

Hyderabad to host mega job mela on May 14 at Masab Tank

Hyderabad: A mega job mela is being organized on May 14, from 7 am to 12.30 pm, at Khaja Mansion Function Hall, Masab Tank-Banjara Hills road.In a press release, the organiser, Mannan Khan, said many companies will participate in the job fair, offering opportunities in various sectors such as pharma, healthcare, IT and ITES, education, banking, and more. Some companies will also offer work-from-home options.Candidates with a minimum qualification of SSC are eligible to attend. Preliminary interviews will be conducted at the venue.Entry is free, and interested job seekers can contact 8374315052 for further details.

Petition urges SC to take suo motu cognisance of repeated NEET leaks, seeks overhaul of NTA

GNS News Agency, May 13

New Delhi: A letter petition has been submitted before the Supreme Court seeking suo motu intervention into the repeated NEET examination leaks, impersonation scams, and alleged systemic failures in the functioning of the National Testing Agency (NTA), contending that the credibility and transparency of national-level entrance examinations have been “fundamentally compromised”.The petition, addressed to the Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant, sought directions for a court-monitored probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or a Special Investigation Team (SIT) into the recent NEET-UG 2026 paper leak controversy and demanded the replacement of the NTA with an “independent, transparent, and professionally regulated National Examination Authority”.Filed by Dr Dhruv Chauhan, National Spokesperson of the Indian Medical Association Junior Doctors Network (IMA-JDN), and social activist Harisharan Devgan through advocate Satyam Singh, the plea said that repeated paper leaks, solver gangs, impersonation rackets, cybersecurity failures and administrative lapses have “destroyed public confidence” in the examination system.

Referring to previous controversies linked to NEET and other examinations conducted by the NTA, the petition alleged that the examination framework has suffered from “continuing collapse of examination security mechanisms” despite judicial scrutiny, criminal investigations and expert committee recommendations.The plea referred to alleged instances of paper leaks and impersonation rackets in NEET examinations over the years, including controversies linked to NEET-UG 2024 and JEE Main 2021, and claimed that the recurring nature of such incidents reflects “institutional incapacity and systemic breakdown within the National Testing Agency”.It further relied on parliamentary disclosures made by the Union Ministry of Education in Rajya Sabha in March 2025, which stated that the CBI had filed five charge sheets against 45 accused persons in connection with the NEET-UG 2024 paper theft case and



that beneficiaries of the leaked paper, impersonators and MBBS students allegedly involved had been identified for necessary action.According to the petition, lakhs of students from economically weaker and middle-class backgrounds dedicate years of preparation for NEET, and recurring examination leaks destroy not only careers but also the constitutional guarantee of equality and fair opportunity under Articles 14 and 21.“The recurring paper leaks have created an environment where deserving students increasingly believe that merit and hard work alone are insufficient to secure success in national examinations,” the plea stated.The petition sought directions to replace the NTA with a new “independent, transparent, and professionally regulated National Examination Authority” having statutory accountability, judicial oversight and advanced technological safeguards.It also sought the constitution of a high-level committee comprising retired judges, cybersecurity experts, educationists and administrative experts to recommend structural reforms for the secure conduct of national-level examinations.The plea further prayed for implementation of encrypted digital paper transmission systems, biometric verification mechanisms, strict cybersecurity protocols and fast-track prosecution against individuals, coaching centres and officials allegedly involved in examination leaks and organised cheating rackets.

Bandi Sai Bageerath fails to appear before police in POCSO case

GNS News Agency, May 13

Hyderabad: Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar’s son, Bandi Sai Bageerath, failed to appear before police by the Wednesday afternoon deadline in connection with a POCSO case registered at the Pet-Basheerabad Police Station.Police had earlier issued a notice to Bageerath on Tuesday directing him to appear before the investigating officer by 2 pm on Wednesday for questioning. However, till 4.30 pm, he had not appeared at the police station.It may be noted that the notice was served on his maternal uncle, Ch Vamshi Krishna, asking him to ensure the suspect’s appearance.

The case was originally booked on May 8 based on a complaint filed by the survivor’s mother, who alleged that Bageerath sexually assaulted the minor girl over a period of time after allegedly promising marriage. She also accused him of circulating the survivor’s photographs, leading to additional trauma.Initially, police registered the case under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the POCSO Act. Following the survivor’s statement during the course of the investigation, the charges were revised to include aggravated penetrative sexual assault under stricter provisions of the POCSO Act.Meanwhile, the suspect has moved the Telangana High Court seeking anticipatory bail, and the petition is expected to come up for hearing on Thursday.Senior police officials said the investigation is being closely monitored, with M Ramesh directing Ritiraj, DCP, Kukatpally, to personally supervise the probe.



Telangana girls surpass boys in CBSE Class XII results



GNS News Agency, May 13

Hyderabad: Telangana girls outperformed boys in the Central Board of Intermediate Education (CBSE) examinations. In the Class XII exam results declared on Wednesday, girls registered 5.65 more percent of passes than boys.As per the CBSE, 5,518 girls who appeared for the exams recorded a pass percentage of 95.16 whereas 5,908 boys secured 89.51 percent with the overall State pass percentage standing at 92.24.

As for management-wise, JNVs (99.08 percent), KVs (98.66 percent), government schools (93.26 percent), independent (91.68 percent) and EMRS (89.93 percent) secured results in the State.This year, the pass percentage of Class XII students in the country has come down by 3.19 percent in comparison to last year. A total of 17,68,968 students appeared and 15,07,109 (85.20 percent) passed this year. Similarly, 16,92,794 students took the exams and 14,96,307 (88.39 percent) passed in 2025.This time, the CBSE introduced on-screen marking (OSM) for evaluation of the Class XII answer books. The new initiative helped the Board to evaluate answer scripts in any part of the coun-

try and abroad in schools affiliated to the CBSE without physically shifting the answer books to the evaluation centres.

Meanwhile, the CBSE said supplementary examinations will be conducted on July 15. Students who passed Class XII now and wish to improve their performance in one subject only and candidates who are placed in compartment category are eligible to sit for supplementary exams.Students who appeared in Class XII in 2025 and placed in the compartment category can also apply. As three opportunities are given to clear the compartment, this examination will be the last opportunity for these students, the CBSE said.Submission of List of Candidates (LOC) for the supplementary examinations by schools will commence on June 2. Students who wish to improve their performance after passing main exams in 2026 and candidates who are placed under the compartment category in main exams can sit for the supplementary exams.

Telangana inter supplementary exams begin, more than 11,000 students skip

Hyderabad: More than 11,000 students were absent for the Intermediate Public Advanced Supplementary Examinations that commenced smoothly across the State on Wednesday. A total of 97,988 students registered, and 90,397 appeared for the first-year second language paper-I conducted in the forenoon session. Similarly, 27,958 candidates applied, and 24,489 took the second-year second language paper-II.

TG CPGET 2026 notification to be released on May 15

Hyderabad: The Telangana Common Post Graduate Entrance Tests (TG CPGET) 2026 notification is set to be released on May 15, with computer-based tests for 40 subjects in the first week of July.As per the schedule released by TGCHE Chairman Prof. V Balakista Reddy and Kakatiya University Vice-Chancellor Prof. K Pratap Reddy, online registrations without a late fee can be done between May 15 and June 10. Applications can be submitted with a late fee of Rs. 500 and Rs. 2,000 until June 14 and 18 respectively.The registration fee for one subject is Rs.800 for OC/BCs and Rs.600 for SC, ST and PH candidates. A fee of Rs.450 has to be paid for an additional subject. Online application data can be edited between June 16 and 19. The hall tickets can be downloaded from the website from June 28.

PM Modi cuts convoy size as BJP CMs adopt austerity measures

GNS News Agency, May 13

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has significantly reduced his convoy size, days after he made an appeal for austerity and urged citizens to curb the use of fuel-driven vehicles.The move has prompted several BJP chief ministers to similarly adopt measures and cut their respective vehicle fleets.A downsizing in the prime minister’s convoy was implemented during his recent domestic visits, official sources said.The reduction was done while maintaining essential security components as per the SPG protocol.Modi’s convoy size was reduced in Gujarat and Assam immediately after his speech in Hyderabad, during which he suggested an array of austerity measures.Sources said the prime minister also asked for electric vehicles to be included in his convoy, wherever possible, without making new purchases.

Taking a cue, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed an immediate 50 per cent reduction in the fleet of vehicles accompanying the chief minister and ministers, and urged people to cut fuel consumption and avoid unnecessary gold purchases in view of the prevailing global situation.Chairing a meeting of the chief secretary, DGP, additional chief secretaries and principal secretaries of all departments, Adityanath appealed to people to adopt the prime minister’s call for austerity measures in a practical manner across the state.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has announced that he will use a minimum number of vehicles for his convoy and asked his ministerial colleagues to do the same.He also urged people to increase the use of public transport.“Until further orders, there will be a minimum number of vehicles in my cavalcade from a security perspective, and there will be no vehicle rallies. All ministers will also use a minimum number of vehicles while travelling,” Yadav said.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has also announced



limits on official vehicles used by ministers, MLAs and other public representatives.She further urged Delhi residents to adopt carpooling and make greater use of buses and metro services instead of private vehicles in view of the prevailing global energy supply uncertainty.Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma similarly directed that the use of his convoy be minimised and unnecessary vehicles should not be used, especially for security purposes.He also instructed all officials and public representatives, including the chief secretary, to adopt similar practices.The Maharashtra government has directed all ministers to obtain prior approval from Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis before using aircraft for official travel.Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat announced that he will travel within Gujarat using trains, state transport buses and public transport instead of helicopters and flights, while also reducing the size of official convoys to save fuel.Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghvi also cancelled his planned trip to the United States after the prime minister’s appeal for reducing foreign travel.Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary has announced that he has personally reduced the number of vehicles he uses by half and will undertake official travel only when necessary.

Chandrababu Naidu says Andhra to unveil measures amid West Asia conflict

Nidamaru (Andhra Pradesh): Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday said the state government would unveil precautionary measures within two days to mitigate the impact of the West Asia conflict on the state.Addressing a meeting at Nidamaru village in Guntur district, the Chief Minister said the government would make an announcement in the next two days on the steps aimed at safeguarding the state from the effects of the ongoing US-Iran war.“Either tomorrow or the day after, we will also make an announcement on what preventive measures we have to take due to the effects of the war on the state,” said Naidu on the sidelines of an event.Referring to the recent austerity appeal made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Naidu said people of the state must act responsibly and support efforts to strengthen the country’s economy.Naidu also echoed the PM’s call, urging people to avoid unnecessary gold purchases and foreign travel, and instead focus on economic self-reliance. Highlighting Andhra’s gold production potential, he said the state plans



to inaugurate a gold mine in Kurnool district in June, where up to “60 per cent of India’s gold reserves are located.”“When you import all the gold, foreign exchange will go out. If we can produce gold domestically, that problem can be reduced,” he said, stressing the need for self-reliance and public cooperation.

IMD issues red alert as Telangana faces severe heatwave



GNS News Agency, May 13

Hyderabad: The India Meteorological Department (IMD), Hyderabad, on Wednesday issued a critical Red Warning, where mercury will cross 44 degree Celsius in several districts in Telangana, as a severe spell of heatwave is steadily taking its grip across the state in the coming days.

In its red heatwave alert issued on Wednesday, the IMD, Hyderabad, has indicated that maximum temperatures are expected to climb in all the districts of Telangana by 2 degree Celsius to 4 degree Celsius, with northern districts expected to witness extreme weather conditions.

The IMD has placed several districts under a severe heatwave watch where temperatures are forecast to exceed 44 degree Celsius starting from Friday, May 15. The districts under red maximum alert are Adilabad, Komaram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherial, and Nirmal, which were expected to consistently see temperatures above 44 degree Celsius for the next three to four days. The red warning for extreme heatwave will continue to expand, as maximum temperatures in Jagtial and Nizamabad will cross 44 degree Celsius by Saturday, May 16.By the end of this week, other districts like Karimnagar and Peddapalle are expected to witness more than 44 degree Celsius of heatwave.According to the IMD, Hyderabad weather bulletin,

virtually every district in Telangana will witness a significant rise in heat in the coming days.Areas that were previously in the 36 to 40 degree Celsius range, including Hyderabad, Rangareddy, Khammam, and Warangal, are forecast to climb into the 41 to 44 degree Celsius range by Friday.With the issuance of a Red Warning, the IMD has classified the health risk for individuals who get exposed to heatwaves as ‘Very High’. There is a very high likelihood of heat illness and heatstroke across all age groups. The weather department has urged the general public to take extreme care for vulnerable populations, including infants, the elderly, and those with chronic diseases.

