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Farmer dies of heart attack at procurement centre in Telangana's Medak

Medak: Delay in paddy procurement led to the death of another farmer, Venkatapuram Shankaraiah, who suffered a fatal heart attack at Chinna Ghanpur procurement centre in Kulcharam mandal on Friday.

The 58-year-old farmer, who slept at his paddy heap on Thursday night, was found dead on Friday morning by his family members. Narsapur MLA Vakiti Sunitha Lakshma Reddy, who visited the bereaved family, alleged that the farmer died due to inordinate delay in purchasing the paddy.

Telangana to revise land registration values from May 28

Hyderabad: Revised market values for land registration will come into force across Telangana from May 28. As per the Cabinet decision taken earlier, officials informed the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Resource Mobilisation here on Friday that the revision is expected to significantly boost the Stamps and Registrations department's revenue.

India to launch smart border project along Pakistan, Bangladesh borders to curb infiltration: Shah

New Delhi, May 22

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said the government will launch a tech-enabled "smart border" project by the next year to make the 6,000 km fronts with Pakistan and Bangladesh impenetrable and ensure that the "conspiracy" to change the demography of the country is defeated.

Delivering the annual Rustamji Memorial lecture hosted by the Border Security Force (BSF) here, the Minister also reiterated that the government will find each and every infiltrator and send them out of India.

K F Rustamji was the founding father and the first director general of the BSF, the world's largest border guarding force with about 2.70 lakh personnel tasked to guard Indian borders with Pakistan on the west and Bangladesh on the east. It was raised in 1965.

"The Government of India has decided that not only will we stop infiltration but we will find each and every infiltrator and send them out of the country," Shah said.

He added his government will not allow "artificial change in our demography being attempted from the other side."

"I want to assure BSF troops that we will launch the smart border project within the 60th year of its raising and we will make the Bangladesh and Pakistan borders impenetrable through major technical assistance," Shah said.

The "smart border" will use technology, drones, radars and smart cameras to help create an impenetrable border, he told the gathering.

Calling these two borders "vulnerable" and a "cause for concern" for the country from the security point of view, Shah said



these fronts (about 1,289 km with Pakistan and 4,096 km with Bangladesh) cannot be guarded with "traditional" methods.

The concept of border security should not be seen in isolation but as a "territorial responsibility" involving all agencies and state governments, he said.

He said these borders currently face threats like illegal infiltration, smuggling of drugs, weapons and arms through drones apart from cattle, fake Indian currency notes and organised crime.

"It is most important to identify future dangers, and it is our responsibility to stop the artificial demographic change being attempted from the other side (of the border) through infiltration, and, for this, we have to remain alert and vigilant," he told the officers and jawans in attendance.

Shah said the Modi government brought a "radical" change to the security policy and border protection perspective since it took charge in 2014.

"We have defeated all three attacks carried out by Pakistan whether it was in Uri (2016), Pulwama

(2019), or Pahalgam (2026)...we have given them a befitting response by striking deep inside Pakistan," he said.

Shah asserted that gone were the days when talks used to happen after a terrorist attack and when Naxalites used to undertake massacres without any fear.

"We have aligned our security perspective with the spirit of the Constitution to strengthen it... all this, in a way, is a declaration of a new defence doctrine," he said.

He said his government took a "firm" decision to free India from Naxalism and this target was achieved recently. The minister said it was his belief that security agencies and forces should work to "uproot" the cause of the problem and just not "control" it.

He asked the BSF troops in border areas to establish communication with the local administration so that they can identify any infiltrator living in the area and effectively plug border gaps aiding smuggling and other illegal activities.

"It is time that the infiltration taking place unhindered for years is stopped. You have done this earlier, for example, by creating a Naxal-free India," he said.

Shah said the current state governments in Tripura, West Bengal and Assam—all led by the BJP—believe in the policy that there should be no infiltration from across Indian borders. His ministry, Shah added, will soon hold a meeting with the chief ministers of these states on the subject of border security.

The minister added that a high-powered demography mission declared earlier by PM Modi will be announced soon by the Union government.

Shah declared that the Union government was planning to launch a "big programme" within the next one year for the welfare of CAPF jawans, adding that they will also initiate a "big operation" against narcotics trafficking in the country.

During the event, the minister honoured BSF jawans and officers with gallantry medals including to those who were part of the 'Operation Sindoor'.

SC Questions Backward Class Quota For Affluent, Advanced Families

New Delhi, May 22

Observing that with educational and economic empowerment there is social mobility, the Supreme Court on Friday questioned the continued grant of reservation benefits to children of economically and educationally advanced families within the Backward Classes communities.

A bench of Justices B.V. Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan was hearing a plea challenging a Karnataka High Court judgment which upheld the exclusion of the petitioner, whose parents are state government employees, from reservation.

"If both parents are IAS officers, why should they have reservations? With educational and economic empowerment, there is social mobility," the bench said, according to PTI. "So then again, to seek reservation for the children, we will never get out of it," the bench observed while issuing notice in the matter.

The top court remarked that if the parents of students were in good jobs with handsome incomes, then the children should get out of reservation.

The apex court said several orders passed by the government provide for the exclusion of such affluent sections from reservation benefits, but they were being challenged now.

"For the economically weaker section and disadvantaged group, there is no social backwardness but only economic backwardness. There has to be some balance. Socially and educationally backward, yes, but once the parents have attained a level because of taking advantage of reservation," the bench said.

The petitioner was selected for appointment as an assistant engineer (electrical) in the Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited under the reserved category. The district caste and income verification com-



SC Questions Backward Class Quota For Affluent, Advanced Families

mittee denied him a caste validity certificate after concluding that he fell within the creamy layer.

The authorities noted that both parents were government employees and that their combined income of '8 lakh exceeded the prescribed creamy layer threshold. Consequently, the caste certificate issued to the petitioner, certifying him as belonging to the Kuruba community, was revoked.

In January 2025, the top court in a separate case had refused to entertain a plea seeking the exclusion of children of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) officers from Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) reservation benefits in Madhya Pradesh, PTI reported.

It said the reference to the exclusion of the creamy layer from SC and ST quotas in a seven-judge Constitution bench's August 2024 ruling in the State of Punjab versus the Davinder Singh case was only a view and the legislature has to decide in this regard.

KTR demands farmers' crisis top Cabinet agenda, demands white paper on crop procurement

HYDERABAD, MAY 22

BRS working president KT Rama Rao has demanded that the State Cabinet meeting scheduled for Saturday take up

Addressing a press conference at Telangana Bhavan on Friday, Rama Rao said the Congress government had com-

tempted suicide. Farmers, including Congress supporters, were staging road blockades and protests across the State demand-

nearly 80 per cent of procurement had been completed, asserting that actual figures were below 30 per cent. "I am prepared to accompany Revanth Reddy to any procurement centre in the State, including Kodangal. If he proves 80 per cent procurement is done, I am ready for any punishment," he said.

The former Minister accused the Congress government of deliberately delaying procurement in an attempt to force farmers to sell produce to private traders at distress prices and avoid expenditure through payment of Minimum Support Price and also Rs 500 bonus. He said 6 to 8 kg of paddy per quintal were being arbitrarily deducted in the name of wastage. He stated that basic facilities, including gunny bags, ropes, tarpaulin sheets, and even drinking water, were absent at centres.

He said Telangana, which had emerged as a major rice-producing State under the BRS government, was now in distress due to failures across the entire agricultural chain under the Congress government, including crop loan waivers, fertiliser supply, irrigation, power, and Rythu Bharosa disbursement.



pletely neglected crop procurement, while farmers across Telangana faced severe hardship during the ongoing Yasangi (Rabi) season. He said he had written to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, urging expedited procurement operations, but the latter continued to deny there was a crisis. He also criticised Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy for allegedly dismissing farmers' grievances.

He demanded unconditional procurement of all pending paddy stock regardless of discolouration or moisture issues. He dared the government to release a white paper on crop procurement since it assumed office. "The Cabinet must take concrete decisions on Saturday. If it fails, the BRS will take to the streets," he said. City & Local Guides

ing immediate crop purchase. "For over 45 days, farmers have been waiting in 45-degree heat for the government to buy their produce, but there has been no respite," he said.

Alleging that officials were citing gunny bag shortages as the reason for delays, he said farmers were also being made to pay waiting charges for tractors and lorries parked at procurement centres. Education Resources

Directly challenging the Chief Minister, Rama Rao disputed the government's claim that

ED arrests Heera Group founder Nowhera Shaik in Gurugram

HYDERABAD, MAY 22

Enforcement Directorate (ED), Hyderabad Zonal Office, has arrested Nowhera Shaik, founder of Heera Group of companies from Gurugram, Haryana, in the case relating to defrauding of investors.

The arrest was made on Thursday under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, the ED said in a release here on Friday.

She was brought to Hyderabad on Thursday night and produced before the PMLA Court, which remanded her to judicial custody.

According to ED, Nowhera Shaik was hiding in Gurugram under a fake identity using forged documents to evade arrest as the PMLA Court had cancelled her bail and issued a Non-Bailable Warrant (NBW). In a joint operation with Haryana Police, the ED traced her location and ap-



prehended her. She was accompanied by her associate, Sameer Khan.

The Central agency said it initiated an investigation based on multiple FIRs registered by Telangana Police and Andhra Pradesh Police against Nowhera Shaik, Molly Thomas, Biju Thomas and Heera Group of companies for allegedly

defrauding 1,72,114 investors of more than Rs 3,000 crore. Education Resources

During the investigation by ED, it was learnt that deposits were collected by Nowhera Shaikh from investors across India on the pretext of investment in Heera Group of Companies by offering huge returns of around 36 per cent per an-

num, and thereafter failed to return their profits/principal amounts.

Nowhera Shaik and related persons diverted the depositors' funds to their personal accounts through company bank accounts for wrongful gain and amassed huge movable and immovable properties by utilising illegally gained money.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Disaster preparedness must be scaled up

INDIA is feeling the heat — literally as well as economically. Rising temperatures are taking their toll on livelihoods and labour productivity amid back-to-back fuel price hikes and rocketing inflation. The worst-hit are the poor and informal workers who form the backbone of India's economy. The nationwide battle against heatwaves can no longer be regarded merely as a seasonal public health concern; it is now a full-blown economic challenge. The warnings in recent years have been stark. The International Labour Organisation estimated in 2024 that India lost nearly \$100 billion due to heat-induced productivity losses. The World Bank cautioned in 2022 that around three-fourths of the labour force in India worked in heat-exposed sectors, while the country alone may account for nearly half of the world's projected job losses caused by heat stress. The most vulnerable groups include construction workers, farmers and farm labourers, street vendors and delivery agents. Central and state governments have issued advisories calling for steps such as rescheduled work hours, shaded rest areas, hydration facilities, protective clothing and health monitoring. Yet these measures remain fragmented and insufficient, considering the scale of the crisis. India's current heat action plans are largely temporary relief mechanisms. What the country urgently needs is a comprehensive policy framework that treats safe working conditions in the scorching summer months as an inalienable right. Earlier this year, the 16th Finance Commission recommended that heatwaves be included in the list of notified disasters under the Disaster Management Act. This classification will enable states and UTs to use money from the State Disaster Response Fund for providing relief and assistance to people.

Intensive 'Nakabandi' checks across Vikarabad district: 109 drunk and drive cases registered, 23 vehicles seized.



"District SP Smt. Sneha Mehra, IPS." "Indian Chronicle Vikarabad (may 22)" "As per the directions of Vikarabad District SP Sneha Mehra, police have undertaken strict measures across the district to maintain law and order and control crime. As part of this, on Thursday from 7 PM to 10 PM, police conducted simultaneous, highly vigilant, and extensive 'Nakabandi' at important junctions, crossroads, and main roads under the jurisdiction of all police stations in the district. These surprise checks were aimed at keeping watch on forces that disrupt law and order and curbing unnecessary movement at night." "Police maintained strict surveillance on district borders as well as internal roads, and thoroughly checked vehicles and individuals moving suspiciously." "As part of these checks, 109 Drunk and Drive (DD) cases were registered against those caught driving under the influence of alcohol. Also, 23 vehicles without proper documents, improper number plates, or violating rules were seized and shifted to police stations. During these inspections, advanced technology was used — the 'Papillon' device was utilized to collect fingerprints of old offenders and suspects to examine their criminal history. The District SP made it clear that no one will be spared if they violate the law and rules, and such surprise inspections will continue regularly in the future."



SEVADAL MEETS MINISTER ADLURI "Hyderabad, May: Congress party - Sevadal's senior member and state secretary Mr. R. Dayakar and another member P. Sunil Rao meet Telangana Minister for SC development, tribal welfare Mr. Adhuri Laxman while honouring him at Gandhi Bhavan, Nampally in Hyderabad.

Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Participates in District-Level Meeting on 99 Days Praja Palana – Pragathi Pranalika



"UPPAL, MAY, 22 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy participated in the district-level "99 Days Praja Palana – Pragathi Pranalika" programme organized under the supervision of the Medchal-Malkajgiri district administration. "The meeting was held at SNR Pushpa Convention in Anthaipally village of Shamirpet mandal, where discussions and reviews were conducted on district development, public welfare programmes, and implementation of key government schemes. "Public representatives, officials, municipal chairpersons, and nominated chairpersons attended the



programme. Discussions focused on delivering public governance more effectively to the people. "Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy stated that officials should work more efficiently to ensure that government welfare schemes reach all eligible beneficiaries. He also urged officials to coordinate better in order to address delays in development works. "The MLA pointed out that welfare programmes and development works in the Uppal constituency were not progressing effectively and stressed the need for improved implementation. District Collector Manu Choudhary, along with BRS party leaders, activists, and other officials, participated in the programme.

KTR Nagar Gets Major Boost: Development Works Worth 1.5 Crore Launched

-Parmeshwar Reddy Oversees Development Activities"



"UPPAL, MAY 22 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): "Development works are progressing rapidly in the Uppal division, with Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Parmeshwar Reddy closely monitoring the ongoing projects. As part of this initiative, Parmeshwar Reddy conducted an extensive visit to KTR Nagar on Friday. "During the visit, he formally inaugurated CC road construction works worth 1.5 crore in KTR Nagar of Uppal Division, along with local residents. "Speaking on the occasion, Parmeshwar Reddy stated that under the initiative of



Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, development works worth nearly ₹100 crore have so far been sanctioned and are being carried out across the Uppal constituency. "Several local leaders and residents participated in the programme, including President Hanumanth Reddy, Janardhan Reddy, Vice President P. Narasimha, Kantha Rao, Nagesh, Shekhar, Balu, Thikka Reddy, Srinivas, Chandu, Radha, Renuka, Padma, Sharada, Venkatamma, Reshma, Razia, Upender Reddy, Ratna Reddy, Satti Reddy, Raghu, Aleem, Sandeep, Bhaskar, Srinivas and others.

IPL Black Ticket Racket Busted in Uppal; Four Arrested Near Stadium

UPPAL, MAY 22 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Rachakonda Police arrested four persons for allegedly selling IPL complimentary tickets in black near the Uppal Stadium ahead of the IPL 2026 match between Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), scheduled to be held on Friday. "As this is the final IPL match to be played in Hyderabad this season and with Indian cricket star Virat Kohli expected to feature in the game, cricket fans showed huge enthusiasm to witness the clash at the stadium. Taking advantage of the high demand for tickets, a major black-ticket scam has come to light. "With genuine tickets becoming increasingly difficult for common fans to obtain, the accused allegedly diverted complimentary tickets and sold them illegally at inflated prices. Acting on specific information, the police apprehended the four accused near the stadium premises. "Police are now investigating how the complimentary tickets reached the accused, whether more people are involved in the racket, and how long the illegal operation has been running. "Officials said special focus has been placed on curbing black-ticket rack-



ets that exploit cricket fans during major matches by charging exorbitant amounts. "Meanwhile, cricket fans alleged that the recurring sale of black tickets during every IPL match points to a failure in surveillance by the Uppal police. Despite repeated assurances by senior police officials during press briefings that strict action would be taken against black-market ticket sales, the illegal activity continues openly, sparking criticism among the public.

Cease Baseless Allegations Against MLA 'Nayini' - DCC President Inagala Venkatram Reddy



"Hanamkonda, May 22 (Indian Chronicle) : Inagala Venkatram Reddy—President of the Hanamkonda District Congress Committee (DCC) and Chairman of the Kakatiya Urban Development Authority (KUDA)—has warned that the Congress party will not tolerate false and baseless allegations leveled against MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy. "Speaking at a press conference held on Friday at the Hanamkonda District Congress office, he alleged that despite MLA Nayini's continuous efforts—backed by public support—towards public welfare and development, certain individuals are deliberately attempting to drag him into unnecessary controversies as part of a political conspiracy. "Venkatram Reddy asserted that a malicious political conspiracy lies behind the attempts to link the MLA to certain temple-related issues, despite the MLA having absolutely no connection to them. He alleged that certain political factions are attempting to derive political mileage under the pretext of these idols; he further questioned why

the officials from the Endowments and Archaeology Departments were not informed if ancient idols had indeed been discovered. "He alleged that while the Congress government and the local MLA are striving to protect government lands, certain individuals are staging political dramas by bringing in idols procured from external sources. He criticized the BRS and BJP parties, accusing them of colluding to mislead the public for their own political gain. "BRS Working President K.T. Criticizing Ramarao, he remarked that—given his declining political graph—he is orchestrating new political dramas in an attempt to recapture the public's attention. He alleged that efforts are being made to install statues in vacant plots across the city with the sole intention of reaping political benefits. "Recalling the services rendered by MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy toward the development of the Shayampet Hanuman temple, Venkatram Reddy stated that the MLA had personally provided financial assistance to the shrine. He emphasized that the public is well aware of the MLA's deep devotion and commitment. "He asserted that there is only one true devotee of Hanuman involved in this entire controversy, and that all the accompanying commotion is merely a political drama being enacted by BRS leaders. He further alleged that they possess evidence proving that these statues were manufactured in Rajasthan and that the payments for them were made by leaders belonging to that very same political party. Advising politicians against propagating "unwholesome politics" among the youth, he warned that attempts to tarnish the reputation of the Congress party and MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy through false propaganda would not succeed and would be met with an appropriate response.

Free IPL Tickets for Thalassaemia Young Warriors for SRH vs RCB Match



"UPPAL, MAY 22 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): The Hyderabad Cricket Association extended a special invitation to children and young warriors battling thalassaemia by providing them free IPL tickets for the #SRHvsRCB match on Friday. "The initiative gave them a rare opportunity to witness and enjoy the excitement of live cricket action at the Uppal Stadium. Hyderabad Cricket Association Secretary Jeevan Reddy said the program was aimed at inspiring and encouraging the young warriors.

Fire Breaks Out at Life Sciences Facility in Genome Valley



"Hyderabad, May 22 (Indian Chronicle): A fire accident occurred at a life sciences facility located in Genome Valley, one of India's leading biotechnology and research hubs. The facility is operated by Rx Propellant, a life sciences infrastructure platform owned by Actis and British International Investment. According to preliminary assessments, the fire is suspected to have been caused by a safety lapse within the facility. The incident resulted in extensive physical and structural damage to the premises of a global Contract Research Organization (CRO) operating within the building. The affected laboratories and research environments play a crucial role in drug discovery and clinical research activities. As a result, the incident has caused significant disruption to the CRO's ongoing research programs, project timelines, and client deliverables. Further investigations are currently underway to determine the exact cause of the fire and assess the full extent of the damage.

The death of an elderly man who was hit by an unidentified vehicle..



"Mulugu/Venkatapuram." "May 22 Indian Chronicle." "A road accident in the outskirts of Alubaka village, within the Venkatapuram areas, left one person dead has come to light late. According to the police, Regga Pidhugaya (62) of Palem village is earning a living by working as a professional. "Verdict: On 21.05.2026 at about 09:00 am Pidhageya went to the village of Barrebonda to see his family members, then walked from there and returned back to Palem Village. It is reported that an unmarked vehicle collided with a road leading to Venkatapuram in the outskirts of Alubaka village during this sequence and caused him to suffer severe blood injuries and die on the spot. "Today, the result was: at approximately 11:00 am on 22.05.2026 locals identified a body in the road and informed family members. The police said they had registered a case at the Venkatapuram Police Station on the complaint of Vasam Parvati, daughter of the deceased. "S .H .O said special measures were being taken to identify the unidentified vehicle and driver who caused the accident.

Over 44k candidates to take Civil Services prelims in Hyderabad on May 24

Hyderabad: As many as 44,209 candidates registered for the Civil Services preliminary examination scheduled to be held on Sunday at 100 centres in Hyderabad.

Paper I will be held from 9.30 am to 11.30 am and Paper II from 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm. The gates of the examination centres will be closed 30 minutes before the commencement of the examination and candidates have been advised to reach centres before 9 am for the morning session and before 2 pm for the afternoon session. Candidates arriving late will not be permitted to enter centres.

"This year, as the Parliamentary Committee has observed that Paper II i.e., CSAT should be rationalised, it is expected that Paper II will be easier and consequently Paper I is expected to be tougher than the previous years," said V Gopalakrishna, Director, Brain Tree

Meanwhile, Hyderabad Collector in-charge C Narayana Reddy said all arrangements have been put in place for smooth and transparent conduct of the examination at all centres.

Delay in grain procurement... Ordeal for food suppliers : Kongara Ravi

yards." "Ravikumar alleged that farmers are facing severe financial and mental distress due to months-long delay in online bill payments. He alleged that the operators of IKP centres are exploiting farmers in the name of "discounts" and "moisture percentage" and illegally harvesting 3 to 5 kg of paddy per quintal." "He also alleged that millers and lorry operators are colluding to deliberately delay the transport of paddy and divert 10 to 20 bags from each lorry. He warned that thousands of paddy bags lying in open yards are at risk of getting damaged due to untimely rains." "The BJP leader demanded that the government immediately supply adequate gunny bags, weighing machines, porters and lorries to all the collection centres. He called for strict action against the officials, managers and mill owners who are harassing the farmers on the pretext of moisture and weight deductions." "He asked the government to set up adequate tarpaulins at the collection centres to protect the grain stocks from rains and also to deposit the payments directly into the farmers' bank accounts within 48 hours of collection." "He asked Tahsildar Ravi Kumar to conduct a field inspection on the problems of the farmers and submit a comprehensive report to the District Collector to ensure immediate government intervention and assistance to the agriculture sector." "State Council members G.T. Koppula Rambabu, 15th Division President Ladella Prabhakar, 16th Division President Prasanna Ram Prasad, District Council members Godasi Ashwin, Billa Ramesh, Division General Secretary Radharapu Mallikarjun, Santhakala Srinivas, Kandikonda Pradeep, Kisan Morcha leaders Lankapalli Marri Rajkumar, Allam Kedari, Marri Kumaraswamy, senior leaders Kamagoni Raghupathi, Mahila Morcha leader Bandela Renuka and many other party leaders and activists participated.

