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Mercury set to soar as heatwave likely returns in Telangana

Hyderabad: Telangana is bracing for a renewed heatwave, as the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Hyderabad forecasts a significant temperature surge across the state starting this week.

While scattered thunderstorms provided a temporary break, the IMD's Sunday evening weather forecast warns of a 'gradual rise' in maximum temperatures by 2 degree Celsius to 3 degree Celsius over the next three to four days.

KTR extends Mother's Day greetings

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Sunday extended Mother's Day greetings to women especially every mother whose love builds the world in silence. He also paid an emotional tribute to his mother and wife for their unwavering support and sacrifices, calling them his greatest strengths.Geographic Reference

"Behind every bit of who I am is a woman who gave everything without asking for anything. My mother, my strength, my guide (sic)," he wrote.

Cyberabad is a Key Hub for State and Nation's Growth: PM

Hyderabad: Prime Minister Narendra Modi described Cyberabad as the key hub and growth engine for the rapid development of Telangana and the nation. "Cyberabad has become a major employment hub. It is playing a key role in cyber technology, electricity and EV sectors," Modi underlined.

Speaking after laying foundation stones, inaugurating and dedicating to the nation various projects at HICC, Modi said that several major projects were being launched from Cyberabad to transform Telangana into a major manufacturing powerhouse. The new projects would create thousands of new jobs and strengthen Telangana's connectivity, he said.

The Prime Minister noted that India was riding the 'Reform Express'. At the same time, he said, India was also building modern infrastructure. This goal was behind the construction of the Zaheerabad industrial area.

Modern connectivity has been a major priority for the NDA government at the Centre over the past 12 years, Modi said. "Unprecedented investments are being made in every mode of connectivity, be it roads, railways, or airports. Nearly ₹1.75 lakh crore has been invested in national highways alone. Telangana is reaping significant benefits from this. The national highway network in Telangana has doubled in the past 12 years. Widening the national highways connecting Telangana and Karnataka will greatly facilitate this. This will reduce travel time and result in savings in fares," he pointed out.

Modi said that the youth of Telangana were nurturing new dreams. The farmers wished to move forward with new hopes. "The industries, the MSMEs, and the start-ups here all want to play their part in building a developed Telangana. Because, if Telangana develops, India will develop. I assure every family in Telangana that the Centre will continue to work, even at a faster pace, to fulfill your dreams," he assured.



‘Better If You Join Me’: Modi To Revanth

HYDERABAD: Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a light-hearted yet politically loaded remark to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Sunday, saying "aap mere se judo" (It is better that you join me), triggering a buzz in the political circles.

It came about when Revanth Reddy, during an event here, requested the Prime Minister to support Telangana's development with a "big heart". He noted that then-prime minister Manmohan Singh had extended all kinds of support to Gujarat when Modi was Chief Minister, and sought similar support.

"The people of Telangana also want to develop our state with your help in the next 10 years and come up with the Telangana model. I believe that you will provide me with full support, just like Manmohan Singh did," Revanth Reddy said.

During his address, Modi responded that if he were to provide Telangana with exactly the same amount of Central assistance that Gujarat received during that period, the state would actually lose half of the funding it was receiving under the NDA government.

"I will tell Revanth that I am ready to give you whatever the Union government gave to Gujarat during its 10 years of rule. But, based on my knowledge, I can tell you that as soon as I do so, what you are currently receiving will be close to half. You will not be able to reach where you want to." Then, turning to Revanth Reddy, he said with a chuckle: "It is better that you join me." Revanth Reddy responded with a laugh, and was joined by the audience.

Modi also explained that before 2014, the railway budget for undivided Andhra Pradesh was less than ₹1,000 crore. "Revanth, are you listening? During undivided Andhra Pradesh, the railway budget was less than



₹1,000 crore. Today, I'm not just talking about united Andhra, as Telangana's railway budget alone is approximately ₹5,500 crore. Currently, rail projects worth approximately ₹50,000 crore are underway here. Five Vande Bharat and six Amrit Bharat trains are also operating in Telangana," he said.

Despite the political banter, the Prime Minister assured that the Centre would vigorously support Telangana's development, emphasizing, "If Telangana is developed, the country too would develop."

Revanth Halts Merger, Clears Inter Admissions

HYDERABAD:May10

To the relief of students, parents and junior college lecturers, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Sunday directed officials to continue the present Intermediate education system for the 2026-27 academic year, citing challenges such as technicalities in merging Intermediate with school education and limited time for college admissions.

tion structure, similar to the CBSE model. The commission noted that the new system would reduce drop-outs.

Officials said students completing Class 10 in government schools were failing to join Intermediate studies. Revanth Reddy had earlier suggested examining the possibility of restructuring Intermediate into the 11th and 12th Class format, a recommendation also highlighted in the commission's report.

During a review meeting with senior officials and education department representatives on Sunday, the Chief Minister decided to temporarily defer the merger process due to the need for a detailed study of several technical and administrative issues linked to the transition.

The Chief Minister directed officials to hold extensive consultations with all stakeholders and asked the committee preparing the policy of proposed reforms to study the issue further and submit a detailed report. He clarified that a final decision would be taken only after discussions in the Assembly.

Several Intermediate education experts, lecturers and associations welcomed the move. Association leaders noted that they had previously appealed to the government not to rush into a merger without giving due consideration to the educational future of 10 lakh students and their parents.

Dr Maskula Srinivas and Dr Koppiseti Suresh of the Telangana Gazetted Junior Lecturers Association urged the government to hold consultations with stakeholders and intellectuals before taking any decision. Satish, president of Inter Private Junior Colleges, thanked the government for clearing the confusion about the merger of the Inter Board.



The Chief Minister instructed officials to immediately begin the admission process, which had been kept in abeyance on May 5, to ensure that students did not face difficulties.

This decision came amid growing concern among students and parents following reports that Intermediate admissions were put on hold due to proposed reforms. The Telangana Education Commission had recommended abolishing the separate Intermediate system and introducing Classes 11 and 12 under the school education system.

‘Thalapathy’ Vijay dons new role as TN boss, promises only one power centre

New Delhi, May 10

Actor-turned-politician C Joseph Vijay on Sunday took oath as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, marking a dramatic political shift in the Dravidian heartland and ending the decades-long dominance of the DMK and the AIADMK in the state. The swearing-in ceremony, attended by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and several film personalities, signalled the arrival of the first non-DMK, non-AIADMK government in nearly six decades.

Soon after assuming office, Vijay moved swiftly to underline his government's priorities, signing files granting 200 units of free electricity for domestic consumers, approving the creation of a special women's safety force and ordering the formation of anti-drug trafficking units across the state.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Vijay on social media and said the Centre would continue working with the Tamil Nadu Government for the welfare of the people. "Congratulations to Thiru C Joseph Vijay upon assuming the office of the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Best wishes for his tenure to be an outstanding one. The Central Government will continue to work in partnership with the Tamil Nadu Government to improve the lives of the people," the PM wrote on X. The PM also had a telephonic conversation with Vijay and congratulated him on taking the oath of office on Sunday.

Rahul also congratulated Vijay and said, "Tamil Nadu has chosen. A new generation. A new voice. A new imagination. My good wishes to Thiru Vijay — may he fulfil the hopes of the people of Tamil Nadu." The oath-taking ceremony at Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium turned into a massive show of political theatre and fanfare, with thousands of supporters cheering for the man long celebrated as "Thalapathy" in Tamil cinema. Governor RV Arlekar administered the oath to Vijay and his nine-member Cabinet, which included veteran leader KA Sengottaiyan alongside younger faces such as TK Prabhu and S Keerthana.

Unlike the conventional white veshti-and-shirt attire associated with Tamil Nadu politics, Vijay appeared in a blazer over a white shirt and dark trousers, while several of his ministers too departed from the traditional political dress code. The visual shift appeared carefully crafted to project a generational and political break from the past.

In his maiden address as the Chief Minister, Vijay sought to position himself as an ordinary man who had risen through struggle rather than privilege. He said he did not come from a political dynasty and described himself as someone born into a modest family, recalling that his father worked as an assistant film director who fought hard to succeed in cinema.

Declaring that his government would have "only one

Unlike the conventional white veshti-and-shirt attire associated with Tamil Nadu politics, Vijay appeared in a blazer over a white shirt and dark trousers, while several of his ministers too departed from the traditional political dress code. The visual shift appeared carefully crafted to project a generational and political break from the past

power centre", Vijay asserted that there would be no parallel authority structures within the administration. In a pointed political message, he said there would be no hidden centres of influence operating behind the government.

He also promised what he described as a "new era" rooted in secularism, social justice and transparent governance. Stressing that he would not mislead people with unrealistic promises, Vijay, while accusing the previous DMK-led government, said the financial condition of the state was under severe strain and claimed Tamil Nadu was carrying a debt burden of over Rs 10 lakh crore.

The new Chief Minister said his government would first assess the fiscal situation in detail and release a white paper before moving ahead with major policy decisions. He appealed to the public to give his administration time to fulfil its commitments in a phased manner.

On law and order, Vijay said his government would act firmly against drug abuse and ensure stronger protection for women and children. He also promised action against corruption, declaring that he would neither misuse public money nor tolerate wrongdoing within his government.

He said welfare measures for women, youth, farmers, fishermen, government employees and workers would remain central to the TVK government's agenda.

The ceremony also carried strong emotional and cinematic undertones. Vijay's parents, filmmaker SA Chandrasekar and Shobha Chandrasekar, were seen visibly emotional during the event, while actor Trisha Krishnan and several members of the film fraternity attended the swearing-in.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Congress split with DMK and the rise of Third Front

The ink on the 2026 Tamil Nadu election results has barely dried, yet the political landscape of India has been hit by a seismic shift that threatens to bring down the entire house of the I.N.D.I.A bloc. In a move that can only be described as a masterclass in political opportunism, the Indian National Congress has decided to pivot away from its steadfast anchor, the DMK, to court Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK).

While the TVK emerged as the single largest party with 108 seats, falling just short of the 118-seat majority mark, the Congress' sudden shift in loyalty is more than a localised strategy; it is a signal that the grand old party may be the very architect of the I.N.D.I.A bloc's demise. This manoeuvre appears particularly irrational given that TVK stands as the single largest party. Yet, the Congress' eagerness to leap into a new bed of convenience reveals a startling lack of political principle and a total disregard for the emotional intelligence of the Tamil people. For decades, the DMK was not just an ally; it was the Congress' life support system in the South. When the Congress faced its darkest hours, the DMK stood like a rock, providing a foundation of support that was as much emotional as it was tactical.

This was a friendship forged in the fires of adversity. During the peak of the National Herald case and the legal tempests surrounding Rahul Gandhi, the DMK and the Communists provided the loudest and most consistent defence. They did not flinch even when the 2G Spectrum storm, later proven to be nothing more than a whirlwind of smoke and mirrors, sent their own leaders, A Raja and Kanimozhi, to prison. They stood by the Congress leadership with an emotional depth rarely seen in the sterile corridors of political power. To watch the Congress now turn its back on such a 'rock-solid' companion is to witness a deep emotional fracture, a total collapse of trust that leaves the spirit of the alliance in ruins. This is not an isolated squall; it is a recurring hurricane of self-destruction. Across the map, the Congress has developed a habit of poisoning its own wells. In Kerala, the "unity" of the I.N.D.I.A bloc is a hollow echo as the party continues its bitter struggle with the Left Front. In West Bengal, the Congress' decision to contest seats independently only serves to fragment the anti-incumbency vote, effectively acting as the wind beneath the BJP's wings by keeping regional heavyweights like Mamata Banerjee in check. As the Congress pivots toward short-term regional gains, the vacuum created by its fading commitment to federal unity is already being filled by emerging Third Front forces.

Perhaps most tragically, we see the echoes of the Arvind Kejriwal saga, where the rhetoric of federalism was buried under a mountain of indifference as the BJP's alleged 'conspiracy to kill' a sitting Chief Minister through medical neglect in jail was met with a deafening silence from the Congress high command.

Both the BJP and the Congress now appear as two sides of the same storm, seeking to uproot every regional tree until only their own monoliths remain standing. Their shared vision is a scorched earth where regional identity is discarded like fallen leaves, and "Federalism" is a word spoken only when the cameras are rolling. While the Congress plays its game of opportunism, Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar ensured the political atmosphere remains stagnant and foul. By stalling the government formation and refusing to let Vijay take the oath, the Governor played an unholy game of constitutional delay that defies the will of the people.

Vijayalakshmi Receives Women Icon of Excellence in Psychology Award

"Khammam Nelakondapalli may 10 Indian Chronicle: Pinnaboyina Vijayalakshmi, a native of Ramachandrapuram village in Nelakondapalli mandal of Khammam district, has received the prestigious "Women Icon of Excellence in Psychology" award. The award was presented during the decennial celebrations organized by the Telangana Psychologists Association on Sunday. Former Governor Bandaru Dattatreya presented the award to Vijayalakshmi at a grand function held at the Film Nagar Cultural Center in Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad. Speaking on the occasion, Vijayalakshmi expressed happiness over receiving the award and said the recognition would further encourage her to continue her work in the field of psychology. She thanked State Revenue and Housing Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, Camp Office In-charge Tumburu Dayakar Reddy, and Congress Mandal President Kodali Govinda Rao for their support and encouragement. Villagers, public rep-



representatives, and intellectuals congratulated her on the achievement. Telangana Psychologists Association President Motkupalli Ramachandra, senior Congress leader Pinnaboyina Venkateswarlu, and others participated in the programme.



Hyderabad, 10 May : The Principal, of Mansura Cyber High School, Mohd. Mudassir Zuha assured the parents in granting holistic approach in regard to their children education and also while nurturing them to become the leaders of tomorrow. For the year 2025-26, the students of SSC achieved 100%. [] Briefing to media persons here at 4th Hyderabad Education Expo, Mr. Zuha, asked the parents to hurry-up in admitting their kids & children, because of limited seats both at his "MC super kids pre-school" as well as "Mansura Cyber High School". The address of the said school is opposite to Begumpet Airport, Secunderabad. The contact number is 9390206438 / 040-27763581. [] The school Principal, explained that the salient features of the school were Touch screen digital classroom, special care for slow-learners, extra-curriculum, kindergarten & many more.

Based in Hyderabad, the Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Society is distributing not just medical treatment, but hope.



"With the mission "Beyond Transfusions... Towards a Cure," the Kamala Hospital and Research Centre has achieved a significant milestone. "To date, 204 Bone Marrow Transplants have been successfully completed. "These include 157 Matched Family Donor transplants, 39 Haplo transplants, and 8 Matched Unrelated Donor transplants. "The Society's objective is not merely to provide treatment to patients, but to bring a new light into their lives. "HbA2 tests are being offered free of cost at the Hyderabad and Khammam centers, enabling

the maximum number of people to undergo screening and ensuring that the disease is detected in a timely manner. "On the occasion of World Thalassemia Day, an awareness run was organized at Necklace Road. The run was flagged off and inaugurated by Telangana's Health Minister, Damodar Raja Narasimha. Also present at the event was Khairatabad MLA, Danam Nagender. "This is not just a run... it is a voice in the battle against Thalassemia... "It is a beacon of hope... and a message that, together, we can save lives.

Medchal District Congress Party General Secretary M.A. Jaleel Pasha Felicitates Women on Mother's Day



UPPAL, MAY 10 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): On the occasion of Mother's Day, celebrations were held grandly on Sunday under the leadership of Medchal-Malkajgiri District Congress Party General Secretary M.A. Jaleel Pa-

sha at his residence in Srinagar Colony, Ramanthapur. "As part of the celebrations, nearly 25 women from the colony were invited and honored with due respect after participating in a cake-cutting ceremony. Breakfast was also arranged for the attendees. Speaking on the occasion, Jaleel Pasha said that Anna Jarvis played a key role in giving a modern form to Mother's Day celebrations. Remembering the services of her mother, she campaigned to recognize the sacrifices made by mothers around the world. As a result of her efforts, the United States government officially declared the second Sunday of May as Mother's Day in 1914. Since then, the tradition of celebrating Mother's Day has spread across the world as a symbol of motherly love, he said. He further stated that a mother's love is priceless and that mothers dedicate their entire lives to the well-being of their children. Women from the colony, including Khairunnisa, Padma, Satyamma, Swaroopa, Suvama, Upendra, Lakshmi, Shantamma, Azmath, Venkateswarlu, Chenchulu, Mallesh, Adayya, and Anjaiah, participated in the event.

Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy Tours District, Participates in Several Social and Religious Events

"Khammam May 10 Indian Chronicle: "Telangana Revenue, Housing and Information Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy toured extensively across the district



on Sunday, attending several social and religious functions from Madhira to Kusumanchi and interacting warmly with the public. The minister first attended the wedding ceremony of the children of Boyina Srinivasa Rao and Chilaka Punnaiah at Jilugumadu in Madhira town. Later, he participated in the weddings of the sons of Vepa Anjaiah and Samala Sathyam at Srinivasa Nagar

in Khammam city, and also attended the marriage ceremony of Thumu Anil's daughter at Mamilagudem. He further attended a family function of Kolichalam Gurunadham's son at Danavaigudem and blessed the newlyweds. At Kaikondaigudem, the minister took part in the re-consecration ceremony of Sri Kashi Visweshwara Swamy Temple and offered special prayers. The minister also attended Uppalamma and Maisamma Thalli festivities held at the residences of Devarapalli Srinivasa Reddy in SR Homes, Khammam, and Nagendra Prasad in Sai Prabhat Nagar under Edulapuram Municipality limits. In Khammam Rural mandal, he attended the wedding of Banoth Teja's daughter at Theerthala village. Later, he participated in the wedding ceremony of Pittala Ganapayya's son at Reddypalli under Edulapuram

Municipality and attended the reception of Shaik Mohsin Khan's son at KBR Nagar, where he presented silk clothes to the families. Concluding his tour, the minister attended the wedding ceremony of Sandra Upender's son at Perikasingar in Kusumanchi mandal and blessed the newly married couple. People and local leaders at various locations accorded a grand welcome to Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy during his district tour.

Four suspected laborers arrested in Tandur

"- being circulated as Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh Maoists.

"- Among the four, one identified as a woman Naxalite!

"- Maharashtra, Tandur police combing operation successful...?

"- State Police Department congratulates Tandur DSP

Indian Chronicle Vikarabad (May 10) "Four suspected individuals working as laborers near Rukmapur Railway Station in Peddemul Mandal, Vikarabad district, were reportedly taken into custody by Maharashtra police with the help of Tandur police. Information suggests Maharashtra police have been conducting extensive search operations for some Naxalites who have been evading capture for the past few days. "With coordination between central and state governments calling on Naxalites to come out of forests into inhabited areas, reports indicate some Naxalites are surrendering. However, police suspect that some Naxalites moving in the forests of Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra have left the



forests without surrendering to avoid detection by police, and have gone to other states. "According to information, Maharashtra police sought help from Telangana's Tandur police after learning that they have been living by working as laborers near Rukmapur Railway Station in Peddemul Mandal to avoid suspicion. Acting on preliminary information that they were moving around in Telangana, Maharashtra police, along with Telangana police, have reportedly taken four Naxalites into custody. "With some Naxalites caught in Tandur, Operation Khagar has been successful. State Police Department officials have congratulated Tandur DSP Yadayya and the police team.

Government Sanctions Rs. 37 Crore for Development of Government Schools in Uppal Constituency ---MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Thanks State Government

UPPAL, MAY 10 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): The State Government has sanctioned Rs. 37 crore for the development and upgradation of several government schools in Uppal Constituency of Medchal-Malkajgiri district, according to Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy. The MLA stated that the funds have been allocated for the upgradation of Zilla Parishad High Schools located in Uppal, Kushaiguda, and Kapra areas, including ZPHS Uppal and ZPHS Kushaiguda. He said the sanctioned funds will be utilized for the construction of additional classrooms, improvement of basic infrastructure facilities, and the introduction of higher classes including PP, Classes VI, VII, XI, and XII. These developments are expected to provide students with a better educational environment and improved learning opportunities. Expressing happiness over the sanctioning of funds, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy thanked the State Government for its support towards strengthening the education sector. He also reiterated his commitment to the development of education and welfare of students in the constituency.



