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When rules crush compassion

THE image from Odisha's Keonjhar district is haunting: a tribal man walking to a bank carrying his dead sister's skeletal remains to prove she had indeed passed away. His purpose was painfully simple. He wanted to withdraw around Rs 19,000 from her account for urgent family needs. That such a desperate act was required should shake the conscience of the system. For the man, repeated visits to the bank had reportedly yielded the same response: produce proof of death. In many remote tribal regions, obtaining a formal death certificate is neither simple nor quick. Deaths often occur at home, registration systems remain weak and families are left navigating unfamiliar procedures without guidance. What should have been a humane administrative verification turned into public humiliation.

The bank has clarified that only standard documents were sought and that the matter has since been resolved. But such explanations do little to address the larger moral question of why the poorest citizens must perform extraordinary acts of distress to access their own money.

Odisha saw such a moment in 2016, too, when Dana Majhi walked nearly 10 km, carrying the body of his wife, Amang Dei, on his shoulders after allegedly being denied an ambulance. That image too shocked the nation, triggering outrage and official promises of reform. A decade later, the recurrence of such an episode points to a deeper failure. Systems designed for efficiency and accountability end up becoming inaccessible to those they are meant to serve.

Rules are necessary, but when applied without empathy they harden into barriers. Financial inclusion cannot be reduced to the opening of accounts. It must ensure dignity in withdrawal, access, and grievance redress. Similarly, public health services cannot end at treatment. They must extend to humane support in death.

Habsiguda Leaders Participate in the Tenth-Day Funeral Rituals of Late Gundu Anasuya



“UPPAL, APRIL 30 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): “Former Medchal-Malkajgiri District Youth Congress President Kandi Shravan Kumar Reddy participated in the tenth-day funeral ritual ceremony of late Gundu Anasuya, mother of Gundu Raju (Rajanna), senior Congress leader of Habsiguda Division and trustee of the Velugugutta Sri Mallikarjuna Swamy Temple. “He paid floral tributes to her portrait and offered his respects. He also consoled the family members of Gundu Rajanna and expressed his support during their time of grief. “Senior leaders and party members who attended the program included former Floor Leader Kandi Aagi Reddy, DCC Vice President Sudhakar Reddy, Division Congress Party President Gannaram Vijay Kumar, Division Congress Party General Secretary Dharmendra Naik (Dharma), Uppal ‘A’ Block Secretary Murali Krishna Mudiraj, Raju Naik, Division Youth Congress President Vasu Naik, Suman Naik, Sai Kiran, Sai Kumar, Shiva, Javed, Shabbir, Ravi, and others.

First Phase Admissions Continue at Uppal Government Degree College



“UPPAL, APRIL 30 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): “Registrations for first-year degree admissions are currently underway at Uppal Government Degree College. Students seeking admission in the first phase through DOST are requested to complete their registration by May 7 through the website dost.cgg.gov.in and select Government Degree College, Uppal (Code: 12816). “DOST Coordinator J. Vishwanath Kumar stated that along with B.Sc, B.Com, and B.A courses, MOOCs courses are also available.”

Principal Dr. K. Vijay Kumar said that, to assist students in the DOST admission process, the college staff will be available in the office even during the summer holidays. “For further details, students may contact the DOST helpdesk at 8985927019, the Coordinator at 8686939844, or the Principal at 9440476739.”

“Master Ji” Creates a Sensation in SSC Results



“— Chairman Sangam Reddy Sundar Raj Yadav” Hanamkonda, April 30 (Indian Chronicle) : Students of Master Ji Group of Schools delivered an outstanding performance in the SSC (Class 10) results released by the Telangana State Government on Wednesday, bringing laurels to the institution with exceptional scores, said Chairman Sangam Reddy Sundar Raj Yadav. “Expressing delight over the ranks secured by the students, he stated that

both the management and the teaching staff were proud of the remarkable achievement. He announced that Kumbha Shreshthi Nidhi scored 580 marks, Syed Bushra Loraine 579, Deeksha Gangotri 575, Umme Habeeba 574, Chilagani Lasya 573, Uppu Geethika 572, Soma Hansika 567, G. Sreesanth Reddy 567, and Srilaya 566 marks. “Out of the 146 students who appeared for the examinations, 29 scored above 550 marks, while 87 secured more than 500 marks, setting a notable record.”

The Chairman attributed this success to the dedication of the students and the committed guidance of the teachers. He specially congratulated the students who excelled in the Class 10 results. “He stated that the achievement reflects the quality of education imparted at the school. He conveyed heartfelt congratulations to the students who secured top scores, their supportive parents, and the teachers who worked tirelessly. Chairman Sangam Reddy Sundar Raj Yadav expressed confidence that the institution would continue to provide quality education and pave the way for students’ bright futures in the coming years.

Amarender Kuruma Appointed as BJP OBC Morcha President for Uppal Division



UPPAL, APRIL 30 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): “Amarender Kuruma has been appointed as the President of the BJP OBC Morcha for the Uppal Division. Uppal BJP President Marineni Phanindra officially issued the appointment orders and handed over the appoint-

ment letter. “Speaking on the occasion, the newly appointed OBC Morcha President Amarender thanked the party senior leaders and district leaders for placing their trust in him and appointing him to this position. He said that he would work towards further strengthening the OBC Morcha in the division and ensure the successful implementation of every program decided by the party leadership. “Amarender stated that his appointment itself is an example of how the party recognizes and rewards everyone who works sincerely for it. He further said that the Central Government is implementing several schemes for the welfare and encouragement of the BC communities. “He expressed special gratitude to Uppal Division BJP President Phanindra for entrusting him with this responsibility, and also thanked Telangana State Mahila Morcha President Shilpa Reddy, senior BJP leaders Dharma Reddy and Balavanth Chary, Division General Secretary Teega Vittal Rao, Treasurer Duvvala Ramesh, and all his associates who supported him in securing the post.

Once again, Tandur Krishnaveni Concept School students emerge as district toppers.. Outstanding SSC Results 2026



Indian Chronicle Vikarabad (April 30) ““ Krishnaveni Concept School, Tandur, has once again demonstrated exceptional academic excellence in the SSC Public Examinations 2026. ““The school proudly announces that G. Sai Vinith secured 592/600 marks, emerging as the Tandur & District Topper and setting a new benchmark in academic performance. ““Top Performers “- G. Sai Vinith – 592 (District Topper) “- C. Soumyasri – 589 “- D. Saanvi – 589 “-



Vibhavari Balaji Pimple – 587 “- C. Srinitha Priya – 582 “- M. Bhavani – 580 “- B. Akanksha – 578 “- Abdul Rahman – 577 “- Shree Singh Thakur – 573 “- Metli Pooja – 573 “- P. Vaishnavi – 571 ““Key Highlights “1. 100% Result “2. 50 Students scored 500+ marks “3. Multiple students secured above 550 marks “4. Consistent academic excellence across all subjects ““Subject-wise Highest Marks “- Telugu – 99 “- Hindi – 98 “- English – 100 “- Mathematics – 100 “- Science – 99 “- Social Studies – 100 ““This outstanding achievement reflects the dedication of students, the commitment of teachers, and the visionary leadership of the HM Sir, Director Sir & Management. ““Krishnaveni Concept School continues to nurture excellence, discipline, and success.

Students Who Created a Sensation in 10th Results at Ramanthapur Government School Honoured by Vallapu Srikanth Yadav



“UPPAL, APRIL 30 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): “The students of Ramanthapur Government School proved what a government school is truly capable of through their outstanding 10th class examination results. With highly experienced teachers and determined students, the Government ZPHS Ramanthapur school created a sensation with its excellent performance. “The school secured the 2nd rank at the mandal level, and students achieved remarkable scores of 551 and 550 marks. It is noteworthy that 12 students scored above 500 marks. “In recognition of their excellent results,

the successful students, along with the teachers who guided them, were warmly congratulated and felicitated by Vallapu Srikanth Yadav, Working President of Ramanthapur Division Congress Party. T

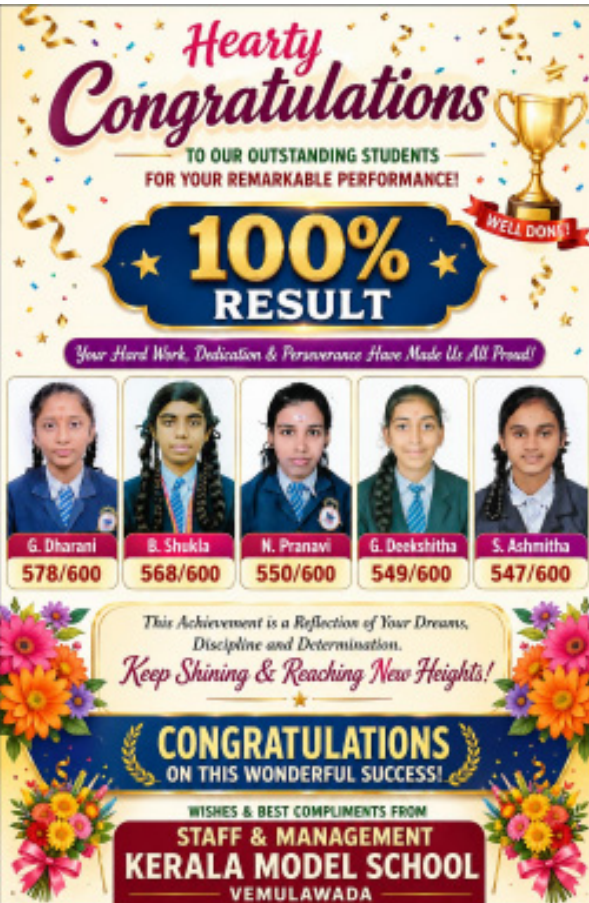
he school's Headmistress Latha and the teaching staff were also honoured. “Those present at the programme included HM Latha, teachers Neelima, Vasantha, K. Padma Latha, S. Sandhya, K. Vishnu, and Akbar, along with Congress leaders Sandeep, Sridhar, Jillu, Bhaskar, Ashok, Sachin, and Shankar, among others.”

Until New Accreditations Are Issued... “Validity of Old Cards Must Be Extended: “TWJF State President Mamidi Somayya”



“Hyderabad, April 30: “Mamidi Somayya, Founding President of the Telangana Working Journalists Federation (TWJF), has appealed to the state government to extend the validity of old accreditation cards for journalists—which expires on the 30th of this month—by at least one month, ensuring they remain valid until the new accreditation cards are officially issued. In a statement, he noted that while the validity period of the old accreditation cards has indeed expired, the new cards have not yet been issued. He alleged that the distribution of new cards, which took place in Hyderabad on Thursday at the hands of Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, was merely a symbolic gesture lacking substance; he pointed out that cards were handed over to only a select few journalists, and apart from that instance, no cards have been issued to anyone else at the state, district, or mandal levels. He further stated that even those journalists who had duly applied for the new cards have not yet received them, and due to the confusion surrounding this entire process, many journalists have been unable to submit their applications to this day. Expressing deep concern, he asserted that discontinuing the validity of old cards before the new ones are ready is unjust; he warned that this would cause significant hardships for journalists, potentially depriving them of essential benefits such as travel concessions on RTC buses and free medical facilities in hospitals. Mamidi Somayya commended the new Commissioner of I&PR for issuing orders to all District Collectors to issue accreditation cards between May 1st and 10th; however, he requested that measures be taken to ensure the validity of existing cards until the new ones are issued.

Kerala Model School Shines in SSC Results – Vemulawada Glitters with Toppers



“Rajanna Sircilla, Vemulawada, April 30 (Indian Chronicle): Kerala Model School in Vemulawada town has achieved remarkable success in this year's SSC (Class 10 th) board examination results, bringing pride and recognition to the institution. The school recorded an impressive 100% pass rate, with students securing outstanding marks and setting a new benchmark. Among the top performers, Gudelli Dharani secured the first position with 578 marks, while Bacchu Shukla stood second with 568 marks. Other high achievers include Pranavi (550), Deekshita (549), Asmita (547), and Roshini (545), all of whom delivered excellent performances. Notably, out of a total of 50 students, more than 25 students scored top grades, highlighting the overall academic excellence of the school. Speaking on the occasion, the school management credited this success to the students' discipline, hard work, and the dedicated efforts of the teaching staff. Parents also expressed their gratitude to the teachers for their continuous support and guidance. The school correspondent, principal, and teaching staff congratulated the students for their outstanding achievement.

Hyderabad sees fresh protest against tree felling near KBR park

Hyderabad: A protest was held against the felling of trees for flyovers and underpasses between Indo-American Cancer Hospital and Maharaja Agrasen Island, here on Thursday. This happens to be the second protest after the Save KBR Park campaign in the span of four days against massive tree felling for flyovers and underpasses around KBR park.

'Shine' Students Create a Wave in SSC Results



“Hanumakonda, April 30 (Indian Chronicle) : Students of Shine High School delivered an outstanding performance at the state level in the Class 10 (SSC) examination results announced by the Telangana State Government on Wednesday, said the institution's head Mugala Kumar Yadav. “He congratulated the high-achieving students and the teachers who guided them to success. Speaking to the media, he shared that out of a total of 600 marks, A. Akshara secured 588 marks. L. Revanth and N. Afroz scored 586 marks each, Sameera Nayeem secured 585, Veludandi Seema, G. Samhitha, and K. Sumith scored 584 each, T. Hasini, A. Prashanthi, A. Sushanth, and CH. Siri scored 583, V. Jahnavi and M. Sreedhar secured 582, A. Harshini scored 581, while P. Yatis and P. Harshitha secured 580

marks.”He stated that it is a matter of pride that 302 students scored above 85 percent, and 362 students secured more than 500 marks. He attributed this success to the special training provided for SSC examinations along with IIT Foundation and NEET coaching. He also proudly mentioned that students of the institution had earlier demonstrated state-level excellence in the recently announced Intermediate examination results. “On this occasion, Mugala Kumar Yadav, Correspondent Mugala Rama, Erragattugutta Branch Secretary Jakkula Srinivas Yadav, IIT Coordinator Mugala Ramesh Yadav, Principals P. Vishal, K. Dinesh, Rajkumar, Kavitha, Pragathi Reddy, Sabitha, Manasa, College Principals Raju Goud and P. Srinivas, along with teachers, students, and parents were present.

Sarpanch Shiga Naresh Goud felicitated the students who passed the 10th class results



(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau..Indian Chronicle...April 30):- 12 students who passed the 10th class results of Mugdhampally Village High School in Bibinagar Mandal were felicitated in front of the village sarpanch's office under the leadership of village sarpanch Shiga Naresh Goud. On this occasion, Sarpanch Shiga Naresh Goud congratulated the 12 students studying in the 10th standard in a government school from Mugdhampalli village, who have brought good name to the village by passing the 10th standard well. He congratulated the students who have brought good name to the village in the mandal and said

that in the coming days, he will help you in every way for higher education. He also said that he will provide financial assistance to the students who want to pursue MBBS, Engineering, IAS, IPS education from the village. He also asked the students to pursue education in a way that they can serve in various government departments in the state from our village. The village Upasarpanch Shetty Soni Mallesh Venkatesham Gopi Sekhar Reddy Prasanna Shankar Balakrishna Radhika Somaiya, Venkat Reddy, Sunitha, Vidyadhara Rao, Balamani, Durga Bhavani, Nasreen, Ramadevi Suresh. The village people and others participated.

As part of the 99-day Public Administration Progress Plan, Education Secretary Yogita Rana held a video conference with the collectors from May 11 to 17 for educational development



“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau..Indian Chronicle... April 30):- As part of the prestigious 99-day Public Administration Progress Plan program being organized by the Telangana State Government, Education Secretary Yogita Rana explained to the collectors through video

conference about the programs to be undertaken in schools during the academic week from May 11 to 17. As part of this, on the first day, summer training camps for students will start, civil works to be undertaken in schools will start, on the second day, special classes will be started for students who have passed the tenth standard, on the third day, a district-level workshop will be organized with Sarpanches, Municipal Chairmen and Councilors to create awareness about the programs being undertaken in the Education Department and strengthen the government education system, on the fourth day, a school walk program and parent-teacher meetings will be held, the fifth day will be celebrated as Library Day, the sixth day will be celebrated as Arts and Cultural Competitions, and the seventh day will be celebrated as Jawahar Bala Bhavan Day. Collectors were advised to complete the construction work undertaken under the Samagra Shiksha Scheme as soon as possible and to make academic panel inspections mandatory. District Collector Anurag Jayanthi, Additional Collector of Local Bodies Bhaskara Rao, and District Education Officer Satyanarayana participated in this program.

SUDA Chairman Narender Reddy inaugurates procurement centre at Bommakal

Assures farmers of hassle-free procurement; reiterates govt.'s commitment to welfare measures.

Karimnagar April 30 (Correspondent) : SUDA Chairman Komatireddy Narender Reddy on Thursday inaugurated a paddy procurement centre at Bommakal in Karimnagar Rural mandal, asserting that farmers would not be put to any inconvenience during the procurement season. Interacting with farmers after the inauguration, Mr. Narender Reddy said the Congress government, led by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, was extending support to the farming community through multiple welfare measures. He maintained that despite financial constraints, the State had prioritised agriculture and was allocating substantial funds for schemes such as loan waiver, Rythu Bharosa, and bonus for fine variety paddy.



This KYC should be immediately abolished..Provide 200 days of work and give Rs 800 per day as daily wage

(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau..Indian Chronicle...April 30):- Telangana Agricultural Labor Union District General Secretary Kondamadugu Narasimha has demanded that the central government immediately abolish this KYC, which is causing hardship to the National Rural Employment Guarantee workers and keeping them away from employment, and provide 200 days of work per year and give Rs 800 per day as daily wage. He has asked the Telangana state government to immediately implement its promise of giving Rs 12,000 per year to every landless poor family before the elections. On Thursday, after organizing a conference in front of the Rajpet Mandal MPDO office, the Telangana Agricultural Workers' Union Mandal Committee organized a "dharna" program and presented a memorandum with demands to the superintendent. Narasimha participated as the chief guest in this program and criticized the Modi government at the center for making many conspiracies to revoke the employment guarantee since it came to power, bringing new forms of employment and making the laborers suffer with face-based photos. On the other hand, he said that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which came as a result of many struggles in 2005, was repealed and the Ji Ram Ji scheme was brought. He said that in the old law, the workers had all kinds of rights, they were given work when they asked for work, and they were given it if they applied for a job card. But in today's Ji Ram Ji scheme brought by Modi, there is not a single right that is useful for the workers and the law has been framed in such a way that the workers depend on the benevolence of landlords, capitalists and rulers. Wages for work already done should be paid on time. He said that the workers are facing many difficulties due to non-payment of wages and non-payment of arrears for months. On the other hand, he expressed his concern that the workers, mainly working in the sun, are not even getting the minimum wage. He demanded that at least minimum facilities like drinking water, tents for shade, and medical kits for first aid be provided at the workplace. He said that 200 working days should be provided in a year and a daily wage of 800 should be given. He demanded that if the workers are injured at the workplace, the entire



medical expenses should be borne by the government and accident insurance should also be provided. Narasimha demanded that the government immediately release the arrears of wages to APOs, technical assistants, and field assistants who play a key role in the implementation of the employment guarantee scheme and recognize all of them as government employees. DYFI District Secretary Gaddam Venkatesh, Agricultural Workers Union District Vice President Jukanti Paul, and District Committee Member Katikala Ramachandram also spoke. Telangana Agricultural Workers Union Mandal President Gandhamalla Rajaiah, Secretary Katta Ravikumar, Vice-Presidents Inja Maisayya and Bhimana Balayya, Assistant Secretaries Kommu Yellamma and Puli Pedda Renuka, Mandal Leaders Golluri Prabhakar, Puli Chinna Renuka, Doragolla Karunakar, Anupa Satyalakshmi, Employment Guaranteed Workers Uppari Gopal, Anasuya, Padma, Chandramma, Mallamma, Balayya, Satyanarayana and others participated.