Bharat Rashtra Samithi Vidyarthi protests at Lok Bhavan over alleged NEET paper leak

Hyderabad: Bharat Rashtra Samithi Vidyarthi (BRSV) on Wednesday held a protest at Lok Bhavan here against the NEET paper leak. Tension prevailed for a while, as the student leaders attempted to gain entry into Lok Bhavan to register their protests.Holding placards, the students raised slogans against the Centre and blamed the Modi government for the NEET paper leak. The student leaders were prevented from gaining entry into the Lok Bhavan by the police personnel present there.The protestors described the NEET paper leak as a betrayal of lakhs of students who sacrificed their sleep, time, mental peace, and family savings for their future. “As BRSV student leaders, we stand firmly with students across the country and demand justice for every aspirant,” they said. The BRSV also demanded a transparent investigation into the NEET paper leak, which has to be monitored by the Supreme Court.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

NEET cancellation demands accountability

THE first part-cancellation of the NEET-UG exam in 2024 was bad enough. The second, on Tuesday, is criminal. Lakhs of students, after years of relentless preparation, sleepless nights and immense emotional strain, have been told that their career-defining examination stands nullified because the authorities entrusted with safeguarding its integrity failed to protect the sanctity of a "guess paper". Heads must roll for allowing a repetition of this unforgivable scandal. The emotional devastation caused by this fiasco cannot be repaired by announcing revised dates. Every paper leak strengthens criminal syndicates while punishing honest students. There must be transparent investigations, criminal prosecution and administrative accountability. In 2024, NEET was rocked by allegations of paper leaks, inflated ranks and controversial grace marks. Though the entire exam was not cancelled then, the episode triggered nationwide outrage, judicial scrutiny and promises of reform. The government assured students that safeguards would be strengthened and lessons had been learnt. Instead, the rot has deepened. The cancellation of the 2026 exam proves that the authorities hardly created the earlier crisis with the seriousness it deserved. The National Testing Agency's credibility is in tatters. Nor can Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan escape accountability. Such a monumental failure affecting millions of young citizens calls for an overhauling of the entire system of education. The whole cycle of infamy — from coaching classes which practically hold the student's life to ransom, to large-scale fraud in "guess papers" — must be reimagined. India needs to break the stranglehold of this magic bullet, three-hour test that decides whether you are worth becoming a doctor or not.

Uppal Congress In-Charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy Participates in Inauguration of Gangaputra Association Building at Ramanthapur



“UPPAL , MAY 13(INDIAN CHRONICAL): Uppal Assembly Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy participated in the inauguration ceremony of the newly constructed Gangaputra Association building at Venkat Reddy Nagar in Ramanthapur. The building was constructed with the association's own funds. Speaking on the occasion, Parameshwar Reddy congratulated the members and elders of the Gangaputra community for successfully completing the construction of the building, which stands as a symbol of unity and self-respect for the community. He said that protecting traditional occupations and passing on cultural values to future generations is the responsibility of everyone. He expressed hope that the association building would be useful to the Gangaputra community in all aspects. The programme was attended by Venkat Reddy Nagar Gangaputra Association President Chevuri Venkataiah, General Secretary Kontham Satyanarayana, Anem Pentaiah, Secretary Lakshmaiah, advisors Pili Narsimhulu, Gurram Narsimhulu, Ambati Srinu, executive members P. Narsimhulu, G. Venkataiah, C. Srinu, G. Shivudu, A. Raghu, Raghu, Ramesh, D. Gopal, C. Krishna, Congress leaders, Uppal Youth Congress President Aakarapu Arun Patel, Kishore, Sandeep, Upender Reddy, Balayya, Golusula Swami, K. Swami, Bottu Yadagiri, Gaddam Narasimha, Somayya, Bhanu, Bhaskar, Dhanalakshmi, Chotu, Rajesh, Sumit Gautam, Prakash, Prabhakar, Chichcha, Nagesh, Sai, Sachin, Ashok and several others.

Uppal Congress In-Charge Parameshwar Reddy Pays Tribute to Medchal Satyanarayana's Mother



“UPPAL, MAY 13(INDIAN CHRONICAL): Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-Charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy paid rich tributes to late Anne Kamala, mother of senior Congress leader Medchal Satyanarayana, during the tenth-day death ritual ceremony held on Tuesday. The programme was organised at Brigadier M.K. Rao Memorial Hall in Sainikpuri, where Parameshwar Reddy garlanded the portrait of Kamalamma and offered floral tributes. He also conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family members of Medchal Satyanarayana and prayed for the departed soul to rest in peace.

Former Uppal Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy Participates in Sri Renuka Ellamma Kalyanam



“UPPAL, MAY 13(INDIAN CHRONICAL): The Sri Renuka Ellamma Ammavari Kalyana Mahotsavam was conducted with great grandeur at Hanuma Sai Nagar in Uppal. Former Uppal Division Corporator Mandamula Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy participated in the celebrations. The event was organized under the leadership of Sri Suryakala Narvotham Reddy and family. Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy, along with her family members, offered special prayers and sought the blessings of Goddess Renuka Ellamma. She prayed for the people of Uppal to be blessed with peace, prosperity, and happiness through the grace of the Goddess. Devotees participated in large numbers and performed special rituals during the Kalyana Mahotsavam. Speaking on the occasion, the former corporator said that worshipping Sri Renuka Ellamma Thalli fulfills the wishes and aspirations of devotees.

Congress Leaders Assure Resolution of Stadium Issues

“Parameshwar Reddy and Irshad Khan Committed to Solving Public Problems



UPPAL, MAY 13(INDIAN CHRONICAL): “Beerappagadda Division senior Congress leader Irshad Khan (Uppal Khan) visited the Uppal Municipal Indoor and Outdoor Stadiums on Wednesday morning and interacted with walkers, youth, and sportspersons to understand their problems. During the visit, the public informed him that the open gym equipment had been completely damaged and requested the installation of new equipment and flooring mats. Players using the indoor stadium for shuttle badminton also appealed for better facilities, including proper flooring, fans, and painting works. Responding to their concerns, Irshad Khan said that



public health and youth development are priorities for the Congress party. He assured that all the issues would be brought to the notice of Uppal Congress Party In-charge Parameshwar Reddy and that discussions would be held with the concerned officials to ensure quick resolution. He further stated that Parameshwar Reddy has been continuously striving for the development of the constituency and that the Congress party always stands at the forefront in addressing public grievances.

“Staying among the people and fighting for their problems — that is the objective of the Congress party,” Irshad Khan said.

Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Inaugurates New Gangaputra Association Building



“UPPAL , MAY 13(INDIAN CHRONICAL): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy inaugurated the newly constructed Gangaputra Association building in Venkat Reddy Nagar Division under the Uppal constituency. On the oc-

casion, members of the association accorded a grand welcome to the MLA and felicitated him. Addressing the gathering, Bandari Lakshma Reddy said that he would work for the welfare and development of the Gangaputra community. He stated that continuous efforts are being made to provide essential infrastructure and facilities to every section of society. The MLA said that the new Gangaputra Association building would be highly useful for the association's activities and social service programmes. Local residents and association leaders expressed their gratitude to the MLA and appreciated everyone who contributed to the construction of the building. He also assured the community that he would extend his full support in resolving the issues faced by the Gangaputra community. He urged them to bring any problems to his notice so that he could take them to the government and work towards their resolution. Association members, leaders, BRS party leaders, activists, and local residents participated in the programme.

Chetana Best Cricket Academy Players Selected for HCA Today League



“Bhadrachalam, May 13, INDIAN CHRONICLE: Young cricketers from Chetana Best Cricket Academy in Bhadrachalam of Bhadradi Kothagudem district have been selected for the HCA Today League cricket team, bringing pride to the district's sporting community. Academy players Ratna Aryan, Prasanna Kumar, Harshavardhan Naidu and Suhas secured places in the Khammam district team through their impressive performances. Speaking on the

occasion, academy coaches Charan Teja and Raviteja said the players achieved this milestone through discipline, dedication and continuous practice. They stated that the main objective of Chetana Best Cricket Academy is to identify hidden talent from rural areas and provide quality training to help young players reach higher levels in cricket. The coaches further said that special focus is being given to modern coaching methods and fitness training to prepare players for state and national-level competitions. They added that the outstanding performances of these youngsters at an early age are bringing greater recognition to the academy. Sports experts opined that selection for a prestigious tournament like the HCA Today League would open up better opportunities for the future of these young cricketers. The coaches expressed hope that the players would achieve greater success in the coming years and bring laurels to the district and the state. Sports enthusiasts, parents, local public representatives and academy members congratulated the selected players and expressed happiness over their achievement.

Director of Sainik Welfare Department Brigadier N.R. Babu met the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Telangana today.

“On this occasion, Brigadier N.R. Babu requested the establishment of a Telangana Ex-Servicemen Corporation, to which the Hon'ble Chief Minister responded positively. He instructed the Chief Minister's Office staff to prepare the necessary framework and procedures. He also suggested collecting information on how Ex-Servicemen Corporations function in other states, including their policies and operational models, and proposed holding a meeting soon to discuss the matter further. Brigadier N.R. Babu also brought to the Chief Minister's attention the need to convene the Rajya Sainik Board meeting, for which the Chief Minister of Telangana is the Chairman. Responding positively, the Hon'ble Chief Minister stated that feasibility to conduct the meeting would definitely be looked in to. Brigadier N.R. Babu further requested the early issuance of orders related to the constitution of the State Managing Committee, chaired by the Hon'ble Governor. The Chief Minister assured that the government would issue the necessary orders soon. The Chief Minister also stated that if there are any additional issues concerning ex-ser-



vicemen, detailed proposals should be submitted to his Special Secretary, and appropriate action would be taken after review. He reiterated that the government is sincerely committed to the welfare of ex-servicemen. Brigadier N.R. Babu expressed his gratitude to the Hon'ble Chief Minister for allocating time and responding positively to the concerns of ex-servicemen. Chief Minister's Special Secretary Shri Ajit Reddy and Regional Sainik Welfare Officer Srinesh Kumar Nori were also present at the meeting.

Committed to the Development of Sainikpuri at All Times – Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy



“UPPAL , MAY 13(INDIAN CHRONICAL): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy inaugurated park development works organized by the Sainikpuri Park Welfare Association in Sainikpuri. On this occasion, he stated that ₹25 lakh funds are being utilized for the construction of wash-rooms and CC road development works around the park. The MLA said that his primary goal is to provide better amenities to the people of the area and assured that they are always committed to the development of Sainikpuri. He mentioned that the development works would greatly benefit senior citizens, women, and children visiting the park. He also expressed full support for the initiatives undertaken by the Welfare Association and appreciated the development activities being carried out by the Sainik Welfare Association. The programme was attended by BRS party leader Bairi Naveen Goud, Welfare Association members, local leaders, colony residents, and public representatives.

DCC President 'Inagala' Attends 'Indiramma' House Inaugurations



“Sangem, May 13 (Indian Chronicle) : Housewarming ceremonies for newly constructed 'Indiramma' homes were held with grandeur on Wednesday across several villages in Sangem mandal. Hanumakonda District Congress Committee President and KUDA Chairman Inagala Venkatram Reddy attended the events as the chief guest and formally inaugurated the houses by cutting the ribbon along with the beneficiaries. He participated in the housewarming ceremony of beneficiary Kothapelli Rakesh from Thimmapur village and performed special prayers on the occasion. Later, he visited Ramachandrapuram village to inaugurate the newly built 'Indiramma' house of Velpula Srinu and shared the joy with the beneficiary's family members. Speaking on the occasion, he said the government is implementing the 'Indiramma' housing scheme as a prestigious initiative with the objective of fulfilling the dream of home ownership for the poor. He stated that the process of sanctioning houses to all eligible poor families is continuing without interruption and reaffirmed the government's commitment to the welfare of the underprivileged. He wished that the families of Kothapelli Rakesh and Velpula Srinu, who are stepping into their new homes, be blessed with good health, happiness, and prosperity. Mandal leaders, local Congress party representatives, and party workers also participated in the programme and conveyed their greetings to the beneficiaries.

BRSV stages protest against NEET paper leak

GNS News Agency, May 13

Karimnagar: BRSV activists staged a protest demonstration at Telangana Chowk here on Wednesday against the alleged leakage of the NEET question paper. BRSV workers, led by former libraries chairman Ponnani Anil Kumar Goud, burnt an effigy of the Union government.