"Geesukonda, May 22 (Indian Chronicle) : BJP Geesukonda Mandal President Kongara Ravi Kumar has lashed out at the government over the negligence and chaos at the rice procurement centres. He said that farmers are facing an 'ordeal' due to the long-term delay in grain procurement." "Submitting a memorandum to the Geesukonda Tahsildar on Friday, Ravikumar said that farmers who have worked tirelessly to grow crops are now facing serious difficulties in selling their crops. He alleged that due to administrative negligence and lack of proper planning, farmers are having to go around the procurement centres for weeks." "Speaking on the occasion, he expressed concern that the procurement of rice and maize has slowed down considerably as the weighing operations have not yet started even though the grain stocks reached the centres almost a month ago. He said that the procurement process has almost come to a standstill due to the acute shortage of gunny bags, coupled with the unavailability of porters and transport lorries, leading to piles of paddy in paddy

Lack of Scientific Basis in Minimum Wage Revision : Gone Yuva Raju



the recommendations of labour unions and the Minimum Wages Advisory Board." "Referring to the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, and the Dr. Aykroyd formula, he stated that if wages were scientifically calculated based on inflation and living expenses, the minimum monthly wage should be ₹32,000, as suggested by the Supreme Court. He expressed disappointment that despite labour unions across the country demanding at least ₹26,000 as minimum wage, the state government had ignored their concerns." "Yuva Raju further pointed out that over three lakh scheme workers, including Anganwadi, ASHA, NREGS, NRHM, and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan workers, were employed across the state, but the government had failed to clarify under which category they would be brought under the revised wage structure." "Demanding justice for workers, he urged the government to review the minimum wage revision and implement a fair and scientific wage policy.

"Narsampeta/Warangal, May 22 (Indian Chronicle) : BRTU District President Gone Yuva Raju criticised the Telangana government's revised minimum wages, alleging that the hike lacked transparency and scientific basis and failed to match the rising cost of living faced by workers." "He stated that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had earlier promised a scientific revision of minimum wages through a Cabinet Sub-Committee, projecting it as a model for the country. However, he alleged that the government failed to implement the exercise with sincerity and ignored the demands raised by labour unions." "Yuva Raju termed it unfortunate that the government did not address the issue of Dearness Allowance (DA) while announcing the revised wages. According to the new structure, unskilled workers would receive ₹16,000, semi-skilled workers ₹17,000, skilled workers ₹18,500, and highly skilled workers ₹20,000 per month." "He pointed out that except for unskilled workers, there was hardly any significant difference between the existing salaries and the revised wages announced by the government. Referring to Contract Labour GO-11, he said workers in the state were already drawing wages ranging from ₹13,098 to ₹23,683." "Citing GO-4, he noted that a skilled worker was earlier entitled to ₹19,572, whereas the present announcement fixed the wage at only ₹18,500, effectively reducing the wage by ₹1,072 compared to the previous structure." "The BRTU leader recalled that during the previous BRS regime, the Minimum Wages Advisory Board had recommended a minimum wage of ₹18,009 for unskilled workers along with a Dearness Allowance of ₹12 per point. He alleged that although the BRS government had issued five GOs on June 25, 2021, the present Congress government had failed to publish them in the Gazette." "Accusing the government of ignoring all accepted wage standards, he questioned the rationale behind announcing wages in the name of a Cabinet Sub-Committee without considering

Congress Government Stands with the Poor – MLA Revuri



and that their primary objective is to ensure every family achieves economic empowerment. He added that the state government is introducing numerous people-centric initiatives aimed at improving the living standards of the poor and vulnerable sections of society. Highlighting the prestigious welfare schemes being implemented by the government, he specifically mentioned initiatives such as the Indira Mahila Dairy,

Young India Integrated Schools, the issuance of new ration cards, the distribution of Indiramma sarees, 200 units of free electricity, farm loan waivers, Indiramma Atmiya Bharosa, Rythu Bima (Farmers' Insurance), a ₹500 bonus for fine-variety paddy, the supply of fine rice, the Mahalakshmi scheme, LPG subsidies, interest-free loans, Sreenidhi loans, and the Indiramma Housing Scheme." "Revuri Prakash Reddy appealed to the public to make the best possible use of these welfare measures—designed for their social and economic upliftment—and to avail themselves of the benefits offered through these schemes.

(HUDCO). He thanked Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, district Ministers and Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar for their efforts in securing the funds. Mr. Narendra Reddy said the State government had sanctioned ₹70 crore as its share for pending works under the Smart City project despite the conclusion of the scheme. The Centre, however, could not release its corresponding share after the project period ended, he added. The funds would be utilised for the construction of multi-level parking facilities and major drainage works in flood-prone areas of the city.

"-----CMRF Cheques Worth 24.27 Lakhs Distributed to Beneficiaries" "Parakala/Hanamkonda, May 22 (Indian Chronicle) : Parakala MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy stated that the Congress-led 'Praja Government' (People's Government) is committed to the welfare of poor and underprivileged families. He urged the public to fully utilize the welfare schemes being implemented by the state government." "Speaking at an event held on Friday at his camp office in Parkal town, MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy distributed Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) cheques to eligible beneficiaries hailing from Parkal town, as well as the mandals of Parkal, Nadiakuda, Atmakur, and Damera." "Addressing the gathering, Revuri Prakash Reddy announced that CMRF cheques worth ₹24,27,750 were distributed to 58 beneficiaries. He noted that this scheme provides crucial financial assistance to families from economically backward sections who struggle to bear medical expenses due to illness and health emergencies." "The MLA emphasized that the Congress government is implementing welfare schemes transcending political considerations,

District Takes the Lead in Implementing 'Praja Palana Pragathi' Program: MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy



Warangal, May 22 (Indian Chronicle): Parakala MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy stated that the 99-day action plan, undertaken as part of the 'Praja Palana Pragathi' (People's Administration and Progress) program, is being successfully implemented across the district." "The MLA participated in an event held at the Sri Convention on Hunter Road in Warangal, alongside MLC Basavaraj Saraiah, the newly appointed Warangal Police Commissioner Sunpreet Singh, and District Collector Dr. Satya Sarada." "Speaking at the meeting, Revuri Prakash Reddy remarked that the welfare schemes introduced by the government are effectively reaching the people right at their doorsteps. He noted that the government is implementing several innovative initiatives aimed at fostering women's economic empowerment, strengthening the education sector, and enhancing social security." "The MLA revealed that the Telangana government is preparing to introduce a special life insurance



scheme designed to provide coverage to every family in the state." "Further elaborating, he announced that—in addition to strengthening government schools—a breakfast scheme would be introduced starting from the upcoming academic year to improve student attendance and academic outcomes. He added that welfare programs such as the 'Mahalakshmi' free bus travel scheme, 'Gruha Jyothi', 'Indiramma Gruha' scheme, 'Kalyana Lakshmi', and 'Rythu Bharosa' are being extended to eligible beneficiaries." "Subsequently, appointment letters were distributed to candidates selected through a mega job fair. Training certificates were also presented to members of Women's Self-Help Groups who successfully completed the "M-Suvidha – NABARD" training program, organized under the aegis of the NABARD Regional Office." "During this event, a commemorative booklet outlining the 99-day action plan of the 'Praja Palana Pragathi' program was formally unveiled.

Census data vital for future planning, says official

Supervisors told to ensure error-free completion of house listing exercise.

KARIMNAGAR May 22 (Correspondent): Census Charge Officer Bashiruddin on Friday stressed the need for carrying out the ongoing Census process in a systematic and error-free manner, stating that the data collected would play a vital role in future planning and implementation of government welfare schemes. Speaking at a review meeting with Census supervisors held at the Karimnagar Municipal Corporation office, he reviewed the progress of the first phase of the Census exercise involving house listing operations within the municipal limits.

Mr. Bashiruddin instructed supervisors to ensure that every household in the city is surveyed block-wise without leaving out a single house. He observed that house numbering and collection of details relating to residential buildings were among the most crucial aspects of the first phase of the enumeration process. He directed supervisors to closely monitor field-level activities and ensure that enumerators visit each household in their allotted blocks and collect accurate information. Supervisors were also asked to promptly resolve technical and operational issues faced by enumerators to facilitate smooth and speedy completion of the process.

The official said details relating to living conditions and



housing facilities should be recorded strictly in accordance with government-prescribed formats. Noting that nearly 35% of the Census work had been completed so far, he called upon officials to accelerate the process and ensure its completion by June 9. Mr. Bashiruddin said Census statistics form the basis for planning welfare programmes and infrastructure development, and appealed to citizens to cooperate with enumerators and supervisors by furnishing accurate information. Deputy Census Officer Khader Mohiuddin, Additional Charge Officers Venu and Sridhar, master trainers and supervisors participated in the meeting.

Forest Department warns people in villages near Edira..

"Venkatapuram, Indian Chronicle, May 22." "The forest has been alerted by reports of a leopard infestation along the borders of Yakannagudem-Subampeta areas, Edira Guts and Churla Mandal range on the border of Venkatapuram Forest Division in Mulugu district. Venkatapuram Forest Range Officer S. said that he had conducted field level observations to this effect. Vansikrishna told the media on Friday. The staff of the Venkatapuram-Charla Forest Department said they had detected suspicious footprints for a leopard, which is thought to be moving towards nearby forest areas and continues its continuous monitoring. People in the forest edge villages have been advised to temporarily stop using cattle and sheep manure, so that people especially children do not wander around alone during evening and night hours. Forestry staff are requested to inform the leopard immediately in case it is found without causing any harm. He warned that under the Wildlife Protection Act-1972, legal action would be taken if wildlife were harmed. Edira, next to the main road of Venkatapuram-Charla for raising awareness among people, said precautionary instructions were given through loudspeakers in villages such as Yakanagudem. The leopard is said to have arrived in the area from Chattisgarh Forest. Forest Department officials have asked for information if there is any leopard-related.



Women's Welfare is the Primary Objective of the Congress Government : Pendem Srilakshmi Ramanand

"Narsampet/Warangal, May 22 (Indian Chronicle) : Narsampet Municipal Chairperson Pendem Srilakshmi Ramanand stated that the Congress government is committed to ensuring that the benefits of welfare schemes reach every household. She reiterated that public welfare remains the government's primary objective. She further announced that, with the cooperation of MLA Donthi Madhava Reddy, they would transform Narsampet into a model town." "As part of the 'Praja Palana Pragathi Pranaliika' (People's Administration and Progress Plan)—a prestigious 99-day action plan undertaken by the Telangana government—Pendem Srilakshmi Ramanand participated in a district-level review meeting held on Hunter Road in Hanamkonda. During this meeting, organized under the directives of MLA Donthi Madhava Reddy, the implementation status of various government welfare schemes was reviewed." "Speaking on the occasion, she stated that the government is working with dedication to ensure that welfare programs, designed for the well-being of the people, reach every home. She noted that eligible beneficiaries are being identified through Ward Sabhas (ward-level meetings) and that continuous measures are being taken to effectively deliver the government's 'Six Guarantees' to the public." "She affirmed that, with the support and guidance of MLA Donthi Madhava Reddy, the Municipality is committed to transforming Narsampet into a model town and positioning it at the forefront of development across all sectors. Emphasizing the Congress government's commitment to women's empowerment, she stated that they are effectively implementing numerous welfare schemes, with a special focus on women's welfare



and their participation in governance." "Pendem Srilakshmi Ramanand clarified that their administrative machinery is actively working to take government schemes and services directly to the people, while simultaneously resolving issues at the grassroots level both rapidly and effectively

Karimnagar gets animal birth control centre to tackle stray dog menace

Mayor asks officials to expand kennel facilities and step up sterilisation drive.



KARIMNAGAR May 22 (Correspondent): Mayor Kolagani Srinivas on Friday inaugurated an Animal Birth Control (ABC) and Animal Care Centre at Bommakal in an effort to address the growing stray dog menace in the city. Constructed by the Karimnagar Municipal Corporation at a cost of ₹43 lakh, the facility has been established in accordance with the guidelines of the Animal Welfare Board

of India (AWBI) for undertaking sterilisation surgeries and providing post-operative care to stray dogs.

Municipal Commissioner Praful Desai, Deputy Mayor Yadagiri Sunil Rao and corporators attended the inaugural programme. The centre presently has 20 pre-operative kennels and 18 post-operative kennels besides an operation theatre equipped with surgical instruments, electrocautery equipment, shadowless lamps and vaccine storage facilities.

Inspecting the centre, the Mayor directed officials to establish 62 additional kennels and construct a compound wall around the premises. He also asked officials to intensify sterilisation operations to reduce dog bite incidents in the city. Mr. Srinivas said the civic body was committed to ensuring public safety while implementing humane animal population control measures. Referring to recent dog bite incidents reported in the 41st and 43rd divisions, he said effective steps were being taken to control the increasing stray dog population. According to officials, dogs undergoing sterilisation procedures would be kept under observation in post-operative wards for five days. Veterinary doctors, dog catchers and support staff have been deployed to carry out the procedures in accordance with AWBI norms. The Mayor said the Municipal Corporation had conducted sterilisation operations on 5,015 stray dogs since 2020. Among those present were corporators Mekala Venkatesh, Somidi Venu and Bhupathi Ravinder, Additional Commissioner Suvarta and Veterinary Officer Durga Prasad Reddy.

Massive Land Scam Comes to Light Amidst Property Dispute Inspector D.Visweswar

Geesugonda, May 22 (Indian Chronicle) : Inspector D. Visweswar announced on Friday that a criminal case has been registered at the Geesugonda Police Station involving allegations of a land scam, trespassing, assault, and criminal intimidation, in connection with a disputed property located on the outskirts of Reddypalem in Warangal district. "According to police sources, the complainant—Konda Venkateswarlu (68), a resident of Kothawada—stated that he, along with his brother-in-law Bethi Srinivasa Rao, had purchased the land situated at Survey No. 204 in Reddypalem through registered sale deeds executed in 1991 and 1995, and that the property has remained under their possession ever since. "The complaint alleges that an individual named Padakanti Venkateswarlu, capitalizing on an ongoing civil dispute regarding this land, gave false assurances to the complainant that he would arrange for a 'General Power of Attorney' (GPA) to be executed in his favor. Exploiting this situation, he allegedly fraudulently forged a "Sale-cum-GPA" document in the name of Kondapaka Narayana Charyulu. "It is further alleged that, despite court orders mandating the maintenance of status quo (the existing state of affairs), the accused continued to engage in various transactions concerning the disputed property. It is reported that the said land was transferred—through sale deeds and GPA agreements—from Kondapaka Narayana Charyulu to Kottapelli Mallesham, and subsequently to Chevva Mogili. "The complainant alleged that on the evening of May 19, Chevva Mogili, Keesari Raju, and four unidentified individuals arrived at the prop-



erty, broke the gate lock, and illegally trespassed into the premises. It is further alleged that, claiming to possess full rights over the land, they assaulted the complainant and threatened him with death. "Based on the complaint, the police registered a case against Padakanti Venkateswarlu, Kondapaka Narayana Charyulu, Kottapelli Mallesham, Chevva Mogili, Keesari Raju, and four unidentified individuals. An investigation is currently underway. Inspector D. Vishweswar stated that the accused are currently absconding, and efforts are being made to apprehend them as soon as possible and produce them before the court for remand.

Welfare Benefits to Reach Every Eligible Citizen: Additional Collector

"Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, May 22: Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Yuvaraj Marmat stated that the government is committed to extending welfare and development benefits to every eligible citizen in the district. "He was addressing the district-level meeting organized on Friday at the conference hall of the Integrated Collectorate Complex as part of the Praja Palana – Pragati Pranali 99 Days Programme. The meeting was attended by Additional Collector M. David, District Library Chairman Anil, District Revenue Officer Dasari Venu, Asifabad Municipal Chairman Akash, and Asifabad Revenue Divisional Officer Lokeshwar Rao. "Speaking on the occasion, the Additional Collector said that several welfare schemes are being implemented by the government for eligible beneficiaries across the district. These include Rythu Bharosa, Indiramma Housing Scheme, Mahalakshmi Scheme, Gruha Jyothi, Rs.500 bonus per quintal for fine variety paddy farmers, Cheyutha pensions, Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak schemes, interest-free loans through women self-help group bank linkage programmes, new ration cards, and Indiramma sarees. "He further stated that from next month, the government is planning to introduce breakfast facilities for students studying in government schools, family life insurance, mid-day meals for intermediate students, vehicles for specially-abled students, crop diversification programmes, organic farming promotion, and oil palm cultivation initiatives. "The Additional



Collector called upon village sarpanches and officials to work in coordination to ensure welfare benefits reach poor and deserving families effectively. "Earlier, Additional Collector (Revenue) M. David read out the message of the Chief Minister. Officials from the Agriculture Department, Horticulture Department, Housing Department, Electricity Department, Rural Development Department, and Civil Supplies Department explained the schemes and activities being implemented under their respective departments during the meeting. "District officials, sarpanches, councillors, women self-help group members, and others participated in the programme. "Issued by District Public Relations Officer

Food Poisoning at Annapurna Hotel



"Serilingampalli May 22: may Five individuals who dined at the Annapurna Hotel—located next to 'Mandi King' in Anjayanagar, within the limits of the Anjayanagar Division—suffered severe food poisoning. Experiencing extreme vomiting and acute discomfort, they were subsequently admitted to a hospital. "Local residents have ex-

pressed deep concern, pointing out that such alarming incidents occur due to the use of spoiled chicken and expired food products. "They have demanded that food safety inspections be conducted across all hotels, fast-food centers, and restaurants situated in and around the Anjayanagar area. "This demand was put forward by Anjayanagar Division leaders Anjaneyulu Sagar and Anjayanagar Colony President Narasimha Sagar, along with Andhra Seenu, Krishna Sagar, Ravi Sagar, Seetharam Sagar, Veladri, Raju, Tirupathayya Sagar, Ganesh, Rohit, and other residents of the locality.

SCB to collect Transfer of Property Tax directly from June 1

Hyderabad: The Commissioner and Inspector General of Registration and Stamps, Telangana, has accorded permission to the Secunderabad Cantonment Board (SCB) to collect Transfer of Property Tax (TPT) directly from June 1. A memo issued by the Commissioner and Inspector General of Registration and Stamps, S D Twinkle Joan, to SCB Chief Executive Officer Arvind Kumar Divedi stated that directions had been issued to separate and enable the collection of TPT charges by SCB instead of cumulative collection through the IGRS portal from June 1.

Government Committed to Clean Drinking Water Access: Additional Collector



Indian Chronicle, Asifabad, May 22: Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Yuvaraj Marmat stated that steps are being taken to provide safe drinking water to every household in the district under the Jal Jeevan Mission. "He participated on Friday in a video conference conducted by officials of the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs from New Delhi. The programme was held at the video conference hall of the Integrated Collectorate Complex. "Speaking on the occasion, the Additional Collector said that the district administration is taking measures to ensure safe drinking water supply to every home through the Jal Jeevan Mission scheme. He added that sanitation and hygiene-related activities are also being carried out in villages as part of the initiative. "District Rural Development Officer Dattarao, Zilla Parishad Chief Executive Officer Lakshmi Narayana, and Mission Bhagiratha Executive Engineer Siddiq participated in the video conference programme. "Issued by District Public Relations Officer

Collector stresses last-mile delivery of welfare schemes

Officials asked to prepare action plans based on issues identified during grassroots visits.

KARIMNAGAR May 22 (Correspondent): District Collector Chitra Mishra on Friday said the government was committed to ensuring that welfare schemes reached every eligible beneficiary and called upon officials to prepare future development plans based on issues identified during extensive field visits across the district. Addressing a district-level review meeting held under the 99-day Public Governance Progress Plan at the Collectorate auditorium here, Ms. Mishra said the programme, focusing on 10 key themes, had been implemented successfully in the district.

She said officials had toured villages, interacted with residents, understood their grievances and identified local needs. Meetings were conducted at village, mandal and constituency levels, while several development works were inaugurated as part of the initiative. The Collector said training programmes and awareness sessions had also been organised for newly elected public representatives. Referring to the issues brought to the administration's notice during the programme, she said the authorities would move ahead with a structured plan for their resolution. The administration would continue efforts until government welfare schemes reached the last eligible beneficiary, she added.

Mayor Kolagani Srinivas urged the government to release adequate funds for resolving the issues identified during the programme and for taking up village-level development works. SUDA Chairman Komatireddy Narendra Reddy said the State government had launched the programme to create awareness among people about welfare and development initiatives and to formulate future plans based on public feedback. He said officials had resolved several issues at the grassroots level during their visits and added that pending matters would be taken up with higher authorities concerned. Police Commissioner Gautham said the Police Department had conducted awareness campaigns on road safety and traffic regulations as part of the programme. Around 1,500 drivers underwent eye screening tests and nearly 500 persons were provided spectacles, he said. Municipal Commissioner Praful Desai said sanitation had improved following special drives conducted in all



66 divisions. He added that focus would also be laid on the development of newly merged peripheral areas of the city. Deputy Mayor Sunil Rao, Additional Collectors Ashwini Tanaji Wakade and Srinivasa Reddy, RDOs Maheshwar and Ramesh Babu, municipal chairpersons, commissioners, corporators and sarpanches participated. Help desk for sarpanches

The Collector directed the District Panchayat Officer to establish a help desk at the Collectorate for addressing issues faced by sarpanches. She instructed officials to allocate helpline numbers for the help desk and communicate them to all sarpanches. Officials were also asked to prepare a list of incomplete Gram Panchayat buildings after field inspections and take steps for their completion. Ms. Mishra further directed authorities to monitor the income and expenditure accounts of all Gram Panchayats in accordance with the Panchayat Raj Act, 2018, to ensure timely payment of staff salaries and electricity bills.

Do Not Believe Rumours; Public Must Remain Vigilant: CI D. Vishweshwar

"Geesugonda, May 22 (Indian Chronicle) : Geesugonda Circle Inspector D. Vishweshwar has clarified that certain individuals are spreading false propaganda on social media alleging that people from Bihar are carrying out attacks on the Kotagandi Maisamma Temple—Pothurajupalli road stretch. "He stated that there has been no official confirmation regarding any such incident and that no complaint related to the matter has been received by the police so far. "The CI urged the public not to panic or fall prey to rumours and misinformation. He appealed to citizens to immediately dial 100 and inform the police if they notice any suspicious persons or untoward incidents in the area. "He further warned that circulating unverified news on social media could create unnecessary fear and misconceptions among the public. He appealed to citizens, youth, and social media users to act responsibly and refrain from spreading baseless information. "CI Vishweshwar assured that the Geesugonda police are maintaining strict vigilance and discharging their duties proactively to ensure the safety and security of villagers.