CM Relief Fund-A Boon for the Needy

-- MLA K.R. Nagaraju Hands Over 1,73,950 Cheque to Beneficiary“

“Hanamkonda, April 30 (Indian Chronicle): Vardhannapet MLA (retired IPS officer) K.R. Nagaraju stated that providing medical assistance to the needy through the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) stands as a testament to the welfare-oriented governance of the Congress people's government. “Namasani Nagaraju, a resident of the 3rd Division within the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation limits, had applied for assistance under the CMRF while undergoing treatment at a private hospital due to illness. Upon reviewing the application, the government sanctioned a sum of ₹1,73,950 (One Lakh Seventy-Three Thousand Nine Hundred and Fifty Rupees) from the relief fund. On Thursday, at the MLA's camp office located in Subedari, Hanamkonda, the MLA personally handed over the cheque to the beneficiary. “Speaking on the occasion, the MLA reiterated that the primary objective of the Congress government is to safeguard the welfare of the poor and vulnerable sections of society. He noted that the CMRF provides crucial financial assistance to cover medical expenses for individuals suffering from ailments not covered under the



Aarogyasri scheme, as well as for those in critical or life-threatening conditions. He added that this relief fund plays a pivotal role in saving the lives of countless people across the state. Local Division Corporator Jannu Shibharani-Anil Kumar, Congress leaders Budde Peddanna, Bijili Sampath, and others participated in this program.

Gaddam Ravikumar Congratulates CM for Appointing Hanumantha Rao as Government Advisor



““UPPAL, APRIL 30 (INDIAN CHRONICAL):“Congratulations have been pouring in for senior Congress leader V. Hanumantha Rao (VHR), who has been appointed as the Government Advisor for BC

Welfare and Development by the Telangana government. “Senior Congress leader from the Uppal constituency and former State Youth Congress Secretary Gaddam Ravikumar expressed his gratitude to Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for appointing V. Hanumantha Rao, who belongs to the BC community, as the government advisor. “Speaking on the occasion, Ravikumar stated that all sections of society are receiving proper representation in the government led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. He expressed happiness that Hanumantha Rao has been given this position in recognition of his efforts and vast experience in working for the welfare of BC communities. “He opined that the BC Welfare Department would achieve greater progress with the appointment of Hanumantha Rao. Ravikumar also conveyed his heartfelt thanks to the Congress high command at both the state and central levels for recognizing Hanumantha Rao's services to the party and awarding him this post. “The appointment of Hanumantha Rao as Government Advisor has been welcomed by BC communities across the state, who are extending their congratulations to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and his cabinet.

Indiramma Housing Construction Works Must Be Completed Expeditiously



Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Anurag Jayanti“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau – Indian Chronicle – April 30): District Collector Anurag Jayanti stated that the construction works for Indiramma houses must be completed quickly. “On Thursday, the District Collector inspected the construction sites of Indiramma houses in Anantharam village, Gundala Mandal. He inquired about the total number of houses currently under construction in the village and ascertained the specific stages of completion for each project. He also asked whether the beneficiaries had received the bill payments corresponding to the work completed thus far. “He urged the beneficiaries to complete the construction of their houses promptly and perform their housewarming ceremonies. Subsequently, he inspected the dilapidated Anganwadi center located within the District Parishad High School premises in the village. He inquired about the total number of Anganwadi centers in the village and the number of children currently enrolled in them. He



assured the community that he would strive to facilitate the construction of a new Anganwadi room within the High School premises. “The Collector also questioned the ASHA workers regarding the number of pregnant women registered across the two Anganwadi centers in the village. He asked whether all of them were undergoing regular medical check-ups at government hospitals and emphasized the need to ensure that all deliveries take place in government healthcare facilities. “Furthermore, he visited the home of a pregnant woman in the village to inquire personally about her health condition. He also asked her whether she was consuming the nutritious meals provided by the Anganwadi center. He advised everyone to consume nutritious food. Upon learning that the husband of a pregnant woman in the village had recently passed away due to ill health, he visited their home to offer his condolences and assured her of financial assistance. Concerned officials also participated in this event.

Recognition of Vishwabrahmins as a Single Caste

— Representatives of the Vishwabrahmin Association meet Collector Satya Sharada***



***"Warangal, April 30 (Indian Chronicle) : The Vishwabrahmin Association has objected to the State government's recent caste-wise population data, in which traditional Vishwabrahmin occupations—Kammari, Vadrangi, Kanchar, Shilpakar, and Kamsali (Avusula/ Swarnakar)—were listed as separate castes. "Warangal District President of the Vishwabrahmin Association, Maturi (Kurimilla) Ramesh, urged that these be recognized as occupations rather than distinct castes, and that all those en-

gaged in these professions be considered collectively under the Vishwabrahmin community. "On Thursday, association representatives met District Collector Satya Sharada and submitted a memorandum in this regard. Speaking on the occasion, Ramesh said that although their associations had submitted reports and representations to the dedicated committee constituted for the caste census, their concerns were not taken into consideration. He said the recently published data made this omission evident, prompting the association to approach the Collector with their appeal. "They requested that the government consider these professions only from the perspective of economic, developmental, and welfare benefits, while listing them under a single caste category—Vishwabrahmin—in official records. "The association also appealed to the State government to revise the currently published separate population figures of the five occupations and issue a Gazette notification declaring them as one caste with a unified population under the Vishwabrahmin category. "The representatives expressed hope that the government would acknowledge their request and take immediate corrective steps. "District Vice-President Panchakoti Sambamurthy, Treasurer Sindhoju Suman, and committee members Gannoju Sanjeev, Usala Srinivas, and Gannoju Babu Chari, among others, were present.

Private Scholarships Worth 5,60,000 Distributed at Uppal Government Degree College

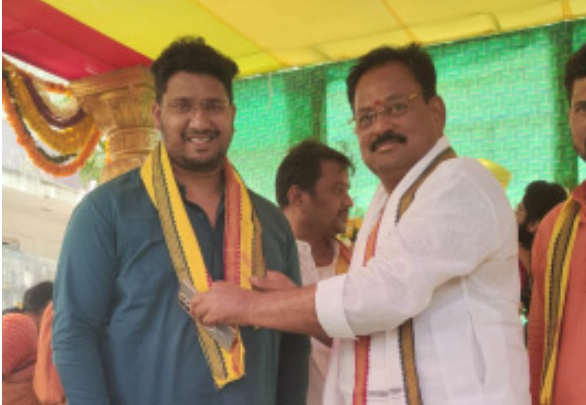


"UPPAL, APRIL 30(INDIAN CHRONICAL):"Private scholarships worth a total of ₹5,60,000 were distributed to students of Uppal Government Degree College. "Over the course of two days, Wednesday and Thursday, scholarships worth ₹2,60,000 were provided under the aegis of Malabar Jewellery, and were handed over by Industries and IT Minister Sridhar Babu. In addition, financial assistance of ₹3,00,000 was provided to eligible students through the Samarthan voluntary service organization from Guntur, and was distributed by the college Principal Dr. K. Vijay Kumar. "This special program was organized under the supervision of Private Scholarships Convener Dr. G. Tirupataiah. "Addressing the gathering, Principal Dr. K. Vijay Kumar expressed special gratitude to the Samarthan voluntary organization for supporting the future of students, and also thanked Malabar Jewellery for providing scholarships through its CSR funds. "He stated that it was highly commendable that these scholarships were awarded to meritorious students who maintained regular attendance and demonstrated outstanding performance in the first and second semesters. "The Principal also appreciated Dr. Tirupataiah for his tireless efforts in securing these schol-



arships, and LDC Surya Deepta Reddy for contributing to the success of the event. "He further mentioned that various voluntary organizations provide private scholarships to the college students every year. While ₹3 lakh was received last year, the amount increased to ₹5.60 lakh this year. Dr. Tirupataiah also informed that Wipro scholarships would soon be credited into the students' bank accounts. "He advised students that by attending classes regularly and securing good marks in all subjects, they would have greater opportunities to receive more scholarships in the future. He explained that while students in private colleges are required to pay fees, government colleges offer free education along with financial assistance in the form of scholarships. "He also highlighted that the government college has highly qualified faculty members with PhD and NET qualifications, who provide quality education. "He urged students to encourage other students in their surroundings to seek admission into government colleges as well. The program was attended by Vice Principal Dr. Satyanarayana, NSS Coordinator Jaldia Vishwanath Kumar, Dr. Yamuna, Vijay Kumar, Dr. Venkateshwarlu, and others.

Irshad Khan (Uppal Khan) Attends the Kalyana Mahotsavam at Sri Sri Sri Thene Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple



A Message of Communal Harmony****UPPAL, APRIL 30(INDIAN CHRONICAL):"The Kalyana Mahotsavam of the presiding deity was conducted with great devotion and grandeur on Thursday at the Sri Sri Sri Thene Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple located in Beerappagadda Division. "Uppal Congress Minority leader Irshad Khan (Uppal Khan) participated in this sacred event and received the blessings of the deity. On this occasion, he offered prayers and had darshan of the Swamy. "Speaking at the event, he said, "Our country is a great nation where different religions and cultures coexist. Hindu-Muslim unity is the strength of our society. There should be mutual respect, love, and brotherhood among all communities. Such spiritual programs serve as platforms that bring all of us together. "He further expressed his wish that the people of Beerappagadda should remain healthy, prosperous, and happy. "He emphasized that maintaining harmony among all religions is the responsibility of every individual and called upon everyone to move forward together for peace and development. "The event was attended by Agricultural Market Committee members Raghupathi Reddy, Samala Nagaraju, Rachakonda Shiva, Pittala Srinivas Mudiraj, Rajashekar, Anand, temple committee members, the chief priest of the temple, other dignitaries, devotees, and a large number of youth, making the program a grand success.

District Collector Anurag Jayanti inspected the day care center for the elderly in Bibinagar mandal center



"(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau..Indian Chronicle...April 30):- District Collector Anurag Jayanti inspected the day care center for the elderly in Bibinagar mandal center on Thursday. "On this occasion, he inquired about the services provided at the center in detail. He inquired about how many elderly people are currently receiving services at the day care center. He examined whether they are receiving the necessary facilities, food, and medical services properly. He also inquired about the number of staff working in the center. "The collector inspected the rooms where the elderly rest and gave suggestions on



cleanliness and maintenance of facilities. He wanted to provide a comfortable environment for the elderly. He spoke to the doctor and medical staff at the day care center and learned about the medical services and treatment methods provided to the elderly. "The role of medical staff is crucial in protecting the health of the elderly and they should be provided with all necessary treatments on time. The Collector suggested that the government should effectively implement the programs being undertaken for the welfare of the elderly. The concerned officials participated in this program.

Narasimha Jayanti celebrations in Swarnagiri...Abhishekam with various spices

"(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau..Indian Chronicle...April 30):- The Jayanti celebrations of Sri Narasimha Swamy were celebrated with great devotion and devotion at the Swarnagiri Temple, a famous Vaishnava shrine in Telangana State, on Thursday morning by the divine hands of the temple's chief priest Dittakavi Sravana Charyula. On this occasion, Snapa Thiru Manjanam was performed for the Lord and special decorations were made. Later, Sudarshana Narasimha Homam was performed and special prayers were offered for the peace and prosperity of the country. A large number of devotees participated in this program and received the pilgrimage prasad of the Lord. Later, Sri devi Bhudevi and Sri Swarnagiri Venkateswara Swamy were visited. Later, as part of the daily food distribution program of the Lord, more than 2500 devotees received the Lord's food today.



FARMER'S CURSE WILL HAUNT CONG GOVT: NRR

Hyderabad, Apr 30 : BJP State President N Ramchander Rao today that the paddy procurement system in Telangana has completely collapsed due to the "incompetence and negligence" of the Congress government. "He was speaking to media after visiting paddy procurement centers at Hanmapur under Bhongir mandal where he interacted with local farmers and gathered first-hand information who were waiting to sell their products. "Rao accompanied by BJP Kisan Morcha leaders visited paddy procurement centers to personally assess the situation. During the visit, distressed farmers shared their plight stating that piles of grain have begun to sprout because no lorries, weighing scales, or even basic tarpaulins have been provided for over last 10 days. "After visiting paddy procurement centers, BJP state chief said farmers' curse will haunt Revanth Reddy government and warned that the tears of the farmers would eventually lead to the downfall of the ruling party. "The situation was so dire that Koppula Saidulu, in-charge of an IKP Center at Bachannagudem in Nalgonda district, attempted suicide by consuming pesticide. He was driven to this extreme step by the harassment of millers and immense pressure from the government. His sacrifice was a desperate plea for the government to wake up, " Rao explained. "He urged farmers not to lose hope or resort to suicide, assuring them

that the Modi government and the BJP stand firmly by their side. "Criticising the functioning of Congress government, Rao questioned why the state is delaying procurement when the central government providing the funds for Minimum Support Price (MSP), transportation, gunny bags, tarpaulins, labor charges, and even commissions for IKP centers. "Terming the Warangal declaration a betrayal, BJP state chief mocked the Congress party's pre-poll "Farmer's Declaration," stating that none of the promises have been fulfilled. He noted that in Hanmapur alone, nearly 100 heaps of grain are rotting while officials offer nothing but empty words. " Rao alleged there was a deep-rooted conspiracy between rice millers, brokers, and certain officials to cheat farmers. He demanded immediate criminal cases against millers involved in exploitative practices. "The BJP State President issued a stern ultimatum to the state government demanding swift action from CM Revanth Reddy and Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao to fix accountability for increasing woes of farmers. He said the government must buy every single sprouted grain from the farmers and provide immediate drinking water, shade, gunny bags, and transport lorries at all centers. "If the Congress government does not wake up from its slumber and deliver justice to the farmers, the BJP Kisan Morcha will intensify state-wide protests, " Rao cautioned.

Government Neglecting Maize Farmers

-----Ex-MLA Peddi Sudarshan Reddy*****Narsampet/ Warangal, April 30 (Indian Chronicle) : Former MLA Peddi Sudarshan Reddy has strongly criticized the Congress government, alleging that it is showing a neglectful and harsh attitude towards maize farmers. "On Thursday, he inspected the SWC godown at Gundlapadu village in Nallabelli mandal. Speaking on the occasion, he launched sharp criticism against the state government, stating that maize farmers are being deliberately put to hardship. "He alleged that due to lack of coordination among the Agriculture Department, MARKFED, SWC, Civil Supplies, Revenue, Market and Police departments, farmers are suffering heavy losses. He pointed out that officials are sending vehicles without even assessing godown storage capacity, resulting in long queues of vehicles for days together. "He further stated that even the local MLA has no proper understanding of maize production, procurement and storage capacity. "Peddi Sudarshan Reddy alleged that procurement centres exist only on paper, while in reality farmers' produce is being exploited by middlemen. He accused the government of lacking sincerity in the procurement system and said that the burden of gunny bags, stitching material and transport costs has been entirely shifted onto farmers. "He said farmers are forced to wait for nearly 40 days under scorching heat of around 45°C at procurement centres and roadside collection points, yet procurement is not being done at a faster pace. He added that the government has not even procured 20% of the maize in Warangal district so far. "He also highlighted the absence of a clear procurement plan for paddy and maize, which is causing severe hardship to farmers.



He criticized that no payments have been made for maize procurement so far, and there is no clarity on future payments as well. "Recalling his tenure as MLA, he said that procurement centres and godowns were established in every mandal to support farmers. He alleged that although large quantities of maize are being cultivated in the Narsampet constituency now, only a few procurement centres have been set up, which he termed as cheating farmers. "He also alleged that PACS, FPOs, and IKP centres have been removed. He made it clear that both the local MLA and officials are 100 percent responsible for the delay in procurement. "He warned that the BRS party will launch protests and agitations against the government from tomorrow in support of farmers.

Delay in New Accreditation: Telangana Extends Journalists' Bus Pass Validity by One Month

"Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, April 30: Citing delays in issuing fresh accreditation cards for 2026–2028, the Telangana government has extended the validity of existing bus passes for State and district journalists till May 31. "The current accreditation cards are set to expire on April

30. Officials said the extension would ensure continuity in travel benefits while the renewal process is completed. "The Information and Public Relations Department has instructed TGSRTC to permit journalists to use existing passes during this period without requiring updated accreditation.

The grain purchase process should be fast and transparent

Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Anurag Jayanti"



"(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau..Indian Chronicle... April 30):"District Collector Anurag Jayanti has instructed the concerned officials to make the grain purchase process fast and transparent. The District Collector inspected the PACS grain purchase center in Anantaram village of Gundala mandal on Thursday. "On this occasion, the District Collector inspected the grain purchase center set up in Anantaram village by the District Collector on Thursday. First, he inspected the grain piles and facilities and

made several suggestions. The District Collector inquired about tarpaulins, sugarcane bags, water facilities, and other basic facilities. How much grain has been received so far? He asked whether the center has adequate weighing machines and moisture machines. It was suggested that the grain should be purchased by following the quality standards and transported to the next mills. If there are not enough lorries at the purchasing centers, arrangements should be made. The concerned officials participated in this program.

Champion Handlooms Empower Weavers: Naga Sahithi



Hyderabad correspondent, April 30 (Indian Chronicle): Member of the Censor Board Naga Sahithi on Thursday inaugurated the "Handloom India Textile Expo-2026" at the Kamma Sangham in Ameerpet, highlighting the need for stronger public support to sustain the traditional handloom sector. Following the inauguration, she toured the exhibition stalls and interacted with weavers and artisans from across the country. She took keen interest in understanding the intricate processes involved in handloom production, appreciating the craftsmanship and dedication behind



each product. Addressing the gathering, Naga Sahithi stated that handloom products continue to retain their charm and cultural value despite changing fashion trends. She noted that the younger generation is increasingly embracing handloom fabrics, reflecting a growing awareness and appreciation for sustainable and traditional clothing. Emphasizing the immense effort involved in weaving, she urged citizens to actively support artisans by purchasing handloom products and promoting indigenous textiles. Expo organizer Jayesh Gupta informed that the exhibition will remain open to the public until May 4. He said that artisans and handloom collectives from 14 states are participating, showcasing an extensive range of products including silk sarees, cotton dress materials, and designer fabrics. Nearly 74,000 varieties of handloom items have been made available, offering visitors a wide selection at competitive prices. Organizers stated that such exhibitions serve as an important platform for weavers by providing direct market access and enhancing their livelihoods. They appealed to the public to visit the expo in large numbers and contribute to the growth and sustainability of the handloom industry.

Focus on School Infrastructure Says Education Secretary



"Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, Asifabad, April 30: State Education Secretary Mogita Rani has directed officials to expedite the completion of infrastructure works in government schools. "During a video conference held from Hyderabad on Thursday with district collectors, additional collectors, and education department officials, the Secretary reviewed progress on school infrastructure, academic panel visits, facilities in pre-primary schools, Aadhaar/APAR updates, UDISE data progress, construction of separate

toilets for girls, and special coaching for students who failed in SSC and Intermediate examinations. "District Collector Haritha, along with Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Yuvraj Marmat, participated in the video conference from the Integrated Collectorate Complex. "Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said steps would be taken to ensure the early completion of infrastructure works being carried out under the supervision of engineering departments. Proposals have been submitted for the establishment of 88 pre-primary schools, and necessary arrangements are being made to provide essential facilities in these institutions. "She further stated that coaching will be provided to students of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas and model schools who failed in Class 10 and Intermediate, to help them prepare for advanced supplementary examinations. "As part of the "Praja Palana - Pragati Pranalika" programme, Education Department week-long celebrations will be conducted in a systematic manner from May 11. During this period, additional classrooms and infrastructure works will be taken up in schools. Coaching programmes for students will be organised, along with workshops involving sarpanches and councillors. The "Jai Shankar Badi Bata" initiative will also be implemented effectively. "Education department officials and other staff attended the programme.

'New Loyola' High School Triumphs in SSC Results

— Correspondent Tadisetty Kranthi Kumar—



"Hanamkonda, April 30 (Indian Chronicle): New Loyola High School, located in Kumarapalli, has demonstrated exceptional academic prowess by achieving a magnificent 100% pass rate in the SSC examinations. The students secured outstanding marks, further enhancing the institution's reputation. "Mahalakshmi emerged as the school topper with 530 marks, followed by Lahari with 527 marks, Suhas with 510 marks, Shoaib with 508 marks, Wazifa with 507 marks, Afsha with 502 marks, and G. Siri with 500 marks. Eight students scored above 450 marks, six students above 400 marks, and five students above 350 marks, thereby showcasing consistent academic excellence across the entire batch. "Speaking on this occasion, Correspondent Tadisetty Kranthi Kumar expressed his delight over the 100% result. He stated that New Loyola High School provides quality education at affordable fees, prov-

ing particularly beneficial for students from poor and middle-class backgrounds. He emphasized that education is not a business and proudly noted that their institution has helped numerous underprivileged students reach great heights in life. Assuring that New Loyola School remains accessible to people from all sections of society, he appealed to parents to ensure that financial constraints do not hinder their children's education. "The management extended its congratulations to the students, parents, and teaching staff for achieving outstanding results. Along with Mahalakshmi, other top scorers who secured over 500 marks were specially felicitated. Subsequently, the students celebrated their success in a joyous atmosphere by sharing sweets and bursting firecrackers. "Correspondent Tadisetty Kranthi Kumar, Director Tadisetty Suprija, Principal Kare Chandrasekhar, and the teaching staff attended the celebrations.



