, collaborate closely with obstetricians, obstetric physicians, foetal medicine experts and neonatologists.

This is especially critical in managing patients in Maternal Critical Care Units (MCCUs), where anaesthesiologists work with the motto — giving best to both the lives — and monitor not only sedation and pain control, but also look after invasive monitoring, ventilation, and provide organ supports.

The need for more training Experts advocate for greater recognition for, and investment in the training of obstetric anaesthesiologists, especially in resource-limited settings. Obstetric anaesthesiologists play a pivotal role in this ecosystem, ensuring safer deliveries and better coordination in emergencies — thereby supporting India's push toward the SDG goals. In many developing regions, a lack of trained anaesthesiologists is a significant barrier to safe obstetric care. The Association of Obstetric Anaesthesiologists, India has made a curriculum and accredited several centres in India to train obstetric anaesthesiologists. We need to prioritise staffing and protocols that integrate anaesthetic services from the first trimester through to the postpartum period. In the quiet precision of their work lies a profound truth: obstetric anaesthesiologists save lives — often silently, always critically.

Kombucha can rebalance gut ecosystem in people with obesity: study

From Instagram reels to supermarket shelves, kombucha — the fizzy, fermented tea drink — has found a growing audience among health-conscious consumers in India. Promoted as a probiotic powerhouse, it's touted for its supposed benefits to digestion, immunity, and metabolism. According to one estimate provided by Indian company Sbooch, the kombucha market in India grew from \$45 million in 2020 to \$102 million in 2024. Yet much of the enthusiasm has outpaced science. While kombucha's traditional use and composition suggest potential health benefits, few rigorous studies have tested these claims in humans. Most research until now has focused on kombucha's biochemistry or has been limited to animal models. This is why a recent study in *The Journal of Nutrition* stands out: it takes a closer look at kombucha's effects on the human gut microbiome and how they matter for human health.

The study followed 46 healthy adults in Brazil — 23 with obesity and 23 of normal weight — over eight weeks in a pre-post trial. The participants were classified using (World Health Organisation cut-offs of) BMI and waist circumference. Every day, each participant consumed 200 ml of kombucha that had been prepared in the lab using black tea and fermented with a symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast (SCOBY). All participants were otherwise healthy and had no recent history of drugs, antibiotics or supplements. Stool samples were collected at the beginning and end to assess gut microbiome changes. The researchers used genomic tools to profile bacterial and fungal communities. They also measured fasting blood glucose, insulin, and proteins linked to gut barrier integrity since a weakened gut lining can allow harmful molecules to enter the bloodstream, trigger low-grade inflammation, and ultimately engender insulin resistance.

What we know, what changed After eight weeks, the overall microbial diversity was largely unchanged but the abundance of certain bacteria had changed in ways that suggested kombucha may help positively rebalance the gut ecosystem. Chemical analysis of the kombucha revealed a rich array of phenolic compounds, mostly flavonoids (81%) and phenolic acids (19%). These polyphenols are largely unabsorbed in the small intestine, reaching the colon where they serve as fermentable food for gut microbes. The authors suggested that they may promote the growth of certain bacteria by stimulating the secretion of mucus and creating a more hospitable gut environment. Notably, the population of Akkermansia bacteria had increased in individuals with obesity. Previous research has linked this shift with better blood sugar control and insulin sensitivity.

The levels of Prevotellaceae also increased, specifically in the obese group. Certain strains of Prevotella copri have similarly been linked to improved insulin sensitivity, hypertension, and inflammation. Both groups also reported higher abundance of Bacteroidota, which play significant roles in digesting complex carbohydrates. Bacteria associated with less favourable outcomes including Ruminococcus and Dorea declined, becoming similar to the normal-weight group by the eighth week. Ruminococcus gnavus has been positively associated with inflammatory bowel disease and liver fat accumulation, while Dorea with high BMI and cholesterol markers. In normal-weight participants, Parabacteroides increased modestly. Parabacteroides goldsteinii has been known to reduce tissue inflammation, ameliorating chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and Helicobacter pylori infections. The populations of Exophiala and Rhodotorula, two fungi associated with cystic fibrosis and obesity respectively, decreased as well. While the study offers promising clues about kombucha's influence, especially for individuals with obesity, the researchers urged caution. The microbial shifts were modest and didn't improve metabolic markers like blood glucose, insulin, or inflammatory proteins. Vineet K. Sharma, a metagenomics researcher at Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Bhopal, noted that while most studies in India have focused on associations rather than causality, microbial shifts have been linked to metabolic changes in several cases. "For instance," he said, "production of metabolites by gut microbes, such as short-chain fatty acids, bile acids, or tryptophan derivatives, has been shown to influence glucose metabolism, inflammation, and gut barrier integrity." The team also pointed out that microbial responses vary by diet, genetics, and overall health, thus reducing the generalisability of the



findings. And with a short duration and a modest sample size, the findings remain a proof-of-concept.