Meru women should be given first priority in sewing machines

Meru community members request government whip Beerla Ayilaiah

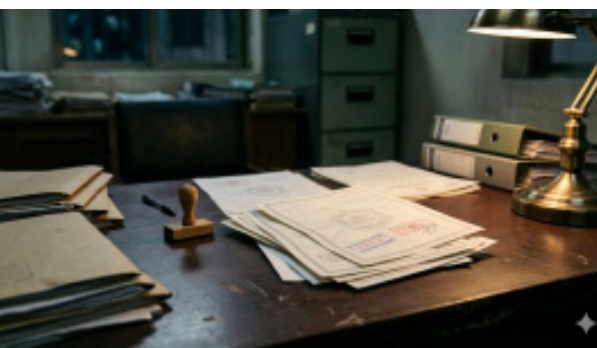


women at the rate of one thousand per constituency, they wanted priority to be given to Meru community women who really depend on the tailoring profession. Speaking on the occasion, the community leaders said that many families belonging to the Meru community have been living on the tailoring profession for generations. They said that the sewing machines provided by the government will help women achieve financial self-sufficiency.

The MLA was informed that the scheme should be implemented transparently and justice should be done to the eligible women. Similarly, tailoring is the main source of livelihood for Meru caste women and special steps should be taken to ensure that they receive the welfare schemes implemented by the government in a timely manner. MLA Beerla Ayilaiah, who received the petition, along with District Collector Anurag Jayant, assured the leaders of the association that they would respond positively to the issue and work to bring it to the attention of the government. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Meru Association President Kataram Bhaskar, Honorary President Boddu Satyanarayana, General Secretary Kotturi Rajamallappa, Treasurer Kotha Bhaskar, Vice President Kotha Anjaneyulu, Turkapalli Mandal Meru Association Presidents Adimulam Suresh, Deekonda Venkatesh, Kotha Ganesh, Mediga Bhaskar, Konda Veender and other association leaders and members participated in this program.

"(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau..Indian Chronicle...May 22):- Meru community leaders of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district met government whip and Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah and submitted a petition to the government whip and Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah to give first priority in the "Sewing Machine to Women" scheme being implemented by the government. "The community representatives, who met politely on Friday, said that in the context of the Telangana government granting sewing machines to BC

Instagram user booked in Mumbai for 'abusive and derogatory' post against PM Modi



GNS News Agency, May 22

Days after a UK national, Sangram Patil, was allowed to leave the country after he was booked for a social media post against the BJP last year, the Mumbai police on Friday registered an FIR against an Instagram account holder for alleged use of insulting and derogatory language against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The police said they are trying to track down the person who handles the Instagram account. The FIR was registered based on a complaint filed by BJP Yuva Morcha worker Deepak Singh. In his complaint, Singh said he came across a post on the Instagram account teekhe_ladhke_no_1 while browsing on Wednesday. Singh alleged that the account was misusing

deepfake technology to show PM Modi in a poor light, and a fake video was made using extremely insulting and derogatory language. He said he found the same video on Facebook as well on an account of Nafees Alam.

In his complaint, Singh said the video, which has hurt the sentiments of many activists, has created a fake story about the Prime Minister and created a false impression in the minds of the people regarding the Indian government. The video has been created by using deepfake technology in the wrong way. Based on his complaint, the Bhoiwada police registered an FIR against the Instagram account holder under sections 196 (Promoting enmity between different groups), 352 (intentional insult to provoke breach of peace), 353 (public mischief) and 356 (defamation) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita in addition to sections of the Information Technology Act. Dattatray Thakur, Senior Inspector, Bhoiwada police station, said they have launched an investigation to identify the person using the Instagram account, as the name may be fake. In December last year, the Mumbai police registered an FIR against an Indian-origin UK doctor, Sangram Patil, for an alleged social media post against the Bharatiya Janata Party. A Look Out Notice had been issued against him, and he was detained upon arriving in Mumbai on January 10. Patil was not allowed to leave India for four months before the Bombay High Court granted him relief earlier this month.

ED raids underway in Kolkata, Murshidabad locations in Sona Pappu extortion and land grab case



GNS News Agency, May 22

The Enforcement Directorate on Friday carried out fresh searches across West Bengal in connection with a money laundering probe involving alleged criminal Biswajit Poddar alias Sona Pappu and arrested former Kolkata Police deputy commissioner Shantanu Sinha Biswas. (File Photo) The Enforcement Directorate on Friday carried out fresh searches across West Bengal in connection with a money laundering probe involving alleged criminal Biswajit Poddar alias Sona Pappu and arrested former Kolkata Police deputy commissioner Shantanu Sinha Biswas.

The Enforcement Directorate Friday carried out fresh raids across multiple locations in West Bengal in connection with a money laundering case involving alleged criminal Biswajit Poddar alias Sona Pappu and arrested Kolkata police officer Shantanu Sinha Biswas. According to ED sources, raids are currently underway at three separate locations in Kasba, Chakraborty, and Royd Street. Simultaneously, another search operation has begun at the palatial house of Shantanu Biswas, a former deputy commissioner (DC) of Kolkata police, in Kandi, Murshidabad. On May 18, ED had arrested Sona Pappu alias Biswajit Poddar, a real estate developer in Kolkata, following raids at his residence and multiple locations linked to him, and reportedly seized over Rs 2 crore in cash, property documents and a handgun. "ED is conducting searches at 9 premises linked

to the case of Sona Pappu and Santanu Sinha Biswas in Kolkata and Murshidabad. The premises covered include those of Mohammed Ali alias Max Raju, Saurav Adhikari, the nephew of Shantanu Sinha Biswas, and the Murshidabad premises of Biswas. The searches are being conducted in pursuance of the findings unearthed during the custodial interrogation of the accused and other persons," read a statement by ED. Officials have also searched the premises of Ruhil Amin Ali, a sub-inspector with Kolkata Police who is a close associate of Biswas, and the residence of a businessman in Chakraborty. Sources in the central investigative agency said that the businessman is a close associate of Sona Pappu.

ED officials arrived at Biswas's residence in Kandi early Friday morning. As the doors were locked from the inside, investigators waited outside for nearly two and a half hours with no response. Later, they broke the gate lock and began the search. Investigators are currently scrutinising various documents and questioning members of Biswas's family. Biswas, a former Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Kalighat Police Station, is originally a resident of Kandi municipality in Murshidabad district. His sister, Gouri Sinha Biswas, is the vice-chairperson of the TMC-run municipality. Following Biswas' arrest by the ED, his palatial residence has sparked widespread curiosity, as residents claim his original family home was dilapidated, but the former deputy commissioner constructed the current palatial house in just five to six years. On Monday, following a gruelling nine-hour interrogation, the ED arrested Sona Pappu, from Kasba. In court, the ED alleged that Sona Pappu used intimidation tactics to acquire others' land and property at throwaway prices. The ED further stated that he did not operate alone, disclosing the names of a few members of a syndicate. They claimed that Pappu operated on behalf of Jay Kamdar, a businessman from Behala, and Shantanu, the Kolkata police officer, playing a pivotal role in this land syndicate. While the ED moved a prayer seeking a 10-day custody of Pappu, the defence counsel filed a bail petition for the arrested Kasba businessman. Rejecting the bail plea, the court remanded Sona Pappu to ED custody until May 28.

How 'Hinjewadi viral samosa' teen turned a roadside stall into a shop

GNS News Agency, May 22

A Class 12 student, known for a roadside samosa stall outside the Tech Mahindra campus in Pune's Hinjewadi — widely popular online as the "Hinjewadi Viral Samosa" — launched his first permanent shop Monday night, drawing long queues of customers within hours. What began as a small roadside setup by Himanshu Nishad, along with his sister Neelu Devi and brother Nilesh, on December 29, 2025, was driven by a simple goal: to support their family financially. Videos of the stall later circulated online, turning it into a popular late-night food spot among IT employees and residents, who queued well past midnight for a bite.



Speaking about the shift from a roadside stall to a permanent shop, Himanshu, 18, says the transition has made operations significantly easier. "There are many more facilities here. If it rains or the weather is bad, work does not stop now. Earlier, we faced several daily struggles, but this setup has made things easier," he says. He adds that life changed significantly after the stall went viral on Instagram. "People see the fun part, but behind it lies a lot of struggle. You barely get any sleep, and the tension is constant". Himanshu says he deliberately chose Hinjewadi's Krishna Market because of its constant flow of office-goers and tech employees. "There are always people here, so I thought it would work," he says. The earlier venture had no name, but the new one is now officially called Lmpians Kitchen. According to the family, the name is inspired by their hometown, Lakhimpur Kheri in Uttar Pradesh, commonly shortened to "LMP". The menu at the stall, which operates daily from 2 pm to 10 pm, includes samosas, dahi samosa chaat, chole samosa chaat, and fries. The samosas, initially priced at Rs 20, now cost Rs 25 following LPG shortages and rising operational costs. 'Lmpians Kitchen', Hinjewadi viral samosa, Pune, Express news Himanshu Nishad frying the special Uttar Pradesh-style samosas at his 'Lmpians Kitchen'. The recipe draws inspi-

ration from Uttar Pradesh-style samosas but has been slightly adapted by the siblings into a mix of UP and Maharashtra flavours. Neelu Devi, who helps manage kitchen operations, said, "It sounds like a simple samosa, but there is a lot of work behind it." Friends and relatives often help during peak hours to manage the workload. The outlet currently prepares around 1,000 to 1,500 samosas daily, though demand often exceeds capacity due to limited staff and infrastructure. Even before the outlet opened, customers would stop by to check whether the shop was operational, and queues would form later in the evening. Many say they first learned about the stall through Instagram reels and recommendations from employees working nearby. Kaustubh Natkut, a software developer at Infosys and a regular customer, says he first visited the stall months ago after a friend recommended its garlic chutney and North Indian-style samosas. "For that taste, we are happy to wait. He's worked so hard, and we are happy to see him succeed at this new location," he adds. Another customer, Gayatri Pillay, a business owner from BT Kawade Road, says she discovered the stall through Instagram reels, adding that the journey reflects the importance of hard work and starting from the basics at a young age.

Pathankot police bust racket spying for Pakistani intelligence, 1 arrested

GNS News Agency, May 22

The Pathankot police have recently uncovered an espionage network operating on behalf of Pakistani intelligence agencies. The Central Investigating Agency (CIA) staff of the Pathankot police arrested Baljit Singh alias Bittu, a resident of Chak Dhariwal village in Pathankot. The police said Bittu and three of his accomplices were in active contact with anti-national elements. Investigations revealed that the suspects had strategically installed a specialised CCTV camera on a roadside shop located between Bridge Numbers 4 and 5 on NH-44 Pathankot-Jammu Highway in Sujanpur. The primary objective of this setup was to closely monitor and track the movements and tactical activities of the Indian Army and paramilitary forces. The live electronic feed from these cameras was being transmitted directly to Pakistan-based handlers and intelligence agencies, presenting a threat to the sovereignty, integrity, and security of India. During interrogation following his arrest, Baljit Singh allegedly confessed that he and his associates had set up the internet-enabled rotating CCTV camera back in January 2026. He revealed that the entire operation was being directed by an unidentified handler operating out of Dubai. For executing this espionage task, he was handed a financial reward of Rs 40,000. The accused had recently removed



the camera from the highway and hidden it inside the shop. However, police teams managed to successfully seize the camera along with its air fiber modem. A formal case has been registered against the accused at the Sujanpur police station on Thursday. The suspects face charges under Sections 61, 111, 113(3), and 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), alongside Section 3 of the Official Secrets Act, 1923. While Baljit Singh has already been taken into custody, two other co-accused are currently lodged in jail in connection with a separate NDPS Act case and will soon be brought in on a production warrant for questioning.

Cricket diploma student drowns at Haryana sports university swimming pool

GNS News Agency, May 22

Haryana Sports University, Haryana Sports University swimming pool death, Indian Express News Reports said the accident occurred around 8.30 pm when Gautam entered the swimming pool and drowned in deep water. A 20-year-old student of the Sports University of Haryana in Rai in Sonapat allegedly drowned in the university's swimming pool late Thursday, raising concerns about safety measures at the pool and whether all required protocols were properly followed. The deceased has been identified as Nishant Gautam, a resident of Palwal and a final-year student pursuing a PG Diploma in Cricket at the university.



versity authorities were informed of the accident after a delay, which may have hampered rescue efforts. The Sonapat police are examining CCTV footage, security arrangements at the pool, and the presence of staff members at the time of the accident. Authorities are also investigating whether a lifeguard was present at the time. The Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) team was inspecting the site, and the swimming pool area has currently been sealed as part of the investigation. The police said they have sent the body for postmortem examination.

Chandigarh magisterial probe reports expose pattern of inaction

GNS News Agency, May 22

Every major tragedy in Chandigarh over the past few years was followed by a familiar official response — the announcement of a magisterial inquiry promising accountability and corrective action. But an investigation by The Indian Express into several such probe reports reveals a recurring pattern: findings acknowledged, lapses documented and recommendations made, yet little visible action followed on the ground. The reports accessed by The Indian Express show how inquiries into some of Chandigarh's most disturbing incidents remained confined largely to paperwork, while victims' families continue to await accountability and closure.

One of the most glaring examples was the February 22, 2020 fire at an illegal paying guest (PG) accommodation in Sector 32, where three girl students died and two others suffered serious injuries. The magisterial inquiry held not only the owners and PG operators responsible, but also indicted Estate Office officials and beat police personnel for negligence in failing to detect and report the illegal setup despite it operating for a long time. The inquiry report, accessed by The Indian Express, stated that around 28 girls were living in cramped cabins constructed using PVC, fibre and wooden sheets inside a residential building illegally converted into a PG facility. The report noted that the premises lacked fire safety measures, emergency exits, ventilation and proper escape routes. "There was very less space for exit" and "no fire safety measure available in the said premises," the inquiry observed. The Inquiry Officer concluded that the negligence of Estate Office officials and beat police staff "cannot be pardonable as it resulted in loss of three precious lives". Officials of the Estate Office, including the SDO (Building), Area JE and SIE (Misuse Wing), had claimed they were unaware of the illegal PG operations as no complaints had been received. However, the report observed that such large-scale misuse and overcrowding could not have escaped notice had proper inspections been carried out.

The inquiry also held beat police officials negligent for failing to verify tenant and PG records or report the illegal accommodation despite regular patrolling in the area. "Their failure to inspect, verify, report and enforce rules allowed the illegal and unsafe PG setup to continue until the fatal fire occurred," the report stated. Despite the findings and recommendations, no significant action followed against the officials named in the report.

Electrocution death of teenager Mayank: Probe recommends action, family still awaits closure. Another case that raised serious questions involved the death of 17-year-old Mayank, who was electrocuted near a transformer in Sector 8 on July 17, 2024. Mayank, son of an Enforcement Directorate officer, had been returning from a gym when he came into contact with the transformer while crossing railings near the Sector 8 market. Following public outrage, the Chandigarh Administration ordered a magisterial inquiry and also sought an assessment from the Central Electricity Authority (CEA). The inquiry report concluded that the incident involved "a miscalculated short cut attempted by the deceased, coupled with losing balance". However, it simultaneously acknowledged major shortcomings in maintenance and safety mechanisms. The report stated that "im-



portant up-gradations are pending on electricity department's part" and observed that more proactive reporting by maintenance staff could have helped install better safety measures. It further noted that the Municipal Corporation Chandigarh also failed to notify the Electricity Department despite the road being under its maintenance jurisdiction. The inquiry recommended disciplinary proceedings against Electricity Department maintenance staff, besides action against the XEN and SDO for supervisory lapses. It also advised the Municipal Corporation to fix responsibility through an internal probe. Yet, despite the recommendations, action remains awaited. Heerakshi case: Probe blamed Engineering Department, but no accountability fixed in 2022. Class X student Heerakshi died after a tree collapsed inside a school campus. Another student lost her arm and a woman attendant was injured in the incident. The inquiry conducted by Justice Rakesh Kumar Jain Chauhan held that the tragedy occurred due to lapses by the Engineering Department of the Chandigarh Administration. "The school authorities cannot be held guilty of any negligence," the report stated, adding that officials failed to inspect the tree or devise protocols for treatment and preservation of diseased trees. Justice Chauhan observed that the Peepal tree was not overaged and had collapsed because it was diseased and structurally weak. "The custodian of the tree being layman and not expert, it is not expected from them that they could fathom the consequences," the report noted, adding that the department should have issued proper conservation guidelines. Despite recommendations for action, no concrete accountability measures followed. Elante toy train accident: Lapses identified, accountability unclear

Two years after 11-year-old Shahbaz Singh died in a toy train accident at Chandigarh's Elante mall, the magisterial inquiry identified several operational and safety lapses but stopped short of fixing responsibility. The June 22, 2024 accident occurred after the toy train overturned inside the mall premises. An FIR was registered and a police investigation is continuing. The 33-page inquiry report pointed to the absence of an attendant and operational lapses by the ride operator. It observed that safety grills and seatbelts inside the train compartments could have prevented the tragedy. The report recommended mandatory safety audits, provision of operation manuals to buyers of amusement rides, stricter inspections of gaming zones and deployment of trained operators. It also stressed stronger enforcement of Chandigarh's Controlling of Places of Public Amusement Rules, 2016. However, even after the inquiry flagged deficiencies and recommended safeguards, questions over accountability remain unresolved.

Four women killed in tiger attack while collecting tendu leaves in Chandrapur

In a tiger attack in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district on Friday morning, four women were killed while collecting tendu leaves in a forest area of Sindewahi taluka, triggering fear and outrage among villagers. The incident took place in the Gunjewahi-Pawanpar forest belt, where 13 women from the village had gone together early in the morning to collect tendu leaves a key source of seasonal income for families in the region during summer. By the time the group returned, only nine women made it back alive.

According to preliminary information, the women were busy collecting leaves inside the forest when a tiger lying in wait inside dense bushes suddenly attacked them around 8 am. Four women died on the spot, while the others escaped after screaming for help and running out of the forest. The incident sent shockwaves through the area, with villagers rushing towards the forest after hearing about the



attack. The deceased were identified as Kavita Dadaji Mohurle (45), Anita Dadaji Mohurle (46), Sangita Santosh Chaudhary (40) and Sunita Kaushik Mohurle (33). Forest officials later reached the spot along with police teams and began a panchnama. This could be among the rarest such incidents in Maharashtra where four people have been killed simultaneously in a tiger attack.

Azam Khan sentenced to two years in prison in 'shoe cleaning' remark case



GNS News Agency, May 22

Jailed Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan has been sentenced to two years in prison in a case related to his alleged "cleaning shoes" objectionable remark against government officials during the 2019 Lok Sabha election campaign. Khan, who is currently lodged in Rampur jail, was also fined Rs 20,000 by a Rampur district court. A 10-time MLA from Rampur Sadar and former Cabinet minister, Khan has been one of the SP's most prominent Muslim faces and a long-standing influential figure. He has been lodged in jail since November last year after his conviction in a forgery case relating to the alleged use of two PAN cards. On Saturday, Azam Khan appeared before the court through video conference.

"The court sentenced Azam Khan to two years imprisonment and also imposed a Rs 20,000 fine on him," said Special Public Prosecutor, Rampur, Rakesh Maurya. The court examined 10 prosecution witnesses in the case. Maurya added that court held Khan guilty under IPC sections 153-A (promoting enmity between two groups),

153-B (imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration), 505 (statements creating or promoting enmity, hatred or ill will between classes). The court also held him guilty under Section 125 of the Representation of People Act. Khan's lawyer, Nasir Sultan, said an appeal would be filed against the judgment.

What is the 2019 case?

Khan was contesting as the joint candidate of the Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party-Rashtriya Lok Dal (SP-BSP-RLD) alliance from the Rampur parliamentary constituency when the alleged remarks were made in 2019. According to the prosecution, the case was registered against Khan on May 11, 2019, at Bhot police station on a complaint by the then Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Rampur, Ghanshyam Tripathi. The complaint alleged that at a public meeting during the Lok Sabha election campaign, Khan made objectionable remarks against government officials. The statement was circulated on social media in a violation of the Model Code of Conduct, stated the complainant. The case is widely regarded as a turning point in Khan's political trajectory, marking the beginning of a prolonged legal action. According to Uttar Pradesh Police records, more than 81 cases were registered against Khan after the BJP assumed power in the state in 2017. A significant majority of these cases — around 70 — were lodged in 2019 alone, with six additional cases reportedly registered in 2020. The charges span alleged offences including land grabbing, cheating, vandalism, criminal trespass, hate speech, and criminal intimidation. Including the current case, Khan has been convicted in eight cases — seven in Rampur and one in Moradabad. He has filed appeals against the judgments, which were allowed in a few cases. He obtained bail in some cases after conviction was suspended.

Gurdaspur Sub-Divisional Magistrate Anupreet Kaur Randhawa arrested in Rs 1.63 crore national highway land scam

GNS News Agency, May 22

Anupreet Kaur Randhawa, Gurdaspur SDM arrested. Anupreet Kaur Randhawa has a similar case pending against her in which she and her brother were booked on charges of embezzling Rs 88 lakh in 2021. Gurdaspur Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Anupreet Kaur Randhawa was arrested on Saturday in a Rs 1.63 crore embezzlement case linked to land acquisition for the Rajasthan-Jammu Kashmir National Highway in 2018-2019. The Tarn Taran police arrested Randhawa, a Punjab Civil Services officer, from her official residence in Gurdaspur at 7 am, sources said. Alongside her role as SDM, she also held the additional charge of the municipal council in Gurdaspur.

When the alleged embezzlement took place, Randhawa was posted in Patti, Tarn Taran. She is accused of illegally extending benefits to individuals during the government's land acquisition process for the construction of the national highway. "The investigation in this case was going on. The case is also being looked at by the Punjab and Haryana High Court. We recently received the investigation report, and the arrest was made following that," said Surendra Lamba, Senior Superintendent of Police, Tarn Taran. On September 5, 2018, the former SDM of Patti, Navraj Singh Brar, had submitted a complaint regarding the alleged embezzlement to the then deputy commissioner Pradeep Sabharwal. It was alleged that between January 9, 2018, and February 11, 2019, a sum of Rs 1.63 crore released by the government in lieu of land acquisition was transferred into the accounts of five ineligible people. Following the allegations, Randhawa was suspended and kept away from field duty for a long time.

What the FIR said. Based on Brar's investigation, a First Information Report (FIR) was registered at City Patti police station on September 5, 2019, under several sections of the Indian Penal Code, on charges including cheating. According to the FIR, revenue department records show that land belonging to the five ineligible individuals named in the case was never acquired for National Highway-54, nor was there any record of them in the revenue



department. It was found that the amount was released after Randhawa signed the document. Following this, a committee was formed under the chairmanship of the deputy commissioner. Based on the committee's findings, the deputy commissioner forwarded his report to the state government. Subsequently, the then chief secretary Karan Avtar Singh ordered Randhawa's suspension. Linked to other controversies, Randhawa has a similar case pending against her in which she and her brother, Sandeep Singh, were booked on charges of embezzling Rs 88 lakh in 2021. Her personal life has also been mired in controversy. She had filed a case against her husband, Bachitar Singh, a former hockey player, levelling allegations of domestic violence as well as death threats. Bachitar was also arrested in connection with that case.

Census enumerators at your door? Here's how to check if they're genuine



The move is in response to a rise in impersonation-based cyber fraud across the country. Fraudsters increasingly pose as government officials, police personnel, and enforcement agency representatives, often carrying forged documents, fake identity cards, and digital verification requests, to deceive and defraud citizens.

