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Government Whip Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah unveils statue of Dr. Chukka Sattaiah



“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau..Indian Chronicle...May 3):- The statue of the late folk artist Dr. Chukka Sattaiah, the father of Oggukala, was inaugurated in Jangaon district headquarters with Telangana State Government Whip Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah present as the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, Beerla Ayilaiah said that he is very happy to install this statue for his efforts in spreading Telangana culture and Oggukala worldwide. He feels very fortunate to unveil the statue of Chukka Sattaiah, a great artist who has transformed Telangana folk art forms into Oggukala and given more than 1200 performances.

Surprise Vehicle Checks Conducted at Gorre Kunta Cross Road

“Geesugonda, May 3 (Indian Chronicle) : As part of efforts to curb crime and prevent unlawful activities within the limits of Geesugonda Police Station, surprise vehicle inspections were carried out on Sunday at Gorre Kunta Cross Road on the Warangal–Narsampet main road under the supervision of CI D. Vishweshwar. SI Kumar and police staff participated in the checking drive.“During the inspections, action was taken against motorists who failed to carry proper vehicle documents and those found violating traffic rules. Fines were imposed on the offenders.“The Geesugonda police appealed to vehicle users to strictly follow traffic regulations and carry all necessary vehicle documents while driving. CI D.Vishweshwar warned that stringent action would be taken against those found violating the law.

Edge-Of-Seat Wait For Results Across 5 States

With the Assembly election results expected on Monday, palpable tension and nervous anticipation have gripped key poll-bound states, as voters in West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Puducherry await the verdict. After a high-decibel campaign, party headquarters, workers, leaders and candidates are on edge, waiting for outcomes that could decisively reshape regional power equations.

All eyes are on West Bengal, where the fiercely fought election was branded by the Opposition as a battle between the “Indian State and the Trinamul Congress”. In an unprecedented show of force, nearly three lakh personnel from the Central armed police forces (CAPF) were deployed along with an “encounter specialist” from Uttar Pradesh. Backed by the full machinery of the Election Commission, the campaign also witnessed a relentless influx of Union ministers and BJP chief ministers, in addition to a massive inflow of cadres from saffron-ruled states.

Not only did Prime Minister Narendra Modi address nearly 14 rallies and multiple roadshows, he also made an effort to woo Bengali voters with carefully choreographed boat ride in the Hooghly, a token kick in a football game and a bite of jhalmuri.

If these were not enough, home minister Amit Shah camped in West Bengal for several days before the final phase of polling on April 29. The Opposition cried foul as the Enforcement Directorate intensified raids across West Bengal during the elections. The ED conducted multiple searches in Kolkata, Siliguri, Burdwan and Habra, primarily targeting TMC-linked functionaries and candidates.

In another first, the EC ordered a repoll in 15 booths following reports of electoral malpractices. To top it all, West Bengal witnessed record high historic voter turn-outs since Independence. The overall turnout across two phases was approximately 93 per cent. On April 29, four exit polls (Matrize, P-Marq, Praja Poll and Poll Diary) predicted a big win for the BJP in West Bengal, while two others (People's Pulse, Janmat) gave a clear edge to chief minister Mamata Banerjee and her TMC. Another exit poll (JVC) predicted a close contest between the TMC and the BJP.

On Saturday, however, the TMC filed a complaint with the Election Commission alleging unauthorised sorting of postal ballot covers at an EVM strongroom in Kolkata. TMC workers camping outside the Khudiram Anushilan Kendra alleged that eight trunks of postal ballots were brought in at 4 am and taken to a room with no CCTV coverage. Late on Saturday evening, in another unprec-



edented move, the EC announced repolling in all 285 polling stations in the Falta Assembly constituency, reportedly a TMC bastion.

With the exit polls offering mixed signals and close contests predicted in several constituencies, Tamil Nadu awaits a verdict that could either reinforce continuity or mark the beginning of a crucial political realignment. While most surveys indicate that the DMK-led alliance may retain power, though with a smaller margin, the biggest surprise appears to be the emergence of actor-turned-politician Vijay's TVK.

While some polls predicted 10-25 seats for TVK, others indicated 30-40 seats, making it a major player in the state. Axis My India, who refrained from making any predictions for the West Bengal elections, however, placed TVK at nearly 100-120 seats, elevating it to the status of a kingmaker. If predictions for the TVK hold, Tamil Nadu will witness a shift from its bipolar politics to the rise of another regional force.

While the ruling DMK has been given an edge with 120-150 seats, the AIADMK-BJP alliance has been confined to 60-100 seats.

As for Kerala, the state could become the graveyard for the Left, if the Congress-led UDF wins. If the Left Demo-

cratic Front (LDF) loses Kerala, the Left parties led by CPM will be out of power all across the country. After losing West Bengal to the Trinamul Congress in 2011, the Left lost Tripura to the BJP in 2018. Kerala is the Marxists' last bastion. If Kerala falls, the Left risks political irrelevance across the country. Sensing a potential UDF return in Kerala, Rahul Gandhi stepped up his campaign addressing nearly 10 rallies — far more than his six engagements in Tamil Nadu and just three in West Bengal.

In Assam, the BJP led by chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma is all set to return to power, while the Congress seems to be struggling to keep pace. The Assam campaign saw a bitter, high-stakes battle between the Congress and the BJP replete with personal attacks and charged rhetoric over identity, development and citizenship. In the high-pitched campaign, a section of civil groups and the Opposition also accused Assam CM Sarma of running a “communally charged and divisive campaign”.

If the Congress loses Assam for the third consecutive time, it could sound alarm bells for the party's face in the state, Gaurav Gogoi. There are already murmurs within the organisation, questioning his leadership in the state. In addition, the Congress risks near-total decimation in the state as a third consecutive defeat will demotivate its workers and leaders.



Nepal objects to Kailash Mansarovar Yatra via Lipulekh; MEA says territorial claim untenable

Nepal has formally objected to the proposed Kailash Mansarovar Yatra via Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand and lodged a diplomatic protest to both India and China. It claimed that Lipulekh and its surrounding areas were its territory.

Rejecting Nepal's contention, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Sunday night said it was unilateral “artificial enlargement” of territorial claim and was “untenable”.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, “As regards territorial claims, India has consistently maintained that such claims are neither justified nor based on historical facts and evidence. Such unilateral artificial enlargement of territorial claims is untenable.”

In its protest, the Nepal Foreign Ministry had said, “The government remains clear and firm that as per the 1816 Sugauli Treaty, Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh and Kalapani are integral parts of Nepal.”

Nepal also signalled that it remained open to a diplomatic resolution. “In keeping with the spirit of close and friendly relations, Nepal remains committed to resolving the boundary issue through historical facts, evidence and diplomatic dialogue,” it said.

The MEA said, with regards to claims related to border issues made by the Nepal Foreign Ministry in the context of the Manasarovar yatra, India's position in this regard had been consistent and clear. “Lipulekh Pass has been a long-standing route for the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra since 1954 and the yatra through this route has been going on for decades. This is not a new development.”

Review Meeting on SIR Held Under the Leadership of Malkajgiri Parliament Sangathan Srujan Abhiyan In-charge and Rajya Sabha Member Anil Kumar Yadav

““UPPAL, MAY03(INDIAN CHRONICAL):“A large-scale review meeting was conducted at Gandhi Bhavan under the leadership of former MP Anil Kumar Yadav, with in-charges and coordinators of the Malkajgiri Parliamentary constituency in attendance.“During the meeting, an in-depth discussion was held on the “Special Intensive Revision (SIR)” program undertaken by the Election Commission. Clear directions were given regarding future action plans.“Speaking on the occasion, Anil Kumar Yadav emphasized that the voter list revision process is a crucial factor influencing election results. He instructed that strict monitoring should be ensured at the booth level to prevent duplicate and bogus votes in the Malkajgiri Corporation area.“He further stated that efforts should be intensified at the grassroots level to ensure that every eligible voter is included in the electoral rolls. This includes speeding up the process of new voter registrations, corrections, and updates. Special focus should be given to youth, women, and newly eligible voters to ensure their enrollment.“He advised party workers to conduct door-to-door awareness campaigns to educate voters. To strengthen the booth-level system, he announced that the appointment of “Booth Level Assistants (BLAs)” would be completed soon, followed by special training for them.“He clarified that only when every party worker takes responsibility seriously will a strong foundation be laid for victory in future elections. He also stressed the need to complete the election process of division presidents.“Among those present at the meeting were Madhuyashki, District President Vajresh Yadav, Uppal Constituency Congress In-charge Parameshwar Reddy, Uppal Constituency Coordinator Shashikala Yadav, Bandi Ramesh, Kolan Hanumanth Reddy, and others.



Major fire in Nizamabad, 12 shops gutted

A major fire broke out at Kamareddy's old bus stand early Sunday around 2 a.m., gutting 12 shops and causing property loss estimated at Rs.50 lakh. No injuries were reported, and authorities are investigating the cause of the incident

Nizamabad: In a major fire that erupted at old bus stand in Kamareddy, nearly 12 shops were gutted in the wee hours of Sunday. Officials claimed none were injured in the mishap but severe property loss was reported.

The fire erupted at around 2 a.m. and the 12 shops were engulfed in flames. Preliminary estimates have put the loss at Rs.50 lakh in the incident, according to reports.

Soon after learning about the incident, the fire tenders reached the spot. The fire was doused immediately and measures were initiated to ensure it did not spread to neighbouring shops.

The exact cause of the fire is yet to be determined. Police are investigating the reasons as to whether it was accidental or any suspicious foul play, reports added.

EDITORIAL Indian Chronicle

War with no end in sight

United States President Donald Trump appears clueless about how to end the Iran war he started, along with Israel, over two months ago. History is replete with instances of global powers starting wars that would soon spin out of their control, leaving them stranded in the midst of rubble and immense human suffering. And, lessons are never learned. As the rest of the world waits with bated breath for the pointless war to end, the situation on the ground is still in a state of flux. While the fragile ceasefire holds for now, the Strait of Hormuz — the lifeline of global oil supplies — remains closed. Backchannel talks, mediated through third parties like Pakistan, are no longer producing even incremental progress. By refusing to engage in prolonged, mediated discussions, the US is effectively forcing Iran into a narrower choice — either initiate direct contact on American terms or absorb the mounting pressure of isolation and military encirclement. The war began on February 28, when US and Israeli forces launched what the Pentagon code-named Operation Epic Fury, a blitzkrieg targeting Iranian military installations, nuclear infrastructure, and killing Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in the initial stage of the campaign. What the Trump administration presented as a decisive blow against the world's foremost state sponsor of terror has evolved, two months on, into something more familiar from American military history: a grinding, costly stalemate in which the opening victories are not translated into strategic resolution.

The ongoing conflict has already cost the American taxpayer over \$25 billion and is still counting, with no exit in sight. Iran's proposal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz — in exchange for lifting the American naval blockade but without nuclear concessions — was promptly rejected by the Trump administration. Pakistan-mediated talks in Islamabad collapsed after Trump abruptly cancelled the planned trip of his envoys. This episode is a reminder of the limits of middle-power diplomacy when major actors lose interest in the process itself. Facilitation is only as effective as the willingness of principals to engage. Also, the internal political dynamics in Tehran — often opaque — have further complicated the situation. There is a significant tension within the Iranian government itself, one that Western diplomats have watched with careful attention. President Masoud Pezeshkian, the reformist elected last year on promises of re-engagement with the world, has struck a markedly different note from the new supreme leader. Tehran is asking for reparations. It is asking for formal international guarantees against future military action. It is offering to reopen Hormuz in exchange for an end to the blockade, but it is emphatically not offering to surrender its nuclear ambitions — the one thing Washington insists upon. This war has demonstrated a key paradox of modern power: overwhelming military and economic force does not guarantee strategic success. Endurance, not firepower, may prove to be the decisive variable.

Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Participates in Idol Installation Ceremony at Sri Sri Sri Koti Maisamma Temple

“MEDCHAL –MALKAJGIRI, May 3 (INDIAN CHRONICAL):“Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy attended as the chief guest at the special idol installation ceremony at Sri Sri Sri Koti Maisamma Temple, located in the Old Village area of Nagaram. “On this occasion, he participated in the temple rituals and offered prayers to the presiding deity. Speaking during the event, the MLA stated that the development of temples in rural areas helps strengthen the spiritual environment. He assured his support for the development of the Maisamma temple, which stands as a symbol of devotees' faith. “Later, he



appreciated the efforts of village elders and temple committee members for their dedication towards the temple's development. The event witnessed the participation of local public representatives, temple committee members, and a large number of devotees.

World Press Freedom Day Celebrated Grandly Under Uppal Press Club (P&E) – Journalists Felicitated



“UPPAL , MAY 03(INDIAN CHRONICAL):“World Press Freedom Day was celebrated grandly on Sunday under the auspices of the Uppal Press Club (Print and Electronic). The event was held at Nova Blanket Hall in Chilkanagar under the ??????ship of Press Club President Vaddepalli Kishore. “BRS former state secretary, Telangana movement activist, and Uppal constituency BC JAC leader Nerdham Bhaskar Goud, along with senior BRS leader from Chilkanagar Jalli Mohan, attended the event as chief guests. “On this occasion, local journalists

were honored with shawls, mementos, and diaries, and were extended greetings on World Press Freedom Day. Speaking at the event, chief guests Bhaskar Goud and Jalli Mohan emphasized that the role of media is extremely crucial in a democratic system. They appreciated the continuous efforts of journalists in uncovering truths and delivering them to the public, stating that their services are invaluable to society. They also stressed the importance of safeguarding media freedom. “Several journalists who



have made notable contributions in various fields were felicitated. Some senior journalists shared their experiences and advised young journalists to work with honesty and responsibility. “The program was attended by General Secretary Anand Narasimha Reddy, Working Presidents Payyavula Santosh and Keerthi Santosh, Deputy General Secretary Nagaraju, and other club members.

Election of New Executive Committee of Uppal Jai Bhim Association

“UPPAL , MAY 03(INDIAN CHRONICAL):“The new executive committee of the Uppal Jai Bhim Association was unanimously elected on Sunday. “Dr. B. Sattalah and B. Ramaiah were appointed as Honorary Advisors. Erra



Balaraju was elected as Honorary President, while Rapolu Ravinder was chosen as President. “Jonnappalli Kranthi Raju and V. Venkatesh Maharaj were elected as Vice Presidents. Maska Dhan Raju was appointed as General Secretary, and Aska Suresh as Joint Secretary. “D. Sai Prasad and Boppana Sridhar were elected as Executive Secretaries. Okkasu Balanarsimha, Maska Sudhakar, Gundu Raju, and Misala Jangaiah were selected as Executive Committee Members.

Kuchipudi Dance Performance Enthralls at Uppal Mini Shilparamam

“UPPAL, APRIL 3 (INDIAN CHRONICAL):“As part of the weekend cultural programs at Uppal Mini Shilparamam, a Kuchipudi dance performance captivated the audience on Sunday evening. The event was presented by the disciples of Sri Sai Dev Kuchipudi Academy under the guidance of gurus Basava Lavanya



and Usha Kiran. “The performance featured a rich repertoire including opening slokas, Ranga Puja, Ganesh Kautham, Raja Rajeswari Ashtakam, Jatiswaram, Muddugare Yashoda, Mandooka Shabdam, Paluke Bangaramayena, Krishna Leelalu, Dhanashree Thillana, Dashavatara Shabdam, and Mangalam. “The artists who performed and impressed the audience included Vaishnavi, Poojitha, Dwaraka, Adhya, Ashritha, Deepashika, Aaruhi, Lakshmi, Komalika, Mohana, Madhurima, Tanvika, Sriveda, Trayati, and Jayashree. “[5:54 PM, 5/3/2026] +91 93911 09207: End

Providing quality healthcare to people is the government's primary objective MP Dr. Kadiyam Kavya inaugurates Urban Primary Health Centre in 60th Division

““Hanamkonda, May 3 (Indian Chronicle) : Dr.Kadiyam Kavya, Member of Parliament from Warangal, stated that delivering quality healthcare services to the public is the foremost priority of the Congress government. On Sunday, she, along with local MLA Naini Rajender Reddy, inaugurated the Urban Primary Health Centre constructed at an estimated cost of ₹1.40 crore in Vadde Palli 60th Division. “Speaking on the occasion, the MP said that ensuring accessible and quality medical services to urban residents remains a key focus of the government. She noted that the establishment of this centre in Vadde Palli would greatly benefit the local population. In addition to general medical services, the facility will provide maternal and child healthcare, immunization, and diagnostic services under one roof, reducing the need for residents to travel long distances for treatment. “She further stated that the government is committed to strengthening medical infrastructure in every ward, prioritizing public health. Special measures are being taken to ensure free medical services for the poor and middle-class sections. She urged the pub-



lic to make effective use of the services offered at the centre and take proactive steps toward safeguarding their health. “Mayor Gundu Sudharani, local Corporator Dasyam Abhinav Bhaskar, DMHO Dr. Allem Appaiah, other public representatives, officials, medical staff, and local residents participated in the programme.

Celebrate the May Day week-ending public meeting to be held in Bhuvanagiri on May 7:- CITU District President and Secretary Komatireddy Chandra Reddy, Kalluri Malleshham call

““(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau..Indian Chronicle...May 3):- CITU District President and Secretary Komatireddy Chandra Reddy, Kalluri Malleshham called on the workers to participate in large numbers in the May Day week-ending public meeting to be held at Prince Square, Bhuvanagiri district center on May 7 and celebrate it. The public meeting pamphlet was released at the CITU district office in Bhuvanagiri district center on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, they said “The BJP government at the center has repealed the old labor laws for the benefit of corporate powers and brought 4 labor codes that enslave workers, and warned that they will organize protests in various forms until they are repealed. They criticized the government for conspiring to implement the 12-hour work system through labor codes, trampling on the 8-hour work day achieved with the sacrifices of the Chicago martyrs in 1886. The Telangana government has also passed a bill in favor of increasing working hours. He said that bringing 282 is an injustice to the workers. May Day week celebrations are being held across the district from May 1 to 7 to intensify the fight against the government for the rights of workers by eliminating permanent jobs and making them job insecure in the name of fixed-term employment. On the occasion of the conclusion of this week, a huge public meeting



will be held at Prince Square in Bhuvanagiri on May 7th at 10 am. CITU State General Secretary Paladugu Bhaskar and State Vice President J. Mallikarjun will attend this meeting as the chief guests. They asked all the workers, members of affiliated unions and democrats in the district to come and make this meeting a success. “CITU District Vice President Dasari Pandu, leaders Srinivas and others participated in this program.

Development of People Is the Primary Goal - MLA 'Nayini' Works Worth Rs 3.50 Crore Launched in a Single Day in 60th Division



““Hanamkonda, May 3 (Indian Chronicle) : Stating that real politics lies in bringing visible change to people's lives, Warangal West MLA Nayani Rajender Reddy said that development which people can see and experience is permanent, while politics is only temporary. “On Sunday, along with Warangal MP Dr. Kadiyam Kavya and Greater Warangal Mayor Gundu Sudharani, the MLA inaugurated and laid foundation stones for multiple development works worth approximately ₹3.50 crore in the 60th Division. The projects include construction of internal CC roads, establishment of a modern CC drainage system, and inauguration of a newly constructed Primary Health Centre at Vaddepalli. “During his visit to various colonies, the MLA directly interacted with residents to understand their problems and instructed officials to take up immediate solutions. Foundation stones were laid for several works in the presence of colony residents and committee members. He emphasized that people's needs remain the government's top priority and that development is

being carried out uniformly across all divisions, keeping politics and party lines aside. “He appreciated the cooperation extended by corporators, noting that despite their term nearing completion, significant development had been achieved over the past two years with their support. “The MLA observed that areas like Vaddepalli had lagged in development due to the neglect of previous administrations and said that a special action plan has been initiated to bring such localities back on track. He assured that more projects related to roads, sanitation, healthcare, and education would be introduced in the coming days. “Reiterating that the Telangana government is committed to comprehensive development in the fields of education, healthcare, and agriculture, he said the same momentum of progress would continue in the constituency. “The programme was attended by MP Dr. Kadiyam Kavya, Mayor Gundu Sudharani, local corporator Dasyam Abhinava Bhaskar, public representatives, party leaders, officials, and colony residents.

Kisan Nagar Chhatrapati Shivaji Park set up with Rs 10 lakhs for children: Bhuvanagiri Municipal Chairman Tangallapalli Srivani Ravikumar

“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau..Indian Chronicle...May 3):- New play equipment has been set up for the entertainment of children in the 34th ward of Chhatrapati Shivaji Park in Kisan Nagar under Bhuvanagiri Municipal limits with a budget of about Rs 10 lakhs from the Municipal General Fund. These were provided with municipal funds on the orders of local legislator Kumbha Anil Kumar Reddy, Bhuvanagiri Municipal Chairman Tangallapalli Srivani Ravikumar participated as the chief guests and inaugurated the play equipment at this event held on Sunday. On this occasion, Municipal Chairman Tangallapalli Srivani Ravikumar said that our goal is to provide a pleasant environment for the people in every ward of the town, and that she is always working to develop Bhuvanagiri Municipality in all fields under the guidance of MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy. She urged that parks with spacious areas will be identified and more facilities will be provided for children there. She urged the people of Kisan Nagar to take advantage of these facilities and maintain the cleanliness of the park. Vice Chairman Pothamsetty Manjula Venkateswarlu, 34th Ward Councilor Saragada Manjula Amar, 32nd Ward Councilor Barre Sanghavi Karunakar, Municipal DE (DE) and other municipal officials and ward dignitaries participated in this program.



Civic works launched in two divisions of Karimnagar

Union Minister Bandi Sanjay attends programme; Mayor reiterates focus on infrastructure in all 66 divisions.

KARIMNAGAR May 3 (Correspondent) : Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Sunday participated in the launch of civic infrastructure works in Karimnagar city, with projects taken up in the 50th and 21st divisions under the Municipal Corporation.

In the 50th division, Mr. Sanjay, along with Mayor Kolagani Srinivas, Deputy Mayor Yadagiri Sunil Rao and local corporator Boyinapalli Praveen, performed the ground-breaking ceremony for construction of CC roads and drainage systems estimated at ₹16.50 lakh under general funds. He directed engineering officials to ensure timely execution of the works.

Later, the Union Minister and other elected representatives were felicitated by the local corporator.

As part of the development programme, similar works were launched in the 21st division, where the Mayor, accompanied by corporator Varala Narsingam and SUDA Chairman Komatireddy Narendra Reddy, initiated drainage and CC road works worth ₹17.20 lakh. Officials instructed the contractor to complete the projects with quality standards and within stipulated timelines.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Srinivas said the Municipal Corporation aimed to strengthen basic infrastructure across all 66 divisions. He noted that priority would be accorded to peripheral areas and recently merged villages. He also referred to the Centre's Urban Challenge Fund, stating that efforts would be made to secure allocations for comprehensive development.

The Mayor said the administration remained committed to addressing civic issues and would continue to be accessible to residents.

Corporators, officials and local residents attended the programme.