The results are still valuable in what they reveal, however: kombucha does appear to nudge the gut microbiome in directions associated with better metabolic health after two months. Kombucha and India Whether the effects will hold for Indian populations remains an open question. Studies have indicated gut microbiota in India are distinct. In one of Sharma's studies, Indian gut microbiomes formed a clearly separate cluster from Western populations. Indian guts, particularly among those consuming traditional plant-based diets, harbour more Prevotella, an inversion of the typical Western microbial pattern. Since consuming kombucha increased Prevotellaceae abundance in the study, it may not drive the same degree of change in local populations. "Even among Indians, microbiome composition varies with diet and location across the six regions we studied," Sharma said. While North Indians have more Prevotella, South Indians carry a higher load of Bacteroides and Ruminococcus. Women from rural high-altitude areas have greater gut diversity than their urban counterparts. Ethnic tribes from Ladakh, Jaisalmer, and Khargone can be differentiated based on their gut microbiomes alone. Taken together, the new study is proof that no single brand of kombucha can claim to be 'good' for all consumers across geographies. The drink may support gut health but whether that translates to long-term metabolic benefits remains to be seen.

US pulls out from vaccines alliance Gavi, says it has lost public trust

London: US Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr said the country is pulling its support from the vaccines alliance Gavi, saying the organisation has "ignored the science" and "lost the public trust." A video of Kennedy's speech was shown to participants at a Gavi meeting in Brussels on Wednesday, where the vaccines group was hoping to raise at least USD 9 billion for the next five years. Gavi is a public-private partnership including WHO, UNICEF, the Gates Foundation, and the World Bank. It has paid for more than 1 billion children to be vaccinated through routine immunisation programmes, saving an estimated 18 million lives. The US has long been one of its biggest supporters; before Trump's re-election, the country had pledged USD 1 billion through 2030. Kennedy called on Gavi "to re-earn the public trust and to justify the USD 8 billion America has provided in funding since 2001," saying officials must "consider the best science available, even when that science contradicts established paradigms." Kennedy said until that happens, the US won't contribute further to Gavi. Kennedy, a longtime vaccine sceptic, said he and President Trump were concerned about how Gavi and the World Health Organisation partnered together during the COVID-19 pandemic to work with social media companies "to silence dissenting views, to stifle free speech and legitimate questions" during a time when many people had questions about vaccine safety. Kennedy said Gavi continues to make "questionable recommendations," like advising pregnant women to get immunized against COVID-19 and funding the roll-out of a vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis in poorer countries.

Guardiola on Al-Hilal: “They have a lot of quality. They are a complete team that can run and run”



GNS News Agency, March 6

When Benfica acquired Marcos Leonardo from Santos when he was only 20, they inserted a release clause of 150 million Euros, assuming that his feats would have the elites of Europe queuing up for his signature. But his one-season tenure hardly took off and he was jettisoned to Saudi Pro League club Al-Hilal, making him one of the youngest imports from Brazil in the league. But his European dreams would not be yet over, as he issued a catalogue of his virtues in the greatest moment of Al-Hilal, topping Pep Guardiola's full-strength Manchester City in a 4-3 thriller. Leonardo belted the winner, after which he accidentally tore his shirt when celebrating, as well as scoring the first equalising goal. Both goals were clinical, rather than spectacular, which could woo a lot of eyes into him, as Europe is experiencing a severe shortage of poachers.

The victory could be considered symbolic of Saudi Pro

League's quality, even though Guardiola's side were not at their sharpest. Guardiola's team wasted a clutch of chances, with Jeremy Doku, Erling Haaland, Josko Gvardiol, Ruben Dias and Savinho squandering presentable opportunities. But Guardiola would praise the Saudi side. "Al-Hilal has a lot of quality. They are a complete team that can run and run – I have a big opinion of them," he said. The precision in counterattacking hurt them immensely. "When the crosses arrived, in the first action, they had the ability to pass the ball and attack and they have quick players. We created a lot and had a lot of chances against a team that defend so deep. They punished us on the transitions," he said. Al-Hilal manager Simone Inzaghi, just three weeks into taking over the club's stewardship, was at a loss of words when praising his side: "Tonight we had to do something extraordinary because we knew how good Manchester City are, we knew we had to climb Mount Everest without oxygen and we were great. Guardiola is the best coach in the world but tonight we did our best and we deserved the result. We were great. All the players were exceptional in everything, in the possession phase, non-possession phase." Centre-back Kalidou Koulibaly, who scored a towering header in the 94th minute, said his team wanted to show that they are one of the best in the world. "We knew that it was one of the difficult games against one of the best of the best teams in the world, we wanted to show ideas, our talent, and I think that we made a very good game, defensively we were very strong, and offensively we used all the opportunities that came our way," Koulibaly told reporters after the game.

'Labuschagne will get back, good as anyone in world': Steve Smith backs out-of-favour batsman

GNS News Agency, March 6

It's been speculated in the Australian press and murmured by the former Australian players that Marnus Labuschagne, who was dropped for the first Test against West Indies, might not make it for the Ashes series owing to poor form, but Steve Smith has thrown his weight behind the out-of-favour middle-order batsman. "At his best, he's as good as anyone in the world and I've no doubt he'll get back there. He's actually in a pretty good place. I think I said it after the last game – I thought he batted really well in the World Test Championship Final without going on to make a big score," Smith told SEN Radio. "I thought his movements, the positions he was getting himself into and the way he was in particular clipping the ball through mid-wicket (was great). I think when he's doing that from an off-stump line, I feel like that's when he's in a good place, his balance is good, and his movements are pretty good. So yeah, I thought he was batting well."

When Labuschagne was dropped for the first Test, Australia chairman of selectors George Bailey had said in a statement: "Marnus at his best can be a really important member of this team. He understands his output hasn't been at the level we, or he, expects. We will continue working with him on the areas of his game we feel he needs to rediscover. We continue to value his skill and expect him to work through the challenge positively."