GNS News Agency, May 22

Starting today, Saturday, May 16, residents across Maharashtra may find government officials knocking at their door as part of the Census exercise. But this time, they have a simple tool to check whether the visitor is genuine — a QR code. Maharashtra has launched its door-to-door field operations for the House Listing and Housing Census exercise on Saturday, running through June 14, as part of the groundwork for Census 2027. To protect citizens from fraud, the authorities have introduced a QR code-based verification system on the identity cards and appointment letters carried by Census enumerators and supervisors.

How to verify the official at your door? If Census enumerators visit your home, citizens can confirm their genuine identity. "To know whether the official is a genuine enumerator, citizens can check his or her appointment letter and official identity card. They need to scan the QR code printed on these documents, and the scan will instantly confirm whether the person is an authorised Census official," Vijay Landge, city census officer, Pune, told The Indian Express. Authorities across the country have announced similar plans, rolling out QR code-based identity cards for Census 2027 enumerators to help residents verify who is at their doorstep.

Why QR codes? The move is in response to a rise in impersonation-based cyber fraud across the country. Fraudsters increasingly pose as government officials, police personnel, and enforcement agency representatives, often carrying forged documents, fake identity cards, and digital verification requests, to deceive and defraud citizens. Online circulation of fake Census-related messages and a surge in so-called 'digital arrest' scams have further raised concerns about the misuse of official-looking visits. Against this backdrop, the QR verification mechanism is designed to give residents a quick, reliable way to confirm they are dealing with authorised Census personnel.

Authorities have cautioned residents to stay alert to pressure tactics used by fraudsters. "Legitimate Census officials will never demand immediate confidential information (other than the list of the Census questions) under urgency, nor will they ever ask for money or funds of any kind," Landge added. Any such demand is a clear red flag. Residents are advised to disengage immediately and report the incident. Self-enumeration module

Census officials said that those who missed the option to fill out the Census form digitally through the self-enumeration module need not worry, as the door-to-door visits will ensure everyone is covered. "There is no cause for concern where citizens were unable to geo-tag their exact home location while filling the self-enumeration form. The enumerators will verify these entries on the ground, using downloaded maps of their assigned house-listing block and then link them to self-enumeration IDs," Landge said.

Bengaluru groups criticise Azim Premji University for suspending student after right-wing vandalism



GNS News Agency, May 22

Three months after the vandalism at Azim Premji University in Bengaluru, allegedly involving ABVP members, civil society groups have released a report criticising the university for taking action against its own students. The groups included the People's Union for Civil Liberties, Bahutva Karnataka, All India Lawyers Association for Justice, and others. It also called for action against the ABVP demonstrators, stating, "... we strongly believe that the action against the ABVP mob must be based on a swift and fair investigation and action must be taken accordingly, under relevant provisions of the BNS."

In the original incident in February, members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) staged a demonstration outside the university near Attibele over a discussion organised by a student-led group called 'Spark Reading Circle' on the 1991 Kanan-Poshpura incident in

Kashmir. Some of the demonstrators had then allegedly entered the university premises and indulged in vandalism. As previously reported by The Indian Express, the university had suspended a student in connection with the reading circle event, drawing protests from other students. The suspension order had been passed down by a special disciplinary committee, which, amongst other reasons, had cited "failure to follow university instructions for de-escalating a volatile situation during an extraordinary event on campus." The report stated that faculty and students at the university believed that the FIR filed against the reading circle was a "disproportionate response on the part of the university administration." It also noted that it had been difficult to control the demonstrators as the Sarjapura police station had only eight personnel. In a statement after the release of the report, various groups stated that Azim Premji University ought to withdraw all charges against members of the reading circle while also revoking the suspension of the student who had been suspended for two years. The groups also called for the police to complete their investigative report and close the case against the reading circle, while the University took measures to engage with the student body. The university had earlier stated via a spokesperson that "Azim Premji University conducted a thorough inquiry into the events of February 24, 2026. Following a careful review of the investigating committee's recommendations, the University has taken disciplinary action against three students found to be in serious violation of the University's code of conduct. One student has been suspended for two years, while two other students have been issued written warnings."

Delhi University rolls out new digital UG, PG admission system linked to NTA. Here's how it works

GNS News Agency, May 22

Delhi University has announced a six-member panel to investigate allegations that DUSU Joint Secretary Deepika Jha slapped a faculty member at Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar College. Delhi University said the move is aimed at reducing paperwork, duplication and manual errors in the admission process. For the first time, Delhi University will introduce automatic digital integration of students' personal details and CUET scores in both undergraduate and postgraduate admissions this year, The Indian Express has learnt.

The university said the move is aimed at reducing paperwork, duplication and manual errors in the admission process. DU also opened postgraduate admissions on Saturday, marking the first full rollout of the postgraduate system envisioned under the National Education Policy (NEP). The digital integration, being rolled out through the government's DigiLocker and API Setu platforms, will allow key student information — including names, dates of birth, gender, category, parents' names and Common University Entrance Test (CUET) scores — to be automatically fetched into the admission portal instead of requiring applicants to repeatedly upload documents or manually fill in forms.

In a statement issued Saturday, the university said the digital integration was part of the government's larger "Digital India vision", describing it as a "secure, scalable, and citizen-focused digital identity solution" that would reduce "the hassle of managing duplicate data", strengthen "data security", and create "a uniform authentication mechanism for Government services". The university also acknowledged the role of the National Testing Agency (NTA) in "integrating the students' information on the national registry and extending it to universities securely". This year, DU will, for the first time, offer two distinct postgraduate pathways under the NEP framework — a one-year Master's programme and a two-year Master's programme. For those opting for two-years Master's: Admissions to the two-year



postgraduate programmes will continue through the university's Common Seat Allocation System (CSAS), with allocations based "solely on the scores obtained in CUET (PG)-2026", according to the admission notice.

Students currently in either the third or fourth year of their undergraduate programmes will be eligible to apply, provided they meet programme-specific eligibility conditions and have appeared for the relevant CUET-PG paper. The university said registrations for the two-year postgraduate programmes would begin on May 16 and close at 11.59 pm on June 7. Candidates belonging to SC, ST and PwBD categories will have to pay an application fee of Rs 100 per programme, while applicants from UR, OBC-NCL and EWS categories will pay Rs 250 per programme. The registration portal for admissions has been hosted on the university's postgraduate admissions website. For those opting for one-year Master's: The university also announced that admissions to the one-year postgraduate programmes would be conducted separately through another portal to be launched later. Under the NEP-based structure, only Delhi University students pursuing a four-year Bachelor's Honours degree with Research or Entrepreneurship, or those completing a four-year Bachelor's degree with a major in the relevant subject, will be eligible for the one-year Master's track, subject to other conditions.

Green belts to green drains: Gurgaon's new plan to tackle waterlogging this monsoon



GNS News Agency, May 22

To facilitate quicker stormwater drainage and improve groundwater recharge ahead of the monsoon season, the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) said it has, for the first time, begun lowering green belts across the city. The GMDA is making the roadside green areas slightly lower than the roads so rainwater can flow into them more easily during the monsoon. The primary aim is to develop these spaces into bioswales — landscaped channels specifically designed to treat and absorb stormwater runoff — effectively turning them into 'green drains', officials said Saturday.

By lowering the elevation of these belts below road level, surface water can naturally flow into them, preventing waterlogging on roads while simultaneously recharging the local groundwater table, they explained.

The initiative is part of a larger civic drive to reclaim public spaces, which involves extensive removal of construction and demolition (C&D) waste, debris, and excess soil from green belts along a 45-km master road network, officials said. Operations are currently underway across major city corridors, including stretches from Signature Chowk to Atul Kataria Chowk, Subhash Chowk to Millennium City Centre, Old Railway Road, and the IFFCO Chowk to Southern Peripheral Road (SPR). "GMDA is carrying out extensive city-wide operations for the improvement of the green environment across Gurgaon. With dedicated manpower and machinery deployed on the ground, work is being undertaken in mission mode to enhance the overall urban environment and strengthen preparedness during the monsoon season," P C Meena, GMDA Chief Executive Officer, said. Gurgaon roads To execute round-the-clock operations, the authority has deployed more than 100 person-

nel and 20 earth-moving machines.

To execute round-the-clock operations, the authority has deployed more than 100 personnel and 20 earth-moving machines. Teams are undertaking large-scale clearance and levelling of green belts that have been encroached upon by dumped construction material and silt over time. Following this, phased plantation and landscaping works are being carried out to restore the roadside ecology at multiple intersections, including Rajiv Chowk and Sectors 89 and 90.

Speaking to The Indian Express, GMDA executive engineer Amit Godara confirmed the lowering of the green belts is being done for the first time in the city. "It is an ongoing drive and will carry on even post monsoon, along with aggressive cleaning and desilting of drains. We are also ensuring that road gullies (placed along road edges to collect surface water runoff and channel it into underground pipes) are cleared," Godara said. However, at the key Golf Course Road stretch, the lowering of green belts cannot be executed due to structural limitations. "There, the belts are not carpeted in a way that it can be lowered (like being on raised dividers)," Godara explained.

Alongside the green belt modifications, sanitation drives are being conducted along key locations including Sector 84, Sector 102, Sector 14, Sectors 44/45, near the IFFCO Metro Station, and Subhash Chowk. "These efforts are aimed at preventing choke points in the drainage network and ensuring uninterrupted water flow during rainfall," officials said. As part of simultaneous traffic and road safety measures, the GMDA has also removed over 200 damaged jersey barriers, concrete blocks, and other obstructions from New Railway Road, Rajiv Chowk, and adjoining stretches to streamline vehicular movement.

Approximately 4.1 km of surface drains along the Sector 46/39/40 dividing road and 1.55 km along the Sector 60/61 dividing road have been comprehensively desilted. Heavy silt deposits, sludge, and accumulated debris that had significantly reduced the carrying capacity of these drains have been removed. Additionally, desilting is currently underway along the Sector 39/46 master road and other critical stretches. To further enhance stormwater runoff from main carriageways, the construction of new road gullies and the cleaning of existing water traps are being undertaken to enable the faster channelisation of rainwater into the stormwater drainage system and reduce waterlogging.

Intra-BRICS trade holds huge untapped potential: Commerce Secretary

New Delhi: The intra-BRICS trade has increased multiple times over the last few years but it accounts for only around 5 per cent of the global trade, reflecting huge untapped potential for deeper integration and stronger value-chain linkages, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal has said. BRICS is a grouping of 11 developing countries – Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates. It acts as a platform for consultation and cooperation on contemporary issues having global as well as regional significance, and issues of global political and economic governance. India has assumed the BRICS Chairship for the fourth time, after 2012, 2016 and 2021. Addressing the 2nd Meeting of the BRICS Contact Group on Trade and Eco-

nomics, held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, on May 14-15, Agrawal said intra-BRICS merchandise trade has risen 13-fold, from USD 84 billion in 2003 to USD 1.17 trillion in 2024.

However, he said, this "trade still accounts for only around 5 per cent of global trade, indicating significant untapped potential for deeper trade integration, stronger value-chain linkages and enhanced economic cooperation". Issues such as promoting more balanced trade, and opening new opportunities in the services sector were also discussed in the meeting. India's exports to BRICS member countries were estimated at USD 82 billion in merchandise goods in 2025-26 and USD 31.3 billion in services calendar year 2024.

Trump's geopolitical brinkmanship has hit a wall with Iran

WASHINGTON, GNS News Agency, May 22 During his first year back in office, U.S. President Donald Trump's blustery negotiating style won him concessions from countries on issues ranging from tariffs to armed conflict. But with Iran that same brand of coercive diplomacy, marked by public threats, insults and ultimatums, seems to have hit a wall and may be undermining his own efforts to end a war that has shaken the global economy.

The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. With the two sides deadlocked, Trump has signalled growing frustration over the 11-week-old crisis but has shown little inclination to soften his harsh diplomatic approach toward Iran's leaders.

That does not bode well for a quick negotiated settlement, fueling fears that the current standoff – and its unprecedented shock to world energy supplies – could drag on indefinitely with periodic bouts of brinkmanship. Among the main obstacles, analysts say, is the Iranian rulers' mindset, including their need to save face with their own domestic audience, despite U.S.-Israeli strikes having killed many top leaders and heavily degraded the Islamic Republic's military capabilities.

Though Iran has essentially maintained a chokehold on the vital Strait of Hormuz, giving it considerable leverage, Trump has persisted with a diplomatic playbook characterized by maximalist demands, unpredictability, mixed signals and scathing language. Even more significant, analysts say, is Trump's insistence on emerging from the conflict framing it as an absolute victory for the U.S. – even if this doesn't match the reality on the ground – while the Iranians must accept total defeat, which they are not likely to do.

"That inevitably gets in the way of reaching a reasonable deal because no government, not just Iran's, can afford to be viewed as having capitulated," said Rob Malley, a former Iran negotiator in the Obama and Biden administrations. The continuing impasse with Iran comes as Trump faces domestic pressure over high U.S. gasoline prices and his own low approval ratings after he embarked on an unpopular war ahead of November's midterm elections. His Republican Party is struggling to maintain control of Congress. White House spokeswoman Olivia Wales defended Trump's diplomatic approach based on what she said was a "proven track record of achieving good deals" and insisted that the Iranians were showing increasing "desperation" for an agreement. "President Trump is a master negotiator who always sets the right tone," she said.

APOCALYPTIC THREAT His most chilling words came last month when he threatened in a social media post to wipe out Iran's civilization unless it reached a deal – a message that administration officials told the Wall Street Journal was improvisational and not vetted as part of a national security strategy.

Trump ultimately backed down and agreed to a truce. But since his profanity-laced Easter Sunday threat to destroy Iran's bridges and power grid, he has repeated that warning, including to reporters on Air Force One returning from China on Friday. And last week, Trump told reporters they would know that the current ceasefire had collapsed if they saw "one big glow coming out of Iran," which some interpreted as a threat to deploy nuclear weapons, something he has insisted he would never do. Trump has reserved some of his toughest words for Iran's leaders, calling them "crazy bastards," "lunatics" and "thugs," and Tehran has responded with its own extensive campaign taunting him with graphic memes and social media posts.

He has repeatedly insisted that Iran has been completely crushed despite evidence to the contrary, said they were "begging" for a deal – only to have the Iranians deny it – while oscillating between demands for "unconditional surrender" and calls for a negotiated settlement. The Iranians, however, have claimed it as a win to have simply survived the military onslaught, showing they can exact a big economic price.

There has been no effort inside the White House to persuade Trump to show greater restraint in his messaging on Iran, according to two sources with knowledge of the matter who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations. While opinion polls show his MAGA movement has mostly stood with him, some prominent figures who have supported him in the past have spoken out against the war and criticized his more extreme threats.

SOCIAL MEDIA AFTER MIDNIGHTS Some of Trump's harshest statements, often delivered on his Truth Social platform after midnight, have come at critical junctures, such as last month when he abruptly announced a blockade of

UAE complicit in attacks, evidence Submitted to UN: Iran's Dy Foreign Minister

New Delhi: Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister on Thursday stated that the United Arab Emirates had played a significant role in the aggression against Iran during the second session of the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi. Kazem Gharibabadi, Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs of Iran, said: "The United Arab Emirates played a significant role in supporting and facilitating the military aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, a party that itself contributed to the creation and escalation of tensions lacks any legitimacy to level political accusations and claims against Iran." According to the Embassy of Iran in India, the Deputy Minister made these remarks in response to the "baseless" allegations made by the United Arab Emirates Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, who had accused Iran of attacking the United Arab Emirates and portrayed Iran as the aggressor.

"When countries facilitate and provide services to aggressors, this is not merely assistance; such conduct itself constitutes aggression. Therefore, the United Arab Emirates is an aggressor, not merely an accomplice to aggression," Gharibabadi said, citing the 1974 United Nations General Assembly Resolution. He highlighted that "every warplane that took off from the United Arab Emirates has been documented, including the exact time, date and flight path". He said that Iran had submitted 120 official diplomatic notices to the United Nations Security Council, and that all the evidence had been included in them, the Embassy wrote on the social media platform X. He emphasised that Iran could not tolerate the situation any longer while Iranian people and infrastructure were being targeted, especially with the "participation and cooperation of one of our neighbours, namely the United Arab Emirates."

Trump says Xi agrees Iran must open strait, China says war should not have started



ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE/DUBAI, - U.S. President Donald Trump said Chinese President Xi Jinping had agreed Tehran must reopen the Strait of Hormuz, though China gave no indication it would weigh in. Flying back from Beijing on Friday after two days of talks with Xi, Trump said he was considering whether to lift U.S. sanctions on Chinese oil companies buying Iranian oil. China is the biggest buyer of Iranian oil. The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. "I'm not asking for any favors because when you ask for favors, you have to do favors in return," Trump said when asked by a reporter on Air Force One whether Xi had made a firm commitment to put pressure on the Iranians to reopen the vital strait.

Xi did not comment on his discussions with Trump about Iran, although China's foreign ministry criticised the war, calling it a conflict "which should never have happened, has no reason to continue". Financial hits, operational changes, price hikes: top 3 company responses WE WANT THE STRAITS OPEN Iran has effectively shut the strait, which carried one-fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas supply before the U.S. and Israel launched attacks on February 28. The disruption to shipping has caused the biggest oil supply crisis in history, sending oil prices skyrocketing. Ebrahim Azizi, who heads the Iranian parliament's national security committee, said on Saturday that Tehran had prepared a mechanism to manage traffic through the strait along a designated route that would be

unveiled soon. Azizi said only commercial vessels and parties cooperating with Iran would benefit, and that fees would be collected for specialised services provided under the mechanism.

Thousands of Iranians were killed in the U.S. and Israeli airstrikes. Thousands more have been killed in Lebanon in fighting between Israel and the Iran-backed group Hezbollah, though Israel and Lebanon agreed on Friday to a 45-day extension of a ceasefire that has tamped down the conflict there. The U.S. paused its attacks last month but began a port blockade. Tehran, which carried out strikes against Israel, U.S. bases and Gulf states after the war began, has said it will not unblock the strait until the U.S. ends its blockade. Trump has threatened to resume attacks if Iran does not agree to a deal. "We don't want them to have a nuclear weapon, we want the straits open," Trump said in Beijing, alongside Xi.

Iran, which has long denied that it intends to build a nuclear weapon, has refused to end nuclear research or relinquish its hidden stockpile of enriched uranium, to Trump's frustration. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said Tehran had received messages from the U.S. indicating Washington was willing to continue talks. "We hope that, with the advancement of negotiations, we will reach a good conclusion so that the Strait of Hormuz can be completely secured and we can expedite the normalisation of traffic through the strait," he told reporters in New Delhi. Trump, who told Fox News

"Hannity" program in an interview aired on Thursday that he was losing patience with Iran, said Tehran "should make a deal". Oil prices rose around 3% to around \$109 a barrel on Friday on concerns over a lack of progress in resolving the conflict, while U.S. Treasury yields hit their highest in around a year on expectations the Federal Reserve might need to raise interest rates. Talks on ending the war, which has become a liability for Trump ahead of U.S. congressional elections in November, have been on hold since last week when Iran and the U.S. each rejected the other's most recent proposals. Iran would welcome Chinese input, Araqchi said on Friday, adding that Tehran was trying to give diplomacy a chance but did not trust the U.S., which has curtailed previous rounds of talks by launching air strikes.

Taiwan presses case for US arms after Trump says he is undecided on new sales



Speaking to reporters in Taipei earlier on Saturday, Taiwan Deputy Foreign Minister Chen Ming-chi declined to comment on the second package because it has yet to be made public, saying Taiwan would continue to communicate with the U.S. to understand the situation from Washington's side.

Taiwan's government has been stymied by the opposition-controlled parliament in trying to pass \$40 billion in extra defence spending. Earlier this month it approved two-thirds of what the government wanted but specified it was for U.S. arms. U.S. Republican and Democratic lawmakers have strongly urged the Trump administration to continue with weapons sales. Item 1 of 4 An F-16 fighter jet takes off during an annual military exercise ahead of Lunar New Year in Chiayi, Kuo Yu-ren, vice president of the Institute for Policy Research, a Taiwan think tank, said Trump might delay approving the new package until after late September when he has invited Xi to visit the U.S.

In comments to journalists after his summit with Xi, Trump also appeared to suggest he would speak with President Lai about the proposed sale, saying, "I have to speak to the person... that's running Taiwan." Asked about that possibility, Deputy Foreign Minister Chen said Taiwan still needed to try to understand the "true intent" of Trump's remarks. While spokesperson Kuo's statement made no mention of whether Lai and Trump would speak, a senior Taiwan security official said the implication from Trump was "quite clear." The party with whom arms sales are to be discussed is Taiwan, not Beijing. "The official said, speaking on condition of anonymity given the sensitivity of the matter. China has never renounced the use of force to bring Taiwan under its control and has rebuffed repeated offers of talks from Lai, whom it says is a 'separatist'. Lai's spokesperson reiterated the government's long-standing position that the Republic of China, Taiwan's formal name, is a "sovereign, independent democratic country." This is self-evident, and Beijing's claims are therefore without merit," Kuo said. China's military, which operates around Taiwan almost daily, did not let up its pressure while Trump was in Beijing on Thursday and Friday. Shen Yu-chung, a deputy minister at Taiwan's China-policy-making Mainland Affairs Council, said China has long sought to use pressure to push for talks and military force to push for "unification." That has always been the basic tone of its Taiwan policy," he said, standing next to Chen.

TAIPEI, Taiwan's government pressed the case on Saturday for U.S. arms supplies, saying they are based on U.S. law and serve as a shared deterrent to regional threats, after President Donald Trump said he had not decided on future sales. Despite a lack of formal diplomatic ties, the U.S. is the most important international backer for democratically governed Taiwan, which China claims as its territory. Washington is bound by the Taiwan Relations Act to provide weapons to the island. The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. But on Friday after a summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing, Trump said he had not decided whether to proceed with a major weapons sale, adding to uncertainty about U.S. support for Taiwan. TAIWAN RELATIONS ACT In a statement, Taiwan President Lai Ching-te's spokesperson Karen Kuo said China's escalating military threat is the "sole destabilising factor" in the Indo-Pacific region, including the Taiwan Strait. "Furthermore, military sales between Taiwan and the U.S. are not only a reflection of the U.S. security commitment to Taiwan as stipulated in the Taiwan Relations Act, but also serve as a mutual deterrence against regional threats," she said.

Taiwan thanks Trump for his long-standing and continued support for security in the Taiwan Strait, and Taipei continues to deepen cooperation with Washington, Kuo added. In December, the Trump administration approved a record \$11 billion arms sale package for Taiwan. Reuters has reported a second one, worth around \$14 billion, still awaits Trump's approval.