Weaver Syed Basha Passes Away Suddenly

TPCC Handloom Wing State Working President Chippa Venkateswarlu Consoles Bereaved Family

“(Kothawada/Warangal, May 3 (Indian Chronicle) : Syed Basha, a senior handloom worker from the 23rd Division and a member of the Pallavi Max Handloom Cooperative Society, passed away suddenly last night. “On learning about the demise, Chippa Venkateswarlu, State Working President of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee Handloom Wing, visited the deceased's residence, consoled the family members, and offered his condolences. “He informed Assistant Director of the Handlooms and Textiles Department, Srikanth Reddy, about the incident and recalled that Syed Basha was enrolled under the Handloom Insurance Scheme. He urged the authorities to ensure that the government insurance assistance of ₹5 lakh is released to the bereaved family at the earliest. “The deceased is survived by his wife, Khaja Bee (45), and son, Yakub (19). The family depends entirely on the handloom profession for their livelihood. “Among those present on the occasion were Adepu Ramesh, Adepu Ravi, Aakunuri Jayaramulu, Pendem Mallikarjun, Syed Khareem, Syed Hussain, Adepu Rajesh, Amancha Vijay, and others.



People shifting towards BJP due to Congress government's failure

Social worker Sriram Venkatesh joins BJP in the presence of Union Minister Kishan Reddy

“(Nacharam, Indian Chronicle:“(Union Minister G.

Kishan Reddy stated that people are increasingly turning towards the BJP due to the failure of the state Congress government. Senior social leader Sriram Venkatesh, along with his followers, formally joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). They proceeded in a massive rally, accompanied by hundreds of party workers, marching all the way to the party office in Barkatpura. Around 200 supporters, along with Sriram Venkatesh and his wife M. Veditha, joined the party in the presence of the Union Minister. “On this occasion, Kishan Reddy warmly welcomed them into the party by draping the BJP scarf and extending his best wishes. Addressing the gathering, he alleged that the state government had incurred debts of nearly ₹12,000 crore in the name of development. He strongly criticized both the Congress and BRS governments, accusing them of pushing the state into a debt trap and placing a financial burden on the people. “He called upon the youth and the general public to support the BJP, stating that it is the only viable alternative to bring what he described as transparent governance and real development in Telangana. He emphasized that the people are seeking change and are gradually aligning with the BJP's vision for growth and accountability. “Kishan Reddy further alleged that development activities have slowed down under the Congress regime and that several promises made to Backward Classes (BC), Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and minority communities remain unfulfilled. Criticizing the previous administration led by KCR, he remarked that while assurances were given to provide free housing for the ??? and underprivileged, the leadership focused on building personal assets such as farmhouses instead. “He asserted that public dissatisfaction with successive governments has led to growing support for the BJP across various sections of society. Expressing confidence in the party's future, he stated that the BJP is steadily gaining strength and will emerge victorious in the coming days. He encouraged the youth to



take inspiration from Sriram Venkatesh and actively participate in political and social change by joining the BJP. “Speaking on the occasion, Sriram Venkatesh said that he was deeply influenced by the welfare-oriented governance and developmental initiatives introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He stated that his decision to join the BJP was driven by a desire to contribute meaningfully to society and support policies aimed at national and state development. He assured that he would work as a committed party worker and strive for the growth and strengthening of the party at the grassroots level. “Other prominent leaders who addressed the gathering included BJP State General Secretary Gautham Rao, State Vice President Banda Karthik Reddy, District President Bharat Goud, Lanka Deepak, and former corporator Chira Suchitra Srikanth. They welcomed the new members and highlighted the party's commitment to inclusive development and good governance. “As a mark of respect and gratitude, Sriram Venkatesh felicitated Union Minister Kishan Reddy and other senior leaders with shawls and mementos. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from party leaders, women representatives, youth members, and supporters in large numbers, reflecting the growing momentum of the BJP in the region.

NEET (UG)-2026 exam ends peacefully in Sangareddy district

“(Sangareddy, May 03:-“(The NEET (UG)-2026 exam held in the district on Sunday ended peacefully. “Additional Collector Pandu visited several examination centers to monitor the conduct of the exam. On this occasion, he inspected the examination centers set up at Zilla Parishad Girls' High School, Pothireddypalli Zilla Parishad High School, Tara Degree College, Isnapur Zilla Parishad High School, Isnapur TSSWRS School, as well as Kendriya Vidyalaya School in Eddu Mylaram Ordnance Factory. “He reviewed the facilities provided to the candidates at the centers, security arrangements, examination management procedure and other aspects. He expressed satisfaction that the exam was conducted smoothly and as per the rules. “Officials said that out of a total of 2,772 candidates in the district, 2,704 appeared for the exam and 68 failed. “In addition to making adequate security arrangements at the exam centers, the relevant departments worked in coordination to ensure that the candidates did not face any difficulties. “The Additional Collector was accompanied by District Coordinator Bharathi Devi.



Robbery at jewellery showroom: IGP reviews probe in Karimnagar



Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, local MLAs visit site; police step up search.

KARIMNAGAR May 3 (Correspondent) : Multi-Zone-1 Inspector General of Police on Sunday inspected the crime scene at the PMJ Jewellers showroom in Karimnagar, where an armed robbery was reported, and reviewed the progress of the investigation.

During his visit, the IGP conducted a detailed examination of the scene and issued directions to the investigating officers to expedite efforts to identify and apprehend the accused. He emphasised the need for a coordinated approach, including analysis of CCTV footage and strengthening surveillance in and around the district.

Later, Mr. Reddy visited a local hospital and interacted with the victims who sustained injuries during the incident. He enquired about their condition with doctors and directed hospital authorities to ensure the best possible medical care. Assuring the victims of swift justice, he said the police would take all necessary measures to bring those responsible to book.

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs also visited the showroom and took stock of the situation. He interacted with police officials and enquired about the steps being taken to nab the culprits.

DCC president and Choppadandi MLA Medipalli Satyam and Karimnagar MLA Gangula Kamalakhar visited the spot separately and expressed concern over the incident, urging the police to ensure swift action.

Karimnagar Police Commissioner and other senior officials accompanied the IGP during the inspection.

According to the police, the robbery was carried out by unidentified persons who were reportedly armed, and their movements were captured on CCTV cameras. Preliminary inputs suggest that the suspects were travelling on a black Pulsar motorcycle and a white Apache motorcycle.

The police have appealed to the public to share any information about suspicious persons or vehicles. Citizens have been urged to contact the police control room or dial emergency numbers if they recognise the suspects or notice unusual movements.

Officials said intensified checks and surveillance have been put in place across Karimnagar and surrounding areas as part of the ongoing investigation.

Government Backs Maize Farmers-Comprehensive Measures on Storage and Procurement

“(— MLA K.R. Nagaraju conducts high-level review on maize stocks“(“(Hanumakonda, May 3 (Indian Chronicle) : Stating that strengthening the agriculture sector and ensuring remunerative prices for farmers is a key priority of the government, Wardhannapet MLA and retired IPS officer K.R. Nagaraju conducted a high-level review meeting on Sunday at the Hanumakonda Collectorate conference hall. The meeting focused on maize stocks, procurement, transportation, and related arrangements in Warangal and Hanumakonda districts, where maize cultivation has been extensive this season. “District Collectors Dr. Satya Sharada (Warangal) and Chahat Bajpai (Hanumakonda), Additional Collector G. Sandhya Rani, and senior officials from various departments participated and briefed the gathering on the prevailing ground situation. Tahsildars, Agriculture Department officials, Marketing Department representatives, DCVOs, RDOs, and members of Agricultural Market Committees attended in large numbers. “Speaking on the occasion, MLA Nagaraju noted that favourable weather conditions this year resulted in a record maize yield. While this is a matter of joy for farmers, he cautioned that inadequate storage facilities could create difficulties. He directed officials to take advance measures to prevent losses to the harvested crop due to rains, moisture, or poor

preservation. “He instructed officials to remain vigilant at every stage to ensure that farmers face no inconvenience and that the procurement process is carried out transparently and swiftly. Proper planning at market yards, he said, should prevent farmers from waiting unnecessarily at procurement centres. He specifically advised optimal utilisation of the covered sheds, warehouses, and temporary storage facilities available at the Enumamula Market Yard, and suggested setting up additional storage centres if required. “Keeping weather changes in view, he emphasized the need to provide tarpaulins, protective covers, and proper drainage facilities to safeguard the produce. Officials were also directed to ensure remunerative prices for farmers and intensify monitoring to minimize middlemen interference. He warned of strict action against any corruption or delays in transportation, weighing, and payments. “Ilanda Agricultural Market Committee Chairman Narakudu Venkataiah, RDOs, DCVOs, Tahsildars, Agriculture officials, and others were present.



Land grabbers who planted fences across the road from Husnabad to Hanmapuram. . Are they brokers?

... If they plant fences across the road.. they are khabardars.

. we will take legal action against them:- Bhuvanagiri Tehsildar Jagan Mohan Rao

“““Even though the revenue officials removed the fences two days ago... land grabbers who planted fences night after night once again. ““““Realtors in Husnabad lands.. the police do not care... fake land grabbers who are terrorizing the land grabbers.. farmers who have been facing many difficulties for a year..!“““ “It is sad that no legal action has been taken till today after a complaint was filed with the police that the finishing wire was removed and fences were planted in the land titles.. Grievances of the land titles.. ““““There is land in two survey numbers.. There is land here.. Addimar.. Fake land titles who blindly planted fences““““Realtors who threw stones in the market and made dogs run wild...Brokers from Bhuvanagiri's Tata Nagar who are talking nonsense.



“““(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau..Indian Chronicle...May 3):- Land brokers have occupied the road leading from Hussainabad village of Bhuvanagiri town to Hanumapuram and have planted fences across the road for the past four days. The local authorities complained to the Bhuvanagiri Tahsildar about this and the next day they formed a team and immediately removed the fences. The same land grabber, remembering that there is no Hanumapuram road from here, planted fences across the road again on Saturday evening. Bhuvanagiri Tahsildar Jaganmohan Rao said that those who plant fences across the Hanumapuram road, which is listed in the government gazette, will not be ignored and legal action will be taken against them. Mandava Srisailam, Kamma, Kishtaiha, Allam Mahesh, and Niranjana Reddy expressed their concern that there is surplus land in Hussainabad village of Bhuvanagiri town, survey numbers 208,205,207. For the past year, some land grabbers have been harassing and intimidating the landowners of the respective survey numbers, saying that there is surplus land in their lands, and that private surveys are being conducted without the knowledge of the landowners, and that the existing land is being measured, and that the existing land is being removed, and that it is reasonable to trouble the farmers. Although the road from Hussainabad to Hanumapuram has been there for the last 50 years, recently, a program was carried out to widen the road with the funds of the Gram Panchayat, spending about ten lakhs on it, 20 years ago. Later, the former councilor of Hussainabad Colony, who spent lakhs of rupees with municipal funds, organized a program to widen the same road last year. The landowners are expressing their concerns that this road is on the lands of fake landowners, and that the real landowners do not have a road to their respective lands, and how justified it is for the fake landowners to threaten them? They said that if there are no roads for agricultural lands as per government regulations, roads will be constructed under the auspices of the Revenue Department Tahsildar to provide the opportunity for roads. Even if there is no land in the respective survey numbers, even if their boundaries are somewhere, they change those boundaries and approach the landowners and threaten the landowners that there is land here. Recently, Marri Vasanth, Marri Chandrayya, their sons (who do not have any land.. cannot cover the paper... Allam Mallesha and his sons) and others have come together and made fake land titles of 19 acres and are causing trouble to the real landowners... The above landowners are expressing their grievances. The landowners of Survey No. 208, Mandava Srisailam and others expressed their grievances that they had complained to the Bhuvanagiri CI on 6/2/26 that there was five pits of land in their land, that your road was in the land of the land, that the above land was purchased by fake landowners, that there was land in their land, that their poles and finishing wire were removed and their poles were planted in their land, and that no case was booked against them. In the same order, they came to their land again on 10-4-26 and again removed the poles and wire on the boundaries of their land and planted their poles in their land. It is regrettable that no legal action was taken against them even after they had made a complaint to the Bhuvanagiri CI on this date. For the past year, brokers Nakkala Anjaiah, Gundaboina Narasimha, and Paka Gopal from Bhuvanagiri Tata Nagar have been coming to these survey numbers regularly. They have

colluded with the landowners who have registered forgeries. They are hoping to get a tenth of the land from them. They are currently causing many problems to the landowners on those lands, and the landowners are expressing their grievances. In the past, government survey officials have surveyed these lands many times, and even though those survey numbers have given a report that there is no surplus land here, these brokers are constantly threatening the landowners and causing them problems. In this landless area, a realtor broker and two ex-councillors are the husbands of former councillors.. One acre and 19 pits of land, there is land in the lands of three landowners. These realtors, who have gone astray, took lakhs of rupees from others and made a fake land title to a person...in the same month, they exchanged one or two land titles to others.. "It's like throwing a bowl of rice in a bowl and letting the dogs fight.. The money belongs to one person, it belongs to another... The games played by the husbands of these former women councillors... The farmers have to face many difficulties. It is inevitable that the voters of these councillors who caused trouble in their respective colonies gave them the right advice in the recent municipal elections and defeated their "wives" in the elections. On this matter, senior police officers, revenue, tahsildars and senior officials took the initiative and started a crackdown on the fake landowners, who sold them and made money. Many landowners are demanding legal action against realtor brokers. Many landowners are alleging that they have less land than the land they actually have. The land that should have been given to the real landowners is falling into the hands of fake landowners and they are facing many problems. The landowners have called 100 several times to complain to the police in this regard. However, the landowners allege that they do not understand the reason behind the police not paying attention. Regarding the road from Hussainabad to Hanumapur, regarding the existing road, when Bhuvanagiri Tehsildar Jagan was asked for an explanation, he said that the road from Hussainabad to Hanumapur is in the government gazette, and that recently some people had planted barriers across the road, so they had arranged their staff to remove them on Friday and Saturday mornings. It was learned that some people had once again planted barriers across the road, and they said that legal action would be taken against such landowners. They said that roads were being built with government funds. He sternly warned that if anyone encroaches on the path, legal action will be taken against them, including legal cases for land encroachment.

NEET conducted smoothly in Karimnagar

Collector reviews arrangements; 2,865 of 2,928 candidates appear.

KARIMNAGAR May 3 (Correspondent) : The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to medical courses was conducted smoothly across Karimnagar district on Sunday, with officials reporting no untoward incidents.

District Collector, accompanied by the Additional Collector (Revenue), inspected examination centres at the Government Women's Degree College, SRR Degree College and Kendriya Vidyalaya, and reviewed the arrangements. They interacted with coordinators and took stock of facilities and attendance.

The examination was held at seven centres. Of the 2,928 candidates who had registered, 2,865 appeared, while 63 were absent.

As per official data, 725 candidates appeared at the Government Women's Degree College, 704 at SRR Degree College, 376 at Kendriya Vidyalaya, 305 at the Women's Polytechnic College, 283 at the Minority Residential School and College, 239 at TGSWR Chintakunta Girls College, and 233 at the Centre of Excellence.

Entry into centres was permitted only after thorough verification, with police enforcing strict security checks.

Officials said nodal Tahsildars supervised the conduct of the examination at each centre, while departments including Education, Police, Traffic and Municipal Administration coordinated to ensure smooth conduct.

Biometric attendance was recorded in all centres with complete reconciliation against physical records. The process was monitored in coordination with the National Testing Agency (NTA).



Free Mega Medical Camp Held in Khila Warangal

Dr. Ananthula Anvesh, General Physician, Sun Life Hospital

““““Hanamkonda, May 3 (Indian Chronicle) : A free mega medical camp was organized on Sunday at Padamarakota Chaman in Khila Warangal. The camp was conducted with the support of Dr. Ananthula Anvesh, General Physician and Head of Sun Life Hospital, and was inaugurated by former President of the Warangal District Bar Association, Mr. Teegala Jeevan Goud.“Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Jeevan Goud appreciated the service activities carried out under the banner of Mee Nestam Helping Society.“During the camp, Dr. Navakrishna, General Physician, along with the medical staff of Sun Life Hospital, conducted BP, blood sugar, and hemoglobin (Hb) tests for nearly 200 beneficiaries and distributed necessary medicines.“The programme was attended by Akulapelli Jacob, Founder President of Mee Nestam Helping Society, and members Nammindla Kumaraswamy, Bandi Raju, Kondra Raju, Rajaboyina Yakaiah, Mittapalli Kattamallu, Rajaboyina Sandeep, Kothapelli Srinivas, Akulapalli Vinod, Poshala Sarangapani, Gaddala Aashirvadam, Poshala Suresh, Vanga Dayakar, and State Working President of Mokudebba Ananthula Ramesh Goud, among others.



Self-enumeration of Population Census - People should register their details in 2027 District Collector Prateek Jain

“““Sangareddy, May 03:- As part of the population census process, the government has made available the facility for people to register their family details through the self-enumeration (self-enumeration) system, said District Collector Prateek Jain.““This self-enumeration process will continue till May 10, and the Collector suggested that every family in the district should utilize this opportunity and register their family details.““He said that people will save time by registering their details themselves and the accuracy of the information will also increase.““Self-enumeration System:““First, open the website <https://se.census.gov.in/>.““Select Telangana at the Self-Enumeration (HLO) login, enter the Captcha, and click Verify and Proceed.““Enter the name and mobile number of the head of the family on the welcome page.““Only one mobile number should be used per family. Enter the OTP received and click Verify and Proceed.“Then select the language of your choice and enter the details of the district, village/town, and pin code.““Turn on the location on your mobile and set a red mark at the location of your house.“Answer 33 questions related to houses, check them through preview and submit.““After submitting, you will receive an 11-digit self-enumeration ID starting with H. Take a screenshot or note it down and save it.“The collector said that if the enumerator comes to your house after May 11, they will verify this SE ID.““District Collector Prateek Jain appealed to everyone in the district to use this opportunity to register their family details themselves and cooperate with this program undertaken by the government.““He called on us to save time by registering our information ourselves as our responsibility.



Palair Farmers in Tears: No Support Despite Procurement Centers

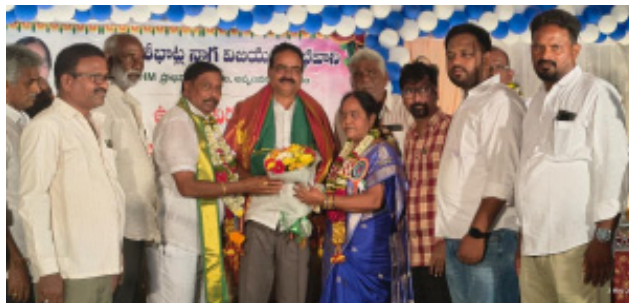


“““Khammam ,Tirumalayapalem, May 03 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):““Farmers in Palair constituency of Khammam district, especially across Tirumalayapalem mandal, are facing severe distress as unseasonal rains continue to damage their harvested crops. Paddy and maize, cultivated with months of hard work, are getting soaked at procurement yards due to delays in purchases at IKP (Indira Kranti Patham) centers.“Procurement Centers in Name Only“Although the government has set up IKP procurement centers with much publicity, the ground reality is quite different. Almost every village in Tirumalayapalem mandal is witnessing similar issues.“Delay in Procurement: Farmers allege that even after drying and preparing the grain, officials are neglecting timely procurement.“Crop Loss Due to Rains: With continuous rainfall and cloudy skies, stored grain is being washed away in water. In some places, the grains have even started sprouting, leaving farmers helpless.“Farmers on Night Vigil: To protect their produce from rain, farmers are covering the wet grain with tarpaulins and staying awake all night near the yards.“A local farmer expressed his anguish:““We took loans and invested in our crops. Now when the harvest is ready, no one is buying at the IKP centers. If it rains, all our hard work goes to waste. Is there no one to support us?““Farmers Appeal to the Government“Farmers are urging the government not to limit itself to announcements but to act immediately. They are demanding relaxation of rules to allow procurement of rain-soaked grain. They also request local representatives and district officials to visit the affected areas and ensure justice for the farmers.“If the government fails to expedite the procurement process on a war footing, farmers warn that they will face heavy financial losses.

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State Warehousing Corporation Chairman Attends Retirement Felicitation Ceremony

“““Khammam, May 03(INDIAN CHRONICLE):““State Warehousing Corporation Chairman Rayala Nageswara Rao attended a retirement felicitation Ceremony held at Sreevara Garden in Nelakondapalli mandal center of Khammam district. The event was organized to honor Kashi Bhothla Naga Vijayalakshmi Bhavani on the occasion of her retirement.“Speaking as the chief guest, Rayala Nageswara Rao praised Bhavani for her dedicated service as a headmistress in Appalanarasimhapuram village. He noted that she earned the appreciation of both students and villagers through her commitment to education.“He emphasized that teachers who nurture students' intellectual abilities are the true builders of society. He also encouraged other teachers to take inspiration from Bhavani's dedication and service-minded approach.“The event was attended by several dignitaries, including State Youth Congress Secretary Jerripothula Anjani, Khammam District Congress Party spokesperson Bachalakuri Nagaraju, Ananthu Satyanarayana, and others.

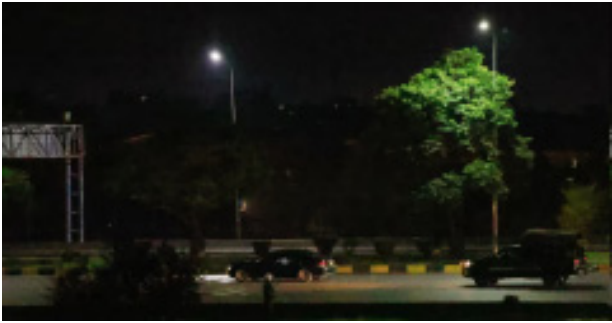


Paddy Crop Destroyed in Fire Due to Electrical Short Circuit; Shepherds Act Swiftly

“““Khammam, Raghunathapalem, May 03(INDIAN CHRONICLE):““In a tragic incident, a paddy crop that was just a week away from harvest was completely destroyed in a fire accident at Koyachalak village in Raghunathapalem mandal of Khammam district.“The affected farmer, Madupu Brahmaiah, lost nearly one acre of standing paddy crop after flames broke out due to an electrical short circuit. According to villagers, sparks from overhead power lines passing through the field fell onto the dry crop, triggering the fire. With intense heat and strong winds, the flames spread rapidly across the field within minutes.“The farmer watched helplessly as his nearly ready-to-harvest crop was reduced to ashes, leaving him devastated.“Local shepherds grazing nearby noticed the fire and acted quickly. They raised an alarm and alerted villagers, who rushed to the spot. Using tree branches and soil, they worked together to bring the fire under control. Their timely response prevented the flames from spreading to an adjacent acre of farmland, which could have caused even greater losses.“Expressing his grief, the farmer said he had taken loans and worked hard for six months to cultivate the crop, only to see it destroyed just before harvest.Villagers have appealed to the government to provide immediate compensation and financial assistance to the affected farmer, who is now facing severe economic distress.



Pakistan still seeks to bridge US, Iran gaps despite failure of face-to-face talks



WASHINGTON/ISLAMABAD Work has not halted to bridge gaps between the United States and Iran, sources from mediator Pakistan said, despite the failure of face-to-face diplomacy after Donald Trump called off a trip by his envoys and said Iran should phone when it wants a deal. Iranian sources disclosed Tehran's latest proposal, which would first seek to end the war and resolve the stand-off over Gulf shipping, while pushing wider talks about Iran's nuclear programme until later. That suggestion is unlikely to satisfy Washington, which says nuclear issues must be resolved from the outset.