Speaking on the occasion, they alleged that the NEET paper was leaked due to the negligence of the Central government. It was a failure of the Union government, they said. Alleging that the National Testing Agency had completely failed in conducting the examination, they demanded the resignation of NTA Director General as well as Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Third Day of Praja Palana Vidya Varotsavam Successfully Conducted at Government Degree College, Uppal



“UPPAL , MAY 13(INDIAN CHRONICAL): As part of the Telangana Government’s prestigious Praja Palana Pragathi Pranalika, the third day of the Vidya Varotsavam was conducted successfully and enthusiastically at Government Degree College, Uppal. “As part of the programme, an awareness rally was organized on Wednesday from the local vegetable market to the bus stand, promoting the reduction of plastic usage and encouraging people to reuse plastic items multiple times instead of using them only once. “College Principal Dr. K. Vijay Kumar attended the event as the chief guest and urged people to minimize plastic usage. He said that if plastic must be used, it should be reused multiple times rather than discarded after a single use. He also advised the public not to throw plastic waste indiscriminately and explained that crushed plastic sent to dumping yards can be recycled and reused. “During the programme, Head of the Computer Science Department and Assistant Professor Dr. Yamuna Rani conducted an awareness session for both teaching and non-teaching staff

on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Using a digital board, she demonstrated practically how AI can be utilized in teaching methods and how it can benefit non-teaching staff as well. “Speaking on the occasion, CSR Funding Mobilization Committee Convener Dr. G. Tirupathiah expressed happiness over felicitating local philanthropist Krishna Reddy and his son Vamsi for donating an RO water plant to the college under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. He also appreciated Habsiguda Malabar Gold showroom management for providing scholarships worth ₹2.60 lakh to 40 girl students studying in the college and hoped they would continue extending support to the institution in the future. “Vice Principal C.H. Satyanarayana, NSS Programme Officer Vishwanath Kumar, Academic Coordinator Geetha, Economics Professor Dr. Rajashri, Dr. Srinivas, Dr. Chandrasagar, Dr. Vijay Kumar, Geetha, along with other teaching and non-teaching staff, participated in the programme and made the third day of the Praja Palana Vidya Varotsavam a grand success.”

Let Us Unite and Fight for Workers’ Rights — Dasyam Vinay Bhaskar



Hanumakonda, May 13 (Indian Chronicle) : Former BRS MLA Dasyam Vinay Bhaskar alleged that both the Central and State governments are neglecting the rights of employees and workers. On Wednesday, he unveiled a poster after participating in a Workers’ Rights Awareness Month meeting held along with trade union leaders at the Bharat Rashtra Samithi district office in Balasamudram, Hanumakonda. “Speaking on the occasion, Vinay Bhaskar said that for the past eight years, Labour Month programmes have been conducted in May to strive for the protection and realization of workers’ and employees’ rights. He stated that this year’s Awareness Month is also being organized with the objective of educating workers and employees about their rights. “He demanded the repeal of the four Labour

Codes introduced by the Central Government and called upon workers from both organized and unorganized sectors to unite in safeguarding their rights. He pointed out that even basic entitlements such as equal pay for equal work, minimum working hours, ESI, and PF facilities are still not reaching lakhs of workers. In view of the governments’ neglect of workers’ welfare, he said awareness campaigns would be taken directly to workplaces and workers would be mobilized to participate in the struggle. “BRTU leader Nayini Ravi stated that the fight in support of workers is continuing under the leadership of Dasayam Vinay Bhaskar. He urged that labour laws be extended and effectively implemented for gig workers as well. He also demanded that the government fulfill the promises made during the elections and withdraw its decision to reclaim the land allocated for workers’ welfare in Hanumakonda town. “Three-Wheeler Auto Union President Isampelli Sanjeev said that although the government had promised ₹12,000 annual assistance to auto drivers during the elections, the assurance remains unfulfilled even after three years. He noted that auto drivers are facing severe hardships due to the free bus scheme and demanded the establishment of a separate corporation for auto workers. “Leaders from various trade unions, including Raju, Gorre Vijay, MD Ismail, Doolam Venkanna, Punnam Chander, Khalil, Sadanandam, Panuganti Sridhar, Mahender, Sridhar Reddy, Babu, Srilatha, Vijaya, and Lakshmi, participated in the programme.

Collector asks millers to expedite paddy unloading

Seeks additional labourers and transport vehicles to speed up procurement.



KARIMNAGAR May 13 (Correspondent): District Collector Chitra Mishra on Wednesday directed rice millers to speed up the unloading of procured paddy to ensure faster movement of stocks from procurement centres and improve the overall pace of procurement operations in the district. During a surprise inspection of Sri Sai Srinivasa Rice Mill and R.K. Rice Mill in Renigunta village of Thimmapur mandal, the Collector reviewed the unloading process and examined the quantity of paddy allotted to the mills and the

stocks received so far.

Interacting with millers and officials, Ms. Mishra stressed the need for close coordination among millers, transporters and procurement centre staff for the smooth completion of procurement operations. She instructed millers to deploy additional hamalis and arrange more transport vehicles to avoid delays. The Collector also warned against raising unnecessary objections during unloading operations and advised mill owners to immediately bring operational issues to the notice of officials for prompt resolution.

Civil Supplies District Manager Rajanikanth briefed the Collector on procurement and transportation details during the inspection. Revenue Divisional Officer Maheshwar and Tahsildar Srinivas Reddy accompanied her. Collector reviews maize procurement centres Earlier, the Collector inspected maize procurement operations at Venkepally in Saidapur mandal and paddy procurement activities at Duddenapalli village.

She reviewed details relating to the quantity of produce received, weighed and transported to mills and enquired about the availability of tarpaulins, transport vehicles and labourers at the centres. Directing officials to ensure basic amenities for farmers at procurement centres, Ms. Mishra asked centre in-charges to maintain constant coordination with senior officials to speed up procurement and address labour and transportation-related issues without delay. She also instructed officials to keep police and revenue authorities informed about operational issues to facilitate timely intervention. Tahsildar Srinivas Goud was present during the inspection.

MLA K.R. Nagaraju Performs Special Prayers at Newly Built Durgamma Temple in DC Thanda

“Wardhannapet, May 13 : K. R. Nagaraju, MLA of Wardhannapet constituency, offered special prayers on Wednesday at the newly constructed Durga temple in DC Thanda of Ward No. 6 under the limits of Wardhannapet Municipality. “He received a warm welcome from temple committee members and residents of the thanda. Participating in the rituals, the MLA prayed for the health, prosperity, and well-being of all people. “Speaking on the occasion, he said that a spiritual atmosphere in rural areas fosters unity and devotion among people. He noted that temples stand as symbols of social harmony and emphasized that spiritual progress should go hand in hand with rural development. “Among those present were Market Committee Chairman Narukudu Venkataiah, Municipal Vice Chairman Netavat Shibarani–Rajender, Ward 6 Councillor Malothu Devender, Ward 1 Councillor Bejjam Paparao, Ward 4 Councillor Nunavat Kamli–Keema Naik, Mandal Party President Eddu Satyanarayana, along with Poshala



Venkanna, Anwar, Rajitha, Tarabai, Srikanth, local leaders, party workers, residents of the thanda, and temple committee members.

We will give due recognition to party workers who worked hard for the party

At the Municipal Co-option members election program..
MLA congratulates unanimously elected co-option members.. “

“Indian Chronicle Vikarabad (may 13)“Tandur MLA Buyyani Manohar Reddy said the party will never forget workers who worked hard for the party. On Wednesday, at the Tandur Municipal Office, in the presence of MLA Manohar Reddy, four co-option members were unanimously elected by the Congress party in the co-option elections conducted by municipal officials. “The four candidates announced by the Congress party: “1. Mengari Subhash (15th Ward), “2. Mohammed Raheem (10th Ward), “3. Chinolla Saritha Hari Goud (13th Ward), “4. Aafreen Javeria Anwar Ahmad Khan (17th Ward) “were unanimously elected as co-option members by the party councillors and other councillors. “Later, MLA Manohar Reddy felicitated the newly elected co-option members and extended his best wishes to them. Mengari Subhash from the 15th Ward, Mohammed Raheem from the 10th Ward, Chinolla Saritha Hari Goud from the 13th Ward, and Aafreen Javeria Anwar Ahmad Khan from the 17th Ward were unanimously elected as new co-option members. “Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said those who worked hard for the party’s victory in the municipal elections were unanimously elected as co-option members. He said that in the future, remaining leaders will be given due recognition in the party at the appropriate time.



ate time. “Municipal Chairperson Neeraja Bal Reddy, Vice Chairman Abdul Razaq, Commissioner Madhusudan Reddy, councillors, and co-option members were present at the program.

Every Household Data is a Stepping Stone to National Development --MLA K.R. Nagaraju, Collector Chahat Bajpai



“Hanumakonda, May 13 (Indian Chronicle): Wardhannapet constituency MLA and retired IPS officer K.R. Nagaraju has stated that a census is crucial for the effective implementation of welfare schemes and development programmes in line with public needs. “He was speaking after participating, along with District Collector Chahat Bajpai, in a public awareness rally on the census held from Kakatiya University Crossroads Circle to Bhimaram Circle

in Hanumakonda city. “Slogans highlighting national development, public participation, and the importance of accurate data drew attention throughout the rally. A human chain was also formed during the event, where participants took a pledge stating that they would take part in “Census–2027,” voluntarily provide family details, and contribute to national development. “Speaking on the occasion, MLA Nagaraju said that the census is not merely a numerical exercise but forms the foundation for future development planning. He noted that this decennial exercise helps in assessing living conditions, public needs, and key development indicators in a comprehensive manner. He added that the census, which was delayed due to COVID-19, has been resumed by the Telangana government and is being implemented with special focus under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. He appealed to all citizens to participate responsibly and provide accurate information. “He further explained that data obtained through the census would help in planning development activities in rural and urban areas, including education, healthcare, roads, drinking water, housing, employment opportunities, and welfare of women and children. He urged the public to extend full cooperation to census officials and provide precise details. “He emphasized that every citizen’s participation is essential in building a developed India, and that the census is a key step in that direction. “A large number of officials and public representatives participated in the rally, including Additional Commissioner Chandrasekhar, Deputy Commissioners Birru Srinivas, Prasanna Rani, and Sammayya, CMHO Dr. Rajireddy, various municipal department officials and staff, MEPMA members, students, representatives of voluntary organizations, members of the Telangana Cultural Department troupe, political leaders, party workers, and local residents.

Prepare High-Capacity Warehouses for Maize Storage:



District Collector Divakar TS “Intensive transportation of maize from procurement centers must be undertaken “Adequate hamalis (load workers) should be arranged to speed up the storage process “Special monitoring measures on maize storage arrangements in warehouses of other districts “District Collector inspects maize transportation and storage process at Agricultural Market in Khammam Three Town “Khammam, May 13 (Indian Chronicle): “District Collector Divakar TS stated that, in addition to the warehouses currently available, additional high-capacity warehouses are being prepared for storing maize procured by the government through Markfed in the district. “On Wednesday, the District Collector conducted a surprise inspection of the maize storage process at the Agricultural Market in Khammam Three Town. Along with Additional Collector P. Srinivas Reddy, he reviewed the transportation of procured maize from procurement centers to warehouses. The Collector also gave several instructions to officials regarding maize storage capacity and available facilities in the chilli and cotton markets. “Speaking on the occasion, Collector Divakar TS directed officials to ensure rapid transportation of maize from procurement cen-



ters to warehouses. He instructed them to arrange sufficient hamalis so that the storage process continues without interruption. He emphasized that maize procurement, transportation, and storage activities should be carried out in coordination to avoid any inconvenience to farmers. “The Collector instructed officials to provide all necessary facilities at warehouses and speed up the storage process. He also ordered an increase in the number of hamalis to accelerate the unloading of lorries. Officials were advised to ensure proper coordination so that maize is unloaded immediately upon the arrival of lorries. “He further directed officials to identify and fully utilize all available government and private storage warehouses in the district. Measures should be taken to enhance storage capacity and prevent any difficulties for farmers. “The Collector stressed that officials should continuously monitor the maize storage and transportation process and remain alert to ensure that farmers do not face any problems. “Khammam Agricultural Market Committee Chairman Hanumantha Rao, Vice Chairman Tallada Ramesh, District Marketing Officer Aleem, officials from concerned departments, market staff, and others participated in the program.

Govind Rao Elected as All India Assistant General Secretary at

“Khammam, Nelakondapalli, May 13 (Indian Chronicle): “Kanthala Govind Rao has been elected as the All India Assistant General Secretary of the National Union of Branch Postmasters (GDS). The All India-level union committee was elected on Wednesday during a three-day conference held in Mysuru. “Govind Rao, a Branch Postmaster from Koratlagudem village in Nelakondapalli mandal of Khammam district, was unanimously elected to the post. “Speaking on the occasion, he said that he would fight at the grassroots level for union-related issues. He also stated that he would lead agitations and movements regarding the problems faced by Branch Postmasters. “Union leaders, public representatives, and others expressed happiness over Govind Rao’s election.