Mega Free Medical Camp Conducted Under Nerdham

Balayya Bhagyalaxmi Trust
Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy
Attends as Chief Guest

Free Medical Check-ups, Medicines and Spectacles
Distributed to 450 People: Nerdham Bhaskar Goud

*****UPPAL , MAY 10 (INDIAN CHRONICAL):“A Mega Free Eye and Medical Camp was organized on Sunday at Uppal Kalyanpuri Community Hall under the aegis of the Nerdham Balayya Bhagyalaxmi Trust with the support of Trust Chairman Nerdham Bhaskar Goud, Dr. Manish Goud, and Hyderabad Youth Assembly team member Balakrishna Goud.”Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy attended the camp as the chief guest and formally inaugurated the programme. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA appreciated the services being rendered by the Nerdham Balayya Bhagyalaxmi Trust through such free medical camps, stating that they are highly beneficial to the public, especially the poor and needy.”He said that conducting free eye examinations and distributing spectacles free of cost would greatly help economically weaker sections. After the eye screening, the MLA personally distributed spectacles to the beneficiaries.”During the camp, free eye check-ups and homeopathy consultations were conducted, and free medicines and spectacles were distributed to the patients. Around 450 people benefited from the camp by receiving free medical services, medicines, and spectacles.”Among those who participated in the programme were Malkajiri Parliament contesting MP candidate Ragidi Lakshma Reddy, colony president Shivarama Raj, secretary Vikas, committee members Naresh, Lingam Goud, Bazaar Jagan Goud, Bal Reddy, Rukkamma, Madhusudan Reddy, TG Goud, Gaddam Papireddy, Srinivas, Jalli Mohan, and a large number of local residents.



Mass Mobilization of Women BJP Workers from Tarnaka for Party Programme

Nacharam, Indian Chronicle, May 10:** Responding to the call given by BJP Secunderabad District President Mr. Bharat Goud, a large number of women BJP activists from the Tarnaka Division participated enthusiastically in a major party programme organized under the leadership of the State BJP President. Two special buses were arranged from Tarnaka to facilitate the participation of women workers, reflecting the growing strength and dedication of the party cadre in the area.”The mobilisation and coordination of the women activists were successfully carried out under the guidance of BJP leaders Sriram Venkatesh and Mrs. Sriram Vedita. Their efforts ensured active participation and smooth organization, showcasing the unity and commitment of the local BJP leadership.”Speaking on the occasion, party leaders emphasized that women play a vital role in strengthening the BJP at the grassroots level. They stated that the active involvement of women workers is essential for expanding the party's reach and effectively communicating the developmental initiatives and welfare programmes being implemented by the Central Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.”The leaders further called upon every party worker to work with dedication and take the achievements and policies of the Central Government directly to the people. They encouraged the cadre to continue engaging with the public and spreading awareness about various development projects, welfare schemes, and national initiatives undertaken by the BJP-led government.”The enthusiastic participation of women workers from the Tarnaka area was described as a reflection of the increasing public support and organizational strength of the BJP in the region. Party leaders expressed confidence that such large-scale participation would further energize the cadre and contribute to the continued growth of the party at the grassroots level.



Good Days for Government Schools Under Congress Government..! Rs 1,011 Crore Plan for Development of Government Schools

*****Special Thanks to CM Revanth Reddy: Uppal Congress In-Charge Parameshwar Reddy*****UPPAL , MAY 10 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy stated that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has allocated ₹1,011 crore for the development of government schools under the Core Urban Region Economy (CURE) limits.”He said the funds have been sanctioned for the construction of integrated school complex buildings in 11 schools, development works in 17 schools, and construction of additional classrooms in 164 government schools.”As part of this initiative, ₹364 crore has been allocated for the upgradation of 17 schools, including two schools from the Uppal constituency. He stated that works will be undertaken with ₹18 crore for the Zilla Parishad High School in Uppal and ₹17.10 crore for the Zilla Parishad High School in Kushaiguda, totaling ₹37.10 crore.”Milk Abhishekam Programmes for Revanth Reddy on Monday”Parameshwar Reddy announced that milk abhishekam programmes for CM Revanth Reddy's portrait will be held on Monday at:“ECIL Crossroads at 9:00 AM”Uppal Crossroads at 9:30 AM”He said the programmes are being organized as a gesture of gratitude to the Chief Minister for allocating nearly ₹40 crore for the development of government schools in the constituency.”Parameshwar Reddy appealed to Congress party leaders and workers to participate in large numbers.



Youth Congress cadre urged to strengthen grassroots outreach.

KARIMNAGAR May 10 (Correspondent): Regional Transport Authority member Padala Rahul on Sunday called upon Youth Congress members to work actively for strengthening the party at the grassroots level and ensure its victory in the forthcoming local body elections.



He was speaking at a programme held at the DCC office in Karimnagar, where newly appointed Karimnagar District Youth Congress general secretaries Chevela Mallikarjun and Ahmed Ali Khadri (Sufiyan) were felicitated.

Mr. Rahul congratulated the newly appointed leaders and urged them to take the welfare schemes being implemented by the Congress government closer to the people. He said dedicated workers in the Youth Congress and the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) would have opportunities to rise to higher positions in the party and government.He also called upon party cadre to continue their efforts with the goal of seeing Rahul Gandhi become Prime Minister in 2029.

BRS Leaders from Chilkanagar and Beerappa Gadda Divisions Extend Birthday Wishes to Former Corporator Bannala Geetha

*****UPPAL, MAY 10 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Birthday celebrations of former Chilkanagar Division Corporator and GHMC Standing Committee Member Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj were held grandly at the BRS party office in the presence of BRS leaders from Chilkanagar and Beerappa Gadda divisions.”Party leaders felicitated her with a shawl, presented flower bouquets, organized a large cake-cutting ceremony, and celebrated the occasion with fire-works while conveying their heartfelt birthday wishes.”Senior BRS leaders, women leaders, and party activists from Chilkanagar and Beerappa Gadda divisions participated in large numbers. The leaders expressed their wish that she celebrate many more birthdays and continue her service to the people.Later, Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj thanked everyone who visited the party office and extended birthday greetings to her.”[5:39 PM, 5/10/2026] +91 93911 09207: End



Blood Donation a Noble Service – Minister Konda Surekha

*****Hanumakonda, May 10 (Indian Chronicle) : A blood donation camp was organized on Sunday under the auspices of Sri Chakra Super Specialty Hospital at Balasamudram, Hanumakonda. Telangana Forest, Environment, Endowments and Charitable Endowments Minister Konda Surekha attended the programme as the chief guest.”Speaking on the occasion, the Minister stated that the conduct of blood donation camps is a highly beneficial service to society. She noted that blood donation not only saves the lives of those in emergency situations but also contributes to the health of the donor.”She further observed that during the summer season, blood banks often face acute shortage of blood, while several patients continue to depend on regular transfusions. In this context, she called upon youth, service organizations and voluntary groups to come forward and organize blood donation camps frequently to ensure there is no shortage of blood.”The Minister appreciated the hospital management for efficiently organizing the blood donation camp.



Uppal Youth Congress President Akarapu Arun Patel Arrested Ahead of PM Modi's Visit



*****UPPAL , MAY 10(INDIAN CHRONICAL):“ Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Telangana, Uppal Constituency Youth Congress President Akarapu Arun Patel was arrested by Uppal police as a preventive measure.”Police reportedly took action keeping in view a protest held on May 5 during the IPL match at Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Uppal, where Arun Patel and others displayed placards criticizing Prime Minister Modi and raised slogans against his alleged dual standards.”Speaking on the occasion, Arun Patel alleged that the BJP fears voices that question the government. He said the police had illegally arrested him out of fear that he would protest against Modi's visit.”He questioned whether arresting leaders who stand for public issues and fight for people's rights reflects democracy or dictatorship.”Arun Patel also criticized the BJP over allegations involving the son of BJP leader Bandi Sanjay Kumar, asking why those facing allegations receive security protection while activists fighting for the people are arrested.”He further stated that Telangana society is observing the BJP's “suppressive attitude” and warned that the people would give a fitting response to such actions.”[6:02 PM, 5/10/2026] +91 93911 09207: End

Call to Build a Democratic Telangana“Lakhs Urged to Attend TJS Plenary on May 12: TJS State General Secretary Gopagani Shankarrao

* ****Nelakondapalli, May 10 Indian Chronicle:****“Telangana Jana Samithi (TJS) State General Secretary Gopagani Shankarrao called upon people from every household to join the movement for building a democratic Telangana.”On Sunday, he conducted extensive campaign activities in several villages of the mandal headquarters. Later, addressing a press conference, he said that the Telangana Jana Samithi plenary meeting would be held in Hyderabad on May 12.”He appealed to Telangana supporters from every family to participate in the party's fourth plenary session in large numbers. He stated that the party's future course of action would be finalized during the plenary.”Shankarrao warned that another movement would become inevitable to achieve the aspirations of the Telangana movement. He also said that party workers would be prepared for the upcoming local body elections.”He further stated that the party would take a decision regarding the attitude of political parties indulging in opportunistic politics. He urged lakhs of Telangana supporters to attend the plenary meeting.”District leaders Madasu Srinivasa Rao and Bhattu Rajender, along with others, participated in the press conference.



Grand Felicitation Meeting for Minister Tummala Held in Enkoor Celebrating 40 Years of Tummala's Political Journey Tummala's dedication is for public service, not power prestige

*****Khammam ,Enkoor, May 10 Indian Chronicle:****“A grand “Athmeeya Sammelanam” was organized on Sunday at the palm oil garden of Congress leader Meda Dharma Rao in Enkoor mandal headquarters to celebrate the 40-year political journey of State Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao. The event was attended by a large number of Tummala's supporters and Congress leaders, who also cut a celebratory cake on the occasion.”Speaking at the event, District Congress leader Gutta Venkateswara Rao said that Tummala has had the rare distinction of serving as a minister under four Chief Ministers — N. T. Rama Rao, N. Chandrababu Naidu, K. Chandrashekar Rao, and A. Revanth Reddy.”He recalled that Tummala first took oath as a minister on May 14, 1986, in the cabinet of NTR after winning from the Sathupalli constituency. Later, he served in several important portfolios in Chandrababu Naidu's cabinet, including Minor Irrigation, Prohibition, Major and Medium Irrigation, Excise, and Roads & Buildings departments.”After the formation of Telangana state, Tummala was inducted into KCR's first cabinet on December 16, 2014. Subsequently, he took oath as Agriculture Minister in Revanth Reddy's cabinet on December 7, 2023.”Leaders at the meeting stated that from 1986 to 2026, Tummala's four-decade-long political career has left a lasting mark on the development history of the erstwhile Khammam district. They praised him for maintaining discipline and corruption-free governance, emphasizing that he viewed ministerial office as a platform for public service rather than personal prestige.”Speakers highlighted Tummala's contributions to road connectivity, irrigation projects, education, healthcare, and tourism development. They noted that his childhood experiences in remote tribal areas of the then undivided Khammam district inspired his commitment to infrastructure development.”Born in Gandugulapalli village of Dammapeta mandal in present-day Bhadradi Kothagudem district, Tummala had witnessed the hardships faced by villagers and tribal communities due to the lack of roads and medical facilities. Determined to change such conditions, he focused extensively on road construction and rural connectivity during his tenure.”Leaders also credited him for playing a key role in the development of major highways passing through the undivided Khammam district, including the Suryapet-Devarapalli National Highway, Kodad-Kuravi National Highway, and the Amaravati-Nagpur National Highway corridor.”Among those who participated in the program were AMC Market Chairman Guguloth Lachiram, Congress Mandal President Swarna Narendra Kumar, leaders Shettipalli Venkateswara Rao, Lalu Naik, Meda Dharma Rao, Shobhan Naik, Banoth Madhavi, Talluri Appa Rao, Arem Ramaiah, Medikonduru Prasad, Madineni Ashok, Talluri Naveen, Jasti Janardhan, Venigandla Srihari, Endrathi Srinu, Jagarlamudi Ranjith Kumar, Vasireddy Venkateswara Rao, Saili Nagaiah, Kotam Raju, Regalla Nagaiah, Ravi, Samineni Narsaiah, Bhaskar, Kolipaka Venkateswarlu and several others.



SIM cards, batteries hidden in fruit seized at Burail jail; three, including two women, booked



The Chandigarh Police has booked three persons, including two women, after jail staff reportedly foiled an attempt to smuggle mobile phone accessories concealed inside fruit into Model Jail, Burail. The incident took place around 3.35 pm on April 15 at the jail in Sector 51, when two women — Paramjeet Kaur, mother of an undertrial, and Jyoti, both residents of Dadu Majra — arrived for a routine meeting with inmate Rahul.

As per standard security protocol, all items brought by visitors are thoroughly checked before being handed over to inmates. During the screening, warder Mohinder

Pal, posted at the frisking point, noticed signs of tampering in the guavas carried by the visitors. On closer examination, jail staff recovered two mobile phone batteries and two SIM cards carefully concealed inside one of the fruits. The concealment appeared to be an attempt to bypass security checks and deliver prohibited items to the inmate.

The warder alerted senior officials, following which Deputy Superintendent Parveen Kumar reached the spot. The recovered items were seized as per procedure, and the incident was duly recorded in jail registers, including visitor slips and the inmate's history ticket. Police said a case has been registered against the accused under Section 52(A) (1) The Prisons Punjab Amendment Act-2011, 61(2) BNS at PS-49, including the inmate, under relevant provisions for attempting to smuggle banned items into the prison. Police officials said inmates often rely on visitors to sneak in prohibited items using innovative methods, including hiding them in food or personal belongings. However, increased vigilance and strict enforcement of screening protocols have led to several such attempts being foiled in recent months.



who is said to have obtained the powers of destruction from Lord Shiva after performing penance. He was subsequently tricked into destroying himself by Lord Vishnu in the form of the enchantress Mohini. The demon is said to have been destroyed at Yana. So far, the GSI has identified 90 sites across the country, variously classifying them as geological monuments and geo-heritage sites. One such well-known site is the Peninsular Gneiss rock formation in Bengaluru, located at the Lalbagh Garden. Made of very hard metamorphic rocks, the Lalbagh formation is similar in age to the Yana Caves.

Amravati case, 4 more held for circulating explicit content online, rented place used for assault sealed

Four more persons were arrested in Amravati on Thursday in a case involving alleged circulation of explicit content online and sexual exploitation of minors, taking the total number of arrests in the case to eight, Amravati (Rural) Superintendent of Police (SP) Vishal Anand said, adding that the investigation was still underway. Addressing reporters, he said one of the accused downloaded the data and forwarded it to others. "We have established part of the chain through which the content was shared. Further digital links are still being traced," SP Anand said.

The main accused Ayan Ahmad Tanvir Ahmad (19) has been booked under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, and Information Technology Act 2000. He has been remanded to police custody until April 21. His mobile phone has been seized by the police. The other accused identified in the case are Uzair Khan Iqbal Khan (20), Mohammad Saad Mohammad Sabir (22) and Tarbej Khan Taslim Khan (24), Manav Deepak Sugandhe (20), Aifaz Khan Mansur Khan (26), Mohammad Imran Mohammad Sajid (21), and Sheikh Naved Sheikh Hasan (21). Police said Ayan admitted that he sexually exploited the girls at his friend Manav's rented accommodation that was given on hourly rent basis to the main accused. This accommodation has now been sealed and a panchnama was carried out by the police.

Police said the role of the property owner of the rented premises is also being examined and appropriate action will be taken if any involvement is established. Mobile phones, laptop, tablet and hard disk were seized from accused Aifaz during a house search, and will be sent for forensic examination. Police said searches have been conducted at the residences of all the accused.

Officials said some data appears to have been de-



leted and efforts are underway to retrieve it through forensic analysis. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) is handling the probe, with the cyber cell examining the seized devices. "We are only presenting verified facts. Our intention is not to downplay the number of victims. If more victims are found, we will share the information," SP Anand said on a question addressing a rumour that the number of victims was being expected to be 180. He added that the number of victims in the case so far are eight. The SP said the prime accused had been active on social media for nearly two years and used these platforms to befriend victims. "Around 90 per cent of the contact with victims appears to have been established through social media," he said. While the accused said they acted individually, police said they are examining all possible angles, including the possibility of a wider criminal nexus or organised activity. "We have not found evidence so far of a group systematically trapping victims, but we are not ruling out any angle," SP Anand said. Officials from the Minority Commission and the district Women and Child Welfare Department have met police and discussed victim support measures, including counselling and legal assistance.

Drugs worth Rs 2.02 crore seized in 75 NDPS cases destroyed in Panchkula

The Panchkula police on Wednesday claimed that it has destroyed drugs worth over Rs 2.02 crore, which had been seized in 75 cases registered under the NDPS Act between 2022 and 2024. According to police, the destroyed substances included 800 grams of heroin, 10.3 kg of cannabis (ganja), 1.5 kg of charas, 76.6 kg of poppy husk (chura post), 24.5 kg of opium plants, 2.6 kg of opium, and 1,342 intoxicant tablets and capsules. The total estimated market value of the seized drugs was pegged at Rs 2,02,83,511.

A police official said that the disposal process was carried out in compliance with all legal formalities at a high-temperature incineration facility in Bagwala to ensure complete destruction and eliminate any possibility of reuse. Senior police officials, including DCP Panchkula Srishti Gupta, DCP State Crime Rajneesh, ACP Ajit Singh, and other personnel, were present during the exercise. Local representatives also witnessed the process to ensure transparency. Panchkula Police Commissioner Sibash Kabiraj said the action reflects a firm commitment to eradicating drug trafficking and that strict and sustained action against narcotics networks will continue. DCP Srishti Gupta



appealed to the public to share information about drug trafficking, illegal sale, or peddler networks through the MANAS helpline (1933) or drug information helpline numbers 7087081100 and 7087081047, assuring that the identity of informants will be kept confidential. She also urged families to seek help for individuals struggling with substance abuse instead of concealing the issue, adding that under the campaign "Nasha evam Hinsaa Mukh: Mera Gaon, Meri Shaan," Panchkula police is facilitating treatment, counselling, and rehabilitation services.

ED raids Punjab minister Sanjeev Arora's house, properties in Ludhiana



In an X post, Sanjeev Arora said that as a responsible citizen he would cooperate with ED. In an X post, Sanjeev Arora said that as a responsible citizen he would cooperate with ED. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted raids at the home and other premises linked to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and Punjab Cabinet Minister Sanjeev Arora in Ludhiana. The raids are being held two days after the Central agency raided the properties of AAP's Rajya Sabha member Ashok Kumar Mittal, who is the founder-chancellor of Lovely Professional University (LPU).

The central agency's teams reached Arora's residence in Gurdev Nagar and other properties linked to him in the morning. Central forces were also deployed at the premises being searched. ED officials conducting raid at Arora's residence in Gurdev Nagar of Ludhiana, Friday.: Gurmeet Singh) ED officials conducting raid at Arora's residence in Gurdev Nagar, Ludhiana, on Friday.: Gurmeet Singh) Meanwhile, sources close to Arora said that the minister left for Amsterdam, the Netherlands capital, late on Thursday for an official trip to invite investments in Punjab.

In a post on X, Arora said: "Good morning! An action by the Enforcement Directorate took place at my premises. As a responsible citizen, I will fully cooperate with the agencies, and I am confident the truth will prevail." Union Minister of State and BJP leader Ravneet Singh Bittu, while reacting to the raids, wrote on Facebook: "Sab faarey jaenge (Everyone will be caught)." In October 2024, the ED had

raided Arora's properties in Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Delhi, Chandigarh, and Gurgaon in an alleged "land fraud" case. Following the raids at Arora's 17 premises, the ED had then stated, "Arora's firm concealed facts, misused industrial land for residential purposes, and caused huge loss to the Punjab government." Arora, currently Punjab's Industries and Commerce and Local Bodies minister, is an industrialist-turned-politician who was nominated to the Rajya Sabha by the ruling AAP in 2022. However, he resigned from the Rajya Sabha to contest the Ludhiana West bypoll on an AAP ticket and won, and was elevated as a cabinet minister.

On October 7, 2024, the ED had raided Hampton Homes, a luxury apartment residential society developed by Arora's firm M/S Hampton Sky Reality (erstwhile Ritesh Properties and Industries Limited (RPIL)), on Chandigarh Road in Ludhiana. The raids were held at 17 different business and residential premises linked to Arora. The ED, Jalandhar, said that it found that the Punjab Government had allotted industrial lands to Arora's firm with certain conditions with an objective to promote industries, but the firm allegedly breached the conditions of allotment.