New Republican bill tightens H-1B, asylum rules

Washington: Indian professionals, students, and family-based immigrants could face sweeping new restrictions under a hardline immigration proposal introduced by influential Republican lawmaker Tommy Tuberville, including tougher H-1B rules, limits on work authorization for foreign students, and higher English requirements for citizenship. The 82-page proposal, titled the "American System for Sustainable Immigration and Mass Immigration Limitations Achieved Through Imposing Oversight Nationally Act," or the "ASSIMILATION Act," would fundamentally reshape large parts of the US immigration system. According to the text, the legislation seeks to replace what it describes as "family-chain and lottery-based admissions" with a "merit-based system" prioritizing "economic self-sufficiency, cultural assimilation, and the protection of United States workers." "I'm glad to see the Trump administration is working overtime to deport the millions of criminals who came here illegally during the Biden administration," Tuberville said in a statement accompanying the bill.

"But we also need to remove the incentives that are encouraging people who hate this country to come here in the first place," he said. The Alabama senator added: "Coming to this country is a privilege, not a right. If you hate this country and refuse to assimilate, we do not want you here." The legislation would significantly affect Indian nationals, one of the largest groups of beneficiaries under employment-based immigration and H-1B visa programs. Among the bill's most consequential provisions are new H-1B restrictions. The measure would cut the annual H-1B cap to 50,000 visas and require employers to pay foreign workers at least "200 per cent of the median

wage" for the relevant occupation and location. The bill would also limit H-1B status to a single three-year term with no extensions or renewals. It further bars H-1B holders from adjusting to permanent residency unless they remain outside the United States for at least two continuous years after their visa expires. Another major change targets foreign students. The proposal would eliminate Optional Practical Training (OPT), a widely used program allowing international students to work in the US after graduation. The bill would also abolish the diversity visa lottery program entirely and sharply narrow family-sponsored immigration categories. Under the proposal, only spouses and unmarried children under 18 of US citizens would qualify as immediate relatives for immigration purposes. Parents of US citizens would no longer qualify for permanent immigration status but could receive limited five-year nonimmigrant visas without access to employment or public benefits. The legislation would further impose stricter naturalization standards, including raising the residency requirement for citizenship from five years to 10 years and requiring English proficiency at the B2 level under the Common European Framework. Asylum rules would also tighten substantially. The bill would bar work authorization for asylum applicants solely on the basis of pending claims and establish a \$500 asylum filing fee. The proposal additionally mandates nationwide use of E-Verify for all new hires and creates new civil and criminal penalties for visa overstays. A companion legislation has been introduced in the House by Andy Ogles. Immigration remains one of the defining political issues in the United States ahead of the 2026 elections

Footballer has high BP at 20; executive, 32, has kidney damage: What hypertension does to young Indians



rich foods such as bananas, spinach and coconut water. These help the body flush out salt, regulate sodium balance and relax blood vessels. He adopted a fixed sleep schedule, stopped screen use an hour before bedtime and committed to getting at least eight hours of sleep. "This allowed his heart rate and blood pressure to naturally drop and recover overnight," says Dr Khanna.

Alongside football training, he added breathing exercises and stress-management practices to calm his nervous system. "This 'fooled' his nervous system into calming down, which lowered his blood pressure almost instantly," adds Dr Khanna. Five months later, his blood pressure had dropped to 114/72 mmHg. "For a few days after I found out, I became unusually aware of things I had never paid attention to before — how little I was sleeping, how often I was relying on energy drinks and how chaotic my routine had become," says Nair. "The biggest shift was realising that health isn't only about what happens during one hour of practice on the football field. It's everything that happens during the rest of the day." Dr Khanna says his case underscores a growing misconception among young people. "This case is a real eye-opener. We are seeing more and more young, lean individuals with high blood pressure, and it proves that being thin does not make you immune to cardiovascular risk," he says. "The good news is that at this age, the body is resilient. If detected early, precise lifestyle interventions can often reset the system without lifelong medication." In Mehta's case, the elevated blood pressure had already begun affecting his kidneys. "Earlier, we mostly saw hypertension-related complications in older adults. Now, younger patients are increasingly walking in with elevated creatinine levels and reduced kidney function," says Dr K Kranthi Kumar, senior consultant nephrologist and transplant physician at the Asian Institute of Nephrology and Urology, Hyderabad. "Many are unaware they have high blood pressure because hypertension can remain silent for years."

The kidneys are among the first organs damaged by persistently high blood pressure. Hypertension injures the tiny blood vessels responsible for filtering waste from the blood. Over time, this reduces kidney efficiency, leading to chronic kidney disease and, in severe cases, kidney failure. "The worrying part is that young adults often ignore warning signs such as headaches, dizziness, swelling in the feet, fatigue or poor concentration," says Dr Kumar. "By the time symptoms become noticeable, significant kidney damage may already have occurred." Fortunately, Mehta's condition was caught before permanent damage set in. Through medication, dietary changes, regular exercise and stress management, doctors were able to stabilise his kidney function. "That's why regular screening should begin by the mid-20s, especially if there is a family history of hypertension, diabetes or heart disease," says Dr Kumar. Simple preventive measures — reducing salt intake, maintaining a healthy weight, staying physically active, sleeping adequately, limiting stimulants such as energy drinks, managing stress and undergoing annual health checks — can dramatically reduce risk. As lifestyle-related diseases begin appearing earlier than ever, doctors warn that outward fitness is no guarantee of internal health.

When 20-year-old college footballer Anil Nair walked into the clinic for a routine health check-up, high blood pressure was the last thing anyone expected. Lean, physically active and with none of the obvious risk factors associated with hypertension, he appeared to be the picture of health. Yet his blood pressure reading was 155/98 mmHg. Repeat tests confirmed what seemed improbable: persistent hypertension. Weeks later, another patient presented a different but equally worrying picture. Thirty-two-year-old marketing professional Rohan Mehta had been blaming his frequent headaches, fatigue and poor concentration on punishing work hours and chronic sleep deprivation. But a routine health check-up revealed worrying counts. His blood pressure was above 160/100 mmHg and his kidney markers were deranged — his serum creatinine and blood urea were elevated while his eGFR (estimated glomerular filtration rate) was lower, signs that the kidneys were struggling to filter blood effectively. The two cases, though separated by age and lifestyle, point to the same troubling trend: high blood pressure is increasingly affecting younger Indians, often silently and in people who do not fit the traditional profile.

A new generation of young adults may be physically active and appear outwardly fit, yet many are living in a near-constant state of physiological stress. "Academic pressure, disrupted sleep schedules, prolonged screen exposure, irregular meals, excessive caffeine intake through coffee and energy drinks, poor stress management and long working hours are increasingly being linked to elevated blood pressure," explains Dr N N Khanna, senior consultant, interventional cardiology and vascular intervention at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, Delhi. "These factors can collectively keep the body in a constant state of alertness and activate the body's stress response system, causing blood vessels to tighten and making the heart work harder. Over time, this can contribute to persistently elevated blood pressure, even in young and lean individuals," he says.

The patient's routine offered some important clues. While he trained regularly and remained physically active, his life outside the football field included late nights, irregular sleep, energy drinks and quick hotel meals. "Like many students today, his schedule was active, but not necessarily heart friendly. Given his age and overall health profile, we decided to focus first on structured lifestyle interventions rather than medication," says Dr Khanna. Nair cut out processed, salty instant meals and switched to potassium-

RFK Jr adviser says traditional Indian food habits can help fight ultra-processed foods

As India grapples with rising consumption of ultra-processed foods and lifestyle-related diseases, its traditional food practices could hold important lessons for better health, according to Calley Means, senior adviser on food and nutrition to US Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Means, a leading voice in the Make America Healthy Again movement, said India's long-standing emphasis on home-cooked meals, fresh ingredients, fasting and mindful living offers a strong counterpoint to the highly processed diets that now dominate many parts of the world. "Unfortunately, these eating patterns have spread globally, including to countries that historically had much healthier food traditions," Means said during a virtual interaction with reporters and incoming fellows of the Health Coverage Fellowship at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. "The message we are trying to promote is not about pushing one dietary philosophy. It is actually very simple: eat real food." Responding to a query from The Indian Express on traditional Indian diets, Means said India's food culture offers valuable insights at a time when countries are searching for solutions to growing metabolic health concerns. "Every country has its own traditions, and there are many paths to good health. What matters is respecting food more, relying less on highly processed products and focusing on nutritional basics such as adequate protein, fibre and whole foods," he said. "In that sense, traditional Indian practices offer a lot of valuable lessons. Studying what has worked in India for centuries is a very good place to start." He said there is real value in revisiting the kinds of foods and lifestyles that humans have historically thrived



on. Asked what one lifestyle change could most benefit urban children, including in India, Means said the answer is straightforward: eat more real food, cut down on ultra-processed products, move more, sleep better and build healthy habits early. "At the core of what we are trying to say is that health is actually much simpler than people often make it out to be," he said. Means pointed out that ultra-processed foods were virtually non-existent 150 years ago, but today make up nearly 60-70 per cent of the average diet in countries such as the US. At the same time, he said, people are moving less and sleeping worse than at any other point in modern history. "People used to move naturally throughout the day. There were no gyms or structured exercise programmes because daily life itself involved much more physical activity," he said. He added that many of today's health problems stem from major changes in diet, movement, sleep and daily routines. "That is why the focus must return to the root causes of health — better nutrition, more movement, proper sleep and healthier routines."

'Why does the urine of people with diabetes smell so strongly?'

It's something many people notice but don't always talk about: a sudden change in urine smell. Sometimes it's stronger, sometimes slightly sweet, and at times, just unusual enough to raise concern. An internet user took to Quora enquiring about the same. The query read: "Why does the urine of people with diabetes smell so strongly?"

Why does urine smell stronger in diabetes?

According to Dr Pankaj Bansal, Senior Consultant — Internal Medicine, Sharda Care Healthcity, "In people with diabetes, urine can smell stronger when blood sugar levels are high. The body tries to remove excess sugar through urine, and this can change its smell." He adds that infections can also contribute. "Sometimes, infections like urinary tract infections (UTIs), which are more common in diabetes, can also cause a strong or unusual odor."

What does a sweet or fruity smell mean?

A distinct sweet or fruity smell is something to take seriously. "A sweet or fruity smell in urine is often linked to high blood sugar levels," Dr. Bansal explains. "It can happen when the body is not able to use sugar properly and starts breaking down fat for energy, producing chemicals called ketones." This can indicate Diabetic Ketoacidosis, a condition that requires immediate medical attention if accompanied by symptoms like fatigue, nausea, or frequent urination.

Is it always about blood sugar?



urine If strong urine smell is accompanied by symptoms like frequent urination, burning sensation, fever, fatigue, or high blood sugar levels, it is better to visit a doctor Not always. While high blood sugar is a common cause, other factors can also change urine smell. "Strong-smelling urine can sometimes be a sign of high blood sugar, especially if it is persistent," he says, adding that dehydration, certain foods, or infections can also be responsible. The role of dehydration Hydration plays a bigger role than many realise. "When the body does not get enough water, urine becomes more concentrated, which increases its odor," Dr. Bansal notes. In diabetes, frequent urination can make dehydration more likely, which in turn intensifies the smell.

He had normal blood sugar at 35, diabetes at 42: Why that one sweet bite after meals matters



At 35, Rohit was a successful company executive with long working hours, frequent client dinners and constant deadlines. He was careful enough with food. And although he did not have diabetes, he avoided sugary soft drinks most of the time and rarely ate desserts in isolation. But there was one habit he never questioned: ending almost every lunch and dinner with something sweet. Sometimes it was a small piece of mithai after office meals, sometimes ice cream during business meetings, and often "just one bite" of cake at home. Because it came after meals and not on an empty stomach, he assumed it was harmless.

Except that it was not. At 42, he was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes and his HbA1c (average blood sugar count of three months) had crossed into the diabetes range at 6.6% instead of the normal 5.7%. The diagnosis did not emerge suddenly. It had quietly evolved through repeated sugar overloads that had seemed insignificant just a few years back. In fact, he had ignored the readings in his annual blood reports which he was regular about. In the intervening years, his blood sugar status had gone to "borderline normal," which is a common term for prediabetes, signalling that blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not yet high enough for a Type 2 diabetes diagnosis. He dismissed it as nothing serious. Looking at his past reports, I saw his fasting blood glucose hovered around the upper limit of normal, his triglycerides were mildly elevated, and his waistline had slowly expanded over the years. He even weighed almost 12 kilograms more than he did in college. There was another important detail. His father had developed Type 2 diabetes in his forties. So he had family history too, which is common among most Indians.

Why post-meal sweets can lead to diabetes in later years?

This pattern is increasingly common in urban India. Many individuals, who do not currently have diabetes, assume that sweets are only dangerous once blood glucose levels have already become abnormal. The reality is more gradual and far more silent. After a regular Indian meal rich in rice, roti, or refined carbohydrates, the body is already

dealing with a significant glucose load. Adding concentrated sugar immediately afterward pushes the pancreas to release even larger amounts of insulin. When this pattern repeats daily over years, particularly in individuals with family history, central obesity, stress, poor sleep, and sedentary lifestyles, the body slowly becomes resistant to insulin.

What are early signs that you are diabetes-prone?

The early warning signs are subtle. Weight gain around the abdomen, mild fatty liver, borderline high triglycerides, slightly elevated fasting glucose, afternoon fatigue and increasing hunger despite regular meals. These changes often appear years before actual diabetes is diagnosed. Stress further worsens the problem. Metabolic and possibly hormonal alterations levels associated with chronic workplace stress promote abdominal fat accumulation and insulin resistance. Sleep deprivation, late dinners and reduced physical activity create an additional metabolic burden. In such individuals, the dessert after meals becomes less of an occasional indulgence and more of a repetitive metabolic trigger layered on top of an already excessive calorie load. But my other family members have sweets too... Many people argue that previous generations also consumed sweets. That is true, but lifestyles were different. Physical activity levels were substantially higher, portion sizes were smaller and sweets were often reserved for occasions rather than becoming a routine end to daily meals. Importantly, the issue is not that a sweet dish after meals automatically "causes" diabetes by itself. Diabetes develops from the interaction of genetics, body weight, physical inactivity, sleep patterns, stress, and long-term dietary excess. However, habitual post meal sweets can significantly accelerate the process in genetically susceptible individuals.

How then should everybody have sweets?

This does not mean sweets need to disappear completely from life. The healthier approach is moderation and timing. Desserts should remain occasional rather than compulsory after every meal. Portion sizes matter. Sharing desserts, avoiding sugary beverages alongside meals, increasing fibre and protein intake, maintaining regular physical activity, and preventing abdominal weight gain all substantially reduce long term risk. For individuals with a strong family history of diabetes, even greater vigilance is needed. Many South Asians develop insulin resistance and diabetes at lower body weights and younger ages compared to Western populations. What appears "normal enough" externally may still conceal significant metabolic strain internally. So make that one piece of sweet count in your recommended total calorie intake for a day. The concern is not the festival sweet eaten occasionally with family. The real danger is the normalization of excess sugar as a daily post meal ritual in already sedentary and stressed lives.

'Woh height mein thoda chota hai': Nakuul Mehta on how parents' comments affect kids mentally

Recently, Nakuul Mehta and Jankee Parekh Mehta sparked an important conversation around parenting and emotional development while speaking on their podcast. Sharing their observations, the couple said, "Parents apne bachon ke baare mei unhi ke saamne baat karte hein. Arey yaar kitna stubborn ho gaya hai, pata nahi isko school mei jaakar kya ho jata hai. Woh height mei bhi thoda chota hai. Aagey chalke theek ho jaayega..." They further reflected on how these seemingly casual remarks deeply affect children. "Your child is standing right there, and he is not a part of the conversation, but ye sab information — what my parents think of me — is going into his system," they said. Drawing a parallel with adulthood, the couple added, "As an adult, if someone spoke about you in front of you, and you have no say in it, you have no right to defend yourself... hume lagta hai ki agar mummy ne bola ki woh thoda shy hai isliye hello nai bola, toh haan mai thoda shy hun... and now I behave like that." The couple emphasised, "Please don't do it in front of them because your voice is becoming your child's voice. So he will grow up thinking that this is my identity."

So, how exactly do these labels affect a child's mental health?

According to Dr Aarushi Dewan, Clinical Psychologist, these everyday labels are far more psychologically influential than many parents realise. "When parents repeatedly label a child as 'shy', 'stubborn', or 'weak' in their presence, children don't just hear a description, they internalise it as truth about who they are," says Dr Dewan. She explains that children naturally view parents as the ultimate authority on reality. "As primary attachment figures, parents serve as the child's authority on reality. Their words carry authoritative weight," she says. Young children are also cognitively wired to absorb adult opinions without questioning them. "Children's cognitive development makes them egocentric. They accept adult labels as objective facts, not observations," Dr Dewan explains. This becomes particularly harmful because labels begin to feel permanent. "Un-

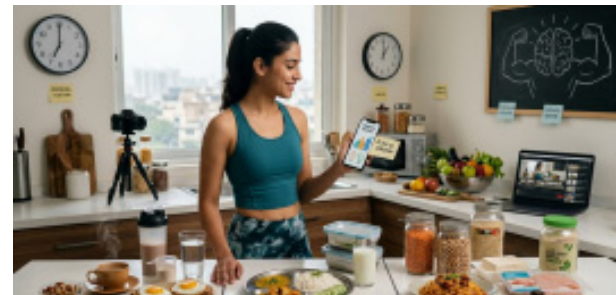


like emotions like 'I'm feeling shy right now,' identity labels like 'I am shy' feel irreversible and unchangeable," she says. Over time, these labels can turn into self-fulfilling prophecies. "Once a child accepts a label, they begin behaving consistently with it. A 'shy' child avoids social situations, reinforcing the label further," Dr Dewan adds. The lasting impact on self-esteem Dr Dewan says conversations parents casually have about a child's appearance, behaviour, or abilities can leave long-term emotional imprints. "A child constantly described as 'difficult' learns to expect conflict and rejection. A child who hears 'you're ugly when you cry' learns to suppress emotions," she explains.

Even labels that sound positive can create pressure. "Telling a child 'you're so smart' may tie their worth entirely to performance. When they eventually struggle or fail, they may feel they've lost their value," Dr Dewan says. According to her, these early experiences often resurface much later in life. "Adult patients frequently trace anxiety, perfectionism, low confidence, or relationship difficulties back to repeated childhood labels," she notes. Dr Dewan explains that children rely on parents to understand themselves because they lack an independent framework for identity formation. "Parents become the child's primary mirror for self-concept," she says.

How to hit 120g of protein on 1500 calories: Why timing your macros matters more than the total count

Digital creator Pooja Chandwani, popular for shooting food and travel vlogs on social media, recently shared a video on everything she eats in a day, which roughly amounts to about 120 grams of protein on 1500 calories daily. Starting the day with dry fruits, a cup of chai and 2 large eggs with whole wheat bread, she drinks a protein shake an hour later. For lunch, she has dal, rice, tawa paneer and some slices of cucumber paired with a glass of buttermilk. Dinner is chicken spaghetti, followed by a few cubes of dark chocolate. According to Dr Amreen Sheikh, chief dietitian, KIMS Hospitals, Thane, starting your day with protein can be helpful as it supports muscle repair, improves fullness, and helps stabilise blood sugar levels, especially during workouts. A general guideline for daily protein intake is 0.8 to 1.2 grams per kilogram of body weight, but for active women who regularly strength train or participate in intense workouts, a higher protein intake may be appropriate. However, she reiterated that needs can vary based on body weight, workout intensity, kidney health, and total calorie intake. Protein targets should always be tailored to the individual. Based on Chandwani's meal plan, eggs, dairy, and plant-based protein powders are excellent choices to help meet daily protein needs. "But planning and spreading protein across meals is more important than depending on a single source," said Sheikh. Achieving a well-rounded protein intake involves diversifying your protein sources. "While animal products like lean meats, poultry, and fish are excellent protein providers, plant-based sources such as beans, lentils, tofu, and quinoa can be equally ef-



fective," said Ekta Singhwal, a dietitian at Ujala Cygnus Group of Hospitals. Including a variety of protein-rich foods ensures you receive a spectrum of essential amino acids crucial for bodily functions. Protein shakes or bars supplement the meal plan, she added. Strategic meal planning can help you distribute your protein intake evenly throughout the day. "Instead of loading up on proteins during one meal, consider incorporating protein-rich options into each meal and snack," said Singhwal, explaining how this approach aids in better digestion and utilisation of amino acids by the body. However, if you have pre-existing kidney issues, excessive protein intake can put additional stress on your kidneys, and sometimes even lead to increased calcium excretion. "Ensure you're getting enough calcium from your diet or supplements to maintain healthy bones," she said, adding that it's crucial to consult with your doctor to determine the appropriate protein intake for your specific health needs.

Unearthing an ancient Tamil civilisation



excavations date back to 785 BCE. Several fully intact, many half-cut and numerous fully broken conch shells were also found showing evidence of manufacturing of ornaments. Black Slipped ware of Gangetic plains, nine-storeyed perforated filtering pipe, and a large pot placed in the centre of a brick structure were also unearthed. Mayiladumparai in Krishnagiri district is yet another significant site, besides Sivagalai, with respect to the antiquity of iron. Excavations by TNSDA here had placed the existence of the Iron Age in the Tamil landscape 4,200 years ago. Excavations yielded cultural items such as microlithic tools, neolithic celts, neolithic tool polishing grooves, rock paintings, Iron Age graves, Tamil-Brahmi inscribed potsherds, memorial stones and trade guild inscriptions covering the time-span from Microlithic times to late Medieval period. Some of the other materials unearthed include merchant guild inscriptions, Neolithic stone tools, and hero stones.