Support price for farmers at purchase centers

"** District Collector Garima Agrawal. "Rajanna Siricilla, Thangallapalli, April -30 (Indian Chronicle) : District Collector Garima Agrawal said that farmers' crops will get support price at government purchase centers. The District Collector inspected the purchase center set up in Nerella village of Tangallapalli mandal under the auspices of the Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society (PACS) on Thursday. First, he inspected the grain piles and facilities and made several suggestions. He inquired about the availability of tarpaulins, sugarcane bags, water facilities, and ORS packets. Speaking on the occasion, District Collector Garima Agrawal advised farmers who bring grain to the purchase centers to use padd...

Self-Enumeration Open till May 10: Collector Haritha

"Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, Asifabad, April 30: District Collector Haritha has informed that citizens can complete self-enumeration of their household details online until May 10 as part of the first phase of Census 2027. "Addressing a press conference held at the Integrated Collectorate Complex on Thursday, the Collector, along with Additional Collector (Revenue) M. David, Kagaznagar Sub-Collector Shraddha Shukla, and Asifabad RDO Lokeshwar Rao, explained the process and related arrangements. "She stated that under the "Our Census - Our Development" initiative of the Central Government, house listing will be conducted from May 11 to June 9, during which enumerators will visit every household and record details online. "As part of the process, citizens can voluntarily register their household information, covering 33 parameters, through self-enumeration from April 26 to May 10. The Collector added that the data entered will later be verified by enumerators during their visits, making the process simple and efficient. "The district has identified 994 enumerators, 174 supervisors, and 1,689 house-listing blocks for the exercise. "Regarding the employment guarantee scheme, she said necessary arrangements would be made at worksites to provide shade, drinking water, and ORS packets for labourers. Workers have been advised to complete their work before 10 a.m. in view of rising temperatures and to take precautions against heat. "The Collector clarified that there is no shortage of petrol and diesel in the district and urged people not to believe in rumours, assuring that supply is adequate to meet demand. "Farmers were advised to remain cautious during the upcoming Kharif season and avoid purchasing spurious cotton seeds and pesticides. Strict action will be taken against those involved in the sale or purchase of unauthorized inputs. Farmers were also asked to obtain online receipts while purchasing seeds and pesticides. Fertilizer shop



owners have been warned against forcing unnecessary products on farmers. "On paddy procurement, the Collector stated that full-scale arrangements have been made for Yasangi paddy procurement, with 34 procurement centres being established. Facilities such as drinking water, shade, lighting, and ORS packets will be ensured at all centres. "The Minimum Support Price (MSP) has been fixed at ₹3,389 per quintal for Grade-A paddy and 2,369 for common variety, with an additional bonus of 500 per quintal for fine varieties.

The entire procurement process, including transportation to rice mills, will be managed through a digital app. "The Collector appealed to all citizens to cooperate for the successful implementation of the self-enumeration and house-listing programme. "District Planning Officer Vasudeva Reddy, Agriculture Officer Venkati, District Public Relations Officer Sampath Kumar, and other officials were present at the meeting.

Former MPP Someswaramma attended the wedding of her son

"Former ministers MLA Tannir Harish Rao, "BRS State General Secretary RS Praveen Kumar, "Former MLA from Kollapur Beeram Harshavardhan "State leaders Rangineni Abhilasha Rao "Former Kollapur MPP Gadela Sudharani "Wanaparthy correspondent Indian Chronicle "The wedding ceremony of former Chinnambavi Mandal MPP Someswaramma's first son Ganesh Reddy was held in a grand manner. At the invitation of Chinnambavi Mandal MPP Someswaramma Madhusudhan Reddy at the function hall of Pyramid Convention in Hyderabad, their first son Ganesh Reddy attended the wedding and blessed the newlyweds. This weddingThe ceremony was attended by a large number of BRS Party public representatives and former public representatives from various villages in Kollapur taluka, Bharat Rashtira Samithi public representatives and former public representatives from all villages in Chinnambavi mandal, leaders and activists, who participated and blessed the newlyweds. In this program, joint mandal in-charge Govindu Sridhar Reddy, Gajje Edanna Yadav, senior leaders of Chinnambavi mandal Indrasena Reddy, Kesireddy Chinna Reddy, former Sarpanch Pasupula Ranjith Kumar, former Sarpanch Chakradhar Goud of Ammayi Palli, Sampangi Maddileti, Vaddeman Ramakrishna, Kurumayya, Upasarpanch Bichanna, Sarpanch Sarath Kumar Reddy, Gudepu Shiva Reddy, Miyapur Shiva, Pedda Dagada Pandu, Ugra Narasimha, Hitler Narasimha, K Vamsi, Thagaram Nagaraju, S



Kurumayya, T Maddileti, T Krishna, T Driver Kurumayya, and others participated in this wedding mahotsav and blessed the newlyweds.

Janaganana 2027: Training for Supervisors and Enumerators Held in Vemulawada



"Rajanna Siricilla April 30 (Indian Chronicle) : "Vemulawada, April 30: Municipal Chairman Pulkam Raju on Wednesday underscored the need for supervisors and enumerators to discharge their duties responsibly for the successful conduct of Janaganana 2027. Addressing participants on the concluding day of a training programme at the municipal office, Raju said that accurate and comprehensive data collection at the household level was crucial, and emphasised that all information gathered must be kept strictly confidential. The training covered key aspects such as house listing blocks, the digital Census Monitoring Management System, and the process of self-enumeration. As

part of the programme, census kits were distributed to supervisors and enumerators. Pulkam Raju advised field staff to report any difficulties encountered during data collection in wards to councillors, ward officers or municipal authorities. In view of the prevailing summer conditions, he also suggested that enumerators carry ORS packets and water bottles while on duty. He noted that effective utilisation of the training would play a vital role in ensuring smooth execution of responsibilities, and reiterated the importance of precise data recording. Supervisors, enumerators, trainers M. Lakshman and Thirupati, Technical Assistant Rakesh, teachers, and others attended the programme.

Telangana singer and immortal Belly Lalita, who fought for the rights of the people, 52nd birth anniversary:

Kutadi Suresh " (Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau..Indian Chronicle.. April 30):- "Belly Lalita's 52nd birth anniversary program On Thursday, Kutadi Suresh, who paid tributes to Telangana singer and immortal Belly Lalita, who fought for the rights of the people, paid tributes at the Bhuvanagiri Martyrs' Stupa on the occasion. On this occasion, local leaders, women leaders and public representatives came together to garland her statue and pay tributes. "Speaking at the program, Kutadi Suresh recalled the services of Belly Lalita and reminded her of the sacrifices she made in the Telangana movement and the services she created awareness among the people through her songs. He said that it is everyone's responsibility to take her aspirations forward. Municipal Vice Chairman Pothamsetty Manjula Venkateswarlu, PCC Delegate Thangallapalli Ravikumar, local people, activists, and women participated in the event in large numbers and paid tribute to her.



He Survived 43% Burns—But Thousands Aren’t as Lucky: India’s Silent Skin Donation Crisis



When 30-year-old burn survivor Viraj Thakoor recalls the workplace accident that left him with 43 per cent burns, he describes a narrow escape. Large portions of his skin were damaged, exposing him to life-threatening infections and complications. What ultimately saved him, he says, was not just timely medical care, but access to donated human skin. “What truly saved my life was skin grafting made possible through skin donation,” Thakoor said, expressing gratitude to the unknown donors whose contribution made his recovery possible. But his survival highlights a harsher reality. For most burn patients in India, access to skin grafting remains uncertain due to a severe shortage of donors. The country records nearly 70 lakh burn injuries every year, with around 1.4 lakh deaths half of which experts say are preventable with adequate skin donation. Yet, supply continues to fall drastically short. In Mumbai alone, over a hundred patients are currently on waiting lists, while nationally more than 1,400 burn victims await skin donations annually underscoring a life-and-death gap between need and availability.

Mumbai’s skin banks are currently receiving only about 25 per cent of the required 150 donations each month, according to the National Burns Centre (NBC), pointing to a

critical shortage that is delaying treatment for burn patients. On average, just 30 skin donations are recorded every month, even as demand has remained unchanged since 2020. At present, around 120 patients in Mumbai are on the waiting list, while the NBC receives about 240 donations annually—all of which are utilised but remain far below requirements.

Data from the centre shows that skin donations have increased over time—from just 15 collections in 2009–10 to 213 in 2024–25, with a cumulative 2,430 collections recorded between 2009 and 2026. Despite this rise, experts say the gap persists largely due to low awareness. Speaking at a closed-door awareness forum, NBC Director and plastic surgeon Dr Sunil Keswani said awareness about skin donation remains limited. “It is likely that only one in ten people know about the option or process of skin donation. This translates into only a fraction of burn survivors receiving skin transplants each year. India records 70 lakh burn injuries annually, of which 1.4 lakh people die. About 50 per cent of these could have been saved if there were enough skin donors,” he said. Doctors note that around 70 per cent of burn injuries occur among those aged 15 to 35, with women and children accounting for nearly 80 per cent of cases. Most injuries are caused by flames, though industrial accidents involving acid or alkali are also reported. “Earlier, nearly 80 per cent of burns were linked to dowry-related incidents, but that has decreased significantly,” Keswani added. Skin donation must take place within six hours of death, and the donor must be registered with a local skin bank. The donated skin is preserved and used as a temporary biological dressing, typically applied for up to three weeks to reduce pain and prevent infections before being removed as the patient’s own skin regenerates. Stored under specialised conditions, skin can be preserved for two to five years, and no matching of blood group, colour, or age is required. Doctors usually harvest skin from the back, thighs, and legs, collecting around 2,500 sq cm from a single donor. At the NBC, doctors say patients with up to 60 per cent burns have shown recovery with skin grafting, while survival chances drop sharply in cases where burns exceed 70 per cent.

Bengaluru exhibit ‘Walk Into Fragmented Forest’ turns ecology data into art

GNS News Agency, April 30

The exhibit on display at Bengaluru’s Science Gallery on the theme, ‘Walk Into a Fragmented Forest’. It visualises data on forest edges in an audiovisual form. (Express photo) The exhibit on display at Bengaluru’s Science Gallery on the theme, ‘Walk Into a Fragmented Forest’. It visualises data on forest edges in an audiovisual form. The forest edge is a completely different environment from its interior – in terms of life, death, and everything that makes up an ecosystem. Recently, at Bengaluru’s Science Gallery, an exhibit on this theme, ‘Walk Into a Fragmented Forest’, was opened to the public, visualising this data in an audiovisual form.

The exhibit is composed of an audiovisual LED display in a darkened room, with a varying pattern created by a generative programme transforming data representing these forest edges into audio and light patterns. The exhibit also includes photographs of these environments, with both sections surrounded by decaying leaf litter symbolising the forest floor. The exhibit was conceptualised by artists Shreni Sanghvi and Abhishek Kapahi of HereNow Studio, alongside ecologist Meghna Krishnadas of the National Centre for Biological Sciences.

Sanghvi told The Indian Express, “We had the opportunity to collaborate with Meghna Krishnadas, which brought us into where she works near Kadamane Estate....the forest that we thought was a large section was actually patches of forest which were deforested back in the day for tea plan-



tations. We realised that the edges of these forests behave very differently from the interior.” She added, “A lot of it is invisible. The plants are constantly putting out chemicals not just to protect themselves but also to grow. We really wanted to take this data and create something that someone can move through, understand, and hear.” Kapahi said, “The system is running live constantly using census data that Meghna’s lab collected over four years from the forest. The second set of data that it is using is mass spectrometry data, which is basically what compounds the leaves are putting out in what quantity. These drive the audio and visuals.” He added, “The forest has a self-regulating mechanism in the interior which does not let any one species dominate. That whole system has been replicated in code to run live.”

Pune braces for 42°C: IMD warns of soaring temperatures despite evening thunderstorms



GNS News Agency, April 30

Pune is set to stay hot over the next few days, with maximum temperatures touching 41-42°C in Lohegaon and Koregaon Park, even as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted a chance of thunderstorms and very light rain. On Saturday morning, temperatures in the city remained on the higher side at 24.3°C, after thunder made way for traces of rainfall in certain parts. Pashan and National Defence Academy (NDA), despite the tree cover, were only marginally cooler, at around 23.3°C. Chinchwad, Hadapsar, and Dapodi were among the warmest areas in the city, with the mercury crossing the 26°C mark.

According to the IMD forecast, the maximum temperature in Shivajinagar, Pashan, and Magarpatta will be around 40°C on Sunday, rise by a degree on April 27, and then slide back to 40°C on April 29. Residents of Lohegaon and Koregaon Park will bear the brunt of the heat in the city, with maximum temperatures reaching 41°C over the weekend, and climbing to 42°C the next two days. Chinchwad, following the pattern, is likely to record a maximum temperature of 39°C on Saturday and Sunday, which will rise thereafter and revert. Lavale and the NDA area will be cooler, but only slightly. The weather office has also forecast that the mainly clear sky on Saturday and Sunday is likely to turn slightly cloudy towards the afternoon or evening, with a “very likely” chance of thunderstorms, lightning, and very light rain. While this has been the condition for the last few days as well, daytime temperatures have not been affected. On Friday, April 24, Pune recorded a maximum temperature 1.7°C above normal, with the main Shivajinagar station registering nearly 40°C. From April 28, the sky over Pune is expected to be clear. Vidarbha heat wave alert to stay

The IMD has forecast that after days under a yellow alert for thunderstorms, lightning, and squalls, Madhya

Bengal ration scam: ED conducts searches at 9 premises linked to 3 rice traders



GNS News Agency, April 30

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday conducted searches at nine locations in West Bengal as part of a money-laundering probe into the alleged large-scale diversion of Public Distribution System (PDS) wheat meant for welfare schemes. The searches were carried out at the residences of three businessmen in Habra in West Bengal’s North 24 Parganas district. ED sources identified the businessmen as rice traders Sagar Saha, Partha Saha, and Samir Chandra Kumar, and said that officials, accompanied by central forces, were conducting the searches at five locations in Habra, three locations in Burdwan, and one in Kolkata.

According to the central agency, the searches are being conducted under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) at premises linked to suppliers and exporters linked to businessman Nirajan Chandra Saha. The development comes days after the first phase of the Assembly elections in the state on April 23. The second phase of

polling will be held on April 29.

The ED had initiated its investigation in this case based on a First Information Report (FIR) dated October 23, 2020, registered at Basirhat police station on the complaint of the deputy commissioner of Customs, Ghojadanga LCS, alleging large-scale diversion of PDS wheat. During the investigation, it was allegedly revealed that the accused had adopted a systematic modus operandi to divert PDS wheat. The wheat was allegedly procured at low prices through unauthorised channels, in collusion with suppliers, licensed distributors, dealers, and middlemen. Large quantities were illegally diverted from the supply chain and aggregated at multiple locations, it was allegedly revealed. To conceal its origin, the accused allegedly removed or reversed the original gunny bags bearing Food Corporation of India (FCI) and state government markings and refilled them, thereby hiding identifying features and passing off the PDS wheat as legitimate stock for further sale in the open market or export, resulting in the undue enrichment of the accused and the generation of proceeds of crime, as per the ED. A few months before the 2021 Assembly elections, 175 vehicles of rice and wheat were allegedly being smuggled into Bangladesh through the Ghojadanga border in Basirhat, when the consignment was seized. Following the incident, ED officials conducted a search at the house of rice trader Niranjana Saha in Habra. The ED arrested TMC minister Jyotipriya Mallick, the former state food and supplies minister and later forest minister, on October 27, 2023, regarding an alleged Rs 9,000–Rs 10,000 crore ration distribution scam. Following his arrest, he was accused of funneling kickbacks through family members’ companies and was granted bail in January 2025 after 14 months in custody.

In first disciplinary act, Haryana govt dismisses two officials

Amid the ongoing CBI investigation into the Rs 590-crore IDFC First Bank fraud, the Nayab Singh Saini-led BJP government has dismissed Naresh Bhuwani, a superintendent in the state panchayat department. An official spokesperson said on Friday that the dismissal was carried out under Article 311(2)(b) of the Constitution after a detailed probe into a criminal conspiracy and the emergence of substantial evidence. The government has also dismissed a Chief Accounts Officer Randhir Singh in the same case. The dismissals mark one of the most significant disciplinary steps taken by the Haryana government in connection with the high-profile fraud case.

The case was initially investigated by the State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau before being handed over to the CBI. During the vigilance inquiry, officials found that the fraud involved an organised, multi-layered financial racket in which government funds were diverted to shell companies through fraudulent banking transactions.

According to the spokesperson, the investigation revealed that “Naresh Bhuwani, in collusion with private individuals and other accused persons, had created a fake firm used for siphoning off government funds. Crores of rupees were transferred from the firm’s accounts to his personal accounts and were used to purchase private properties.” The vigilance report further noted: “Naresh Bhuwani received approximately Rs 6.45 crore on different dates. In addition, he also accepted cash payments on several occasions.” The spokesperson added: “Following his arrest on April 6 this year, Bhuwani admitted during interrogation his role in operating the bank accounts and executing transactions. The investigation established that he was a key



part of the organised conspiracy and acted as a link between co-accused, bank officials, and private individuals.”

The other dismissed official Randhir Singh was arrested by the vigilance on March 14 this year when he was posted controller of finance and accounts at the School Shiksha Pariyojna Parishad. The vigilance also arrested Rajesh Sangwan, controller of finance and accounts at the Haryana State Agriculture Marketing Board in the same case. Explaining the alleged role of the two officials, the vigilance had informed a Panchkula court that “they were found to be involved in commission of the offence as alleged”. “They deliberately violated the instructions issued by the Finance Department (Government of Haryana) from time to time and hatched a criminal conspiracy with co-accused to siphon off government funds; actively participated in commission of offence and accepted substantial amounts as part of illegal gratification”.

Gujarat woman saves septuagenarian neighbours from losing Rs 23 lakh FD to ‘digital arrest’ fraud



GNS News Agency, April 30

cyber fraud Parul Desai, a 50-year-old Maninagar resident, was honored by Ahmedabad Police for rescuing her septuagenarian neighbors from a 48-hour “digital arrest” scam, saving their ₹23 lakh savings just hours before the planned transfer. IN A singular victory for rising public awareness about cyber crime and especially the bane of “digital arrest” fraud, a 50-year-old woman in Maninagar saved her septuagenarian neighbours from losing their life savings to cyber criminals on Thursday. ACP NK Vyas of J Division of Ahmedabad City Police felicitated Parul Desai for her role in preventing the crime.

Rita Pankaj Desai, 70 and her husband Pankaj Desai, 72, live in Maninagar. Their son lives in Vadodara while their daughter lives in Nashik so they call their parents everyday. However, on April 21, their daughter Purvi felt something was off about her mother, like she was worried about something but she didn’t tell her what was wrong.

Concerned, Purvi immediately called their neighbour Parul Desai and requested her to check on her parents. Parul Desai went to meet the septuagenarian couple. But once there, Rita didn’t allow her to stay in the house but immediately asked her to leave and closed the door. However, Parul, sensing that something was amiss about this behaviour, insisted on going into the house where she noticed that a video call was underway on the couple’s phone, said PI J P Jadeja of Maninagar police station. He added, “Parulben apparently immediately realised that this was a case of ‘digital arrest’ fraud. The neighbour explained to the couple that they were being scammed and then brought them to Maninagar police station. There, we learnt that the couple had been kept under ‘digital arrest’ for 48 hours and had been deeply traumatised by the incident.” Police said that if Parul Desai had not realised the scam on time and saved the elderly couple, they were going to withdraw Rs23

lakh from their Fixed Deposit (FD) and hand it over to the scammers. PI JP Jadeja said that since a large number of senior citizens live in the Maninagar area or WhatsApp group had been made in which police officials for outside it where is elderly couples could put in their questions and doubts which could be answered quickly by the police personnel. Senior citizens in Maninagar area can reach out to Inspector Jadeja (9099499799) to request to be added to the group.

China reportedly blocks Meta’s 2 billion USD AI startup deal over security concerns

New Delhi: China has blocked Meta’s proposed \$2 billion acquisition of artificial intelligence startup Manus, citing national security concerns, in a move that signals tighter regulatory scrutiny of cross-border technology deals, a new report has said.

According to a report by Modern Diplomacy, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) ordered the transaction to be unwound under foreign investment security rules introduced in 2021, which underscores Beijing’s increasing control over the transfer of domestic technology and talent to overseas firms.