ED investigation further revealed that Hampton Sky Reality alienated the land use without the permission of the Punjab Government, and later developed a residential project and business park on it "by concealing material facts at the time of seeking permission of the Punjab Government for the project." Ludhiana-based Arora was the chairman-cum-managing director of M/S Hampton Sky Reality Limited, a company with business interests in real estate, women's clothing, and the fashion industry. However, in August 2025, he resigned from all the posts in his company and eight other associated firms after being elevated as cabinet minister to "give undivided attention" to the public office. As per the company's website, his son Kavya Arora is the managing director, and his wife Sandhya Arora is the director of the company. The company has developed Hampton Court Business Park, a sprawling industrial park on Chandigarh Road in Ludhiana. The venture also includes a housing project offering luxury residential apartments by the name 'Hampton Homes'. Arora also runs the Krishna Pran Breast Cancer Charitable Trust in Ludhiana. Earlier, Arora mostly lived at his Gurgaon residence. But after being elected an MLA from Ludhiana West, he now has a house in Gurdev Nagar in the city.

Karnataka extends state police chief M A Saleem's tenure till August 2027

Dr M A Saleem, a 1993-batch Indian Police Service officer had initially taken charge as the in-charge Director General and Inspector General of Police, Karnataka, on May 21, 2025. (Express photo) Dr M A Saleem, a 1993-batch Indian Police Service officer had initially taken charge as the in-charge Director General and Inspector General of Police, Karnataka, on May 21, 2025. (Express photo) Karnataka on Thursday issued a notification extending the tenure of Dr M A Saleem, a 1993-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, as the Head of the Police Force (HoPF) till August 29, 2027, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

Dr Saleem had initially taken charge as the in-charge Director General and Inspector General of Police (DG&IGP), Karnataka, on May 21, 2025. His appointment to the post was formally confirmed on August 30, 2025. The extension has been granted to ensure that he completes a minimum tenure of two years in the post. In the normal course, Dr Saleem was due to retire on June 30, 2026. The move is in line with the Supreme Court's 2006 judgment in the Prakash Singh vs Union of India case, which mandates a fixed minimum tenure of two years for state police chiefs. The ruling was aimed at insulating senior police leadership from frequent transfers and ensuring continuity and stability in law enforcement administration. Karnataka had earlier filed an



affidavit before the Supreme Court in 2019-20, undertaking compliance with the Prakash Singh guidelines. Following this, former police chiefs Neelmani N Raju and Praveen Sood were able to complete two-year tenures before their superannuation, making extensions unnecessary in their cases. In the case of Alok Mohan, who served as the state police chief from May 2023 to May 2025, his tenure was extended by 22 days to enable him to complete the mandated two-year term. Dr Saleem's tenure, however, has been extended by approximately 14 months, reflecting the state's effort to adhere to the Supreme Court directive.

Punjab farmers defer rail roko protest over wheat procurement delay



Farmer unions in Punjab postponed a statewide 'rail roko' agitation, originally scheduled for Friday at 21 locations across the state, by three days after discussions with government officials. The Punjab chapter of the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM), five unions of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) Punjab chapter, and the Azad Kisan Morcha (AKM) were leading the agitation to demand the immediate start of wheat procurement.

"The decision was taken after leaders of KMM, SKM, and AKM held an online meeting on Friday. Government officials approached us and assured us that procurement arrangements would be improved soon. They also informed us that procurement has already begun in several mandis. Therefore, we have decided to give both the Punjab and central governments three days, failing which we will resume the agitation to press for our demands," a farmer leader said.

Punjab wheat Farmers in Punjab, who have suffered heavy crop losses due to the recent unseasonal rains and hailstorms, are now grappling with delays in wheat procurement. The call for the rail blockade came amid growing anger among farmers over heavy crop losses caused by recent unseasonal rains and hailstorms, along with delays in procurement, even as the Food Corporation of India (FCI) recommended a relaxation in key quality parameters for wheat procurement allowing up to 20 per cent shrivelled and broken grains, up to 80 per cent lustre loss, and up to 6 per cent damaged grains without any value cut. Farmer leaders alleged that while neighbouring states like Haryana and Rajasthan received relaxation in norms to begin procurement, Punjab has yet to get approval from the Centre. "It is ironic that the Punjab government wrote to the Union government so late, close to Baisakhi, seeking relaxation norms, while Haryana and Rajasthan had done so in the first week of April. The KMM will hold a meeting in

Ludhiana on Saturday afternoon. We will review whether the relaxation norms by the Union government have been implemented by then," a farmer leader said. Farmer union representatives also flagged poor mandi arrangements, stating that wheat is lying unsold and farmers are being forced into distress sales at lower prices. They have demanded immediate procurement at the full minimum support price (MSP), along with adequate availability of gunny bags and basic facilities such as shade and washrooms.

Engineering student ends life in Hyderabad, unable to cope with father's death

Hyderabad: Unable to cope with her father's death, an engineering student ended her life in her house in Petbasheerabad. According to police, Pamulapati Gnanashree (21), a native of Chattrai in Eluru district, Andhra Pradesh, was staying at a private girls' hostel in Maisammaguda while pursuing her third year BTech at

Malla Reddy Engineering College. Her father, Chennakesava Reddy, a government school teacher, had passed away due to illness on March 31. Police said Gnanashree had recently returned

to the hostel and appeared for an examination on Wednesday. However, she did not attend the exam scheduled on Thursday. Later, she was found hanging in her hostel room in the evening. Her friends noticed her and immediately alerted the police. A suicide note was recovered, in which she reportedly expressed deep distress over her father's death, stating that she could not imagine life without her parents and wished to be with her father.



As massive fire reduces Indirapuram jhuggis to ashes, residents say they lost home, savings, identity

EMS News Agency, May 9

As teams of firefighters rushed in to contain the fire that tore through 150 to 200 shanties in Indirapuram in Ghaziabad on Thursday, residents were restless to go back to what once they called their home — towards the smouldering ruins of the jhuggis they stayed in. Smoke still curled out of heaps of charred tin and wood, houses and belongings reduced to coal and ash. In the debris, residents — mostly migrants from Bihar — sifted frantically through the remains, searching not for valuables, but for papers that could prove that they belong here: Aadhaar cards, ration cards, voter IDs and their children's birth certificates. "We only have these clothes that we are wearing, left. Now that everything is gone, how will we prove that we belong here?" 43-year-old Mohammad Hasim said. On Thursday afternoon, the fire allegedly started near one of the plastic factories and spread to the shanties in Indirapuram's Kanawani.

Ghaziabad District Magistrate Ravindra Kumar Mandar confirmed that there was no casualty. While officials said the fire broke out between 12.30 pm and 1 pm, residents said it started around 11:30 am, when children were at school and the adults at work. Most women residing in these jhuggis work as househelps in nearby high-rise buildings, while men work as labourers, e-rickshaw drivers or scrap workers.

Once the fire was brought under control, people rushed to collect utensils, appliances, cycles and everything they thought could be used. Mohammad Hasim, a resident of Bihar's Saharsa who works as a tailor in Vasundhara's Sector 2, lost his tailoring machine. "The clothes people had given me to repair are burnt. My Aadhaar card, the birth certificates of my daughters are burnt. What paper do I pro-



duce now to prove we are Indians?" he said wiping his tears. He was carrying one of his daughters

For 45-year-old Salma from Katihar, it was her daughter's gold jewellery that "melted" in the fire. "She was going to get married in June. All my savings have turned into ashes. Who will support us?" she said. Roza (28) and Salman (31) stared at their five-year-old son's new bicycle that still stood outside their jhuggi, but burnt. "His books are gone too. We had saved Rs 3,000 for his books and dress. That's gone too. I recently got my salary and saved some money for his books. What now?" said Roza. Even as smoke engulfed the area, people hardly stopped trying to collect whatever they could. "Our lives will not be normal any more. We pay Rs 2,000 to the local contractor to stay here. This month, he will ask for the rent too. We only have ashes left," said Sonu. The tragedy in Ghaziabad came a day after another slum cluster was destroyed in a similarly massive fire in Lucknow's Vikas Nagar on Wednesday evening.

Uproar over LSR college principal's cameo in BJP video: Students protest still on, say not all demands heard



Protests by students continued at the Lady Shri Ram College for Women (LSR) on Thursday, a day after demonstrations first broke out over Principal Kanika K Ahuja's appearance in a video shared by the BJP's official Instagram handle, in which she praised the Women's Reservation Bill. Seeking dialogue with the LSR administration and raising concerns over alleged restrictions on campus dissent, the students claimed that while the Principal met them on Thursday, she did not hear all their demands. "Today, we were supposed to meet the principal in the auditorium to discuss our list of demands, but she did not hear all of our demands," a third-year student who was part of the protest said.

The controversy stems from a video posted on April 13 on BJP's 'BJP4India' Instagram handle, in which Ahuja described the Women's Reservation Bill as "a constitutional course correction" that was "long overdue," and expressed hope that it would enable more women, including LSR students, to assume leadership roles. On Wednesday, students had raised slogans against what they described as the "safricanisation" of the college, pointing to politically-affiliated speakers being invited to the campus. The third-year student emphasised that the protest was not directed at the legislation itself. "We are not against the Bill, we are simply against the fact that our college and its principal should not be associated with a specific political party," the student said, adding that they are "peacefully demanding a dialogue with the principal so that she can listen to their demands". On Wednesday, Ahuja had told The Indian Express that her remarks shared in the video were made in a personal capacity. "The views were shared in the video in an individual capacity... it is important to distinguish between personal intellectual engagement with a social subject and a for-

mal institutional communique," she had said, adding that support for the Bill was rooted in "the fundamental principle of gender justice". The student, however, said that Ahuja's claim of expressing "personal views" was difficult to reconcile with the video that identified her as the LSR principal. Throughout Thursday, students circulated a formal statement reiterating that "this protest was not against the Women's Reservation Bill," but was triggered by "the platform on which it was delivered", calling the use of a party's official page "explicitly political" and in contradiction with the college's stated commitment to being "apolitical". In their list of demands, they sought a "formal statement clarifying that... students were not engaging in a conversation about the Bill", and called on the administration to "ensure that all political engagements on campus remain strictly non-partisan". On Wednesday, Ahuja had said the college's commitment to an apolitical environment "refers to an absence of partisan affiliation, not a detachment from critical social discourse".

Further, the statement by students demanded that the college "condemn the harassment faced by LSR students on online platforms and in public spaces", and urged the authorities to ensure that "no student should be persecuted by the administration for dissent in any form". The escalation on Thursday came alongside many students alleging that the LSR administration had contacted their parents regarding their participation in the protests. The college did not respond to queries on such claims. Adding to the tension was an email sent to students and the students' union by the college administration on Thursday, referencing a March 23 notice issued by the University of Delhi's Proctor's Office, which mandated prior written permission for any form of assembly or protest on campus and warned of disciplinary action, including possible rustication or police proceedings, for violations. It also urged the union to "ensure full compliance" with the regulations, and encourage students to attend their classes", while asking students to treat the matter "with utmost seriousness". "I, staff advisors, faculty and others in the administration have remained in active dialogue with students to address campus concerns. To ensure transparency, the Proctor's Office of the college has shared official Delhi University guidelines for protest/dharna... with students to keep all stakeholders informed of DU's regulatory framework and safety protocols," Ahuja said

Gujarat local polls 10 days away, but 722 seats already declared uncontested

EVEN AS the local body general elections for 9,952 seats across municipal corporations, municipalities and panchayats in Gujarat are days away, 722 seats have been declared 'uncontested' amid 1,663 withdrawals, as per official data. This comes even as the Congress party and several of its candidates were alleging that the latter were being threatened, and lured with money, tickets and positions by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. These numbers may go up further as returning officers (ROs) were still making entries till the time of the filing of this report around 8 pm Thursday. The 722 uncontested seats include three seats where by-elections are due. The State Election Commission (SEC) data revealed that the most candidates declared uncontested winners are from municipalities or nagar palikas. Out of the total 7,819 nominations filed till April 11 for 2,624 seats in 84 nagar palikas going to election on April 26, 1,525 forms were cancelled. Out of the 6,294 valid forms, 468 were withdrawn, and 383 seats were declared uncontested. The data further revealed that the highest number of withdrawn forms were from seats in taluka panchayats. For the 5,234 seats in 260 taluka panchayats, 20,638 nominations were received, out of which 5,700 were canceled by the SEC. From among the 14,938 valid forms, 806 were withdrawn and 250 were declared uncontested, leaving 13,882 aspirants in the fray. In the 15 municipal corporations where elections are due for 1,004 seats, 43 seats were declared uncontested. The municipal corporations saw the withdrawals of 133 forms from a total nomination of 3,321 valid forms. On Thursday, when the nominations were being scrutinised, several Congress candidates in Ahmedabad alleged that they were being contacted by police, BJP leaders, social leaders from their community and even their own relatives, who asked them to withdraw their nominations. To

mark their protest, the Congress is planning a statewide protest, titled 'Lokshahi Bachao Andolan', soon, party sources said. It was previously reported that the Congress had already lost six of its candidates for Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections: five of them withdrew while one went 'missing' on the day of the filing of nominations. "I was asked to state an amount to withdraw my form. We were even offered that our house would be plastered and other facilities provided. Is this what we call 'vikas ki rajniti (development politics)'? I will never betray the Congress. My father-in-law is a Congressman, and my son too will be one," Jyotsnaben Chavda, 38, who is contesting on a Congress ticket from the Nava Vadaj ward, told at the party's Ahmedabad office, where she had gone to on Thursday to share her experience with other candidates. Some of the candidates were even taken to 'unknown' places by the party. "We are under so much pressure that we had to shift all four candidates to different offices... the candidates were put under pressure by senior BJP leaders," Anish Patel, the Congress office-bearer from the Nikol ward, told this newspaper. Ahmedabad City Congress Committee president Sonal Patel said the party's candidates were so scared that they had put in a request not to make their names public till the filing of nominations. "Under fear, they requested us not to declare their candidature. So, later we informed them individually over the phone. The BJP has used everything—from police, money and social pressure to even blackmailing some of our candidates—to force them to withdraw," she added. Payal Limbachiya, 29, Congress candidate from Viratnagar ward, said: "I started getting phone calls from influential persons known to me, including my business partners, asking me to withdraw my nomination. I was offered a BJP ticket in the next term."

Sent to clean a Nuh sewer without safety gear, two men died — and it wasn't even their job

EMS News Agency, May 9

Late Tuesday, 30-year-old Abdul Kalam, hailing from Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh, was allegedly told by his contractor, Taufik, to help clean a sewer at the busy Ambedkar Chowk at Nuh's Firozpur Jhirka. It was not his usual work: he was a labourer who built sewer lines. Not thinking much of it, he climbed down the sewer — without any safety equipment, said Jamshed (55), Abdul's father.

Minutes earlier, his friend Rajendra Kumar (27), a sweeper, had also entered the 25-ft-deep drain to clean it, allegedly following instructions from Taufik. When Rajendra did not emerge, Abdul followed, trying to pull him out, said Jamshed, a farmer. Neither made it back — both had collapsed, overcome by toxic fumes. By the time help arrived, they had died, Jamshed said. A third worker, Mohammed Arbaz (28), who later went in with a rope, managed to come out alive. He was discharged from hospital on Thursday, police said. According to Jamshed, Abdul had returned to Nuh just a month ago after Eid, leaving behind his wife, his six-month-old girl, and his two-year-old son in Saharanpur. He was one of eight siblings — the only brother among seven sisters.

Based on a complaint filed by the families of the deceased, an FIR was registered at the City Firozpur Jhirka police station on Wednesday afternoon under Section 106 (death by negligence) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita against the contractor, the junior engineer concerned and the sub-divisional officer. The contractor is absconding, and no arrests have been made so far, they added. A senior Haryana Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) official said the junior engineer has been suspended and action recommended against the sub-divisional officer on Thursday. "The contractor was given the tender four months ago to desilt the sewer after we received complaints in this regard. He will be liable to pay compensation to the deceased as per policy... strictest action will be taken," the official added. Speaking to The Indian Express, Sub-Inspector Shiv Prakash, Firozpur Jhirka Sub-Divisional Magistrate Laxmi Narayan and senior PHED officials confirmed the absence



of safety equipment. "I, too, had reached the spot immediately... there was no safety gear. It is an unfortunate incident," Narayan said. Assistant Sub-Inspector Krishan Kumar alleged the contractor took shortcuts. "They should never have been working on Ambedkar Jayanti (a statewide holiday) in the first place, and that too without necessary gear. We have sent notices to the accused to join the investigation." Yaseen Khan (35), who runs a sugarcane juice shop near the spot, said, "When the first worker did not come out for a long time, another went in without any rope or any other safety equipment. He soon started screaming... Following this, a third worker entered the sewer after we arranged a rope and managed to bring out one of the men (Abdul). By then the police had come... Soon after, the sub-divisional magistrate and other officials arrived." Mohd Sameer, a 20-year-old who runs a shop next to the drain, added, "They did not have any safety masks, ropes, or gear." An earthmover was eventually brought in. "We reached immediately. I called the earthmover but by then it was too late," said Mukesh Kumar, a home guard on duty at a police post overlooking the chowk. For Kalam's family, the grief is compounded by anger. "The contractor has not even come to meet us... We just want justice. We have his children to think about now," Jamshed said, adding that the family completed Abdul's last rites on Wednesday.

Karnataka clears 'Rohith Vemula Bill' to end campus discrimination against SC/ST students



The Karnataka Rohith Vemula, which faced long delays, is expected to be tabled during the Monsoon Session of the Assembly later this year. The Karnataka Rohith Vemula, which faced long delays, is expected to be tabled during the Monsoon Session of the Assembly later this year. The Karnataka Rohith Vemula (Prevention of Discrimination, Exclusion or Injustice) (Right to Education and Dignity) Bill, 2026, that aims to safeguard the rights of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes students, was cleared by the state Cabinet on Thursday.

The legislation, which faced long delays, is expected to be tabled during the Monsoon Session of the legislature later this year. The Bill, when enacted, will prohibit discrimination against SC/ST students at all institutes of higher education — both public and private — and will compensate victims of harassment. As per its provisions, all institutes of higher education will have to form an 'Equity Committee'

Border farmers in Punjab seek speedy survey as plan to shift fence brings hope

Farmers living along the India-Pakistan border in Punjab have welcomed the Centre's decision to conduct a survey aimed at shifting border fencing closer to the international boundary. If implemented, the move will bring major relief to farmers long forced to cultivate their crops across the fence under tight BSF restrictions including limited farming hours and repeated security checks. Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann recently said letters have been issued to deputy commissioners (DCs) of border districts — Pathankot, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Fazilka, and Ferozepur — to conduct surveys and assess how close the fencing can be moved to the International Border (IB).

Punjab shares a 532-km border with Pakistan, which is secured by a barbed wire fence. Considering the terrain and topography, the distance between the fence and the IB varies from a few feet at some places to nearly 2 km at others. As per an estimate, nearly 21,500 acres of land belonging to Punjab's farmers and another 10,000 acres of the government lies between the fence and the IB. BSF mans the gates that allows farmers access to the land. The gates, however, open for limited hours on designated days of the week. As per the BSF protocol, two Kisan Guards must accompany each tractor crossing the fence. There are also restrictions on the number of people allowed beyond the fence.

CM Mann said sub-divisional magistrates have been asked to conduct surveys so that inform 300-metre area can be demarcated for installing the barbed wire fence. On the ground, however, farmers say they are yet to see any progress. "We are yet to see the officials on ground. However it will be a great relief for us if the fencing can be shifted closer to the international border," said Karj Singh, a farmer from Khilchey village in Ferozepur district. He said farmers in his village and adjoining Nihalewala have nearly 1,000 acres of land that falls between fence and the IB.

Farmers are allowed to go beyond the fence for cultivation only at fixed hours decided by the BSF. "They cannot go before 9 am, are frisked, and are accompanied by security forces. They cannot stay in the fields after 4 pm, and are again frisked while returning. A significant amount of time of the security forces is also spent in checking our own citizens," Mann had said after meeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Farmers say, if implemented, the move could significantly reduce daily hardships. Pargat Singh, a farmer from Mehdiipur village in Tarn Taran and president of BKU Rajewal (Tarn Taran), said, "It had been our long pending demand. In villages like Chhina Bhidichand, Khaira, Vaan, Dhal etc in Tarn Taran district, the fencing is nearly 1



kilometre inside the Indian territory. Farmers who go beyond the barbed wire to do farming are always seen with a suspicious eye". He added, "If fencing is closer to the international border, we can do farming without any tension and restrictions".