The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. Hopes of reviving peace efforts have receded since the U.S. president scrapped a visit on Saturday by his envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner to Islamabad, the Pakistani capital, where Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi shuttled in and out twice over the weekend. Araqchi, who also visited Oman, arrived on Monday in Russia to meet President Vladimir Putin, a longstanding ally. With the warring sides still seemingly far apart on issues including Iran's nuclear ambitions and access through the crucial Strait of Hormuz, oil prices resumed their upward march when trade reopened on Monday. Brent crude was up around 2.5% at around \$108 a barrel. "If they want to talk, they can come to us, or they can call us. You know, there is a telephone. We have nice, secure lines," Trump told "The Sunday Briefing" on Fox News. "They know what has to be in the agreement. It's very simple: They cannot have a nuclear weapon; otherwise, there's no reason to meet," Trump said.

Senior Iranian sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters the proposal carried by Araqchi to Islamabad over the weekend envisioned talks in stages. A first step would require ending the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran and providing guarantees that Washington cannot start it up again. Then negotiators would resolve the U.S. blockade and the fate of the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran aims to reopen under its control. Only then would talks look at other issues, including a longstanding dispute over Iran's nuclear programme, with Iran still seeking some kind of U.S. acknowledgment of its right to enrich uranium for what it

says are peaceful purposes. In a sign that no face-to-face meetings are planned any time soon, streets reopened in Pakistan's capital Islamabad, which had been locked down for a week in anticipation of talks that never took place. The luxury hotel that had been cleared out to serve as a venue was again taking reservations from the public. Pakistani officials said negotiations were still taking place remotely, but there were no plans to convene a meeting in person until the sides were close enough to sign a memorandum. "The draft will be negotiated remotely till they reach some consensus," said a Pakistani source familiar with the negotiations. Item 1 of 7 People walk past a billboard with a graphic design about the Strait of Hormuz on a building, amid a ceasefire between U.S. and Iran, in Tehran, Washington, which says its main war aim has always been preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, has demanded Iran give up a stockpile of highly enriched uranium and forgo further enrichment, a step needed to make a bomb. Although a ceasefire has paused the U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran that began on February 28, no agreement has been reached on terms to end a war that has killed thousands, driven up oil prices, fuelled inflation and darkened the outlook for global growth. Both sides could be settling in for a test of wills to see who can endure economic pain before making concessions. Iran has largely blocked all shipping apart from its own from the Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz since the war began. This month, the United States began blockading Iranian ships, which Iran says must be halted as a condition for talks.

With his approval ratings falling, Trump faces domestic pressure to end the unpopular war. Iran's leaders, though weakened militarily, have found leverage in negotiations with their ability to stop shipping in the strait, which normally carries a fifth of global oil shipments. While Araqchi met Pakistani officials, Trump, speaking in Florida on Saturday, said he cancelled his envoys' visit due to too much travel and expense for what he considered an inadequate Iranian offer. Iran "offered a lot, but not enough," he said. Iranian officials had already played down any suggestion that Araqchi might meet Americans while in Islamabad. Fighting has intensified in Lebanon, where Israeli strikes killed 14 people and wounded 37 in the south on Sunday, according to the health ministry, making it the deadliest day since a U.S.-brokered ceasefire was agreed in mid-April. Iran says it will not hold talks on the wider conflict unless a ceasefire also holds in Lebanon, which Israel invaded in March in pursuit of the Iran-backed group Hezbollah, which fired across the border in support of Tehran. Israel and Hezbollah blame each other for violating the truce, which was agreed between Israel and the Lebanese government in Washington and extended last week. Israeli forces have ordered hundreds of thousands of people out of their villages and have been bulldozing homes where they say Hezbollah fighters operated. The military warned residents on Sunday to leave seven more towns beyond the occupied buffer zone.

Suspect in Washington dinner shooting set to appear in court

WASHINGTON, The man accused of shooting a U.S. Secret Service agent as he tried to breach security at a Washington dinner where President Donald Trump was present is expected in court on Monday to face criminal charges. Cole Tomas Allen, 31, of Torrance, California, is scheduled to make his first appearance in Washington federal court, two days after authorities said they foiled an attack at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner, an annual black-tie gathering of journalists and politicians. The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. Charges have not yet been formally filed, but U.S. Attorney Jeanine Pirro, the top federal prosecutor in Washington, said Allen would be charged with assault on a federal officer and using a firearm during a crime of violence. Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said other charges, including attempted assassination, were possible, but that the investigation remains ongoing. Allen left a manifesto with family members referring to himself as "the 'Friendly Federal Assassin'" and discussing plans to target senior Trump administration officials, who were present in the hotel ballroom. Blanche said his targets likely included Trump himself. Allen booked a room at the Washington Hilton hotel, where the dinner took place, and traveled from California to Washington by train, officials said. The shooting on Saturday rattled the press dinner, a prominent event on Washington's social calendar, sending attendees scrambling under tables and prompting law enforcement to whisk senior officials out of the room. Trump, who was set to deliver remarks later in the evening, was rushed off the stage by security personnel after shots were fired. The proceeding on Monday is expected to be brief. A judge will advise Allen of his legal rights



and prosecutors are expected to seek his detention while the case moves forward. Allen has not yet responded to the allegations. It was not immediately clear if he had a lawyer. The suspect allegedly fired a shotgun at a Secret Service agent at a checkpoint inside the hotel before being tackled and arrested, according to authorities. Video footage Trump posted online showed the suspect sprinting through a hallway outside the ballroom. U.S. officials have said the suspect was subdued just inside a security perimeter and have touted his takedown as a law enforcement success.

But the incident has revived concerns about the safety of Trump, who survived two assassination attempts during his 2024 presidential campaign, and other U.S. officials. The Secret Service agent was struck but a tactical vest stopped the shot, and the agent was released from a hospital hours later. Allen, who authorities said was armed with a handgun and multiple knives, in addition to the shotgun, was also taken to a local hospital to be evaluated following the shooting.

Bangladesh police fail to complete 90% of July 2024 protest cases:

Dhaka: Bangladeshi police have failed to complete investigations in more than 90 per cent of the 1,855 cases filed over killings and violence during the July 2024 protests, even after nearly two years of the incidents, according to a report. The delay has intensified concern and frustration among victims' families and those alleging false implication in the cases. Citing the Police Headquarters (PHQ) data, Bangladesh's leading newspaper, The Daily Star, reported that among the cases filed across the country, 799 were lodged over murders and the remaining 1,056 on other charges, including attempted murder. Citing legal experts, the report said that the slow pace in investigations reflects the complexity of the cases and exposes the weaknesses in the country's criminal justice system. "Filing of a large number of cases immediately after a mass uprising is not unusual, but investigations must be conducted with due diligence and completed within a reasonable timeframe," The Daily Star quoted Ishrat Hasan, a lawyer at the Supreme Court, as saying. "If probes remain stalled for years, both the victims and those falsely accused suffer, ultimately undermining public confidence in the justice system," she noted. Ishrat noted that the presence of a large number of unnamed accused in many cases has significantly complicated and slowed down the investigative process. "Ensuring accountability for the killings and safeguarding those wrongly accused are equally important for upholding the rule of law." If the authorities fail to ensure transparent, impartial, and timely investigations, the justice process will become ineffective," she added. The Daily Star report men-



tioned that thousands of people, including dozens of journalists, continue to await the disposal of the cases, with many claiming that they had no role in the killings or acts of violence during the demonstrations. It cited court records, which documented that at least 24 cases have been registered with various police stations in Dhaka city against 77 journalists on different charges, including murder, attempted murder, and unlawful assembly in connection with the July 2024 protests. Speaking to The Daily Star on condition of anonymity, a journalist said he was shocked after being named in a murder case with Jatrabari Police Station over alleged involvement in killings during a protest on August 5, 2024. "I knew nothing about the incident. I learnt about it from social media." This false case has taken a heavy toll on me over the last one and a half years," he stated. Tariqul Islam, a lawyer defending several accused in Dhaka courts, said many individuals without

China blocks Meta's acquisition of AI startup Manus



Hong Kong: China on Monday blocked Meta's acquisition of the artificial intelligence startup Manus, which has Chinese roots but is Singapore-based. In a short statement, China's National Development and Reform Commission, the country's top planning agency, said it was prohibiting a foreign acquisition of Manus and had required all the parties to withdraw from the deal. It did not specifically name Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram. The decision was made by the commission's Office of the Working Mechanism for Security Review of Foreign Investment in

accordance with Chinese laws and regulations, the statement said. It came after Chinese authorities said they were looking into the deal earlier this year. The commission did not elaborate on the reasons for the ban.

Meta first announced that it was acquiring Manus in December in a rare case of a major US tech group buying an AI company with strong links to China. Its deal with Manus, whose "general-purpose" AI agent can perform multi-step complex work autonomously, was expected to help expand AI offerings across Meta's platforms. Meta had said there would be "no continuing Chinese ownership interests in Manus" and that Manus would discontinue its services and operations in China. But China said in January that it would investigate whether the acquisition would be consistent with its laws and regulations. China's commerce ministry said at the time that any enterprises engaging in outward investment, technology exports, data transfers and cross-border acquisitions must comply with Chinese law. Meta had said most of Manus' employees were based in Singapore. Meta said on Monday in a response that the transaction "complied fully with applicable law." "We anticipate an appropriate resolution to the inquiry," the California-based company said in a statement.

Iran offers to reopen Strait of Hormuz if US lifts blockade



Cairo: Iran has offered to end its chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz in exchange for the US lifting its blockade on the country and an end to the war, while proposing that discussions on the larger question of its nuclear programme would come in a later phase, two regional officials said Monday. US President Donald Trump seems unlikely to accept the offer, which was passed to the Americans by Pakistan and would leave unresolved the disagreements that led the US and Israel to go to war on February 28.

With a fragile ceasefire in place, the US and Iran are locked in a standoff over the strait, through which a fifth of the world's traded oil and gas passes in peacetime. The US blockade is designed to prevent Iran from selling its oil, depriving it of crucial revenue while also potentially creating a situation where Tehran has to shut off production because it has nowhere to store the oil. The strait's closure, meanwhile, has put pressure on Trump, as oil and gasoline prices have surged ahead of crucial midterm elections, and it has also pressured his Gulf allies, which use the waterway to export their oil and gas. The closure has also had far-reaching effects throughout the world economy, raising the price of fertiliser, food and other basic goods. The proposal would push off negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme to a later date. Trump said one of the major reasons he went to war was to deny Iran the ability to develop nuclear weapons. The two officials, who had knowledge of the proposal, spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the closed-door negotiations between Iranian and Pakistani officials this weekend. The Axios news outlet first reported Iran's proposal. It came as Iran's foreign minister visited Russia, which has long been a key backer of Tehran. It is unclear what, if any, assistance Moscow might offer now. Strait of Hormuz remains blocked. Iran's ability to choke off traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, has proved one of its biggest strategic advantages in a war that has often boiled down to which side can take more pain.

Oil prices have risen steadily since the war began and tankers full of crude became stranded in the Persian Gulf, unable to safely transit through the strait and reach global distribution points. On Monday, the spot price of Brent crude, the international standard, was trading at around USD 108 per barrel, nearly 50 per cent higher than when the war began. Iranian foreign minister holds talks as negotiations with US stall. Trump last week indefinitely extended the ceasefire. The US and Iran agreed to on April 7 that has largely halted fighting. But a permanent settlement remains elusive in the war that has killed thousands of people. Iran's state-run IRNA news agency said Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi landed in St Petersburg on Monday morning ahead of a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin. "It is a good opportunity for us to consult with our Russian friends about the developments that have occurred in relation to the war during this period and what is happening now," Araqchi said in a video interview posted by IRNA. It comes

India-New Zealand FTA: First women-led trade deal boosts exports and jobs



New Delhi: The India-New Zealand FTA is India's first women-led Free Trade Agreement and a defining milestone in the bilateral economic journey of the two countries, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Monday. The minister was referring to the fact that a majority of the negotiation team was composed of women, including the chief negotiator, deputy negotiator, and sectoral leads. The landmark trade deal, promoted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is seen as a milestone for both gender inclusivity in trade negotiations and a boost for domestic industries and international trade relations.

Signed under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi and his New Zealand counterpart, Chris Luxon, the agreement was successfully concluded in a record nine months, with the steadfast efforts of New Zealand Trade Minister Todd McClay and both negotiating teams. This landmark agreement reflects deep mutual trust, shared ambition, and a common commitment to prosperity, Goyal said. "It grants 100 per cent duty-free access for Indian exports to New Zealand, opening significant opportunities for MSMEs, farmers, women, youth, professionals and job-creating sectors, while safeguarding India's sensitive interests through a balanced and calibrated framework," he said.

Goyal said that this forward-looking agreement will also facilitate \$20 billion of investment into India, deepening cooperation in trade, services, investment, innovation, mobility, agriculture productivity and education, and creating pathways for skilled talent and students. "A truly win-win partnership that advances the vision of Viksit Bharat, strengthens India-New Zealand ties, and sets a new benchmark for inclusive and trusted global cooperation," he remarked. Besides, the FTA includes several provisions relating to the mobility of working professionals and students. New Zealand has signed an annex on student mobility and post-study work visas for the first time with any country. Under this, Indian students can work up to 20 hours per week while studying in New Zealand, with extended post-study work visas. Further, the agreement includes a quota of 5,000 visas for skilled Indians for a stay of up to three years in the sectors of interest to India, which include AYUSH practitioners, yoga instructors, chefs, and music teachers, as well as other key sectors such as IT, engineering, healthcare, education, and construction. Under the Working Holiday Visa programme included in the agreement, 1,000 young Indians annually can avail multiple entries in New Zealand for a period of 12 months. India has also managed to keep several items out of the FTA, including all dairy products such as milk, cream, whey, yoghurt and cheese as well as agricultural produce such as onions.

Telangana braces for 44 degrees heat, storms ahead

Hyderabad: The India Meteorological Department (IMD), Hyderabad, issued a red alert on Monday evening, warning of a severe heatwave as maximum temperatures are expected to soar past 44 degrees Celsius in several districts of Telangana on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Raghav Chadha could not have defected or split AAP — if his Bill had passed



If the first legislation he had proposed as Rajya Sabha's youngest member four years ago had become law, Raghav Chadha would not have been able to exit the AAP, along with six other party members of the House, and "merge with" the BJP, an announcement he made two days ago, citing a two-thirds majority of AAP's House strength of 10. In fact, had his proposed Bill been enacted, Chadha would have needed the support of seven, not six, from his party to cross over. And the present team would have been barred from contesting elections for six years for splitting the party.

Because the Constitution (Amendment) Bill that Chadha, then a trusted aide of AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, brought to the House as a Private Member's Bill on August 5, 2022 — this was three months after he entered Rajya Sabha — sought a stiffer anti-defection law, one that would require a three-fourths majority, not two-thirds, to engineer a legitimate split. Citing "nefarious floor crossing by legislators in total disregard of the democratic wishes of the electorate who returned them", Chadha's proposed Bill sought to strengthen anti-defection norms through more stringent provisions for the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, which pertains to disqualification of elected representatives on

ground of defection.

The proposed legislation, according to its objectives, aimed to "strengthen our democracy and help our public representatives in becoming informed lawmakers rather than political party workers" by amending Articles 102 and 191 of the Constitution and increasing the threshold for inter-party mergers from 2/3rd to 3/4th of a party's legislative strength through an amendment to the Tenth Schedule. It also proposed that if MPs or MLAs change their party after winning the election, they be banned from contesting elections for six years and, to "prevent 'Resort Politics'", such elected representatives must mandatorily appear before the Chair "within 7 days of withdrawing support to a government", risking disqualification in case of non-compliance. "...In Tenth Schedule to the Constitution...for sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 4, the following shall be substituted:— (2) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph, the merger of the original political party of a member of a House shall be deemed to have taken place if, and only if, not less than three-fourth of the members of the legislature party concerned have agreed to such merger..." the Bill, listed against Chadha's name as part of his Rajya Sabha record, stated. Article 102 (2) of the Constitution states 'A person shall be disqualified for being a member of either House of Parliament if he is so disqualified under the Tenth Schedule.' According to 191 (2), 'A person shall be disqualified for being a member of the Legislative Assembly or Legislative Council of a State if he is so disqualified under the Tenth Schedule.' While the anti-defection law, the Bill stated, envisaged "the prevention of horse-trading" of legislators, the problem was still "notoriously prevalent", and there was "rampant misuse of Tenth Schedule" and instances of it being bypassed "are a blot on our democracy". That Bill remains pending. Chadha's office did not respond to a request from for a comment.

Trump's rhetoric, Rajiv Gandhi's restraint, and lessons on leadership

Donald Trump's menacing threat to Iran that "A whole civilisation will die tonight, never to be brought back again" has unintentionally brought to light Rajiv Gandhi's genius in anticipating that India and Pakistan might do just this to each other unless protected from such an eventuality in times of tension and war. After the unspeakable horrors of World War II, the international community decided to newly codify humanitarian law through four conventions adopted in August 1949 in Geneva, including the fourth relating to the "protection of civilian persons in time of war," because casualties were no longer confined to combatants on battlefields. It was hugely destructive and damaging to civilians caught up in war. However, as the realisation grew that it was more proxy wars, civil wars and terrorism than openly declared interstate wars that were causing asymmetric death and injury to civilian life and property, it became apparent that the Fourth Geneva Convention was not adequate to meet the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of these new kinds of inhuman war — labelled "indiscriminate" wars.

Accordingly, additional protocols relating to "civilian persons and objects" in all types of armed conflict were adopted in 1977, but not before the nuclear weapons powers, particularly the United States, had leached these "protections" of practical significance by inserting codas into the text and interpretations to legitimise their right to attack civil nuclear facilities, whatever might be the damage caused. Thus, for example, Ronald Reagan denounced the humanitarian provisions of the additional protocols as "unacceptable and thoroughly distasteful". Meanwhile, India under Indira Gandhi refused to accede to these dodgy additional protocols. It was at this time of crisis in the prospects of the survival of the planet and humanity itself that Rajiv Gandhi became India's prime minister in 1984-85. As his speechwriter, I was deeply involved in the exposition of his views on the nuclear threat. As we were working on his magnum opus — his address to the UN General Assembly at its Third Special Session on Disarmament, June 1988 — he looked at me quizzically and said, "You know, Mani, Pakistan and we already have the bomb." I was stunned — and puzzled. How, I asked? Rajiv replied, "Because the Canadians have gifted both of us nuclear reactors. A single Pakistani kamikaze pilot can blow up the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre outside Bombay, as easily as an Indian kamikaze pilot can blow up the CANDU reactor outside Karachi, causing as deadly damage to both cities as a nuclear bomb." This conversation, however idle, signalled the process by which India, distancing itself from the ambiguous additional protocols, insulated its civil nuclear facilities from Pakistani attacks by reciprocally promising similar protection to Pakistani civil nuclear facilities (remember, we were then not openly declared NWP). Contemplating the prospect of becoming the first Indian PM to visit Pakistan in 28 years, Rajiv decided that to make the historic breakthrough meaningful, he needed to bring back from the Islamabad SAARC meeting in December 1988 a signed bilateral agreement that would protect each country's nuclear facilities even if war were to break out between them. The key point was that there should be no ambiguity about the purpose of the agreement as had overtaken the Additional Protocols of 1977.

So, behind-the-scenes moves were initiated which led to the "Agreement between India and Pakistan on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities" signed in Islamabad by the two foreign secretaries in the presence of both prime ministers on the last day of the 1988



calendar year. The agreement binds both countries to "refrain from undertaking" any action causing "destruction" or "damage" to "any nuclear installation or facility". Moreover, such installations or facilities are explicitly deemed to include nuclear reactors, fuel fabrication, uranium enrichment, separation of isotopes, reprocessing and "storage" of "radioactive materials". Further, the contracting parties are obligated to inform each other on the first day of January every year of the "longitude and latitude" of their respective "nuclear installations and facilities". Straightforward, with all ambiguity excised, this bilateral agreement freed the India-Pakistan nuclear relationship from the ambiguities of the Geneva Additional Protocols that are currently being exploited by President Donald Trump in his wholly illegal participation in Israel's wholly illegal war against its perceived existential enemy, Iran. The threat against the Bushehr VVER light water 915 MW reactor, and the multiple high voltage lines connecting it to the off-site grid, which are critical to the plant's safety, and the grave threats to the facilities at Minzadehei and the Shahid Khondab heavy water reactor at Arak, besides the Ardakan yellowcake production facility in Iran, strip Additional Protocols' civilian protection from these installations and facilities, notwithstanding Trump's facile claim that his 2025 attack on Iran's nuclear facilities at Natanz, Fordow, Isfahan and Parchin Taleghar 2, had "obliterated" Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions.

Massively escalating the danger of uninhibited nuclear destruction in the region, with all its long-term, and perhaps perpetual consequences, Iran reacted to Israel's attack on Bushehr's surroundings by attacking the surroundings of Israel's nuclear war installations at Dimona. Further, given the US military involvement in the Gulf States threatening Iran's security, Iran has warned that, in retaliation, it might take out the four units of the Barakah nuclear plants in the United Arab Emirates, underlining that while this will not affect Tehran, it will render "life impossible" in the capitals of the Gulf's Arab states. This frightful prospect has been legitimised by the Additional Protocols detracting from absolute immunity to civil nuclear installations and facilities by allowing such dehumanising acts if the "civil facility" supports "the enemy's war efforts" and provided there is no "massive radiation leak", little realising that these supplementary "protections" will become operational only after immense and indefinite human suffering has been inflicted and irreparable environmental damage caused. So, what inspired Rajiv to recuse himself from the conundrums of international law to insulate Indo-Pak nuclear relations from such ambiguities? Perhaps (Trump to please note) it was Mahatma Gandhi's reply to a question, "What do you think of Western civilisation?" Gandhiji paused for a moment and gently replied, "I think that might be a good idea!"

discussed and reshared, becoming the central point of the debate. Grok is an artificial intelligence chatbot developed by xAI and integrated into the social media platform X. It is increasingly being described as a de facto social media encyclopedia due to its ability to analyse and summarise real-time conversations happening on the platform. Unlike traditional encyclopedias, Grok does not rely on static entries. Instead, it generates responses dynamically using live data from X and the web, allowing it to function as a continuously updated knowledge system. This makes it especially relevant for interpreting breaking news, viral posts, and political discourse in real time. Grok often functions as an "information provider" and even a kind of public interpreter of online discourse, summarising posts, clarifying context, and answering user queries directly within social conversations. Supporters of such AI systems argue that they help users quickly understand complex topics by aggregating widely available information in real time.