The decision was driven not by the company’s place of incorporation but by its underlying links to China, including technology development and data security considerations, it said.

Moreover, the development has highlighted China’s stance against the transfer of sensitive AI capabilities to foreign entities, particularly US-based companies and expected to raise caution among global investors evaluating similar deals. Moreover, Manus — an emerging player in the AI space — had attracted funding from US investors and later shifted its base overseas. However, Chinese authorities reportedly took a stricter view of the company’s continued ties to domestic talent and infrastructure, the report said. It further stated that as part of the regulatory action, the deal between Meta and Manus is set to be reversed, a process likely to involve unwinding equity transfers and returning capital and intellectual property, a complex exercise in knowledge-intensive sectors such as AI.

How a Bengaluru road rage murder case survived hostile witnesses to end in a conviction



In the early minutes of June 26, 2018, south Bengaluru had settled into the kind of silence that comes only after midnight—when traffic thins, shops shut, and the city briefly pauses. A car moved along the stretch connecting JP Nagar and Electronics City, carrying three young men on their way home after a late outing. There was nothing unusual about the drive, nothing to suggest that it would soon turn into a murder investigation that would take nearly seven years to resolve. The car slowed near BTM Layout 16th Main and pulled over as the men decided to wait for other friends to catch up. Siddharth Koushal, 26, stepped out briefly. In that moment, a motorcycle passed through the narrow stretch and brushed against him, grazing his elbow. It was the kind of minor contact that rarely lingers—an everyday occurrence on city roads. He turned and asked the riders to be careful. What followed was unforeseeable.

The motorcycle stopped. Words were exchanged—sharp, brief, and escalating faster than anyone could anticipate. One of the men picked up a wooden log lying nearby and struck Koushal on the head. Ravi Prakash, who rushed forward to intervene, was also attacked. Before the situation could fully register, the two men fled into the darkness. There was no chase. No prolonged fight. No history between the men. Just a sudden burst of violence between strangers, one that would prove fatal. Koushal collapsed at the scene. He was rushed first to a nearby hospital and later shifted to Apollo Hospital on Bannerghatta Road. Four days later, on June 30, 2018, he died from severe head injuries. At first glance, it seemed like a case that would follow a familiar pattern: a late-night altercation, swift police action, and a straightforward prosecution. In fact, the case moved with striking speed in its earliest phase. However, what the police secured quickly in terms of arrests would take far longer to prove as fact. The case, which began with urgency and apparent clarity, would go on to be tested, challenged, and repeatedly strained over the next seven years. The case was taken up by the Mico Layout police station, with then inspector R M Ajay leading the investigation. But even as arrests were made swiftly, investigators were aware of a critical gap—the most important moment of the crime had not been captured. There was no footage of the assault. “We had no direct CCTV from the spot. What we had was reconstruction,” Ajay said. “We were not working with a complete picture...only fragments.”

Those fragments came from scattered sources. A worker from a nearby establishment, who had been asleep inside, stepped out after hearing the commotion. By the time he reached the road, the assault was over. He saw the attackers only as they were leaving, but managed to note down what he believed was the motorcycle’s registration number. He later filed the complaint based on that recollection.

For a brief period, that detail appeared to give the investigation direction. But the clarity did not last. “The number plate initially given to us was not accurate,” Ajay recalled. “For some time, we were working with a lead that did not match.” Investigators widened their approach. They analysed CCTV footage from surrounding junctions and roads, tracking vehicle movement across multiple cameras. Timestamps were compared and mismatches eliminated to reconstruct the sequence around the crime.

Gradually, a motorcycle matching the general description began to appear across different camera points. Its repeated presence helped investigators piece together a rough timeline—not of what was directly seen, but of what could be logically connected. In parallel, field verification and interrogation helped narrow down suspects. This combination of technical tracking and on-ground work eventually led police to the two accused. Within 48 hours, the police had identified and arrested Girish V, 28, and Mahesh M K, 26. The alleged weapon was recovered, and a chargesheet was filed. But what seemed like an open-and-shut case took seven years to prove: links had to be built, evidence pieced together, and though arrests came quickly, conviction did not. Bengaluru road rage Girish V, 28, and Mahesh M K, 26, were arrested within 48 hours of the road rage incident resulting in murder in Bengaluru.

Kannada, Hindi, and triggered egos?

In the early stages, the case was widely seen as road rage. An attempt to murder case was filed, but as the investigation progressed, that explanation began to feel insufficient. There had been no aggressive driving, no prolonged confrontation, no pursuit. What, then, had triggered such violence? Koushal was on his way to Electronics City with a group of friends, driving ahead while others followed on a motorcycle. Along the way, he pulled over briefly to wait for them. As he stepped aside, a two-wheeler carrying the accused passed close by, its mirror brushing against him before continuing ahead. Reacting to the sudden contact, Koushal told them to be careful—first in Hindi, and then, as the exchange continued, in broken Kannada, an officer familiar with the investigation explained. According to an officer, the turning point was not the caution itself, but how it was perceived. “The victim was speaking in broken Kannada; the accused, being locals, identified him as a non-local and questioned how someone from outside could tell them how to ride. That is how the argument escalated,” the officer added. In that brief moment, the interaction shifted. What began as a routine warning was taken as a challenge. The issue was no longer about a minor road incident, but about identity and ego. “It was not planned. It happened in seconds,” Ajay said. “But those few seconds were enough.”

The trial phase unfolded with uncertainty. The prosecution’s case relied heavily on eyewitness accounts, but as proceedings progressed in court, several key witnesses began to withdraw or contradict their earlier statements, significantly weakening the narrative built during the investigation. Naveen, who was present in the car with Koushal on the night of the incident, denied witnessing the assault during his deposition. Surendra Naik stated that he had seen Koushal only later at the hospital and had no direct knowledge of the attack. Swamy, who was expected to support the identification of the accused, also turned hostile, claiming he was unaware of the case details. Another witness said he had signed statements at the police station without fully understanding their contents. Richard Rai, another friend linked to the case, gave inconsistent testimony; he initially suggested he had seen the incident unfold, but later admitted he arrived after the assault and was relying

on what others told him. With each reversal, the prosecution’s chain of eyewitness evidence weakened further, creating gaps that could not be bridged by direct visual proof.

Ajay said the turning of witnesses was one of the biggest setbacks in the trial. “Several witnesses turned hostile during the proceedings. In a case like this, where there is no direct footage of the assault, witness consistency becomes crucial,” he said. Amid the collapse of multiple eyewitness accounts, one testimony remained consistent throughout the trial—that of Prakash. As Koushal’s close friend and the complainant witness, he consistently maintained that after the initial exchange near the road, the accused returned and attacked Siddharth with a wooden log, while the second accused allegedly instigated the assault.

Even under cross-examination over several years, his version did not materially change. Investigators said this consistency became critical in anchoring the prosecution’s case at a stage when other oral evidence had fractured. “Ravi’s statement matched the medical and forensic findings, which strengthened its credibility.” Officer Ajai said. Medical reports confirmed that Koushal’s death was caused by severe head injuries inflicted by a blunt object. Forensic examination also detected human blood on the recovered wooden weapon. These findings, when read alongside the reconstructed CCTV trail of the accused’s movement, helped corroborate Prakash’s account.

As the trial stretched across nearly seven years, the case became less about a single straightforward narrative and more about piecing together surviving fragments of evidence. Delays caused by procedural factors and the COVID-19 pandemic further slowed proceedings, widening gaps in memory and testimony and some witnesses were even threatened. Investigators noted that the passage of time itself became a challenge. By the time the trial approached its conclusion, what remained was a combination of forensic evidence, reconstructed movement through CCTV inputs, and the testimony of a single witness that aligned with the physical findings. Together, these elements formed the final chain that the court ultimately relied upon to convict the accused. On October 24, 2025, Koushal’s birthday, the court delivered its verdict. Judge Balachandra N Bhat of the 59th Additional City Civil and Sessions Court found Girish V and Mahesh M K guilty of murder, sentencing them to life imprisonment and imposing a fine of Rs 10,000 each. The court observed that striking a person on the head with a heavy object demonstrated clear knowledge that such an act could cause death and that the force used was disproportionate. “The accused No. 1 (Girish) was not justified in having used disproportionate force to avenge the calling of the deceased to ride carefully,” the judgment stated. For Koushal’s father, Koushalendar Kumar Pandey, the verdict marked the end of a long wait. “My son’s birthday was on October 24—the day the court pronounced both the accused guilty. I know my son won’t come back, but the conviction coming through on his birthday is justice delivered. A lot of witnesses in the case were threatened, but the police ensured their safety,” he said.

Couple held for flouting bail norm, travelling abroad after claiming surrendered passports ‘missing’



Surat fraud case involving Rs 6.28 crore has led to the arrest of a couple who allegedly violated Gujarat High Court bail conditions by travelling abroad using reissued passports. (File Photo) Surat fraud case involving Rs 6.28 crore has led to the arrest of a couple who allegedly violated Gujarat High Court bail conditions by travelling abroad using reissued passports.

A COUPLE booked for fraud in Rajkot was arrested in Surat for travelling abroad on reissued passports after they reported their surrendered passports as part of a bail condition, as “missing”. They have been booked again under sections of fraud, the Passport Act and the Immigration and Foreigners Act. Ghanashyam Pambhar and his wife Ashmita from Lodhika in Rajkot launched a company by the name of Dhananjay Finance in 2021 and allegedly cheated several people of Rs 6.28 crore by assuring high returns in a short period. They collected large sums of money from investors and when they turned up to collect their returns, the couple had wound up the company and moved to Mota Varachha in Surat.

A case of cheating was registered against them at the Rajkot Taluka police station, but the couple got anticipatory bail from Gujarat High Court on the condition that they would not leave the country without permission and surrender their passports to the local police station. Their cover was busted when a lawyer, Ashok Koyani, who was a victim of their fraud in Rajkot, learnt that the Pambhars had travelled to Dubai and other countries following which he informed the Gujarat HC and also gave an application to the Rajkot Taluka police station on the violation of the bail condition.

The Rajkot police, on finding their passports still in their custody, launched an investigation and found that the couple had registered complaints of their passports “missing” at the Dindoli police station in Surat. On the basis of this FIR, the couple obtained new, fresh passports in their names from the Surat passport office. Surat Assistant Commissioner of Police N P Gohil told The Indian Express that the Surat police seized their new passports on which they travelled abroad. Police booked the two under BNS 212 (Furnishing False Information), 217(b) (Providing False information to a public servant with the intent to cause them to use their lawful power to injure or annoy another person), 318(4)(Cheating), 336(3) (forgery), 338 (forgery of valuable security, wills etc.), 340(2)(Fraudulent or dishonest use of forged documents as genuine one), and The Passport Act 1967 section 12(1-b) and the Immigration and foreigners Act 2025 section 22.

3 employees of Bengaluru college suspended after student forced to remove sacred thread files case



GNS News Agency, April 30

Three staff members of Krupanidhi Pre-University College in Bengaluru were suspended on Friday after a case was lodged against them for allegedly not allowing a candidate appear for the Karnataka Common Entrance Test (KCET) unless he removed his janivara (sacred thread), triggering complaints of hurting religious sentiments. According to the complaint, the incident occurred on April 23. When the candidate arrived at Krupanidhi PU College to appear for the KCET Physics paper, the staff on examination duty allegedly instructed him to remove his janivara before allowing him inside the examination hall. The candidate, who removed the thread and wrote the exam, stated that the act hurt his religious sentiments.

He then approached the Madiwala police station on April 24 and lodged a formal complaint. Based on this, the police registered a case and initiated an inquiry. Sudhakar D, Girijamma, and Saritha R, the three staff members deployed for examination duty and involved in entry checking at the centre, were questioned. Following the incident, the college suspended the three employees pending inquiry.

‘Asked to withdraw complaint’: Mohali ex-councillor questions road quality



Sethi said, despite the claims that the road samples had passed quality tests, the condition of the road, which was constructed around 20-22 days ago, is alarming. Sethi said, despite the claims that the road samples had passed quality tests, the condition of the road, which was constructed around 20-22 days ago, is alarming.

Mohali’s former councillor has raised concerns over a recently built road from Madanpur to Diplast Chowk and said it was improperly layered with tar, and also alleged that officials asked him to withdraw a complaint regarding the same. Manjeet Singh Sethi said he had previously raised the issue during a meeting of the Mohali Municipal Corporation. Sethi said, despite the claims that the road samples had passed quality tests, the condition of the road, which was constructed around 20-22 days ago, is alarming. Sethi warned that if immediate repairs are not carried

The suspension orders stated they were placed under immediate suspension. They were directed to remain available for inquiry proceedings and not report to duty until further orders. The suspension has been termed a precautionary measure and not a final determination of guilt.

The Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) said the KCET for Physics and Chemistry was conducted on April 23 across 745 centres in the state, including Krupanidhi PU College in Bengaluru. The KEA stated that clear instructions regarding examination protocols and dress code had been issued, and candidates were not required to remove religious symbols such as the janivara. It also said such instructions were reiterated during training sessions for invigilators. The authority added that if the reported incident is confirmed, it would amount to a serious procedural lapse and may warrant strict action. Senior officials have conducted an inquiry and sought a detailed report. Legal action will be taken as per the rules. Leader of Opposition R Ashoka on Friday alleged that students were being asked to remove the janivara during CET exams with the “support of the Congress government,” and demanded that such incidents be stopped immediately. After meeting Bengaluru police commissioner, he called the incident a “serious violation of religious sentiment” and questioned how it occurred despite court directions. He said forcing the removal of the janivara could cause mental distress to students. “If there is no backing from the government, such incidents cannot happen,” he alleged, adding that he had raised the issue with police and district authorities and criticised the delay in action against the staff involved. Ashoka also alleged that around 20 students were affected, including one from Padmanabhanagar, and said at least six complaints had been filed. He accused the state government of hurting Hindu sentiments and demanded a fair investigation, reiterating his allegations on X.

out, even a single spell of rain could worsen the road’s condition. He claimed that during a meeting held on March 31, the issue was discussed before Chief Engineer Naresh Batta, who assured that the road would be repaired. According to Sethi, he had also filed a complaint but officials allegedly asked him to withdraw it, assuring that the work will be done. In case there is failure in prompt action, he warned of taking the matter to ministerial level. The former councillor also claimed that the concerned officials, including Executive Engineer Kuldeep Singh, failed to inspect the site and to visit Mohali even once. He alleged that road works worth Rs 27 crore were carried out in Mohali using government grant funds. However, the quality of work was extremely poor, he said. He also claimed that the same contractor repeatedly gets the projects despite unsatisfactory performance, and no strict action was taken against them. Demanding a transparent probe into the matter, Sethi said the taxpayers’ money should not go to waste. He has sought time from the concerned minister, he said.

Once granted a meeting, he will request a vigilance inquiry, as the issue has already been brought to the minister’s attention. Repeated attempts were made to contact Chief Engineer Naresh Batta regarding the matter, but he did not respond. Following this, Municipal Corporation Commissioner Sandeep Singh was contacted. He said a thorough inquiry would be conducted in accordance with rules and regulations, and if anyone is found guilty, appropriate action will be taken against them. Regarding the vigilance inquiry and meeting with the minister, he said that it is everyone’s right, and the councillor is also free to do so.

Bulldozer, bridge, water tank, but all ‘talk’: Congress turns to AI for poll campaign

To bolster its campaigning for the upcoming general elections to local bodies in the state, the Congress has created 20 AI-generated videos that animate issues, such as demolitions, infrastructural mishaps and incidents of health hazards, that the party wants to highlight. One such video made through artificial intelligence (AI), for instance, imagines a bulldozer talking: “I am the BJP’s bulldozer. During the Congress rule, I was used for development works, but the BJP, today is using me for demolishing people’s houses. The Congress will not demolish without rehabilitating people. Havey toh samjho layi ao panjo (better understand now, bring in the Congress)”.

Conceived as a counter to the BJP’s ‘Dada no bulldozer’ campaign, which refers to the demolitions of illegal properties of alleged criminals by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel-led government and show them as achievements, the Congress hopes to send across a message to communities that have claimed to be the victims. A meme on the collapse of a newly built overhead water tank in Surat district in March says: “I am the BJP’s corrupted water tank; I will collapse once you fill water in me. If you want a ‘solid’ water tank and drinking water, remove the BJP and bring the Congress.” “Our focus has been to “recall-and-reconnect” with locals through our social media campaigns by highlighting micro issues,” Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee president Amit Chavda told. The issues that the party has drawn from are the Morbi bridge collapse, which killed 135 people in ? the Rajkot TRP game zone fire, which killed 27 people in ? the Gambhira bridge collapse last year, when 22 people died; the Harni boat tragedy of Vadodara, which caused the deaths of 12 schoolchildren and two teachers; and the crackdowns on fake paneer and food products. However, some party leaders admit that they are not sure if these methods will turn into votes in their favour, as the BJP has been in power in the local self-government bodies in Gujarat for at least three decades, with exceptions like the 2015 elections when the tide turned in the opposition’s favour, largely because of the Patidar quota agitation.

Detailing about the campaign, the chairman of the Congress’s social media department, Bhuman Bhatt, noted, “We are talking about issues such as food adulteration, Morbi bridge collapse...through short AI videos to reach out to voters. This is very different from our previous campaigns. Normally, manifestos are released, and political leaders speak with a focus on the manifestos. The AI videos have been created to address issues and catch people’s attention.” Bhatt adds, “We are deploying three approaches [to our campaign]: the negatives, to attack the government on its failures; the positives, our commitments; and the comparison, of what was during the Congress rule and what is now.” The party leaders also admit that its focus this elec-



tion season is mostly on capturing people’s attention through social media over physical campaigning. Revealing the strategy used in creating this campaign, political strategist Kunal Shah, who is the co-founder of Bestsellers Strategies and has been associated with the party since 2016, told this reporter, “We know there is a fatigue, but how to express and show that voter sentiment was a challenge that we addressed through AI. These 10-15 second videos are legally sound creatives developed using a software application. No deepfake or someone’s voice has been used.” While the party has created 20 AI-generated videos, it has released only 15 so far. “In addition to specific incidents such as Morbi, Gambhira, Harni, hyper-local issues—from roads to drinking water—which can be used across the state have been used as subjects for the videos,” Kunal added.

AIMIM expands Gujarat footprint, eyes strong show in local body polls

Hyderabad: The All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen party will be testing waters in various towns and cities in Gujarat during the local body elections to be held on Sunday. The party for the first time had fielded candidates from around 400 wards in different local bodies in Gujarat as against a few areas in 2021.

AIMIM party president Asaduddin Owaisi had campaigned for the party until the last day of the campaign on Friday and addressed two public meetings including one in Ahmedabad. The party leadership expects it will win a high number of seats in Gujarat due to several factors including under-representation of the minorities in the local bodies in the State

US Republicans propose three-year halt on H-1B visas, sweeping overhaul of programme



GNS News Agency, April 30

Washington: A group of Republican lawmakers has introduced legislation to pause the issuance of H-1B visas for three years and overhaul the programme, arguing it has disadvantaged American workers. The proposed “End H-1B Visa Abuse Act of 2026”, introduced by Eli Crane, seeks to reset the visa system before resuming it with stricter rules. “The federal government should work for hardworking citizens, not the profit margins of massive corporations. We owe it to the American people to prevent the broken H-1B system from boxing them out of jobs they are qualified to perform,” Crane said.

He added the bill “would provide greater access to employment, strengthen protocols in the visa process, and prioritise the livelihoods of Americans.” The legislation has drawn support from several Republican lawmakers, including Brandon Gill, Paul Gosar and Andy Ogles. “I am proud to cosponsor Rep. Eli Crane’s efforts to reform and tighten our H-1B visa system, ensuring that our immigration system serves American workers first before foreigners,” Gill said. The bill proposes sweeping changes. It would cut the annual H-1B cap from 65,000 to 25,000 and eliminate exemptions. It would replace the lottery system with a wage-based selection process and set a minimum salary of \$200,000 per year. Employers would be required to certify

they cannot find a qualified American worker and confirm they have not carried out layoffs. The bill would also bar H-1B workers from holding multiple jobs and prohibit third-party staffing agencies from employing them. Further provisions include banning H-1B workers from bringing dependents, ending the Optional Practical Training (OPT) programme, and preventing visa holders from transitioning to permanent residency. “The H-1B program has been hijacked to replace American workers with cheaper foreign labor—plain and simple. This bill slams the brakes on a system that’s rigged against our own people and puts American jobs first again,” Gosar said. Ogles struck a sharper tone, saying: “American workers are being replaced, and cheap foreign labor is the cause. We will not bow down to the corporations, and we will not let Americans become strangers in their own country. End the H-1B scam.”