Village-Level Public Representatives’ Participation Crucial for Educational Development - MLA K.R. Nagaraju



*****Vardhannapet/Warangal, May 13 (Indian Chronicle) : As part of the Praja Palana – Pragati Pranalika 99-day action plan and on the occasion of Special Education Week celebrations, a workshop was conducted on Wednesday at the Vardhannapet Municipal Council Hall to create awareness among sarpanches, councillors, and public representatives about school education programmes. The workshop was organized by the District Education Department. Vardhannapet MLA and retired IPS officer K.R. Nagaraju, along with Warangal District Collector Satya Sharada (IAS), attended the programme. “Speaking on the occasion, MLA K.R. Nagaraju said that the State Government is giving top priority to the education sector. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, several reforms are being implemented to modernize government schools and provide qual-

ity education to students. He emphasized that education is the foundation of societal progress and that comprehensive development is possible only when educational growth takes place in every village. “He underlined that the active involvement of gram panchayats, municipalities, and local public representatives is essential for strengthening government schools. School development, he noted, is not the sole responsibility of teachers; meaningful results can be achieved only when parents, public representatives, and local institutions work together. He advised sarpanches to frequently monitor the condition of schools in their villages and pay special attention to student attendance, cleanliness, drinking water facilities, toilets, and the quality of the mid-day meal. “He also called for awareness programmes at the village level to cultivate students’ interest in education. The Special Education Week, he said, not only encourages students towards learning but also enhances social responsibility towards schools. He urged everyone to work collectively to transform government schools into centers of public trust. “The MLA further stated that the State Government’s Praja Palana – Pragati Pranalika is serving as a guiding framework for grassroots development and that all departments are implementing measures to bring governance closer to the people. “Municipal Chairman Palakurthi Sarangapani, Vice Chairman Netavat Shibharani–Rajender, FAC Chairman Rajesh Khanna, Market Committee Chairman Narakudu Venkataiah, councillors Bezzam Paparao, Nunavat Kamli–Keema Nayak, Maloth Devender, Tirupelli Vani–Kumaraswamy, ZP CEO Ram Reddy, RDO Suma, MPDO, MEO, Town Party President Maisa Suresh, party leaders, workers, and other public representatives participated in the programme.

Accurate data collection stressed during census inspections

Residents urged to cooperate with census officials during household survey.



KARIMNAGAR May 13 (Correspondent): The first phase of the 2027 Census is progressing at a brisk pace within the limits of the Karimnagar Municipal Corporation, with officials intensifying field-level inspections to ensure

accuracy in data collection and mapping activities. District Census in-charge Tirupati on Wednesday visited Kashmir Gadda, Chaitanyapuri and Ramnagar areas in the city and reviewed the ongoing census operations. He inspected the house list block boundaries allotted for enumeration and examined the progress of house list block numbering and digital mapping undertaken by enumerators and supervisors.

During the inspection, he issued instructions to field staff to ensure that the census process is conducted in a systematic and error-free manner. Addressing officials, Tirupati said that enumerators and supervisors should collect information from every household accurately under the objective of “Census for Development.” He observed that population enumeration plays a key role in planning and national development. He appealed to residents to cooperate with enumerators and furnish accurate details during the survey. Those who had completed self-enumeration were advised to present their identification details to officials visiting their households for verification. He also directed officials to complete the house list block mapping and CN house numbering process within the stipulated timeframe to expedite the census exercise. Municipal Corporation Town Planning officials, ACP Sridhar, TPBO Khader Mohiuddin, enumerators and supervisors participated in the inspection programme.

Be Alert Against Cyber Crimes: Uppal Police Station SHO Y. Ramalinga Reddy

“UPPAL , MAY 13(INDIAN CHRONICAL):“Uppal Police Station House Officer Y. Ramalinga Reddy urged citizens to remain vigilant against the increasing cyber crimes in society. An awareness seminar on cyber safety was organized on Wednesday evening at Kalabhairava Temple in Uppal Bagayat under his leadership. “Speaking on the occasion, the SHO explained the precautions people should take to avoid becoming victims of cyber fraud. He said that while playing mobile games like Candy Crush, users often come across “free gift” offers while progressing from one level to another. Out of excitement, many people click on such offers without thinking, which may redirect them to dangerous websites and encourage the download of unauthorized applications. “He strongly advised people never to share their personal OTPs with anyone under any circumstances. He also warned the public to be cautious about calls or messages offering to increase credit card limits. For any financial concerns or banking-related issues, he suggested directly visiting the bank branch and consulting the manager for safe guidance. “Ramalinga Reddy further stated that downloading unauthorized applications could lead



to theft of personal information and emphasized that everyone must act responsibly towards cyber security. “The programme was attended by Uppal Police Station Admin SI Madhava Reddy, Kalabhairava Temple Chairman Poojala Prabhakar, BJP senior leader Shamirpet Dharma Reddy, along with presidents of various colonies and a large number of local residents.

Uppal Youth Congress President Akarapu Arun Patel Participates in Massive Protest Against NEET Paper Leak



Effigies of PM Modi and Dharmendra Pradhan Burnt; Demand for Resignations”

*****UPPAL , MAY 13(INDIAN CHRONICAL): Under the leadership of Telangana Youth Congress, a massive protest was organized against the alleged NEET paper leak issue. Uppal Youth Congress President Akarapu Arun Patel participated in the protest along with several Youth Congress leaders from Uppal. “The protest program was attended by Telangana Youth Congress State President Jakkidi Shivacharan Reddy as the chief guest. The demonstration was held near the Ambedkar statue at Himayatnagar, where Youth Congress activists staged a large-scale agitation condemning the NEET paper leak. “As part of the protest, demonstrators burnt effigies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, accusing the Central Government of failing to prevent repeated examination paper leaks. “Speaking on the occasion, Jakkidi Shivacharan Reddy stated that the NEET paper leak had pushed the future of nearly 22 lakh students into uncertainty. He alleged that repeated paper leaks during the Modi government’s tenure reflected serious negligence by the Centre. He further claimed that over the past ten years, 89 paper leak incidents had occurred, leading to re-examinations on 48 occasions, which he described as shameful. “He demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan immediately resign, taking responsibility for the incident. A large number of Youth Congress leaders and activists from Uppal participated in the protest program.

Modi’s Policies Are Dangerous for the Country

Farmers in the State Are DissatisfiedPhased Agitation Demanding Cancellation of VBJ Ram G Scheme”“CPI District Council Meeting Addressed by Bagam Hemanth Rao”



Khammam, May 13 (Indian Chronicle): “CPI National Council member Bagam Hemanth Rao stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s policies are dangerous for the country and that BJP victories in state elections should not be interpreted as public approval of Modi’s governance. He said several hidden factors contributed to the BJP’s electoral success. “A meeting of the Communist Party of India Khammam district committee was held on Wednesday at the local CPI office under the chairmanship of Pavuluri Mallikarjun. Addressing the meeting, Hemanth Rao alleged that voter deletions, the conduct of the Election Commission, inducements, and other factors played a role in the BJP’s victory. “He said prices are rising across the country and accused the BJP of promoting the idea that every problem is merely the result of “karma” instead of addressing people’s issues. According to him, the BJP gains political advantage by creating divisions among people through Hindutva slogans rather than solving real problems. “Hemanth Rao described the Labour Codes and the “VBJ Ram G” scheme as anti-people policies. He said workers across the country are already protesting against the Labour Codes and that laborers around the national capital, Delhi, are preparing for continuous agitations. “He

further stated that the Communist Party strongly opposes the VBJ Ram G scheme and demanded its cancellation. He called for the continued implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in its original form. He said the party has launched phased protests and that agitations beginning on the 15th of this month will continue until the scheme is withdrawn. “Hemanth Rao said farmers in the state are highly dissatisfied. He blamed the situation on the incomplete implementation of the Rythu Bharosa scheme and the government’s failure in procuring paddy and maize. Due to severe delays in maize procurement, farmers are facing additional financial burdens, he said. Even after more than two months, not a single rupee has been deposited into maize farmers’ accounts. “He added that paddy farmers are also in a miserable condition. Farmers are allegedly facing deductions of up to 10 kilograms per quintal, while procurement operations are taking days to complete. Transportation and export expenses have also become a heavy burden on farmers. “He accused the state government of failing to act in a planned and organized manner, which he said led to the current crisis. He demanded that the government immediately expand procurement operations on a large scale and address farmers’ hardships to reduce growing dissatisfaction. “Hemanth Rao also advised party members to focus on strengthening organizational structures and work toward reinforcing party-affiliated mass organizations. “District Secretary Dandi Suresh presented the activity report during the meeting. CPI State Control Commission Chairman Mohammed Moulana, District Assistant Secretary Jammula Jitender Reddy, and others participated in the meeting. “

Action to resolve every grievance petition within three months with accountability

State Revenue, Housing, and Information & Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy



“Second phase of Indiramma Houses allotment to begin from June 2”“70,000 jobs filled through transparent examinations without any paper leaks”“Dharani and Sada Bainama issues to be resolved through Bhu Bharati”Minister Ponguleti participated in Praja Darbar program held at Jeellacheruvu village in Kusumanchi Mandal”“Khammam, Kusumanchi, May 13 (Indian Chronicle): “State Revenue, Housing, and Information & Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy stated that the Praja Darbar program has become an effective platform for resolving public grievances and that steps have been taken to ensure every application is addressed with accountability within three months. “On Wednesday, Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy participated in the Praja Darbar program organized as part of the 99-day Praja Palana Pragathi Pranalika initiative at Jeellacheruvu village in Kusumanchi Mandal, along with District Collector Divakar T.S. and Additional Collector P. Srinivas Reddy. “Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that soon after the formation of the people’s government, officials were sent directly to the public to receive applications regarding grievances and initiate measures for their resolution. “As the government is nearing completion of two-and-a-half years in office, the Praja Palana Pragathi Pranalika program has been launched by dividing every mandal into three clusters and conducting Praja Darbar meetings. He noted that programs in 10 clusters have already been completed successfully. “The Minister emphasized that officials must work with complete accountability on every application received. While some issues can be resolved immediately, others may take some time. However, he assured that all eligible applications would be resolved within three months as per rules and regulations. “The Minister stated that the government is implementing the promises made to the people. Schemes such as free bus travel for women, supply of fine rice through ration cards, 200 units of free electricity for poor families, and issuance of new ration cards are being implemented successfully. “To support farmers, the government has waived loans worth ₹21,000 crore benefiting 2.5 million farmers and increased Rythu Bharosa assistance to ₹12,000 per acre. He said that paddy produced by farmers is being procured at Minimum Support Price (MSP), and an additional bonus of ₹500 per quintal is being provided for fine varieties of paddy. “The Minister said that during the past ten years, houses were not provided to the poor, whereas the present government sanctioned 450,000 Indiramma houses in the very first phase itself. Funds are



being directly credited into beneficiaries’ bank accounts every Monday. He announced that the second phase of Indiramma house allotments would begin from June 2, followed by the third and fourth phases. He clarified that houses would be provided to every poor family irrespective of political affiliation. “He noted that a majority of applications received in Praja Darbar programs are related to Indiramma housing, attributing this to the previous government’s failure to construct houses. Since funds are being directly transferred into beneficiaries’ accounts, public confidence in the government has increased, he added. “The Minister said that all Dharani-related issues would be resolved through the Bhu Bharati initiative, and applications related to Sada Bainama land issues would also be addressed based on eligibility. He announced that special measures would be taken within the next month to resolve pending Sada Bainama land disputes. “The Minister stated that 70,000 jobs have been provided to unemployed youth. After the Congress government came to power, examinations were conducted transparently and without leaks, ensuring justice for meritorious candidates. “Referring to the NEET examination paper leak in “double-engine government” states, he said that 2.3 million students across the country and around 70,000 students in Telangana were affected. He demanded that the Central Government take stringent action against those responsible for the NEET paper leak. “He further stated that during the previous government’s tenure, many students suffered due to Group examination paper leaks and errors in Intermediate evaluation. After the Congress government assumed office, transparent examinations were conducted without leaks, ensuring fairness to deserving candidates and resulting in the recruitment of 70,000 employees. “District Collector Divakar T.S. said that the Praja Darbar programs organized under the Praja Palana Pragathi Pranalika initiative are receiving an overwhelming response from the public. He assured continuous follow-up on every application to ensure resolution of grievances and appealed to the public to cooperate in the process. “On this occasion, beneficiaries from the village expressed happiness over the government’s welfare programs. Beneficiaries stated that sanction of Indiramma houses fulfilled their dream of owning a home. Women said that interest-free loans to women’s self-help groups had significantly improved their financial condition. “Additional Collector P. Srinivas Reddy, district officials, RDO Srinivas, officials of various departments, public representatives, sarpanches, villagers, and others participated in the program. “Issued by the District Public Relations Officer’s Office, Khammam”

Farmers Should Not Burn Crop Residue

Agriculture Officer Narasimha Rao Creating Awareness Among Farmers Across the Mandal”

“Khammam, Enkoor, May 13 (Indian Chronicle): “Agriculture Officer Narasimha Rao organized a farmers’ meeting in Gangula Nacharam village under the Nacharam cluster of the mandal headquarters and appealed to farmers not to burn crop residue. “He explained that burning crop residue destroys beneficial microorganisms present in the soil and damages the physical condition of the land. Instead, he advised farmers to mix the crop residue into the soil using a rotavator so that it decomposes naturally, increasing organic matter in the soil and benefiting future crops. “He also advised farmers to purchase seeds only from licensed dealers and warned them not to buy seeds from unauthorized sellers who visit villages at night. Farmers were instructed to preserve seed purchase receipts and seed bags until the end of the season so that they can file complaints with concerned authorities if any issues arise. “The officer further urged all farmers to register in the Farmer Registry to receive the next installment of PM-Kisan benefits. He stated that in the future, fertilizers may also be provided only to farmers registered in the Farmer Registry. “He encouraged farmers to cultivate oil palm crops to earn monthly income and suggested growing intercrops during the first four years to generate additional earnings. He mentioned that the current price of oil palm is above 23,000, making it a profitable crop for farmers. “Farmers were also advised to

update their phone numbers in the Rythu Bharosa system in order to use the Urea App. Those who have changed their phone numbers were asked to contact the Agricultural Extension Officer for updating their details. “He instructed farmers to buy cotton seeds only from licensed dealers and warned that if anyone is found roaming in villages under the



name of advance booking for seeds, farmers should immediately inform the concerned Agriculture Officer, AEO, or the police. “The program was attended by AO Narasimha Rao, AEO Ashok, and local farmers.