Heat wave stress is much more silent and severe: Why 62-year-old collapsed after morning walk



A 62-year-old man collapsed after a routine morning walk between 8 am and 9 am. Being hypertensive, diabetic and having a stent in his heart, he was always cautious about stepping out in midday heat. Still, he felt dizzy, weak and sweated profusely when he entered the OPD of Dr Rommel Tickoo, Director, Internal Medicine, Max Healthcare, Delhi. "Then his sweating reduced, a dangerous transition indicating failure of the body's cooling mechanism. Nausea followed, he could neither eat or drink anything. He complained of mild breathlessness, gradually became disoriented and drowsy, eventually requiring assistance to walk and collapsing in a heap. His heart was under stress," says Dr Tickoo. By the time he was evaluated, his temperature was elevated, his blood pressure had dropped and his pulse was high. His blood sugar had risen sharply to 250 mg/dL, a stress response compounded by dehydration. Laboratory findings revealed creatinine at 1.8 (normal upto 1.3 mg/dL) pointing to acute kidney injury, sodium at 150 mmol/L (normal being upto 145 mmol/L), reflecting significant dehydration. An ECG confirmed a very high heart rate that could trigger a heart attack and stroke. "His stressors were heat exhaustion, dehydration, electrolyte imbalance and evolving organ dysfunction. We sponged him to cool down his body, gave intravenous fluids, monitored his urine output, gave insulin for blood sugar. Within two days, he improved and returned to baseline. What he didn't know was that even half-hour of easy walking outdoors was enough for him to develop heat stress, when the body's thermal regulation is overwhelmed, and putting his heart at risk," he says.

Heat stress can build up rapidly, even with little exposure, because the body cannot dissipate absorbed heat easily. "Not many know that extreme heat forces the heart to work harder, increasing heart rate and output to boost blood flow to the skin for cooling. This strain is driven by dehydration, reduced blood volume, and widened blood vessels, which can lead to cardiovascular disease exacerbations, including hypertension, heart failure, arrhythmias, and acute myocardial infarction," says Dr Tickoo. The WHO identifies heat stress as the leading cause of weather-related deaths, which can exacerbate underlying conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and mental health. Extreme heat now poses a risk to 57 per cent of Indian districts — home to 76 per cent of the population — according to a new independent study launched today by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW). The study finds that the top ten most heat-risk-prone states and UTs are Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh. In dry north India, humidity over the past decade has increased by 50 per cent. This significantly raises the 'felt' temperature, sometimes by 3-5°C more compared to the recorded air temperature, making even moderate heat more dangerous. "When body temperature exceeds 37°C, sweating is the primary cooling mechanism, but high humidity hinders evaporation. That's why those living in urban heat islands across our cities are exposed to adverse consequences of heat stress. But this is mostly unrecognised," says Dr Dileep Mavalankar, former director of the Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar and the creator of Asia's first city-wide Heat Action Plan (HAP) for Ahmedabad in 2010. "Medically, only about one-tenth of heat-related illness presents as direct conditions such as heat stroke, where proteins change structure and cannot function properly, or heat syncope, when blood pressure drops suddenly or when blood pools in the legs. The remaining 90 per cent involve indirect impacts, which target key organs," says Dr Mavalankar.

For example, the heart pumps faster, often increasing by 10 beats per minute for every degree the body's internal temperature rises. "Rapid blood vessel expansion can lead to lowered blood pressure, causing dizziness, weakness and fainting. Excessive sweating reduces blood volume, which means the heart has to work harder to circulate the

remaining blood, which can trigger irregular heartbeats or worsen pre-existing heart conditions," he says. If the kidneys are already vulnerable, then intense heat leads to rapid fluid loss through sweat, reducing blood flow to the kidneys and increasing uric acid concentrations. "Repeated episodes of heat strain, dehydration, and subclinical injury can cause permanent renal damage, known as kidney failure," says Dr Mavalankar. Those with lung disease, diabetes, and other chronic conditions similarly worsen under heat stress. "Heat increases the rate of insulin absorption. People with diabetes are more vulnerable to heat exhaustion and heat stroke because diabetic nerve damage can inhibit sweating and prevent the body from cooling down. In patients with comorbidities, even 15 to 30 minutes of exposure can significantly stress the heart," he adds. Pregnant women are more sensitive to heat stress due to increased blood volume, nearly seven litres by the end of pregnancy, and a lower ratio of body surface area to mass, making it harder to shed heat. "Prolonged heat stress affects pregnant women silently. Intense heat can reduce blood flow to the placenta and increase foetal heart rate. It can impact the function of placenta, which may lead to lower birth weights. Intense heat exposure in the first trimester may contribute to birth defects. Heatwaves increase risks of heatstroke, fainting and high blood pressure," says Dr Tickoo. He even warns of heat interfering with medication. "Diuretics increase urine production. So if you sweat more, there's a compound effect, depleting body fluids and causing potentially dangerous drops in potassium," he warns.

Dr Mavalankar has long argued that the real burden of heat is grossly underestimated because of how it is measured. During the Ahmedabad heat wave of 2010, there were more than 800 additional deaths. Yet very few were officially classified as heat-related. "Most were recorded under routine causes such as cardiac or renal failure. The correct approach is to track all-cause mortality. If a city like Delhi typically records 300 deaths a day and that number rises to 500 during a heatwave, those excess deaths must be counted — even in the absence of a formally declared epidemic. The same principle applies to morbidity. Emergency room visits rise sharply during heat events, hospital admissions increase, and ambulance calls surge. Government clinic registrations and footfall go up. These are all measurable signals, yet very few cities systematically count or analyse them," he says. According to Dr Mavalankar, this data should be automatically captured through computerised systems and shared with institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology and local universities for rigorous analysis.

He also points out the need for structured governance. Cities should have designated leadership for heat response, much like vaccination programs. "Places like Nagpur have discussed the idea of a Chief Heat Officer to coordinate action. Nationally, efforts by the National Centre for Disease Control to create pooled data systems are steps in the right direction, but without mandatory reporting and integration, their impact remains limited. A national dashboard combining mortality, hospital data, ambulance calls, and clinic visits would provide a far clearer picture of the crisis and create a unified heat protocol for prevention," says Dr Mavalankar. The effects of heat extend well beyond immediate illness. Worker productivity declines, increasing economic strain. The risk of accidents rises. Mental health conditions deteriorate, often manifesting as irritability and even road rage. After 2010, Ahmedabad implemented a Heat Action Plan, supported by the National Disaster Management Authority, which later expanded similar frameworks to over 400 cities. "However, these plans lack a legal mandate and dedicated budgets, limiting their effectiveness. Ahmedabad remains the only city in South Asia to demonstrate a substantial impact of a heat action, with mortality falling by about 40 per cent after implementation," says Dr Mavalankar. The Ahmedabad model initiated "cool roofs" with reflective white paint in low-income neighborhoods, reducing indoor temperatures significantly. Many cities, including Delhi, have since adopted a multi-layered approach: early warning systems, public awareness, capacity building for health professionals, and emergency response. "A combined data-driven approach is needed, incorporating climate projections and hyperlocal vulnerability assessment. Then heat alerts can protect those at risk and help people plan workarounds during high heat," says Dr Mavalankar. Last year, data obtained by PTI under the Right to Information (RTI) Act showed that the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) reported 7,192 suspected cases of heatstroke. "Given India's NCD burden, heat stress should be emphasised as an independent risk factor," says Dr Mavalankar.

Kodagu 'rape': Karnataka's challenge, 10,000 homestays, less than half registered

The recent sexual assault allegations at a Kodagu homestay have prompted a review of Karnataka's enforcement gaps, with the state tourism department calling a high-level meeting Monday with the police and other law enforcement authorities to tighten implementation mechanisms across Karnataka. This comes days after a US national reported being sexually assaulted at a homestay in Kodagu. It also comes a year after the alleged gang-rape of two women — among them a foreign tourist — in Hampi, which led to tighter homestay regulations, particularly in remote tourist areas.

Authorities are now considering stricter employee verification, in light of the arrest of two people, including a staff member at the Kodagu homestay, over the allegations. A senior official with the tourism department told that while Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) already exist, enforcement remains fragmented, with no centralised system to track compliance across the state's growing number of homestays.

"The focus now is on how to more effectively monitor the implementation of rules and guidelines," the official said. "We will convene a meeting with all concerned authorities, including the police, to review the situation and assess how existing guidelines can be more effectively implemented and monitored on the ground." Officials pointed out that in the Kodagu case, the cook — allegedly the main accused — had been hired from outside, raising concerns over whether mandatory police verification procedures were followed. The department is now considering making it compulsory for homestay owners to ensure all staff hired from outside undergo police verification, with their details shared with local police. There is also a proposal to mandate displaying the Karnataka State Police (KSP) app QR code at registered homestays to improve traceability and reporting by guests and authorities. The current review comes nearly a year after a violent incident near Hampi in March 2025 prompted the state to tighten homestay regulations, particularly in remote tourist areas. In that case, three men attacked a group of tourists on a late-night outing near Sanapur Lake. Two women, including a foreign tourist, were gang-raped, and a

male tourist from Odisha died after being pushed into a canal. The incident drew widespread outrage and exposed gaps in tourist safety, especially in isolated locations. Following this, the government introduced stricter guidelines. Homestay owners were asked to inform local police before taking guests to secluded areas, particularly at night. It became mandatory to maintain detailed guest records — ID proof for domestic tourists and passport details for foreign nationals — and to share this information with the police. CCTV cameras were required in common areas, and owners were made responsible for guest safety, including during off-site activities. Existing rules on registration, occupancy limits, and owner presence on the premises were also reinforced. According to government data, Karnataka's challenge has over 10,000 homestays, less than half of which are registered. The Kodagu Homestay Association estimates that the district alone has nearly 4,000 homestays, of which only 2,478 are officially registered. The Kodagu homestay was among the ones that were registered, with authorities cancelling its licence after the incident. Guidelines issued after the alleged Hampi gangrape case require law enforcement authorities to conduct mandatory vetting of the staff at these homestays. Police sources explain the process: background checks for such hires are carried out through a Police Verification Certificate (PVC) process at the police station level and handled at the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) or Superintendent of Police (SP) level. In these cases, the employee's details are verified through official records before formal clearance. The challenge, however, lies in implementation, with officials admitting that enforcement of staff verification has been patchy given the practical hurdles. According to officials, while police verification and related processes can cost around Rs 500-1,500 per employee, depending on the verification type, in practice, the overall cost can be higher due to documentation and coordination requirements. In addition, many workers — especially migrants — stay for short periods, often leaving within two to three months, making it difficult for homestay owners to complete verification for every hire, particularly when recruitment is done quickly to meet demand.

Grok supports Modi govt over Congress' dynastic politics

New Delhi: A post circulating on social media platform X has drawn attention after the AI chatbot Grok appeared to respond to a hypothetical question about Indian political leadership in a way that users interpreted as supportive of "dated governance" under Prime Minister Narendra Modi over Congress' dynastic politics. In the widely shared exchange, a user asked: "Hey @Grok if you were an Indian citizen, who would you vote for as Prime Minister?" Grok responded that, hypothetically, it would support Prime Minister Narendra Modi, citing infrastructure development, Digital India and UPI growth, and India's rise as the world's fifth-largest economy. It contrasted this with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's focus on welfare critiques, adding that outcomes in jobs, technology, and global standing were more decisive, concluding with the phrase "data over dynasties". The response quickly went viral, with many users highlighting Grok's apparent support for a governance model based on measurable development outcomes over legacy political structures. The phrase "data over dynasties" in particular has been widely

Mythos shows that in age of AI, no system is safe



For the almost three decades that I have worked in the domain, cybersecurity operated on a reassuring asymmetry: Attackers needed extraordinary skill, time, and patience to find and exploit software vulnerabilities, while defenders, though perpetually behind, could at least count on that human bottleneck to slow the threat. Claude Mythos Preview, Anthropic's frontier AI model announced on April 7, has shattered that assumption. In controlled evaluations, Mythos Preview could execute multi-stage attacks on susceptible networks and discover and exploit vulnerabilities autonomously, tasks that would take human professionals days of work. Mythos has a fundamentally different architecture from its predecessors, enabling it to chain multiple small vulnerabilities into a single devastating attack, reconstruct source code from deployed software to find exploitable weaknesses, and, once inside a network, automatically map systems, move laterally, and build custom tools to extract data — all within hours.

Engineers with no formal security training can ask Mythos to find remote code execution vulnerabilities overnight and wake the following morning to a complete, working exploit. The democratisation of offensive capability, once exclusive to nation-state actors and elite hacker collectives, is now a prompt away. Anthropic's response is Project Glasswing, a controlled, invitation-only consortium of roughly 50 organisations, including AWS, Microsoft, Google, Apple, and CrowdStrike, given access to Mythos Preview for defensive security work. Over the past few weeks, Anthropic used Claude Mythos Preview to identify thousands of zero-day vulnerabilities in every major operating system and web browser, along with other important pieces of soft-

ware. The intent is to get defenders ahead of the curve before Mythos-class capabilities reach less scrupulous hands.

The logic is sound in principle. But the execution reveals a structural tension at the heart of modern technology governance: Cybersecurity is no longer centred solely on defending systems against enemies but is increasingly about managing AI systems, collapsing the long-standing gap between those who can discover and those who can exploit vulnerabilities. Glasswing addresses the top of this threat pyramid, widely-used software maintained by well-funded companies, but leaves the vast underbelly of custom, legacy, and underfunded systems essentially untouched. Project Glasswing, in its current structure, is a form of digital partnership, but a deeply unequal one. This new digital divide is not about access to technology but access to the tools that secure it. Critics have questioned how much of Mythos's projected danger is clever marketing. Anthropic is simultaneously the creator of the threat and the curator of its solution — a conflict of interest that deserves scrutiny, even if independent evaluations confirm the threat is largely genuine. For India, the implications are urgent and underappreciated. The Fintech Association for Consumer Empowerment (FACE) has urged members to reinforce cyber defences and adopt continuous vulnerability solutions and zero-day vulnerability intelligence in response to Mythos's capabilities. This is a start, but it barely scratches the surface. India runs enormous volumes of financial, governmental, and civic transactions on software that are old. When Mythos-level tools start finding zero-days in old codebases, Indian institutions will be exposed to vulnerabilities they cannot quickly patch, while the average time-to-exploit now sits under 20 hours. Critically, Project Glasswing does not cover the thousands of custom applications built by Indian banks, government departments, state utilities, and telecom companies. CERT-In and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology need to urgently pursue AI-assisted security audits of domestic critical infrastructure as a first step. What Mythos and Glasswing together announce is a new epoch. Cybersecurity, AI governance, and crisis management no longer exist as separate disciplines. They must be integrated into one framework of digital risk governance capable of addressing autonomous, probabilistic, and high-impact systems. Glasswing is a possible, necessary first step, but clearly not a sufficient one.

Despite recovery, why Indian stocks are trailing global indices

The West Asia crisis may be far from resolved, but stock markets around the world have, in recent weeks, reversed their war-induced losses and are currently nearing all-time highs. In the US, indices are 1-8% higher than pre-war levels, with the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite touching a record high earlier this week. South Korea's Kospi and Japan's Nikkei 225, both of which had slumped 13-19% in the early weeks of the war, are now up 2-4% despite both countries being heavy net importers of crude oil. India, though, is lagging again, with the Nifty and Sensex still down 5-6% from February 27. Admittedly, they had both fallen as much as 11% and have thus recovered some ground. But why are Indian stocks not faring as well as others?

The Indian market's underperformance in comparison to others is not a recent phenomenon. Over the past year, the Nasdaq has surged 42%, the Nikkei 70%, and the Kospi 2.5 times. Meanwhile, key Indian indices edged 1% lower. The key differentiator here is Artificial Intelligence (AI). The same explosion in AI-related stocks that saw South Korean, American, and Japanese stocks ride the wave before the West Asia war began has returned. Some investors saw Indian stocks as a 'reverse AI play', meaning that their low exposure to the biggest investment boom the world has ever known could protect them in case of a sudden market correction, or what has been called the AI 'bubble' bursting. However, this strategy does not seem to be bearing fruit at the moment.

India Inc's lack of investment in AI is seen as a big reason why foreign investors are staying away from Indian markets. This, coupled with India's energy import dependence, has left India in a tough spot, with HSBC on Thursday (April 23) downgrading Indian equities to 'underweight' from 'neutral' on account of the impact it expects elevated energy prices to have on company earnings. It is no surprise, then, to see foreign investors continuing to leave India in droves. After selling \$12.7 billion worth of Indian shares in March, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have taken out \$4.7 billion so far in April. This has hurt the Indian rupee, which closed at 94.26 per dollar on Friday and is down 4.6% in 2026, despite the Reserve Bank of India taking steps to curb speculative bets against the Indian currency. A weaker rupee reduces the return foreign investors get in their own currency. This is the exchange rate risk investors face when buying assets overseas.

Meanwhile, foreign investors have net purchased around \$58 billion of Japanese shares since March 29, af-



ter selling around \$52 billion in the first four weeks of March, data from Japan's finance ministry showed. The US and South Korean markets, too, have seen significant foreign investments. "The US isn't very energy dependent like India, and they also benefit due to their status as a safe harbour. In South Korea's case, it is benefiting from the AI trade, which is pushing the market up. In India, we still don't have significant AI play, and we are vulnerable to energy shocks. So that is reflected in our market," said Nilesh Shah, Managing Director of Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company. "There is an underlying theme of tech investment that is playing a dominant role (in some of these other economies). While there will be some impact on their cost of manufacturing because of high energy prices, the underlying demand for those industries remains fairly robust," said the investment and research head of another fund house.

Structurally, technology stocks, or stocks benefiting from the AI wave, have a higher weightage in some of these outperforming indices in comparison to the Nifty. "... TSMC, Samsung Electronics and Hynix now account for a combined 24.0% of the MSCI AC Asia Pacific ex-Japan Index and 24.2% of the MSCI Emerging Markets Index, up from 9.4% and 10.0% at the start of 2023. These are now the highest weightings they have ever been in the history of both asset classes," Christopher Wood, Jefferies' Global Head of Equity Strategy, said Thursday. Samsung and SK Hynix, two of the biggest chipmakers in the world, comprise more than 40% of the Kospi. In the US, big tech and AI players constitute around 70% of the Nasdaq. Meanwhile, IT services have only about 10% weight in the Nifty. And, even these players are seen to have fallen significantly behind the AI curve, with the Nifty IT down 25% so far in 2026 — by far the worst-performing sector in the Indian market — as investors worry the rise of increasingly more potent AI models could severely hurt profits.



perimentation and enterprise-scale adoption. AI talent supply is also expanding across industries as adoption deepens. In manufacturing, AI engineering talent has expanded 4-fold in India reaching 2 per cent of the workforce in 2025. "We are seeing strong growth in applied AI skills such as AI agents and productivity tools, which are directly tied to real-world deployment," said Malai Lakshmanan, Head of LinkedIn India Engineering. "For engineers, this is a clear signal to focus on building practical, hands-on capabilities and integrating AI into everyday workflows.

Get out of my country': Youth charged after yelling racist slurs at elderly Sikh man in Ontario -



An elderly Sikh man has been assaulted by a youth who yelled racist slurs that "get out of my country" in Canada, prompting police to investigate the "hate-motivated assault", authorities said. The incident took place on April 22 in Woodstock, Ontario, and the youth is facing multiple charges for his actions, the Woodstock Police said in a statement. The attack happened when the elderly man was walking along a sidewalk when he was approached by a youth who shoved him, it said. A Police said that the youth targeted the victim based on his ethnicity and yelled racially charged comments and obscenities. The victim was not

physically injured, it added. The investigation determined that the youth unprovokedly assaulted the man. Following the incident, the youth jumped a fence into the Turtle Island School property before exiting the school area. No students were harmed during the incident, the statement added. "As a result of the investigation, the youth was arrested following the hate-motivated assault. The accused was held in custody for a bail hearing," it said. The Woodstock Police Service is aware that videos of this incident are circulating on social media, which show that the youth repeatedly shouting racist abuse, including, "What the...are you doing in my country?" "You ain't from here, get the...out of my country." "Acts of hate have no place in our community. The Woodstock Police Service is committed to ensuring all members of the community feel safe and protected. We encourage anyone who has experienced or witnessed a hate-motivated incident to report it to police," police said. "Woodstock Police Service will pursue and hold those who commit hate crimes accountable." Meanwhile, in a statement posted to X, the World Sikh Organisation (WSO) said it is "deeply concerned" regarding the incident and calls the assault "unacceptable." The organisation goes on to thank Woodstock police for their quick response. "As our recent Anti-Sikh Hate Report shows, these incidents are part of a broader pattern. We need systemic action, including better reporting, public education, and coordinated responses from institutions. If you experience or witness hate, report it to the police and to WSO," the organisation said.

Sluggish wheat lifting in Faridkot sparks row, only 33 per cent moved in 27 days

Sluggish lifting and transportation of procured wheat in Faridkot district has become a major concern for commission agents and food procurement agencies. Delays, attributed to alleged political interference and rivalry between transport and labour contractors, have severely hampered the movement of wheat from mandis to storage godowns. Large quantities of wheat packed in gunny bags remain exposed to the open sky and intense heat, leading to weight loss and deterioration in quality. Commission agents have expressed strong resentment, saying they are being unfairly held financially responsible for the losses despite the delays being beyond their control.

According to sources, only about 33 per cent of the procured wheat has been lifted from mandis even 27 days into the procurement season. Officials from Food and Supply Department have not commented on the issue, adding to stakeholders' concerns. As of Sunday evening, 393,625 metric tonnes of wheat had arrived in district mandis, of which 374,680 MT had been procured by various agencies. Of the procured stock, only 133,708 MT had been lifted so far.

Faridkot DC Poonamdeep Kaur said lifting operations would be accelerated in the coming days to prevent further losses and inconvenience. Despite the assurance, stakeholders remain anxious and have urged immediate intervention to streamline logistics and ensure timely transportation. Commission agents claim that even the limited quantity moved so far was transported using arrangements made at their own expense. "Contractors seem unconcerned about the delays and resulting losses. We are forced to pay from our own pockets, even though lifting and



transportation are the sole responsibility of procurement agencies and their appointed contractors," they said. Transportation costs typically follow a distance-based structure, with rates quoted per 50-kg bag or per quintal. For short distances under 10 km, rates range from Rs 5 to Rs 8 per bag, while longer distances within the district cost Rs 10 to Rs 15 per bag, depending on the State Order of Rates and tender conditions. These rates usually cover loading, transportation, unloading and stacking at storage depots. District Food and Supply Controller Gurjit Singh said PUNGRAIN had procured the maximum wheat in the district at 112,385 MT, followed by Markfed at 98,232 MT, PUNSUP at 85,604 MT, Punjab State Warehousing Corporation at 66,334 MT and private traders at 12,125 MT.