The proposal also seeks to ensure nonimmigrant visas remain temporary by requiring holders to leave the United States before changing to another visa status and prohibiting federal agencies from sponsoring such workers. Rosemary Jenks, cofounder of the Immigration Accountability Project, described it as “the strongest H-1B bill that has ever been introduced in Congress”. “H-1B visas were sold to the American people as a short-term visa to fill temporary labor gaps while Americans are trained to take those jobs. This bill makes that a reality,” she said, citing provisions such as reducing caps, raising wage thresholds and ending third-party employment. The H-1B visa programme allows US companies to hire foreign workers in specialised occupations, particularly in technology and engineering sectors. Indian nationals have historically been the largest beneficiaries of these visas, forming a significant share of the high-skilled workforce in the United States. The programme has long been a point of political debate in Washington, with critics arguing it undercuts domestic wages, while industry groups maintain it fills critical skill shortages and supports innovation in the US economy.

Netanyahu vows transformation of Middle East with US support



GNS News Agency, April 30

Jerusalem: Trump is applying very strong pressure on Iran and Lebanon to achieve peace, said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a video message released by the official X handle of the Israeli Prime Minister on Friday. “I promised you that we would change the face of the Middle East, and that is exactly what we are doing. First and foremost, in Iran: I have had an excellent conversation with President Trump. He is applying very strong pressure on Iran, both economically and militarily. We are operating in full cooperation,” said Netanyahu. “The same applies to Lebanon: We have begun a process to achieve a historic peace between Israel and Lebanon, and it is clear to us that Hezbollah is trying to sabotage this,” he stated. The mes-

sage also mentioned that they are maintaining full freedom of action against any threat, including emerging ones.

Netanyahu said, “We attacked yesterday, and we attacked today. We are determined to restore security to the residents of the North.” The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) stated that it had struck Hezbollah military structures in the area of Deir Aames, from which rockets were launched towards Shtula on Friday. Hezbollah uses ambulances and medical teams as cover for transporting weapons and operatives, undermining the special protections granted to medical facilities and equipment under international law, stated the IDF in a post on X. During searches in southern Lebanon, an ambulance used by Hezbollah to conceal weapons was located. Among the weapons found were explosive devices, mortar shells, magazines, and a grenade, according to the video posted by the IDF. The IDF also reported two incidents where Hezbollah launched rockets and an explosive UAV towards IDF soldiers operating south of the Forward Defence Line in southern Lebanon. Defence Minister Israel Katz stated, “Awaiting a green light from the United States, first and foremost to complete the elimination of the Khamenei dynasty, the initiator of the extermination plan against Israel, and the successors of the successors of the leadership of the Iranian terror regime, and in addition to return Iran to the age of darkness and stone by blowing up central energy and electricity facilities and crushing national economic infrastructure,” reported The Times of Israel.

India needs a supply chain strategy amid Hormuz, Red Sea crises

The turbulence the world has experienced this decade indicates larger structural shifts. The current Israel-US-Iran war and instability across West Asia since the October 7 attacks, along with the Russia-Ukraine war, symbolise shifting contours of the international order. The US-dominated unipolar era is over.

Abroad, the Trump administration’s aggressive and hyper-militaristic policies cannot hide the fact that the world is no longer Pax Americana. At home, there’s little appetite for large-scale wars like Iraq. Without a large-scale troop deployment in West Asia, Iran cannot be restrained. Iran is not Venezuela. Air campaigns and targeted assassinations of the Iranian leadership have failed to deliver the desired strategic end. These changes highlight India’s strategic vulnerability. Two events in West Asia — the disruption of sea lanes through Bab-el-Mandeb in 2023 and the Strait of Hormuz in 2026 — clearly reveal our supply chain vulnerabilities. The Houthis and Iran successfully disrupted these straits for weeks, with the Americans struggling to keep these lanes open. Rising middle powers like India, located at the centre of the Indian Ocean, require a long-term supply chain strategy — not just for West Asia but for the entire Indian Ocean.

According to data from the government of India, maritime trade accounts for almost 95% of India’s trade by volume and 70% by value. India depends heavily on oil and natural gas that passes through the Straits of Hormuz and Bab-el-Mandeb. The country imported 4.5 million barrels per day of crude oil and condensate in 2023, with 45% of its crude imports still coming from West Asia even after Russia’s rise as a supplier. India was among the main Asian destinations for Hormuz crude flows in 2024. Roughly 90% of Indian LPG passed through Hormuz before the war. Qatar alone accounted for nearly 50% of LNG imports. Apart from energy security, India’s overall trade is heavily dependent on these strategic chokepoints. India-Europe trade is deeply reliant on the Red Sea, with almost 80% of Indian exports to Europe passing through this route. India must combine reshoring, decoupling, and strategic partnerships to secure supply chains, which are vital for sustaining trade and supporting its ambitions as a major Indian Ocean power.

The Iran-US war and the Red Sea crisis instigated by the Houthis have highlighted the vulnerability of India’s oceanic trade. In response to these crises, India sought to diversify its sources. However, such ad hoc responses are insufficient and often too late. The question now is: how can India prepare for such future shocks, and what should a long-term supply chain strategy entail? Strategic autonomy lies at the core of India’s strategic orientation and major power ambitions in the 21st century. This entails avoiding



military alliances with any great power, pursuing multi-alignment with like-minded states on specific issues, and maintaining overall strategic independence. In this context, the vulnerability of India’s global maritime supply chains is a key impediment. This requires prudent, long-term thinking about global supply chains. India’s major power ambitions require sustained economic growth and domestic political stability. These vulnerabilities create challenges on both fronts. A nation’s grand strategy, according to scholars like Barry Posen, is “theory about how to produce security for itself.” This involves the prudent use of economic, political, military, and diplomatic means to achieve the desired end. For almost two decades, strategic thinkers have called for a grand strategy for India?. Any long-term strategic document must take maritime security into account. In this context, the security of the supply chain is fundamental for an aspiring major power that depends on the Indian Ocean for the majority of its trade. As part of this supply chain strategy, Indian policymakers need to prudently combine reshoring, decoupling, and interest-based coupling. First and foremost, India should decouple its strategic industries from vulnerable regions and states with which its security interests do not align. Economic logic alone should not shape the supply chain for such industries. Strategic industries include core defence manufacturing, semiconductors, defence-related electronics systems, and pharmaceuticals. Reshoring such industries should be the next step. In the case of other strategic sectors, such as energy and critical minerals, where reshoring is not possible, supply chains should be diversified as much as possible, avoiding concentration in any one region. Finally, for manufacturing processes that are not part of core security interests but are important for economic growth, supply chains should be concentrated in economies that do not directly threaten Indian security interests. Another key feature of the post-Trump era is the decline of liberal ideas, such as the belief that economic interdependence leads to less competition.

Rajasthan Merchant Navy Officer aboard vessel seized by Iran, says family



Jaipur: An India-bound container vessel was seized by Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in the Strait of Hormuz, with a merchant navy officer from Rajasthan’s Sri Ganganagar district among the crew, his family said on Friday. The vessel, identified as ‘Epaminondes’, was intercepted while heading towards India, and vice captain Sanjay Mahar (38), a resident of Sadhbhavana Nagar in Sri Ganganagar, is among the 21 crew members on board. Speaking to his family, Sanjay

Mahar said the crew is safe but described tense moments during the incident.

“There was firing from the Iranian side while they were crossing the Strait of Hormuz. All crew members immediately moved to a safe location inside the ship,” Sanjay’s father Om Prakash Mahar said. The ship, sailing under the Liberian flag, had been waiting near the strait for the past three to four days for clearance to proceed to Mundra port in Gujarat. “Firing began as soon as the vessel moved,” Mahar said. He said the family came to know about the incident through media reports but later received assurance from his son. “He told us he is safe, but we are very worried. We appeal to the government to ensure the safe return of all Indian citizens on board,” he said. His brother, Subhash Mahar, said the family has approached local MLA Jaideep Bihani and urged authorities to escalate the matter. “We have informed the MLA and requested that the matter be taken up with the chief minister and the prime minister. We hope the government will intervene and bring everyone back safely,” he said. The vessel reportedly has crew members from India, the Philippines, Ukraine and Sri Lanka. Mahar, who has been working in the merchant navy for around 15 years, had left home about 20 days ago for duty in Saudi Arabia, his family said.

US warns ships without permission risk ‘capture’ and ‘interception’



The US military has warned that ships entering or exiting a maritime blockade in the Gulf of Oman “without permission” will be “subject to interception, diversion, and capture”. The US Central Command, tasked for operations in West Asia, has enforced a blockade in the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea east of the Strait of Hormuz from 7:30 pm IST on Monday. The note to mariners issued on Monday night said: “Any vessel entering or departing the blockaded area? without authorisation is subject to interception, diversion, and capture.” These access restrictions apply without distinction to vessels of any flag engaging with Iranian ports, oil terminals, or coastal facilities, it said.

However, the US clarified that the blockade “will not impede neutral transit passage through the Strait of Hormuz to or from non-Iranian destinations in the Persian Gulf.” Iran has also threatened that their fast missile boats, named the ‘Red Bees of the Persian Gulf’, are warning up.

“Now they’re (US) about to find out how a swarm can pin you down real quick,” an Iranian statement said. Iran had, on Monday, termed the US move as “piracy”, while Chinese Defence Minister Admiral Dong Jun cited his country’s energy sources from Tehran. “We expect others not to interfere in our affairs. The Strait of Hormuz is open to us,” he said. Maritime watchkeeper, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) Centre issued an advisory detailing the threats posed by the US blockade. It said, “Restrictions are being enforced affecting Iranian ports and coastal areas, including locations along the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, and the Arabian Sea east of the Strait of Hormuz.”

The restrictions encompass the entire Iranian coastline, including ports and energy infrastructure. Neutral vessels currently within Iranian ports have been granted a limited grace period to depart, as will be specified. Vessels operating in the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Oman, and adjacent waters have been advised to maintain heightened situational awareness, ensure maximum bridge readiness, and communicate through the ‘channel-16’, the maritime channel for ship-to-ship communications.

Meanwhile, the US has significantly increased its military presence in the region. Three US carrier strike groups are converging: the USS Abraham Lincoln in the Arabian Sea, the USS Gerald R Ford in the eastern Mediterranean, and the USS George HW Bush, which has entered the Mediterranean Sea from the Strait of Gibraltar. Additionally, two US amphibious ready groups, the USS Boxer and the USS Tripoli, are in the area. Multiple US Air Force planes, like KC-135 and KC-46 refuelling aircraft, and C-17 Globemaster transport planes, are at staging areas in Jordan, Qatar and Israel.

Outsourcing chaos sparks protest by unpaid workers in Faisalabad

Faisalabad [Pakistan]. Hundreds of sanitation workers and rickshaw drivers took to the streets in Faisalabad, protesting the non-payment of wages for nearly two months under an outsourcing system linked to the Suthra Punjab Authority, aAccording to The Express Tribune, the demonstrators marched from District Council Chowk to the Deputy Commissioner’s Office, led by Baba Latif Ansari, who heads the Pakistan Labour National Movement and also serves as President of the Huqoq Khalq Party Punjab.

Addressing the gathering, Ansari accused authorities and contractors of violating labour agreements and neglecting workers’ rights. He alleged that under contracts with the Faisalabad Waste Management Company (FWMC), the outsourced Care Services Company was required to ensure workers’ registration with Social Security and the Employees’ Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI). However, according to Ansari, only partial registrations were completed, and Social Security contributions had not been deposited for the past six months, an estimated Rs 65 million shortfall. He further claimed that EOBI payments were entirely neglected, depriving nearly 1,200 sanitation workers of essential benefits, including pensions and medical care. “Workers are staging a protest to demand their rightful salaries and pending dues,” he said.

The protest caused major disruption outside the Deputy Commissioner’s Office, with long queues of rickshaws blocking both sides of the road. In a dramatic show of frustration, protesters also dumped truckloads of rubbish at the



main gate, symbolising what they described as systemic mismanagement and official apathy, as cited by The Express Tribune. Following talks with Suthra Punjab Authority Managing Director Abid Hussain Bhatti and Assistant Commissioner City Adil Umer, officials issued a show-cause notice to the outsourcing company. Authorities also directed the immediate release of pending payments for rickshaw drivers and expedited processing of sanitation workers’ salaries. Despite the assurances, Bhatti maintained that FWMC bore no direct responsibility, stating that the workers were employed through third-party contractors,

BRICS envoys flag ‘deep concern’ over West Asia conflict, call for aid, political solutions

Deputy foreign ministers and special envoys from BRICS countries on Friday voiced “deep concern” over the escalating situation in West Asia, calling for sustained humanitarian assistance, respect for international mechanisms, and renewed political efforts to stabilise the region. Meeting in New Delhi, the grouping held wide-ranging consultations on developments across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), with a sharp focus on the crisis in Gaza and the broader Palestine issue. According to the Chair’s Statement, participants underscored the urgent need for humanitarian aid and highlighted the role of UNRWA in addressing the crisis. They also reiterated a “zero-tolerance approach to terrorism” while stressing the importance of safeguarding UN peacekeeping operations, terming attacks on UNIFIL as unacceptable. The envoys welcomed the ceasefire in Lebanon and discussed pathways for post-conflict reconstruction in Syria, alongside the need for a political settlement in Yemen. Stability and development in Iraq, revival of the political process in Libya, and the worsening humanitarian crisis in Sudan also figured prominently in the deliberations. The meeting reflected a coordinated attempt by BRICS nations to articulate a collective position on multiple, overlapping crises in the region, even as global diplomatic efforts remain fragmented.

Officials said the consultations aimed to align perspectives among major emerging economies on conflict resolu-

tion, humanitarian response, and long-term regional stability. The envoys agreed to continue their engagement and will reconvene under China’s chairship in 2027, signalling an ongoing BRICS role in shaping discourse on West Asian geopolitics. Since the West Asia conflict began on February 28, attention has increasingly turned to the role of BRICS, with Tehran multiple times urging New Delhi—the bloc’s current chair—to mobilise the forum as a diplomatic counterweight to Western influence. Tehran has called on India to activate BRICS to condemn what it calls “military aggression” by the US and Israel, and to press for a coordinated response from emerging economies. The issue has figured in multiple conversations between Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, as well as between Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Iran’s push reflected a broader strategy to leverage BRICS—which recently expanded to include Tehran—as a geopolitical platform representing the Global South. Iranian officials believe a collective BRICS response could challenge Western narratives and strengthen diplomatic pressure on them. The West Asia crisis has also highlighted the evolving yet uncertain role of BRICS in global security affairs. Originally conceived as an economic grouping, the bloc has increasingly projected itself as a platform advocating a more multipolar international order.

How dust from India’s growing construction sector is impacting our health



India’s construction industry is a burgeoning sector projected to reach INR 36.58 trillion by 2028. It currently contributes 8% to the GDP, and employs over 40 million people, according to the India Construction Industry Report 2024. However, rapid construction growth seems to have significantly increased dust pollution. According to a CEEW (Council on Energy, Environment, and Water) study, construction site dust lowers air quality locally and regionally. In cities like Delhi, Amritsar, and Chandigarh, this re-suspended dust accounts for about 18% to 20% of PM2.5, leading to frequent criticism of the sector for poor air quality. According to CEEW, excavation, earthwork, roadwork, and vehicle movement are significant sources of dust pollution at work sites. Unpaved site roads can raise PM2.5 levels during vehicle movement by about 2.5 times compared to when no work is done.

Dust is an invisible hazard, and so the risk of its ill health effects is grossly underperceived. Research shows that construction dust causes serious health issues not only among workers, but also to residents living near construction sites. Respirable silica (airborne crystalline silica) is small enough to reach the lungs’ gas exchange areas, called alveoli. High concentrations, especially from quartz, can cause lung diseases such as silicosis, pneumoconiosis, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), chronic bronchitis, emphysema, lung cancer, as well as renal disorders. At construction sites, the risk is even greater. Poor ventilation leads to dust concentration, increasing the workers’ risk of respiratory diseases as they inhale polluted air throughout the day. Research shows silica levels in the atmosphere are especially elevated during finishing, brick-laying, carpentry, concrete drilling, demolition, mortar mixing, block wall laying, core drilling, cutting, dower drilling, and grinding—much higher than in typical ambient particulate matter. Construction workers face elevated risks particularly when cutting concrete. The problem is especially severe in developing countries like India, where many labourers work in unsafe environments, without safety gear or without information provided about the risks they may incur.

What is needed to assess dust and the health risks it poses, is a tool called as COSHH (control of substances hazards to health), a specific form of risk assessment. There is no better time than now, with the Central Pollution Control Board and the Union government having introduced new Construction & Demolition (C&D) Waste Rules and standardised dust mitigation standard operating procedures

The India-EU trade deal is also a strategic turning point



The unprecedented frequency of meetings, which included the India-EU leaders’ summit in 2021, allowed for a frank exchange of perspectives that built trust and enabled the pursuit of the highest-hanging fruit despite repeated failures since 2007

Last week, India and the European Union (EU) achieved what, until just a year or two ago, many observers considered impossible: meeting halfway to conclude a long-elusive trade agreement. Negotiated, stalled, revived and reimagined over a quarter of a century, the deal represents far more than a technical breakthrough on tariffs. It marks a strategic inflexion point in what could become one of the most consequential partnerships to stabilise an international order that is marked by rapid, uncertain and conflictual transition.

A meeting point with a risk-averse BrusselsThe commercial breakthrough did not emerge from a vacuum. It is the result of two drivers — one political and the other geopolitical. First, in an example of how summit diplomacy does pay off, both sides have been engaging at the highest level for the last 10 years, beginning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Brussels in 2016.

The unprecedented frequency of meetings, which included the India-EU leaders’ summit in 2021, allowed for a frank exchange of perspectives that built trust and enabled the pursuit of the highest-hanging fruit despite repeated failures since 2007. This mutual political trust mattered at home because it empowered the Indian and European leadership to invest significant personal and political capital to overcome a variety of internal obstacles and risks.

The Modi government worked with, rather than against or around, various domestic stakeholders and their protectionist impulses to explain why the EU offers a qualitatively different economic partner than next-door China. Previous trade deals with the United Kingdom or Australia helped create momentum, assess roadblocks and build industry support. And on the EU side, the tandem between the Commission and the Council laid clear political guidelines that pushed the otherwise risk-averse Brussels bureaucracy to move beyond rigid free trade agreement templates. With this political direction, negotiators finally found common ground. Second, and more importantly, this deal is driven by the urgency of responding to an international system that is shaking, if not collapsing. The agreement is the most tangible product of the extraordinary geopolitical churn unleashed by U.S. President Donald Trump’s commercial offensives, but also the continued coercion and economic

for on-site materials. These measures are designed to establish consistent protocols for containment, covering, and disposal at both local and municipal levels across all States. The flaw here, is that while the expectations of the government for self-regulation by industries may work in developed countries with a responsible mindset, India is still not yet ready for the culture of self-regulation: there is a need for stringent enforcement.

The provision of adequate respiratory protective equipment (RPE), continuous health monitoring every six months as required by law, and practical training of workers in ways and means of protecting themselves against dust hazards has become essential. Mandatory health check-ups by the employers for their employees above the age of 40, are also part of the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSHC) Code that became fully enforceable in November 2025. are a step in the right direction What is also critically needed is a focus on primary controls to begin to reduce the exposure of dust hazards in the workplace. This approach will not only protect workers’ health, but will also help keep healthcare costs low in the long-term, and sustain productivity in a sector fundamental to India’s economic progress.

There are several effective ways to control dust emissions on construction sites. The most important of these are dust control through covering stockpiles of materials, using water sprays or misting systems in cutting and demolition works, and providing wheel washes. Ensuring that roads are either paved or stabilised with temporary materials further reduces dust emissions. Using localised extraction vacuums in cutting and grinding work, as well as simple windbreak fencing or barrier systems, can significantly help control dust emissions in the surrounding area. Prioritising these measures, from design and procurement to daily operations, avoids dust becoming a hazard to the workers and the surrounding community. Training and behavioural interventions play a supportive role. Employers and principal contractors should also integrate dust control measures into tender requirements and performance audits, ensuring subcontractors are evaluated on environmental performance as well as on other project metrics. Similarly, when contractors are evaluated for technical competence, appropriate weightage must be given to their environmental performance to ensure they take it seriously during construction. Cities should embed construction dust control within broader air-quality management strategies. Targeted management of construction dust can lead to measurable reductions in residents’ daily exposure to pollution.