He disappeared after bludgeoning his wife with a brick. 40 years later, Delhi cops found him.



GNS News Agency, May 13

A suspect, a misspelled name of a village in Bihar's Nalanda district: This was all a Delhi Police Crime Branch team had when they reopened a 40-year-old murder case in late March and pulled out a copy of the FIR from the records. From its damaged pages, they managed to piece together the events of October 19, 1986. The man they were looking for, Chander Shekhar Prasad, was 44 years old then. He was a cardboard businessman. Before entering the business, he'd worked as a compositor at a prominent English newspaper in Delhi. Prasad lived with his family — his wife, two sons aged 10 and 8, and a three-year-old daughter — in East Delhi's Shakarpur School Block. Police said he'd also employed a 24*7 helper, Luv Kumar, paying him Rs 350 a month, a substantial amount at the time. On that evening of October 19, Prasad, along with two aides, allegedly smashed his wife's head and face with a brick — he suspected she was having an affair. His three children lay sleeping in another room, Kumar was confined to the house at gunpoint. Prasad then escaped. He had been declared a proclaimed offender in 1987, and efforts to trace him continued until 1990 before the case went cold. Over the years, Prasad's old home was sold. Multiple commercial buildings have now come up at the site. And none of the current residents remember the gruesome crime. At the time, police had established a motive. They knew that Prasad and his wife fought over his suspicions that she was being unfaithful. So, it was not an entirely blind case for them. "The main suspect had already been identified but he was never arrested. We had no photograph or any other details except the name of his village, Bhikhani Bigha, in Nalanda," a police officer involved in the investigation said, adding that the records misspelled the name as Bikani Bigha.

A team was formed by DCP (Crime) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav and led by Inspector Sunil Kumar Kalkhande, under the supervision of ACP (Central Range) Satendra Mohan. It comprised SI Birpal Singh and head constables Vijay Singh, Jai Singh, Praveen, Rahul, Samander and Anoop. One of the head constables, who is also from Bihar, was sent to the village as he knew the area but hit a wall initially. Relatives and locals told us Prasad no longer lived there. They also claimed they didn't know where his children were," an officer said. Despite the lack of leads, the head constable continued to camp in the village. "A person may migrate anywhere but he rarely cuts off all ties with his

hometown. That hunch eventually helped us," added the officer. After a week, they got a breakthrough. Someone known to the family told the head constable that Prasad's children were placed in an orphanage in Bihar by relatives from their mother's side. The team then traced the maternal side of the family and obtained details of the children. Police then tracked down one of Prasad's sons in Delhi. The other son was also living in Delhi with his family, while the daughter was married and living in Bihar.

Investigators discovered that Prasad remained in touch with his sons. "We kept an eye on them because we suspected they were in contact with their father. Their mobile numbers were discreetly obtained and placed under surveillance. While analysing their call detail records, a number appeared repeatedly. We called the number multiple times but it was switched off," another officer said. When they checked details of the SIM card, they found it was not registered in Prasad's name. Police, however, said they grew suspicious after noticing that its location frequently coincided with a factory in Delhi's Alipur where one of the sons worked. Police also learnt that the user of the number was an elderly man who periodically travelled from an ashram in Haryana to stay at the factory. Police said a trap was laid on April 22. The team members spent at least two hours scouting the factory to ascertain that Prakash was inside. "We decided to pose as officials conducting a survey for the 2027 Census, since census-related fieldwork had already begun in parts of the city... we didn't want him to find out we were cops and clam up," said an officer part of the team.

The policemen began asking workers their names and other details for the 'survey'. Among them, an 84-year-old man said he was called 'Chandu Chacha' by other workers. "We insisted he tell his full name and other details so we could add it to our records... he managed to call his son and said some government officials had come for a survey..." the officer said. By now, the team was suspicious and took Prasad in for questioning — and he eventually admitted to the 1986 crime. He was later produced before a court and handed over to Shakarpur police station. According to police, Prasad's son later told investigators that his father had long claimed he had served time for the murder. Although the family believed him initially, they continued to harbour doubts. Police said Prasad told them that after killing his wife, he fled to Patiala in Punjab, where he worked as a daily wage labourer, before shifting to Moga and later moving across Haryana. He reportedly stayed at different ashrams in Kurukshetra, Panipat and Sonipat over the years. Police also found that he had sold his ancestral properties in Bihar through relatives and used the money to sustain himself while on the run. Crime Branch officials said Prasad disclosed during questioning that he remembered little about the case now; his memory had reportedly weakened with age. He claimed the associates who helped him commit the murder had died. So had Kumar, the help he had hired. Police, though, are still trying to trace surviving witnesses linked to the case. "He admitted that he had become confident he would never be caught after evading arrest for nearly 40 years," the officer said.

UT Admn's letter seeks release of frozen accounts; HC asks 'under what authority'



GNS News Agency, May 13

The plea said that three FIRs were registered in connection with the alleged fraud by the Haryana Anti-Corruption Bureau, and FIR Nos 2 and 3 of 2026 by Chandigarh authorities. The plea said that three FIRs were registered in connection with the alleged fraud by the Haryana Anti-Corruption Bureau, and FIR Nos 2 and 3 of 2026 by Chandigarh authorities. The Punjab and Haryana High Court Monday asked the Chandigarh Administration to explain "under what authority in law" it had issued a letter dated May 2, 2026, after the CBI took over the investigation in two FIRs — linked to the alleged multi-crore IDFC First Bank fraud case. The court questioned the UT administration over its communications to banks seeking release of frozen accounts, even after the investigation had been transferred to the CBI.

Hearing a writ petition filed by the IDFC FIRST Bank, the division bench of Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Sanjiv Berry observed, "Counsel for UT Administration... is required to seek instructions in regard to letter dated May 2, 2026, especially in the backdrop that when investigation in FIRs No 02 and 03 dated March 9, 2026 and March 12, 2026, respectively, both registered at Economic Offences Police Station, Sector 17, Chandigarh, was transferred to CBI on April 27, 2026, then under what authority in law, the UT Administration had issued this letter dated May 02, 2026."

Appearing for the petitioner bank — IDFC First Bank, Senior Advocate R S Rai, along with Advocates Rubina Vermani, Sukriti Rai and Arjun S Rai, argued that the bank was "a victim of a complex, large-scale financial fraud involving misappropriation of... funds from bank accounts of its customers primarily being government department accounts of Haryana and Chandigarh perpetrated by certain individuals in connivance with public officials". The plea said that three FIRs were registered in connection with the alleged fraud by the Haryana Anti-Corruption Bureau, and FIR Nos 2 and 3 of 2026 by Chandigarh authorities. It also submitted that on April 8, 2026, the Haryana ACB investigation was transferred to the CBI, which re-registered the matter.

Referring to the steps taken after the alleged fraud surfaced, Rai submitted before the HC that it had filed NCRP complaints on February 22 and March 5, 2026, "to aid in identification of the money trail", adding that "hereafter, liens have been marked on various beneficiary accounts which have received the money transferred from the government department accounts". The petitioner bank, through counsels, further sought issuance of directions "to safeguard and prevent dissipation of the amounts in the bank accounts of beneficiaries of the fraud/recipients of funds identified and lien marked through the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre ('I4C') pursuant to the Petitioner's complaints on the National Crime Reporting Portal ('NCRP')". The bank also sought directions to enable authorities "to identify the money obtained through fraud/proceeds of crime and initiate appropriate proceedings to seize/attach in accordance with law". The High Court on the matter repeatedly asked the UT Administration to explain the legal basis for the communications. "So, this investigation stands transferred to the CBI... CBI is seized with the investigation," the Bench observed orally during the hearing. Questioning the continuation of correspondence by the Chandigarh Police, the court also remarked orally: "What authority that the UT Administration had to issue this letter after the transfer?"

North Korean hackers using AI to find cybersecurity blind spots: Google

GNS News Agency, May 13 Seoul: State-sponsored hackers from North Korea and China have demonstrated "significant interest" in leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) to detect previously unknown cybersecurity vulnerabilities, Alphabet's Google said in a report on Tuesday. "We noted a particular interest from several clusters of threat activity associated with the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)," Google's threat intelligence group said in the report, referring to North Korea by its official name, the DPRK.

They have already shown sophisticated approaches to leveraging AI for vulnerability research, the report said, noting a recent attempt from North Korea's hacking group APT45, reports Yonhap news agency.

The North Korean hackers leveraged AI to send thousands of repetitive prompts that recursively analyse different cybersecurity blind spots for possible exploitation, the report elaborated. The report also noted that it used AI to detect hackers from a criminal group using a "zero-day

exploit," which they planned to use in a "mass exploitation," and blocked it. Zero-day exploits refer to those in which organisations and developers are unaware of them and don't have time to respond before an assailant attacks. The incident marks the first time Google identified attackers using AI to find new vulnerabilities and exploit them on a mass scale. The report comes amid renewed global concerns over cybersecurity, following the introduction of Claude Mythos, the latest AI model from U.S. startup Anthropic, specialising in detecting software security vulnerabilities. Anthropic has decided not to release the model publicly and limited its access to a select number of companies and institutions for defence security testing. Meanwhile, South Korean stocks turned lower late on Tuesday morning after opening at a fresh peak of above 7,900 points and almost touching the unprecedented 8,000-point mark, as investors moved to take profit amid woes over little progress in peace talks between the United States and Iran.

Chandigarh residents oppose plan to merge senior home with mental care facility



GNS News Agency, May 13

Moreover, she said, the UT Social Welfare Department took the decision without any discussion or consultation with the UTTHAAN Group Home Society's governing body and executive committee. Moreover, she said, the UT Social Welfare Department took the decision without any discussion or consultation with the UTTHAAN Group Home Society's governing body and executive committee. The residents of Chandigarh have presented to UT Administrator Gulab Chand Kataria their concerns regarding the new plan to accommodate a Senior Citizens' Home in the same facility as Group Home, Sector 31, meant for individuals suffering from mental illnesses who lack family support. Kanchan Malhotra is a 75-year-old resident of Chandigarh's Sector 27 A, whose daughter (52) suffers from mental illness. Malhotra said the sudden announcement to accommodate both the facilities together is concerning.

Moreover, she said, the UT Social Welfare Department took the decision without any discussion or consultation with the UTTHAAN Group Home Society's governing body and executive committee. "Families like ours are struggling with the hope that our children will live with dignity, safety and security — their rightful entitlement under the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017. Such an undemocratic and insensitive approach towards persons with disabilities is deeply disturbing," the mother said in the representation to the UT administrator. She also said, "From the very beginning, the nodal officer of the Social Welfare Department has kept the terms and conditions for admission to the Group Home extremely rigid — whether it is the exorbitant security deposit, untrained professional staff, lack of vocational and occupational activities or other shortcomings in the facility. Instead of addressing the problems faced by families... nodal officer (the UT Social Welfare Department) is

trying to cover up this failure by diverting the Group Home to the Senior Citizens' Home." Another resident of Haryana's Kalka, Swarleen Kaur, said, "The first admission notice invites applications for admission to a Senior Citizens' Home in Sector 31. This is the same building that was originally constructed as a group home for persons with mental and intellectual disabilities after a sustained effort of over six years by caregivers. The new plan to accommodate senior citizens in a portion of this facility risks taking away a vital and much-needed inclusive space for persons with mental and intellectual disabilities in the Tricity. This was supposed to be the only facility for this vulnerable section of society and hence the diversion is not logical, especially when many government and private senior citizens' homes already operate in the region." "I am also not sure how the administration is planning to equip the group home for two groups with very different needs... the Administration should have focused more on creating awareness. Unfortunately, not only were the caregivers not given insufficient time, but those belonging to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) have also been made ineligible for this group home." Swarleen urged the Administrator to intervene and prevent the diversion of this facility from its original purpose.