Heat wave stress is much more silent and severe: Why 62-year-old collapsed after morning walk

A 62-year-old man collapsed after a routine morning walk between 8 am and 9 am. Being hypertensive, diabetic and having a stent in his heart, he was always cautious about stepping out in midday heat. Still, he felt dizzy, weak and sweated profusely when he entered the OPD of Dr Rommel Tickoo, Director, Internal Medicine, Max Healthcare, Delhi. "Then his sweating reduced, a dangerous transition indicating failure of the body's cooling mechanism. Nausea followed, he could neither eat or drink anything. He complained of mild breathlessness, gradually became disoriented and drowsy, eventually requiring assistance to walk and collapsing in a heap. His heart was under stress," says Dr Tickoo. By the time he was evaluated, his temperature was elevated, his blood pressure had dropped and his pulse was high. His blood sugar had risen sharply to 250 mg/dL, a stress response compounded by dehydration. Laboratory findings revealed creatinine at 1.8 (normal upto 1.3 mg/dL) pointing to acute kidney injury, sodium at 150 mmol/L (normal being upto 145 mmol/L), reflecting significant dehydration. An ECG confirmed a very high heart rate that could trigger a heart attack and stroke. "His stressors were heat exhaustion, dehydration, electrolyte imbalance and evolving organ dysfunction. We sponged him to cool down his body, gave intravenous fluids, monitored his urine output, gave insulin for blood sugar. Within two days, he improved and returned to baseline. What he didn't know was that even half-hour of easy walking outdoors was enough for him to develop heat stress, when the body's thermal regulation is overwhelmed, and putting his heart at risk," he says. Heat stress can build up rapidly, even with little exposure, because the body cannot dissipate absorbed heat easily. "Not many know that extreme heat forces the heart to work harder, increasing heart rate and output to boost blood flow to the skin for cooling. This strain is driven by dehydration, reduced blood volume, and widened blood vessels, which can lead to cardiovascular disease exacerbations, including hypertension, heart failure, arrhythmias, and acute myocardial infarction," says Dr Tickoo. The WHO identifies heat stress as the leading cause of weather-related deaths, which can exacerbate underlying conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and mental health. Extreme heat now poses a risk to 57 per cent of Indian districts — home to 76 per cent of the population — according to a new independent study launched today by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW). The study finds that the top ten most heat-risk-prone states and UTs are Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh. In dry north India, humidity over the past decade has increased by 50 per cent. This significantly raises the 'felt' temperature, sometimes by 3-5°C more compared to the recorded air temperature, making even moderate heat more dangerous. "When body temperature exceeds 37°C, sweating is the primary cooling mechanism, but high humidity hinders evaporation. That's why those living in urban heat islands across our cities are exposed to adverse con-

sequences of heat stress. But this is mostly unrecognised," says Dr Dileep Mavalankar, former director of the Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar and the creator of Asia's first city-wide Heat Action Plan (HAP) for Ahmedabad in 2010. "Medically, only about one-tenth of heat-related illness presents as direct conditions such as heat stroke, where proteins change structure and cannot function properly, or heat syncope, when blood pressure drops suddenly or when blood pools in the legs. The remaining 90 per cent involve indirect impacts, which target key organs," says Dr Mavalankar. For example, the heart pumps faster, often increasing by 10 beats per minute for every degree the body's internal temperature rises. "Rapid blood vessel expansion can lead to lowered blood pressure, causing dizziness, weakness and fainting. Excessive sweating reduces blood volume, which means the heart has to work harder to circulate the remaining blood, which can trigger irregular heartbeats or worsen pre-existing heart conditions," he says. If the kidneys are already vulnerable, then intense heat leads to rapid fluid loss through sweat, reducing blood flow to the kidneys and increasing uric acid concentrations. "Repeated episodes of heat strain, dehydration, and subclinical injury can cause permanent renal damage, known as kidney failure," says Dr Mavalankar. Those with lung disease, diabetes, and other chronic conditions similarly worsen under heat stress. "Heat increases the rate of insulin absorption. People with diabetes are more vulnerable to heat exhaustion and heat stroke because diabetic nerve damage can inhibit sweating and prevent the body from cooling down. In patients with comorbidities, even 15 to 30 minutes of exposure can significantly stress the heart," he adds. Pregnant women are more sensitive to heat stress due to increased blood volume, nearly seven litres by the end of pregnancy, and a lower ratio of body surface area to mass, making it harder to shed heat. "Prolonged heat stress affects pregnant women silently. Intense heat can reduce blood flow to the placenta and increase foetal heart rate. It can impact the function of placenta, which may lead to lower birth weights. Intense heat exposure in the first trimester may contribute to birth defects. Heatwaves increase risks of heatstroke, fainting and high blood pressure," says Dr Tickoo. He even warns of heat interfering with medication. "Diuretics increase urine production. So if you sweat more, there's a compound effect, depleting body fluids and causing potentially dangerous drops in potassium," he warns. Dr Mavalankar has long argued that the real burden of heat is grossly underestimated because of how it is measured. During the Ahmedabad heat wave of 2010, there were more than 800 additional deaths. Yet very few were officially classified as heat-related. "Most were recorded under routine causes such as cardiac or renal failure. The correct approach is to track all-cause mortality. If a city like Delhi typically records 300 deaths a day and that number rises to 500 during a heatwave, those excess deaths must be counted — even in the absence of a formally declared epidemic. The same principle applies to morbidity.

South Korean president's Holocaust remarks spark outcry from Israel and controversy at home



SEOUL, South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol has sparked a diplomatic row with Israel and criticism at home after comparing Israeli military actions against Palestinians to the Holocaust in a post on social media platform X. The controversy began on Friday after Lee said "wartime killings" by the Israel Defense Forces were "no different from the Jewish massacre" by the Nazis in World War Two, and reposted footage with a caption that said it showed Israeli troops had tortured and thrown a Palestinian from the roof of a building.

The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. Israel's Foreign Ministry said in a post on X on Saturday that Lee "for some strange reason, chose to dig up a story from 2024." It said the incident occurred during an IDF operation against what it called "terrorists" and had been thoroughly investigated. The ministry accused Yoon, who had said that he needed to verify the

footage, of the "trivialization of the massacre of Jews on the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day in Israel," saying his remarks were "unacceptable and warrant strong condemnation." Israel marks Yom HaShoah on Monday remembering the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis.

The Israeli military said in 2024 it was investigating the incident in the videos and described the actions as serious and not in keeping with its values. Friday's comments are a rare instance of Lee discussing international politics on social media and come as his government navigates a surge in energy prices following U.S. and Israeli strikes against Iran. Tehran has closed the Strait of Hormuz to tanker traffic and South Korea is one of the world's largest importers of oil and gas. Lee did not mention the Iran war in his posts but said that South Koreans were today feeling "immense pain and national hardship." The president later on Saturday said it was "disappointing" that Israel criticised his comments and that it was natural to feel sorry if someone was suffering. South Korea's foreign ministry later said it was regrettable Israel "misunderstood" Lee's remarks, which were about universal human rights. Lee's comments also proved controversial at home. South Korea's conservative party hit out at Lee for failing to speak more prudently and said he was showing double standards for his silence on human rights abuses in North Korea, while Lee's Democratic Party praised him for speaking out on the universal value of human dignity. The mainstream JoongAng Ilbo newspaper said on Monday Lee would be well advised to recognise the weight of a president's remarks and the risk of misunderstanding from unfiltered comments on social media, especially in sensitive global disputes.

Turkey says NATO should reset ties with Trump at next summit, prepare for future

ANKARA, - Turkey said on Monday that NATO allies should use their July summit in Ankara to reset ties with U.S. President Donald Trump and prepare for a potential reduction of U.S. involvement in the alliance. Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said that Turkey believed Trump would attend the NATO leaders' summit on July 7-8 due to his "personal respect" for President Tayyip Erdogan, but added he understood Trump was otherwise reluctant come to the meeting. The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.

Trump has criticised NATO for years and last week threatened to pull the United States out of the alliance over European members' refusal to send ships to unblock the Strait of Hormuz near Iran. That compounded friction within the bloc over his earlier plans to acquire Greenland. Fidan told the state-owned Anadolu news agency that allies had long considered Trump's criticisms to be rhetoric, but were now planning around the possibility of reduced U.S. involvement and ramping up their own defensive capacities. "NATO countries need to turn this Ankara Summit into an opportunity to put ties with the United States on a systematic basis," he said. "If there will be a U.S. withdrawal from some NATO mechanisms, there needs to be



be a plan and programme to phase this out so nobody is left in the open," he added. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte has said he understood Trump's frustrations with the alliance, but that the "large majority of European nations" had been helpful to Washington's war effort in Iran. A senior White House official told Reuters last week that Trump, as part of frustration with NATO, had also considered the option of removing some U.S. troops from Europe.

Why US-Iran talks in Islamabad failed

GNS News Agency, May 3

The failure of the latest round of negotiations between Iran and the United States should not come as a surprise. If anything, it reflects the structural depth of disagreements that have long defined this relationship. These were not tactical gaps that could be bridged over a few rounds of talks; they were fundamental divergences rooted in security perceptions, economic pressures and, above all, a profound trust deficit. At the core lies the unresolved nuclear question. Iran's insistence on retaining its uranium enrichment programme continues to collide with Washington's demand for verifiable limits. Layered onto this is the equally contentious issue of sanctions relief. Tehran seeks immediate access to its frozen assets and economic normalisation, while the United States prefers a phased approach tied to compliance. This sequencing problem has historically derailed diplomacy, and it remains unresolved.

Equally significant is the emergence of the Strait of Hormuz as a central point of contention. Iran increasingly views Hormuz not merely as a geographic feature but as strategic leverage—hinting at control mechanisms, even the possibility of imposing costs on passing vessels. This stands in direct opposition to the long-standing global consensus that these waters must remain open for free navigation. Add to this the regional dimension—particularly tensions linked to Lebanon, ceasefire dynamics, and questions of accountability—and it becomes evident why negotiations faltered. Trust, already fragile, could not sustain such a wide spectrum of disagreements. Yet, the collapse of talks does not signify the end of diplomacy. Negotiations of this nature are inherently iterative, unfolding over months, even years. In the immediate term, a fragile ceasefire is likely to hold, if only because both sides appear to be searching for an exit from escalation.

What is striking, however, is how the strategic narrative has shifted. At the onset of the conflict, Hormuz was peripheral to the discourse. Today, it is the centre of gravity. This transition indicates that Iran has, at least temporarily, seized the initiative. By foregrounding Hormuz, it has reframed the conflict—from a bilateral confrontation to a global economic concern. But such leverage is inherently limited. Disrupting Hormuz is not a cost-free strategy. It places pressure not only on adversaries but also on neighbouring Gulf economies and major Asian consumers of energy. Nearly 89% of the oil passing through Hormuz is destined for Asian markets, making countries such as India and China particularly vulnerable. For India, the implications are immediate: a significant proportion of its LPG imports—nearly half—are sourced from this region, much of it transiting through Hormuz. Any sustained disruption would translate into higher energy costs and economic strain.

Recent developments have further complicated the situation. The United States has signalled an intention to monitor and potentially block vessels suspected of complying with Iranian demands, including the payment of transit-related charges. This introduces an unprecedented layer of contestation—effectively placing two actors in a position to influence maritime movement through a single chokepoint. The logistical feasibility of such enforcement, however, remains questionable. The Strait, though narrow

at approximately 33 kilometres at its tightest, is a high-traffic international waterway. Policing it comprehensively would require enormous naval resources and coordination. Moreover, this sets a troubling precedent. If strategic waterways such as Hormuz become arenas for unilateral control, it raises broader concerns about other chokepoints—from the Strait of Malacca to the Bab el-Mandeb. The global trading system relies on the principle of open seas; any erosion of this norm risks cascading disruptions. The economic consequences are already being felt. Reports suggest that vessels have been compelled to pay substantial sums—running into millions of dollars—to ensure safe passage. Such practices, whether coercive or precautionary, add to shipping costs and, by extension, global inflationary pressures. For energy-importing regions, particularly in Asia, the impact could be severe despite the existence of strategic reserves. At a strategic level, Iran's use of Hormuz as leverage may ultimately prove counterproductive. While it provides short-term bargaining power, it risks long-term isolation. Gulf countries, already uneasy, may increasingly align against such tactics. Indeed, there are indications of growing frustration within the region, with some states even hinting at the possibility of stronger responses. This is where the concept of diminishing returns becomes relevant. The more Iran relies on disruption as a tool, the more it risks alienating not just adversaries but also potential partners. In the long run, such a strategy may weaken its position rather than strengthen it. The United States, for its part, appears to be recalibrating its approach. Rather than direct intervention, the emphasis is on containment—managing escalation while avoiding deeper entanglement. This reflects both strategic caution and domestic political considerations. Similarly, Iran, despite its assertiveness, appears aware of the risks of overextension. The result is a paradoxical situation where both sides project strength while quietly seeking an off-ramp.

The nuclear dimension further complicates matters. Technically, Iran is closer than ever to weapons capability. Once enrichment levels cross the 80% threshold, the transition to weapons-grade material becomes relatively swift. Yet, Iran's calculus is likely shaped by regional consequences. A rapid move towards weaponisation could trigger a broader proliferation cascade, particularly among Gulf states. Meanwhile, non-state actors such as Hezbollah continue to inject volatility into the equation. Operating beyond the full control of state institutions, they complicate efforts at de-escalation. Israel, too, may view the current moment as an opportunity to recalibrate its regional posture, particularly vis-à-vis Hezbollah.

ASEAN foreign ministers urge US and Iran to push for permanent resolution



MANILA, - ASEAN foreign ministers called on Monday for the United States and Iran to continue negotiating a permanent ceasefire. GNS News Agency, April 16nd to their conflict, and to implement the ceasefire fully and effectively. The ministers, who met virtually to discuss the war in the Middle East, also called for the restoration of safe, unimpeded

and continuous passage of vessels and aircraft in the Strait of Hormuz. The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. Beyond immediate security concerns, ASEAN highlighted the broader implications of the conflict on regional stability, especially on energy and food supplies. The ministers of the 11-member bloc stressed the need to prioritise energy access for member states during crises. They reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening a regional mechanism linking member states with China, Japan, and South Korea to prevent and respond to food shortages, price shocks, and supply disruptions. Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Ma. Theresa Lazaro said at a press conference that the ministers also discussed joint approaches to securing fertiliser and other critical agriculture inputs. They also explored the possibility of establishing an ASEAN foreign ministers' crisis communications protocol that could be convened rapidly, Lazaro said. As ASEAN chair, the Philippines is committed to proceeding with the leaders' summit in May, which will focus on food and energy security, as well as the safety of its nationals, she added.

Peru election marred by delays as conservatives lead early count

LIMA Polling station delays and early uncertainty over the runoff contenders marked Peru's general election on Sunday, as voters chose a new president and Congress from a fragmented field of more than 30 candidates. Early official results showed former congresswoman Keiko Fujimori narrowly in the lead with 17.17% closely followed by right-wing former Lima mayor, Rafael Lopez Aliaga with 16.97%, with 37% of votes counted, according to Peru's electoral body, ONPE. The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.

Exit polls had shown Fujimori, daughter of ex-President Alberto Fujimori who was imprisoned for human rights abuses, in the lead, although Lopez Aliaga emerged in the lead earlier in the count underlining the fluidity of the race. Years of political turmoil in the Andean nation have eroded confidence in institutions and left voters deeply disillusioned. With no clear frontrunner and all major candidates polling well below the 50% needed to win outright, a June 7 runoff appeared likely—a scenario that could prolong uncertainty in the world's third-largest copper producer at a time of rising crime and intensifying competition for influence between the United States and China. "I want to express my solidarity with the citizens who today were denied the opportunity to exercise their right to vote," Fujimori said in a brief statement to the press, adding that she would begin a new campaign for the runoff from Monday.

Delays to polling stations opening were reported in some areas on Sunday morning, centered in the capital Lima, following logistical issues involving a contractor responsible for the distribution of electoral material. The disruptions prompted authorities to extend voting hours by one more day, until 6 p.m. local time (2300 GMT) on Monday, for over 50,000 people who were unable to cast their ballots. Roberto Burneo, head of Peru's electoral authority (JNE), said legal action would be taken against the company responsible for distributing the voting materials. Voter Margarita Sandoval, 35, said she had waited in line for two hours without being able to enter her ballot station in Chorrillos, a southern district of the capital.

"I have to work and I can't vote," Sandoval said. "These elections are a disaster." Item 1 of 6 People vote during Peru's general election, in San Juan Miraflores district, in Lima, Peru. People vote during Peru's general election, in San Juan Miraflores district, in Lima, Peru, s Pauca Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab Since 2018, Peru has cycled through eight presidents, fueling skepticism that any new administration will last a full five-year term following a dizzying turnover driven by impeachments, corruption scandals and weak governing coalitions that have paralyzed decision-making.

"People really despise the current Congress," said Martin Cassinelli at the Atlantic Council. "They recognize



them as responsible for the political chaos we've had over the last 10 years," he added. Political distrust has fueled a crowded field spanning the ideological spectrum, including seasoned politicians, a far-right businessman and a television comedian. Among the best known is conservative Fujimori, making her fourth presidential bid after reaching the runoff in all three previous races. Educated in the U.S. and leader of the powerful Popular Force party in Congress, Fujimori has framed herself as a guarantor of order and economic stability, appealing to voters alarmed by surging violent crime. Her candidacy remains polarizing, however, due to her family legacy and past legal troubles. Former Lima mayor Lopez Aliaga, a wealthy businessman with socially conservative views, campaigned on an ultra-conservative platform and had seen support fluctuate in the weeks leading up to the election. Center-left Jorge Nieto, who has pitched himself as a unifying figure with institutional experience, was polling in third place late on Sunday, with 14.1% of the vote. Ricardo Belmont, a former Lima mayor running for the center-left Civic Works Party, saw a late rise in support, elevating him in polls in recent days.

Public insecurity has emerged as the dominant theme of the campaign. Homicides and extortion have climbed in recent years, driven in part by drug trafficking and illegal mining. Most leading candidates have proposed expanding the role of the armed forces in internal security. The election also carries geopolitical implications. Peru's deepening economic relationship with China—now its largest trading partner and a major investor in mining and infrastructure—has raised concerns in Washington, which has stepped up diplomatic and security engagement ahead of the vote. The two leading candidates have said they will maintain close ties with the U.S. Whoever advances to the runoff will face a fractured Congress and newly reinstated Senate, which may complicate efforts to pass legislation and raise the risk of renewed impeachment battles. Reporting by Lucinda Elliott and Marco Aquino; Editing by Cassandra Garrison, Bill Berkrot, Laura Gottesdiener, Lincoln Feast and Kate Mathers

Southport girls' murders should have been prevented, UK inquiry says



LIVERPOOL, England, GNS News Agency, May 3 The murders of three young girls at a Taylor Swift-themed dance event in Britain in 2024 should have been prevented, but there was a "fundamental failure" by state bodies to recognise the risk the killer posed, a public inquiry concluded on Monday. Teenager Axel Rudakubana launched the frenzied knife attack at the summer vacation event in Southport, northern England, on July 29, 2024, in what Prime Minister Keir Starmer called "a devastating moment" in British history. The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. He was jailed for at least 52 years after he admitted the killings shortly before his trial last year.

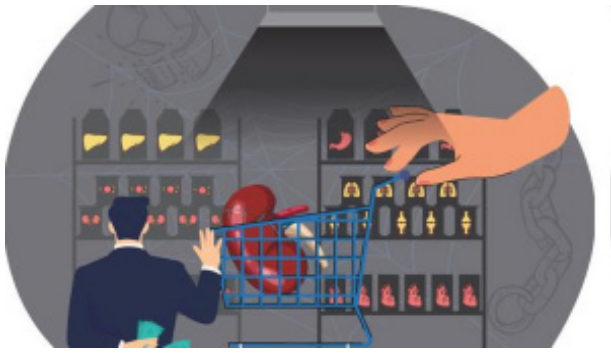
Inquiry chair Adrian Fulford said there was a failure by agencies—including the police, the counter-radicalisation scheme Prevent and social services—to "take ownership of the risk" Rudakubana posed. "This failure lies at the heart of why (Rudakubana) was able to mount the attack, despite so many warning signs of his capacity for fatal violence," he added. Rudakubana was referred to Prevent three times, firstly in December 2019 after taking a knife to school and searching online for school shootings, but no further action was taken. Rudakubana attended his previous school later in December 2019 with a hockey stick and a knife, which

Fulford described as "a watershed event". "If appropriate arrangements and reasonable resources had been in place to address the risk that (Rudakubana) posed to others from December 2019 onwards, it is highly likely that the tragedy ... would not have occurred," Fulford said. He also said Rudakubana's parents "bear significant responsibility" for failing to alert the authorities to the risk their son posed. Rudakubana, 17, killed Bebe King, six, Elsie Dot Stancombe, seven, and Alice Dasilva Aguiar, nine, and wounded another 10 in an attack which was followed by days of nationwide rioting.

UK and France to co-host talks this week on possible defensive naval mission for Hormuz

PARIS/LONDON - Britain and France will this week co-host talks aimed at restoring freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, including discussions on what President Emmanuel Macron described as a possible strictly defensive naval mission. The talks are intended to bring together Britain, France and other countries willing to join a peaceful multinational mission aimed at restoring freedom of navigation in the Strait. The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. "This strictly defensive mission, which will be separate from the warring parties, is intended to be deployed as soon as the situation allows," Macron said in a post on X. Tensions in the Gulf have intensified after the United States said it would begin a blockade of maritime traffic entering and exiting Iranian ports, while Iran has effectively shut the Strait, a route that carries about a fifth of the world's oil consumption. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the continued closure of the Strait of Hormuz was deeply damaging global shipping and was adding to cost-of-living pressures.

How a Vizag woman's death brought to light biggest organ-trafficking network in Andhra Pradesh



In early November 2025, B. Yamuna (29) from Visakhapatnam left home for a trip to Araku Valley with friends. Yamuna, who was separated from her husband and living with her parents, supported her family by working at a grocery shop in Madhurawada. However, her family's world shattered on November 11, when Yamuna's brother Nagendra received a call from an unknown number informing him that his sister had passed away at a hospital in Tirupati and asking him to collect her body immediately. Nagendra's initial reaction was shock, followed by denial, but when he re-dialled the same number, the caller confirmed the tragic news.

Nagendra, who works as an AC mechanic, also manages a small shop in Boddapalem of Anandapuram mandal in Visakhapatnam, while his father, Narsinga Rao, runs a pan shop. They desperately tried to verify the information, but the caller had not provided any further details. The family immediately approached a distant relative with political connections, and soon the information reached the Anandapuram police station in Visakhapatnam, which alerted the Tirupati police. While Yamuna's father and brother were en route to Tirupati, the Annamayya police unearthed the biggest organ-trafficking racket in Andhra Pradesh operating from Global Multi-Specialty Hospital in Madanapalle of Annamayya district, and arrested several key suspects. It soon became clear through the investigation how Yamuna found herself at the Tirupati hospital, 900 km from her hometown, rather than heading to Araku Valley.

Yamuna was under the impression that a "paid kidney donation procedure" would end her financial struggles once she received the promised amount of ₹78 lakh — money she hoped would help educate her children in an English-medium school, according to police records. According to the investigators, the hospital records state that Yamuna slipped into a coma after one of her kidneys was removed. Whether she died on the operating table or during her purported transfer to a hospital in Tirupati is still under investigation. Yamuna's untimely demise has blown the lid on the racket involving government doctors, hospital insiders, visiting surgeons, forgery networks, and how vulnerable individuals and families were being exploited. A modest town hospital in Madanapalle emerged as the epicentre of an interstate criminal operation that preyed on the vulnerable, operating in shadows where medicine, money, and illegal organ trade merged into a corporate-like syndicate. The investigation revealed that another woman from Visakhapatnam had also undergone the same procedure through the same racket at approximately the same time. However, she disappeared after Yamuna's death and the subsequent police involvement. Preliminary investigation found that Yamuna's kidney was being transported to Goa for transplantation. What happened to the other woman's kidney, and how much she was paid, remain under probe.