Gangaikondacholapuram. Located a few kilometres north of River Kollidam in Ariyalur district, excavations at Gangaikondacholapuram, the capital of the Cholas for about 250 years, were first carried out in the 1980s by the then TNSDA's director R. Nagaswamy. It brought to light the hidden structures of a palace and the city that Rajendra Chola-I built after his victorious expedition up to the Gangetic plains. Remains of a palace were exposed at Maligaimedu (the mound of a palace), about two km away to the rear of the famous Brihadisvara Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Subsequent excavations unearthed more such medieval-era mega brick structures, broken pieces of a bracelet made of gold and copper; and a figurine made of ivory. Situated about 6.5 km to the east of Pudukkottai town, a Sangam-age fort is believed to have existed at Porpanaikottai where the TNSDA has been conducting excavations for the last couple of years. The unearthed materials at the site include hoppers, glass beads and bangles, soapstone beads, crystal beads, iron nails, terracotta wheel, antimony rod, copper coins, rubbing stone, grinding stone, agate beads, spindle whorl, copper nails, carnelian beads, and terracotta earrings. A bone point probably used as a tool for weaving, a tiny broken piece of gold, glazed ware, porcelain potshard, black ware, red ware, perforated ware, torpedo jar and rouletted ware were also found during the excavations that were carried out at 'Aranmanai Thidal' and 'Kottai Karai'. Located on the banks of the Vaippar river in Virudhunagar district, excavations at Vembakottai have unearthed terracotta, shell bangles, artefacts made of gold, pot shreds, carnelian and glass beads, shell and ivory bangles, hoppers, and iron and copper objects. Last year, a carnelian intaglio showing a humped bull was found. It was the second such carnelian intaglio found in Tamil Nadu. Earlier a similar material showing a wild boar was found in Keeladi. Archaeological excavations at Kodumal, lying on the northern banks of the Noyyal river about 15 km from Chennai, revealed that the area flourished as an industrial and trading centre more than 2,000 years ago. Kodumal was referred to as Kodumanam in Pathirupathu of Sangam literature. It is believed that Kodumal, lying on the ancient trade route connecting Karur, the capital of Cheras with Muziris, their ancient port town which is currently in Kerala, had a bustling industrial activity. Shell bangles, coins, potsherds inscribed with Tamil Brahmi scripts, precious stones, and beads made of carnelian, amethyst, and quartz were unearthed during the excavation carried out between 1985 and 2011. A menhir (standing stone) and a few megalithic burial sites were also found. Located close to Chennai city, Pallavaram, originally known as Pallavapuram, was one of the oldest inhabited places in the southern part of India, since the Paleolithic Age. More than 160 years ago, in 1863, geologist Robert Bruce Foote discovered a stone tool on the Parade Ground at Pallavaram cantonment. It was a hand-axe made of quartzite. Prehistoric man had crafted it to dig out tubers and roots from the soil, and to butcher animals and take out the meat. In the same year, he also found numerous stone tools, including hand axes, cleavers and flake tools at Attirampakkam, near the Kosasthalaiyar river, in Tiruvallur district. Since then, Pallavaram gained a historical significance. In 1888, British officer Alexander Rea for the first time unearthed a sarcophagus at a hillock in Pallavaram. Later in 2017, the ASI unearthed a six-foot-high terracotta sarcophagus believed to be more than 2,000 years old from the same locality.

A series of excavations by ASI and TNSDA at Keeladi, a hamlet in the Sivaganga district located 12 kilometers south-east of Madurai, since 2015, have proved that an urban civilisation existed in the ancient Tamil landscape on the banks of Vaigai river. K. Amarnath Ramakrishna, the then Superintending Archaeologist of ASI, discovered and oversaw the first two phases of excavations. Heaps of pottery unearthed here suggested the existence of a pottery-making industry that flourished using locally available raw materials. Hundreds of potsherds containing Tamil Brahmi inscriptions were found. Spindle whorls, copper needles, terracotta seals, hanging stones of the yam, terracotta spheres and earthen vessels to hold liquid suggest various stages of a weaving industry. Gold ornaments, copper articles, semi-precious stones, shell bangles, ivory bangles and ivory combs reflect the artistic, culturally prosperous lifestyle that existed in Keeladi. The materials unearthed during the excavations by TNSDA in the ancient port town of Korkai in Thoothukudi district in 1968-69 and in recent years had shed light on the long-established trade relations of ancient Tamil Nadu. On-shore excavations have been taken up since the late 1960s point to the existence of a shell bangle-making industry. Organic materials found during the

Cloud and local backups complement each other: Western Digital's Owais Mohammed

How often do you back up your data? Chances are, you forget — unless of course there is an automatic cloud backup, working unattended. The key to answering the question asked beforehand, is finding an answer to another pertinent question. How do you back up your data? The latest Global World Backup Day Survey, by storage solutions giants Western Digital, suggests it is a case of workable alternatives. They suggest there is a high demand for cloud storage worldwide, and also in India, where 77% of the survey's respondents, use some cloud storage service to make copies of their data. However, cloud storage subscription costs are figuring prominently, as more consumers begin to adopt a combination of cloud and local external storage (read, physical drives) to find the balance between insurance of data backups and the costs involved. "We believe that cloud and external drive backup solutions are complementary. While the usage of cloud storage worldwide is more widespread (75%), nearly half of all respondents (45%) utilise external drives as a local storage option. In India, this trend is even more evident with 77% storing their backup in the cloud and 54% using external drives," says Owais Mohammed, sales director India, Middle East, and Africa at Western Digital, in a conversation with HT. Here's an illustration — a 5TB Google One Premium plan costs ₹1,625 per month, or ₹16,250 annually. Dropbox, another popular cloud storage platform, has priced the 3TB Dropbox Professional plan at ₹1,549 per month, which totals to around ₹18,588 annually. In comparison, a WD My Passport 4TB portable hard drive costs around ₹10,899 while a Seagate Expansion 4TB external hard drive also has a similar market price. For users, individuals and as part of teams in businesses and enterprises, will have to balance costs with convenience for their workflows and data backup processes. The headline stats for India, indicate a positive trend. The survey suggests India leads in daily backups, with 30% of Indian respondents ensuring daily data back-ups, which is higher than US (27%) and UK (23%). PC and smartphone users in India are also relying heavily on less complicated external storage, with 54% of surveyed Indians use external drives; the second-biggest demographic globally. These evolving habits perhaps stem from a heartbreak of data loss is common — the Global World Backup Day Survey notes that 71% of Indian respondents have experienced data loss due to device failure, acciden-

tal deletion, or cyber threats. Often, a complicated backup solution isn't the best (or most robust) for users — even a simple drive that connects to your PC via USB (even the USB-C on phones and tablets exhibit the same capabilities) can be a useful way to keep your documents, photos and other files safe in multiplicity of copies. But there is still an outlier. Around 28% of Indian consumers still do not back up their data, relying solely on device (PC, tablet, or smartphone) reliability. The survey had 6,118 respondents worldwide. There was a time in the past decade, when cloud storage was in vogue, and physical storage was considered a cumbersome, inferior choice. But the good old "USB drive", is making a resounding comeback. According to research firm Statista's latest numbers, India's storage market (this will be a collective of personal and enterprise expenditure) is expected to grow annually at around 9.75%, with the market expected to be valued at \$1.45 billion by the year 2029 — up from \$1 billion, in 2025. "These results show there is awareness of an appropriate backup strategy, such as the 3-2-1 backup rule. We recommend storing three sets of the same data (one original and two copies) on at least two different storage media (e.g. cloud and external hard drive). One of these copies should be in a different location or off-site. In India, a whopping 37% of respondents are aware of this rule and apply it," explains Mohammed. "This puts India in first place in this comparison, far ahead of China (29%) and Taiwan (25%)," he adds. The survey also states that among respondents in India, around 22% also rely on network-attached storage (NAS) for backing up data — the biggest demographic, worldwide. Western Digital recently expanded their extensive portfolio, adding higher capacity drives to their portfolio, including the 26TB G-DRIVE for creative workflows, a 52TB G-RAID PROJECT 2 for enterprises, and the WD My Passport 20th Anniversary Edition with up to 6TB storage. The storage solutions company's product portfolio includes external storage including rugged drives, NAS storage and data centre drives. For enterprises, data insurance is becoming even more important, as artificial intelligence (AI) implementation gathers pace. Greg Clark, director of product management, Data Security at OpenText Cybersecurity points out the need for identifying and eliminating unnecessary or non-useful data to reduce costs and compliance.

How Nawaz Sharif played a key role in India-Pak peace efforts



"Please ask him to visit Delhi," former foreign minister of Pakistan, Khurshid Kasuri, suggested when he came to know I was meeting former Pakistani prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, the next day. Kasuri, who is chairman of the Lahore-based Institute of Peace and Connectivity (IPAC), felt, "He can break the ice."

I did convey Kasuri's request to Sharif. He listened carefully, before responding with a benign, non-committal smile. In the past, as head of government, he would connect with India much to the chagrin of the omnipotent Pakistan Army; and in fact, paid a price for it. Now that his younger brother Shahbaz Sharif — who is reputed to have a better equation with the army — is in the saddle, Nawaz will only take an initiative if Shahbaz and the army are in conformity with it. An hour south of Lahore, a mere 50 kilometres as the crow flies from Amritsar, lies the leafy, rural setting of Raiwind. Here in one of several quite expansive farm houses lives Nawaz Sharif, 74, the only Pakistani with the distinction of thrice being elected his country's prime minister.

He didn't complete his full tenure in any; not because he lost the confidence of his party the Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz or of the directly-elected National Assembly. Such has been Pakistan's turbulent history since its breakaway from India and birth in 1947. Winding through alluring and sprawling farmland and orchards my car approached Sharif's residence. Walking towards it from the opposite side with a retinue of people in tow was the man himself in his customary Pathan-style shalwar kameez, and wearing a facemask reminiscent of covid times. It could well have been a scene out of Francis Ford Coppola's Godfather; except that the central figure wasn't a don of a Sicilian clan, but a president of a political party, where in addition to one of his siblings being prime minister, his daughter Maryam Nawaz is the chief minister of Pakistan's most powerful province - Punjab. "What a pity there are no direct flights between Pakistan and India," Sharif ruefully remarked after we had settled down in a drawing room. His disappointment was genuine. He has, to be fair, been a consistent proponent of better relations India — to the extent of including it in his party's general election manifestos. His aides would advise against it; but he would persist — to prove that the Pakistani masses were not opposed to an engagement with India. In February 1999, in his second term as prime minister, he attempted to repair Indo-Pak ties with a 'Lahore Declaration' with his Indian counterpart Atal Bihari Vajpayee — after high tension between the two countries following a tit-for-tat testing of nuclear weapons. Sharif excitedly recalled Vajpayee's arrival in Pakistan on a bus. He reminisced how the late Indian matinee idol, Dev Anand, dashed out of the coach to hug him and tell him he had read at Lahore's esteemed Government College and would like to visit it. Sharif replied, "I, too, studied at the Government College and will make sure you do so." Moved by the trip to his college, Anand asked Sharif if he could stay back in Lahore for a fortnight. The latter said he had no objection. But Indian officials decreed that since Anand had come with Vajpayee's official delegation, he would have to return with it.

Sharif, then, in a reverie reeled of lyrics of songs in Anand's 1960s blockbuster Guide and other Bollywood movies. He added he's hooked on listening to music for at least an hour or two before he retires at night. He didn't elaborate on his preference. I surmised, though, it was Indian cinema hits of older vintage. India's fortunate soft-power stranglehold over its neighbour. The Pakistani chief of army staff (COAS), the late General Pervez Musharraf, disapproved of the Lahore Declaration; and spectacularly sabotaged it three months later with a Pakistani incursion into the Indian-controlled Kargil region of Kashmir. Indeed, he went a step further by ousting Sharif in a coup d'etat in October of the same year. Imprisoned and charged with treason, it was apprehended he would be executed like a previous Pakistani prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was in 1979, when intervention by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan's financial benefactor for decades, providentially exiled him to that country. In 2017, Sharif was charged with corruption and a year later disqualified him from holding public office by the Pakistani supreme court. He relocated to London; from where he returned to Pakistan in 2023, before being acquitted by the Islamabad high court in two graft cases. Ironically, it was his khaki bete noire who ushered Sharif into politics.

R.N. Ravi: In pursuit of controversies

Neither Tamil Nadu nor its Governor Ravindra Narayan Ravi is a stranger to controversies. However, the last three-odd years of the tenure of the 72-year-old Governor, a retired IPS officer of the Kerala cadre (1976 batch), has all along been full of controversies. As an officer of the Intelligence wing in the police initially and an interlocutor subsequently for the Naga peace process for seven years, Mr. Ravi, who was also Nagaland Governor during August 2019-September 2021, must have used his diplomatic skills greatly. This could be seen from the fact that he, as the Union government's representative, signed a framework agreement with one of the rebel Naga groups in New Delhi on August 3, 2015. It was another matter that he later courted one controversy after another as the Governor of the north-eastern State.

But, in the case of the southern State, the trouble began more than 40 months ago even before Mr. Ravi became the 26th Governor of Tamil Nadu. The then chief of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, K.S. Alagiri, questioned the motive behind Mr. Ravi's shift and recalled how another retired police officer Kiran Bedi, as Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry (May 2016-February 2021), and the former Congress government, headed by V. Narayanasamy, had fractious ties. The first sign of trouble between the Governor and the DMK government, led by M.K. Stalin, was visible over the issue of clearance to the legislation seeking exemption from the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to undergraduate medical courses. The latter gradually found that Mr. Ravi was not acting as a facilitator for sending the Bill to the President for assent. It was then — January 2022 — that the DMK began making

His father Muhammad Sharif was one of the founders of Itefaq Foundries, which had become Pakistan's largest iron and steel producer, making a variety of products, including hardware for the Pakistan Army, when in 1972 Bhutto nationalised the industry. In 1978, though, General Zia-ul-Haq unseated Bhutto in a putsch and returned the business to the Sharifs. Five years later, he appointed Nawaz as Punjab's finance minister. When elections were held in 1988, Sharif emerged as the province's chief minister.

Two on, he ascended to the post of Pakistan's prime minister, only to be unseated a little over two and a half years later. His attempt to clip the armed forces' wings was rudely resisted. There now ensued in the 1990s a game of thrones between him and his Pakistan People's Party rival Benazir Bhutto, daughter of Zulfikar and the first woman head of government in a Muslim state (who died in a suicide attack in 2007). As the conversation continued, Sharif regretted the suspension of direct trade between the two nations. His pet inclination has always been developing economic relations with India. "It doesn't make sense," he said, "to export and import via third countries." Trade between the two countries has predictably plummeted to a negligible turnover.

Direct trade between the two countries stalled after India accused Pakistan of being behind the killing of Central Reserve Police Force personnel in Pulwama in Kashmir in February 2019. In 2014, during Sharif's third term as premier, his government was about to sign a non-discriminatory market access (NDMA) treaty with India, before rather peremptorily withdrawing from it. The Pakistani government was persuaded by a Maryland-based Hindutva activist that grant of NDMA status to India just before the then imminent general election would be advantageous to the incumbent Congress party. But contrary to Pakistan's expectation, BJP did not proceed with the deal.

If Sharif thinks he was short-changed, he did not express this. Professor Athar Hussain of the London School of Economics had projected Indo-Pak trade of \$50 billion in a decade. This is not impossible, given the way Sino-Indian trade has burgeoned. His citing of the absence of direct transport and trade indicated these be restored, while not ignoring the issues of Kashmir and terrorism. For Kashmir, there's a readymade template in the progress made by Ambassador Satinder Lambah and his interlocutor civil servant Tariq Aziz in 2004-2008 — on the basis of which talks can resume. As for terrorism, with both sides affected, a joint mechanism could be a solution. But this would need mutual goodwill and trust, both of which have long evaporated. The Sharif family's Itefaq Group — buffeted over the years by the Pakistan Army and Nawaz's political opponents — has ceased to exist. Nawaz's himself now derives pleasure from farming and governing a charitable state-of-the-art hospital near where he lives, attached to which are medical, nursing and dental colleges. Profits from the schools finance the free medical care. Legend has it that Lahore takes its name after Loh, son of Rama. This month, Sharif was appointed patron-in-chief of the Lahore Heritage Revival Authority, entrusted with preserving the metropolis' monuments from pre-Mughal to British times, not to mention remnants of the Mughal and Sikh empires in between. Earlier this week, Sharif observed the nicety of attending the current Pakistani COAS, General Asim Munir's mother's funeral. But there is no love lost between him and the institution of the Pakistan Army. At a previous tete-a-tete with me in London, he blamed it for much of Pakistan's ills, including the loss of East Pakistan in 1971. About being evicted from office a third time, he said, but for it, "Pakistan would have progressed leaps and bounds."

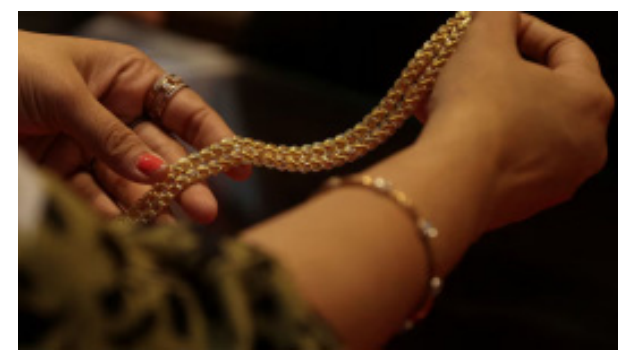
Pakistan's economy has subsequently been in a tail-spin, which the Imran Khan premiership in the interim failing to arrest it. But there are green-shoots of a revival in the US\$350 billion economy. The International Monetary Fund, which had provided a US\$7 billion bailout, stated this week, "Over the past 18 months, Pakistan has made significant progress in restoring macroeconomic stability and rebuilding confidence despite a challenging global environment." Inflation, which hit 40 percent in May 2023, had declined to 1.5 percent last month. The Karachi Stock Exchange has been on a northward trend since the beginning of 2025. Economic growth, though, remains moderate. As president of the ruling party, Sharif should be reasonably satisfied.

He evinced interest in IPAC's efforts to encourage a rapprochement between India and Pakistan. He asked to be apprised of the proceedings at its upcoming session - in order to study proposals therein. His interest in India seemed intact, notwithstanding suffering because of it. His decision to attend the BJP government's swearing in ceremony in 2014 didn't go down well with the army either, nor did Narendra Modi's surprise presence at Sharif's granddaughter's wedding in 2015. A week later, coincidentally, erupted an attack on an Indian military base in Pathankot. The Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed group was suspected of being behind it. Sharif is unlikely to unilaterally rock the boat, so as not to inconvenience his brother. At the same time, no initiative with or response to India is



its demand for his ouster. After Mr. Ravi sent back the Bill on the ground that it was against the interests of students from rural areas and economically weaker sections, the State Assembly in February 2022 re-adopted it and returned it to him. Eventually, the Governor had referred the Bill to the President, leaving the matter pending. On many other Bills, the State government had to seek remedy from the Supreme Court, which, in November 2023, described as a "serious concern" the "constitutional deadlock" created by Mr. Ravi. On February 7, 2024, the top court asked whether the Governor referred to the President 10 Bills re-passed by the State legislature only to avoid having to give consent to them. Mr. Ravi is in no way different with regard to higher education where he has a direct role to play in the form of Chancellor of State Universities, six of which have not been having Vice Chancellors (VCs). For the purpose of selecting VCs, he is pushing for the implementation of the UGC's 2018 Regulations, which stipulates the formation of a panel of 3-5 persons,

April gold imports surge 82%, no more steps planned to curb imports



Two days after the government raised the import duty on gold, silver, and platinum to cool the pressure on the rupee amid the ongoing war in West Asia, data from the commerce ministry on Friday showed that gold imports jumped 82% year-on-year to \$5.63 billion in April, with the overall merchandise trade deficit rising to a three-month high of \$28.38 billion. Silver imports more than doubled to \$41.1 million in April compared to the same month last year. The vegetable oil import bill, meanwhile, surged 40% to \$1.72 billion. The impact of the war in terms of supplies and prices was also visible in the import of petroleum, crude, and products, which were down 10% year-on-year at \$18.63 billion — but 53% higher compared to March.

While merchandise exports increased by 13.8% to \$43.56 billion — outbound shipments of petroleum products soared 35% to \$9.59 billion — imports rose by 10% to \$71.94 billion. With the rupee under intense pressure since the war in West Asia began in late February — it has tumbled 5.2% against the US dollar since then — the government has been taking austerity measures to ease the strain on the use of foreign currency and reduce fuel consumption. In addition to a hike in the import duty on precious metals, oil marketing companies on Friday increased the pump price of petrol and diesel for the first time in four years.

Meanwhile, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal told

reporters on Friday that the government has not planned any further "policy measures to discourage any imports in the country". "But there has been a clarion call by the Honourable Prime Minister to discourage non-essential consumption. So, if there is a citizen move to consume less of non-essential consumption, it will translate... But as far as policy is concerned, we are not putting a curb on imports as such right now," Agrawal said. Over the weekend and again on Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged the public to change their consumption behaviour by reviving Covid-era measures such as work-from-home and virtual meetings, avoiding non-essential foreign travel and gold purchases for a year, and prioritising local goods, among others. These actions would help save the country's foreign exchange reserves as most of these activities and purchases require import.

In 2025-26, India imported a record \$71.98 billion of gold, up 24% from the previous year. More than 9% of India's import bill last year was due to gold, with another 1.6% being on account of silver. Commenting on the impact of the gold and silver import duty hike, the Commerce Secretary said on Friday there would "definitely be some impact", although it may be lower in the case of silver on account of it being an industrial input. While exports, on the whole, recorded robust growth in April, trade with the West Asia region continued to take a huge hit, shrinking for the second consecutive month due to the disruptions caused by the war and the closure of the key waterway of the Strait of Hormuz. Exports to the region fell 28% year-on-year to \$4.16 billion in April, with imports slumping 32% to \$10.47 billion. On the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) front, Agrawal said efforts were on to find a "creative solution" around the UK's decision in March to lower reduce the tariff-free quota for imported steel and impose higher duties on imports beyond that limit. On the deal with the US, the secretary said the American delegation is expected to soon visit India following the Indian team's visit to Washington, DC last month and continue discussions.

SEC, Adanis move for consent judgments in Adani Green Bond issue



US Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC, Gautam Adani, Adani Green Bond issue, Adani Green Bond, Sagar Adani, Adani Green Energy Ltd, Indian express business, business news, current affairs. In addition, the final judgments, if approved by the court, would order Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani to pay civil monetary penalties of \$ 6 million and \$12 million, respectively, SEC said. The SEC's complaint, filed on November 20, 2024, alleged that Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani, respectively the founder and Executive Director of Adani Green, orchestrated a scheme to pay or promise to pay the equivalent of hundreds of millions of dollars in bribes to Indian government officials in exchange for commitments to purchase energy at above-market rates, thereby benefiting Adani Green, SEC said. SEC said the complaint alleged that in September 2021, while the bribery scheme was ongoing, the defendants falsely touted Adani Green's compliance with anti-bribery principles and laws in connection with a \$750 million bond offering, which raised more than \$175 million from US investors. According to the complaint, Adani Green's offering materials contained statements about its anti-corruption and anti-bribery efforts that were materially false or misleading in light of the bribery scheme, SEC said.

The US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has sought the entry of final consent judgments against Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani, whom it had earlier accused of making false and misleading statements linked to a 2021 bond offering by Adani Green Energy Ltd. According

to SEC, without admitting or denying the allegations in the complaint, Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani each consented to the entry of final judgments, subject to court approval, that would permanently enjoin each from violating the US laws.

In addition, the final judgments, if approved by the court, would order Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani to pay civil monetary penalties of \$ 6 million and \$12 million, respectively, SEC said. The SEC's complaint, filed on November 20, 2024, alleged that Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani, respectively the founder and Executive Director of Adani Green, orchestrated a scheme to pay or promise to pay the equivalent of hundreds of millions of dollars in bribes to Indian government officials in exchange for commitments to purchase energy at above-market rates, thereby benefiting Adani Green, SEC said. SEC said the complaint alleged that in September 2021, while the bribery scheme was ongoing, the defendants falsely touted Adani Green's compliance with anti-bribery principles and laws in connection with a \$750 million bond offering, which raised more than \$175 million from US investors. According to the complaint, Adani Green's offering materials contained statements about its anti-corruption and anti-bribery efforts that were materially false or misleading in light of the bribery scheme, SEC said.