"The group home in Chandigarh has been a model for other states, and at a time when mental health requires greater attention and sensitivity, such decisions risk reversing the progress made." The members said this change of Group Home building was never discussed in the UTTHAAN Society meeting. And that there has been no meeting of the UTTHAAN Society since November, 2025. Individuals also said there are several families in Chandigarh Tricity who are looking forward to applying for Group Home admission in the upcoming months. Radhika Singh, Director Social Welfare, told The Indian Express said, "In fact we haven't received as many applications for group homes as we were expecting... So why should we let such a facility go to waste. Moreover right now it's a cold environment. With senior citizens around and integrated activities there will be a more familial environment for both the groups. Though I am new to this department, this is what I have learnt prima facie." The UT Administration is already running two homes for senior citizens in Chandigarh. There is also a specific land parcel allotted in Sector 34 for another senior citizens' home. A few years ago, there was a discussion regarding a possible senior citizens home in the Indra Holiday Home campus in Sector 24 as well.

As EC announces schedule for civic polls in Punjab, parties speed up candidate finalisation

GNS News Agency, May 13

Goyal stated that detailed discussions are being held within the party along with MLA Kulwant Singh, district president Prabhjot Singh and youth leader Parminder Goldy to identify suitable candidates with a strong public connect and service-oriented approach. Goyal stated that detailed discussions are being held within the party along with MLA Kulwant Singh, district president Prabhjot Singh and youth leader Parminder Goldy to identify suitable candidates with a strong public connect and service-oriented approach. With the announcement of the schedule for the upcoming Municipal Corporation and Municipal Council elections in Punjab, political activity has intensified across Mohali as all major parties have started speeding up their preparations and candidate selection process.

According to the election schedule announced by the Election Commission in Chandigarh, nominations for the municipal elections will begin on May 13 and continue till May 16 between 11 am to 5 pm. Polling will be held on May 26 from 8 am to 5 pm, while counting of votes and declaration of results will take place on May 29. Addressing a press conference in Mohali on Monday, Punjab Cabinet Minister Barinder Kumar Goyal said the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) would field candidates who are connected with the public, understand people's concerns and work with a spirit of service. He said the primary responsibility of elected representatives in municipal bodies is public service, whether it relates to sanitation issues in wards or resolving civic problems faced by residents. Goyal stated that detailed discussions are being held within the party along with MLA Kulwant Singh, district president Prabhjot Singh and youth leader Parminder Goldy to identify suitable candidates with a strong public connect and service-oriented approach. He further said Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann has given a clear message that the party is focused on public service rather than power politics. The minister added that the party has fixed clear criteria for ticket distribution and candidates would be selected on the basis of their work, public outreach and commitment towards society. He said several wards have multiple ticket aspirants, but the final decision would be taken after discussions with the party high command and local leadership.

Speaking about women's representation, Goyal said the party believes in giving women genuine opportunities rather than making symbolic claims. He added that deserving women candidates would be fielded not only in reserved

wards but also in general wards if they meet the party's criteria and have a strong background in public service. Responding to allegations levelled by opposition parties, the minister said elections conducted during the AAP government in Punjab had been peaceful and transparent. He termed allegations regarding rejection of nomination papers or interference in the election process as baseless. Goyal also highlighted the Punjab government's efforts to strengthen the canal water supply system for farmers. He said several long-pending irrigation projects had been revived and thousands of kilometres of canal networks and water distribution systems had been upgraded. He claimed that for the first time since Independence, Punjab was witnessing large-scale efforts to ensure canal water reaches every field. He added that the government's target is to provide irrigation water to every agricultural area in the state, with surveys and development works currently underway in multiple regions. Meanwhile, the Congress also intensified its activities as observer Simarjeet Bains met various councillors and ticket aspirants. During the meetings, discussions were also held with aspirants belonging to the faction opposed to former health minister Balbir Singh Sidhu. Later in the evening, Bains held a separate meeting with Sidhu supporters at a hotel. With only two days left before the nomination process begins, political parties are now under pressure to announce their candidates soon. Similarly, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) had already formed its committee earlier, but no formal announcement has been made so far. District president Parvinder Singh Sohana said a committee meeting has been called for Tuesday and candidates would likely be announced by Tuesday evening. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) district president Sanjiv Vashisht said the party committee is currently preparing the list of aspirants and the final list of candidates is expected to be announced by May 13. With only two days left before the nomination process begins, political parties are now under pressure to announce their candidates soon. Similarly, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) had already formed its committee earlier, but no formal announcement has been made so far. District president Parvinder Singh Sohana said a committee meeting has been called for Tuesday and candidates would likely be announced by Tuesday evening. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) district president Sanjiv Vashisht said the party committee is currently preparing the list of aspirants and the final list of candidates is expected to be announced by May 13.

Sanskrit compulsory, Punjabi optional: Army Schools' language policy sparks row in Punjab

A policy on teaching the fourth language in Army Public Schools (APS) has created a controversy in Punjab with parents and activists accusing the Army Welfare Education Society (AWES) of sidelining Punjabi in favour of Sanskrit. The controversy erupted after the APS sent out messages to the parents asking them to submit a consent form if they wanted their wards to study Punjabi language.

"Parents are informed that Sanskrit language is compulsory for the academic session 2026-27. Students who wish to take Punjabi language as additional subject need to bring the consent form duly filled and signed by parents," the schools said in messages sent to parents on May 5. As per the message, the language will be taught and a dedicated teacher will be provided only if sufficient numbers of students — reportedly a minimum threshold of around 15 — opt for it. The move, aimed at standardising the curriculum across Army schools nationwide for the benefit of frequently transferable armed forces personnel, has drawn sharp criticism for allegedly violating Punjab's language laws.

Under the Punjab Learning of Punjabi and Other Languages (Amendment) Act, 2008, Punjabi is mandatory as a subject up to Class 10 in all schools operating in the state, irrespective of the board or management. Critics argue the AWES directive directly contravenes this law. Punjab Chetna

Manch, a forum of CPI members, Punjabi writers, and political activists, and other education activists have condemned the policy as "arbitrary" and an attempt to sideline Punjab's linguistic and cultural identity. They have written to Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains, and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), demanding immediate intervention. Rajya Sabha MP Vikramjit Singh Sawhney has urged Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to restore Punjabi as a compulsory subject, citing its importance for students in the region. In a post on X, Sawhney said Punjabi is not just a language, it is the soul, culture and identity of Punjab. "Making Punjabi compulsory in Army Public of Punjab is essential to keep our future generations connected to our roots, rich cultural and martial legacy," he said. Our language culture and values have played a historic role in inspiring generations of brave soldiers who have served the nation with unmatched courage and sacrifice, it will further strengthen the emotional bond of students with Punjab's rich legacy and India's proud armed forces," he added. Similar appeals have come from various quarters, including parents and political groups. Many parents, including those from civilian backgrounds fear the policy will weaken their children's command over their mother tongue. The issue resonates strongly in the state where previous attempts by AWES in 2022 to limit regional languages had also sparked protests.

Mohali civic staff launch indefinite protest, seek regularisation, Rs 26k minimum wage



GNS News Agency, May 13

Mohali's municipal employees under the banner of the Municipal Employees Action Committee, Wednesday, began an indefinite protest outside the Mohali Municipal Corporation office, pressing for regularisation of workers and an end to the outsourcing system. The protest, led by the Safai Sewak Mazdoor Union (Mohali), will continue "until the Punjab government accepts our demands", the union leaders said.

Among the key demands is the regularisation of sanitation workers recruited in 2021 and the abolition of the contractor-driven outsourcing model. The employees alleged

that the government has failed to act despite submitting the memorandums for over four-and-a-half years. The union representatives said, "The dharna will continue till our demands are met. This is an anti-employee government that has ignored us despite repeated appeals." The protesters targeted Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and said, "The CM has consistently made false promises. Nothing has materialised on the ground." They also pointed out that most sanitation workers earn around Rs 10,000 per month, which they said is insufficient in the current inflationary climate. "In today's times, even maintaining a pet can cost Rs 500 a day. You can imagine the condition of sanitation workers trying to run households on such low wages," a speaker said during the protest. The union has demanded that the minimum wage for sanitation workers be fixed at Rs 26,000 per month. It also flagged the lack of permanent recruitment, stating that no regular appointments for Class IV employees were made in the Municipal Corporation since 1993. "We demand unconditional regularisation of sanitation workers and sewer men. If the government fails to act, the protest will be intensified in the coming days," the union warned. Appealing to the media for support, union leaders also urged wider coverage of their demands, saying the issue concerns the dignity and livelihood of essential civic workers.

'Where is the evidence?': BJP serves defamation notice to Bhagwant Mann over 'party behind blasts' remark

GNS News Agency, May 13

The political row over Bhagwant Mann's statement linking the BJP to recent blasts in Punjab escalated further Thursday with the saffron party's national general secretary, Tarun Chugh, serving a legal notice to the Punjab Chief Minister, demanding withdrawal of the statement and a public apology within seven days. In the defamation notice, served through Chugh's counsel Sanket Gupta and associates, Chugh strongly objected to the controversial remarks made by Mann in which he had alleged that the blasts were part of the BJP's "preparation" for the Punjab elections.

"The people of Punjab also want to know now — where is the evidence? Punjab today is struggling with drugs, bomb blasts, gangster networks and economic crisis, but the Bhagwant Mann government is making false allegations against the BJP to hide every one of its failures. Punjab needs responsible governance, not political drama," Chugh said. The controversy erupted Wednesday after Bhagwant Mann launched his 'Shukrana Yatra' from Anandpur Sahib following the implementation of a stricter sacrilege law in Punjab. While interacting with reporters in Rupnagar and reacting to Tuesday's low-intensity blasts in Amritsar and Jalandhar, Mann said, "This is BJP's preparation for Punjab election... they had said that after Bengal... now next is Punjab... they wanted to create communal violence in name of sacrilege earlier but now that strict sacrilege law has been formed... they know that no one will dare to do such acts as punishment is harsh now... so whatever low intensity blasts are happening... of which investigation is on but it is their preparation of Punjab polls." "Those who sow seeds of hatred on the land of Punjab will never succeed... Punjab is the land of Gurus and saints; formulas like those used in Bengal will not work here," he added. Soon after Mann's remarks, Union Minister of State for Railways Ravneet Singh Bittu challenged the Chief Minister to register a case against the BJP if he had proof. Escalating the attack Thursday,



Chugh alleged that Mann's remarks were contrary to the stand taken by the Punjab Police. "Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has tarnished the dignity of the office of the Chief Minister by accusing the BJP of being behind the bomb blasts without any evidence. This is why legal action has now been initiated against him for criminal defamation, spreading false information and attempting to incite public unrest," Chugh said. "Mann's statement is contrary to the statement of his own DGP. While the Punjab Police is pointing towards the involvement of the ISI and foreign networks, the Chief Minister is busy pursuing a political agenda. The question is clear — is the Chief Minister protecting Punjab's security or providing political cover to anti-national forces?" he asked. "On a day when the entire nation was celebrating the courage and valour of its armed forces on the anniversary of 'Operation Sindoor', Chief Minister Mann linking a democratic and nationalist party like the BJP to terrorist incidents is not just a political lie but also an insult to the mandate and faith of crores of Indians," he said. Calling Mann's statement "defamatory" and "dangerous", Chugh said such allegations could create "confusion, mistrust and social unrest" in Punjab and accused Mann of playing politics over issues related to national security and public order.

Mumbai's beloved street food is getting costlier as LPG price hike pushes vendors to the brink



GNS News Agency, May 13

The ₹33 price hike in commercial LPG prices has left many of Mumbai's street food vendors struggling to stay afloat by eating into already thin margins, forcing many to absorb losses rather than pass costs on to customers. Commercial LPG cylinder prices have seen steep rises in recent months. A 19-kg cylinder now costs around ₹3,024 in Mumbai following a ₹33 hike in commercial LPG prices on May 1, 2026, according to oil marketing companies. The hike follows successive increases in March and April which had already pushed up prices, reflecting the volatility in global energy markets. While domestic LPG prices for households have remained relatively stable at around ₹913 for a 14.2-kg cylinder, data from public sector oil companies shows that commercial users, including small food businesses, have borne the brunt of the rising costs.

At Nariman Point, Vishal Gujjan, a chaiwala, said a large part of his earnings now goes into simply keeping his stove running. "It has become harder to make do but still I have not increased the price of a cup of chai." He added that he has not changed the size of a cup of chai either, despite rising costs. "As long as I can fill my stomach and keep the water running at home, I'm happy." Sameem Ahmed Sameem Ahmed (in the black shirt), a worker at a sandwich stall in Nariman Point, says rising LPG costs have led him to have price hikes and a fall in daily customers. (Express Photo) Gujjan's concerns are echoed across the city. In Goregaon, Imran Javed, a roadside shawarma stall operator, said that rising costs have altered the local street food landscape. "This road used to have so many stalls, vada pav, bhajia, sandwiches. In the last month many have had to move, don't know where they've gone." Javed continued that he has not increased his prices in spite of the rising costs. "People still come from nearby societies, offices and the metro. It's not about how many people are coming, the money I make is going down."