Harbhajan Singh, another farmer from Khunder Gatti, said they face difficulties in harvesting season too. "Often after the security check, we reach the farm after 11 am. Then an hour two later, they start telling us to wind up," he said. According to estimates, around 15–17 lakh hectares of land across nearly 220 villages in six border districts lie beyond the fence. Farmers and labourers are issued identity cards, and are allowed to working in their fields between 9 am and 5 pm in summer and 10 am to 4 pm in winter.

Senior BJP leader Rana Gurmeet Singh Sodhi said the issue had been repeatedly raised with the Centre. "This had been a long pending demand of farmers and we had been raising it before the union government for long. The survey work has started. This will bring relief to thousands of farmers," he said. The demand itself is not new. As far back as 2010, then Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram was confronted with the issue during a visit to Hussainiwala in Ferozepur district, where villagers raised concerns about fencing located deep in the Indian territory.

Farmers say the extent of the problem varies. In some villages, the fencing lies nearly a kilometre inside Indian territory, affecting cultivation and land value. "If fencing is pushed closer to the international border, land prices and lease prospects would improve," said Pargat Singh. However, not all areas stand to benefit equally. Rakesh Dhingra, a farmer from Mohammad Pira village in Fazilka, said, "In our village, the fencing is already at 300 meters only." Parkash Singh, a farmer from Tendiwala village in Ferozepur district, added that areas beyond the Sutlej river may continue under existing rules, though "a large number of villagers will benefit."

Cricket binds India, Jamaica in ties ‘written in runs, respect, friendship’: Jaishankar



Kingston: Cricket serves as a bridge between India and Jamaica, fostering a relationship “written in runs, respect and friendship”, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said as he dedicated a digital scoreboard, gifted by New Delhi, to the Caribbean nation.Speaking at the unveiling of the scoreboard at the iconic Sabina Park cricket stadium in the Jamaican capital Kingston on Sunday, Jaishankar highlighted the unifying role of sports, particularly cricket, which he said is followed passionately by over a billion people in India.“Sports bring nations together by creating shared experiences and fostering mutual respect. And cricket, in particular, has a special meaning for India and Jamaica,” he said.

Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness was also present at the event.Sabina Park is the home of the Jamaica cricket team and is the only Test cricket ground in the island nation.Recalling the historic significance of Sabina Park, Jaishankar noted that the ground holds special memories for Indian cricket, including a century by legendary cricketer Rahul Dravid and the start of Virat Kohli’s Test career in 2011.

Describing these moments as symbolic of the India-Jamaica connection, he said the relationship between the two countries is “written in runs, respect and friendship”.Jaishankar said the state-of-the-art electronic

scoreboard would enhance the viewing experience for cricket lovers in Jamaica and stands as a testament to the enduring cricketing partnership between the two nations.Highlighting Jamaica’s rich cricketing legacy, he said the country commands immense respect globally for producing great players such as George Headley, Michael Holding, Courtney Walsh, Chris Gayle and Andrew Richardson.Jamaican cricketers receive enthusiastic support from Indian fans, including in the Indian Premier League (IPL), Jaishankar said.As nations cooperate and compete globally, India and Jamaica will always continue to seek “special connections that define our ties, and cricket is very much one of them”, he said.Calling the scoreboard a symbol of solidarity, Jaishankar expressed hope that it would witness many memorable innings, including those reflecting the growing friendship between India and Jamaica.

“May the scoreboard count many great innings to come. Among them, that of India-Jamaica friendship,” he said.In a social media post after the unveiling ceremony, Jaishankar noted the absence of cricket legend Gayle at the event, saying he was “missed”.Cricket has long been a strong cultural bridge between India and Jamaica, which is part of the West Indies cricket team.Jaishankar, in his speech, underlined that despite geographical distance, India and Jamaica share close ties rooted in a common history and aspirations as developing nations of the Global South.“We may be geographically some distance apart, but in spirit, in our struggle, in our aspirations, we are indeed very close. Both our nations have come out of a shared history. We are proud developing nations of the Global South today. We have made a place for ourselves in the international community,” he said.The minister also recalled India’s support to Jamaica during challenging times, including assistance during hurricanes and the COVID-19 pandemic through medicines and vaccines.Jaishankar arrived in Kingston on Saturday evening, marking the first leg of his nine-day tour of Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, aimed at further strengthening India’s strategic and cultural ties with the Caribbean nations.

US-led task force tells ships to reroute on first day of new effort to reopen Strait of Hormuz

Dubai: The United States kicked off an effort to “guide” stranded ships from the Iran-gripped Strait of Hormuz, as it tries to counter economic disruptions that outlasted the peak of fighting with no peace deal in sight.A day after US President Donald Trump announced what he called “Project Freedom,” the Joint Maritime Information Centre said Monday that the US had set up an “enhanced security area” south of typical shipping routes and urged mariners to coordinate closely with Omani authorities “due to anticipated high traffic volume.” The Strait sits between Iranian and Omani territory.

The centre warned that passing close to the usual routes, known as the traffic separation scheme, “should be considered extremely hazardous due to the presence of mines that have not been fully surveyed and mitigated.” The US-led maritime task force’s announcement marked the start of the effort to revive traffic and restore confidence among commercial vessels transiting the strait.The disruption of the waterway through which roughly one-fifth of the world’s oil typically passes has become one of the most enduring consequences of the war that the US and Israel launched Feb. 28. It has squeezed countries in Europe and Asia that depend on Persian Gulf supplies and added new volatility to energy prices for households and businesses worldwide.

Announcing the ship shepherding effort in a social media post Sunday, Trump promised “neutral and innocent countries “that we will guide their Ships safely out of these restricted Waterways, so that they can freely and ably get on with their business.” US Central Command said the initiative would involve guided-missile destroyers, more than 100 aircraft and 15,000 service members. The Pentagon did not immediately answer questions about how they would be deployed.

Ships and seafarers, many on oil and gas tankers and cargo ships, have been stuck in the Persian Gulf since the war began. Crew members have described to The Associated Press seeing intercepted drones and missiles explode over the waters as their vessels run low on drinking water, food and other supplies.“They are victims of circumstance,” Trump wrote, describing the effort as a humanitarian gesture “on behalf of the United States, Middle Eastern Countries, but, in particular, the Country of Iran.” Trump also sounded a warning: “If, in any way, this Humanitarian process is interfered with, that interference will, unfortunately, have to be dealt with forcefully.” As more ships reported coming under attack Sunday, Iran’s state-run IRNA news agency called Trump’s announcement part of his “delirium.” Ebrahim Azizi, head of the national security commission of Iran’s parliament, said on X that any interference in the strait would be seen as a ceasefire violation.Trump spoke

Iran says US has responded to Tehran’s 14-point plan to end war

Tehran: Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said that the United States has responded to Iran’s 14-point proposed plan to end the war. He made the remarks in an interview with state-run IRIB TV while noting that the US response is being reviewed.He stressed that Iran’s plan is exclusively focused on ending the war, and “nothing pertaining to the nuclear field’s details exists in it.” “At present, we are focused on the parameters related to ending the war in the region, including Lebanon,” Baghaei added, stressing “we have no nuclear negotiation at this stage.”

Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman was quoted by state media as saying that “at this stage, we do not have nuclear negotiations” – a key demand by Washington. Iran has repeatedly denied it is seeking a bomb and says its programme is only for peaceful purposes, though the country is the only non-nuclear-armed state to have enriched uranium at near weapons-grade level.

Also on Sunday, Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi briefed his Omani and German counterparts on Iran’s latest diplomatic efforts and initiatives to end the war. In separate phone calls, Araghchi exchanged views with Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Albusaidi and German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl on the latest regional and international developments, according to statements released by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.On February 28, Israel and the United States launched joint strikes on Tehran and other cities, killing Iran’s

then-Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, senior commanders, and civilians. Iran responded with waves of missile and drone attacks targeting Israel and US interests in the region. A ceasefire took effect on April 8, followed by talks between Iranian and US delegations in Islamabad that failed to produce a deal.

What to know about US military presence in Europe?



Washington: President Donald Trump’s vow to shrink America’s military deployment in Germany has put a new spotlight on the US role in Europe.There are usually 80,000 to 100,000 troops on the continent, with more than 36,000 in Germany. The Pentagon announced on Friday that it would remove 5,000 troops from Germany, and Trump said the next day that he would go “a lot further” than that.

The US military presence is a legacy of World War II, when Americans helped stabilise and rebuild Europe, and the Cold War, when the troops served as a bulwark against Soviet expansion. More recently, the deployment has played a key role in supporting operations in the Arctic, Africa and the Middle East, including the current conflict with Iran.But Trump has broken with years of bipartisan consensus, criticising European allies in NATO and following through on threats to reduce the US commitment to the continent’s security. The recent announcement comes after escalating tensions with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who last week said the US was being “humiliated” by Iran and accused Washington of lacking a clear strategy.Here’s a look at America’s current deployment in Europe and how it could change.

What to know about the US defence posture in EuropeThe US European Command, created in 1947 and known as EUCOM, is one of 11 combat commands within the Defence Department, and covers some 50 countries and territories.In addition to more than 36,000 troops in Germany, Italy hosts more than 12,000, and there are another 10,000 in the United Kingdom, according to Pentagon numbers from December.The Pentagon has offered few details about which troops or operations would be affected in the drawdown announced Friday.The US increased its European deployment after Russia launched its full-scale war on Ukraine four years ago. NATO allies like Germany have expected for over a year that these troops would be the first to leave.European deployment has a global roleAside from its role as a deterrent to Russia, the US military presence in Europe helps Washington project power across the globe.US Gen. Alexus Grynkeiwich, who is the commander in Europe of both US and NATO forces, reinforced the benefits of a strong footprint on the continent to the Senate Armed Services Committee in March.“It is having capabilities in Europe, munitions in Europe that allow us to help US Africa

Iran warns US Navy to stay clear of Hormuz after Trump says US to help stranded ships



Its forces would “respond harshly” to any threat, it added, telling commercial ships and oil tankers to refrain from any movement in the absence of coordination with Iran’s military.

DUBAI/DORAL, Iran’s military warned U.S. forces on Monday not to enter the Strait of Hormuz after President Donald Trump said the United States would start “helping to free ships stranded in the Gulf by the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran.Trump gave few details of the plan to aid ships and their crews that have been “locked up” in the vital waterway “and are running low on food and other supplies more than two months since the conflict began.The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.“We have told these Countries that we will guide their Ships safely out of these restricted Waterways, so that they can freely and ably get on with their business,” Trump said in a post on his Truth Social site on Sunday.The unified command of Iran’s armed forces responded by warning U.S. forces to stay out of the strait.

Its forces would “respond harshly” to any threat, it added, telling commercial ships and oil tankers to refrain from any movement in “the absence of coordination with Iran’s military.”We have repeatedly said the security of the Strait of Hormuz is in our hands and that the safe passage of vessels needs to be coordinated with the armed forces,” Ali Abdollahi, the head of the forces’ unified command said in the statement.“We warn that any foreign armed forces, especially the aggressive U.S. army, will be attacked if they intend to approach and enter the Strait of Hormuz.”

U.S. Central Command said it would support the effort with 15,000 military personnel, more than 100 land and sea-based aircraft, along with warships and drones.“Our support for this defensive mission is essential “to regional security and the global economy as we also maintain the naval blockade,” Admiral Brad Cooper, the CENTCOM commander, said in a statement.Hundreds of ships and as many as 20,000 seafarers have been unable to transit the strait during the conflict, the ?International Maritime Organization says.Soon after Trump’s comments, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations agency said a tanker had reported being hit by unknown projectiles in the strait.The agency said all crew were reported safe in the incident, which occurred 78 nautical miles north of Fujairah, in the United Arab Emirates, but few details were immediately

Command to target terrorists in Africa, or to help US Central Command as they execute Operation Epic Fury,” he told lawmakers, referring to the Iran war. “The distances are shorter, it’s less expensive, and it’s much easier to project power.” Germany hosts the headquarters of the US European and Africa commands, Ramstein Air Base and a medical centre in Landstuhl, where casualties from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were treated. US nuclear weapons are also stationed in the country.The US has approximately 100 nuclear bombs deployed to bases in Europe that would be delivered by aircraft, according to a March estimate from the Federation of American Scientists. The group’s report said the bombs are at bases in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey, while it’s possible they’re also at a base in the United Kingdom.

A call to move US forces further east in EuropeEven before Trump’s comment Saturday to reporters, Republican leaders of both armed services committees in Congress expressed concern about the Pentagon plan, warning a premature drawdown in Europe would send “the wrong signal to Vladimir Putin” as the Russian president continues his war in Ukraine.Sen. Roger Wicker of Mississippi and Rep. Mike Rogers of Alabama said troops should be shifted to bases in Eastern Europe rather than withdrawn.The lawmakers also said allies have made “substantial investments to host US troops.” Wicker and Rogers said the Pentagon, following its announcement Friday, has also decided to cancel the planned deployment to Germany of one of the US Army’s long-range fires battalions, which operate ground-launched missile systems.Trump’s vision: DIY defence in EuropeAs part of its National Defence Strategy announced in January – a sweeping document laying out a vision on everything from deterring China to defending against cyberattacks to disrupting Iran’s nuclear ambitions – the administration said Europe must do more for its own defence.

While “we are and will remain engaged in Europe, we must – and will – prioritise defending the US Homeland and deterring China,” it said.Among other things, the document noted that Europe’s economic power, while shrinking in relative terms globally, remains significant, and said that Germany’s economy alone “dwarfs that of Russia.” “Fortunately, our NATO allies are substantially more powerful than Russia – it is not even close,” it said, noting a recent commitment among NATO allies to raise national defence spending to 5 per cent of GDP in total, a push led by Trump.What Germany has been doing to beef up its forcesGermany has moved to modernise its long-neglected military, or Bundeswehr, since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022. That year, it set up a 100 billion euro (USD 117 billion) special fund to boost the Bundeswehr, much of which has been committed to procuring new equipment.Late last year, Merz’s government announced plans to raise the number of military personnel to 260,000, up from about 180,000. In 2001, when Germany still had conscription, the headcount was 300,000 – more than a third of them conscripts.Berlin says it will also need around 200,000 reservists, more than double the current figure.Defence Minister Boris Pistorius, in comments to German news agency dpa after the Pentagon’s drawdown plan was announced Friday, acknowledged that Europe must take more responsibility for its own security – and said the Bundeswehr is growing, military equipment is being procured more quickly, and infrastructure is being developed.

available.Iran has been blocking nearly all shipping from the Gulf apart from its own for more than two months, sending energy prices soaring.Some vessels attempting to transit the strait have reported being fired on, and Iran seized ?several other ships. Last month, the U.S. imposed its own blockade of ships from Iranian ports.The Trump administration has been seeking help from other countries to form an international coalition to secure shipping in the strait. CENTCOM said the latest effort “would combine “diplomatic action with military coordination.”

It was not immediately clear which countries the U.S. operation would aid or how the operation would work. It will not necessarily include U.S. Navy ships escorting commercial ships, Axios reporter Barak Ravid said in a post on X.The ?White House ?did not immediately respond to a request for comment.Trump threatened that any interference with the U.S. operation would “have to be dealt with forcefully.”Equity markets edged higher on Monday while crude oil prices were little moved, having surged back above \$100 a barrel last week amid uncertainty over when and how the conflict will be resolved.On Sunday, Iran said it had received a U.S. response to its latest offer for peace talks a day after Trump said he would probably reject the Iranian proposal because “they have not paid a big enough price.”

Trump, responding to shouted questions from reporters, said on Sunday evening talks were going “very well”, without elaborating.Iranian state media said Washington had conveyed its response to Iran’s 14-point proposal ?via Pakistan, and that Tehran was now reviewing it. There ?was no immediate confirmation from Washington or Islamabad of ?the U.S. response.At this stage, we do not have nuclear negotiations,” state media quoted Iran’s foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei as saying.The comment was an apparent reference to Iran’s proposal to set aside talks on nuclear issues until after the war has ended and the foes have agreed to lift opposing blockades of Gulf shipping.The United States and Israel suspended their bombing ?campaign against Iran four weeks ago, and U.S. and Iranian officials held one round of talks. But attempts to set up further meetings have so far failed.The proposal to delay ?talks on nuclear issues until a later phase would appear at odds with Washington’s repeated demand that Iran accept stringent restrictions on its nuclear program before the war can end.Washington wants Tehran to give up its stockpile of more than 400 kg (900 pounds) of highly enriched uranium, which the United States says could be used to make a bomb.Iran says its nuclear program is peaceful, although it is willing to discuss some curbs in return for the lifting of sanctions. It had accepted such curbs in ?a 2015 deal ?that Trump abandoned.While repeating he is in no hurry, Trump faces domestic pressure to break Iran’s hold on the Strait of Hormuz, which has choked off 20% of the world’s oil and gas supplies and driven up U.S. gasoline prices.Trump’s Republican Party faces the risk of a voter backlash over higher prices in midterm congressional elections due in November.Iranian media said Tehran’s 14-point proposal includes withdrawing U.S. forces from nearby areas, lifting the ?blockade, releasing frozen assets, paying compensation, lifting sanctions, ending the war on all fronts including Lebanon, and creating a new control mechanism for the strait.

No carbs for Lakshya Lalwani: Anya Singh dishes on her co-star’s current diet regime



Actor Anya Singh recently revealed that her co-star from The Ba***ds of Bollywood, Lakshya Lalwani, is off carbs. “He is not eating carbs right now. Just right now. He eats everything, but just right now. He is a big foodie,” she told Mamaraazzi entertainment portal.

What happens to your body when you give up carbs briefly?

Dt Amreen Sheikh, Chief Dietitian, KIMS Hospitals, Thane, said carbohydrates are the body’s primary source of energy, especially for the brain and muscles. “Eliminating them can lead to fatigue, irritability, poor concentration, and even nutrient gaps. What often works better is carb quality control. Choosing whole grains, fruits, and vegetables over refined sugars and processed foods,” said

Think Your Earphones Are Harmless? Here’s What Experts Say



Dhurandhar actor Gaurav Gera on why he’s single: ‘There was a time, I was very deeply in...’

Bollywood actor Gaurav Gera has been single for a while now. “It’s not my scene,” he shared during a recent conversation with Humans of Bombay. “There was a time, I was very deeply in...And after that, I never want to go back into it. I don’t want to make anyone so special that they have the power to hurt me,” the Dhurandhar star further added.Gera’s reluctance to date and open himself up to love and relationships eventually shaped his attachment style, with Dr Samant Darshi, consultant psychiatrist, Psmate Healthcare & Yatharth Super-Speciality Hospitals, explaining it as an avoidant attachment.Simply put, it is a type of attachment characterised by a fear of intimacy and a tendency to avoid closeness in relationships. According to him, people with avoidant attachment often view themselves as “self-sufficient and independent, and may have trouble trusting others or allowing themselves to be vulnerable.”Some signs to watch out for in an avoidant attachment style:Difficulty forming close relationships: You keep your partner, emotionally, at arm’s length because it feels safer, but they often accuse you of being distant.Difficulty expressing emotions: When your partner seeks intimacy with you, do your barriers go up? The more they try to get close, the more you combat.A strong need for personal space: You hold back on starting new relationships because it is so hard to trust people.Difficulty relying on others and a tendency to avoid intimacy: You sometimes end relationships to gain a sense of freedom.

How to get past it? Dr Darshi explained that having experienced emotionally distant, detached caregivers while growing up, is where people learn to be emotionally independent. “Such people aren’t comfortable with emotional intimacy, and self-reliance and self-sufficiency become their foremost needs in a relationship,” he added. To overcome or manage avoidant attachment style, Dr Darshi suggested engaging in therapy with a mental

Cell Broadcast system tested with ‘Extremely Severe Alert’ in Hyd

Hyderabad: Citizens in Hyderabad received an ‘Extremely Severe Alert’ message as part of the nationwide test of SACHET (Secure & Advanced Cell-based High-speed Emergency Transmission), the new Cell Broadcasting (CB) system, launched by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) in coordination with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

People reported receiving full-screen notifications along with a loud alarm sound. The message, in English and Telugu, informed people that India had launched its own public alerting framework and that no action was required from the public. The broadcast, unlike normal SMS messages, is sent to all mobile phones in a specific geographical location.Posting on X, the DoT, said, “A step forward in strengthening how we communicate during critical situa-

Sheikh. If someone is avoiding carbs for weight loss, will it actually help? In the short term, yes. “You may see quick weight loss, but much of it is water weight. Over time, extreme carb restriction is hard to sustain and can trigger cravings or overeating. Sustainable weight loss comes from balanced meals, portion control, and consistency, not cutting out an entire food group,” said Sheikh. What to consider? Very low-carb diets can affect gut health due to reduced fibre intake, impact mood, and in some cases lead to nutrient deficiencies. “For people with existing health conditions like diabetes or thyroid disorders. Unsupervised dietary changes can do more harm than good,” said Sheikh. What’s a healthier way to approach carbs in daily meals? Think balance, not elimination. “Pair carbohydrates with protein and healthy fats like dal with rice, roti with vegetables and paneer, or fruit with nuts. This helps stabilise blood sugar and keeps you fuller for longer. Portion size matters, but so does the type of carb you choose,” said Sheikh.Diet trends often get simplified for quick results or headlines. “But what works for one person, especially someone with access to trainers and dietitians, may not suit everyone. Nutrition should be personalised, based on lifestyle, activity level, and health needs,” said Sheikh.