Smith reckoned that Labuschagne is as "good as anyone in world". "Labuschagne's obviously not played the last Test match, and he's got an opportunity to work on a few



things that he probably wants to work on without the pressures of playing in the game as well." Sam Konstas replaced Labuschagne as the opener, and Cameron Green had played as No.3 in the first Test against West Indies. Neither scored much, and Smith has asked for more patience.

"I think for them it's just about being patient," Smith said. "Cam's done it before in Test cricket, he scored runs, so he's not foreign to that. Maybe batting at number three but I've always said it, even when I went up to open the batting, it's just a number. Sometimes you feel more comfortable in a certain position, but it's also just a number. You can come in at any time when the ball's new or whatever when you lose a few early wickets. I think we've just got to be patient with them, they're talented players, they've got good skills and I'm sure they'll come good."

New fastest serve record at Wimbledon set by Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard – but Taylor Fritz wins the point

GNS News Agency, March 6

French Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard recorded fastest serve at Wimbledon during the opening round clash against USA's Taylor Fritz. (AP) French Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard recorded fastest serve at Wimbledon during the opening round clash against USA's Taylor Fritz. French youngster Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard smashed the record for the fastest recorded serve at Wimbledon by a full 5 mph difference... but it wasn't still enough to win him the point during the opening round clash against USA's Taylor Fritz. In the opening set of the match that was eventually suspended at 2-sets each late in the night, Mpetshi Perricard hammered a 153 mph (246 km/h) bullet. The record was previously at 148 mph, struck by USA's Taylor Dent in 2010, according to ATP website. But fifth-seeded Fritz, known for his solid all-round game, hit a block return to the bullet serve that drew an audible gasp from the crowd, neutralised the rally and ended up winning the point. Fritz however, was in danger of joining the list of major upsets on the opening day, before eventually clawing his back from two sets down to level the match – including a stunning 4th-set turnaround in the tiebreak – to stay alive overnight. The match suspended after four sets on Monday night in case they wouldn't be able to finish before the tournament's 11 p.m. curfew. They'll resume on Tuesday. Mpetshi Perricard, whose speediest serve came in the opening game, took the initial two sets 7-6 (6), 7-6 (8), before Fritz grabbed the next two 6-4, 7-6 (6). Playing with the No. 1 Court retractable roof closed and artificial lights on, Mpetshi Perricard was two points from winning while leading 5-2 in the fourth-set tiebreaker, but never got closer. From 6-all, 2024 U.S. Open runner-up Fritz took the next two points to force a fifth set and pounded his right fist on his



chest, yelling, "Let's (expletive) go! Come on!" It was about 10:15 p.m., and the players met up at the net with an official to discuss whether or not to continue. Eventually, the chair umpire announced to the crowd: "Ladies and gentlemen, due to the late time of the day, we will not be able to finish the match. Therefore the match will be suspended until tomorrow. Play is suspended." Fritz did not appear pleased about the interruption of his match. He looked toward his guest box with his palms up and said: "I couldn't do anything. I tried." In a match between two of the tour's top servers, Mpetshi Perricard hit 33 aces before play was stopped, and Fritz hit 24. Mpetshi Perricard never earned a break point during the four sets contested Monday; Fritz had five chances and converted one. Fritz, a 27-year-old Californian, was a quarterfinalist at Wimbledon in 2022, losing to Rafael Nadal, and again a year ago, losing to Lorenzo Musetti. Mpetshi Perricard, a 21-year-old Frenchman, reached the fourth round at the All England Club last year, also eliminated by Musetti.

Record viewership for India-England Test

Hyderabad: JioHotstar took centre stage as a new era in Indian cricket began with the five-match Test series against England, led by Shubman Gill and a revitalised long-format strategy – making a powerful statement both on the field and on the streaming platform. The first Test match between India and England at Headingley, marking the start of this much-anticipated era and the WTC 2025–27 cycle for both teams, delivered historic numbers on JioHotstar.

It recorded the highest-ever reach for a Test match on digital with 89.1 million viewers* tuning in, and clocked an unprecedented 13.7 billion minutes* of watch-time. The renewed ambition to reclaim supremacy in red-ball cricket captured the imagination of fans across five languages – English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada – on JioHotstar. Reception to the new leadership and team outlook was overwhelmingly positive, with fans engaging deeply with 'Follow The Blues,' a behind-the-scenes content series offering a daily window into training sessions and key narratives. In a light-hearted touch, JioHotstar roped in Rohit Sharma for a

promo film, where he shared his tips for the five-match series.

During the live presentation, a special segment titled 'When India Challenged the Crown' revisited India's rich Test legacy in England. With four Tests still to go, the series is well poised to set new benchmarks in digital sports consumption. The second Test begins on July 2 in Birmingham. The ICC World Test Championship (WTC) Final 2025 – marking the culmination of the 2023–25 cycle – reaffirmed the enduring appeal of elite Test cricket. The high-stakes clash, which saw South Africa end their ICC title drought with a win over Australia, set new records across platforms. It became the highest-rated, most-watched (2.95 billion minutes), and highest-reach (47 million) Non-India Test match ever on linear TV. On JioHotstar, the match reached a record 41.4 million viewers – the highest-ever for a Test match on the platform – surpassing the India vs Australia WTC Final in 2023.