Long-term progress depends on incentivizing best practices and building industry capacity to manage dust risks. Improving access to workplace health services, such as regular medical check-ups and compensation, will particularly benefit migrant labourers, who face the greatest risks. Tackling construction dust is an imperative task, not only for the environment but also for public health. Effective construction dust management solutions can help protect workers’ health, while also helping Indian cities meet cleaner air targets. The key to success is in the collaborative efforts of developers, the government, and society to ensure India’s progress is clean, healthy and sustainable.

security threats posed by China and Russia.

The larger picture Driven by political and geopolitical factors, the resulting economic agreement is best understood not as the culmination of a mere trade negotiation but also as the foundation of a broader EU-India strategic realignment. But trade alone will not sustain this convergence. If the India-EU partnership remains confined to tariffs and market access, it risks becoming a tactical adjustment rather than a durable strategic shift.

To avoid this fate, New Delhi and Brussels must now move quickly to flesh out the other dimensions of their strategic partnership enunciated during last week’s summit, most notably in defence and security, energy, technology and mobility. In defence and security, the logic for deeper cooperation is increasingly compelling. India and the EU have a stake in ensuring maritime stability and freedom of navigation. There are growing opportunities for joint military exercises, information sharing, and the development of security capacity among Indo-Pacific states. The agreement reflects an interest in moving beyond ad hoc engagement toward institutionalised cooperation, coupling defence industrial interests with financing, trade and technology priorities.

Energy cooperation is equally critical. Europe’s push for energy diversification and decarbonisation intersects with India’s need for affordable, scalable, and sustainable energy solutions. Joint investment in green hydrogen, renewable technologies, and resilient energy infrastructure could anchor long-term interdependence while advancing shared climate goals. Technology represents perhaps the most consequential frontier as global technology governance fragments along geopolitical lines. India and the EU have an opportunity to shape standards and norms that reflect values without stifling innovation. Cooperation on semiconductors, digital public infrastructure, artificial intelligence and data governance could reduce mutual vulnerabilities and enhance strategic autonomy on both sides.

Finally, the mobility of students, researchers and skilled workers will be essential to translating political alignment into societal and economic depth. Addressing long-standing frictions over visas and professional recognition would not only strengthen people-to-people ties but also support innovation ecosystems across both partners. Taken together, these sectors offer a path toward genuine India-European interdependence. Without such multi-sectoral investment, the current alignment risks remaining contingent on external pressures rather than internalised interests.

Foundation to build on India and the EU now have a rare opportunity to give practical meaning to their old mantra of multipolarity that dates back to the 2000s. In coordination with other middle powers, New Delhi and Brussels can help deliver growth and security that is rooted in openness, resilience and shared democratic values. This will have to be a partnership that delivers tangible public goods across the Indo-Pacific — to keep China in check — and across the Global South, which seeks reliable development partners. In an era defined less by alliance blocs than by issue-based coalitions, the India-EU convergence — if sustained and deepened — may finally emerge as one of the pillars of a more stable international system. The economic deal is a start. The strategic test now lies in what follows. India–EU Free Trade Agreement explained: Biggest trade deal in India’s history Constantino Xavier is Senior Fellow, Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP). The views expressed are personal

Bengal’s SIR hearing woes continue as voters line up at centres



Three months into the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process in West Bengal, there are still long queues outside hearing centres as lakhs of electors wait to respond to what the Election Commission (EC) terms “logical discrepancies” in the electoral roll. With the draft electoral roll scheduled to be published on February 14, the hearings are required to conclude by February 7, as per the stipulated deadlines. Officials say this has added to the pressure at hearing centres, where hundreds of voters are being called each day. Both voters and election officials are racing against time, amid widespread confusion over surname variations, clerical errors and automated system-generated notices. Common surnames Common Bengali surnames like Bandhopadhyay, Chattopadhyay and Gangopadhyay were anglicised over time to Banerjee, Chatterjee, and Ganguly. However, lakhs have received hearing notices for these. The issue was recently flagged by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in the Supreme Court. “My grandfather and father used the Chattopadhyay surname because places like Calcutta University and government schools in Bengal for the longest time did not recognise ‘Chatterjee’ as a surname. But we have always used it. Yet both my sister and I have gotten hearing notices,” said a voter from south Kolkata who did not want to be named. Lakhs like her are facing the same issue.

Minor errors in names like Kumar shortened to Kr or Ray as Roy, Mallick as Mallik have caused immense ha-

What is the Zeigarnik effect?



The Zeigarnik effect is a phenomenon which hypothesizes that one has a higher tendency to remember things, actions, or events that were left unfinished than those that were completed. It is something that one probably experiences on a daily basis. The effect can be experienced when you have an unreturned phone call, unfinished chore, or even a partially eaten breakfast that only filled a portion of your tummy. If it is unfinished or was interrupted, there is a high chance that you will remember it. The Zeigarnik effect was first studied and introduced by Lithuanian-Soviet psychologist Bluma Zeigarnik, after whom it was named. She first looked into it following an observation made by her academic advisor and psychologist Kurt Lewin, wherein he had noticed that a waiter could easily memorise orders that were still unpaid for. But after the customers had paid for their meals, the waiter failed to recall any details of the same order. Following this incident, Bluma Zeigarnik began conducting experiments that would further explain this phenomenon. Her research was published in the journal Psychological Research: An International Journal of Perception, Attention, Memory, and Action.

Within the mind Now here’s a question. Why do unfin-

Rethinking battery strategy in India: the case for sodium-ion technology

Batteries have become deeply embedded in modern life. From laptops, mobile phones, wearable devices such as smartwatches and wireless earphones, to power tools, electric vehicles (EVs), and large-scale battery energy storage systems, batteries now underpin both personal conveniences and critical infrastructure. A newer trend is also emerging, with batteries being integrated directly into household appliances, ranging from induction cooktops to refrigerators, alongside the rise of energy storage systems. These developments collectively point to a future saturated with batteries, making energy storage a foundational pillar of economic growth, energy security, and the clean energy transition.

Dominant, not a perfect solution Among the various battery chemistries that have existed or are still in use, such as nickel-cadmium, lead-acid, and others, lithium-ion batteries have emerged as the dominant global technology. This dominance is largely driven by their high energy density, low self-discharge rates, and long cycle life. Sustained global focus on lithium-ion technology over the past two decades has resulted in steady improvements in performance, manufacturing efficiency, and large-scale capacity build-out. By 2024, global lithium-ion manufacturing capacity had reached nearly 2.5 times annual demand, further accelerating cost reductions through economies of scale. As a result, costs have fallen dramatically, from nearly \$1,100 per kWh in the early 2010s to about \$108 per kWh in 2025.

However, the success of lithium-ion batteries masks several structural challenges. These batteries are highly resource-intensive and depend on critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, and graphite. The availability of these materials is unevenly distributed across a handful of countries, while refining and processing capacities are even more geographically concentrated. This creates vulnerabilities related to supply security, price volatility, and geopolitical risk. As global demand for batteries accelerates, these constraints are likely to intensify, reinforcing the need for alternative technologies that can support a more resilient and equitable energy transition.

Ambitions and structural constraints India provides a compelling case for rethinking battery technology choices. The Government of India has made sustained efforts to build domestic battery manufacturing capacity, most notably

rassment, as many are still running pillar to post to find documents to prove that these people are one and the same. “We do not wish to harass anyone. We also know that Kr and Kumar are the same and Chattopadhyay and Chatterjee are the same. But the hearing notices have been system-generated. Once someone gets a notice, they have to appear for the hearing,” a senior officer who has been involved in the hearing process told The Hindu. In some cases, age gaps within families have also raised red flags. A 30-year-old Sriparna Ghosh got a hearing notice because her age difference from her father was 54 years. Standing outside the Sree Jain Swetamber Terapanthi Vidyalaya in north Kolkata, M. Bhatti said all their siblings were called for hearings. “We have all the necessary documents. We will show whatever they need. Our father had six children,” Mr. Bhatti added. This issue has been raised by both the Congress and the Trinamool Congress. West Bengal Congress president Subhankar Sarkar flagged the ‘arbitrary’ threshold setting by the EC and pointed out that the number of electors with six or more electors linked to them as children stood at 2,06,056, whereas, if the threshold is raised to 10, the number was only 8,682. Syed Shahab Alam, a 58-year-old man who has spent all his life in the civil defence and served the nation, came out of the hearing centre at Sree Jain Swetamber Terapanthi Vidyalaya and waits for his daughter to turn up. He submitted 14 documents to prove that the wrong father’s name on his daughter’s birth certificate is a clerical error and not a fake voter issue. They wrote my name as Mohammad Shahab Alam in my daughter’s birth certificate. When a small child is born people are more worried about well being of the child and mother. Who cared to check the names,” Mr. Alam said. However, since he served as a Booth Level Officer till 2024, it made him familiar with the electoral process and hence kept the records intact. After the completion of the first phase of the SIR, about 58 lakh names were deleted in West Bengal, bringing the number of electors in the State to 7.08 crore from 7.66 crore. About 1.36 crore such notices of logical discrepancies have been issued. The Supreme Court directed that the list of logical discrepancies be made public, but the lists still remain inaccessible and are only available to the Electoral Roll Officers.

ished tasks tend to linger in our memory with far more stubbornness than those that are finished? Zeigarnik had stated that the brain can distinguish between tasks that were completed and those that were unfinished. Whenever we start a task, there is a type of tension that builds up in the mind. Information is sent to the sensory memory (information taken in through the five traditional senses), where it is momentarily stored before being transferred to short-term memory. The information here is soon forgotten. However, when a task is left incomplete, it becomes an open loop and is constantly replayed in the short-term memory region of the brain, so the information is not lost. This brings out a cognitive tension (mental discomfort when an individual is faced with conflicting situations).

Utilisation and prevention Yes, those two opposing words definitely fit this phenomenon. Similar to how scissors in the wrong hands can lead to injuries, but can create marvellous paper crafts in the right ones, it is important to understand some cases in which the Zeigarnik effect can be utilised for benefits. Like during study sessions, where strategic interruptions, or short breaks, are taken in between to relax the mind with the last-read information stored safely within. Then there are times when the effect needs to be prevented since it can cause the mind to be cluttered with a large list of unfinished tasks. In this case, prevention can be achieved by ‘not procrastinating’. If you have a short task (making your bed, returning a phone call, etc), do not stop until it is complete. The controversy While experiments have been performed in the making of the study of this phenomenon, it has been met with its fair share of controversies. Since there are many external factors to take into account: the mindset of the person performing the task, the nature of the interruption, etc. In a systematic review conducted in 2025 on both the Zeigarnik and the Ovsiankina effect (the urge to finish incomplete tasks), the validity of the latter was chosen over the former.

Prolonged West Asia conflict to raise energy costs, hit trade and markets: RBI’s State of the Economy article



If the West Asia conflict persists and supply chains are not restored soon, it could pose risks to the domestic economy through higher energy costs, rising input prices, disrupted trade flows, and spillovers to financial markets, a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) bulletin article said on Thursday. The intensity and the duration of the conflict and the resultant damage to the energy and other infrastructure add risk to the inflation and growth outlook, the article titled ‘State of the economy’ authored by RBI researchers said. Though inflation remains within the tolerance band, upside risks have risen due to supply-side disruptions, including weather-related uncertainties. “Possible second round effects with the supply shock transforming itself into demand shock also warrant careful and continuous assessment,” the article published in the RBI monthly bulletin said. The temporary two-week ceasefire between the US and Iran has, however, provided some breather to the global economy. The strong macroeconomic fundamentals should support the Indian economy to maintain its resilience to withstand such shocks, it said.

The views expressed in the Bulletin article are of the authors and do not represent the views of the RBI, the central bank said. The RBI earlier this month projected that India’s GDP growth will decline to 6.9% in FY27 from 7.6% in FY26. On the other hand, headline retail inflation is set to

average 4.6% in the current fiscal. “The conflict in West Asia has intensified pressures on the global supply chains in March with some easing observed in the first half of April. Domestic economic activity displayed resilience in many segments with slowdown in a few others. CPI inflation, driven by fuel and food, marginally edged up in March,” it said. The money market and bond yields moderated after the temporary ceasefire in West Asia. A slowdown in imports and expansion in exports narrowed trade deficit to a nine-month low. Foreign portfolio investment flows remained volatile, although net foreign direct investment turned positive in February, the article said.

It said the resilience of the global economy, already inflicted with trade tensions, is being tested by the conflict in West Asia. The near halt in tanker movements through the Strait of Hormuz has intensified pressures in the global supply chains. “The durability and intensity of the conflict pose substantial uncertainty to the global growth prospects amid broader supply chain disruptions and elevated energy prices,” it said. Global economic activity moderated to an 11-month low as momentum weakened across manufacturing and services sectors. Global commodity prices, barring precious metals, surged sharply with the upturn becoming broad-based. Crude oil prices touched multi-year high of US\$ 118.4 per barrel on March 31 and remain high, it said. “Early signs of deceleration are, however, evident in select indicators like port cargo, air passenger traffic and the outlook of purchasing managers. The manufacturing PMI, albeit in expansionary zone, declined to its lowest level in nearly four years,” it said. Cost pressures and uncertainty took a toll on new orders and output, which grew at the slowest rates since mid-2022. The services PMI showed resilience, although, its pace of expansion slowed to a 14-month low, reflecting softening in new business. The index of eight core industries also declined, marking its 19-month low, driven by a decline in production of fertilisers, crude oil, coal, and electricity, the article said.

Overregulation masks weak enforcement, says former SBI chief Arundhati Bhattacharya

Explaining the divergence, she said SEBI operates through a quasi-judicial process based on existing regulations, whereas SAT follows a strictly judicial approach. Explaining the divergence, she said SEBI operates through a quasi-judicial process based on existing regulations, whereas SAT follows a strictly judicial approach. India’s regulatory framework is increasingly weighed down by excessive detail, while falling short on effective enforcement, former SBI Chairperson Arundhati Bhattacharya said on Thursday.

Speaking on the tendency to bypass rules at a function here, Bhattacharya said that individuals and businesses often look for shortcuts, prompting regulators to respond with tighter controls. “Regulators try to ensure there are no shortcuts, but in doing so, regulations become highly micro in nature,” she said, adding that such an approach ends up entangling both policymakers and businesses in complex compliance requirements.

“While we definitely seem to be over regulated, where we lack is in the execution of those regulations,” she said while releasing the report on ‘Regulatory governance’ published by the Centre for Regulatory Governance of the OP Jindal Global University. Bhattacharya, now Chairperson and CEO of Salesforce, observed that while India appears over-regulated, the real gap lies in execution. She pointed to the number of orders issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and how many are later overturned by the Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT). Explaining the divergence, she said SEBI operates through a quasi-judicial process based on existing regulations, whereas SAT follows a strictly judicial approach. “What SEBI does is a quasi-judicial process. They go as per regulations, and they get these orders,” she said.

“What SAT does is a pure judicial process, and in the



judicial process, if it is not specifically mentioned in the regulation that this is not allowed, they will throw it out, meaning that they go by the letter of the law, not by the spirit of the law.” “What should be done, as is done in many other countries, is that, whatever is the regulation, you try to make sure that the regulated entity has gone not only by the letter of the regulation, but also the spirit of the regulation,” Bhattacharya said. She also flagged delays in resolving high-profile cases, citing the long-pending NSE co-location case. “If it had been in the US, they would have done it all in a matter of four or five months. But we have gone around, and it’s almost 10 years, and they are still talking about settling it with a file initially,” she said. Bhattacharya concluded that India’s legislative framework is largely sound, but enforcement remains the weak link. “The fact of the matter is, what we lack is a proper ability to execute, not a proper ability to enact. The enactment of the regulation of the laws is all perfect. Where we fall down is in the execution... unless and until we improve there, it’s going to be very difficult, because regulation invariably will then have to address a lot of micro issues,” she said.

Reliance Retail crosses 20,000 stores, reports 12 pc revenue growth in FY26

New Delhi: Reliance Retail Venture Ltd (RRVL), the retail arm of billionaire Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries, reported 11.83 per cent growth in gross revenue to Rs 3.70 lakh crore in FY26, and crossed the mark of 20,000 stores in its 20th year of operations. Reliance Retail’s Profit After Tax (PAT) for FY 2025-26 was also up 11.73 per cent to Rs 13,842 crore. This was “led by broad-based growth across consumption baskets and rapid scale-up of hyper-local commerce,” said an earnings statement from parent entity Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL). For the March quarter, it reported a marginal increase of 0.5 per cent in profit after tax to Rs 3,563 crore in the March quarter, while its gross revenue for the period was up 10.84 per cent to Rs 98,232 crore. “Reliance Retail delivered steady growth through the year. I am confident that Reliance Retail’s deep omnichannel presence and its strong understanding of the Indian consumer will continue to underpin sustained growth,” RIL Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani said.

Reliance Retail tax expenses in the January-March period of FY26 were at Rs 1,252 crore, up 15.5 per cent, as against Rs 1,084 crore of the corresponding quarter. In the March quarter, Reliance Retail’s revenue from operations was at Rs 87,344 crore, up 10.84 per cent from Rs 78,622 crore in the year-ago period. For the quarter, Reliance Retail’s pre-tax profit (reported EBITDA) was at Rs 6,921 crore, which was up 3.1 per cent year-on-year.

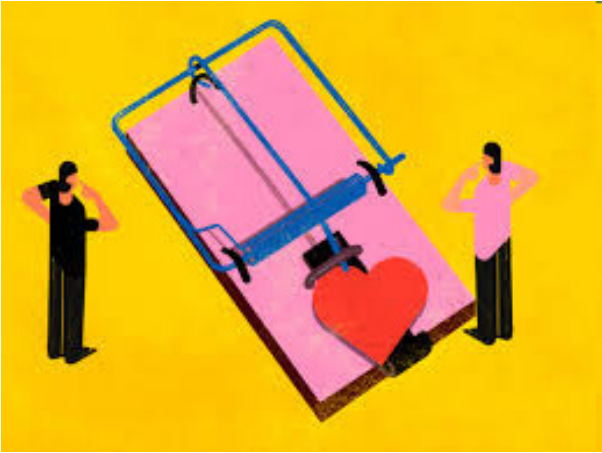
The country’s largest retailer continued to focus on expansion of new store openings, adding 333 new stores in the March quarter and 1,564 stores in FY26, taking the total store count to 20,160 with a total area of 78.3 million sq. ft. “The consumer products vertical, now operating within an independent and focused organisational structure, is gaining meaningful traction with an expanding portfolio of FMCG brands. India’s consumption story has many years of growth ahead of it, and our businesses are built to be at the centre of this opportunity,” Ambani said. Reliance Retail’s registered customer base stood at 387 million, a growth of 10.9 per cent Y-o-Y, in FY26, becoming one of the most preferred retailers in the country. Moreover, in FY26, “total transactions recorded were at 1.93 billion, up 38.8 per cent Y-o-Y,” which was led by rapid acceleration in hyper-local commerce, it added.



During the quarter, Reliance Retail continued to amplify its play into the fast-growing hyperlocal delivery/quick-commerce, where it recorded a 29 per cent growth sequentially in daily orders and threefold on a year-on-year basis, establishing India’s widest hyper-local delivery network. Its hyperlocal commerce arm JioMart “continues to expand its reach across 5,100+ pin codes and 1,200+ cities, serviced by a network of over 3,100+ stores”. In the grocery segment, its “big box stores” are driven by festive demand and the continued expansion crossed the milestone of 1,000 Smart Bazaar stores.

The segment witnessed a “broad-based growth that was sustained across categories, led primarily by strong traction in Staples, HPC, and Processed Food”, it said. Similarly, its Fashion and Lifestyle business delivered steady performance and broad-based growth across categories, “led by strong customer demand and outperformance in men’s fashion”. Its fashion and lifestyle e-commerce platform Ajo delivered a 23 per cent year-on-year increase in average bill value. In the Consumer Electronics segment, its stores maintained revenue momentum. Over the outlook, its Executive Director, Isha M Ambani, said: “As we enter FY27, our focus is on converting this unmatched reach into deeper customer value—through AI-embedded merchandising, sharper pricing architecture, and disciplined execution. The balance sheet is strong, and our leadership across categories is widening”.

Why we keep looking for red flags in relationships even when nothing is wrong—and what it costs us



They had been talking for two weeks before they met. Not intense conversations; not in that all-consuming way people sometimes do, but they have been talking enough to establish a rhythm. A few messages through the day, some light teasing, some healthy flirting, the occasional longer exchange at night when neither had anything urgent to do. By the time they sat across each other at a café, there was already a sense of familiarity, the kind that makes the first ten minutes easier. The conversation moved effortlessly. They spoke about work, about where they grew up, about the predictable things that come up when two people are trying to understand who the other is. At one point, he mentioned he tends to get very focused on his work and sometimes forgets to respond to messages. He said it casually, only as a harmless disclaimer. No biggie, right?