Hyderabad: From work calls to music and binge-watching, earphones have become a constant companion in daily life. Many people now spend hours plugged in, often without realising the impact it could have on their hearing. While earphones are convenient, prolonged use especially at high volumes can strain the ears. Listening at loud levels for extended periods may damage the tiny hair cells in the inner ear, which are responsible for transmitting sound signals to the brain. Over time, this can lead to reduced hearing sensitivity or even permanent hearing loss.Another common issue is ear infections. Wearing earphones for long hours can trap moisture and create a warm environment, making it easier for bacteria to grow. This may result in irritation, discomfort or infections, particularly if the devices are not cleaned regularly.“Continuous use of earphones at high volume is one of the most common causes of early hearing problems we see today,” says Dr. Anil Kumar, an ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist. “It’s important to follow the 60-60 rule, listening at 60% volume for no more than 60 minutes at a stretch and to give your ears regular breaks,” he adds.Experts also suggest switching to over-ear headphones occasionally and avoiding the use of earphones in noisy environments, where people tend to increase volume unknowingly.Earphones are hard to avoid in today’s digital world, but mindful usage can go a long way in protecting your hearing in the long run.



health professional. “A therapist can help you identify the root causes of your attachment issues and develop coping mechanisms for dealing with them. They can also help you work on building trust and forming healthy relationships. It can also be beneficial to practice self-reflection and self-awareness,” he told indianexpress.com.Pay attention to your own emotions and needs, and work on developing a sense of self-worth. Dr Darshi believes it is important to challenge any negative beliefs you may have about relationships and trust, and to make an effort to be more open and vulnerable with others. “It may take time, but with effort and support, it is possible to overcome avoidant attachment style and build fulfilling relationships,” he said.Avoidantly attached people also have fewer, less intense friendships as they are uncomfortable being emotionally expressive or vulnerable in relationships and prefer to maintain emotional distance.Compared to them, Dr Darshi highlighted how securely attached individuals tend to have stable, healthy and fulfilling friendships. “They are comfortable being emotional and vulnerable amidst their friends, are able to communicate openly and honestly, are able to set healthy boundaries while being supportive of their partners. This leads to long lasting, trustworthy relationships,” he concluded.

tions.” The tweet also said that the initiative reflected a continued commitment to building a more responsive and resilient communication ecosystem for citizens. The new indigenous Cell Broadcasting system will be used to alert people on the occasion of emergencies such as cyclones, earthquakes, and tsunamis, or man-made disasters like chemical hazards, or wars.SACHET was developed by the Center for Development Of Telematics (C-DOT) under the DoT as a low-cost solution to broadcast multilingual, geo-targeted alerts about emergencies to millions of mobile phones.Several users, through social media, shared that the alert scared them, while several other users asked people not to panic as it was only a test.The NDMA had earlier launched the SACHET app and web portal to provide real-time, location-specific details for natural disasters, and the Cell Broadcasting system has also been integrated into it.

After years of battling rosacea and dermatitis, this woman set out to change what goes into makeup with her own brand



She began her professional writing journey in 2011, entering the evolving world of digital lifestyle journalism as beauty and wellness content rapidly transformed in India. Over the years, she has worked with reputed digital media houses like India Today, the Times of India and Skymet Weather, steadily building credibility through well-researched features, product reviews, and trend analyses. Her career reflects consistent growth, moving from content contributor to senior writer. She now plays a key role in shaping editorial strategy, social media content, and ensuring high-quality, reader-focused content that aligns with evolving audience needs.Shweta’s core expertise spans makeup, skincare, hair care, and holistic health and fitness. She specialises in in-depth beauty product reviews, ingredient analysis, skincare routines, and evidence-based wellness advice. Known for her analytical and data-driven approach, she relies on verified sources, dermatological insights, and expert consultations to ensure credibility. Her field experience includes interviewing Bollywood celebrities, beauty and makeup professionals, tracking consumer trends, and simplifying the top picks.

Shweta holds a Master’s degree in Mass Communication, Advertising, and Journalism and has done Bachelor’s in Commerce from Delhi University. She believes in delivering reader-first insights that empower informed decisions while maintaining transparency, credibility, and trust.Beyond her writing desk, Shweta enjoys exploring new destinations, experimenting in the kitchen with delightful recipes, and staying in tune with the latest beauty and wellness trends.

Harlin Sachdeva dealt with rosacea, contact dermatitis, and recurring flare-ups for years herself. She recognised a glaring gap: while the Indian market offered a wide spectrum of makeup, very few products were truly designed for reactive, acne-prone skin. This is what led to the rise of her clean makeup brand, House Of Makeup, which aims to combine high-performance products with skin-first formulations that align with global safety benchmarks like the European Cosmetic Directive.In an interview with HT Shop Now, Harlin Sachdeva opens up about redefining clean beauty, navigating challenges, and creating makeup that doesn’t just look good but feels right for the skin it’s made for.

Q: What inspired you to start House Of Makeup, and what gap did you see in the beauty market? Harlin Sachdeva: After over a decade of building products within brands like Sugar Cosmetics and Nykaa’s private label, a pattern became impossible to ignore: there were plenty of makeup options, but very few were designed for Indian skin concerns. Sensitive, acne-prone, reactive skin was still an afterthought. I’ve dealt with rosacea, contact dermatitis, and frequent flare-ups, so I know what harmful formulations could do to your skin. There was constant innovation in shades and finishes, but not enough in formulation.House Of Makeup came from that gap, the need for products that are non-comedogenic, clean, high-performing, and genuinely safe for skin like ours. Every product is built to deliver on performance without compromising skin health. Q: How do you define “clean beauty,” and how does your brand embody that philosophy? Harlin Sachdeva: For us, clean beauty isn’t a label, it’s a discipline. It begins at formulation and runs through every decision we make. We work closely with our labs to develop products that are both safe and effective, using non-

The Pinocchio mystery: Why scientists were fooled by this chameleon

When you think of Pinocchio, you probably picture that famous growing nose. But what if there’s a real-life animal with a similar feature, one that kept scientists guessing for years? Meet the “Pinocchio” chameleon, a reptile with a nose that’s as intriguing as its story.Deep in Madagascar, a place known for its incredible wildlife, lives a group of chameleons with long, horn-like noses. These colourful forest-dwelling lizards often come up with vibrant hues. For a long time, scientists identified these reptiles mainly by their appearance, especially the shape and size of their noses. But looks can be deceiving.

Recent research has shown that these long-nosed chameleons are more complex than once thought. What was previously grouped as a single species actually comprises multiple distinct species, such as Calumma pinocchio and Calumma hofreiteri. In other words, the famous “Pinocchio chameleon” isn’t just a quirky-looking reptile—it’s part of a much bigger evolutionary story.

Fooled for yearsFor decades, scientists relied on visible features like nose length, shape, and curve to classify these chameleons. Some had long noses, others short; some straight, others curved. It seemed simple, but it wasn’t.With the help of modern genetic studies, researchers discovered that these physical traits didn’t tell the full story. What was thought to be one species turned out to be several, misidentified for years.To solve this mystery, scientists used a method called museumics—studying DNA from preserved museum specimens. This allowed them to compare old samples with living chameleons and spot differences that weren’t visible to the eye.Some of these specimens dated all the way back to 1836, helping researchers

comedogenic ingredients suited for sensitive skin. But more importantly, we benchmark ourselves against global standards, not internal definitions. The European Cosmetic Directive, for instance, bans over 1,300 potentially harmful ingredients, far more than most markets regulate. That’s the framework we align with, and we only work with partners who follow this Directive.So when we say “clean,” it’s not about marketing language, it’s about being precise, transparent, and uncompromising about what goes into every product.

Q: What makes your brand different from other indie beauty brands?

Harlin Sachdeva: I have always believed that Indian consumers deserve the very best, not a diluted version of it. Too often, we see exceptional products created here but meant for global markets, while what stays back isn’t always held to the same standard. What we’re building is a bridge between global-quality formulations and products that are actually designed for Indian skin. Everything we create is made with sensitive, acne-prone, reactive skin in mind, across regions, because I am that consumer. There’s an obsessive focus on product, from research and third-party testing to ingredient selection. It’s not just about how makeup looks, it’s about how it behaves on your skin over time.

Q: What are some misconceptions people have about clean or vegan makeup?

Harlin Sachdeva: One of the biggest misconceptions is that clean or vegan makeup doesn’t perform well, so you have to compromise. That might have been true at one point, but it doesn’t hold anymore. Formulation has evolved significantly, and today you can create products that are both high-performing and skin-friendly. At the same time, “clean” is often used very loosely. That’s where the confusion comes from.

Q: What current makeup trends are you loving right now?

Harlin Sachdeva: I’m really enjoying the shift towards dewy, skin-first makeup. There’s a certain ease to it, skin that looks fresh, luminous, and like itself, just more refined. It’s less about covering everything up and more about enhancing what’s already there. The “no-makeup makeup” look has evolved beautifully; it’s thoughtful, well-balanced, and still very intentional. You’re seeing products that work with the skin rather than sit on top of it, which makes a big difference in how natural the final result feels.What I love most is that it allows room for both; you can keep the base light and radiant, while still playing with colour, texture, or definition elsewhere. It feels modern, wearable, and much more in sync with how people want their makeup to look today.

Q: Are there any trends you think people should skip or rethink?

Harlin Sachdeva: Not really. Makeup should feel personal. What works for one person won’t work for another, and that’s the beauty of it. I think the idea of “following trends” too closely can sometimes take away from that. It’s far more interesting when people find what works for them and build their own way of using makeup.

Q: How has social media changed the way beauty brands connect with consumers?

Harlin Sachdeva: It has completely changed the equation. Beauty is no longer one-way communication; it’s a conversation. Consumers today are far more informed. They ask questions, they understand ingredients, and they expect transparency. That has pushed brands to be more accountable, which is a good thing. It’s also brought brands and consumers much closer. People want to understand not just the product, but the intent behind it. And that creates an opportunity to build real trust, but only if you’re honest about what you’re doing. Creators play an important role here as well. The ones we work with don’t just promote, they validate, question, and sometimes even challenge. That ultimately helps consumers make better decisions.

Q: What were some of the biggest challenges you faced as a founder in the beauty industry?

Harlin Sachdeva: Building any brand comes with its own set of challenges, and for us, one of the toughest phases was during COVID. Manufacturing came to a standstill, cash flows were tight, and at one point, we didn’t even have the capital to produce fresh stock. For nearly a year, we had very little to sell. It was an incredibly difficult phase, both emotionally and operationally.But it also built resilience. At a critical moment, we found an investor who believed in what we were building and backed us when it mattered most. That gave us the ability to rebuild, rethink, and move forward with clarity. Today, the focus is on growing the brand with that same intent, building products that people can trust consistently.



connect past records with present-day findings. Why all the confusion? One surprising reason is how quickly these chameleons can evolve. Scientists believe female mate choice plays a role, meaning males may develop different nose shapes and sizes to attract partners.So, the nose isn’t just a random feature, it’s likely shaped by evolution and courtship.This discovery shows how much we still have to learn about the natural world. Madagascar alone is home to over 40% of the world’s chameleon species.Depending on how species are classified, the island has around 97 to 100 types of chameleons, while the global total is about 236.It’s a reminder that nature still holds many surprises. What looks simple at first glance can turn out to be far more complex. And unlike Pinocchio, this long nose has nothing to do with lies—it’s all about survival, attraction, and evolution.

Despite objections, open school body spent Rs 247 crore on new office — didn’t move in



Despite a senior official’s caution against “extravagant expenditure on fancy offices,” the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) — mandated to educate underprivileged children — spent Rs 247 crore in 2021 to acquire two floors in NBCC’s World Trade Centre in Delhi. It received possession in March 2024 but has never moved in and is now scouting for a tenant, The Indian Express has learnt. The sum is striking in context. NIOS receives no budgetary support from the Centre. It funds itself entirely through admission and examination fees. According to its last publicly available annual report, for 2022-23, NIOS generated a total income of Rs 288.65 crore that year, of which Rs 183 crore came from admission and exam fees, against total expenditure of Rs 157.89 crore. Official records show the proposal to buy 61,000 square feet of commercial space, and relocate NIOS headquarters from its current office in Noida to the capital, was discussed and approved at a Finance Committee meeting of the NIOS Society on October 8, 2021, under then Chairperson Prof Saroj Sharma.

The Ministry’s own Joint Secretary and Financial Adviser then had cautioned against the move before that meeting. The Joint Secretary had reportedly highlighted the mandate of NIOS to help educate “un(der)privileged, poor children of the society who could not pursue formal education in schools.” And that the revenue earned by NIOS comes mainly from these sections of the society. “It is therefore necessary that NIOS must refrain from making any extravagant expenditure on fancy offices at very costly places,” the JS is learnt to have said. The committee set those objections aside. Sharma reportedly told the committee that

NIOS was empowered to locate its office anywhere in the Union Territory of Delhi and “learners of NIOS face difficulties in reaching NIOS office, as no Regional Centre is located in Delhi.” Those in favour of the purchase also cited the National Education Policy’s emphasis on digital infrastructure, arguing that the “newly constructed building in the said premises will have all modern facilities for the learners for making them at par to other boards.”

The committee further noted that other government bodies and public sector undertakings had established offices in NBCC-designed buildings at Kidwai Nagar and Nauroji Nagar, and that the space would be “allotted as per fixed rate in a transparent manner.” On those grounds, the Finance Committee approved the acquisition, recording that “other members of the Finance Committee have given their consent on the agenda.” An official later said the decision was “not a single person’s decision but unanimously taken by the academic council.”

The cost, however, did not stop at Rs 247 crore. At a meeting on January 13, 2025, held under then Chairperson Pankaj Arora — who held additional charge of NIOS from October 2024 to July 2025 while also serving as chairperson of the National Council for Teacher Education — the Society approved further expenditure: Rs 18.82 lakh as stamp duty and e-registration fee, and Rs 70 lakh as GST on maintenance services. Asked about the spending and the need for the space, Arora said there was “no progress on that front” during his tenure. By July last year, NIOS had estimated that actually moving in would require a one-time interior development cost of Rs 37 crore, followed by annual recurring expenses of roughly Rs 2.13 crore for maintenance, and Rs 7 lakh in property tax. Faced with that arithmetic, the institution formed a committee to assess the WTC premises and recommend “optimal utilization.” The committee has since suggested leasing out one floor to reduce the financial burden.

When contacted, current NIOS chief Akhilesh Mishra declined to comment. A senior NIOS official, however, said that according to a proposal in the works, one floor will be rented out and the other will be used “as a space for digital schooling, where we will broadcast our classes live, and another part for the ‘Learn One More Bharatiya Bhasha’ initiative.”

From worst-affected by Maoism to highest class 10 pass percentage: The Bijapur turnaround

Bijapur, the Chhattisgarh district that was the worst-affected by Maoism, has jumped to first place among the state’s 33 districts for pass percentage in class 10 board exams and second place in class 12 exams. Last year, the district stood ninth in class 10 pass percentage and 23rd in class 12 pass percentage. The pass percentage for class 10 boards has increased from 85.40% last year to 96.06% this year, and for class 12 boards, it increased from 80.35% to 95.63%.

The district was once infamous for school students dropping out and allegedly joining Maoist ranks, officials said. In the last two years, security forces stepped up operations against Maoists in the Bastar region, which includes Bijapur. Since 2024, as many as 234 Maoists have been killed in encounters, while 1,191 have been arrested and another 1,003 have surrendered, severely weakening the rebel movement. How Bijapur Moved from Maoist Violence to Top Class 10 Results How Bijapur Moved from Maoist Violence to Top Class 10 Results Starting from a survey

Last year, District Collector Sambit Mishra conducted a survey to find out how many school children were dropping out and why. The survey revealed that nearly 10,000 children had dropped out of school. Mishra then set out to ensure that of those that remain, the maximum number of students clear the 10th and 12th board exams. “Soon after the results last year (in May), we took a meeting with all school teachers and principals, where we found out the issues. We learnt that faculty members were not present in many instances. We also took a basic test of all children and identified those who were weak in their studies. We learnt that there were learning gaps, due to which personal attention was needed for students. We then took four major steps,” he said. First was finding out which subjects needed more teachers, and we recruited 68 new teachers, called “Shiksha Mitans”, using District Monetary Foundation (DMF) funds. The other three steps taken were conducting pre-board exams every two months with regular performance reviews. The teachers were asked to identify weaker students and take remedial classes and extra teaching sessions. A district-level exam cell prepared blueprint-based question papers for students so they are well-prepared. Another initiative was teaching students Artificial Intelligence prompts, which helped some of them clear their doubts, though several others could not use it due to a lack of mobile network. How Bijapur Moved from Maoist Violence to Top Class 10 Results How Bijapur Moved from Maoist Violence to Top Class 10 Results The authorities also worked on ensuring that attendance at schools was over 90%.

Hot showers may harm your skin, dermatologists warn

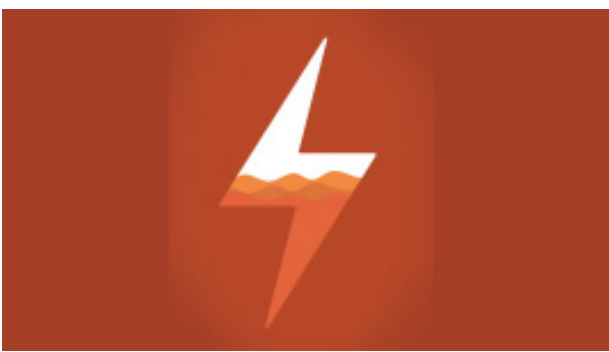
Hyderabad: Love turning the shower knob all the way to hot? Your skin probably doesn’t. That steamy, relaxing shower might feel like the best part of your day, but frequent exposure to hot water can quietly weaken your skin over time. The heat disrupts your skin’s natural protective barrier, the layer that helps retain moisture and keep irritants out. As this barrier gets affected, your skin becomes more sensitive and prone to issues like irritation, redness and that tight, uncomfortable feeling after a shower. Over time, this can also make your skin appear dull and less healthy.

Long, hot showers can further aggravate existing conditions like dryness or eczema, making flare-ups more likely. The higher the temperature and the longer the exposure, the greater the impact on your skin. Dermatologists often recommend switching to lukewarm water and keeping showers short. It may not feel as indulgent, but it helps maintain your skin’s natural balance. A simple fix? Apply a moisturiser immediately after stepping out, while your skin is still slightly damp, to lock in hydration and support the skin barrier. You don’t have to give up hot showers completely, but turning down the heat and cutting down the time can make a noticeable difference. Sometimes, small changes in routine are all it takes to protect your skin in the long run.



You don’t have to give up hot showers completely, but turning down the heat and cutting down the time can make a noticeable difference. Sometimes, small changes in routine are all it takes to protect your skin in the long run.

After the Hormuz disruption, Asia should build an energy security alliance



After Hormuz disruption, Asia should build an energy security alliance The closure has alerted countries to their vulnerability to other nautical chokepoints. Aside from the Strait of Hormuz, their energy supplies have to cross the Strait of Malacca, the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. Fatih Birol, executive director of the International Energy Agency (IEA), said last month that “we are facing the biggest energy security threat in history”, worse than the aggregate impact of the crises sparked by the Yom Kippur War of 1973, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the Russia-Ukraine conflict that began in 2022. He should know, as the organisation he heads was established as a result of the Yom Kippur War. The latter triggered the quadrupling of crude oil prices (\$2.90/bbl in October 1973 to \$11.90 in January 1974) and a global recession. In its aftermath in January 1974, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger invited the leaders of the Western world to a conference in Washington, DC. Kissinger’s objective was to create a mechanism by which Western countries could counter the cartel of the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) and manage and mitigate future supply disruptions. The IEA was the outcome of this conference.