Carlos Alcaraz survives but upsets plenty on Day 1 – from Holger Rune to Paula Badosa, all the big names knocked out



GNS News Agency, March 6

Paula Badosa, Daniil Medvedev and Holger Rune were few of the higher seeded players to get knocked out of Wimbledon 2025 on Day 1. (AP/Reuters) Paula Badosa, Daniil Medvedev and Holger Rune were few of the higher seeded players to get knocked out of Wimbledon 2025 on Day 1. One of the hottest-ever opening days at Wimbledon, plenty of top players faced the heat on the grass as a total of three seeds on the men's side and three seeds on the women's part of the draw were knocked out. The biggest of potential upsets was avoided as two-time defending champion Carlos Alcaraz recovered just in time to win a five-set marathon against veteran Fabio Fognini but the likes of Holger Rune, Daniil Medvedev, Paula Badosa and Stefanos Tsitsipas couldn't escape. Seeds knocked out on day 1: Women's singles – Paula Badosa [9], Jelena Ostapenko [20], McCartney Kessler [32]. Men's singles – Daniil Medvedev [9], Holger Rune [8], Francisco Cerundolo [16], Alexei Popyrin [20], Stefanos Tsitsipas [24], Tallon Griekspoor [31], Matteo Berrettini [32]

No arena at Wimbledon gets as hot as bowl-like Court Two and the conditions were clearly not to the liking of ex-world number one Medvedev as the ninth seed saw his hopes scorched by Frenchman Benjamin Bonzi, who won 7-6(2) 3-6 7-6(3) 6-2. Eighth seed Rune of Denmark, yet to really make his mark at a Grand Slam, won the opening two sets against Chilean qualifier Nicolas Jarry but succumbed 4-6 4-6 7-5 6-3 6-4. Tsitsipas, twice a Grand Slam runner-up was left despondent after retiring with a back injury having fallen two sets behind against French qualifier Valentin Royer. American fifth seed Taylor Fritz looked to be on his way out before battling back to force a fifth set against big-serving Frenchman Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard before their match was suspended with the Grand Slam's 11 p.m. curfew looming. There are 23 British players in the singles draw, the most since 1984 and the biggest results for the home

contingent came via Sonay Kartal, who upset 20th seed and former French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko 7-5 2-6 6-2, and Arthur Fery, who beat the 20th seed Australian Alexei Popyrin, in a four set thriller. Fery, ranked 461st in the world, won 6-4, 6-1, 4-6, 6-4. Later in the day, when Katie Boulter later knocked out Spanish ninth seed Paula Badosa 6-2 3-6 6-4 on Centre Court, seven British players had enjoyed victories, the most in a single day for the home nation in the professional era. Medvedev surprised Medvedev arrived at Wimbledon after a good performance in Halle on grass. He exited from the first round itself, comprehensively dismantled by French World No. 64 Benjamin Bonzi 6-7 (2), 6-3, 6-7 (3), 6-2. After losing early in Melbourne and Paris too, the 2021 US Open champion may be looking a bit too one-dimensional, his defence-first playing style now feeling out of date. "I felt like I didn't play too bad. I don't see much I could do better," the former world No 1 said. "I was surprised by his level. I know that he can play well. I would be surprised if you find a match of him playing like this any other time this year. I'm surprised he did today. But it can happen. That's when sensations happen." Jabeur's struggles continue. Apart from seeded players, a Wimbledon fan-favourite also fell by the wayside. Ons Jabeur's big dream of winning Wimbledon came to a grinding halt on Monday afternoon. The 2022 and 2023 finalist, now outside the world's top 50, retired from illness against Bulgaria's Viktoriya Tomova as the scoreline reflected 7-6 (5), 2-0. An ice towel around her neck, and with tears streaming down her eyes as the on-court physio checked her blood pressure, the picture looked grim. The Greek star has gone through plenty of changes in his burgeoning career, the most recent being the hiring of Goran Ivanisevic as his coach. Nothing seems to be stopping his slide down the rankings though, as he also retired, down 3-6, 2-6 to French qualifier Valentin Royer. The two-time Major finalist will be as low as World No. 28 next week. "I'm battling many ways these days. It's really painful to see myself in a situation like this," he said after the match. "I've tried everything. I've done an incredible job with my fitness. I've done an incredible job with my physiotherapy, so I've maximised on everything that I possibly can do. "Right now, I'm just absolutely left with no answers." Rune rues knee injury was considered a promising talent on the level of Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner a couple of years ago, but despite flashes of brilliance, he is simply unable to get himself to emulate their consistency. On Monday, the World No. 8 slumped to a five-set defeat to Chile's Nicolas Jarry despite leading by two sets, with those lofty expectations continuing to look unrealistic a few years since they were born.

'Can't hear the AI line calls, bit low' – How players reacted to first day of electronic calls at Wimbledon

GNS News Agency, March 6

The electronic line-call system was developed by Hawk-Eye and uses AI to analyse footage from up to 18 cameras tracking the progress of the ball across the court. (AP) The electronic line-call system was developed by Hawk-Eye and uses AI to analyse footage from up to 18 cameras tracking the progress of the ball across the court. (AP) How did the first day of the electronic calls that ended 147-year tradition of lines-judges at Wimbledon go? It turns out the players have small issues about the volume of the calls. And they are getting used to human vocalisation of those calls. Outside the grounds, some fans held up signs to protest their grievances that the technology is taking jobs away from people. The electronic line-call system was developed by Hawk-Eye and uses AI to analyse footage from up to 18 cameras tracking the progress of the ball across the court. If the ball falls wide during a rally or serve, manufacturers say the software will issue a notification within a tenth of a second. In a unique Wimbledon twist, those calls are then vocalised using recordings of the voices of staff from the All England Club.