According to the reports, Yamuna was approached months earlier by a group of middlemen who were aware of her financial struggles. Yamuna who was struggling to make ends meet became an easy target. The brokers promised her a financial relief in exchange for her kidney. A police officer revealed that the brokers told Yamuna, "kidney donation is absolutely safe. With one kidney, life will be normal. The recipient is a rich businessman from Mumbai and Goa. He will take care of you in the future, and you may even get a good job in Mumbai or Dubai. Immediately after the operation, you will get ₹78 lakh." Hoping for a better future for her children, Yamuna arrived in Madanapalle and, using false documents, became a donor prepared to violate the Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act (THOTA 1994).

According to reports, after the operation resulted in her death, the carefully constructed façade collapsed. The hospital authorities desperately tried to cover up and informed her family that "unexpected complications" led to her death and demanded that they take the body home immediately. Suspicious about the whole episode, the fam-

ily demanded a post-mortem, which revealed the illegal kidney removal, contradicting the hospital record that cited post-surgical complications as the cause of death. Guided by the Madanapalle police, the family lodged a formal complaint, bringing months of covert illegal operations under the scanner.

A chilling picture of an organised kidney racket exploiting vulnerable communities emerged. The Global Multi-Specialty Hospital in Madanapalle had allegedly become a covert organ transplant centre. Police discovered donors admitted under false identities, and video evidence showed brokers escorting them into restricted zones. Hospital logs, patient records, and administrative entries were riddled with glaring inconsistencies. Following the exposure, district and police authorities raided the hospital, sealed it, and seized all documents and digital materials. Forensic teams joined a special investigation team (SIT), now probing the entire network. The police have so far arrested eight people. Among them is A1, Dr. Anjaneyulu, the hospital owner and a senior government doctor serving as District Coordinator of Health Services (DCHS), along with two dialysis technicians from government hospitals in Madanapalle and Kadiiri. Police also identified the involvement of a senior consultant surgeon from Bengaluru, believed to have performed the removal of Yamuna's kidney. Call data records of all accused, including brokers, are under scrutiny. Investigators suspect that many more vulnerable donors may have been brought to Madanapalle under similar circumstances. Some may be suffering silently, while others remain untraceable.

The case has shaken Madanapalle and sent ripples through Visakhapatnam, where kidney racket cases are not new. Social activists note that slum dwellers and low-income communities in Visakhapatnam and tribal hamlets in North Andhra districts are frequently targeted due to financial distress. Pragada Vasu of Association for Tribal and Urban Development (AUTD), who works extensively in urban slums, stressed the urgent need for stricter monitoring. "Many families depend on daily-wage work. Their incomes fluctuate, and unexpected expenses push them into debt cycles, making them vulnerable," he said. Organ brokers exploit these vulnerabilities. They promise large sums, claiming the procedure is safe. Most donors receive only a small advance, with the full payment promised after surgery — which rarely comes, he added. Visakhapatnam's connection to kidney rackets dates back years. In 2022, Vinay Kumar of Vambay Colony was promised ₹78 lakh but he received only ₹2 lakh after surgery, prompting a complaint that led to the arrests of medical professionals in Pendurthi. In 2019, Sraddha Hospital near Collectorate Junction was shut down after multiple illegal kidney surgeries were uncovered. A Bengaluru doctor and several others were arrested.

Yamuna's case is not just an unfortunate incident but "the tip of the iceberg," where poverty collides with thriving criminal networks in the illegal organ trade. Her story lays bare the dangerous intersection of poverty, lack of awareness, medical misconduct, and organised crime. Her brother, Nagendra, and her mother, Suramma, failed to understand why Yamuna hid the truth. "The guilt is killing me every second. I failed to recognise her distress," Nagendra said. Fear and anger enveloped Boddapalem for a week after the incident, but life is slowly returning to normal. However, the threat remains — brokers may still be lurking nearby, waiting for their next victim. Mala Mahanadu State president Yamala Sudarshan, who met the grieving family, condemned the incident, calling it "an assault on the dignity of the poor" and demanded a judicial inquiry into the "dangerous erosion of medical ethics." As investigators probe further, they uncover layers of an interstate network, suspecting that donors are being recruited not only from North Andhra but also from Karnataka.

Tamil Nadu, and the urban slums of major metropolitan cities. A SIT officer said that in cities like Mumbai and Kolkata, there is no shortage of kidney recipients willing to pay ₹70 lakh to ₹1 crore per organ. "The tragedy is that 90% of victims receive barely 5% of the amount. The game always favours the syndicate. Ironically, even the recipients sometimes find themselves cheated. If anything goes wrong, neither side dares to approach the police. Personal shame is what the networks exploit," he said. Deputy Superintendent of Police (Madanapalle) S. Mahendra told The Hindu that the investigation has entered a crucial phase. "None from the kidney racket will escape. We have already arrested several key accused. The search is on for A2, a Bengaluru-based surgeon. Our teams are also looking for vital clues in other States, including Goa. If the probe expands or enters new avenues, we are prepared for any challenge," he said.

Delhi can stop blaming farm fires for its pollution woes

The paddy harvesting season for 2025 officially ended on November 30. Punjab and Haryana recorded a 90% reduction in stubble burning incidents this year compared to 2021. In fact, farm fires in the two States declined to their lowest levels in five years in 2025. However, pollution levels in Delhi remained stubbornly high, triggering protests last month. This disparity shows that local sources remain the primary driver of the capital's persistent pollution crisis.

Notably, the Supreme Court on Monday suggested that farmers could not be made scapegoats for air pollution in the national capital. The Court also asked why blue skies were visible during the pandemic years when stubble burning was relatively high and vehicles were off the roads. The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)'s assessment of Delhi's early winter trends and annual air quality confirms this reality: Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) can no longer hide behind the smokescreen of farm fires.

The incidence of crop burning has substantially reduced in Punjab and Haryana this year, partly due to the massive floods in Punjab during the monsoon. In the October-November period, the daily contribution of farm fires to pollution levels in Delhi mostly remained below 5%, or between 5-15% for a few days and peaked at 22% only between November 12 and 13. The chart below shows Delhi's Air Quality Index (left axis) versus contribution of farm fires (right axis: %) in the October-November period.

While the reduced fires prevented extreme spikes, the Air Quality Index (AQI) stayed in the 'very poor' to 'severe' range for almost the entire month of November, indicating the significance of Delhi's local, year-round sources of pollution. Importantly, PM 2.5 remained the prominent pollutant for 34 days in the October-November period. Data show that the air is toxic to breathe not just because of the increase in the levels of particulate matter but also due to the contribution of local sources. According to the report, the daily particulate pollution spikes are closely reinforced by traffic-related emissions of both NO₂ and CO, especially



under low-dispersion winter conditions. Both NO₂ and CO are highly toxic and harmful gases. The chart below shows the correlation of PM₁₀, with CO and NO₂ in the Nov. 21 - Nov. 28 period. In the graphs, the PM₁₀ values are plotted on the left axis. This problem has become widespread over the years. CSE's report noted that in 2018, about 13 hotspots were officially identified based on their pollution levels that not only exceeded the standards but also the city's average levels. These hotspots have continued to remain extremely polluted. With an annual PM_{2.5} average of 119 g/m³ in 2025, Jahangirpuri is the most polluted hotspot, followed by Bawana, Wazirpur and Anand Vihar.

Over the years, several other hotspots have emerged in the city. Vivek Vihar recorded 101 g/m³ in 2025, similar to Ashok Vihar. Nehru Nagar, Alipur, Sirifort, Dwarka Sector 8, and Patparganj have all recorded more than 90 g/m³.

The chart below shows the trend in annual PM₁₀ level among original and emerging pollution hotspots in Delhi and its surroundings. The report also noted that several NCR cities remained just as polluted as Delhi, and were often worse off. While a region-wide smog episode affected NCR towns too, Bahadurgarh endured persistent conditions, with the episode lasting 10 days. The town's average smog intensity exceeded that of Delhi's.

The 83-year-old behind Hyderabad's favourite Sakinalu: The story of Sreedevi Swagruha foods



Women, seated in a row, at an arm's distance from one another, shape sakinalu with practiced ease — ring after ring, coil after coil. Each woman has a portion of the smooth rice flour dough beside her. With a deft pinch using thumb, index, and middle finger, they roll the dough into thin strands, curling them into perfect spirals. This is an everyday scene at the Sreedevi Swagruha warehouse in Nacharam, Hyderabad. The brand that has become synonymous with Telugu pindi vantakalu (traditional Telugu sweets and savouries). The primary ingredient for all the savouries is rice flour. For many in Telangana, any event in a family, irrespective of the size, is incomplete without snacks like sakinalu, sarvapindi, chegodu and ariselu from Sreedevi Swagruha Foods, Telangana Pindi Vantakalu. Their largest outlet is at HMT Nagar in Nacharam.

The brand, which now operates from the three floors of a warehouse, made its beginning as a home business in 1998. In the house of Vangapalli Savithamma who took to making these snacks and catering to small orders. The sakinalu became so popular that she earned the moniker Sakinalu Savithamma. All this without attending any start-up masterclass. She also probably isn't aware that start-ups are a buzzword today. Twenty-seven years later, at 83, Savithamma still visits the factory occasionally. When she is in the factory, she joins the women to prepare snacks. Hailing from Jagtial, near Karimnagar, Savithamma's family shifted to Hyderabad when her husband, who was a contractor, sought better opportunities. Savithamma said, "On a random day, I just decided to make some snacks because someone wanted sakinalu. It is a traditional Telangana snack and we would make it home on all festivals. Growing up, I would see these snacks being prepared at every festival in our home. I would join them in making whatever was being prepared. That's how most traditional sweets and snacks are learnt at home isn't it?" The snack brand is popular for another Telangana snack —

Sarpapindi. As orders started coming in, her daughter-in-law V Renuka joined her. Within a couple of years what started with just two individuals turned into a family of nearly 100 employees. "Initially we would take orders and send it over through someone, or people would collect it from my house. We used to grind everything in a small mixer grinder, producing two kilograms daily. As orders grew, we kept expanding. We shifted to a shop in the same building where we were staying. Within two years Sreedevi Swagruha Foods, Telangana Pindi Vantakalu was set up at HMT Nagar," she recalls. They decided to dedicate the brand name to a Goddess. "My daughter-in-law managed the shop and the counter. She would be there from the time it opens, so people started calling her Sreedevi amma," adds Savithamma with a smile.

As the brand grew, they decided to shift to a 15,000 sq.ft state-of-the-art facility in the industrial area at Nacharam. Nearly 500 kilograms of snacks are prepared here each day. Talking about the expansion journey, she says, "Our growth was never about marketing; it was the trust our customers placed in us. We became a part of every festival and wedding, which made us more responsible with our products. We continue to buy raw material from the same vendors we did business with from day one. And we keep our utensils separate. No two snacks are fried in the same oil or kadhai. We also do not reuse oil. This keeps our snacks fresh for a longer time." Savithamma also takes pride in mentioning that "65 of our employees have been with us for over 25 years. It is their collaboration. We have experts in every snack we prepare, including laddoos." Inside the warehouse, it was not just the preparation of snacks that I witnessed. The brand has mechanised murukku presses, and machines knead the dough for various snacks. A washing machine and dryer is constantly at work, washing and drying the cloth on which the snacks are laid to set before frying. Savithamma said she was ridiculed in the beginning. "People in my village said 'patnam lo poyee pindi vantalu amutava?' (After going to a city, why will you sell snacks?) But I did not pay heed. Some of the Telangana snacks are laborious to make, many people might not have the time or even know how to prepare them. With that thought I went ahead with my idea and I am glad I did. I teach my recipes to all my workers. I believe knowledge shared is knowledge gained. When it is about native recipes, it is best to share to continue the tradition of food."

The brand also has an e-commerce platform named savithrammas.com. "Going online with savithrammas.com was my grandson Ram Gopal's idea. He felt the need to make food of Telangana popular by making it easily available to everyone," added the proud grandmother.

The push to globalise Indian storytelling



In Bengaluru, Megha Gupta runs a small gaming studio, Wala Interactive, with a workforce of half a dozen people. They are working on Spook-A-Boo, a ghost-hunting "couch co-op" game in which multiple players work together to trap an evasive group of ghosts across a series of levels with progressively challenging layouts. Gupta started the studio in 2017, but this will be its first game for personal computers (PCs) and gaming consoles, and one of just a few of its original titles. Most of the work her team has done over the last few years has been relatively invisible: developing mobile games for "hypercasual" game publishers who hire firms like Wala Interactive to develop the gaming ideas they come up with.

"We actually developed over 50 games in two and a half years with a team of four," Gupta says over a phone call. Those games involved over 70 different mechanics — a wealth of experience. They earned the studio a small fortune that she chose to invest in Spook-A-Boo, a "bootstrapped" game that she is self-financing with \$200,000. It appears to be in an advanced stage of development, given that her firm has released its demo on the PC gaming storefront, Steam. Wala Interactive is part of a growing movement within India's creative industries — animation, video games, comics, and more traditional entertainment industries — to progress from being a supplement to the world's major Hollywood studios and game publishers' low-cost workforce to actually ideating and therefore owning intellectual property (IP) and selling it to audiences around the world. Occasional hits India doesn't have a breakout franchise that has resonated worldwide despite having firms that work behind the scenes for many global franchises. There are occasional titles that have had some success such as the Telugu blockbuster RRR, which benefited from a re-release in the United States that carried it to the Oscars, where it made history by winning the Academy Award for Best Original Song for the track Naatu Naatu. Actor Aamir Khan's films generally do well in China when authorities permit their screening under the annual quota for foreign theatrical titles. However, Indians' creative endeavours are yet to yield a steady stream of cultural production and the financial gains it entails. One hurdle is finding an audience at home itself. Gupta points out that PC and console gaming are "practically non-existent" in India, while mobile gaming is big enough to garner global attention — Battlegrounds Mobile India (earlier known as PUBG Mobile) has been downloaded over 240 million times, giving its Korean developer, Krafton, Inc., a scale that only China can rival. For gaming on larger screens, the numbers are far dimmer: industry estimates suggest that India has fewer PlayStation 5 consoles than gram panchayats. Only around 10% of households have a desktop PC or a laptop. "It will always be that 10% of the audience and we have to fight for that 10% of audience's time," Gupta says, which explains the decision to go global by design. The global video gaming industry is worth hundreds of billions of dollars and much of that value comes from players spending significant sums on PC and console titles. The market for those lucrative segments is thriving abroad, though limited in India. Abeer Kapoor and illustrator Ujan Dutta who have published a graphic novel, Zoraver and the Lost Gods. There is a recognised gap between Indian artists' work on games, movies, and other big-ticket content and the scale of globally resonating creations originating in the country. A major effort by the Union government to bridge this gap was the establishment of the National Centre of Excellence for

Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics, and Extended Reality (AVGC-XR), targeting the very sectors where Indian expertise is already leveraged. "This national centre of excellence will also extensively focus on creation of India's intellectual properties for domestic consumption and global outreach, overall leading to creation of content based on India's rich historical and cultural heritage," read a statement issued by the government last year.

At the World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit in Mumbai in May this year, the government brought in speakers from firms such as YouTube and Netflix, as well as an array of Bollywood stars, to drive the aspiration to bridge this gap at home. In the run-up to the event, the government announced a \$1-billion fund to support the creative economy. Support like this is crucial for one major reason — content thrives in an ecosystem — and creators slugging it out amid a lack of appetite for risking money on creative endeavours understand this deeply. Abeer Kapoor has been running Civic Games Lab since 2018 from a converted residential flat in south Delhi. He has created board games like The Poll based on Indian elections and just published a graphic novel, Zoraver and the Lost Gods, with long-time collaborator and illustrator Ujan Dutta. Kapoor was able to finish many of his projects not because they held promise for investors, but because thriving ecosystems abroad and non-profit creative funds were available to him through supporters such as Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, Germany's main foreign aid agency, and the Gates Foundation. "We are a service delivery partner for international development organisations as game builders. And whenever we get an opportunity to build what we want, we do that," he says. In Germany, where Kapoor has spent some time, he saw an ecosystem where "you're able to let an idea germinate and take it to market" and a "variety of local and state-level funding, from private to public, that invests in the business of storytelling." From the university and local government level to the highest reaches of the federal government, he says, Germany has a thriving AVGC-XR ecosystem — winning the country's Spiel des Jahres ('Game of the Year') board game award practically guarantees a boost in sales around the world. Beyond ecosystems, Kapoor says there is massive potential in existing IPs that he considers "incredibly undertapped". He points to the deal between game studio Ubisoft and action-adventure novelist Tom Clancy, in which the firm bought the rights to use his name for a series of games — a deal that runs into millions of euros. In India, Kapoor says, there is potential to do that with the fictional town of Malgudi in R.K. Narayan's Malgudi Days. "We are deeply obsessed with the idea of Malgudi," he says. "India needs to continuously create and recreate types of Malgudi... India has a static IP. There is no sharing of it as in the West. Let's take Malgudi and Tom Clancy's novels. Both of them are full of stories. Both of them have a set of characters, right? And fundamentally, both of them are beautifully built worlds." The world of Malgudi could have been harnessed continuously but it hasn't, he says. The country needs "canonical, referential works" because working with those "again and again and again is how you build a visual culture for a society". Right now, Kapoor says, he is constantly speaking to the estate of Pran, the Hindi comic creator behind Chacha Chaudhary, trying to convince it to let him work on the property. Leaning in to the mic during the interview, he says, "Abeer and Ujan want to be able to work on Indian IPs that are existing and old, including, but not limited to Chacha Chaudhary, Commando Dhruv, anything that is owned by Indrajal, Diamond Comics, anything. Please reach out." Funding from abroad in film, at the office of the Department of Lore (DoL), set up by filmmaker Anand Gandhi and his long-time creative partner Zain Memon, over a dozen young people are developing an entire IP, Maya, a "transmedia" franchise they hope will resonate around the world. Like Kapoor, the team has relied largely on funding from abroad, raising funds through a campaign on the Kickstarter platform in which the majority of funds have come from U.S.-based contributors. Memon, whose board game Shasn has been a breakout hit around the world, with strategy elements rooted in an interpretation of Indian politics, said in an interview at the DoL's office that he and Gandhi had worked on the setting of Maya for four years,

Two tankers with Iranian oil anchor off Indian ports; Iran-flagged Felicity off Sikka, Curacao-flagged Jaya near Paradip



After a crude oil tanker laden with Iranian oil reached the waters off the port of Paradip in Odisha, another Iranian oil tanker has reached the anchorage of Gujarat's Sikka port, according to ship tracking data. These tankers mark the first cargoes of Iranian crude to reach Indian ports in almost seven years, following the sanctions waiver announced by the US last month. The one-month waiver allowed sale of Iranian oil already in tankers on the water in a bid to ease the supply disruption in the global market and keep oil prices in check. After peace talks failed over the weekend, the US has now announced a blockade of Iranian ports in an effort to restrict Tehran's revenue from oil exports.

Very large crude carrier (VLCC) Felicity dropped anchor off Sikka port late Sunday (April 12), according to vessel tracking data. The tanker sails under the Iranian flag and is operated by the National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC), as per shipping database. As of Monday 10 am, its location was the Sikka anchorage, according to data from maritime analytics provider MarineTraffic. Trade sources indicated that Felicity may be laden with 2 million barrels of Iranian oil meant for private sector refining giant Reliance Industries (RIL). The company did not immediately respond to a request for comment.Felicity follows Jaya, a Curacao-flagged VLCC, which reached the waters off Paradip port a couple of days earlier, and is estimated to be carrying 2 million barrels of Iranian crude for public sector refiner Indian Oil Corporation (IOC). Both Felicity and Jaya—among the tankers sanctioned by the US—lifted crude from Iran's main oil export facility of Kharg Island, according to trade sources. Jaya is estimated to have been loaded late February, just before the US and Israel launched strikes on Iran. Felicity is estimated to have lifted oil from Kharg some-

time in the middle of March.

A recent Reuters report had said that India's shipping ministry gave special permission to four tankers carrying Iranian oil to berth at the Sikka port. Felicity was among the tankers for which the permission was reportedly given. Industry experts believe that some more Iranian crude is expected to reach India over the coming days, before the US waiver for Iranian oil purchases expires on April 19.A few days back, the government confirmed that India is buying Iranian crude and there were no payment-related hurdles in buying Tehran's oil, following the sanctions waiver for Iranian oil on water. "India imports crude oil from 40+ countries, with companies having full flexibility to source oil from different sources & geographies based on commercial considerations. Amid Middle East supply disruptions, Indian refiners have secured their crude oil requirements, including from Iran; and there is no payment hurdle for Iranian crude imports..." the Petroleum Ministry had said in an April 4 post on social media platform X. It had also announced that a tanker carrying Iranian liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) was discharging cargo at the New Mangalore port.

Amid the West Asia war, the US on March 21 suspended for a month the sanctions on Iranian crude already loaded on tankers in a bid to allow as many barrels of oil as possible to flow into the international market to improve the global oil supply situation and curb spiralling crude oil prices. The waiver from Washington was similar to the one issued for Russian oil earlier in March; India's Russian oil imports have surged since the war began. India hasn't imported Iranian crude since May 2019 due to reimposition of US sanctions on Tehran by the first Trump administration.According to the general licence issued by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the US Department of the Treasury on March 21, transactions related to the sale, delivery, or offloading of crude oil and petroleum products of Iranian origin — loaded on any vessel, including tankers sanctioned by the US, as of 12.01 eastern daylight time (9.31 am India time) on March 20 — are authorised until April 19.Vessel movements through the Strait of Hormuz were effectively halted due to the conflict that began on February 28; Iranian oil shipments largely continued unabated though. The Strait accounted for one-fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) flows. Around 2.5–2.7 million bpd of India's crude imports—around half of the overall oil imports—have transited the Strait in recent months, while the longer-term average is around 40%. India depends on imports to meet over 88% of its requirement of crude oil.

LPG tanker Jag Vikram crosses Strait of Hormuz; first Indian vessel to transit since US-Iran ceasefire announcement



Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tanker Jag Vikram crossed the Strait of Hormuz between Friday night and Saturday morning, becoming the first India-flagged vessel to cross the maritime chokepoint since the announcement of the temporary two-week ceasefire between the US and Iran, according to ship tracking data. Jag Vikram is the ninth Indian ship to exit the Persian Gulf since early March; another 15 India-flagged vessels are in the Persian Gulf with its exit. As of 8 pm (India time) on Saturday, the tanker was in the Gulf of Oman, well beyond the Strait, and was sailing eastwards towards India's west coast.According to the government, Jag Vikram is carrying around 20,400 tonnes of LPG with 24 seafarers on board. It is expected to arrive at Mumbai on April 15. The tanker is a mid-sized gas carrier (MGC) owned by Mumbai-based Great Eastern Shipping Company, as per shipping databases. The tanker has a deadweight capacity of over 26,000 tonnes. Deadweight tonnage is the total weight a vessel can carry, including cargo, fuel, fresh water, ballast water, provisions, and crew.