Fifty-two years on, in the wake of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, India should lead a call for the petroleum-importing countries of Asia to create a similar institution, but with a broader threefold purpose. One, to safeguard the rights of individual member countries to free and unencumbered navigation passage through the maritime straits in Asia; two, to counter the pricing power of Middle East exporters through the lever of their aggregate purchasing strength; and three, to harness the complementary technical, financial and human assets of members to accelerate the pace of the green energy transition. Such an institution could be called the Asian Energy Collaborative Compact (AECC).

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has had a dual impact on Asian oil-import-dependent countries. It has led to an energy shortage and highlighted the risks of exposure to maritime chokepoints. The closure has trapped 13 million barrels of petroleum (and its derivatives) in the straits. The bulk of this quantity (approximately 85 per cent) is destined for the Asian markets. As a result, a number of Asian countries are currently facing an energy-supply crisis. The Philippines has declared a national energy emergency; Japan has cut back on ferry and bus services, and India has rationed the supply of LPG to commercial establishments. China has also put the brakes on domestic consumption, although the impact has been buffered by substitute supplies from Russia and a drawdown of stocks from its strategic reserves. Beyond this physical constraint, the closure has alerted countries to their vulnerability to other nautical

AI in top colleges: Is it helping students or adding to stress? A professor explains

The launch of ChatGPT in November 2022 accelerated the adoption of Generative AI (GenAI) across domains. It is now widely used in education, research, and industry to improve productivity and work quality, and is increasingly treated as an assistive technology. While concerns remain about its impact on jobs, GenAI has quickly become embedded in everyday academic and professional workflows. In academia, adoption has been particularly rapid in India’s premier technical institutions (TIs), such as Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) Pilani, and National Institutes of Technology (NITs). GenAI tools provide on-demand access to explanations, problem-solving support, and coding assistance, effectively functioning as 24x7 tutors at students’ fingertips. While this improves access to guidance and reduces dependence on institutional resources, it raises a key question: Is GenAI reducing academic stress or intensifying it? The question is especially relevant given the high number of student suicides reported in these colleges, owing to a variety of factors. The recent proliferation of Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning (AI/ML) has penetrated academia’s teaching and learning (T&L) more rapidly than the earlier cycles of AI development. While AI has evolved since the late 1950s, its direct integration into daily life accelerated with the rise of conversational systems such as the Google Assistant in the mid-2010s. A decisive shift followed the public release of ChatGPT in November 2022, marking the widespread adoption of large language models (LLMs). These systems generate text, code, images, and other content from large datasets, fundamentally altering how information is accessed and processed, and are called GenAI. Within academia, GenAI tools are now embedded in routine workflows. From coding assistance and problem-solving to report drafting and assignment preparation, students increasingly rely on tools such as Google Gemini, DeepSeek, and GitHub Copilot. These tools function as assistive technologies, enhancing productivity and reducing time spent on routine tasks. At the same time, they are shifting learning from deep engagement with problems to effective querying, placing greater emphasis on prompt formulation than on independent reasoning. LLMs are probabilistic systems and can produce errors, inconsistencies, or misleading outputs. Over-reliance without verification may affect conceptual understanding and academic rigour. This evolving ecosystem brings both efficiency gains and new challenges in education. What is missing in GenAI Ecosystem?

Traditionally, teaching and learning in premier TIs focused on analysis, design, and application of knowledge rather than rote memorisation. Given concepts and mathematical formulations, students were expected to apply them to solve engineering problems. Many examinations were open-book, allowing the use of reference material while assessing analytical and problem-solving ability. Preparation involved selecting relevant material, organising notes, and developing approaches—processes that ensured deep engagement. With the advent of LLMs, this mode of learning is changing. The effort invested in reading, organising material, and working independently through problems has declined. Students increasingly rely on querying AI systems for solutions and explanations. As a result, emphasis shifts from internalising concepts to retrieving answers on demand. While they could be efficient, this reduces sustained think-

chokepoints. Aside from the Strait of Hormuz, their energy supplies have to cross the Strait of Malacca and, further east, the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. These maritime passages are in the high seas and under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, also referred to as the “constitution of the oceans”, all ships are assured the right of “innocent passage”. The Iranian action has breached this right and created a precedent that compels reflection on the counterfactual. What if the Strait of Malacca (through which 60 per cent of all seaborne trade to and from East Asia passes) were choked? What if the flow of merchandise traffic through the Taiwan Strait and/or the South China Sea were impeded by regulatory restrictions and/or tolls? What pipeline configurations, over land and under water, might enable countries to create supply lines that avoid exposure to such blocks?

These concerns are common to most Asian countries irrespective of their political system, ideology or stage of economic development. They can and should therefore be discussed conjointly. The AECC could provide a forum for such discussions. The “Asian Premium” (the price differential between the price paid for crude oil by Asian countries to Middle Eastern exporters and the North Sea benchmark price) ranged between \$3 and \$6 per barrel before the start of the conflict. It widened to \$60 per barrel after the start of the bombing. It has come down since, but the initial increase warrants the question: Was the steepness of the hike in prices, freight rates and insurance premiums due entirely to tightening supply and inelastic demand? Or was it also because of asymmetric bargaining, that is, the fact that Asian importers failed to leverage their aggregate purchasing power? Kissinger convened the leadership of the Western world in January 1974 to counter OAPEC. My suggestion is that AECC should be set up to secure a similar objective. It should develop mechanisms that, whilst not impeding a country’s ability to trade independently, enable the members to negotiate collectively to secure better supply terms and reduced freight and insurance costs. In addition, AECC should provide real-time market intelligence on supply disruptions, infrastructure incidents and geopolitics. This information is currently provided by the IEA, but Asia should have its own bespoke agency. IEA has a Western skew as it works under the OECD’s umbrella. The exit of the UAE from OPEC is further evidence of the fractured relationships amongst the Gulf oil exporters and the terminal volatility of the international petroleum market. It deepens the urgency for Asia to shift away from fossils towards renewables. Most, if not all, Asian countries have a green energy strategy in place, and some have made impressive progress. But no country has successfully scaled up renewables to dominance in its energy consumption basket. The question arises: How can this shift be accelerated? One proposition that prima facie seems fanciful would be for Asian countries to leverage their green assets (technology, finance, mineral and metal resources, human talent) to identify and tackle areas of overlapping interests regarding the green transition. The proposition is fanciful because, unlike the IEA, Asian countries do not share a common political ideology or system. But the region does have a common purpose in decarbonisation and energy security. So, in its third role as an energy think tank, AECC should research how best the complementary assets of its members can be combined to generate a positive-sum green outcome.



ing, weakens problem-solving depth, and limits the development of independent analytical skills.

How can GenAI reshape academic stress? The widespread adoption of GenAI is introducing a set of specific though interlinked stress intensifiers in academic environments: Dependence and reduced confidence: Frequent reliance on AI-generated solutions shifts competence from self to system, weakening confidence in unaided problem-solving. Over time, this reduces persistence in tackling complex problems independently and shifts learning from deep engagement to effective querying. AI-driven benchmarking: Student performance is increasingly measured—directly or indirectly—against AI-generated outputs that are faster, more structured, and often appear near-ideal. It raises evaluation standards, leaves little room for iterative thinking or minor errors, and fosters constant comparison with peers and machine outputs, intensifying performance pressure. Competitive pressure driven by Fear of Missing Out (FOMO): With all-time access to GenAI, students feel compelled to use these tools to avoid falling behind. It creates continuous pressure to match AI-augmented productivity, often prioritising speed and output over deep understanding. This approach may not sustain for long-term knowledge acquisition and skill development. Learning–evaluation mismatch: While GenAI is widely used for coursework and preparation, it is typically restricted in examinations and interviews. It creates a dual environment, forcing abrupt shifts to unaided performance, leading to anxiety, self-doubt, and a sense of unpreparedness during high-stakes assessments. Ethics undefined: The absence of clear norms on acceptable AI use creates uncertainty and internal conflict. Students must constantly decide how much reliance is appropriate, increasing stress while raising concerns about academic integrity. Addressing the rise in suicides requires a shift to integrate mental health support, academic reform, and a policy on the use of GenAI in teaching, learning, and evaluation (TLE). Despite widespread use of GenAI, none of the TIs has a policy framework to address its impact on academic use. Policy efforts should aim to detect stress early through continuous assessment. Counselling systems must be strengthened with early-warning mechanisms and greater faculty sensitisation. Preventing further loss of life must be treated as a national priority, requiring coordinated action by institutions, regulators, and policymakers to ensure that technological ad

Iran war energy shock drives nuclear power plans in hard-hit Asia, Africa



Nairobi: The Iran war’s global energy shock is causing some nations in Africa and Asia to boost nuclear power generation and spurring atomic energy plans in non-nuclear countries on both continents.Asia, where most of the Middle Eastern oil and natural gas was headed, was hit first and hardest by disruptions to shipping routes carrying those fuels – swiftly followed by Africa. The US and Europe are also feeling the pinch as the conflict drives up energy costs.African and Asian nations with nuclear plants are increasing their output as they scramble for short-term energy supplies, while non-nuclear countries are accelerating long-term nuclear plans to safeguard against future fossil fuel shocks.Nuclear power isn’t a quick fix for the current energy crisis. Developing atomic energy can take decades, especially for nuclear newcomers. But long-term commitments to nuclear power made now will likely lock it in to countries’ future energy mixes, said Joshua Kurlantzick of the Council on Foreign Relations.

In Asia, the Iran war is pushing South Korea to increase nuclear power generation, while Taiwan is debating restarting mothballed reactors. In Africa, future plans to build reactors have taken on urgency, with Kenya, Rwanda and South Africa affirming their support.Nuclear power takes advantage of the energy released when the nucleus of an atom, such as uranium, splits in a process called fission. Unlike fossil fuels, this doesn’t release climate change-causing carbon dioxide. But it creates potentially dangerous radioactive waste, which is one reason many countries are cautious about nuclear power.

The war has accelerated a global “nuclear renaissance,” said Rachel Bronson of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, as countries seek an out from the risks of fossil fuel markets.There are 31 countries that use nuclear power, which provides about 10 per cent of global electricity, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency, which says another 40 nations are either considering the technology or preparing to build a plant.

In Asia, where energy triage efforts range from increased coal use to purchases of Russian crude oil, countries with nuclear plants are seeking to get more out of their existing reactors.South Korea is increasing generation at its nuclear plants and speeding up maintenance at five offline reactors, with restarts planned in May.Taiwan and Japan are reversing policies that shuttered nuclear sites following the 2011 Fukushima nuclear meltdown, triggered when an earthquake and tsunami disabled the power supply that cooled the reactors.

Taiwan is considering the years-long process of restarting two reactors because of the current crisis, which will require meticulous inspections, safety checks and control system verifications. In Japan, since the start of the war, Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae has signed a \$40 billion reactor deal with the US, a nuclear fuel recycling agreement with France and promised Indonesia nuclear cooperation. Japan restarted the world’s largest nuclear plant, the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa site, in January.

Renewables, like solar and wind, make more sense for energy affordability and security, according to Michiyo Miyamoto of the US-based Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis.While the Iran war is also driving consumer and government interest in renewable energy globally and in Japan, historically high electricity costs combined with the current crisis are swinging Japanese pub-

Macron, Starmer hold international summit on reopening Strait of Hormuz

Paris: The leaders of France and the UK will gather dozens of countries – but not the United States – on Friday to push forward plans to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a key oil route choked off by the US-Israeli war on Iran.The Paris meeting is part of attempts by sidelined nations to ease the impact of a conflict they didn’t start and haven’t joined, but that has sent the global economy reeling. After the war started on Feb. 28, Iran effectively shut the narrow strait through which a fifth of the world’s oil usually passes.The US is not part of the planning for what has been branded the Strait of Hormuz Maritime Freedom of Navigation Initiative. In a post on X ahead of Friday’s conference, French President Emmanuel Macron said the mission to provide security for shipping through the strait would be “strictly defensive,” limited to non-belligerent countries and deployed “when security conditions allow.”Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer have spearheaded international efforts to increase diplomatic and economic pressure on Iran, which Starmer has accused of “holding the world’s economy to ransom.” US President Donald Trump’s announcement of a retaliatory American blockade of Iranian ports has raised the economic jeopardy even higher.“The unconditional and immediate reopening of the Strait is a global responsibility, and we need to act to get global energy and trade flowing freely again,” Starmer said before the meeting.France and Britain have also led military planning meetings, in an echo of the “coalition of the willing” assembled to provide security for Ukraine in the event of a ceasefire in that war.French military spokesman Col. Guillaume Vernet said Thursday that the mission is still “in construction.” Macron’s office said participants will contribute “each according to its capabilities,” stressing options to ensure safe passage through the strait will depend on the security situation after a lasting ceasefire.

“What matters is that ship operators have all the means at their disposal to be sure their vessels will not be hit if they pass through the strait. That may require intelligence, mine-clearing capabilities, military escorts, communication procedures with coastal states, etc.,” an official said, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with the French presidency’s customary practices.Sidharth Kaushal, a research fellow in sea power at the Royal United Services Institute think tank, said mine-clearing and creating a warning system for maritime threats were more likely roles for the coalition than warships escorting commercial tankers through the strait.“You need huge numbers of vessels for that sort of thing, which nobody

lic opinion toward acceptance of nuclear power, she said.

In South Asia, Bangladesh is racing to turn on new reactors built by Russia’s state-owned nuclear corporation Rosatom. Dhaka hopes they will supply the national grid with 300 megawatts by this summer, relieving some pressure from current gas shortfalls.Meanwhile, Vietnam signed a deal with Moscow in March for two Russian-designed reactors.The Philippines, which recently declared a national energy emergency, is also considering reviving a nuclear plant built in the aftermath of the 1973 oil crisis but was never turned on.“I hope we learned our lesson,” said Alvie Asuncion-Astronomo of the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute. The Iran war is “providing a needed push for nuclear.”Soaring energy prices and power shortages in Africa, triggered by the Iran war, are leading to public calls for nuclear cooperation and reinvigorated interest in long-term nuclear energy plans, which are underway in more than 20 of the 54 African countries.With Africa seen as an atomic energy growth market, nuclear nations – including the US, Russia, China, France and South Korea – are pitching advanced technology such as small modular reactors, or SMRs, as a solution to energy shortages.

These modular reactors are a cheaper, more compact alternative to large-scale plants.Proponents tout them as a faster option, but projects can still take years. Kenya, for instance, plans to bring a small modular reactor online in 2034 after starting the first phase in 2009.

Last month, Justus Wabuyabo of Kenya’s Nuclear Power and Energy Agency said, “Nuclear energy is no longer a distant aspiration for African countries; it is a strategic necessity.” During a March summit convened by the U.N.’s nuclear watchdog agency, Rwandan President Paul Kagame said Africa will be “one of the most important global markets” for the smaller reactors in the years ahead.Smaller reactors, which can offer scalable, low-emitting base load power, are considered a solution to Africa’s rising electricity demand, weak grids and over-reliance on imported diesel.Similarly, Loyiso Tyabashe of the South African Nuclear Energy Corporation, said SMRs could “fulfil our strategic objective of positioning South Africa at the forefront of advanced nuclear technologies.” South Africa, which has the continent’s only existing nuclear plants, wants nuclear to go from making around 5 per cent of its energy mix now to 16 per cent by 2040.The energy disruptions come as competition for influence in Africa intensifies between Washington and Moscow.

Russia’s Rosatom is building Egypt’s first reactor and has cooperation agreements with Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Tanzania and Niger, spanning major projects, research centres, uranium processing facilities and training programs.While only Kenya and Ghana have joined an American-led modular reactor initiative, Washington is trying to catch up.The US and South Korea sponsored a nuclear conference in Nairobi last month. Ryan Taugher of the US State Department said Washington is working with African nations to rapidly develop secure and safe civil nuclear reactors.Ghana, which aims to begin building a nuclear plant in 2027, is in the market for foreign suppliers.

Risks like meltdowns and mismanaged waste remain, even as interest builds. Nuclear energy could also be a step toward building nuclear bombs.Ayumi Fukakusa, of the advocacy group Friends of the Earth Japan, said “nuclear is very risky” and will keep countries reliant on imported fuels such as enriched uranium.Given that nuclear sectors take years to develop, governments should stay focused on building out renewables for long-term energy security, said Rex Amancio of the Global Renewables Alliance.Bronson, with the atomic scientists group, also said nuclear plants are vulnerable during conflicts, citing recent instances where reactors were specifically targeted during the Iran war and the Russia-Ukraine War.“All of this comes into the mix of how we think about energy security,” she said. “Countries are now weighing those kinds of risks against the other risks, which Asia and Africa are seeing first and foremost, about what happens when gas and oil stop.



has,” he said.Iran expert Ellie Geranmayeh, deputy head of the Middle East and North Africa program at the European Council on Foreign Relations think tank, said mine-clearing is an area where European countries and their partners could play a role.“They would be a better party to do this than the United States, because once you have US military doing this and lingering on Iranian shores, it creates a potential arena for Iran and the US to have miscalculations and get back into a sort of military tension,” she said.Britain has discussed using mine-hunting drones, deployed from the ship RFA Lyme Bay, for a Hormuz mission.The war has highlighted the shrunken state of the Royal Navy, which has deployed just one major warship, destroyer HMS Dragon, to the eastern Mediterranean. France, which has the European Union’s most powerful military, has sent its nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to the region, alongside a helicopter carrier and several frigates.More than 40 nations have taken part in diplomatic or military meetings led by France and the UK in recent weeks, though fewer are likely to commit military resources.Macron’s office said about 30 countries are to attend Friday’s talks, including some from the Middle East and Asia. The list has not been disclosed. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni are expected to attend in person, with others joining by video.The operation is partly a response to Trump, who has berated allies for failing to join the war and said reopening the strait is not America’s job. The president has called allies “cowards,” said NATO “wasn’t there when we needed them”, and told Britain: “You don’t even have a navy.” “I imagine there’ll be some desire on the part of many European states, and potentially Canada, to demonstrate the ability to provide security in a way that’s distinct from if not completely separate

Trump says Iran war should end 'soon', both sides may meet at weekend



WASHINGTON/ISLAMABAD, U.S. President Donald Trump expressed confidence that an agreement could soon be reached to end the Iran war and urged the Tehran-aligned Hezbollah group to hold its fire as a 10-day truce went in to effect between Lebanon and Israel.Trump said the next meeting between the United States and Iran could take place at the weekend and an extension of a two-week ceasefire was possible, but may not be needed as Tehran wanted ‘a deal.The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here."We’re going to see what happens. But I think we’re very close to making a deal with Iran," he told reporters outside the White House, adding if an agreement was reached and signed in the Pakistani capital Islamabad, he may go there for the occasion.Hours later while in Las Vegas, Trump went further, saying the war "should be ending pretty soon".

The war with Iran has been unpopular in the United States and has left Trump with a political headache just months before a crucial midterm election at home.The U.S.-Israeli attack on Iran that started on February 28 has triggered the worst oil price shock in history and led to ‘an International Monetary Fund downgrade of its outlook for the global economy and a warning that prolonged conflict could push the world to the brink of recession.

A Pakistani source involved in mediating between the U.S. and Iran said on Friday there was ‘progress in backdoor diplomacy and that an upcoming meeting between the two sides could result in the signing of an agreement.

The two sides would first sign a memorandum of understanding followed by a ‘comprehensive agreement within 60 days, the source said."Detailed agreement comes later. Both sides are agreeing in principle. And technical bits come later," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.A diplomatic source said the key Pakistani mediator, army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir, had been ‘holding talks in Tehran since Wednesday and had made a breakthrough on ‘sticky issues".OIL PRICE FALLS ON DEAL HOPES

Oil prices fell in early trade on Friday and Asian stocks headed for a second week of strong gains on optimism the Middle East conflict could be nearing an end, even ‘though the critical Strait of Hormuz, an artery for a fifth of the world’s oil and gas supply, remains effectively closed.The MSCI’s broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan.(MIAPJ0000PUS), opens new tabwas down 0.8% as investors locked in profits after a blistering rally this month, with the index close to its highest since the Iran war broke out.slipped 1% after hitting a record high on Thursday and almost all stock markets were back to pre-war levels.

Brent crude futures declined to \$98.17 a barrel at 0434 GMT while U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude futures fell to \$93.47 a barrel, trimming gains from the previous session.France and Britain will chair ‘a meeting on Friday of around 40 countries aimed at signalling to the United States that some of its closest allies, many chided by Trump for failing to act, are ready to help restore freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz once conditions allow.