On court 18 during Cameron Norrie's first-round match against Roberto Bautista Agut, the announcement of "fault" calls used the voice of a ballboy, while the "out" calls were said out in the voices of adults – male and female. "The voice, I cannot really hear it, it is a bit too low," said China's Yuan Yue, who played her first-round match against Germany's Eva Lys on court eight, an outside court with fans moving around. "I asked the referee can you [turn] it up a little bit. He said he cannot. He said he will try to let us know [the call] because he has a machine that can look it up. I don't really mind, I just want to hear it clearly. [The umpire's] voice is a lot more loud than the automatic one so we can hear that clearly." Another player Jelena Ostapenko, however, said she



was "perfectly fine" with the nature of the calls, though she echoed Yuan's issues with the volume. "I hit a few shots that were at a pretty big moment and the crowd kind of went nuts, so maybe I lost it a bit in that," she said. UK's Cameron Norrie sympathised with the loss of jobs, but said now the calls can't be argued against. As a player it's pretty black or white with the calls. In, out... there's no mistake, nothing happening. Definitely you've got to feel for those linesmen and those people. That's a bit tough for them, but it's pretty black or white with the calling. Sally Bolton, the chief executive of the All England Club, said the new system tries to strike a balance between modernity and tradition. "For us, it was time to make that change," she said. "It's not a money-saving exercise, the technology investment we've had to make to deliver electronic line calling is not insignificant. It's about evolving the tournament and making sure that we're providing the most effective possible line calling. The line judges have been such an important part of the championships for so many years, and we obviously hugely appreciate the service that they've provided. Quite a few of them, around 80, are still with us as match assistants in a new role, supporting the chair umpire."

India at Edgbaston in the 21st century: From Virat Kohli ending his troubles to MS Dhoni's men crumbling to Alastair Cook's might

GNS News Agency, March 6

The second Test of the ongoing five-match series between India and England, newly christened the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy, will be played at Edgbaston. While the ground may be a well-established name in the annals of cricket history, this will only be India's ninth Test there, and the fourth of this century. Shubman Gill and Co. would be hoping to bounce back in this match, having suffered a bruising five-wicket loss in Headingley but they have history against them – India have never won any of the Tests they have played at Edgbaston, with their best result being a draw in July 1986. All three of the Tests that India have played at Edgbaston since the turn of the century have been memorable affairs, some that the visitors would look at fondly, others not so much. With the second Test of the ongoing underway on Wednesday, lets recap India's three Test matches at Edgbaston in this century: 1. 3rd Test, 2011: England won by an innings and 242 runs. India had come into this tour after the highs of winning the 2011 World Cup but by the time they had reached Edgbaston for the third Test, it had become pretty clear that they are being brought crashing down to earth. MS Dhoni's men had lost the first Test by 196 runs and the second by 319. Hopes of a turnaround were meagre and it reduced even further after India were all out for 224 batting first, with Dhoni's 77 off 96 balls being the highest score. Alastair Cook had a pretty unforgettable couple of Test matches before that, having made scores of 12, 1, 2 and five. Well, he gave a reminder of what he is capable of by batting

more than 90 overs and grinding out 294 runs. England declared once he missed out on his triple century, having got to a score 710/7 in a whopping 188.1 overs. Once again, Dhoni was the highest scorer with an unbeaten 74 in 79 balls but India never stood a chance. It could be argued that Mike Atherton's pointed questions for Dhoni in the post-match presentation ceremony is as famous as the game itself. 2. 1st Test, 2018: England won by 31 runs. This was probably a match that India should've won but the efforts of all-rounders Sam Curran and Ben Stokes with the ball did them in. However, it also marked the start of a series to remember for Virat Kohli. England were all out for 287 batting first with Ravichandran Ashwin taking four wickets and Kohli was yet to go past fifty when India were down to their last four wickets with a score of 13. The Indian captain then expertly farmed strike with the tail and went on to smash 149 in 225 balls, an innings that was remembered fondly by a number of fans online when he announced his retirement from Test cricket last month. Ishant Sharma took five wickets as India then dismissed England for 180 runs, thus needing to chase a target of 194. It wasn't to be though. Kohli scored 51 but Ben Stokes led the English charge with figures of 4/40. India were all out for 162.3. 5th Test, 2022: England won by 7 wickets. India's first brush with Bazball. There is an argument that had this Test been played as it was originally scheduled at Old Trafford in September the previous year, India would've won it and thus recorded a rare Test series win in England. As things turned out, the match was postponed due to Covid-related problems and held in July 2022, by which time England had let go of their ponderous ways under Joe Root and Chris Silverwood.

Bollywood Golden Era star earned more than Dilip Kumar, said no to becoming Dev Anand's wife, received Jawaharlal Nehru's praise; only to quit films at 34



Gregory Peck made a point to meet Suraiya. Suraiya became a sensation in Hindi cinema at a young age, outperforming leading stars of her time like Raj Kapoor, Dev Anand and Dilip Kumar. (Express archive photo) Much before pay parity became a topic of discussion among leading female actors, the Hindi film industry witnessed the rise of superstar Suraiya, who left legendary stars like Dilip Kumar, Dev Anand, and Ashok Kumar behind when it came to remuneration. Suraiya's rise in the film industry as a singer and actor

While Suraiya was known for her roles in films like Omar Khayyam (1946), Pyar Ki Jeet (1948), Badi Behan (1949), and Dillagi (1949), which took her career to new heights, she didn't initially enter the film industry to become an actor. Instead, she was first recognised by music director Naushad for her beautiful voice, which led to many playback singing offers. It all started when Suraiya was just 12 years old and would frequently visit film sets with her uncle. During one such visit to the set of Taj Mahal, she was picked by the director to play the role of young Mumtaz Mahal. After starring in several children's programmes for All India Radio, Suraiya's singing talent was discovered by Naushad, who gave her a chance to sing in the film Sharda (1942) for the legendary actor Mehtab. She soon became synonymous with musicals like Phool, Samarat Chandragupta, Aaj Ki Raat, Dard, Dillagi, Natak, Afsar, Kajal, Dastan, Sanam, and Char

Din.