According to trade sources, Jag Vikram had been waiting to cross the Strait of Hormuz for over a week now. On April 3, The Indian Express had reported that LPG tankers Green Asha and Jag Vikram were expected to cross the crucial waterway in a few days' time. Green Asha transited the Strait on April 5. Scores of vessels have been stranded in the Persian Gulf since the war began, with only a few being able to safely transit the Strait, and that, too, in coordination with Iran.Seven of the eight other Indian LPG tankers that crossed the Strait of Hormuz over the past few weeks were very large gas carriers (VLGCs), with more than double the LPG carrying capacity than an MGC. One was an MGC. The remaining 15 Indian vessels in the Persian Gulf include at least one more LPG tanker, four crude oil tankers, one liquefied natural gas (LNG) tanker, one chemical products tanker, three container ships, two bulk carriers, and a few vessels undergoing routine maintenance.While transiting the Strait of Hormuz, Jag Vikram was signalling that it was an Indian ship with Indian crew on board. Such identity broadcasts have become a standard of sorts among vessels crossing the Strait in coordination with Iranian authorities, which are regulating vessel movements. The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow waterway between Iran and Oman that connects the Persian Gulf with the Arabian Sea; it is a critical maritime chokepoint for global energy flows. Around one-fifth of global oil and gas flows transited the Strait before the war began.

India is among the countries that have been engaged with Iran at the diplomatic level for safe passage of their ships through the Strait of Hormuz, where Tehran brought vessel movements to an effective halt amid the ongoing West Asia war. With the ceasefire announcement on Wednesday, there were hopes that vessel movements through the Strait would progressively increase. While some movement in traffic has reportedly picked up a bit, flows remain highly constricted.Amid reports that Iran wants to impose a toll or a transit fee on merchant vessels crossing the Strait of Hormuz, India continues to press for free and safe navigation through the waterway. In response to re-

ports regarding the potential formalisation of a toll by Iran for passage through the Strait, a senior Foreign Ministry official recently said that there has been "absolutely no discussion" on the issue between India and Iran, adding that India maintains its long-held stance on the matter and will evaluate future scenarios if and when they arise.

There had been reports that Iran was already charging a "toll" from some vessels before allowing them to cross the Strait of Hormuz. The Indian government has been categorically denying the payment of any toll or charge to the Iranians for the passage of India-flagged ships through the waterway. Since the war began, eight India-flagged vessels—all LPG tankers—have returned from the Persian Gulf. India has high dependence on West Asia for its oil and gas supplies, most of which come to the country via the Strait of Hormuz. The Strait is also important for India's supplies of other commodities, including fertilisers and petrochemicals."On the question of toll...there has been no discussion on this point between us and Iran. So that is where we are. As to what will be the scenario if a certain situation arises or happens in future, we'll see when the time comes. But our point of view at this point in time is that we continue to call for free and safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz," Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on Thursday.

Like most other natural waterways that are shipping chokepoints, the Strait of Hormuz is an international strait, and no tolls are charged just for crossing them, as per the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Although neither Iran nor the US have ratified the convention, it is widely accepted as international law, and Washington and Tehran have mostly abided by it. Sources indicated that changing the status of the Strait of Hormuz is a question of international law and would be required to be done through the UN.Prior to the ceasefire, Iran had said that non-hostile vessels linked to countries other than the US, Israel, and their allies can cross the strait in coordination with Iranian authorities. With the ceasefire announcement on Wednesday, Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said that safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz will be possible for two weeks but "via coordination with Iran's Armed Forces and with due consideration of technical limitations".

India's inflation rises to 3.4 per cent in March on CPI data

New Delhi: India's inflation rate, based on the new Consumer Price Index (CPI) series with 2024 as the base year, edged up to 3.4 per cent in March compared to the same month of the previous year, according to data released by the Ministry of Statistics on Monday.

The commodities that recorded the highest inflation during the month were silver jewellery, which saw a 148.61 per cent jump in prices, and gold jewellery, which clocked a 45.92 per cent increase in prices.Overall food inflation in March stood at 3.87 per cent, largely because vegetables such as tomato and cauliflower turned more expensive during the month. However, the prices of onion, potato, and garlic recorded a double-digit decline during the month compared to the same month of the previous year, while pulses also turned cheaper. The prices of arhar and tur daal dropped by 9.56 per cent, while chickpea registered a 7.87 per cent fall in price.Sequentially, the inflation in March was a tad higher than 3.21 per cent in the previous month of February and the revised figure of 2.74 per cent for January this year, when the new series was launched.

‘I changed most of the furniture...’: Inside Dhurandhar actor Gaurav Gera’s minimal and unfiltered 28-year-old Mumbai sanctuary



There is something quietly grounding about spaces that are not curated for display but shaped by lived experience. Step into Gaurav Gera's Mumbai apartment in Oshiwara, and you find a home that reflects just that. It is simple, functional and deeply personal. During a candid home tour with *Curly Tales*, the *Dhurandhar* actor opened up not just about his home but also about the thought process behind it. From white walls and a neutral palette to indoor plants and a seamless layout, the space feels calm without trying too hard.His connection to the neighbourhood itself is rooted in time and familiarity. "I am here from 1998... So, around 28 years. Since I have come, I have always stayed in Andheri. So, I am familiar with this place... So, this area is, I feel, where I belong," he shared, reflecting a sense of belonging. The house itself mirrors his personality. Minimal, practical, and free from unnecessary indulgence. As he put it, "I didn't do much... The things that were there earlier, I put them there. Rest, I changed most of the furniture. IKEA's, I thought, it was easy... Very practical."

What stands out are the personal details that give the space character without overwhelming it. From fish motifs brought back from Thailand—"Fish is for good luck. So, I wanted it. Fish is pointing upwards. So, I really wanted to bring it"—to repurposed furniture and everyday objects like "utensils with broken handles" that he chooses not to discard, the home reflects continuity and emotional attachment. The environment also supports his need for quiet and focus, with cosy nooks where he likes to spend most of his free time.At the same time, there is a contrast within the home. While most of it leans towards minimalism, his gad-

get and content room is filled with technology, reflecting his creative side. "I am very, heavily into gadgets... Rest, I don't like cars, clothes, anything else," he admitted. This duality between simplicity and creative stimulation, along with personal corners filled with awards, photographs, and memories, creates a space that feels both functional and emotionally layered.Even everyday habits, like cooking his own meals or adapting to lactose intolerance, add to the sense of a home that supports independence while staying rooted in comfort and familiarity. Altogether, the apartment is less about aesthetics and more about emotional ease, identity, and lived experience.How do minimalist, clutter-free living spaces impact mental clarity, stress levels, and overall emotional well-being?

Neha Cadabam, senior psychologist and executive director, Cadabam's Hospitals, tells indianexpress.com, "A minimalist, clutter-free environment reduces cognitive overload by limiting constant visual stimuli competing for attention. This allows the brain to process information more efficiently, improving focus and mental clarity."Gaurav Gera home Creating distinct zones within a home helps the brain establish clear contextual boundaries (Source: YouTube/ Curly Tales)From a psychological standpoint, she says, organised spaces are associated with lower cortisol levels, which directly impacts stress reduction. Such environments also create a sense of control and predictability, both of which are essential for emotional stability and overall well-being.How designing separate zones for work, rest, and creativity within a home support better mental balanceCreating distinct zones within a home helps the brain establish clear contextual boundaries, confirms Cadabam, which is critical for regulating attention and emotional states. When work, rest, and creative activities are spatially separated,

it reduces role overlap and mental fatigue.Gaurav Gera home From fish motifs brought back from Thailand to repurposed furniture and everyday objects that he chooses not to discard, the home reflects continuity and emotional attachment.)"This zoning enables more effective switching between focused productivity and relaxation, improving both output and recovery. For individuals in creative fields, dedicated spaces can also act as psychological triggers that enhance flow and ideation," concludes the expert.

‘Can you be both insulin resistant and have elevated blood sugar?’



The idea of having both insulin resistance and elevated blood sugar levels isn't just possible — it is the hallmark of Type 2 diabetes. While the body can initially compensate for insulin resistance by producing more insulin, blood sugar levels inevitably rise once the pancreas can no longer keep up with the demand.

The discussion recently flared up on Quora, where an internet user enquired 'Can you be both insulin resistant and have elevated blood sugar?'. We reached out to Dr Rajiv Kovil, Head of Diabetology and weight loss expert, Zandra Healthcare and Co-founder of Rang De Neela Initiative, seeking answers, rooted in medical facts."The answer is a clear and clinically important yes," the diabetologist tells indianexpress.com confirming the possibility."It is often the earliest detectable abnormality in metabolic disease, long

before glucose levels begin to rise," the diabetologist notes, pointing out that the human body has a remarkable ability to compensate.In the early stages, you can be insulin resistant while your blood sugar still looks completely normal. That's because the body produces extra insulin to keep glucose levels in check.Even during this phase, changes may already be underway—higher insulin levels, increasing belly fat, and low-grade inflammation—often without obvious warning signs.Over time, this balance can break down. When the pancreas can no longer keep up with the body's rising insulin demand, blood sugar begins to rise. That's when both insulin resistance and elevated glucose exist together—often signalling progression toward Type 2 Diabetes. "By the time glucose rises, years of metabolic injury have already occurred," Dr Kovil says.Why normal reports can be misleading—and what to watch forRoutine tests like fasting glucose or HbA1c don't measure insulin resistance directly.

"They reflect glucose levels, not insulin dynamics and often detect disease only when it is established," he explains.This is why some people may still experience fatigue, weight gain, or post-meal energy crashes despite having "normal" reports.The encouraging part: insulin resistance doesn't always progress to Type 2 Diabetes. With timely lifestyle changes—like regular exercise, balanced nutrition, good sleep, and weight management—insulin sensitivity can improve significantly."Normal sugar does not always mean normal metabolism," Dr Kovil emphasises. To put it simple, catching insulin resistance early is key; because by the time blood sugar rises, the condition may already be well underway.

Dipika Kakar describes hospital visits as ‘one of the most difficult days’, says ‘everyone is worried about me’

Dipika Kakar, 39, recently visited the hospital to understand the next course of treatment. On her YouTube vlog, the Sasural Simar Ka actor expressed, "I have to go to the hospital today. Would get to know about the future course of treatment. A hospital visit is one of the most difficult days. Everyone is smiling in front of me. But I know that everyone is worried about me, including my mom and mother-in-law. They manage to smile and put on a brave front, which keeps my strength going...and gives me blessings," she said in Hindi.Taking a leaf out of her expression, let's understand how illness is not just a physical issue but a deeply emotional and even psychologically draining one, too.

Psychotherapist and life coach Delnna Rajesh said that moments like hospital visits carry layers of emotional weight. "There is fear of the unknown, anxiety around health outcomes, physical exhaustion, and an unspoken pressure to stay composed, particularly when there is a child involved. For many mothers, the struggle becomes twofold: processing their own pain while simultaneously protecting their child from it," Delnna said.This creates what psychology refers to as emotional duality—the ability to hold grief and strength at the same time. On the outside, there is composure. "On the inside, there may be fear, vulnerability, even moments of breakdown," described Delnna.Strength often includes moments where emotions overflow. "Tears, fatigue, and emotional vulnerability are not signs of weakness. They are natural responses to uncertainty and stress," shared Delnna.One of the most overlooked aspects of serious illness is the anticipatory anxiety it brings. "Hospital visits are not just about treatment. They represent waiting, uncertainty, and the mind constantly imagining possibilities. Research in health psychology shows that uncertainty can sometimes be more distressing than the diagnosis itself, because the brain struggles with lack of control," said Delnna.

For caregivers and parents, this is further intensified by the need to maintain normalcy, mentioned Delnna."From a psychological and emotional healing lens, the first step is allowing emotional expression without guilt. It is important to recognise that feeling overwhelmed does not make you less strong; it makes you human. Suppressing emotions



Psychotherapist and life coach Delnna Rajesh said that moments like hospital visits carry layers of emotional weight. "There is fear of the unknown, anxiety around health outcomes, physical exhaustion, and an unspoken pressure to stay composed, particularly when there is a child involved.

may create temporary control, but over time it can lead to emotional fatigue or burnout."Then there is a need to create safe emotional outlets. "This could be through talking to a trusted person, journaling, or even moments of solitude where emotions can be processed without interruption. Emotional release is essential for maintaining mental well-being during prolonged stress," said Delnna."Another important aspect is redefining strength. Strength is not about constantly holding it together. "It is about knowing when to pause, when to ask for support, and when to simply feel."*Practices like mindful breathing or short moments of stillness can help regulate the nervous system during overwhelming phases, said Delnna.

Rishabh Pant’s ‘too many minds’ comment threw LSG management under the bus, says Shaun Pollock



GNS News Agency, May 3

Former South Africa captain Shaun Pollock slammed Lucknow Super Giants skipper Rishabh Pant’s comments that had hinted at too many decision-makers in the camp following their sixth defeat of the IPL 2026 season on Sunday night. Pant’s men suffered yet another embarrassing defeat after they failed to chase down a 156-run target at the Ekana Stadium in Lucknow, handing Kolkata Knight Riders a pulsating Super Over win despite a sluggish start after being sent into bat. Post the defeat, a fifth in succession and an eighth consecutive loss at home, Pant hinted that there

were too many opinions being fed to him from a vaunted coaching set-up. Reflecting on the decision to bowl spinner Digvesh Rathi in the final over, during which KKR batter Rinku Singh slammed him for four consecutive sixes, Pant said: “See, there are always times in cricket where you can turn a little bit of bowling at the same time. But sometimes bowlers have to bowl those hard overs. “And there will be time when I have to give him that in middle overs because I was looking for a wicket. I just didn’t get one. That was the thought process behind it. And too many minds doesn’t make it easy on the ground,” Pant said during the post-match presentation. Besides head coach Justin Langer, the LSG backroom staff also comprise of Tom Moody as the Director of Cricket, former Kiwi captain Kane Williamson as the strategic advisor, assistant coach Lance Klusener and Bharat Arun as the bowling coach. Pollock suggested that Pant’s comments threw the management group under the bus, suggesting that all wasn’t well around the leadership group. “It’s not really good that it is coming from the captain because he is basically saying there are too many people giving me information, and he is kind of under the bus-ing the management group that they have got. Maybe we don’t know how it works, that’s the problem. You don’t know who has the final call, you don’t know who sits with him and gives him the understanding of what they feel and has the discussions with him,” Shaun Pollock said on Cricbuzz.

‘I believe it’s not out. When he turned...’: Sehwa on Angkrish Raghuvanshi’s controversial dismissal

GNS News Agency, May 3

With his dismissal in the match against Lucknow Super Giants on Sunday evening, Kolkata Knight Riders batsman Angkrish Raghuvanshi became only the fourth batter in IPL history to be given out for obstructing the field. In the match, which KKR won eventually in a super-over, Raghuvanshi punched a Prince Yadav delivery towards mid-on and started to take a run only to be sent back by Cameron Green. With fielder Mohammad Shami aiming for the strikers’ end, the ball hit a diving Raghuvanshi, with the third umpire adjudging Raghuvanshi to be out. The KKR batter soon joined the likes of Yusuf Pathan (2013), Amit Mishra (2019) and Ravindra Jadeja (2024) to be adjudged out while obstructing the field.

Former India opener Virender Sehwa believes a harsh decision was made by the umpire in Raghuvanshi’s case, and the batsman was ‘not out’ in his eyes.

“Every batsman looks at the fielder when the ball goes to them. You take one run, you take two runs, and you see which end is safer. If the throw was coming to the bowling end, there was no need to dive. But when you know the throw is coming to your end, then you will dive. Your eyes will naturally go towards the fielder. It’s not that his eyes were on the fielder because he thought, ‘I am stopping something.’ He dived after that. So, I believe it’s not out. When he turned, he was looking at the fielder to see where the ball was coming from. But after turning, he ran and jumped. He wasn’t looking at the fielder anymore, nor was his attention in front. In my opinion, a slightly harsh decision has been made here,” Sehwa said on Cricbuzz. According to the IPL playing conditions, which include the MCC rulebook, clause 37.1.4 states about the dismissal mode being obstructing the field. “For the avoidance of doubt, if an umpire feels that a batter, in running between the wickets, has significantly changed his direction without probable cause and thereby obstructed a fielder’s attempt to effect a run out, the batter should, on appeal, be given out, obstructing the field. It shall not be relevant whether a run out would have occurred or not,” states the IPL 2026 rulebook. Former India batsman and coach Sanjay Bangar too said that Raghuvanshi was not out and his turnaround was intentional. “Yes, he did have a look when the ball was about to be released but it isn’t possible for a batter to make an abrupt turn there has to be a little bit of a curvature for a batter to turn. Now if he had



turned on his left, he would have run on the pitch. So it’s a very natural instinct for a batter to run away from the pitch. And that is what gets into our subconscious. Because having played for such a length of time for any player. I think he is hard done by because no batter at that point of time would have gone back immediately making that 90 degree turn and avoided being hit by that particular ball. I don’t think it was intentional,” said Bangar on ESPNcricinfo. Former T20 World Cup winner Carlos Brathwaite added that: “I think the funniest part of it all is when he (Angkrish Raghuvanshi) went to the umpire and he kind of gesticulated like do you want me to just turn like that? It’s genuinely not possible. And if you watch the arc that he ran up, he has hit the ball over his hand, he is running as you are told to run the bowler if he is coming over the hockey. Then if you start to put on the brakes, then how are you going to run from there and then just stop? Like you will have a little bit of curvature and you are looking to see where the ball is. Because if the ball doesn’t come to your end, you just relax. “If it is coming to your end and you are in trouble. You have to put in the dive, which I did. I think it was a tough one and I feel sometimes umpires better understand and appreciate the rhythm of the game. So if you look at it, just square on and think, did he look at the ball before it was thrown and did he dive in the way of the ball? Yes but if you add some context, and add did he somewhere else to go in the natural motion, the answer is no. So he was doing what he was doing. I think that’s where some context could have been added and it should have been not out on the pretext that he could not go anywhere else,” said Brathwaite on ESPNcricinfo.

India drub Australia 5-0 in Thomas Cup; Shi Yuqi gives walkover to Canada’s energy-sapper Victor Lai



GNS News Agency, May 3

India’s Lakshya Sen who had lost his first time game, defeated Ephraim Stephen Sam of Australia 21-14, 21-16 to restore his confidence. (Badminton Photo) India’s Lakshya Sen who had lost his first time game, defeated Ephraim Stephen Sam of Australia 21-14, 21-16 to restore his confidence. Indians wrapped up their Thomas Cup Australia tie in just 153 minutes, as Lakshya Sen, Ayush Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty all won in straight sets, to take the 3-0 lead against Australia. HS Prannoy and MR Arjun-Hariharan Amsakarunan tied up the ends, as all 5 matches were won in straight sets.

Shi Yuqi of China, the first singles player, interestingly gave a walkover to Canada’s energy sapper Victor Lai. India take on China Sen who had lost his first time game against Canada to Victor Lai, defeated Ephraim Stephen Sam of Australia 21-14, 21-16 to restore his confidence. He will be required to defeat Shi Yuqi in the China-tie, though the Chinese 30 year old seems to have smartly given himself more rest, after what panned out at All England — a first round scalding loss for the Chinese World champion. Ayush Shetty took a mere 26 minutes to defeat Shrey Dhand 21-8, 21-6. Later, Satwik-Chirag won 21-14, 21-16 against Rizky Hidayat and Jack Yu. After pocketing the first, the Indians fell back 3-6. But they had had enough at 14-all and raced to a finish thereafter. HS Prannoy offered a third singles option for the China tie, with a 21-11, 21-17 win over Rishi Honda Bopadathy, while Hari-Arjun won 21-12, 21-10 against Andika Ramadiansyah and Ephraim Sam. Li Shifeng defeated Brian Yang 21-10, and Liang-Wang won 24-22, 21-14. Second

doubles He-Ren won 21-15, 21-9, while Weng Hong Yang beat Timothy Lock 21-15, 21-5. Hong Yang can be a headache for Indians in third singles (MS3), where he leads both Kidambi Srikanth and Kiran George 3-1. He is 2-2 with HS Prannoy, but much will depend on the Indian’s fitness.

The year that broke him, and the knock that didn't

Rinku Singh waited. He waited till he struck his weightiest knock of the season; he waited till he took five catches of varying levels of strain; he waited till he thrashed the winning runs himself in the Super Over. And then he uncorked his emotions. He leapt and swiped the air, he kissed the Ekana turf, baring its grainy black soil. He gazed forlornly at the skies. If a drop of tear rolled down his cheek, it blended with the sweat dripping off his temple. It has been a tough year for him. He lost his father during the T20 World Cup; he lost his spot in India’s playing eleven; his IPL form wobbled after the bright start, his club tottered at the bottom; he was quietly slipping out of public imagination; critics breathed down his neck. He needed a knock that could put a smile back on his face, and those of his supporters, one of relevance and substance, perhaps not so much to prove the world that he is not a one-knock wonder, as to convince himself of his resounding virtues. “Sometimes the mind just doesn’t work when you’re struggling,” he admitted after his half-century against Rajasthan Royals. It’s an indescribably wretched feeling. The batsman knows his failings; he knows the solutions; he is sweating in the nets and trying to be the batsman he once was. Yet, he keeps failing. The 53 against Royals reinstated hope and belief, but something was still pulling him back, something invisible clutching at his throat. Sometimes the circumstances conspire; being part of a sinking ship doesn’t aid comebacks. But when you are neck deep in rough seas and the only urge is to survive, an unstoppable spirit pulls them over the currents. At 34 for four, when he walked out to bat, he finally knew that he had time to trench in, find rhythm, take the game deep and then summon the heavy artillery.

PV Sindhu gets voting rights on BWF Council after election as Chair of Athletes’ Commission



GNS News Agency, May 3

PV Sindhu started her term as a voting member of the BWF Council after being elected as Chair of the BWF Athletes’ Commission, starting her governance role. The former World Champion and Olympic medallist and World Champion assumed a full voting position after completing the formal vetting process. Sindhu officially entered the BWF Council at the end of 2025. She made her first appearance before the global badminton membership during the BWF Annual General Meeting in Horsens, marking the beginning of her tenure within the sport’s highest governing body.

Some of the pressing reforms Sindhu can look to push for are: prize money at World Championships and reducing the load of mandatory tournaments expected of top athletes, which will continue to cause injuries, be it in 15 points or 21. BWF has muscles through the 15-point system despite considerable opposition. The BWF Council plays a central role in guiding the strategic direction and governance of badminton worldwide. As a voting member of the Council, Sindhu will participate in discussions and decisions on matters that shape the future of the sport, bringing the perspectives

and experiences of elite athletes directly into the heart of global badminton leadership. Her presence within the Council is particularly significant as she is an active athlete competing at the highest level of the sport to simultaneously hold a voting position within badminton’s global governance structure. In this role, Sindhu will help ensure that the voices, experiences and priorities of players are represented at the highest levels of decision-making. Speaking on the occasion, P. V. Sindhu said, “It is a true honour and privilege to take on this responsibility within the Badminton World Federation and to represent the voices of athletes from around the world. Badminton has given me so much, and I feel deeply grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the sport in this capacity. I am especially grateful to BWF President Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul for her warmth and encouragement, and I look forward to working closely with the Council and the wider BWF community as we continue to strengthen and grow this wonderful sport across the world.” Sindhu’s presence on the BWF Council represents an important step in ensuring that the insights, experiences and perspectives of athletes remain central to the evolution of badminton, helping shape a stronger and more inclusive future for the sport globally. BWF President Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul welcomed Sindhu to the high seat, saying, “Over many years, P. V. Sindhu has demonstrated exceptional skill, grace and spirit on the court, and it is wonderful to now have such an outstanding role model representing the voice of our athletes. Athletes are the heart of our sport, and their voices must remain central to every decision we make. Through the BWF Athletes’ Commission, our global badminton community continues to be shaped by those who live and breathe the game. We very much look forward to working closely with Sindhu in the years ahead as we continue our efforts to grow badminton and strengthen its place among the world’s leading sports.”