Iran has largely ‘closed the strait to ships other than its own and Washington this week imposed a blockade on ships entering or leaving Iranian ports. Analysts said the blockade could prevent roughly 2 million barrels per day of

Iranian crude from reaching its primary buyer China.Only a trickle of vessels have passed through ‘the strait since the ‘war started, compared to an average 130-plus each day before the conflict.A map showing the inbound and outbound shipping lanes in the Strait of Hormuz, in addition to the maritime boundary between Oman and Iran.HOPES FOR ‘MEANINGFUL TALKS'The ceasefire in Lebanon went into effect on Thursday and Trump said he had spoken to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Lebanese counterpart Joseph Aoun and planned to invite them to the White House for “meaningful talks” that could happen over the next week or two.Iran has insisted that any peace deal should also cover the fighting in Lebanon. The ceasefire was part of an understanding reached with the U.S. and mediated by Pakistan, Iranian media reported, citing a foreign ministry spokesperson."May have been a historic day for Lebanon. Good things are happening!!!" Trump said on social media late In an earlier post, he urged Hezbollah to respect the ceasefire."I hope Hezbollah acts nicely and well during this important period of time. It will be an ‘GREAT moment for them if they do. No more killing. Must ‘finally have PEACE!" he said.

Conflict between Israel and the Iran-backed ‘Hezbollah in Lebanon was reignited by the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran. Hezbollah opened fire in support of Tehran on March 2, prompting an Israeli offensive in Lebanon that authorities say has killed 2,000 people, 15 months after their last major conflict.Celebratory gunfire rang out across parts of Beirut as the clock struck midnight on Thursday to mark the start of the truce and witnesses heard explosions from rockets fired in ‘celebration, prompting a safety warning and threat of arrests from the Lebanese Army.But the pause in hostilities remained fragile, with the army early on Friday reporting that Israel had already violated the ceasefire ‘with intermittent shelling of several southern ‘Lebanese villages.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military, which had said earlier that its forces remained deployed in the area, in what a spokesperson said was in response to continued Hezbollah militant activity.Hezbollah released a lengthy statement on its military operations against Israel throughout Thursday, which listed its last attack as being 10 minutes before the ceasefire took effect.The truce was "essential, urgently needed and a demand shared by all," senior Hezbollah official Bilal Lakkiss told NBC News ahead of the start of the ceasefire, but said the group would not comply with Israel’s demand that it ‘disarm “except within a framework ‘tied to a broader national security vision".

NUCLEAR AMBITIONS A STICKING POINTTehran’s nuclear ambitions were a sticking point at talks in Islamabad last weekend, where the U.S. proposed ‘a 20-year suspension of all nuclear activity by Iran. Tehran suggested a half of three to five years, according to people familiar with the proposals.Trump on Thursday said Iran had offered not to possess nuclear weapons for more than 20 years.Iran has demanded that international sanctions be lifted and Washington has pressed for any highly enriched ‘uranium to be removed from Iran.

Two Iranian sources said there were signs of a compromise on the HEU stockpile, with Tehran considering shipping part of it out of the country.Humeyra Pamuk is a senior foreign policy correspondent based in Washington DC. She covers the U.S. State Department, regularly traveling with U.S. Secretary of State. During her 20 years with Reuters, she has had postings in London, Dubai, Cairo and Turkey, covering everything from the Arab Spring and Syria’s civil war to numerous Turkish elections and the Kurdish insurgency in the southeast. In 2017, she won the Knight-Bagehot fellowship program at Columbia University’s School of Journalism. She holds a BA in International Relations and an MA on European Union studies.Ariba Shahid is a journalist based in Karachi, Pakistan. She primarily covers economic and financial news from Pakistan, along with Karachi-centric stories. Ariba has previously worked at DealStreetAsia and Profit Magazine.Shahzad is an accomplished media professional, with over two decades of experience. He primarily reports out of Pakistan, Afghanistan regions, with a great interest and an extensive knowledge of Asia. He also reports on politics, economy, finance, business, commodities, Islamist militancy, human rights

China turns Taiwan’s own voices against it in information war

TAIPEI, GNS News Agency, April 21- As Chinese warships and fighter jets staged massive drills around Taiwan in December, a parallel action was unfolding on smartphone screens.On Douyin, China’s version of TikTok, a news outlet run by the Chinese Communist Party posted a 51-second video of Taiwan opposition leader Cheng Li-wun accusing President Lai Ching-te of inviting Chinese aggression. Lai, Cheng said, was “dragging all 23 million of us” in Taiwan into a “dead end, a ‘road to death” by pursuing independence. The clip quickly surfaced on Facebook, YouTube and other platforms popular in Taiwan.The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.Chinese state media outlets are increasingly amplifying Taiwanese critics of the island’s ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), including influencers and politicians linked to the opposition Kuomintang (KMT), according to five Taiwanese security officials and data from ‘Taipei-based research group

China imports the public statements of leading KMT and other opposition figures that are critical of the Taiwan government and pumps them out in a torrent of anti-DPP messaging in Chinese state media and on social media platforms in China, according to the data and sources. Those clips are then reshared and often repackaged for consumption on platforms popular in Taiwan, including Facebook, TikTok and YouTube, as well as on Douyin, sometimes embellished or presented in ways that obscure China’s hand.While China has in the past employed Taiwanese figures in its propaganda, it has turbocharged this information-warfare tactic, the Taiwan security officials said: Familiar voices and accents can sound more credible.The goal is to discredit a government Beijing accuses of seeking independence, the officials said. And, with the DPP seeking \$40 billion in extra defense outlays, the campaign also appears aimed at convincing Taiwanese that China’s ‘military power is so overwhelming that it is futile for Taiwan to spend heavily on more American weapons, according to IORG and three of the security officials.

A giant screen shows a news report on China’s "Justice Mission 2025" military drills around Taiwan, in Beijing, China December 30, 2025. /Tingshu Wang/File Photo Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab

China’s Taiwan Affairs Office and defense ministry didn’t respond to requests for comment about Beijing’s in-

formation warfare.Taiwan’s defense ministry told Reuters it is countering a massive increase in Chinese “cognitive warfare” by ‘strengthening the armed forces’ media-literacy skills and psychological resilience. President Lai’s office added that cross-strait peace must be “built on strength, not on concessions to authoritarian pressure.”

Facebook, TikTok and YouTube, which are blocked in China, didn’t respond to questions about Chinese information warfare. Douyin also didn’t respond ‘to a request for comment.China considers Taiwan part of its territory and hasn’t ruled out using military force to seize it. Taiwan’s government rejects China’s sovereignty claim, saying it is already an independent country called the Republic of China, its formal name. Beijing refuses to speak with the DPP administration, and calls Lai a ‘separatist.”

While Chinese preparations for military action against Taiwan continue, the information warfare ‘is part of Beijing’s strategy of wearing down Taiwan without resorting to force. In this regard, Taiwan’s opposition KMT provides a valuable opening for China: The party has moved to seek closer ties with Beijing in a bid to head off what it says is a crisis made worse by the DPP government’s provocation of China.Cheng Li-wun, chairperson of the Kuomintang (KMT), Taiwan’s largest opposition party, shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China April 10, 2026, in this screengrab from a video provided by CTI. CTI via REUTERS TV ATTENTION EDITORS - THIS IMAGE WAS PROVIDED BY A THIRD PARTY.... Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab Read moreCheng, the KMT leader, met Chinese President Xi Jinping this month ‘in Beijing, where Xi told her the KMT and the Communist Party must “consolidate political mutual trust” and “join hands to create a bright future of the motherland’s reunification.”In a statement to Reuters, the KMT said Cheng’s visit to Beijing fulfilled a campaign pledge and continued a long-established tradition of top-level meetings between the KMT and the Communist Party. The two parties have many differences, but both believe disagreements should be resolved through dialogue, it added.Data provided to Reuters by IORG, also known as the Taiwan Information Environment Research Center, shows the mechanics of the Chinese campaign. The non-partisan group of social scientists and data analysts is funded in part by the U.S. and European governments, and academic institutions in Taiwan.

Govt should nominate members to Tata Trusts, say some trustees



“There is a good case for the government to appoint one or two trustees of high standing like former judges or reputed scientists to restore order and credibility,” a trustee, who did not wish to be named, told The Indian Express. Pointing to a culture where unanimity and consensus was the norm in decision-making, the trustee said, “RNT (Ratan Tata) would be turning in his grave. Mehli Mistry is now Noel’s (Noel Tata, the current chairman of Tata Trusts) foe but they have used each other in the past and may do so again,” the trustee said, indicating a deepening rift within Tata Trusts.

These demands come close on the heels of former trustee of Tata Trusts Mehli Mistry approaching the Maharashtra Charity Commissioner now seeking the appointment of an administrator to run the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT). He was voted out of the Tata Trusts by their boards last November. In his filing, he has also highlighted alleged governance failures, contested board decisions and possible conflicts of interest.

Earlier, Mistry had challenged the eligibility of Venu Srinivasan and another trustee Vijay Singh (former defence secretary) on the board of Bai Hira Bai Jamsetji Tata Navsari Charitable Institution, citing they were not Parsis. Srinivasan quit the trust citing commitments to other businesses; Singh did not comply. Questioning the manner in which Srinivasan was allegedly forced out, the trustee said this had happened for the first time in the history of the Tatas. But Tata Trusts CEO Siddharth Sharma said that “the Trustees have spoken in one voice in ensuring that the Trusts perform their core functions efficiently and effectively, and continue to move the needle forward on social change.” “The observations made shall be duly responded to at the appropriate forum,” he said.

Denying claims of the trustee that Tata Trusts were not functioning well, Sharma told The Indian Express that unified leadership among Trustees, along with strong systems, dedicated personnel and a deep commitment to public service, enables the Trusts to carry out their core functions effectively and sustain increased philanthropic spending. “For the record, we have ended FY25-26 with a philanthropic spend of Rs 1,586 crore, an increase of 270% over the last three years, and are on course to deliver approximately Rs 1,900 crore in the current fiscal. This kind of increase in philanthropic spending is not possible in the absence of robust structures, systems & processes, dedicated personnel and, above all, a passion and commitment to public service,” Sharma said. In his latest petition, Mistry has questioned the legitimacy of the current SDTT board, arguing that certain trustees may not meet eligibility criteria outlined in the trust deed, including requirements related to religion and residency. He claims that decisions made by such a board, particularly those involving governance and appointments, may lack legal validity. SDTT is the largest shareholder in Tata Sons, holding a 28% stake, followed by the Sir Ratan Tata Trust with 24%, while other Tata trusts collectively own an additional 14%. Together, SDTT and the Sir Ratan Tata Trust control around 66% of Tata Sons, the Tata Group’s holding company, underscoring the broader significance of the dispute. Observers said the unity and cohesion within Tata Trusts have weakened. During Ratan Tata’s tenure, decisions were typically made through consensus, but that approach seems to have eroded. Mehli Mistry’s reappointment was blocked by other trustees in October 2025, and in September 2025, Vijay Singh was voted out of a board position at Tata Sons.

More recently, both Venu Srinivasan and Vijay Singh have pushed for listing Tata Sons, apparently against Noel Tata’s wishes. The listing of Tata Sons, the principal shareholder of Tata group of companies, on the stock exchanges has become a hot issue in the ongoing Tata group saga. Tensions have surfaced within Tata Trusts and Tata Sons — two major institutions in the Tata family — as disagreements over strategy, regulatory challenges and governance continue among trustees. At the centre of the debate is a divide on the group’s future direction, with some trustees advocating for listing to unlock capital for expansion, while Noel Tata remains opposed to the move. Concerns are mounting over rising losses in several unlisted entities, raising questions about financial sustainability and capital allocation.

US Russian crude waiver expires: What it could mean for India’s oil imports from Russia

The US has allowed the one-month sanctions waiver on buying Russian oil already on the water to expire, and will not be extending it, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a press briefing in Washington. Bessent’s comments pertaining to the waiver, which expired on April 11, came close on the heels of the US Department of the Treasury announcing that a similar sanctions waiver issued for Iranian oil won’t be extended beyond its expiration date of April 19. “We will not be ?renewing the general license (sanctions waiver) on Russian oil, and we will not be renewing the general license on Iranian oil. That was oil that was on the water prior to March 11. So all that has been used,” Bessent said at a White House briefing early Thursday India time.

With global oil supplies squeezed due to the effective halt in vessel movements through the Strait of Hormuz amid the West Asia war, these waivers aimed to allow more barrels of oil to reach the international market, thereby easing the supply situation and exerting downward pressure on spiralling oil prices. Experts saw these moves from Washington as part of President Donald Trump’s effort to prevent a further and sustained spike in international oil prices—and the consequent rise in domestic fuel prices in the US—given the midterm elections later this year.

While these short-term waivers, particularly the one on Russian barrels already loaded on tankers, helped bring more oil to the market, their impact on international oil prices is not so clear, as prices have remained elevated since early March. Moreover, the waivers attracted criticism from various sections within the US; critics argued that the waiver for Russian oil led to a windfall for Moscow, which in turn would be used to fund its war effort in Ukraine. Similar arguments were made against the waiver for oil from Iran, with whom the US was locked in battle in West Asia. India cashed in big on the waiver to buy Russian oil already on water. The country’s Russian oil imports surged through March and April so far, as its refiners moved quickly to secure supplies amid the global supply crunch. Although the West Asia crisis persists, the waiver is now gone, which could lead to some reduction in oil flows from Russia to India. Nonetheless, Russian oil is likely to dominate India’s oil import slate for the foreseeable future. How India capitalised on the Russian oil waiver

The sanctions waiver for Russian crude was first issued specifically for India in the first week of March and was later extended to all other countries. This waiver allowed countries to import Russian crude for a month—including from sanctioned entities and on board sanctioned tankers—that was loaded on or before 12:01 am Eastern Daylight Time, or 9:31 am India time, on March 12. A week later, a similar waiver was issued for Iranian oil loaded on tankers before March 20. While government sources maintained that India didn’t require a waiver from the US to buy oil from Russia, industry experts said that the waiver indeed helped.

That is because Indian refiners were able to take deliveries of Russian oil on sanctioned tankers and could deal directly with US-sanctioned Russian companies, like Rosneft and Lukoil. Moreover, it temporarily removed any friction between Washington and New Delhi over the latter’s hefty purchases of Moscow’s crude. For India, the Russian oil waiver allowed for a fast ramp-up of imports of Moscow’s oil amid the major disruption in supplies from West Asia. Indian refiners were also able to secure some cargoes of Iranian oil, marking the first deliveries of Tehran’s crude to India in nearly seven years, although the volumes were insignificant when compared to imports of Russian crude. Around 2.5–2.7 million barrels per day (bpd) of India’s crude imports—accounting for around half of the country’s total oil imports—have transited the Strait of Hormuz in recent months; the longer-term average is around 40%. Most of that supply is effectively offline due to the war.

While India was buying significant volumes of Russian crude even before the West Asia war began, the quantity had reduced notably over the past few months, evidently due to the US imposing sanctions on Russian oil majors Rosneft and Lukoil, and amid trade pact negotiations with Washington. The US made a meaningful reduction in India’s



Russian oil imports a prerequisite for scrapping its 25% additional penal tariff on New Delhi. In February, India had imported just over 1 million bpd of Russian crude, almost half of the 2025 peak of over 2 million bpd. Even with the significant reduction in volumes, Russia was India’s largest source of crude in February, accounting for about a fifth of its total oil imports. Then, with the war in West Asia raging and the sanctions waiver in place, India’s Russian oil imports nearly doubled to 2 million bpd in March, accounting for a whopping 44.4% of India’s total oil imports for the month even as imports from West Asia crashed, according to tanker data from commodity market analytics firm Kpler. In the first two weeks of April, India’s Russian oil imports averaged 1.6 million bpd.

With the waiver now gone, there could be some adjustments and downward pressure on oil imports from Russia, even as Moscow is likely to remain India’s largest source of crude oil in the coming months, according to industry insiders and experts. For India, which is the world’s third-largest consumer of crude oil and depends on imports to meet over 88% of its requirement, there aren’t any major alternatives to West Asian oil—in scale, quality, and pricing—apart from Russia in a market that continues to grapple with geopolitical uncertainty. “The adjustment is more likely to be operational rather than structural—with refiners leaning toward near-term loaded barrels and avoiding directly sanctioned entities, rather than stepping away from Russian crude altogether,” said Sumit Ritolia, manager, modelling & refining at Kpler.

“It’s difficult to see India materially stepping back from Russian barrels. The decision isn’t just about sanctions optics any more; it’s about supply security and economics in a much more fragile system. With continued geopolitical uncertainty and the situation around the Strait of Hormuz still far from normal (restricted transits, higher risk, slower flows), Middle East barrels are not as straightforward as they used to be. In that context, Russian crude continues to offer a clear advantage—both in terms of pricing and relatively stable logistics via non-SoH (Strait of Hormuz) routes,” Ritolia said. Some industry experts pointed out that while Indian refiners would not directly want to deal with sanctioned Russian oil suppliers—to avoid the risk of attracting secondary sanctions from the US—a number of previously little-known suppliers, intermediaries, and traders have gradually gained a foothold in Russian oil trade over the past few months, particularly after US sanctions on Rosneft and Lukoil took effect in November

Experts believe that with new entities in the market, Russian oil volumes reaching Indian ports can be maintained at significant levels, as long as the US doesn’t go after these new players or target them or Indian buyers with secondary sanctions. To be sure, Russian oil per se is not sanctioned by Washington; only a few Russian oil companies like Rosneft and Lukoil are. Also, over the years,

Russia has built a strong and agile network of tankers to transport its oil, helping its oil trade thrive despite a growing number of tankers being sanctioned by the US and other Western powers. This essentially means that Indian refiners can continue to buy Russian crude as long as no sanctioned entity, vessel, bank, or service provider is involved, and if the seller can provide documentary proof that the oil is not sourced from the sanctioned players. The threat of secondary sanctions from the US is the reason why countries like India, while politically opposed to unilateral economic sanctions, usually steer clear of countries and other entities sanctioned by Washington.

Veteran actor Ranjeet shares a glimpse of his workout at 84: ‘Toh hamesha fit rahuga...’



Actor Ranjeet, 84, recently shared a glimpse of working out with his daughter Divyanka Bedi, who happens to be his coach as well. “Ayeeee... Agar aisa hi workout karuga, to hamesha fit rahuga... tnx to my coach & daughter,” (If I keep working out like this, I will stay fit...) he shared on his Instagram. In the video, he can be seen doing a standing cable chest fly, where the handles are brought forward and together in front of the chest to work the pectoral muscles. “For individuals in their 80s, this exercise can be beneficial when done with proper care. It helps improve chest strength, which supports daily movements like pushing and getting up, and also enhances shoulder mobility by maintaining range of motion. Additionally, it contributes to better posture by preventing rounded shoulders and is relatively low-impact, making it more joint-friendly compared to heavier exercises,” said consultant dietitian and fitness expert Garima Goyal. However, safety is extremely important at this age. The exercise should always be done with very

‘How do I know if I had an early miscarriage or a period?’

A delayed cycle, heavier bleeding, or cramps that feel more intense than usual can make you pause and question what your body is going through. When something doesn’t feel like your usual period, the uncertainty can be hard to ignore. A similarly stressed netizen posted this query on Quora: How do I know if I had an early miscarriage or just a period? So we decided to dig deeper and find a medically rooted answer. According to Dr Pooja Chaudhary, Consultant – Obstetrics, Gynaecology, and Laparoscopic Surgery at Motherhood Hospitals, Greater Noida, the difficulty lies in how closely the symptoms can resemble one another in the early weeks. The confusion is natural; however, Dr Chaudhary points out that “an early miscarriage can feel like a heavier or more painful period,” often accompanied by “stronger cramps, larger clots, and sometimes tissue-like discharge.” These signs can make a cycle feel noticeably different, but they don’t always offer a clear answer on their own. Why it’s easy to mistake one for the other: miscarriage An early miscarriage may involve heavier bleeding than usual, larger clots or tissue, and stronger, more persistent cramping than a typical period (Image: Pexels) Part of the confusion also comes from timing. An early miscarriage can often be mistaken for a heavy or delayed period, especially before a pregnancy is confirmed. “In many cases, it is quite common, and many women may not even realize they were pregnant,” which is why the experience may simply pass as an unusual cycle.