Suraiya was a huge admirer of Hollywood heartthrob Gregory Peck and got a chance to meet him when he visited India. It all began in 1952 when Suraiya gave her autographed photo to Hollywood director Frank Capra—who was visiting India during the first International Film Festival of India—to pass on to Gregory Peck. The Hollywood actor received the photo and made it a point to visit Suraiya when he came to India. He went to Suraiya's home in Mumbai and the two chatted for an hour. Speaking about the meeting, she had said, "We spoke for an hour. I didn't sleep at all that night. Nobody believed I'd met him. For two months newspapers carried our 'love stories'. I enjoyed it!" Suraiya had given her autographed photo to Hollywood director Frank Capra at the first International Film Festival of India in 1952, to give to Gregory Peck of whom she was a huge fan. Suraiya's affair with Dev Anand that marked her descent in Hindi films. At the peak of her professional career, Suraiya fell in love with Dev Anand, with whom she starred in seven films. He even borrowed money to buy her a diamond ring. At that time, Suraiya was a bigger star than Dev Anand, and since he was also a Hindu, Suraiya's maternal grandmother didn't approve of their relationship. Suraiya's grandmother controlled her life and her career. She even threw the ring Dev Anand bought for her into the sea and instructed filmmakers to cut the romantic scenes between them.

Dev Anand wanted to marry Suraiya and even quit acting, which wasn't acceptable to her, so they eventually parted ways. However, the relationship had such a deep impact on Suraiya that she never married. Dev Anand, meanwhile, married Kalpana Kartik in 1954. "When I refused to marry Dev, he called me a coward. Maybe I was one. I admit I didn't have the courage to take a step I was not absolutely sure of. Perhaps it was a folly, perhaps a mistake or perhaps destiny?" Suraiya told Stardust. Suraiya's downfall and retirement after her breakup with Dev Anand, Suraiya's professional career also took a hit. Her films in the 1950s didn't perform well. However, she did experience a brief resurgence with her Mirza Ghalib in 1954, which was a huge hit. She even earned praise from Jawaharlal Nehru, who told her, "Tumne Mirza Ghalib kii ruuh ko zindaa kar diya (You brought Mirza Ghalib's soul alive)". But her 1964 film Rustam Sohrab, co-starring Prithviraj Kapoor, turned out to be a major flop. Witnessing the curtain fall on her career, Suraiya took voluntary retirement in 1963 and stepped away from the limelight. She was never seen on the big screen again and also did not return to playback singing. She passed away in 2004 due to health-related issues.

Abhishek Bachchan on 25 years of Refugee: 'Kareena Kapoor and I were locked into projector room because audience got to know we're visiting the theatre'



Kareena Kapoor and Abhishek Bachchan made their debut with Refugee, which released on June 30, 2000. Kareena Kapoor and Abhishek Bachchan made their debut with Refugee, which released on June 30, 2000. 2025 is memorable for Abhishek Bachchan as he completes multiple professional milestones this year. June 30 will signify 25 years of Abhishek Bachchan as his debut film, JP Dutta's Refugee, released on that date back in 2000. The romantic drama also served as the launch vehicle for Kareena Kapoor. In an exclusive interview with SCREEN, Abhishek discusses the week in which Refugee premiered, how he's changed over the last 25 years, and what he missed about working on a film set in the early 2000s.

Do you remember what you were up to on this day exactly 25 years ago, when Refugee was on the verge of release?

I have vivid memories! I was filming in Manali for Shararat (2002). It was a huge set with 15 actors, so I couldn't come down to Mumbai before June 29, a day before Refugee released. Those days, promotions weren't as extensive, although I must admit Bebo (Kareena Kapoor, co-star) and I were the first ones to start the city tour. We also had an audio launch earlier, after which I went for the outdoor shoot. JP sahab showed the film to the families for the first time on 29th. Obviously, I couldn't sleep that night because there were a lot of nerves and excitement. It rained on the day of the premiere. Everybody panicked because the premiere was at Liberty Cinema (in South Mumbai), but I said it's auspicious because rain on a big day like this is considered God's blessing.