Charity Commissioner orders Tata Trusts to defer its Saturday board meeting

It would therefore be in the interest of the Trust as well as interest of justice that such meeting is deferred till submission of report of the Inspector inquiry ordered by ACC, the order said. In an email to the trustees, the trust has not given any reason for the indefinite postponement of the meeting. Tata Trusts on Friday deferred indefinitely its much-awaited board meeting scheduled for Saturday following an order from the Charity Commissioner of Maharashtra.

Interestingly, the order has made reference to representation/complaint from Tata Sons Director and Tata Trusts Trustee Venu Srinivasan and Adv Katyayani Agrawal. It's clear from the order of the Charity Commissioner that Srinivasan and Agrawal raised the issue of reducing the number of perpetual trustees. In an email to the trustees, the trust has not given any reason for the indefinite postponement of the meeting.

The board meeting was originally supposed to be held on May 8, but the trust had postponed it to May 16 without assigning any reason. The key issues on the agenda of Tata Trusts board meet included review of Tata Trusts representation on the board of Tata Sons, differing views among trustees regarding the potential listing of Tata Sons and the issue of perpetual trustees. In an order dated May 15 addressed to Tata Trusts, Charity Commissioner Amogh S Kaloti said, "A direction is issued to the Board of Trustees of Tata Trusts to defer the meeting of the Board of Trustees scheduled to be held on 16-05-2026. It is further directed not to hold any such meeting till submission of report of Inspector inquiry." "The issues highlighted by them are serious and require due consideration," the order said.

"The office of Charity Commissioner received an e-mail dated April 18 sent by Adv. Katyayani Agrawal. This e-mail communication requested urgent intervention of the Charity Commissioner for violation of Section 30A (2) of the Maharashtra Public Trusts Act," the order said. "Charity Commissioner was urged to exercise his statutory powers under the Maharashtra Public Trusts Act and initiate an immediate inquiry into the composition of the Board of Trustees of Sir Ratan Tata Trust and direct the Trust to comply with the mandatory conditions in Section 30A (2) by reducing the number of perpetual trustees to not more than one-fourth of total strength (i.e. maximum one perpetual trustee in a board of six)," the order said. It also urged the Charity commissioner to take all consequential actions, including removal of excess perpetual trustees and appointment of trustees in accordance with law, as may be necessary to restore legality and pass any other appropriate orders to prevent further violation of the Act and to protect the interest of the public trust and its beneficiaries.

The office of Charity Commissioner had forwarded the said complaint/representation to concerned Assistant Charity Commissioner (ACC) who, on May 13, directed the concerned Inspector to conduct an inquiry and submit report. "Thus, direction for an Inspector inquiry, to be conducted



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under section 37 has already been passed, and a report under section 39 to the Charity Commissioner is awaited," the order said. Subsequently, complaint of similar nature dated April 28 by Venu Srinivasan was also received through e-mail. "This was also placed before the concerned ACC who directed to keep it with the pending proceeding. The ACC on Friday placed these complaints and the order of the Bombay High Court before the Charity Commissioner. The High Court did not entertain the petition for the reason that the representations referred to by the petitioner were not made by him or on his behalf, but by some other/third party, the order said. "It is clear from the text that Venu Srinivasan also made a representation to the Charity Commissioner. The issues highlighted by them are serious and require due consideration. An Inspector inquiry into these complaints has already been ordered and a report of the inquiry is awaited," it said. "In case, a meeting of the Board of Trustees is called and any important decisions regarding the administration, management or composition of the Trust are taken during pendency of the said inquiry, that would lead to further complications and multiplicity of the proceedings," the order said. It would therefore be in the interest of the Trust as well as interest of justice that such meeting is deferred till submission of report of the Inspector inquiry ordered by ACC, the order said. Section 36A(1) of the Maharashtra Public Trusts Act mandates the trustee of every public trust to, administer the affairs of the trust in accordance with lawful directions which the Charity Commissioner may issue, it said. The Maharashtra Public Trusts (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025, states that the number of perpetual trustees cannot exceed 25% (one-fourth) of the total board strength. However, at Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT), there are currently three perpetual trustees — Jimmy Tata, Noel Tata, and Jehangir HC Jehangir — out of a total strength of six.

The bizarre reason camels are fed salt before long journeys



Imagine a group of humans feeding salt to a camel, before riding it through vast deserts. Sounds bizarre, right? What if we told you it's an actual practice worldwide?

Camels are famous for surviving in some of the harshest environments on Earth. They can tolerate scorching heat, travel for days with limited water, and carry heavy loads across deserts that would quickly exhaust most animals. But before long desert journeys, many camels are intentionally fed large amounts of salt, and there's a surprisingly smart biological reason behind it. At first, the idea sounds counterintuitive. Humans are usually told to avoid excess salt because it increases the risk of dehydration. But for camels, the strategy works differently. Why salt matters for camels Salt helps camels retain and regulate

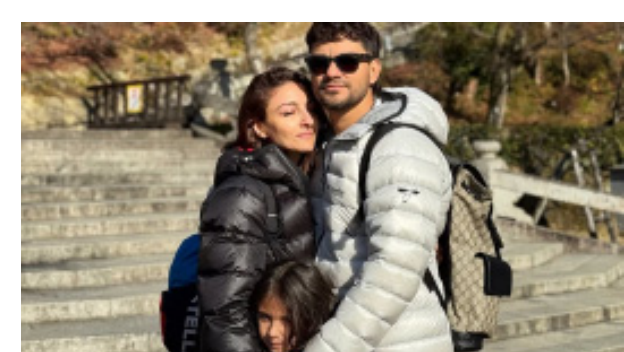
fluids more effectively during long desert expeditions. When camels consume salt before travel, it encourages them to drink and store larger amounts of water in their body before entering extremely dry conditions. The salt also helps maintain electrolyte balance while the animals lose fluids through heat and sweating during exhausting journeys. Unlike many animals, camels are specially adapted to handle large fluctuations in hydration without their body shutting down.

Their kidneys are highly efficient at conserving water, and their bodies can tolerate dehydration levels that would be dangerous for most mammals. Camels are built for survival. One of the biggest myths about camels is that they store water in their humps. In reality, the humps mainly store fat, which can later be converted into energy and metabolic water when food is scarce. Camels also have oval-shaped red blood cells, which continue flowing smoothly even when the blood becomes thicker during dehydration. This allows circulation to function under extreme desert stress. Their nostrils help reduce moisture loss, their thick eyelashes protect against sandstorms, and their body temperature can fluctuate more widely than humans — reducing the need for sweating and helping conserve water. Why desert communities rely on them For centuries, desert communities across regions of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia have relied on camels for transport, trade, food, and survival. The pre-expedition salt feeding practice is part of traditional desert knowledge developed over generations by people who closely understood camel physiology and survival patterns. Combined with strategic hydration and rest, the method helps prepare the animals for long stretches where water sources may be limited or unpredictable. So while humans may reach for electrolytes after dehydration, camels are often "prepped" in advance — turning salt into part of a carefully evolved desert survival system.

Soha Ali Khan on Kunal Kemmu's relationship habits: 'I think it only makes him sleepy'

Soha Ali Khan does not like to go to sleep in the middle of a fight. "Kunal, on the other hand, can. I think it only makes him sleepy. We did a podcast on sleep, and apparently, men don't use much of their brains in general. I didn't say this; the expert said this. There are statistics to back this," she shared during a recent interview with We Are Yuvaa. Fights can bring out different shades in partners, and, truth be told, everyone experiences and processes emotions in their own unique way. Rutuja Varade, psychologist, Mpower Aditya Birla Education Trust, believes sleeping over after a fight is not always a sign of avoidance. At times, it may serve as a coping strategy that helps a person relax, manage their emotions, and gain a clearer understanding of the situation before responding.

"In times of conflict, the emotional regions of our brain, particularly the amygdala, become intensely active, triggering our fight-or-flight reaction. At those times, we might say things on the spur of the moment that we do not genuinely mean," she tells indianexpress.com. Sometimes, stepping back, resting, or sleeping on the issue can help the nervous system calm down and allow the rational part of the brain to regain control. However, Varade says that this should not lead to a recurring pattern of emotional withdrawal or total avoidance. "Healthy conflict resolution is not about avoiding the issue but about recognising how each partner experiences and handles emotions uniquely," she adds. According to her, some people require time and quiet to regain their composure, whereas others feel more se-



cure by expressing themselves promptly and emotionally. This is especially true in the case of men, like Soha pointed out. "Many men are frequently conditioned socially to suppress or steer clear of emotional discussions, while women may tend to express emotions more openly and seek comfort through talking," Varade says. Tips for healthy conflict resolution However, emotional needs differ from individual to individual and are not solely based on gender, and the healthiest way to approach conflict is through communication: "A pause during conflict can be healthy if it creates emotional safety and leads to better communication afterward. Because ultimately, the goal is not to avoid conflict, but to handle it with emotional awareness, respect, and understanding," Varade concluded.

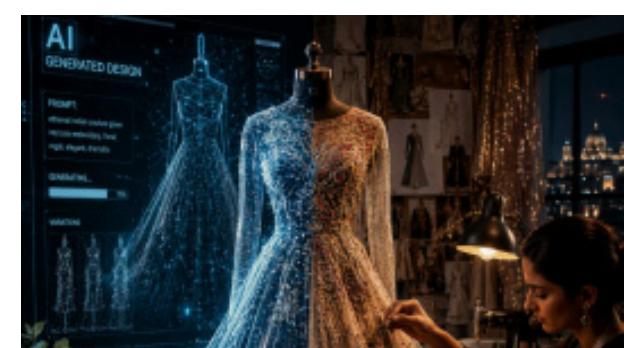
When imagination becomes real: How AI is quietly rewriting fashion's creative rules

A homemaker in her 40s from Punjab, self-taught with a needle and thread after a tailor once quoted her more than she could afford, was scrolling through Pinterest the way she always does, looking for something beautiful to make. She found it: an elaborate gown, detailed and dreamy. She studied it, sourced leftover fabric scraps from her elder daughter's fashion work, and spent the better part of ten days bringing it to life, stitch by careful stitch, between her household chores.

The dress was stunning. The original image, it turned out, had never existed in the physical world. It was AI-generated. "I had no idea it was AI," Sunita says. "I just liked the design and thought about it and made it. I will try to make any dress I like, be it AI or not. I just want to bring out the design in its truest sense." Her daughter Shalu, a 19-year-old content creator, posted the video of her mother's creation. It spread quickly, not merely as a feel-good moment, but as an almost perfect illustration of something larger quietly happening across fashion: the dissolving boundary between the imagined and the made. For Delhi-based fashion designer Afsha Noor, who goes by Noor Alchemy on Instagram and creates AI-generated couture and bridal collections, this dissolving line is not a side effect. It is the entire point.

"You cannot come inside my head and see what I am imagining," she says. "What we are doing with AI is imagining out loud." Noor uses AI at every stage of her process, from concept sketching to presenting finished looks to clients, and says the results have changed how buyers engage with her work. "Till date, whatever clients I have are not able to differentiate between what is real and what is AI. They are able to see what the actual outfit will look like. And this makes them feel confident in placing an order." She is emphatic, though, that AI is not the author of her vision. "We treat AI as an assistant. You have a vision, and AI is just helping you. That is it." Her creative instinct comes first, always, and the technology follows.

This distinction matters enormously to Vijay Raj, a visualiser and branding expert based in Kochi with over a decade in advertising, who has watched AI reshape the industry from the inside. "My workflow is that when I get a concept or a brief, I think it through by myself first. After that process, I use AI only for prompting," he explains. "Otherwise, we are not controlling something; the AI is completely controlling us." Raj is both an enthusiast and a watchdog. In workshops he conducts at universities, he tells students plainly: "You are completely free to generate anything you want, but as a designer, you have a value to your society and a responsibility to it." He argues that fashion shares the same ecosystem of trust and misinformation as any other part of society, and designers must take that seriously. Luxury label founder Ranna Gill, trained at FIT New York and a veteran of Donna Karan and Ralph Lauren, sees AI with the measured pragmatism of someone who has watched several revolutions come through the indus-



Couture designer Ridhi Mehra, known for blending traditional Indian craft with contemporary silhouettes, echoes this measured view. AI has made the client conversation easier, she says, because brides can now visualize a garment before it is made, but it has also introduced a new anxiety.

Her studio uses it for early visualization, testing how a colour, print, or embroidery might look before committing to samples, but she is clear about its limits. "AI generates designs, but we still have to recreate it. We rework on it, reposition it, colour it. It is not the final draft," she says. She draws a longer arc: "When the computer was invented, we learned to use it. We learned to use smartphones. And as we will learn to use AI, we will bring it into our worlds in the ways best for us."

Couture designer Ridhi Mehra, known for blending traditional Indian craft with contemporary silhouettes, echoes this measured view. AI has made the client conversation easier, she says, because brides can now visualize a garment before it is made, but it has also introduced a new anxiety. "The distinctiveness is definitely getting lost. Now anybody can pick up from anywhere, put it on AI, and create whatever they want." On the production side, fabric sourcing professional Harish Sharma watches all of this with the pragmatism of someone who must make the imagined physical. "AI creates designs digitally, but we have to make them practical in real life. There is a big difference between designing on a computer and producing it in reality. Every fabric has its own behaviour. It is not as easy as it looks," he says. Back in Punjab, Sunita Rawat does not particularly care about any of this debate. She sees an image she likes, and she builds it. The future of fashion, it turns out, may rest in both the most sophisticated algorithm and the most human instinct: the desire to make something beautiful real.

Satwik-Chirag dabble at Plan B; make Thailand Open finals after 3-set entertainer



GNS News Agency, May 22

Could a sub-optimal, discomfiting but essential Plan B be deployed for a win? That was the question posed to Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty throughout their first set of the Thailand Open Super 500. They lost the battle 19-21, but won the war, 22-20, 21-16 for a 82 minute three-set tussle that gave them their first final of the season. Like lightning, the light of the win followed the sound of noise of the past fortnight. Plan B implied, allowing former World No 1s – now No 9, Malaysians Goh Sze Fei and Nur Izzuddin to dictate the opening moves like in a chess game: the battle confined to flat, fast net exchanges, where the Indians would be starved of lifts, to smash down. A taut, tense front and midcourt war-theatre, where the Indians would necessarily need to defend Goh's jump smashes if an errant lift ballooned up.

Out of their comfort zone, it would also mean Satwik playing front court, and Chirag manning the back – an adapting measure that's necessary to be trained for in contingencies, but not ideal. Plan B, a self inflicted pressure-test started badly – 9-15 down. But then the Indians got past the criss-cross maze where they had to operate from a bending position. Not quite crouching tigers, more like scrambling rabbits, the two tall 6 foot forwards shuttlers need to urgently speak to India's finest wrestlers or even Leander Paes to get that front court attacking crouch-squat stance right. But they have worked hard enough on the problem already and took 7 of the next 10 points by opening up the court a tad to reach 16-18. Chirag's round the head thereafter didn't connect, and Satwik, not very sharp on the day, watched the tape return the shuttle on his court. 19-21, the first set was lost. But Satwik-Chirag have not reached World No 1 (they are No 4 currently), by giving up. Problem-solving is now second-nature to them and their coaching team,

which astutely had Manu Attri, a chameleon of a front & back court former Olympian, a Meerut man who properly understands the Malaysian-Indonesian way of front court sorcery, along with coach Tan who can untangle the flat-exchange gameplan. Early in the second set with the Indians still grappling with the stock Malaysian model, at 4-6 down, Satwik-Chirag went on a 5-point surge. Dipping the shuttle to disrupt the parallels, they started forcing lifts out of Goh-Nur. It really is all that the Indians need to drop the defensive cloak and toggle to attack. It went to 16-16, but Chirag was breaking the shackles. He even reviewed a faulted serve and won. His childhood coach Uday Pawar had once told Chirag bluntly that even if the duo were getting better at defense, they must not push it, and pretend they will win matches on retrieves. By instinct, the Indians are attackers, and must back their strength. Satwik was erring on lengths, but Chirag stayed sturdy and smashed at every opportunity to break away to 19-16. Nery rallies followed to 20-20, but the decider was earned when Satwik clutched up with a brilliant tall flat cross from backcourt. Once released from the chains of forecourt flats, the Indians were well on their way in the third. Chirag, whose swivel serve and 'Huudd' exhales are reassuringly back, still logged a high serve error, and a long rally ended with net tape drama as the shuttle clipped and tumbled onto Malaysian side. But the Indians had their first final of 2026, second in two years at Thailand. They have won twice at Bangkok, and also were crowned Thomas Cup champions in the city.

While Chirag drew his motivation from how well the Indians defended even after lifting, and moved the Malaysians around, Satwik explained why the flat game played by shorter players is troublesome. It's a lesson learnt the hard way from losing to Minions early in their career and to Aaron-Soh at the Olympics. "Malaysians and Indonesians always want to dominate the net. They don't want us to play back court. Goh-Nur had the upper hand at the net that's how they started first game. They were controlling front and mid court. They're quite skillful with their hands at the net and being short guys they use net skills. We are tall and need to bend, and play tight shots to get there. For them it's very easy... it's tactical," he told the BWF. Goh-Nur acceded that the higher temp the Indians switched to, broke their back. "They increased pace and kept attacking. And put pressure on us. And we cannot sustain that. The attacking was too strong... we couldn't overcome," they told BWF. "Job not done yet," was Satwik's verdict to BWF, while Chirag accepted, "Slowly we are getting better, we are playing well in patches."

'6 cameras following you at practice is not a comfortable feeling'

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Virat Kohli has spoken out about his discomfort with players being recorded by social media teams of Indian Premier League franchises while they are sharing personal conversations with other players or in training sessions. The Royal Challengers Bengaluru star asked for there to be some "streamlining" in terms of the footage that IPL teams' social media units capture in order to create viral moments.

"You walk to practice and you have six cameras following you. It's not a comfortable feeling at all," Kohli said on the RCB Podcast. "As a sportsperson, you need to have the ability and the freedom to work on your game in peace. If everything you do is an opportunity to film or display or to dissect, then you are not being organic. I'm not going to be able to try to do things at practice which I really want to do because I know tomorrow if someone films it and there are discussions on my practice sessions... You judge me on my performances during the game, not during the leadup. No one has the right to judge me on what I'm doing in terms of my preparation, the things I'm trying in the nets." Kohli called for social media units of teams to understand what to record behind the scenes and when to roll the cameras.

"I just feel like there has to be a bit more streamlining in terms of understanding how much to do, when to do, is the player okay with being filmed at all times. Those kinds of things really need to be taken into account because it gets too much," Kohli added. "I love the pressure of the game but I honestly don't love the pressure of anything else. Like social media is a huge part of the commercial representation or the fan engagement for any team, which is understandable. But I genuinely feel like there has to be a bit more streamlining, because if you look at the growth of the official fan clubs or the official fan pages of teams it has taken place after a long period of time when the IPL was



already in play. So it's not a thing that people were ready for from day one. "Kohli then gave the example of the robo-dog Champak intruding while he was having a conversation with Kane Williamson, who is now an advisor to the Lucknow Super Giants. "I was talking to Kane the other day and there's that robot thing just waving at me. And I am like 'Why is this thing waving at me?' I'm talking to Kane about something so serious. First I ignored the dog and then I told the man controlling it, please take him away. Let me talk in peace. Kane's my friend. I can't have a conversation with him without it becoming a 'moment'," Kohli added. These days Kohli plays only in the IPL and for India in the 50-over format. He said that not just cricket, he's also cut down on other aspects of his life. "Of course I'm playing much lesser and this was always my plan — I always felt like I want to play to a point where I'm completely finished like I have nothing else to give and then I want to take things very easy I want to focus on life and not just you know cricket, cricket, cricket. This comes even in the choices which I'm actively making off the field: I've cut down massively on the number of days I work from a commercial standpoint. I'm focusing more on the business side of things," Kohli added.

Praggnanandhaa on Gukesh vs Sindarov world championship: 'It's 50-50 for now'



In fact, the defeat to Pragg was Sindarov's first in eight months. The Uzbek prodigy's last defeat in the classical format came in September 2025 against Bulgaria's Ivan Cheparinov in the 3rd round of the FIDE Grand Swiss 2025 at home in Samarkand.

GNS News Agency, May 22

After defeating Javokhir Sindarov in a round 2 clash of the Super Chess Classic 2026 tournament in Romania, India's Praggnanandhaa said that the upcoming World Chess Championship battle between the Uzbek prodigy and world champion D Gukesh will be an evenly poised battle. Sindarov has been in rampaging form in classical chess recently, scything through the Candidates tournament in Cyprus last month with an unblemished record to secure his spot in the world championship. In fact, the defeat to Pragg was Sindarov's first in eight months. The Uzbek prodigy's last defeat in the classical format came in September 2025 against Bulgaria's Ivan Cheparinov in the 3rd round of the FIDE Grand Swiss 2025 at home in Samarkand. Sindarov went unbeaten at the FIDE World Cup in Goa and then the Candidates tournament.

But while former world champions Magnus Carlsen and Garry Kasparov have firmly installed Sindarov as the favourite for the World Championship against Gukesh, Pragg felt that no player has a clear advantage. When asked by ChessBase India about who he thinks is the favourite at the upcoming World Championship at the end of the year, Pragg said: "The world championship is 6 months away. No one knows what form they will go in. I think it's just 50-50. I don't think anyone is a favourite. It's just about who plays the best at the World Championship that will take it." Sindarov was handed a brutal loss by Indian grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa in a second round game of the Super Chess Classic 2026 tournament in Romania. Sindarov was handed a brutal loss by Indian grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa in a second round game of the Super Chess Classic 2026 tournament in Romania. Last month, when Carlsen was asked who would win the Gukesh vs Sindarov World Chess Championship clash during a Chess Party in Stockholm, he had named Sindarov to be the next world champion. "At the moment it's impossible not to say Sindarov but we know anything can happen in a World Championship match," Carlsen had said. "I am first of all really curious as to what Sindarov will do in the next few months because he is very different from Gukesh. In the sense that Gukesh has very obvious weaknesses when it comes to his understanding and Sindarov does not. He is a lot more well-rounded."

"Compared to Gukesh, if you look at the games, Sindarov looks like the clear favorite. But this match is a special format. Gukesh is very mentally stable, able to defend any position and find resources even in the worst situations. Gukesh has match experience, but for Sindarov, this will be his first serious match. Yes, it's relatively short — 14 games, we've played longer games before — but it will still be very interesting," Kasparov said in an interview with St Louis Chess Club's YouTube handle.