But later that night, when she was back home, that line returned with more weight than it had in the moment. Not because it was alarming in itself, but because it now had context. She replayed the past few days of conversation. There was indeed a gap one evening. A delayed reply the next morning. Nothing significant, nothing that had stood out earlier. But now it began to align into a pattern. The next day, when his replies came a little later than usual, the label felt validated. Not confirmed, but reinforced enough to be taken seriously. In reality, nothing had actually changed. The interaction was still pleasant, still open, still moving forward. But something else entered it—a layer of interpretation that was now difficult to remove. This is how red flag spotting—the most interesting game in the market lately—begins. It starts not with clear warnings, but with small observations that gather meaning over time. The process is subtle enough to feel like awareness rather than judgment, and that distinction is important because it allows the habit of searching for red flags to grow without resistance. The mind prefers patterns over uncertainty.

There is a reason why red flag spotting feels reasonable. The human mind is built to recognise patterns. It prefers coherence over randomness, explanations over ambiguity. When something happens more than once, even in a limited sample, it begins to draw connections. These connections are not always accurate, but they create a sense of understanding, and that sense is comforting. In relationships, where outcomes are uncertain and stakes are personal, this tendency becomes more pronounced. People are not just trying to understand what is happening; they are trying to anticipate what might happen next. The present is rarely experienced in its entirety. It is treated as evidence. Language has changed the way we see people.

Like I tried to explain in my last column, what has drastically shifted is not the instinct, but the vocabulary. Words like “inconsistent,” “avoidant,” and “emotionally unavailable” have become part of everyday language. They offer a way to name behaviour quickly, to place it within a framework that feels familiar. Once a behaviour is named, it is no longer neutral. It belongs to a category, and categories carry expectations.

This has made people more articulate about their ex-

periences. However, these experiences are often analysed, defined and judged in haste, and that has reduced the gap between noticing something and deciding what it means. There is less space for ambiguity, less patience for not knowing. Looking for red flags creates the impression that outcomes can be managed. That if you are observant enough, careful enough, you can avoid being hurt later. It feels like a rational approach to something inherently uncertain. But relationships do not follow predictable rules. You can identify every early sign correctly and still end up in something that does not last. Not because you missed anything, but because human connections evolve in ways that cannot be fully mapped in advance. The idea of control is comforting, but incomplete.

In the café, the conversation did not suffer. There were no awkward pauses, no visible tension. But the internal experience had already begun to change. What had been a straightforward interaction was now layered with evaluation. When part of the mind is occupied with interpretation, there is less room for direct experience. You are present, but also slightly removed, watching, assessing, and measuring. Once a potential red flag is identified, attention begins to organize itself around it. Instances that support the idea stand out more clearly. Instances that don’t fit are often dismissed as exceptions. Over time, the initial observation gains strength, not necessarily because it is accurate, but because it has been consistently reinforced. This is not a failure of logic; it is how perception works. The mind is guided by what it expects to find. Instead of asking, “What is this?” people begin asking, “What could this become?” The question carries an underlying concern: if something goes wrong later, could it have been predicted earlier?

This creates a pressure to identify problems before they fully exist. It encourages a form of vigilance that feels responsible, even necessary. But vigilance changes the quality of attention. It makes people look at each other not just as they are, but as potential sources of difficulty. The cost of always preparing for what comes next if every moment is treated as evidence, the present becomes thinner. There is less space for something to unfold without being immediately defined. Interactions are no longer just experienced; they are assessed for future implications. The irony is that in trying to avoid future discomfort, people begin to limit present ease. This does not mean that red flags are irrelevant or that awareness is unnecessary. There are behaviours that signal genuine concern, patterns that should not be ignored.

In that initial story, the line about delayed replies could mean many things. It could indicate a pattern that becomes frustrating over time. It could also be a simple reflection of someone’s working style, something that has little bearing on the overall connection. At that stage, both interpretations are possible. What determines which one takes hold is not just the behaviour itself, but the framework through which it is viewed. Having said all of that, it is not that I don’t understand why we look for red flags. It often comes from having been hurt before, from a mind that has learned to stay alert to avoid a repeat of what went wrong last time you gave it a shot. It feels responsible to be careful, to read the signs early, to not walk into something “blindly” again. But being hurt is not separate from being in a relationship; it is part of it, just as much as the good parts are. There is no reward without risk, and no version of connection that comes without the possibility of discomfort. If you hold on too tightly to control, if you stay hyper-aware of every possible sign, if you never allow yourself to step in without guarantees, you end up experiencing only a fraction of what a connection can offer. It will include uncomfortable conversations, mistakes, moments of doubt, and yes, even pain. That is not failure; that is the process. And if you remove all of that in the name of safety, it is worth asking what you are really left with in the end.

’10/10 recommend...’: Alaya F, all for romanticising life, shares her morning routine

Alaya F, Bollywood’s resident wellness enthusiast, has shared a reel that takes us along her morning wellness routine. “10/10 recommend romanticising your life every chance you get,” she mentioned in the caption of her Instagram post, while the video quickly panned through snapshots of matcha latte, a journal and coffee tumbler, yoga mat, her detox tea and chocolate cake. According to Tanisha Bawa, certified nutrition coach and founder of TANJ365 Health & Wellness studio, matcha is a Japanese green tea made from 3-week-old green tea leaves grown in the shade, hand-picked, dried, and ground into a fine powder. Drinking matcha is a tradition in Japan, one that Alaya has inculcated in her daily routine. She likes to start the day with a matcha berry latte, which is packed with antioxidants and has the highest anti-inflammatory potential.

“It contains high amounts of healthy gut polyphenols that feed your good gut bacteria, reduce inflammation, and remove toxins from your body. It is also a source of theanine, an anti-jitter, anxiety-quelling component that is absent in coffee,” said Bawa, adding how drinking matcha leads to fewer spike and crash cycles, more productivity, and satiety. According to the expert, journaling helps process thoughts and emotions, while exposure to sunlight regulates circadian rhythms, improving sleep quality, and, in moderation, caffeine can improve alertness and cognitive function.

Sumit Sharma, a certified yoga instructor and founder of StrongByYoga.com, said that practising yoga at any time of day brings numerous benefits, including improved mobility, flexibility, stamina, sleep quality, heart health, and immunity. However, yoga in the morning has some added advantages because of the calmness, clarity of thought, and fresh air it brings, added Sharma. Morning is also considered the best time to practice yoga by many practitioners because the human mind is far more active and receptive then. Morning yoga can instantly make you feel calmer and more at peace with yourself,” he explained. Alaya likes to start her day with a detox concoction, that includes some warm water in a glass, a tablespoon of freshly squeezed lemon juice, 2 teaspoons of apple cider vinegar, 2 teaspoons of soaked chia seeds, and a teaspoon of honey.

Her three pointers? “Have it on an empty stomach, first thing in the morning, make sure the water is warm, not boiling, and being consistent for the best results,” she pointed out. Chocolate mousse cake She likes to snack on gluten free and sugar free chocolate mousse cake which is under 200 calories and has 17 grams of protein, without any protein powder. Just paneer, milk, egg whites, cocoa powder and oat flour blended together and baked on high heat for 22 minutes. However, Dt Amreen Sheikh, chief dietitian, KIMS Hospitals, Thane pointed out that even a



healthier cake is dessert. Enjoy a small piece. Scan the ingredient list for added sugars or syrups. And balance it out, don’t let a “guilt-free” dessert displace your fruits, veggies, proteins, and whole grains. Consider it as a special treat, not as a meal substitute,” said Sheikh.

Google plans 40 billion dollar investment in Anthropic as AI race intensifies

New Delhi: US tech giant Google plans to invest up to \$40 billion in the artificial intelligence (AI) firm Anthropic, as global technology giants accelerate their push into advanced AI models and infrastructure. The proposed investment includes an initial \$10 billion infusion at Anthropic’s latest valuation of \$380 billion, with the remaining \$30 billion tied to performance-based milestones, the companies confirmed, according to multiple reports.

The move has built on a multi-year partnership between the two firms, under which Google provides cloud infrastructure and access to Anthropic’s AI models, including its Claude suite.

Moreover, Anthropic also leverages Google’s custom tensor processing units (TPUs) as an alternative to widely used graphics processing units. The latest agreement between the tech firms came amid surging demand for generative AI tools across enterprises, developers and consumers, which has placed increasing pressure on computing infrastructure.

Notably, Anthropic recently secured 5 gigawatts of compute capacity through collaborations involving Google and Broadcom, with additional expansion planned. However, despite their collaboration, the companies remain competitors in the AI space, with Google’s Gemini models vying against Anthropic’s offerings in the rapidly evolving market.

Batsmen playing like golfers and dead tracks are hurting IPL with a thousand cuts, and killing Tests



GNS News Agency, April 30

In case India fails to reach the World Test Championship final, and the usual formality of an inquest is undertaken by the BCCI, this week's IPL game at Lucknow can be a good start. If there is the customary righteous rage about the death of Test cricket among experts, and the mandatory shedding of crocodile tears by fans, the dismissals of a few Test batsmen playing the LSG vs RR match would provide perspective. There shouldn't be any shock or surprise; this was coming. During the said game, Mohammed Shami's two wickets served as a reminder of India's potential problem in Tests in the coming months. Bowling to India Test regular Dhruv Jurel, the 35-year-old made the ball swing in and move a shade after pitching around the off-stump. Jurel would dutifully edge the ball to the wicket-keeper. The commentators would react as if Shami had bowled the ball of the century. If not for the IPL brief to overact at every minor match moment, it was unlikely that the seen-it-all international players-turned-pundits would have gone overboard.

Actually, that much-praised Shami delivery is a bread-and-butter ball for Test match pacers. On most days, batsmen negotiate them without much fuss. They either stride forward to defend or leave. But this is IPL, here, you do none of the above. Just like Jurel. In T20s, you don't move your feet and allowing the ball to go to the wicket-keeper would result in instant aura-loss.

Shami also got Yashasvi Jaiswal with a ball that the opener would be facing in the months ahead — namely during the away series in New Zealand and when the Aussies come here for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Sixth on the WTC table, owing to the two recent draws at home against New Zealand and South Africa, India can't afford any slip-ups now if they have ambitions to reach the final. Against Jaiswal, Shami began with a couple of short ones. Both would be dispatched outside the square boundary. This was followed by an effort ball from Shami that also had a bit of finger work. This one had extra spice, it also cut in from his leg-middle line and climbed to the batsman's forehead. Jaiswal tried to hook it but gloved it behind. You might be in the form of your life, you are young with razor-sharp reflexes, but respecting a great ball is a format-agnostic cricketing principle. But then in IPL, you don't duck. Again, it would result in instant aura-loss.

In the LSG innings, Rishabh Pant would walk in to bat in the second over. He would be facing the burly, broad-shouldered RR pacer from South Africa, Nandre Burger.

Harbhajan's 'Slapgate' advert reignites old feud — Sreesanth: 'I'll forgive, never forget'



GNS News Agency, April 30

Eighteen years after Harbhajan Singh slapped S Sreesanth after an IPL game between Mumbai Indians and Kings XI Punjab in Mohali, the fast bowler says he will forgive the spinner but he will never forget him. The revisiting of the incident came after Harbhajan did an advertisement strongly inspired by the incident and asked Sreesanth to put out a story on this. "I never had a problem until last month, until he was part of an ad and made money, for which he was paid around Rs 80 lakh to Rs 1 crore. He asked me to put that as a story on my Instagram," he recollects in a chat with Mathrubhumi.com. Sreesanth said he instantly told him: "I will forgive but will never forget it. If someone commits a mistake towards us, we will forgive but we should never forget." He added: "If we forget, that person will commit the same mistake again."

He was referring to a recent advertisement for a retail seller, where Harbhajan is yelling at a group of people trying to fix electronic equipment by beating them: "Sahi se thappad lagao, sab theek ho jata hain." Roughly translated as, "Slap them properly. You can fix everything." He illustrated how to give the perfect slap: "Keep your hand at a 45 degree angle." He slaps the air a few times, and says: "Kinetic energy, potential energy. Haath sein nahin dil se maro." Beat with heart, not just hands. Then he beats a refrigerator, beside a mechanic he calls "Shreeman" and sports a headband like Sreesanth in his playing days.

The advertisement incensed Sreesanth. He instantly blocked him on Instagram. He came on Ashwin's show and spoke about my daughter — that he felt sad when she refused to shake hands with him at an event. Seeing this, some people would believe that he is such a nice guy. Perhaps he really is, but for me personally, since the days in the Indian team, I have felt that it is all his acting," Sreesanth said. On the handshake incident itself, Sreesanth had tried to explain the context to his daughter. "I explained that he was like our elder brother. I don't think Bhajji pa did that deliberately. It happened on the spur of the moment. It was just a learning experience for both of us," he said. "He was a brother once, but not after the advertisement. I don't have any relationship with him. I don't have any complaints against him, and I don't need him. May god bless his family," he added.

In public, Harbhajan and Sreesanth had long buried the hatchet after the incident that cost the off-spinner an 11-match suspension and 730,000 USD fine. They had shared public space together and acted in a commercial for a food retailer when Sreesanth and Harbhajan are locked in an elevator and the former says: "Let's settle the matter once and for all." In his chat with R Ashwin on "Kutti Stories with Ash", he said: "One thing I'd want to change in my life is

Pant's second ball was a mean short ball well outside the off-stump. The India wicket-keeper, heavily trolled for irresponsible stroke-play in India's recent Test loss against South Africa, would attempt to cart the ball to the other side of the pitch. The ball had more bounce and pace than he expected. The faint edge would carry to the keeper. Batsmen generally take a couple of balls to assess situations. But this was IPL, caution means instant aura-loss. Can the Lucknow pitch be blamed for these batting failures? LSG coach, the Aussie Justin Langer, did try to float that narrative. He suggested that it was like playing like the "old WACA (Perth) pitch". Langer was born in Perth, played 10 Tests and even hit a couple of hundreds there. His WACA comparison might work as a coach's excuse to a demanding franchise but not for those who are aware about Perth's history. At WACA, Jeff Thomson once bowled a bouncer that crossed the boundary after just one bounce. Lucknow was certainly not Perth, and the short-comings of batsmen can't be hidden by exaggerating the conditions.

India's Test set-up doesn't need to believe Langer's words. In the past, too, the IPL impact has dented India's Test hopes but this is crisis-time. The age-old Indian home advantage, the erstwhile final frontier, is now a thing of the past. Indian Test bowlers are capable of taking 20 wickets but does the team have the batsmen to play for time, leave balls and use their feet? The recent IPL trend, explained in detail by all-time great Kapil Dev to this newspaper, is about batsmen taking a leaf from golf's guide. Like on the greens, on the cricket pitch too, it is the high back-lift and the swing that is helping them hit the ball long.

Coaches these days are advocating the golf approach. They stress that batsmen need to have a strong base as it gives better control of the swing. Talk of footwork is missing from T20 coaching. Range hitting is the new trend. At the net sessions, the batsmen stand with their bat parallel to the body and behind the head. It's easy to confuse them for baseball hitters. The coaches lob soft full tosses at them and the batsmen swing the bats to send the ball into the stands. Footwork isn't needed. In IPL, it is so yesterday, so part of a longer format, that footwork is on its last legs. Apparently, this was the reason six-smasher Sanju Samson was preferred over the more correct Shubman Gill in the World T20 team. "The problem with Gill is his footwork. He brings his front-foot out and caresses the ball through covers. On the other hand, Sanju stands in the crease and swings ... he can hit more sixes," an expert said. Everybody loves sixes, starting with the broadcaster. There have been whispers that TV dictates pitch preparation. But is the six-fest really working for TV? This ongoing season, rookie teenagers have been smashing the ball into the stands at will and the world's best bowler, Jasprit Bumrah, had long dry wicketless spells at the start of the tournament. There is talk that IPL TRPs are falling. There are some tell-tale signs. Advertisements don't eat into game time. There are days when even a bit of strategic timeout, the slot where commercials are fitted, have commentators talking about cricket. In case an honest IPL audit is done, the blame might rest on pitches that suck out the pace and offer no deviation. The unending shower of sixes on dead tracks could well be the thousand cuts that are hurting IPL. And also killing Tests.

that incident with Sreesanth. I want to remove that incident from my career," Harbhajan said. "I apologised 200 times. What I felt so bad was even years after that incident, I have been apologising every opportunity or stage I get. It was a mistake," he added. Sreesanth would call him a "class guy." "He is a very supportive guy. Even during broadcasting, he is someone who really helps me out. When I went to WTC (for broadcasting), he was the one who literally told me, how to do and when to do. I am genuinely grateful to him, for he is always supportive, calls me and messages me, and talks to my kids," he told Life of Beer Biceps.

He even said: "Maybe that incident happened for a good reason!"

The incident recaptured the public imagination after former IPL commissioner Lalit Modi recently released a 56-second clip of the incident, to which Harbhajan alleged "personal conspiracy". "The way the video has been leaked, it's wrong," he told IANS. "Whatever happened was wrong, and I have already apologised for it. What happened between me and Sreesanth at that time was not right. As a sportsman, I don't think I should have done that. People learn from their mistakes, and if I had enough understanding back then, I wouldn't have done it," he added. But a commercial eighteen years later has reawakened the old ghosts.

Delhi Capitals face tough test against unbeaten Punjab Kings

New Delhi: Delhi Capitals will have to play out of their skins to get their stuttering campaign back on track when they face high-flying Punjab Kings in the Indian Premier League here on Saturday. It will be a daunting task for the struggling Delhi outfit, smarting from a comprehensive 47-run defeat to Sunrisers Hyderabad, to stand up to a Punjab side that has been firing on all cylinders this season. With three wins and as many losses from six matches, the Capitals find themselves in the bottom half of the table in sixth place. In contrast, Punjab Kings remain the only unbeaten team in the competition so far, sitting at the top of the standings with 11 points from six outings. The only point they dropped was due to their game being washed out against Kolkata Knight Riders at Eden Gardens. Delhi's biggest concern has been their inconsistent batting. While the likes of KL Rahul, David Miller, Tristan Stubbs and Sameer Rizvi have all contributed in patches, the unit has failed to click collectively. Opener Pathum Nissanka, despite getting starts, has been unable to convert them into substantial scores, leaving the middle order with too much to do. Captain Axar Patel, too, would want to shoulder greater responsibility with the bat. The all-rounder is also under scrutiny for some questionable tactical calls in the previous game. Against a rampaging Abhishek Sharma, Axar persisted with part-time off-spinner Nitish Rana, who proved ineffective, while frontline options such as himself and Kuldeep Yadav were not used enough. The absence of a clear Plan B highlighted Delhi's lack of adaptability under pressure. Fielding lapses have further compounded their struggles. Missed stumpings, botched run-out opportunities and a few dropped catches have cost them dear in crucial moments, preventing them from taking control of games.

GT coach explains what separates Virat Kohli from the rest: 'He is ziddi to do well'



GNS News Agency, April 30

Gujarat Titans assistant coach Vijay Dahiya, who shares a long history with Virat Kohli from their days together in Delhi domestic cricket, offered a reflective take on the former India captain's evolution, from a chubby youngster in the dressing room to one of the most disciplined and relentless competitors in modern cricket. Dahiya underlined that Kohli's defining trait has always been an internal drive to keep improving, built on consistency, discipline, and an uncompromising mindset. "I think he wants to be better than what he was yesterday. That's another thing that stands out in his fitness and discipline. It's an example for a lot of people. It's damn difficult to follow in the same way. But at least pick up something from there," he said in the post-match press conference.

He also spoke about Kohli's mentality, particularly his refusal to be defined by longevity or reputation, instead fo-

cusing on constant self-improvement. "A lot of times, there is a word called zid. We use it in a wrong way. I think he is ziddi to do well. That's one thing that stands out for him. The other thing, a lot of people say, I don't think so. He has been around for such a long time. He is not playing to prove a point to anyone. It's a man in the mirror," Dahiya added. Dahiya emphasised that Kohli's influence goes far beyond skill, pointing instead to his energy, awareness and intensity as the foundation of his sustained success. "I think it's amazing. If you look at his energy, one thing is about skill, one thing is about game sense. But his awareness, his energy and his willingness," he said.