We drove in about three-four cars because there were so many of my family and close friends. I drove to Liberty with my chachaji (Ajitabh Bachchan) and friend Sikandar (Kher, actor). All the mandirs that came on the way from my home in Juhu to Liberty, I just stopped by for a quick blessing. Before reaching, JP sahab called me and said he hadn't reached, but asked me to take care of the premiere. I panicked because it was my first time. When I reached, it was so wonderful because the entire film industry had shown up. That relaxed me because being

someone who's born in the film industry, they're all your extended family. They were all there with big smiles. The walk from the Liberty gate to the stairs felt like a gauntlet. The first person I met was Mr. Yash Chopra, who gave me a big hug and great advice. After the premiere, there was a dinner and party. That became a long night. I drove back home with Sikandar at seven in the morning. We stopped by at Marine Drive and sat there just to take in the moment that the film was going to release. Unfortunately, I had to go back to Manali the next day so I couldn't enjoy much of it. But when I was getting ready, I got a call that the flight has been cancelled due to bad weather, so I had two more days in Mumbai. I got excited and called up Bebo. She said, "Let's go to the theatres." So we went to Gaiety Galaxy and Chandan Cinema, which unfortunately is not there anymore. It was terribly exciting! We had to be locked in the projector room because the audience got to know we were there. I still get gooseflesh talking about it.

Thanks for painting such a clear picture of that whole week. In the 25 years since, what's changed within you?

I think my features have remained constant. I'd like to believe everything else has changed. Because it's very important for an actor to, if not film on film, but year on year, to improve, learn something new, and do it a bit differently. That's been my quest, to a certain extent. I hope I've managed to evolve as an artiste. The audience, the tastes and the movies also change, so should the actor. I've attempted to do that, but it's up to the audience to decide whether they accept that or not.

And is there something that's changed within the film industry?

It's a very different industry from when we first started. It's far more mechanical in the sense that it's very professional. Twenty-five years ago, it was more about relationships and doing films because someone had asked you to. "Chal jayega" was the way. Today, it's a lot more regimented and organized. But there's a great charm to how it happened in the old days. I miss that quite a bit, especially whilst making a film. There was a family atmosphere. Now, the AD (Assistant Director) is on to you: Lunch break finished, get back in. That's also great because it makes us efficient and cost-conscious. But I feel somewhere, we've traded the fun family-ness of that time.

Bigg Boss 18's Nyrraa Banerji urges balanced roles for men in TV dramas

Mumbai: Television actress Nyrraa Banerji has opened up about the evolving landscape of gender representation on the small screen. While acknowledging the rise of strong female-centric shows, she emphasized the need for balanced storytelling where both male and female characters are given equal importance. Speaking to IANS, Banerji shared that real narratives must reflect the emotional contributions of both genders, as families and good stories are built on shared experiences.

Shefali Jariwala's husband Parag Tyagi was grilled by police, but autopsy revealed no foul play; he was numb': Late actor's friend Pooja Ghai



The late actor Shefali Jariwala's friend, Pooja Ghai, recalled what happened after her death. Shefali died at the age of 42 on Saturday, after going into cardiac arrest. In an interview, Pooja said that Shefali's husband, Parag Tyagi, had gone downstairs to walk their dog when he was summoned back home. He took Shefali to the hospital, but she was declared dead on arrival. Pooja said that the police grilled Parag the following day, and that thankfully, the autopsy declared that there was no foul play in her death. The findings of the autopsy haven't yet been officially revealed. Shefali was cremated on Saturday evening. In an interview with

Vicky Lalwani, Pooja was asked about the preliminary findings of the autopsy, and she said, "The good part is that there was no foul play. My only fear, the moment I saw Parag was... The guy was grieving, the guy naturally wanted to be left alone, and he was being cross-questioned by the police. Of course, they were doing their duty. But you've seen it in past cases, I don't want to name people... You've seen (next of kin) being grilled for months, and their life is over. They don't even have time to grieve, because they're constantly under the police's radar. The moment I saw Parag, my only hope was, 'I hope he gets out of this as soon as possible'. Fortunately, the report says there was no foul play, and he was released."

Pooja said that Shefali was very conscious about her health and looks, but revealed that she took an IV drip earlier in the day. Shefali would regularly take supplements, Pooja said, but she would never knowingly risk her health. "Shefali was extremely conscious about what she took and what she did. She was so conscious about her food. Just everything. Calling an unqualified person would be the last thing that she'd do," she said. Asked what Shefali's mother and Parag's emotional state was the next day, Pooja said that Shefali's mother had to be taken to hospital herself, and Parag was completely 'numb'. The police have registered a case of accidental death, according to an Indian Express report. Shefali is said to have taken an anti-ageing drug earlier in the day, which is said to have impacted her blood pressure. "Prima facie, there is no foul play, and the doctors have reserved their opinion on the cause of death," said Dixit Gedam, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Zone 9.

Karan Johar says will have to move to London with friends if their WhatsApp group chats come out: 'We may not be able to continue living in our city'

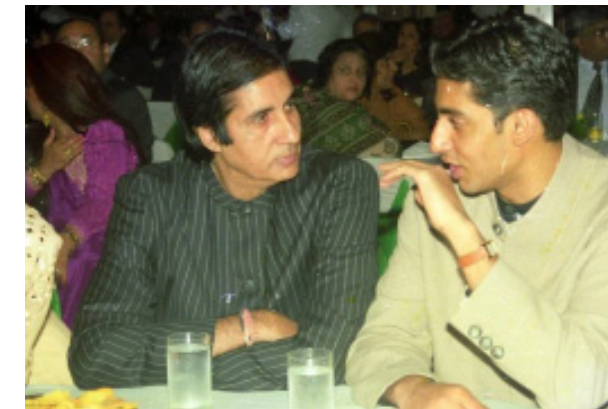
Karan Johar says he and his friends would have to move out of Mumbai if their controversial WhatsApp chats came out. Karan Johar says he and his friends would have to move out of Mumbai if their controversial WhatsApp chats came out. On his controversial chat show Koffee with Karan, host Karan Johar has often referred to his fiercely guarded WhatsApp groups with fellow Bollywood celebrities. One of them being 'GLUTS,' where the filmmaker breaks down airport looks and red carpet appearances of his industry colleagues with friends Kareena Kapoor, Karisma Kapoor, Sonam Kapoor, and Rhea Kapoor among others.