With fuel costs rising, he added that a significant portion of his earnings are spent on keeping the stall going, "Most of my earnings now go into keeping the stove going. Anyway, what can we do?" This pressure is not just limited to small vendors. In Dadar, Hussein Ali, owner of Dadar Lucky Restaurant & Stores, said he has also refrained from

increasing menu prices and still routinely faces near-empty lunch services at his restaurant. However, in spite of this, he remains positive. "These things keep happening, I have a roof over my head and two square meals a day, I'll be okay." He added that the impact is more sharply felt by his employees and other daily wage earners. "Personally, I feel that no business owner is truly affected by the price rises, your margins take a small hit but it is your employees who are really affected by it", noting that the costs of smaller LPG cylinders used in households has also risen, even as incomes remain uncertain. However, not all vendors have been able to absorb the rising costs. At a sandwich stall in Nariman Point, worker Sameem Ahmed said that prices had to be increased, leading to a drop in customers. "Earlier a sandwich used to cost ₹20 and now it costs ₹30, many aren't willing to pay." Ahmed added that while he is lucky to be located in an area surrounded by offices and that office workers make up a large portion of his customers, the stall has lost an estimated 30% of their customer base in daily workers, "They used to be regulars, now they aren't willing to pay the raised prices." For many vendors, the options are no longer profit or loss, but survival or closure. With no immediate relief in sight from the rising prices of LPG cylinders, small businesses say that soon they may have no choice but to raise prices or scale down their operations, thus reshaping the city's food economy, previously sustained by availability and affordability.

Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace becomes unicorn after raising \$60 million funding

Hyderabad: Skyroot Aerospace, India's leading private space launch company, on Thursday announced raising nearly \$60 million at a pre-money valuation of \$1.1 billion, making it a unicorn. The round was co-led by Sherpalo Ventures and GIC, a global institutional investor, with participation from other existing Skyroot investors, including the founders of Greenko Group and Arkam Ventures. The founder of Sherpalo, Ram Shriram, a tech investor and a Board member of Alphabet Inc, will be joining Skyroot's Board. Also joining the cap table are funds managed by BlackRock, the world's largest asset management company, Playbook Partners, a tech growth capital firm, Shanghvi Family Office, and others. The new capital will enable Skyroot to establish a high cadence of Vikram-1 launches, scale up manufacturing, and develop Vikram-2 (a 1-tonne class launch vehicle powered by an advanced cryogenic stage), expanding the range of missions and customers it can serve. The funding round comes as Skyroot readies Vikram-1, India's first privately developed orbital rocket, for its maiden flight.

'I don't think in months anymore... just counting the days': H-1B anxiety grips Indian tech workers



That was the day his 60-day grace period began, the narrow window the US immigration system allows after a job loss. Sixty days to find a new employer, file fresh paperwork, and hold together a life that had taken nearly a decade to build. "I don't think in months anymore," the 30-year-old tech professional told The Indian Express. "I just count how many days are left." Until recently, his life followed a familiar arc: he arrived from India on an F-1 visa in 2018, completed his Master's in Computer Science in 2020, secured an H-1B visa in 2021 after being picked in the third lottery draw, and settled into a career building enterprise software, microservices, cloud systems — the kind of infrastructure that quietly powers industries like healthcare and finance. By 2024, he had begun the green card process. The paperwork was underway. The future, while distant, felt structured. He bought a house in Dallas-Fort Worth, built credit history, started planning in years instead of visa cycles. The client backed out over unmet contractual terms. The company responded with layoffs across the team — he was among them. "With that, my PERM (Program Electronic Review Management) application was terminated," he said. "Just like that."

For employment-based green cards, the PERM process is one of the first major steps, requiring an employer to sponsor the worker for permanent residency. But because his application had not yet reached the stage where an I-140 (Immigrant Petition for Alien Workers) petition was approved, the layoff effectively erased the years already spent in the process. If a new employer agrees to sponsor him, he will have to restart the green card process from scratch. In recent months, conversations around H-1B workers in the United States have increasingly been accompanied by concerns about mental health, isolation, and burnout. Reports of suicides involving Indian-origin tech workers and students alongside layoffs, visa uncertainty and mounting immigration pressures have triggered wider discussions within the immigrant community about the emotional cost of living under temporary status. A recent Rest of World analysis found 227 reported cases of suicides among Indian tech workers between 2017 and 2025, with work pressure, uncertainty and financial stress emerging repeatedly in reported accounts. Immigration lawyers said laid-off workers often find themselves making life-altering decisions within weeks.

The tech professional, meanwhile, is weighing his options. If a new employer files an H-1B transfer before June 8, he can remain in the United States and begin working as soon as the petition is filed, even if it remains pending beyond the grace period. If the petition is approved, his stay continues uninterrupted. If it is denied, the job ends immediately, and so does his ability to remain. "The filing has to happen before June 8," he said. "That's the difference between staying and leaving." He is trying to sell his house. "If the house doesn't sell in time, I don't know what I'll do," he said. The uncertainty has seeped into ordinary decisions: Whether to renew a lease, ship belongings back to India, continue paying a mortgage on a house. His days are spent applying for jobs, speaking to real estate agents and checking immigration forums where laid-off H-1B workers com-

pare timelines, transfer approvals, and denials.

One option is to apply for a change of status to a B-2 visitor visa — essentially asking for a temporary extension of stay to wrap up personal affairs. But that path is uncertain, and increasingly scrutinised. He has been told that applying for B-2 requires building a case: documents showing ties to his home country, proof that the house is listed and actively being sold, records of buyer interest, financial statements, even evidence of future plans outside the United States. "You have to prove you're going to leave," he said. "Even while you're trying to stay just a little longer." A pending H-1B transfer, he has learned, would not automatically be cancelled by a B-2 application. But both could face Requests for Evidence. Both could be delayed or denied. A biomedical engineer, in her 30s, working in surgical robotics described a similar situation. Currently employed under STEM OPT and involved in testing robots for FDA regulatory submissions, she said her employer had indicated they were unwilling to sponsor a H-1B visa. "I still have nearly two years left on my STEM OPT," she said. "I'm already authorised to work. But the problem is no longer whether I can do the job — it's whether a company is willing to deal with sponsorship at all."

Though her work authorisation remains valid for now, she said the absence of a long-term pathway hangs over every career decision. "My employer basically said they don't want to sponsor H-1Bs because they're unfamiliar with the process," she said. "So even though my work continues, my future here feels temporary all the time."

The STEM OPT (Optional Practical Training) extension allows international students in the US on F-1 visas who graduate in eligible Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics fields to work for up to 24 additional months after their initial 12-month OPT period. It is widely used by Indian students to gain work experience and bridge the gap before securing longer-term visas such as the H-1B. In another case, a Computer Science student from Drexel University in Philadelphia said a job offer from IBM was rescinded before it was formally signed. "The offer wasn't rescinded because of my work or qualifications," the student said. "It was because of visa status — even though I had three years of work authorisation left under STEM OPT." "What's frustrating is that companies are rejecting candidates over sponsorship concerns that are years away," the student added. "You work for years to get here, and then immigration status becomes the first thing people see." Immigration attorney Asel Williams, based in New York, said many H-1B workers misunderstand how narrow the timelines become after a layoff. "If the H-1B transfer petition is properly filed before the grace period expires, the individual can generally continue to remain and work in the United States while the petition is pending," Williams said. "But if the petition is denied, the employment must stop immediately, and the person should depart the US promptly."

On the growing use of B-2 applications by laid-off H-1B workers trying to buy time, Williams said the USCIS (US Citizenship and Immigration Services) has been closely scrutinising such filings. "I'm seeing Requests for Evidence issued on both B-2 change-of-status applications and subsequent H-1B transfers," she said. "Applicants now need extensive documentation showing that their stay is genuinely temporary and that they maintain substantial ties abroad." That evidence, she said, can range from proof of attempts to sell property in the United States to financial records, family ties, foreign employment prospects, and proof of residence or assets in the home country. Williams added that while filing for B-2 status does not automatically cancel a pending H-1B transfer, a denial can leave applicants with few options. "If the B-2 is denied and there is no underlying valid status, the individual may need to depart the country," she said.

Watchman who murdered wife, walked with her head on Pune road, gets life imprisonment



A Pune court has awarded life imprisonment to a man who murdered his wife and then was seen walking with her head in one hand and an axe in the other 11 years ago. The accused, identified as Ramchandra Sheu Chavan, was 53 at the time of the crime. According to the police, on October 9, 2015, the accused reportedly had a heated argument with his wife, Sonabai, 45. He allegedly locked his daughter-in-law, Sunita, and two minor grandsons in the house and attacked Sonabai with an axe. The police said he chopped off the victim's head, picked up the axe, and started walking on the streets of Katraj. They said the accused killed his wife, suspecting her of having an affair with a family member.

Sunita lodged the First Information Report (FIR) against him at the Bharati Vidyapeeth Police Station. The police booked him under Indian Penal Code sections 302 (murder), 201, 342, and 498-A, and sections of the Maharashtra Police Act as well. On January 1, 2026, the police filed a chargesheet against the accused, who had no prior criminal record, before the court in Pune. The accused pleaded not guilty before the court, saying he did not murder his wife. During the trial, the prosecution lawyer, Premkumar Agarwal, examined 24 witnesses, including the medical officer and investigation officer, Shekhar Shinde.

The court observed that complainant Sunita was a 'star witness', who had seen the accused assaulting her mother-in-law. Sunita told the court that she shouted and requested the accused to leave her mother-in-law. But the convict had locked her along with her children, when "she heard some noise of cutting." A woman witness running a tea stall, who saw the accused walking with his wife's head, told the court that she asked him, "Anna, kuthe bakru kaple (Anna, have you slaughtered a goat)?" The accused replied to her that he had killed his wife. The woman stated that she was frightened, as she saw blood coming out of the severed head. Another important witness, a nine-year-old schoolgirl who was standing near the crime scene while waiting for her school bus, identified the accused in court. A witness, who had later shifted to a foreign country for work, came back for his testimony. The person who had recorded a video of the accused walking with his wife's chopped head

was also examined before the court. Defence lawyer Sangram Kolhatkar argued that the prosecution had not proved the "chain of events" and failed to bring on record the motive behind the alleged crime. He also argued that the CCTV footage and the video cannot be relied upon to convict the accused. The court stated that the prosecution could not establish that the accused had a suspicion about his wife's character. But the court also observed that all the evidence on record, from eyewitnesses to forensic reports, established the accused's guilt. The court sentenced the accused to life imprisonment and said that the accused, who has been in jail since October 9, 2015, is entitled to set off for this period.

Skyroot Aerospace becomes India's first space-tech unicorn, raises \$60 million

New Delhi: Hyderabad-based private space launch startup Skyroot Aerospace on Thursday said it has raised \$60 million in a fresh funding round led by existing investors Sherpalo Ventures and Singapore's sovereign wealth fund GIC, becoming India's first space-tech unicorn.

The latest investment round also saw participation from BlackRock, the founders of Greenko Group, Arkam Ventures, Playbook Partners, Shanghvi Family Office and several other investors. While Playbook Partners and Shanghvi Family Office joined the company as new investors, Sherpalo Ventures, GIC, BlackRock, Greenko Group and Arkam Ventures were existing backers of the space-tech startup. Following the fresh capital infusion, Skyroot Aerospace's valuation has climbed to \$1.1 billion, more than doubling from its previous valuation of nearly \$519 million in 2023.

Lt Gen AK Bhatt (Retd.), Director General of the Indian Space Association (ISPA), described the development as a landmark moment for India's private space ecosystem. He said Skyroot's unicorn status reflects the growing technological and commercial capabilities of Indian space startups and signals rising global investor confidence in the country's space sector. According to him, the milestone could further strengthen India's ambitions of increasing its share in the global space economy by 2033.

Meanwhile, Skyroot co-founder and CEO Pawan Kumar Chandana said the company is preparing for the launch of Vikram-1, India's first privately developed orbital rocket, in the coming weeks. He added that the latest funding round reflects strong investor confidence in the company's long-term vision and launch capabilities.

Massive drone attack raises tensions before Moscow celebrations



GNS News Agency, May 13

Kyiv: Russian air defences shot down 347 Ukrainian drones overnight, Russia's Defence Ministry said Thursday, in what appeared to be a major attack after Moscow spurned Kyiv's ceasefire earlier in the week and tension mounted over safety at Russia's upcoming Victory Day celebrations.Incoming drones were destroyed over 20 Russian regions, including Moscow, according to the Defence Ministry, in Ukraine's second-biggest aerial attack since Russia's all-out invasion more than four years ago. The largest was last March when it launched 389 drones.

The attack came ahead of Russia's most important secular holiday, Victory Day, which marks the anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. Russian authorities have declared a unilateral ceasefire in Ukraine for Friday and Saturday.Ukraine had responded to that with its own suspension of hostilities from midnight Tuesday. But Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Moscow disregarded the goodwill gesture and launched fresh

attacks. "Russia has not stopped any type of its military activity. Unfortunately, it has not stopped. Ukraine will act symmetrically," Zelenskyy said in his regular evening video address Wednesday.He said Thursday on X that Russia's attacks have been ceaseless, with drones, missiles, artillery shelling and glide bombs hitting civilian areas of Ukraine, including the power grid and rail network.