He also recalled a post-match conversation where Kohli, despite playing a match-defining innings, was still focused on what he felt he had missed. "After the game, I was just having a chat with him and he was disappointed. He was saying that I could have converted this to 100. I said it's for somebody who doesn't know how to do it," Dahiya said. Dahiya threw light on Kohli's ability to control games even against world-class attacks, noting how he can make difficult conditions appear straightforward through sheer authority at the crease. "I am very confident that I would have won this game on a surface like this. He made the surface look really easy, sort of a wicket. It wasn't an easy sort of a wicket," he said. "When you are playing and when you are commanding the situation, you make the bowler bowl where you want him to bowl. That's the kind of innings Virat has played, put pressure on the bowlers. World-class bowlers, not only the domestic bowlers. That's what Virat is all about. I think his mindset sets him apart from a lot of other people," he added.

Devdutt Padikkal on how captaincy has changed him as a batsman: 'Made me think a lot more'



GNS News Agency, April 30

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Devdutt Padikkal plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Gujarat Titans in Bengaluru, India, Friday, April 24, 2026. (AP Photo) Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Devdutt Padikkal plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Gujarat Titans. Devdutt Padikkal's growing leadership role at the domestic level appears to be feeding directly into his evolution as a T20 batter, with the Karnataka captain crediting the added responsibility for sharpening his game awareness and decision-making at the crease. Padikkal, appointed Karnataka's Ranji Trophy captain during the 2025-26 season, pointed to how thinking like a leader has altered his perspective as an opener, helping him better read situations and opposition plans.

Virat Kohli hails Devdutt Padikkal's 55 off 27 in RCB's win over GT: 'His innings was the clear difference'



GNS News Agency, April 30

Virat Kohli was named Player of the Match for his 81 off 44 balls against Gujarat Titans at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Friday. However, at the post-match presentation ceremony, Kohli was quick to turn the spotlight on his younger partner Devdutt Padikkal, whose explosive 55 off 27 balls set the tone for Royal Challengers Bengaluru's successful 206-run chase against the Titans in an Indian Premier League group stage clash.

While Kohli anchored the chase with his trademark control and acceleration, Padikkal's early burst ensured RCB were never behind the rate, as the pair stitched together a 115-run partnership that effectively sealed the contest's outcome. "I think Dev's done this twice this season, where he's come in and absolutely played a blinder from ball one. You know, the first ball he hit off Rabada was magnificent, and he has the game awareness and the ability, especially in conditions like ours, to be able to play good cricketing shots and hurt opposition, striking over 200, which is quite rare. To be honest," Kohli said at the post-match presentation.

Kohli highlighted Padikkal's ability to dominate without resorting to high-risk slogging, a quality that allowed RCB to maintain both tempo and control in the chase. "You never see him slogging the ball. You feel like he's not giving you a sniff in the game and yet he's scoring so freely. So I think Dev's innings was the clear difference in the first half," he added. The RCB batter also explained how the partnership affected his own approach, allowing him to settle in before taking responsibility for changing the momentum later in the innings. "And then I was just trying to stay in the game enough so that he doesn't feel all the pressure. And it was my responsibility to try and hit boundaries at the right times. And yeah, that partnership was the game-sealer and the game-changer for us eventually," the 37-year-old said.

Reflecting on the broader match context, Kohli felt Gujarat Titans fell short of what the surface demanded despite a flying start, with RCB's bowling effort ensuring the chase remained within reach. "I mean, even in our bowling innings, I think we bowled really well to pull things back. They were about 20-25 short in the end. We were looking at 230, 235 at one stage. But our bowlers did a magnificent

job and the feedback was the pitch is not bad at all. It's probably the best batting conditions we've had so far," he said. "They were 128/0 at one stage, and I felt they were a few runs short in the end," Kohli added. The game also marked RCB's final league-stage appearance at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium this season, with the team set to travel to Raipur for their remaining two group matches. The former RCB captain was reflective about the campaign at home, where RCB have enjoyed strong support and results. "Yeah, brilliant. I mean, firstly, we're quite happy that we were able to play five games here. The fans get to see the team again, and it's just a special place to play cricket. Hopefully, at the later stages of the tournament, we can come back here and entertain the crowd once more. It's been brilliant to play at home and win four out of five here, so it's been a great start," he said.

Sunrisers Hyderabad, Rajasthan Royals set for high-stakes IPL clash

Jaipur: Rajasthan Royals would want to assert their dominance at home and settle old scores when they host Sunrisers Hyderabad in what promises to be a high-stakes Indian Premier League game here on Saturday, with both sides eyeing crucial points.

Revenge could be on RR's mind, having been outplayed by SRH in their first-leg match on April 13, when Praful Hinge headlined a 57-run drubbing with a performance that has now become part of IPL lore. RR have since done well, including notching a 40-run win over Lucknow Super Giants away on Wednesday, and are currently placed second in the standings. SRH, who have already had their share of ups and downs this season due to inconsistency, are occupying the fourth spot, and they know the home team will come at them strongly at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium.

Whether it was controlling the start, the middle overs, or closing out at the death, RR were found wanting in almost every department in the most recent meeting between the two sides, and they will see this fixture as the perfect opportunity to come up with a strong response, especially in phases where they faltered last time. There is no doubt that there is a clear subplot of unfinished business in the game as far as RR are concerned, even as SRH bank on their attacking top-order batters to fire and set the tone for the visitors. SRH's aggressive template worked for them last time, with the likes of Ishan Kishan and Heinrich Klaasen doing the job with the bat. Fresh from his blazing hundred against Delhi Capitals, Abhishek Sharma will be keen to continue in the same vein, even as Travis Head looks for quick runs at the top.

Sanjay Dutt's Ballu reimagined, reborn and more fearless than ever.



Khalnayak Returns teaser: Sanjay Dutt returns as the iconic Ballu in the gritty, action-packed sequel to the actor's 1993 blockbuster. Sanjay Dutt will reprise his role as Ballu in Khalnayak Returns. Actor Sanjay Dutt is all set for his biggest cinematic endeavour in recent times. Fans will see him once again as the iconic Balaram Prasad aka Ballu from legendary filmmaker Subhash Ghai's blockbuster movie Khal Nayak (1993), as a sequel to the actioner is currently in the making. The makers of the movie, titled Khalnayak Returns, officially announced it with a special teaser that offers glimpses of Sanjay Dutt as Ballu 2.0. However, unlike the 1993 film, the latest instalment in the franchise appears far bloodier and grittier, suggesting it will be an out-and-out actioner.

What's in Khalnayak Returns teaser?

The 72-second promo begins with a close-up of flames. As the camera zooms out, it reveals that the entire place is burning. On one side, a man can be seen

lying unconscious, drenched in blood. As the fire burns on both sides, a man emerges from between. A long chain can be seen fixed to one of his hands, hinting that he was shackled by someone but broke free effortlessly. He then goes and sits next to another person, also bloodied, struggling to crawl to safety. Soon, the teaser reveals the former's face — and it's Ballu! As the wounded man pleads for forgiveness and requests to be let go, Ballu utters his iconic line from Khal Nayak, "Bhola tha nah? 10 October, raat ke 10 baje, Balu jail se 'furr.'" Ballu then goes on to sing the title track from the 1993 movie as he walks away with swagger. "Every story has its time... and that time has come," Sanjay Dutt wrote while sharing the announcement video on social media. "The legend is back. Witness the first look of one of the most iconic characters in Indian cinema — reimagined, reborn and more fearless than ever," the movie's makers mentioned in the description box for the teaser on YouTube. Talking about Khalnayak Returns, Sanjay Dutt told Variety, "It's been a long-cherished dream of mine to be able to revive this film and hence we have legally acquired the rights for it."

He added, "I want to thank Subhashji and the team of Mukta Arts for entrusting us with this legacy." The movie will be jointly produced by Jio Studios, Aspect Entertainment, and Sanjay Dutt's Three Dimension Motion Pictures. Further details regarding its cast and crew members have not been unveiled yet. One of the biggest hits in Sanjay Dutt's career as a leading man, Khal Nayak also starred Madhuri Dixit, Jackie Shroff, Raakhee, and Anupam Kher in key roles. While the movie in itself became a blockbuster, its songs, composed by Laxmikant–Pyarelal, are celebrated even now. The film hit the screens around the time when Sanjay was arrested for his alleged involvement in the 1993 Mumbai bomb blasts and his purported connections to the underworld.

After 'rape' comment backlash, Salman Khan endorsed media training: 'He gave us 6 people to train'

In today's world, where every statement made by a celebrity is intensely scrutinised, the need for media trainers has become increasingly significant. Janice Sequeira and Nupur Singh Riat, two media trainers who work with Bollywood celebrities, recently reflected on how they began this practice nearly a decade ago, when it was still a relatively niche field, and how Salman Khan played an unexpected role in helping them get started. In a conversation with Variety India, Sequeira recalled her first meeting with the actor during the shoot of Sultan: "I remember Salman Khan was shooting, finishing the last bit of patchwork for Sultan. He was quite fond of me, so he said, 'Okay, come meet me, come to YRF Studios.' I remember he was shooting his wrestling scene. He looked very exhausted. I was sitting there pitching to him, telling him I had this idea about newcomers and people who hadn't really been trained properly on how to speak in a motivational or media-facing way."

She further added: "And in my head, I'm just thinking, 'Is Salman even listening to what I'm saying?' Because he looked so exhausted and deeply involved in everything happening on set. He was also more interested in asking, 'Did you eat food?' (laughs). So I met him, I left, and I thought it was an interesting meeting." However, Sequeira revealed that about a year later, Salman Khan surprised her by remembering the conversation and taking it forward. "Then about a year goes by, and I get a call from a producer who worked very closely with Salman at the time. He said, 'Did you mention something about media coaching to Salman?' I said, 'Yes'. He said, 'Ok today 7 o'clock, come to Galaxy.' That's all I was told. Like, I had been summoned." She continued: "I go there, and by the end of that evening, I was genuinely surprised because I thought Salman wasn't listening to a word I said. But he had remembered everything. He had called all the people he intended for us to train and introduced them to me. And it wasn't just one or two people, he gave us six people to train. They were at different stages of their careers; some were newcomers, while others were more established." Sequeira also clarified: "Just to be very clear, we did not train Salman Khan. He was the first one to say, 'Okay, I think your idea might have legs.'"

Interestingly, he might have not taken the media training himself, but around the time of Sultan's promotions, Salman became embroiled in controversy over a remark

Yash praises Geetu Mohandas' 'female gaze', says women present 'sensuality' differently



Yash's Toxic is undoubtedly one of the most awaited films of the year. The period action film, which was initially expected to release earlier this year clashing with Dhurandhar 2, has now been pushed to June 4. As the release date approaches, Yash recently took a moment to speak about his director, Geetu Mohandas.

'A gangster film with a female gaze' Since the announcement of the project, there has been significant anticipation around this collaboration. Geetu, known for films like Moothon and Liar's Dice, comes from a very different cinematic background compared to Yash, who rose to pan-India fame with KGF. Yash reflected on what she brings to the gangster world of Toxic, highlighting her "female gaze." He told American content creator Sabeen Faheem, "That's the most exciting part. So what happens is that when you generally say action films, it's only restricted to male directors. That's been the history in India. A lot of people have done that. A large-scale action film, that too a gangster film

he made during a media interaction. While describing the physically exhausting shoot, he said: "When I used to walk out of that ring, it used to be like a raped woman walking out." The comment triggered widespread outrage on social media. The National Commission for Women wrote to the actor demanding a public apology within seven days. The controversy escalated further, prompting his father, veteran screenwriter Salim Khan, to issue a statement on X (formerly Twitter), saying: "Undoubtedly, what Salman said is wrong. The intention was not wrong. Nevertheless, I apologise on behalf of his family, his fans, and his friends."

When Anushka Sharma, his co-star in Sultan, was later asked about the controversy and whether she would advise Salman Khan to apologise, she told Film Companion: "He is very intimidating. I don't have that equation with him. And he is an adult man, he knows what he needs to do. I don't need to go and tell somebody what they should be saying, thinking, or doing." Salman Khan is currently gearing up for the release of Maatrubhum: May War Rest in Peace, which is reportedly facing delays. Meanwhile, he has begun shooting for his upcoming action film with Vamshi Paidipally and Dil Raju, which is slated for release next year.

with a female gaze, is something which is very new and refreshing."

He also spoke about how Geetu contributed to shaping the film's sensual and emotional layers, elements that have already sparked discussion since the first look was released earlier this year. He said, "Thoughts are very clear, and she has a strong conviction in whatever she does. And she's a fabulous writer. I could learn so much, you know. The desire quotient or certain emotions, romance or sensuality, how a female can show, a woman can present is entirely different is what I've realised in this journey."

Previously, in a conversation with Fandango, Yash had described Toxic as more than just an action film. "Toxic is a very ambitious film. For the first time, we have also shot it in English. At face value, it may seem like a typical gangster drama packed with action, but it's far more layered. It explores deep psychological themes and aspects of human behaviour that audiences can relate to. It's a unique way of presenting a dark character. Working with Geethu Mohandas has been exciting. She has brought a fresh perspective to the genre. With some of the best technicians on board, it will be a visual spectacle that also leaves a strong psychological impact." Recently, the makers also screened a nine-minute preview of the film at CinemaCon 2026 in Las Vegas.

According to a Variety India report, the footage suggests the story is set between the 1940s and 1970s. An attendee described the preview experience, saying, "We got to see a nine-minute preview of Toxic at CinemaCon, and it really expands on what's been shown so far. It gives you a much richer sense of the world and the themes. What stood out was how it balances edgy and mass appeal while still feeling layered in its characters. There was a genuine buzz in the room."

How Priyanka Chopra should have handled the Oscars moment with Javier Bardem: 'Prepare your non-verbal cues'



One of the most talked-about moments from this year's Oscar Awards involved Priyanka Chopra and Javier Bardem, who appeared on stage together to present the award for Best International Feature Film. During the presentation, Javier drew attention when he used his time on stage to call for "Free Palestine". His remarks received a huge applause from the audience, while Priyanka, standing beside him, appeared momentarily taken aback. The moment quickly went viral on social media, where she faced criticism over her reaction. Body Language and Non-Verbal Clues

Media trainers to the celebrities, Janice Sequeira and Nupur Singh Riat, were recently asked how they would advise public figures to handle such situations. Speaking to Variety India, Sequeira pointed out that Priyanka may have been briefly distracted just before Javier began speaking. "At the outset, first let's discuss that incident by itself, right? I think it is clear that there was also a moment where she was caught off guard because right before he started talking, there was someone in the audience who cheered for the two of them, or for her, and she waved at them. And the narrative starts from there, that it was an inappropriate reaction while someone was talking about something so serious." Riat then emphasised the importance of body lan-

guage in high-profile appearances. "The number one thing, that's a key element in our training modules as well, is body language. You can say so much; your body and your face can convey so much emotion without saying a single word. So if, as a team, you anticipate something like this coming up, it would be important to prepare what you should be silently endorsing or sidestepping."

Sequeira added that media training often includes rehearsing such non-verbal cues. "We would actually have told our client: let's prepare your non-verbal cues. Which means that if Javier Bardem is talking about the war, are you going to be nodding? Are you going to be slightly more composed and non-reactive? What are you going to be silently conveying? Those non-verbal cues would be rehearsed." She further added, "Number two would be: from the time you are up on that stage, your mind should be focused only on getting through that two-to-three-minute interaction and nothing else. So getting caught off guard by waving, in the long run, that clip doesn't look great, right?" She also stressed that Priyanka was sharing the stage with a presenter known for serious and political commentary, and therefore needed to remain fully attentive. "One would be being present in every second, because this is not like other presenters who come, crack a joke, and leave. This was different, you were with a very serious co-presenter, who you knew might talk about something like this. So, being present in every second, knowing that everything is going to be analysed under a microscope. And number two, like she said, body language." Before announcing the winner, Javier said, "No to war and free Palestine," drawing loud applause from the audience. Priyanka stood beside him, smiling and nodding slightly, before continuing with the presentation. She described the nominated films as "visceral and engrossing," adding that their stories resonate far beyond borders. Priyanka has previously appeared at the Oscars multiple times. In 2016, she presented the award for Best Film Editing to Margaret Sixel for Mad Max: Fury Road, sharing the stage with Liev Schreiber. She also attended the ceremony in 2017, and in 2021, she and Nick Jonas announced the Oscar nominations.

Rihanna says 'shukriya' to eager Mumbai fans, poses warmly with a paparazzo.

Rihanna is widely regarded as one of the coolest and boldest pop icons around the world, known for her carefree attitude and magnetic presence. Whether it is her pregnancy fashion or red carpet appearances, the singer never fails to grab attention. The global superstar, who is currently in India for her make-up brand promotions, is now winning hearts online for her warm gesture towards a paparazzo in Mumbai.

In a now-viral video, Rihanna was seen posing for photographers at her event in Mumbai, dressed in a black outfit with leather detailing and diamond accessories. All smiles for the cameras, the singer melted hearts when a paparazzo requested a photo with her. Responding warmly, Rihanna said, "Come on," before putting an arm around the photographer, leaning her head toward his, and posing with a bright smile. As other paparazzi rushed towards her hoping for similar photos, Rihanna laughed and walked away from the spot. Earlier in the day, Rihanna had arrived at Mumbai's Phoenix Palladium in a stunning butter-yellow outfit paired with bold red lipstick. In another viral clip from the outing, Rihanna was seen stepping out of a store and asking the paparazzi how to say "thank you" in Hindi. After learning the phrase, she sweetly said, "Shukriya," waved at the photographers, smiled, and then dramatically turned around before heading back inside.

In yet another heartwarming moment from her visit, Rihanna was seen acknowledging a fan who was pleading for a photo and autograph as she exited the store. Even



after getting into her car, the singer called the fan over, posed for a picture with him, and signed his T-shirt—once again leaving the internet in awe of her humility and warmth. This marks Rihanna's second visit to India. She had previously visited in 2024 to perform at the lavish pre-wedding celebrations of Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant in Jamnagar, where she entertained a star-studded guest list of global leaders, industrialists, and film celebrities. This time, the singer's visit is centered around the launch and promotion of new Fenty Beauty products in India. Rihanna had partnered with Tira Beauty and Sephora last year to expand the cosmetic brand's presence in the country.

After years of feud, Krushna Abhishek falls at Sunita Ahuja's feet, Kashmera apologises.

After years of misunderstandings between Govinda-Sunita Ahuja and Krushna Abhishek-Kashmera Shah, it appears that peace has finally been restored between the two families. Recently, Sunita graced the sets of Laughter Chefs 3, where Krushna and Kashmera are contestants, and videos of the trio posing together quickly went viral. Now, Colors TV has shared a new promo in which Kashmera is seen apologising to Sunita, while Krushna falls at her feet. The promo begins with Sunita Ahuja calling out Krushna's name in her signature style, leaving him and the other contestants stunned. Moments later, Krushna rushes to hug Sunita tightly as the song "Kitni Baatein" plays in the background. A visibly emotional Krushna says, "It has been 14 years..." but is unable to complete his sentence in the promo. He then falls at Sunita's feet, leaving both Sunita and Kashmera teary-eyed. Adding humour to the emotional moment, he says, "Mujhe toh aapke chamo mein parking mil gayi hai." He further jokes, "Today, two cars need parking at your feet," hinting at his



wife Kashmera, whose tweet had upset Sunita years ago. An emotional Kashmera then apologises to Sunita on national television, saying simply, "I am so sorry."

What went wrong between the two families?

The rift reportedly began in 2016 when Govinda chose to appear on The Kapil Sharma Show with Sunita instead of Krushna's Comedy Nights Live. This prompted Krushna to publicly take a dig at his maternal uncle for not supporting him and behaving like a "superstar." Around the same time, Krushna also joked on his show, "Maine Govinda ko mama rakha

hai," which did not sit well with Govinda. The actor reportedly summoned Krushna home over the remark. However, Sunita had then stepped in to diffuse the matter, telling Govinda that "it was his work" and he should not stop him. The situation worsened when Kashmera tweeted about "people who dance for money" after Govinda and Sunita appeared on The Drama Company. Sunita took the remark personally and publicly declared that she would never see Krushna's face again. In an earlier interview, Sunita had said, "About six months ago, on Krushna's insistence, Govinda and I went on his show (The Drama Com-

pany). Since we are also fond of the show's producers, Preeti and Neeti Simoes, we agreed. All was well until Kashmera had the audacity to slyly write rubbish about us on social media, soon after that appearance. She referred to us as 'People who dance for money' in that post. Even if we were paid for that appearance, it was none of her business. Almost every Bollywood celebrity charges for appearances on TV shows. Plus, she is not the one who paid us. I don't know if she has deleted that post now, but most of our relatives and family friends read it back then. Krushna claims that the post was meant for his sister Arti.