During a recent event in London, when an audience member asked Johar to publish a book on those WhatsApp chats, Johar responded cheekily. "If anyone ever got access to those WhatsApp groups about me and many of my friends in the fraternity, I think we would have to move to London. We may not be able to continue living in our city," he said. In the interview with Mojo Story, Johar explained further, "Because let me tell you, they are very candid, honest, and sometimes very b*tchy analysis of our immediate environment and what is going on. We are fashion critics, we are movie critics. We are critics of everything in that group. Everyone has an opinion, and none of us can ever put those opinions out there." In the same chat, Johar revealed he's part of not only those gossip groups on WhatsApp, but also some serious ones as the single parent of his kids Yash and Roohi. "It can be very daunting, and also hilarious when you're on two WhatsApp groups with 30 mothers on one and 32 moth-



ers on another. They're in two divisions: A and B," Johar explained. "Every morning, I wake up to these 62 amazing women saying 'Ladies!' And I say, 'Hello? I'm also on this WhatsApp group!' But they're so nurturing and helpful. They've really helped me through some tough times because I really don't know. Whenever I go to a parent-teacher meeting, I'm always doing two roles (as a father and a mother) and hearing for both of them. That's the joy of having twins," he added. Johar became a father to Yash and Roohi in 2017 via surrogacy. Johar is a published author as Penguin Random House released his memoir An Unsuitable Boy in 2016. It was co-authored by Johar and journalist Poonam Saxena. On the work front, Johar will next direct his first series for Netflix India. His last directorial was the 2023 hit family comedy Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani, starring Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt in lead roles.

'Is this why I worked so hard, spent on your education?': Amitabh Bachchan couldn't hide his disappointment in son Abhishek



Abhishek Bachchan said that he was 'literally shaking' when he first acted opposite his legendary father, Amitabh Bachchan, in the film Sarkar. He knew that his father wouldn't sugarcoat his feelings, especially when it comes to work. He learned the hard way after Big B didn't mince words when expressing his feelings about Abhishek's performance in Ram Gopal Varma's Sarkar, and later said on national television that he wasn't impressed by Mani Ratnam's Yuva. While the general audience was very appreciative of Abhishek's work in the film, Amitabh was immensely let down. In an interview with The Hollywood Reporter India, Abhishek was asked about the praise that his father showers on him on social media these days, and he said that he feels embarrassed about it. But, Abhishek said, it isn't lost on him that his father is 83 years old, and is expressing his love for him in ways that he didn't when he was younger. It wasn't always like this, Abhishek said, as he recalled what happened in 2004.

He said, "It was Yuva's premiere at the IIFA Awards in Singapore, and I watched the film, and I sensed that something special was happening." Abhishek said that it was the first time that he found his own performance tolerable. After the screening, he walked over to Shammi Kapoor, and offered to help him up from his seat. Shammi Kapoor refused the assistance, got up by himself, and praised Abhishek loudly. The crowd erupted in applause, and Abhishek was on cloud nine. Outside, he saw his mother in tears, but his father simply told him that they would talk later. The chat never happened, until Bachchan announced on Koffee with

Karan that he didn't like Abhishek's work in Yuva.

Abhishek continued, "The first time we shot together was for Sarkar. Ramu said that we'll do some test shoots, and then I could go away and shoot Bunty Aur Babli. This was September 2004. First day, I was panicking and sweating. He says to me, 'Shankar', and all I had to do was turn around and say, 'Ji?'. I was petrified, I was literally shaking. He has that effect." Abhishek said that he 'ran' to his trailer after the shot was canned, and waited for his father to leave because he didn't want to leave together. But Amitabh dropped by and insisted that they go home in the same car. The entire ride back was spent in silence. When they pulled into their bungalow's driveway, the staff got out, leaving the two of them alone in the car. "He's just sitting there, and then, in 48 frames, he turned to me. 'Isi liye maine itne saal mehnat karke tumhe padhaya likhaya? Dialogue bolna aata nahi hai tumhe (Is this why I worked so hard and spent so much on your education? You can't even say a line properly)'. I felt like I had murdered someone, the way he looked at me," Abhishek recalled. Abhishek said that his father shook his head in disappointment, and later, Abhishek called up RGV and yelled at him for putting him in that position. "You dog! I told you this would happen," he said. But Sarkar was a hit, and inspired two follow-ups. Abhishek was recently seen in Housefull 5.

Dhanush wraps up shooting for Aanand L Rai's 'Tere Ishq Mein'

New Delhi: Tamil cinema star Dhanush has completed shooting for his upcoming film "Tere Ishq Mein".

The actor announced the news on his Instagram handle on Monday. Sharing the post, he wrote, "And it's a wrap #tereishqmein". Also starring Kriti Sanon, known for films such as "Mimi" and "Luka Chuppi", "Tere Ishq Mein" is directed by Aanand L Rai. Sanon will essay the role of Mukti in the film. Dhanush plays Shankar "Tere Ishq Mein" marks the third collaboration between Dhanush and director Rai after 2013's "Raanjhanaa" and "Atrangi Re" (2021). The upcoming movie is slated to be released in theatres worldwide on November 28.