Signs that may point towards a difference There are some patterns that may stand out. “An early miscarriage may involve heavier bleeding than usual, larger clots or tissue, and stronger, more persistent cramping than a typical



period,” Dr Chaudhary notes. However, since the symptoms can overlap, a pregnancy test or medical check is the “only reliable way” to confirm. Because of this overlap, paying attention to how your body feels is important—especially if symptoms are intense. Dr Chaudhary advises to seek medical attention if the bleeding is very heavy (soaking a pad every hour), severe pain, fever, or dizziness occurs, and also to consult a doctor “if you had a positive pregnancy test or if there is any doubt, to confirm and ensure there are no complications.”

A couple of blood tests can further help in getting a confirmed answer. You can also keep a track of your blood hCG levels, since “falling levels can indicate a miscarriage.” In addition, “an ultrasound scan is also used to see if the pregnancy is developing normally or if there are signs of pregnancy loss,” helping provide a clearer understanding of what the body has experienced.

Archana Puran Singh shares a glimpse of her ayurvedic journey: ‘Evening snack’



Archana Puran Singh, 63, who is currently at an Ayurvedic retreat in Bengaluru, gave a glimpse of her simple food, in which she can be seen indulging in rice-flour momos with soy filling. “Evening snack”, she wrote on her Instagram Stories. In another Instagram Story, she shared the morning view. Taking a leaf out of her wellness diary, we asked an expert about consuming rice flour at night. Dr Amreen Sheikh, chief dietitian at KIMS Hospitals, Thane, said rice flour snacks can be a light, easy-to-digest choice, especially in the evening when digestion naturally slows. “Compared to deep-fried or packaged snacks, they usually have fewer additives and are easier on the stomach. They provide quick energy since rice is a simple carbohydrate, but they may not keep someone full for long unless paired with some protein or healthy fats,” said Sheikh.

Why snakes eat their own kind

Cannibalism might sound shocking—almost like something out of a horror story. But in the world of snakes, it’s not as rare or unusual as we imagine. In fact, scientists are now finding that snakes have evolved to eat their own kind multiple times across history.

In fact, according to a study published on Nov. 2, 2025, in the journal Biological Reviews, which evaluated around 500 documented cases across more than 200 species, suggests that this behaviour has evolved at least 11 times independently. That’s not random, but a pattern, with strong survival reasons. Snakes are opportunistic feeders. They don’t always stick to one type of prey. If food is scarce and another snake is available, they may take that chance. In difficult conditions, this can provide a high-energy meal while also reducing competition. snake The research team gathered 503 cases of reported cannibalism across 207 snake species (Image: Unsplash)

Researchers believe this behaviour is often triggered by lack of food, environmental stress and competition for resources. In such situations, eating another snake isn’t unusual but an efficient diet plan. “For us humans, we don’t think of cannibalism as something common — it’s some-

thing weird and disgusting,” Bruna Falcão, lead author of the study and a graduate student in biology at the University of São Paulo, told Live Science. “But for snakes, it’s good for them; it’s good for their ecological fitness. ... It’s strategic,” he further added. It’s more common than expected Cannibalism has been observed across multiple snake families, including Colubridae, Viperidae and Elapidae. Some cases happen in the wild, while others are seen in captivity, where stress, space limitations, or lack of food may increase the chances of such behaviour. There have even been rare instances of male snakes eating females outside the mating season—something that seems unusual, but may still be linked to survival pressures.

However, not every snake can eat another snake. One key factor is their ability to stretch their jaws wide enough to consume large prey. Many of the species that show cannibalism are also generalist feeders, meaning they can adapt their diet based on what’s available. This flexibility makes it easier for them to turn to cannibalism when needed. Isn’t it strange and fascinating how survival pushes even one of the most dangerous creatures on the planet to resort to extreme measures for survival?

Classical Test bowlers and a composed innings from Washington Sundar see GT over the line against resilient Punjab



A chase of slow-burning thrills and twists met its befitting end when Washington Sundar swirled Marcus Stoinis's penultimate ball of the final over on one knee over fine leg. The pursuit of 163 wasn't to be this suspenseful, but for Punjab Kings' persistence and panic setting into the Gujarat Titans' middle-order.

It was perhaps the most important stroke of Washington's start-stop T20 career, a stroke he might look back on and say it saved his shortest-format career. The shot and the knock (40 off 23 not out) had redemptive powers. Almost everyone, including himself, seemed to be confused about his role. He has offered clarity. He could be a middle-order finisher with icy veins and calm manners to guide a tricky chase. Maybe not for wild-goose chases, but ones that require hearts that don't flutter in crisis. For, whenever Gujarat Titans seemed to tighten their grip over the contest, Punjab would strike. After Shubman Gill's exit for 16, Sai Sudharsan and Jos Buttler, with a 51-run stand, allayed Titans' fears of a power-play wobble. But Buttler's exit, with the total score on 69, triggered panic. Nishant Sindhu played the nerves of a debutant and eked out only 15 runs off 11 balls. But Sudharsan offered peace and calm. Post timeout, with the requirement shooting to an uncomfortable 61 off 42 balls, Sudharsan slashed the equation by pummelling Yuzvendra Chahal for a couple of fours. Sundar's lofted-driven four of Vijayakumar Vyshak reduced the gap further, but in tune with the cat-and-mouse nature of the chase, Vyshak ejected Sudharsan with a shortish ball, exposing his locked shoulders that hinder the uncluttered flow of the bat.

A four-run over from Xavier Bartlett put the match on a knife-edge, only for Washington to reclaim Titans' supremacy with back-to-back fours off Marco Jansen. But Punjab kept fighting back; Jansen's short-ball removed Rahul Tewatia, the Impact Sub. Suddenly, the match was on an even keel, with 17 wanted from 12 balls. But Punjab's best bowlers had exhausted their quota. Jason Holder and Washington knew this, and without fuss gathered five runs off the

first four balls. Then ambition seized Holder, he aimed Arshdeep Singh over mid-wicket, but mistimed the shot to Cooper Connolly. But Washington kept more twists away. The skid and swerve of Mohammed Siraj; the pace and spunk of Kagiso Rabada; the bounce and late deviations of Jason Holder—Gujarat Titans have torn the staple blueprints of franchises and have rattled batsmen through the orthodox paths of unleashing classical Test bowlers and their frightening red-ball lengths. All they need is a smidgeon of assistance from the surface. The Motera surface usually conspires seam movement with the new ball. Siraj obliged gleefully. But before his fuller length made batsmen flail this way and that, he deceived Priyansh Arya with a clever deployment of the hard-length ball. He hustled him into a top-edged pull that evaded the rushing Buttler, but the next ball, on a similar length, pitched wider and had him flaying. An ounce of movement away from his and the left-hander feebly slices the ball to the lunging hands of Nishant Sindhu at backward point. His next ball was designed in fast bowling heaven. The good-length ball to the left-handed Cooper Connolly seemed to slant away, before it came back a wee bit to kiss the inside edge of his bat. He had both Shreyas Iyer and Prabhsimran Singh stab unconvincingly outside the off-stump, but they survived his seam onslaught. Not for too long, though.

The swing from the surface seemed to wane. Shreyas and Prabhsimran crunched themselves to four-splashed stars. But with the second ball of the last powerplay over, Rabada stung with his heavy ball. The hard-length ball crashed into Prabhsimran's bat, which was halfway through a cover drive. But the ball trembled off the splice to the cover fielder. The speed gun read 152 kph. A similar heat-seeker nailed Suryansh Shedge, the top scorer with a punchy 57. Shedge, fresh from plundering 26 runs from a Manav Suthar over, tried to glide his short ball through third man, but for the extra bounce to defeat his purpose and edge to the keeper. Punjab had Shedge, Marcus Stoinis and their 73-run stand for a rearguard. They united when they were quivering at 47 for 5 after Holder had removed Nehal Wadhwa and figurehead Iyer. The latter chopped on, a typical Holder dismissal. Batsmen often gauge the bounce from an almost seven-feet-high release. But they discount his subtle, late seam movement. The ball came in a tad, making it too close for Iyer to run it down the third man. He undid Wadhwa with a late away-nibbler. The triumvirate made for a glorious sight, each different from the other, each with common as well as unique traits. Good things, they say, don't often come in three. But for the Titans, it does. Brief Scores: Punjab Kings 163/9 in 20 overs (Shedge 57, Stoinis 40; Holder 4/24) lost to GT 167/6 in 19.5 overs (Sudharsan 57, Washington 40 not out; Arshdeep 2/24) by four wickets.

Jason Holder reveals desire for return to Test cricket amid heroics in IPL: ‘Haven’t closed that chapter...’



Gujarat Titans took their time getting Jason Holder in as a regular in their playing eleven this season and the senior all-rounder has been pivotal to their recent upturn in fortunes. Holder took four wickets for 24 runs on Sunday as GT beat table-toppers Punjab Kings and thus managed their third consecutive win. Before that, he took two wickets for 29 runs against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, in addition to taking a slew of important catches. Holder's success on Sunday in particular could be in part attributed to him hitting the good length consistently despite batters looking to hit every ball out of the park, something that is a byproduct of a long and successful career in Test cricket.

Holder, who captained West Indies in 37 Test matches between 2015 and 2020, and was rated as the best all-

rounder in the world at various points during this period, said after the game on Sunday that he still hasn't closed the doors on the format. "Fair to say that, last year and a half I have only played T20 cricket, haven't played Test cricket. I would love to still play some Test-match cricket," he said. "I haven't yet closed that chapter." Holder's last Test match came in August 2024 against South Africa. He last played first class cricket in a domestic game for Barbados in March 2025. In 69 Tests, Holder has taken 162 wickets thus far and scored 3073 runs at an average of 29.83 with three centuries and 14 half-centuries. He has also played 138 ODIs in which he took 159 wickets and scored 2237 runs. T20Is remain the only format in which Holder still plays in every game that the West Indies plays and he has taken 108 wickets in 96 matches. Holder has also scored 888 T20I runs at a strike rate of 140.06.

In the four matches that Holder has played thus far in the 2026 IPL, he has taken seven wickets and boasts an economy of 6.94. He is yet to show his full range of skills as a batter though, having scored 40 runs in three innings at a strike rate of 148.14. Holder said that he was disappointed that he couldn't finish the last two matches for GT with the bat. "I am probably a little disappointed that I didn't finish the last two games," Holder said. "But I am still in a good frame of mind. That's the most important thing for me. Just keeping a fresh mind, staying positive, understanding my role, and just trying to execute when called upon. Just try to make an impact and execute as well as I can under pressure."



actly how you wanted once you get out there. You try everything, but things just don't go your favor," Babar said. In those moments, what you do is try to take two steps back and look at yourself. You analyze your mistakes and try to rectify them. That's what I did. During that phase, the people closest to me provided immense support. You really need that support during such times. My family and close friends motivated me and kept talking to me about my 'best abilities.' I also tried to repeat the things I do best. I spoke with my coaches, had discussions, and worked on my game. Look, things move like a rollercoaster; life is never a stable, flat line. You learn, you do well, and you do poorly. That's just part of life." Reflecting on the T20 World Cup and the shift to PSL, Babar said: "Look, when we came back from the World Cup, I hadn't performed according to expectations. As a player, you feel a bit down. But again, there was very little time—I only had about ten days.

Why RCB, Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings at the IPL make a difference to merch vendors



Outside the Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi, the evening builds gradually. It's April 27 and chants of "RCB, RCB" rise from groups of supporters as they spill out of autos and the Delhi Metro. Between the sea of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) and Delhi Capitals jerseys at entry gates, along the pavement is a parallel economy. There are blue plastic sheets spread on the concrete path, jerseys and caps in neat piles while some are draped on shoulders as a waking advertisement. It's a market that depends on these ardent, exuberant crowds, who have paid anywhere from Rs 1,400 to Rs over 2,500 for a ticket, but their margins as merch vendors are way narrower.

For 28-year-old Maahi, who has been selling jerseys for nearly 10 years, the cricket leagues remain the most reliable period of business in the year. "If it's a good match, I can earn Rs 2,000-3,000," she says, arranging a stack of RCB jerseys. Originally from Bihar, she moved to Delhi after her marriage about 12 years ago. "My husband does not get paid regularly. So this helps run the house" she says, "There is a lot of hard work, but not much profit." She sources the jerseys from Mumbai at around Rs 160 a piece and sells them for Rs 200 to Rs 250, depending on demand. On days when popular teams such as RCB, Mumbai Indians, Chennai Super Kings play, she is able to sell about 40 to 50 pieces. Unsold stock, she says, is returned to the supplier in Mumbai. A few metres away, another vendor, Imran 46, travels from Ghaziabad during the season, says the earnings are not guaranteed. "Some days we sell 20, some days 50. It depends on the match and the crowd. Weekend matches

The man Arsenal must stop: What a new documentary reveals about Diego Simeone



The firm, fiery eyes of Diego Simeone welled up towards the end of the first episode of a documentary on him, Living Match by Match. He was recounting a chat with his four-year-old daughter. "I told her football was my life, and she corrected, 'No, we are your life.'" The eyes welling up again, he nodded and said: "But she was right." The Amazon Prime documentary deconstructs the raging man in pitch-black coat prancing up and down the Atletico Madrid touchline and separates the man from the manager, stitching together his more humane, likeable side, his fears and fragilities. He smiles more often than most during games; he cries often too, especially when paying tribute to his idol Diego Maradona. He wears turtle-necks and round-necks of more coloured textures.

There are warm nuggets into his managing style. When his team was wobbling in the title race in the 2020-21 season, he hung childhood photos of every player next to their shelf in the locker room. The players were surprised. He told them: "Do you remember your childhood dream?" He made another morning ritual — his players would not say "good morning" to each other, but greet one another with "We're going to be champions." They got the point, toughened up and delivered him the title in a suspenseful climax.

One of Simeone's favourite players, Fernando Torres, explains how he motivates his charges. "Cholo knows how to motivate people," the forward said. "There are team talks before games when he has to stop as he is overcome with emotion. It's not a pose, it's real. He feels it. And if you see your coach feels it, you follow him." Every Simeone team bears certain common traits — grit, fight and heart. Sometimes it boils to extremes that his tactics could be misconstrued as cynical and provocative, as any Arsenal supporter who watched the first leg would readily vouch. The Atletico codes are shaped as much by circumstance as by the characteristics of their manager. Atletico were never as rich or

are better." He says, indicating to the pile of unsold jerseys because of a weekday match. "People come, ask the price and leave. Many already have branded jerseys or jerseys bought earlier when they arrive," he says.

A vendor who sells team jerseys for anything between Rs 200 to Rs 250. (Photo: Navya Dua) A vendor who sells team jerseys for anything between Rs 200 to Rs 250. For 24-year-old Rohit Kumar, the work is temporary. A resident of Seelampur, he works at a garment shop the rest of the year, stitching and packing clothes. "During the IPL, I take time out to come here," he says, "From this we can earn money faster but this job is not steady. After the matches, I go back to my regular work. You cannot depend on this for the whole year." The vendors arrive early morning to secure a spot near the stadium, but where they sit is often negotiated. "We are not allowed on the main road. The police ask us to move to the side because of the crowd," says Maahi. Most vendors operate without formal licences, relying on the turnout outside the stadium rather than access to licensed selling spaces, which are often inside the stadium. They rely usually on last-minute buyers — those who arrive without team colours but want to be a part of the crowd. "Some people don't want to spend too much. They just want something for the match," says Imran. As the evening goes by, the difference between those entering the stadium and those waiting outside become sharper. Groups of fans, many already in branded jerseys, walk past without stopping, while others pause briefly, bargain and move on. Nineteen-year-old college student Aditya Sharma, who is attending the match with his friends, says he chose to buy the jersey here, outside the stadium. "Branded ones are too expensive. Here you can get something for Rs 200-300. It's good for one match," he says. For vendors, the sale is less about impulse, more about survival. "We sit the whole day for this," says Imran. "If the match is not between popular teams or if the crowd is less, then we get nothing." By the time the match begins and the crowd lessens, the pace slows down. Some vendors pack up early, while others wait for the post-match rush. The outcome, they say, is rarely certain. "Some days it works, some days it doesn't," says Maahi, folding unsold jerseys back into her bag as the first cheers from inside the stadium start rising. "But, we come with hope for every match," she says.

powerful as the El Clasico rivals, frequently forced to rebuild after losing their finest players to direct rivals — so much so that only two players, captain Koke and Antoine Griezmann, remain from the team that lost to Real Madrid on penalties in the 2016 Champions League final. Simeone did not complain. He just kept building teams that fought and challenged the duopoly of Real Madrid and Barcelona in La Liga, even when crowns didn't follow. The latest iteration is perhaps his most dynamic, finally shedding the stereotype of cynicism.

Few teams are defined by their manager as much as Atletico is. It was always Lionel Messi's Barcelona, it is already Lamine Yamal's now; it was always Cristiano Ronaldo's Real Madrid, it could soon be Kylian Mbappe's. But Atletico was always Simeone's. A tough-tackling defensive midfielder, he belonged to the pragmatic school of Carlos Bilardo and not his antithesis, César Luis Menotti, the romantic. He snarled, sniggered, exaggerated fouls — rewatch the David Beckham sending-off in the 1998 World Cup — and stretched the laws to their limits without ever breaking them. The Brazil striker Ronaldo says in the documentary: "Cholo was a master at kicking you, but not getting caught and sent off." He once left a stud-shaped hole in the thigh of Atletico Bilbao's star midfielder Julen Guerrero. Several times in the documentary he insists he was creative too, pointing to a century of goals scored for his country and seven clubs. The one that best embodies his spirit came against Colombia in the 1993 Copa America. The goalkeeper and defender are converging towards the ball, but a galloping Simeone intervenes. The goalkeeper trips him, but he bounces back onto his feet and fizzes an angled shot into the empty net from an awkward angle. In a group of artists and mavericks, he was the artisan that let their artistry shine. So chaotically creative were some of the sides that teammates would drift from pre-game tactics and assume wanton positions on the field. Simeone filled in the spaces they vacated, fiercely guarding against quick counters. "If there is one thing I am, it is very hard-headed. If I want something, I go after it," he wrote in Coach's Voice. But the pragmatic man in dark suits has a bright, vivid dream — to win the Champions League. It eluded him in his playing days, once crushingly in the 119th minute of a quarterfinal against Ajax. Twice he has endured the pain as manager, both times to bitter rivals Real Madrid — once through a stoppage-time equaliser, the second in a shootout. "I don't feel it as an obsession, that would be the wrong path," he said. "I see it as a dream, which is something positive. And we all share that dream." Between him and that dream is Arsenal at the Emirates, managed by a man who wears black himself. Emotions will tumble, tempers will rage. But whether Atletico loses or wins, Simeone will come back — because "football is life."

Pujara lauds Holder's all-round impact, backs MI to respond against LSG

Ahmedabad: Former India batter Cheteshwar Pujara praised Jason Holder's all-round impact in Gujarat Titans' victory over Punjab Kings, noting that the experienced player has elevated the team. "The way Jason Holder has made an impact on this team, both with the bat and the ball, has been impressive. He contributed to key wickets, including the important dismissal of Shreyas Iyer," he told JioStar, pointing to the all-rounder's decisive role in crucial phases of the game.

Pujara further stressed how Holder's versatility has strengthened the team combination and highlighted the value of having a multi-dimensional player in the XI. "Overall, his presence has taken the team to a different level. GT had some concerns around the middle-order bting, and his flexibility to bat at No. 5, 6, or 7 adds great balance to the side," he added. Shifting focus to Kolkata Knight Riders' outing against Sunrisers Hyderabad that was played earlier on Sunday, Pujara praised young batter Angkrish Raghuvanshi for anchoring the chase with maturity beyond his years. "It

was a clinical performance overall. While others contributed, Angkrish played a crucial role in the chase. His 59 off 47 balls provided the stability that was needed," he noted. Emphasising the youngster's temperament, Pujara said, "He showed great calmness and composure, playing the role of an anchor perfectly. With consistent contributions like this, KKR look to be in good form." Looking ahead to the clash between Mumbai Indians and Lucknow Super Giants on Monday, Pujara framed the contest as one driven by pride and the urge to respond. "Mumbai Indians have faced several challenges this season, and there is a strong need for a comeback, for the fans, the team's pride, and for the players who have worked hard," he said. He also acknowledged the pressures that come with expectations as he remarked, "When you are such a big team, expectations are high, and they will be keen to respond. At the same time, Lucknow Super Giants have also had their share of issues. So, both teams will be playing for pride, regardless of their playoff chances."