KKR player fined 20% match fee for act committed during LSG match

GNS News Agency, May 3

Kolkata Knight Riders batter Angkrish Raghuvanshi was fined 20% of his match fee and accumulated a demerit point for breaching Level 1 of the IPL’s Code of Conduct for Players and Team officials during his team’s match against the Lucknow Super Giants. The incident took place on Sunday when Kolkata were batting first. Raghuvanshi was dismissed in a rare manner in the last ball of the fifth over. When attempting to take a run of a Prince Yadav delivery, Raghuvanshi was sent back by his partner Cameron Green. But the throw towards the wicket hit the Indian batter and when the play went up to the third umpire, it was believed that Raghuvanshi veered from his path to that of the ball and was given out via ‘obstructing the field’.

The batter got into a heated argument with the on-field umpires over the decision. It was clear that he and the KKR camp were not happy with the decision made. On his way back to the pavilion, Raghuvanshi took his bat and slammed the boundary rope and then threw his helmet away in frustration. KKR support staff Shane Watson and Abhishek Nayar were also seen protesting the decision, with Nayar getting into a heated discussion with the fourth umpire over the decision as well. “Angkrish Raghuvanshi has been fined 20% of his match fee and has also accumulated one Demerit Point for breaching Level 1 of the IPL’s Code of Con-



duct,” the statement read. “He was found to have breached Article 2.2, which relates to abuse of cricket equipment or clothing, ground equipment or fixtures and fittings during a match,” it added. Despite how things panned out for Raghuvanshi on the field and off it, KKR picked up a Super Over win on Sunday. With seven runs required off the last ball, Mohammad Shami hit a six to take the game to the Super Over where KKR prevailed after both Aidan Markram and Nicolas Pooran lost their wickets to Sunil Narine and then Rinku Singh hit a boundary of the first ball to deliver the win for his team.

Sabastian Sawe runs 1:59:30 — the grandmother who won’t see it

GNS News Agency, May 3

He was in Seville, Spain, the night before his first competitive half-marathon. His job the next morning was to pace the elite field through 10km, then step aside. Instead, he made a decision. He would run — not for the clock, not for the contract, not for the agent who had never called back — but for Koko. The woman who had raised him in a mud-walled house in Cheukta with no electricity, who had told him, every time the world closed a door, that it would be okay. When the gun fired, he ignored the pacing brief entirely. By 7km, the elite field had collapsed behind him. A race director pulled alongside on a motorbike: “Nobody’s with you. Just go.” He finished in 59:02. A course record by a minute and a half. Days later, he flew home to Kenya and buried her. She never saw what he became. On Sunday in London, in a time of 1:59:30, Sabastian Sawe became the first human being to run a legal marathon in under two hours — and his first thought, he told Diario AS in the moments after crossing the finish line, was of his family. Of home. Of the people who had told him, when nothing else was certain, that it would be okay. Sawe was born in Cheukta, a remote village in Kenya’s Rift Valley — the region that produced generations of the world’s greatest distance runners. (Reuters Photo) Sawe was born in Cheukta, a remote village in Kenya’s Rift Valley — the region that produced generations of the world’s greatest distance runners. (Reuters Photo) He ran to school — everyone did, a ten-minute run. A teacher, Julius Kemei, spotted something and refused to let him hide. “Running is not just talent,” Kemei told him. “It’s your fortune and your future.” His uncle, Abraham Chepkirwok, set Uganda’s 800m national record in 2008 with 1:43.72 — a mark that still stands. Sawe watched him line up at the Olympics on a generator-powered TV in the barn. “That image I did not forget,” he told Runner’s World. In 2017, he took a bus to Iten to chase the dream. He trained. Recognition didn’t come. Then came March 2020: a ruptured tendon. Then Covid. Then his family, watching siblings settle into stable jobs, began to ask the question plainly. Family contacts could get him into the police force. A wage. Security. He was about to be a father. Wasn’t it time? His uncle Abraham called. “Why didn’t you tell me?” When Sawe confessed everything, Abraham asked him directly: “Is this what you want?” Abraham called an old rival — Abel Mutai, Olympic steeplechase bronze medallist, now assistant coach at the 2Running Club in Nandi County, founded by Italian



coach Claudio Berardelli. In two days, they took Sawe from Iten. “Closed that chapter,” Mutai told Runner’s World.

At 2Running, Sawe found structure — treatment machines, recovery protocols, a coach who spoke of loading phases and cellular adaptation. He healed. The tendon flared again. Berardelli pulled him aside: “Patience. You must accept setbacks. Don’t give up.” By early 2021, Berardelli had seen enough. “Sabastian is really something special,” he told Runner’s World’s Toby Tanser. “This one... he can run like nobody I’ve seen before.” From a man who had coached world and Olympic champions, those words carried weight. With his earnings, he could live in luxury. He shares a bunkbed — a spartan camp room, three others, his wife Lydia seen only twice a month. On the morning of the race, he had two slices of bread and honey tea for breakfast. His only physical vulnerability, his physiotherapist Shadrack noted, was a slightly thickened Achilles insertion — literally, his Achilles heel. Then came Valencia in 2024 — a 2:02:05 debut, the second fastest in history. Then London, won by a quarter mile after skipping water at 30km. Then Berlin in 25-degree heat, where he ran 2:02:16 and called it “tough,” the understatement of a man who rates a 2:40 final kilometre at altitude as “four out of ten.” Berardelli, watching that session: “Forty to fifty seconds faster than his London prep. We are seeing something.” Kelvin Kiptum was 23 years old when he ran 2:00:35 in Chicago in 2023 — the fastest marathon ever run, the record that made sub-2 feel not just possible but imminent. And then, on a dark rural road in February 2024, he was gone — his car skidding off loose gravel into a tree. The Rift Valley grieved. “It was not if Kelvin would be the first man to break two,” his compatriot Benson Kipruto told Runner’s World. “It was by how much he would do it.” The mantra has proved itself before. When Abraham and his wife struggled a decade to conceive, Koko told him on her deathbed that all would be well. A daughter was born — on the anniversary of Koko’s death. On Sunday, the world saw it too. Sawe crossed in 1:59:30. Behind him, Ethiopian debutant Yomif Kejelcha finished in 1:59:41 — also under two hours. “I prepare well,” he told Diario AS after finishing. “For what has come today, it shows I prepare much better than last year.” He was asked if he could have run 10km more. The interviewer laughed. Sawe did not. “I was capable,” he said. I was thinking about my family,” Sawe said, the clock behind him reading something no clock had ever read before. In Cheukta, in a house his grandmother filled with faith when there was nothing else, they already knew. She told them a

‘Hamza more challenging than Khilji’: What Ranveer Singh told Superyou co-founder, said Dhurandhar took ‘so much out of me’



Actor Ranveer Singh has surely set a benchmark with his performance in Dhurandhar. While his role in the Aditya Dhar film is said to be his career best, in the past, Ranveer has also played various other challenging roles. Until Dhurandhar, Ranveer Singh's performance as Alauddin Khilji in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Padmaavat remained his most challenging role, for which the actor had famously said that it sent him in a dark place and impacted him personally. However, his character in Dhurandhar precedes that now. In a conversation with Men's XP, Ranveer Singh's business partner Nikunj Biyani recalls their conversation where Ranveer said playing Hamza and Jaskirit Singh Rangri in Dhurandhar was more challenging than playing Alauddin Khilji.

In his recent interview, while Nikunj praised Ranveer Singh's Dhurandhar, he shared, "I saw Dhurandhar first day first show for both the movies, I loved the film. Dhurandhar 2: The Revenge, for me, was the best film of all time. I enjoyed part one as well, but part 2 was something else. We were chatting with him once, and we asked him if he would do something that would be as demanding as Khilji, and he said, 'This character has been way more challenging for me, as an artist; it has taken so much more out of me. I have had to go deep and give it 300 percent; it has been very demanding.'"

In 2019, Ranveer Singh spoke to India Today about locking himself in a room for weeks to prepare for his role as Alauddin Khilji. He had shared how he avoided meeting people, moved to a new apartment closer to the set, and read many books about Khilji. "I took 21 days and locked

myself up in my Goregaon house. I was completely isolated. I kind of isolated myself, marinated into the character because I can't relate to Alauddin Khilji, I can't relate to that level of manipulativenes, greed and ambition. I had to tap into dark experiences but his world view is not something I can relate to also," he continued. Khilji took Ranveer Singh to a dark place. He added that the process became 'dangerous' for him. "Stuff that I have buried in my conscience, that I had to dig out in order to play this character. And it was not always pretty, which validates my apprehension. I knew how deep I had to go into this rabbit hole. I would have had to go into this dark, black space. This abyss that could be dangerous for me. And it was." In 2018, Ranveer had said, "When I was offered Padmaavat, most people thought that a hero should not play the anti-hero. But I believed otherwise. I saw Khilji as a challenge for me, as an actor. And I wanted to take the challenge up. I went with the vision of Sanjay Leela Bhansali and my instinct of what I could achieve with Khilji." He had also shared, "I took a big risk with this character, and it's wonderful to see my gamble pay off. This kind of validation gives one the confidence to take bigger and bigger risks, challenge stereotypes, and continue to push the envelope in the realm of mainstream Hindi cinema. I feel very happy and very fulfilled today."

Ranveer Singh as the co-founder of Super You. Nikunj, who is the co-founder of Super You, also spoke about Ranveer Singh's creative genius and involvement in the brand. He said, "We get to see the other side of Ranveer Singh. The world has seen this one side of him, which is an insanely talented actor or superstar. They have seen him in his public appearances as an extremely high-energy person. We also get to see his other side, where he is so detail-oriented about everything. He is so thoughtful about anything that goes out. He is very well aware of what's happening and anything that he is doing. He is that extreme energy guy all the time, whenever you meet him, but he is also the person who goes very deep into everything." Nikunj further added, "He will want to know the smallest of details, and then he absorbs everything, activates his creative muscles, and then come these sharp creative insights. When we started, he told me that my background was business, product, and operations. I trust you fully with it. I understand content and how to land a certain narrative or story, and you trust me with it. As long as that is there, we have nothing to worry about. He has never gotten involved in things that he will not have valuable input into. He was clear with this from the get-go. He has known everything that has been going on." Recalling Ranveer Singh's detail-oriented approach in their first brand film, Nikunj shared, "The first brand film that we did, he has literally taken screenshots frame by frame and given feedback himself. He said which shot can be better, if we can alternate one option with the other, and I don't know what kind of memory he has. He will remember something from 20 years ago about you that you did not know, it's scary. He has a crazy memory. He is extremely detail-oriented. He is creative in these impactful ways."

Michael Jackson’s estate went from \$450M debt at the time of his death to a \$3.5 billion empire

One would imagine Michael Jackson would be swimming in money when he died of drug overdose in 2009. But the reality tells a different story. The King of Pop was, in fact, in great financial peril, thanks to a debt of at least \$450 million at the time. But things were looking up before his sudden demise, as he was all set to go on one of his biggest global tours — This Is It. But unfortunately, Jackson passed away barely a month before the opening concert in London. Michael Jackson began earning lucratively in the late 1980s, when his earnings bumped from \$37 million a year to \$125 million. This was aided by the groundbreaking success of his 1987 album Bad, its ancillary tour, his 1988 autobiography Moonwalk, and the acquisition of the ATV Music catalogue (including songs by The Beatles). The earnings continued well up to the late 1990s across the 400 million records sold by the popstar throughout his career.

However, this tremendous cash inflow was subset by an equally draining cash outflow. As per Forbes, every year, he'd spend around \$50 million on luxuries like jewellery, art, amenities, animals, and travel. He'd also donate liberally towards charitable organizations and medical facilities, including treatment of burns, having encountered a traumatic burning accident himself in 1984 while shooting for a Pepsi commercial.

The \$450 million debt at the time of his death also included \$40 million paid by This Is It promoter AEG Live. There was also a loan of \$270 million. Creditors lodged as many as 65 claims against Jackson across the US and abroad. To add to the trouble, his estate would also have to pay for the mounting legal fees involved in settling these claims. Micheal Jackson was in 0 million debt at the time of his death. Micheal Jackson was in 0 million debt at the time of his death.

How did Michael Jackson estate bounce back?

Michael Jackson's estate put his unparalleled legacy to the best use and eventually made him one of the highest earning dead celebrities ever. Since the much-anticipated This Is It tour could never really take over, the estate put together the rehearsal footage for Jackson's new tour and released Michael Jackson's This Is It, a 2009 documentary. The posthumous love and fandom for Jackson led to the documentary earning over \$265 million at the global box office, aided by another \$100 million+ gathered through the sale of DVDs, soundtrack, and merchandise sale. The estate went on to earn \$200 million from the documentary, thus paying off a significant chunk of the debt. Up next, Jackson's ATV catalogue, consisting of over 4,000 songs, was sold to Sony Music for \$750 million. Sony also acquired half of Jackson's own music rights for \$600 million in 2024. Jackson's legacy was further encashed through new albums with unreleased music, touring shows, stage productions including Cirque du Soleil, and now, a Hollywood biopic.

Although Jackson rented out a lot of properties across the globe, including a luxurious apartment in Trump Towers, his beloved Neverland ranch on the outskirts of Los Angeles, California was paid to his friend and billionaire Ron Burkle in 2020 for \$22 million. All the above earnings were used to pay off the debt, legal expenses, and taxes. After all the settlement, the current net worth of Michael Jackson estate stands at a whopping \$3.5 billion, making this the most



profitable career phase of Jackson, over 15 years after his death. A still from Michael Jackson's This Is It. A still from Michael Jackson's This Is It.

Michael: Make or break?

Taking a cue from how Michael Jackson's This Is It changed the course for them, the estate then invested in Michael, a Hollywood biopic, in which Michael's nephew Jafar Jackson essays the King of Pop. The estate carefully considered its bets, renegotiating its terms with Sony over Jackson's music catalogue in order to benefit from the spike in his music post Michael's release. And they weren't entirely wrong to presume that, since seven of Michael Jackson's tracks, from "Billy Jean" to even "They Don't Care About Us" (which isn't even in the film), have started dominating music charts just three days after the biopic's global release. They also roped in Billy Graham, who previously backed another musician's biopic, Bryan Singer's Bohemian Rhapsody (2018), which fetched Rami Malek an Oscar for his portrayal of Queen's lead singer Freddie Mercury. That film earned over \$940 million globally, also leading to a spike in Queen's music across charts. Mercury's estate and the surviving Queen members, who had a profit sharing in the film's business, saw their revenue increase from \$24 million in 2017 to \$94 million in 2019, followed by a dividend of over \$85 million over the next four years. The soaring popularity also enabled Queen to sell their catalogue in 2024 to Sony Music for more than \$1.2 billion. Now, Michael has opened at \$217 million worldwide, including \$97 million in North America and Canada alone. This is \$45 million more than the opening weekend of Bohemian Rhapsody (\$52 million) at the domestic box office. However, unlike the latter which was made on a budget of \$55 million, Michael's reported budget is as high as \$200 million. It was already one of the most expensive biopics to be made in Hollywood, on a budget of \$150 million. But its budget was escalated to \$200 million, thanks to a major lapse on part of the Michael Jackson estate. The initial third act of the biopic touched upon the child sexual abuse allegations the popstar faced in the early 1990s, but the estate discovered in the eleventh hour that a settlement with the accuser bars any mention of the same in film and television projects.

‘She belongs to Tara Singh’: How an angry crowd didn’t let Bobby Deol hug Ameesha Patel



Ameesha Patel and Sunny Deol's 2001 blockbuster Gadar: Ek Prem Katha won hearts for their characters Tara Singh and Sakeena. The iconic duo, who reprised their roles in the latest 2023 release, Gadar 2, have gained a massive following. Now, in a recent interview, Ameesha revealed an interesting anecdote, when a serious climax shoot of Humraaz with Bobby Deol, turned into a funny moment. She also opened up about Sunny's huge fanbase, sharing a BTS story from Gadar's shoot.

During a conversation with Bollywood Bubble, she recalled the shoot of Humraaz with Bobby Deol, and revealed that the crowd couldn't accept her in Bobby's arms, calling the actor his brother Singh's 'property'. "Some characters etch in people's heart and memories so much, that they blur the difference between real and reel life. Gadar was newly released, and Tara and Sakeena were receiving a lot of love

from everyone. I was shooting for Humraaz at Jaipur fort. It was the climax scene, in which I had to shoot Akshaye Khanna with a gun and Bobby Deol had to hug me." The excited crowd turned the serious scene into a laughing moment. "A crowd had assembled to watch the shoot. There were ropes to control the people, cops were present, and people weren't able to cross and reach the set. But, there was so much public during the shoot, all three actors were there, so it was very exciting for them. However, when Bobby came to hug me, public started shouting loudly, 'Leave her. Yeh toh Taara Singh ki amaanat hai, tere Bhai ki amaanat hai. Vo Pakistan se leke aaya hai usse, chorr Sakeena ko (Leave Sakeena, she is your brother's partner, he brought her from Pakistan)," she shared. The actor further added, "It was a bittersweet and happy feeling also, that people loved Tara and Sakeena so much that they couldn't digest someone else coming in her life. But, it was laughable also, because after all it was a film, not real life. It was quite funny. We all were serious, crying during the scene, but we all started laughing, including the directors and actors. I joked with Bobby, 'I won't hug you now, mai aapke bhai ki amaanat hu, yeh samajh lo aap (I belong to your brother)'."

Recalling another instance from Gadar's shoot with Sunny Deol, she shared, "Sunny ji loves dhaba food – raw milk etc. We were driving from Dalhousie to Pathankot for the shoot. He asked me to sit in his car, so we can listen to music and travel. We were crossing a dhaba and he said that he will make me try all these things," she said. Ameesha continued, "So, we stopped at the dhaba and were sitting in the car. A cute boy came to give our food and tea in a tray. When Sunny rolled down the window to receive it, the boy was in a state of shock. Sunny ji was a big star. That boy was looking at the TV and then looking at him live, his film was showing. He said, 'Sunny ji kaise do-do jagah?' The tray fell from his hands, the entire food fell on us." The 50-year-old has worked with both Deol brothers extensively in the past. She has shared screen space with Sunny Deol in the hit films, Gadar and Gadar 2. With Bobby Deol, the actor has starred in Humraaz and Humko Tumse Pyaar Hai. Meanwhile, on the professional front, Ameesha Patel was last seen in the rom-com Tauba Tera Jalwa. The actor hasn't announced any upcoming projects yet.

TDP supporters disrupt Bengaluru comedy show, force comedian Sarat Uday to apologise for two-year-old jokes

A stand-up comedy show by Hyderabad-based comedian Sarat Uday was cut short at a club in Koramangala on Saturday evening after a group of men claiming to be Telugu Desam Party supporters walked onto the stage, abused him, and demanded he chant party slogans in front of a paying audience. Sarat was performing a solo show at Ministry of Comedy when the disruption began within minutes of him taking the stage. Around 7 pm, a man from the audience walked up, and told the stand-up comedian, "I'm your fan, you do comedy very well. But in one show, you insulted our leader." Before Sarat could respond, two more individuals joined the first man on stage. Within a short while, a group of five to six others had gathered near the stage as well, turning what began as a confrontation into something far more hostile.

The video had already faced backlash at the time it was posted. Sarat had received a wave of abusive messages and threats, and he subsequently issued a public apology in 2024, acknowledging that viewers had found the jokes hurtful and saying he would step back from political comedy. On Saturday night in Bengaluru, he reminded the group of this. However, it didn't stop the group. The men on stage demanded he apologise again, in person, in front of the audience, using abusive language while doing so. Sarat Uday complied, addressing his apology directly to Naidu, Lokesh, and TDP workers, but the group did not leave. They raised slogans of "Jai Telugu Desam Party" inside the venue and pushed the comedian to repeat their chants, specifically "Jai TDP," "Jai Lokesh Anna," and "Jai Chandrababu Naidu." He refused, pointing out that since his original video had covered multiple parties, he was not going to publicly align himself with any single one. One member of the group questioned how Sarat had dared to joke about the Naxalite assassination attempt on Naidu in 2003. Another said the comedian had hurt Hindu religious sentiment with his refer-



ences to the Tirupati laddu adulteration episode. A warning was issued openly: "If you make such a mistake one more time, mark my words." CCTV footage from the venue captured the group explicitly calling it a "final warning" and telling Sarat to be careful going forward. After the apology, the group demanded refunds for their tickets before eventually heading for the exit. The incident is the third of its kind involving Telugu comedians within the space of a month. Earlier in April, comedians Anudeep Katikala and Rafiq Muhammad were arrested by Andhra Pradesh police over separate videos in which they made jokes about state Deputy Chief Minister and Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan. Katikala was picked up from Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh and taken to Kakinada, while Muhammad was arrested in Vizag and taken to Machilipatnam. Both cases were registered following complaints from Jana Sena leaders.

Suriya meets singer Dhee in Colombo; calls her single ‘Vari Vari’ a “timeless song”

Chennai: Actor Suriya, who recently met singer Dhee in Colombo, Sri Lanka, has now called her latest single 'Vari Vari' "a timeless song". Music director Santhosh Narayanan, who has jointly produced the song with Dhee, posted a video clip of Dhee's meeting with Suriya on his X timeline and thanked Suriya for the love he expressed for their song. He wrote, "Thank you, dearest @Suriya_off sir, for your love for #VariVari. Eternally grateful for this and for the unforgettable moments we spent making music together."

In the video that Santhosh Narayanan posted, Suriya is seen telling Dhee that he was coming to Colombo after 24 years. The actor went on to thank the singer for taking the time to come and meet him and also show him her song. Commenting on the recently released single of Dhee, Suriya said, "It's a lovely song" and



urged viewers to check the song out.

"I'm a big fan of her work always and I was very happy to hear such a song again. I think it will be a timeless song. Everybody will love it," he said, speaking about the number, youthful number that has just been released. The actor on the

occasion was also seen making a request to Dhee. He said, "In fact, I have a request now. Is this song only in your album or is it in a film? Can I have this song?" For the unaware, 'Vari Vari' is a single that has music by Santhosh Narayanan and lyrics by Vivek. It has been sung by Dhee, who has a huge fan

following. While describing the number, its makers said the song was about "someone or something that's gone and isn't around anymore, something that's been lost." The song, its makers say, is about the search for one's inner child that one might have lost along the way of growing up.