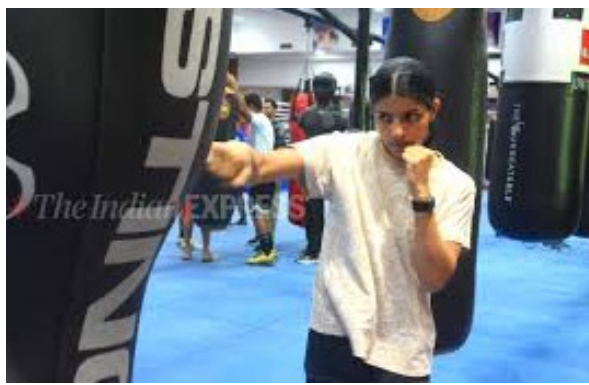
'Bit of funny and rubbish': Dale Steyn, Ambati Rayudu slam Akash Singh's 'nonsense' note celebration



In his first game of the IPL 2026 season, Lucknow Super Giants pacer Akash Singh had his reasons for bringing out the note celebration. However, the left-arm seamer's antics have not gone down too well with a bunch of former cricketers, including Dale Steyn, Ambati Rayudu and Mitchell McClenaghan. Akash had enough reasons to rejoice on Friday night as he single-handedly dismantled the Chennai Super Kings top order, comprising Sanju Samson, skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad and Urvil Patel in succession. Each time he took a wicket, Akash pulled out a little note and held it up. It was later revealed that the chit contained a motivational message. "#Akkionfire – Akash knows how to take wickets in a T20 game," the note read. "I just want to know at what point today he thought, 'hey this will be awesome, like I'll pull this out on TV, everybody will think I'm

cool. I also want to know who his friends that he told backed him up and said that would be a great idea." "I just think that's his manifestation, it may not go down well with a lot of people, but it's kind of funny and a bit of rubbish," said Rayudu. "I'm actually flabbergasted with some of this generation that's coming through, like you know putting your fingers up on your first real performance on the IPL when you've only just turned up on the scene, we've only just learnt your name. It's like jeez how many haters have you got bro, you've played four games. I just find it all fascinating, it's really interesting," McClenaghan added. A former CSK batter, Rayudu also called for a complete ban on bringing notes onto the ground. "I think they should ban this chit business, absolute nonsense. I don't think they're supposed to bring chits anyway. Pace legend Steyn took to social media and stressed that the notes were an outdated business. "Time to put the papers away. It ain't trending no more. Actually, to be honest, never really was," said Steyn on X. After walking away with figures of 3/26 in four overs, Akash explained the reason behind the chit which reflected as a source of motivation. "It just gives me motivation. There is no reason behind it. Whatever motivates me during the game, I'll keep backing it," said Akash. Akash was not the first to pull out the note celebration this season, with CSK batter Urvil Patel dedicating a chit to his father during the previous fixture between LSG and CSK last week in Chennai. After smashing a record 13-ball fifty, Urvil raised a note to the screens which read: "This is for you papa."

Bhiwani boxer Sakshi Chaudhary's long reach benefits by dropping down to 51kg



For the last two days, Bhiwani boxer Sakshi Chaudhary has been getting a call from her coach Jagdish Singh, once coach to boxers like Beijing Olympics bronze medalist Vijender Singh and the man behind the Bhiwani Boxing Club, to remind her of one story from Indian mythology. "Jagdish coach sahib ne yahi yad dilaya 3-4 din se ki tu Hanuman hai," Sakshi narrates. "Jaise unko unki shaktion ki yaad dilaani padhti hai, tere ko bhi yaad karana padta hai (Jagdish coach sir only told me that I am like lord Hanuman. The way he needed to be reminded of his powers, I too need to be reminded of my abilities). It has been 14 years since I started training and today I have got the chance to play in my first Games CWG and Asian Games. I wanted to win and that's what I have done here," shared Chaudhary while speaking with With Chaudhary, a former two-time world youth champion and world junior champion, getting a shot at bagging a berth in the Indian women's team for the CWG and Asian Games, Singh wanted to reassure his ward. A day after she defeated two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen in the 51-kg trials, Chaudhary out punched 2025 48-kg World Champion Minakshi Hooda in the final to seal the berth. Bhiwani legacy and weight shift

Sakshi arrived on the world boxing map with her maiden world junior title in 2015 and followed it with two consecutive titles in the World Youth Championships in 2017 and 2018. The Dhanana village native would win the bronze in the Asian Championships in 2021 followed by her maiden national title in 2022. But a shoulder injury the same year meant the boxer missed the nationals as well as trials prior to the 2023 World Championships in Astana as well as the Paris Olympics qualifier. Last year, Chaudhary had won the title in the World Boxing Cup in Astana with a 5-0 win over USA's Yoseline Perez in the 54-kg category. The 25-year-old had also appeared in the assessments prior to the Asian Championships in Mongolia. Preeti Panwar both won the assessment and the 54-kg title in Mongolia, and was headed for the CWG and Asian Games. So last month, Chaudhary made the decision to drop down to 51-kg, a call that saw her defeating Zareen and Hooda in the trials. Sakshi arrived on the world boxing map with her maiden world junior title in 2015 and followed it with two consecutive titles in the World Youth Championships in 2017 and 2018. (Express Photo by Harmeet Sodhi) Sakshi arrived on the world boxing map with her maiden world junior title in 2015 and followed it with

two consecutive titles in the World Youth Championships in 2017 and 2018.

"When I made the transition from junior to senior, I had three world titles under me and such things always motivate you. But then when the shoulder injury happened, it somehow stopped me. The title in last year's World Cup made me believe that I am back to my best. Dropping weight to 51 has been a challenge but then I knew I had the height advantage as well as power advantage. In 54-kg, sometimes I would face much taller boxers, who would make the shift from 60 kg," shared Chaudhary. After Nitu Ghanghas in 2022 CWG and Sachin Siwach, it is Chaudhary carrying the Bhiwani flag. "As kids, we heard about boxers like Vijender sir. And when me and Nitu won the world youth titles, once again there was talk of Bhiwani Boxing Club. So it works as a motivation for each one of us," shares Chaudhary. Plan against Nikhat and Minakshi On Wednesday, Chaudhary had scored a 4:1 win over Zareen and on Friday, she outclassed Hooda with a 5:0 verdict. Zareen had earlier emerged as the contender for Asian Championships topping the assessment but a bronze in Mongolia meant that the selection was to be made in this category apart from other categories, where boxers did not reach the final in Mongolia. Chaudhary speaks about how she relied on her jab as well as long range boxing. "Against Nikhat, I had two challenges. One was to fight the perception of her being the top most boxer in this weight. Nikhat is a boxer with strong willpower and plays from close range. My plan was to play from a distance and used that to my advantage. Minakshi relies on her counter punches and my plan was to box in a counter way against her and not to go near," shared Chaudhary.

Indian women's head coach Santiago Nieva weighs in, "Sakshi had a tremendous outing. She gambled by moving down the weight and it paid out very well for her. She dominated today's bout and she has shown that she is very strong in this weight. She has a good long reach and she has been successful in the trials. Her jab was excellent and it's a sharp and strong jab which she uses to score. Her footwork and overall ring IQ too has been good. We want her to have more variations in terms of punches. She has a tendency to slap a bit, which she needs to cut. She needs to add more body punches, combinations as well as her inside game. Sometimes the bouts become a little rough," added Nieva. The Indian team for CWG: Sakshi Chaudhary (51kg), Preeti Pawar (54kg), Jaismine Lamboria (57kg), Priya Ghanghas (60kg), Parveen Hooda (65kg), Arundhati Choudhary (70kg), Lovlina Borgohain (75kg); Men: Jadumani Singh (55kg), Sachin Siwach (60kg), Aditya Pratap Singh (65kg), Sumit Kundu (70kg), Ankush (80kg), Kapil Pokhariya (90kg), Narender Berwal (+90kg); Asian Games: Women: Sakshi Chaudhary (51kg), Preeti Pawar (54kg), Jaismine Lamboria (57kg), Priya Ghanghas (60kg), Parveen Hooda (65kg), Arundhati Choudhary (70kg), Lovlina Borgohain (75kg); Men: Jadumani Singh (55kg), Sachin Siwach (60kg), Aditya Pratap Singh (65kg), Sumit Kundu (70kg), Ankush (80kg), Kapil Pokhariya (90kg), Narender Berwal (+90kg).

Why interrupt boxers' preparation, trials are too demanding: Women's coach Nieva

Earlier this week, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) ended the assessment system at national camps to select boxers and instead asked the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) to conduct trial bouts. The SAI intervention came after boxers complained about alleged lack of transparency. At the end of the three-day trials for the Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games at the National Institute of Sport in Patiala, the Indian women's team head coach Santiago Nieva told The Indian Express that it was "too demanding psychologically and physically" for boxers to go for trials every time they have to compete. In your earlier stint as High Performance Director, you had spoken about the need for assessment-based selection... We had the Asian Championships recently, where the top performers have proven themselves. So why expose them to trials and interrupt their preparation? So, we did a hybrid system where the five boxers who reached the finals at the Asian Championships were selected for the Commonwealth and Asian Games and those who didn't had to prove themselves through trial bouts. But it's too demanding psychologically and physically to go for trials every time you have to compete.

Some boxers have complained that selection should be based on trials and not the assessment. How do you see this?

Nikhat (Zareen) got the trial against Mary Kom in the past. Sometimes, trials are required, but not all the time. You have to take into account more parameters than just one bout. So some of the 3-2 decisions in today's bouts can be 2-3 tomorrow. But you don't get the chance to take that into account when there are trial bouts. If you do an overall assessment, you look at how the training is going,

at injuries, weight management, previous international results, and who has better chances overall. Of course, it's a little bit subjective but this is more than just a bout of three rounds. There is more to a selection than who has done best for nine minutes during trial bouts.

You coached Sweden and Argentina before joining India in 2017, and then coached Australia. What are the positives of the assessment system?

The traditional way is having a selection event, a national championship, or a selection trial. Selecting the winners of a selection trial has been going on for 50 years. But when teams started training together more full-time, especially in the former communist bloc, those countries took other parameters into account because they saw the boxers train every day. So they gave either the head coach or the selection panel the freedom to pick the boxers. So, the coach does an overall assessment. And this assessment system that we were using, comes from English-speaking countries... to try to put some more objective parameters into it.

So can we say assessment is your preferred method to select boxers?

They use it in Canada, USA, England, Ireland. We tried it in Australia. In most countries, you respect it. If you have a head coach, that person should be able to select a team. When I was head coach in Sweden, they had the policy that we have appointed this person. If that person cannot select the team, he cannot be the head coach. So if you give the responsibility to the head coach, we give him the freedom to pick the team. How do you do it in football? In Argentina, if the head coach wants Lionel Messi, he doesn't have to give any justification.

Virat Kohli turned vegetarian for Anushka Sharma: 'She made me a better person'



etarianism, I don't fall sick as often. Also, I've become more conscious about the environment. I want to set the right kind of example as a human being," she said. Despite living a lifestyle that needs them to travel around the globe, Virat and Anushka have maintained their vegetarianism. In fact, when they visit restaurants in foreign countries, chefs are delighted to present them with dishes that work for them.

In 2023, a profile in Vogue suggested that the couple loves to visit the restaurant Tendril in London, and had dined at the place five times. The restaurant revealed that their favourite dishes included Chinatown purple potatoes, carrot with tahini and pomegranate salad, Nduja squash tostada, and cauliflower moilee with pita bread. Chef Harsh Dixit, in a chat with The Hollywood Reporter India, revealed that for their anniversary dinner, he made them pho, but with a twist. Since the dish is often prepared with meat, Harsh made sure that this was altered to suit Virat and Anushka's lifestyle. "There's chicken and beef in the broth. But they were eating gluten-free at the time, so we went with rice noodles, which are traditional in Pho and gluten-free," he said. This is when he made them try 'snakes'. "Vietnamese cuisine includes a lot of snake — snake wine, even snake meat. So, how about serving 'snakes' to vegans?" He came up with the idea of serving snake gourd. "The idea was to have fun while staying within the dietary boundaries. That's what being a private chef is about," he said.

When Anushka found the perfect Chole Bhature for Virat in Mumbai while they love enjoying international delicacies, Virat, who is from Delhi, and would often express his love for Chole Bhature earlier, loves to eat food that reminds him of home. In 2022, Anushka, in fact, found the perfect spot for him in Mumbai, a restaurant named Delhi Se. "Those who know him, know his love for Chole Bhature," she shared in an Instagram Story. In the same post, she also shared that Virat loved watching Chole Bhature videos in his spare time. The restaurant owners, in a chat with The Indian Express, revealed that their restaurant was on the verge of shutting down but after they got an endorsement from the power couple, the restaurant got a new lease of life. Their love for smaller eateries is quite evident, as was recently shared by the Bengaluru restaurant CTR. In a chat with Pinkvilla Biz, they recalled the couple's visit in 2023 and shared that within minutes, the road outside the restaurant was jam-packed with fans. "At that moment, outside the restaurant, the entire road was blocked, no vehicles could pass and there were people madly waiting for the couple to exit. When we opened the doors, they couldn't even get inside the car," they shared. Anushka grew up in Bengaluru and this was one of her favourite joint during her college days, and Virat too, loved the delicacies they had to offer.

gest her feelings were not real, that it was the brain tumour talking, not the person. You located her personhood in a medical diagnosis because it was easier than accepting that another woman was telling you, plainly, that she did not want what you wanted. When she ended things, you told her there was some fundamental part of her that could not love or be loved. You said that to a woman in recovery. Someone who had spent years fighting to come back to herself. She called it a moment of clarity. She was right. You loved her. She loved you. And rather than do anything honest with that, you spent years keeping her close enough to hold without ever fully choosing her. When she was finally pregnant with your child and began seeing someone else, you were jealous and controlling — while you were still with Amelia. You treated her love like something that would simply be there when you needed it, without requiring much tending in the meantime. By the time you finally committed to her, so much had accumulated that the relationship was already carrying more than most could hold. She forgave you things that were genuinely hard to forgive. That was always more about Teddy's capacity than your deserving.

By the time Season 19 arrived and the story of the veterans came out, that you had been illegally providing physician-assisted deaths to soldiers who were suffering, the show asked us to understand it as a complicated act of compassion. And perhaps it was, somewhere underneath. You genuinely cared about those men and women. That was never really in question. But you dragged Teddy into it. You put her career, her freedom, her life at risk for a decision you made largely alone. And when it collapsed, the two of you fled Seattle like fugitives, leaving behind the hospital, the colleagues. Which is, in its way, very you. Leaving town with a woman who has spent her adult life absorbing the aftershocks of your decisions that you made without her. Here is the thing that makes all of it land with such specific frustration: you were not without warmth. As a trauma surgeon you were often extraordinary, calm in chaos, instinctive under pressure. Your love for Leo and Allison was real and uncomplicated in a way that very little else about you was. And Kevin McKidd (the actor who played Owen Hunt), gave you nearly two decades, directed 49 episodes of this show, and never once stopped caring about the character, even when the writing made it difficult. But warmth is not the same as goodness.

She had told you who she was from the beginning. The abortion was not a betrayal. It was Cristina being exactly who she had always said she was. The screaming was you, finally admitting you had never really accepted it. Then came the cheating, which you later admitted was punishment. The man who held her hand at the clinic had, within a season, turned that gesture into a debt she owed you. She threw cereal at you. Given everything, it was a restrained response. As Chief of Surgery, you put six colleagues on a charter flight with a documented history of mechanical problems. Lexie Grey died in a field. Mark Sloan died weeks later. Arizona Robbins lost her leg. The Callie-Arizona marriage, one of the most resilient relationships the show ever built, eventually came apart under the weight of what that crash did to them. You felt guilty about it. The guilt was real. But you had a particular way of grieving that kept you at the centre of the tragedy, while the people who had actually lost limbs and partners were left to put themselves back together.

By the time you got to Amelia, a pattern had become visible enough that the audience was watching with something close to dread. When she told you she was not sure she wanted children with you, your response was to sug-

Madhavan says he refused son Vedaant's request to 'spend quality time': 'I'm not a cosmetic dad'



R. Madhavan has often spoken with pride about his son Vedaant Madhavan, who has made a name for himself in competitive swimming and dreams of winning an Olympic gold medal for India one day. The actor has frequently shared how deeply involved he is in his son's journey. However, Madhavan once opened up about why he does not believe in being a "cosmetic father" who is physically present at every school event. In a conversation with Rannvijay Singha for Mashable, Madhavan called the idea of spending "quality time" with children a Western concept and said he believes parenting is more about values and emotional support than appearances.

"There will never be enough time to spend with your kids. I think this is a very Western concept that I have to spend quality time with the kids and everything. All your job is to make sure you treat them with the right family, teach them the right family values," he said. When Vedaant complained to Madhavan about quality time, the actor recalled a conversation with Vedaant when he was six years old and complained that his father was not spending enough time with him. Madhavan said he responded by drawing parallels with his own upbringing. "When my son came to me when he was 6 years old and said, 'Papa, you know, you're not spending quality time with me.' And I said, 'Look at that man, my father over there. He never spent quality time with me either.' He didn't come to my baseball games because we didn't have bloody baseball. He didn't come to school. He was there when I needed him." Madhavan explained that

Debut with Rani Mukerji but 'star kid' Shadaab is still auditioning: 'Yash Chopra wanted to launch me'



Shadaab Khan, son of legendary actor Amjad Khan, made his acting debut opposite Rani Mukerji in Raja Ki Aayegi Baraat in 1997. While the film failed at the box office, Shadaab went on to do a few more films over the years but never found major success in Bollywood. In 2020, his performance as stockbroker Ajay Kedia in the critically acclaimed series Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story marked a comeback of sorts for the actor. Since then, he says he has been consistently auditioning in the hope of landing strong roles again.

In a conversation with Vickey Lalwani, Shadaab opened up about losing his father at a young age, struggling to establish himself in the industry, and giving nearly 60 auditions in the last few years despite being a star kid. Shadaab shared that he was initially supposed to make his debut with Himalayputra, but things did not work out due to confusion regarding the role. Later, producer Salim Akhtar cast him in Raja Ki Aayegi Baraat. "At that time, I had undergone a drastic transformation. Before my father's death, I weighed 145 kgs. After he passed away, I started losing weight and by the time I was 21, I was 67 kgs. The problem was that I became extremely thin. Drastic weight loss takes a huge toll on you. I looked gaunt, drained and odd."

"I met Yashji at his house. He was very close to my dad. I told him I wanted to act. He said, 'Right now, you are not ready. Look at yourself, you have become scrawny. Give yourself a couple of years, go to the gym, get into shape and I will launch you.' His mother too advised him to wait, but he was determined to enter films immediately. I couldn't do it. My father had died and I wanted to make him proud. So I did Raja Ki Aayegi Baraat. There was nothing

'Reasons behind Toxic's delay are valid': Tara Sutaria calls Yash-starrer 'fearless, fabulous'

every character has immense power and courage. The film is fearless and fabulous."

She further revealed that the film would present audiences with a fresh visual style. "We are talking about a period where visually and stylistically all of us have very exciting personal styles — something I don't think Indian cinema has explored in a long time. Globally, it is going to be something people won't expect," she shared. Praising her co-stars, Tara said, "It has also been wonderful to watch so many women come together alongside Yash, who is incredible both as a human being and a co-star. To see women from different ages and stages of life and career come together and celebrate every scene has been truly special. We are not all together in every scene, so whenever it happens, it feels rare and magical." Addressing the repeated delays in the film's release, Tara said she remains patient and understands the bigger picture behind such decisions. "I am a very patient person

while his father may not have attended events or activities, he was always emotionally present and gave him the strength and values he needed.

"He was there as a pillar of strength philosophically. He was there as a person when I needed support and he funded what I wanted to do. But he instilled the qualities," he said. "Don't expect me to be cosmetic father. The actor added that his relationship with his father shaped the kind of parent he wanted to become for Vedaant. "I love that man dearly and I'm going to make sure that I'm the best son possible for him till as long as he lasts." Madhavan then shared the conversation he had with his son about the kind of father he could realistically be while balancing a demanding profession. "So I said, Vedaant, if you expect me to be this cosmetic father who will come to all your school games, that's not going to be me because I have a profession that does not allow me to do that. But if you ever need any help, if you ever need me to be there for anything, I'm just a messenger."

He stressed that unconditional support matters more than constant physical presence. "Because no matter how much of a blunder you do, how much of a mistake you do, I will always be on your side. I will try and solve the problem if you tell me earlier on that you made a blunder or a mistake," he said. Madhavan said he hopes he has built enough trust for his son to approach him with anything in life. "I hope that I have instilled that confidence that you can come to me with anything. But apart from that, live life like an Indian kid. Go out, play, don't feel insecure about the fact that people are telling you, 'Oh, my father did this, my father didn't do that.' I could have done so many things, but I don't regret it at all," he said. Earlier, in an interview with GQ, R. Madhavan had also spoken about his relationship with son Vedaant Madhavan and the kind of bond he hopes to share with him in the future. "I want to be an integral part of my son's life — the kind where my future grandkids call me thatha and visit often. I want him to someday ask me, 'Dad, how did you raise me?' Of course, I can't be there for every event, but he knows I'll always show up when it matters. We don't talk every day or say 'I love you' all the time, but when he needs to talk or find a solution, I'm the one he calls," he said. Madhavan married Sarita Birje in 1999. Their son, Vedaant, who was born in 2005, is currently based in Dubai, where he balances his education with intense training sessions.

wrong with the film and I won't blame Salim Akhtar for it. I worked in the film, but it didn't work." "I have given 55-60 auditions in the last six years"

Shadaab said that after Scam 1992 brought him back into conversations, he hoped more substantial work would follow. However, he claimed that the struggle has continued. "I am telling you the truth — in the last six years, I have given 55 to 60 auditions for solid roles. Either I was removed after being confirmed or I was rejected and actors who were not as good were cast instead." According to him, not being associated with a powerful camp, PR agency or social media network has hurt his chances. "I am not part of any big camp in the industry. Secondly, I am not on social media, and that plays a huge role today in getting work. Your popularity on social media determines whether you get a role or not. I don't have a management agency promoting me. I am not good at PR." "My audition clips were used as reference reels"

The actor also alleged that casting teams often used his audition tapes to guide other actors instead of genuinely considering him for roles. "I checked and saw 85 to 100 views on some of my audition tapes. You only get those many views on an unlisted link if the audition is being circulated among actors. What they do is think, 'We won't cast him because he doesn't have social media presence or camp backing, but he's a good actor, so let others use this as reference.'"

Shadaab also recalled a particular incident involving a major web show that was eventually shelved. According to him, he had auditioned for the main villain's role and was repeatedly asked to tone down his expressions. "I gave the audition and they said, 'It's good, but you are giving expressions. Give a blank face.' I did that. Then they asked me to go even more blank. I don't think I could have gone any blander than that." A week later, he was informed that he had been shortlisted for the role, but was then asked to audition for another secondary character as well. "Later, an AD associated with the project told me I had actually been finalised for the main villain role, but the casting agency was trying to push another actor for the part. He told me the director was happy with my casting, but unfortunately the show never took off." "I am the only so-called star kid who is still auditioning. Others are in strong positions, part of camps, active on social media and backed by talent agencies." He added, "My father died more than 30 years ago, so I am not in the current star-kid circle. But because I am not technically an outsider either, I don't belong there as well. I am somewhere in between."