In the northeastern city of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest, a drone strike wounded nine people, including three children, local officials said. Tension has grown as Russia's Victory Day celebrations approach and US-led peace efforts gain no traction.All mobile internet access and text messaging services will be shut down in the Russian capital on May 9, state media reported Thursday, citing the country's Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media. Also, a traditional parade in Moscow won't feature the usual tanks, missiles and other military equipment for the first time in nearly two decades.Russian authorities say they are concerned about possible Ukrainian attacks, as Kyiv has expanded its long-range drone and missile capabilities. The Russian Defense Ministry cited the "current operational situation" as a reason for excluding military equipment.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Thursday that additional security measures were being taken due to the "rather complex operational situation". The measures being taken "are necessary to ensure the safety of citizens, which is an absolute priority," Peskov told reporters.The restrictions will include websites on the Russian government's so-called "white list," a group of state-approved online services that are kept available during the country's increasingly common connectivity blackouts. Home internet and Wi-Fi will be unaffected, officials said.

Indian-American expert Ashley Tellis espionage case dismissed by US judge

GNS News Agency, May 13

Washington: A federal judge in Virginia has dismissed without prejudice an Espionage Act case against Indian-American strategic affairs scholar Ashley J. Tellis, ruling in favour of a defence argument that prosecutors used the wrong statutory provision in charging him with unlawful retention of classified documents.US District Judge Michael S. Nachmanoff granted Tellis' motion to dismiss on April 16 after hearing arguments from both sides in Alexandria, Virginia. The brief court order said the motion was "GRANTED" and that the case was "DISMISSED WITHOUT PREJUDICE." Tellis, a well-known scholar of international security and US foreign policy, had been charged under Section 793(e) of the Espionage Act with wilful retention of national defence information.Prosecutors alleged he removed and stored classified documents at his residence while serving in senior positions linked to the US State Department and the Department of War. The superseding indictment accused Tellis of retaining 11 classified documents containing national defence information.

The government alleged that he "exploited his access to classified information related to the national defence by secreting NDI from his secure workplaces and storing said NDI at his personal residence in hard copy and digital form." But Tellis' legal team argued that the government charged him under the wrong subsection of the Espionage Act. In a detailed filing, his lawyers said Section 793(e) applies only to people in "unauthorised possession" of classified information, while the indictment itself acknowledged that Tellis held a high-level security clearance and had been "entrusted" with access to sensitive material.The defence ar-

gued that Tellis "was entrusted with the relevant documents" and therefore could not legally fall under the subsection prosecutors chose. His lawyers also noted that the government had not accused him of disseminating classified information or accessing files beyond his clearance authority.The filing said prosecutors could have pursued other statutes, including Section 793(d) or Section 1924, which deals with unauthorised removal and retention of classified material by government employees, but "deliberately chose to limit its indictment to the wrong provision." Federal prosecutors had opposed attempts to relax Tellis' strict bail conditions earlier in the case.In one filing, the government argued that Tellis remained both a flight risk and a danger to national security because he allegedly possessed "tens of thousands of pages of classified material, including over 1,000 pages of hard-copy TOP SECRET material."The government also alleged that some material involved information related to China's nuclear and military capabilities and said Tellis retained "decades' worth of sensitive national defence information in his head." After the dismissal order, Tellis filed an unopposed motion seeking release of his secured bond, which prosecutors did not contest.A separate court order later directed the government to respond to Tellis' motion seeking the return of property seized during the investigation. The case drew attention in Washington's national security and strategic affairs circles because of Tellis' long career advising the US government on defence and Indo-Pacific policy. Cases involving alleged mishandling of classified information have intensified in recent years amid broader scrutiny of retention of sensitive national security material by current and former government officials.

Hungry to sell, UAE slips hidden oil tankers through Strait of Hormuz

SINGAPORE/LONDON, GNS News Agency, May 13With their location trackers shut off to avoid Iranian attacks, the United Arab Emirates and buyers have recently sailed several tankers loaded with crude through the Strait of Hormuz ?in a bid to move oil bottled up in the Gulf by the Middle East conflict, according to industry sources and shipping data.The volumes are a fraction of the ?UAE's typical exports before the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran but they demonstrate the risks the producer and buyers are willing to take to free up oil sales. The other Gulf producers - Iraq, Kuwait, and Qatar - have either halted sales, deeply cut prices to entice uninterested buyers or are shipping only through the Red Sea in the case of Saudi Arabia.

The Reuters Power Up newsletter provides everything you need to know about the global energy industry. Sign up here.In April, the UAE's Abu Dhabi National Oil Co managed to export at least 4 million barrels of its Upper Zakum crude and 2 million barrels of Das crude on four tankers from terminals inside the Gulf, according to three sources, shiptracking data from Kpler and an analysis of satellite data from SynMax. The shipments were either unloaded by ship-to-ship (STS) ?transfer to a vessel that later carried the oil to a Southeast Asian refinery, unloaded into storage in Oman or sailed directly to South Korean refineries, ?according to the three sources, one with direct knowledge of the matter and two familiar with ADNOC's operations, and the Kpler and SynMax data.Tehran responded to the U.S.-Israeli attacks that began on February 28 by effectively shutting the Strait of Hormuz to exports other than its own, bottling up a fifth of global oil and gas ?supply. The closure and a U.S. blockade that has halted Iranian exports in recent weeks has pushed global oil prices over \$100 a barrel.ADNOC has had to cut exports by more than 1 million barrels per day since the start of the war, from the 3.1 million bpd it shipped last year, Kpler data showed. Most of its exports are its Murban grade exported by pipeline from onshore fields to Fujairah.VLCC Hafeet loaded crude at Zirku terminal and transfer its cargo to VLCC Olympic Luck off UAE's FujairahADNOC's shipments risk attacks from Iran. This was highlighted by the ?UAE's accusation on Monday Iran used drones to attack an empty ADNOC tanker, the Barakah, passing through the Strait of Hormuz.

The ships move with their automatic identification system transponders turned off, which reduces the chance they will be spotted by Iranian forces. The tactic is commonly employed by Iran to skirt U.S. sanctions on its oil exports.It also makes it difficult to track the total volumes of ADNOC's exports through industry shipping data, meaning the volumes it ?shipped from the Gulf in April could be higher.Still, Kpler data showed the VLCC Hafeet loaded 2 million barrels of Upper Zakum inside the Gulf on April 7 and exited the strait on April 15.Outside the strait, the cargo was trans-



The ships move with their automatic identification system transponders turned off, which reduces the chance they will be spotted by Iranian forces.

ferred to the Greek-flagged VLCC Olympic Luck on April 17-18 and shipped to the Pengerang refinery in Malaysia, a joint venture of Malaysia's state-owned oil company Petronas and Saudi Aramco, Kpler data and SynMax analysis showed.Hafeet is managed by the Logistics and Services unit of ADNOC, which declined to comment. Greece-based Olympic Shipping & Management, which manages the Olympic Luck, and Petronas did not respond to requests for comment.Splitting up the ?oil by STS allows ADNOC to sell smaller ?cargoes and free up the VLCCs to move ?quickly back inside the Gulf to load again.One of the broken up cargoes of Upper Zakum sailed to a Northeast Asian refinery and sold at a record premium of \$20 a barrel over ADNOC's official selling price, said the source with direct knowledge of the matter.For Abu Dhabi's Das crude, the VLCC Aliakmon I loaded ?2 million barrels of the grade on April 27 and exited the strait on May 2, discharging at Oman's Ras Markaz storage terminal on May ?3, Kpler data showed.Kpler and ?SynMax also found two Suezmax tankers - the Odessa and Zouzou N. - carrying 1 million barrels each of Upper Zakum, headed to South Korea after exiting the strait.All three tankers are managed by Greece-based Dynacom Tankers Management. It was not clear who chartered the Dynacom tankers and the company did not respond to a request for comment.

ADNOC intends to continue to sell oil from inside the strait, notifying some customers in late April they could load Das and Upper Zakum crude ?from May ?via STS transfers at ports outside the Gulf including Fujairah and Oman's Sohar. The company is holding talks with Asian refiners to sell ?May-loading Das and Upper Zakum cargoes, said the source with direct knowledge of ADNOC's plans, and an Indian refining source, who declined to be identified as they are not authorised to speak to the media.

US and Iran inch towards short-term deal to end fightingAriba Shahid, Steve Holland, Nayera Abdallah

ISLAMABAD/WASHINGTON/DUBAI,The United States and Iran are edging toward a limited, temporary agreement to halt their war, ?sources and officials said on Thursday, with a draft framework that would stop the fighting but leave the most contentious issues unresolved.The emerging plan centres on a short-term memorandum rather than a ?comprehensive peace deal, underscoring deep divisions between the two sides and signalling that any agreement at this stage would be an interim step.The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.

Hopes that even a partial deal could lead to the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz have already moved markets, with global stocks approaching record highs on Thursday and oil prices nursing steep losses on bets that supply disruptions could ease.Tehran and Washington have scaled back ambitions for a sweeping settlement as differences persist, particularly over Iran's nuclear programme — including the fate of its highly enriched uranium stockpiles and how long ?Tehran would halt nuclear work.Instead, they are working toward a temporary arrangement aimed at preventing a return to conflict and stabilising shipping through the strait, the sources and officials said.

"Our priority is that they announce ?a permanent end to war and the rest of the issues could be thrashed out once they get back to direct talks," a senior Pakistani official involved in mediation ?between the two sides told Reuters.The proposed framework would unfold in three stages: formally ending the war, resolving the crisis in the Strait of Hormuz and launching a 30-day window for negotiations on a broader agreement, according to the sources and officials.A Pakistani source and another source briefed on the mediation said a one-page memorandum to formally end the conflict was close, though gaps remain between the sides.U.S. President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly played ?up the prospect of a breakthrough since the war began on February 28 with U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran, struck an optimistic tone.

"They want to make a deal... it's very possible," he told reporters at the White House on Wednesday, adding later that "it'll be over quickly."The proposal would formally end the conflict in which full-scale warfare was paused by a ceasefire announced on April 7. But it leaves unresolved key U.S. demands that Iran suspend its nuclear programme and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the sources said.Israel, which has also been ?fighting Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon, said on Thursday it had killed a Hezbollah commander in an airstrike on Beirut a day earlier, the first Israeli attack on the Lebanese capital since a ceasefire there was agreed last month.

US senators urge stability, cooperation between US, China

BEIJING, A delegation of U.S. senators visiting Beijing has called for stability and peaceful cooperation ?between the world's two largest economies a week before the countries' leaders meet."I strongly believe that we want to de-escalate, not decouple. We want stability, we want mutual respect," Senator Steve Daines, who is leading the bipartisan delegation, said ?in opening remarks at a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang ?Yi on Thursday.The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.U.S. President Donald Trump is scheduled to travel to the Chinese capital to meet President Xi Jinping on May 14 and 15.

"It's been about nine years since there was a purchase made of Boeing aircraft here," he said, according to ?a media pool report.China has yet to announce Trump's visit, saying the ?two sides maintain communication regarding the trip. Relations between the two powers remain generally stable after ?striking ?an uneasy trade truce last October following their leaders' meeting in South Korea.Speaking to Daines, Wang said China and the U.S. should be partners rather than rivals, despite their differences, and called on Washington to view Beijing objectively and establish a rational understanding."It is hoped ?that the U.S. could truly

Hezbollah triggered its ?latest conflict with Israel by opening fire in support of Iran on March 2. A halt to Israeli strikes in Lebanon is another key Iranian demand in Tehran's negotiations with Washington, and Iranian officials signalled scepticism over the U.S. proposal to end the wider war.A foreign ?ministry spokesperson said Tehran would respond in due course, while lawmaker Ebrahim Rezaei described the proposal as "more of an American wish-list than a reality."Iran's parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf appeared to mock reports that indicated the two sides were close, writing on social media that "Operation Trust Me Bro failed" and portraying the negotiations as U.S. spin following its failure to reopen the strait.Reports of a possible agreement caused global oil prices to shed roughly 11% on Wednesday, with benchmark Brent crude trading at around \$98 a barrel on Thursday.Global share prices also rose and bond yields fell on optimism about an end to a war that has disrupted energy supplies."The contents of the U.S.-Iran peace ?proposals are thin, but there is an expectation in the ?market that further military action will not take ?place," said Takamasa Ikeda, a senior portfolio manager at GCI Asset Management.

A line chart of the percent change in price of energy commodities since Trump's electionNBC News, citing two unnamed U.S. officials, said Trump decided on the pause after Saudi Arabia suspended the U.S. military's ability to use a Saudi base for the operation.Saudi officials ?were surprised and angered by Trump's announcement that the U.S. would help escort ships through the Strait, leading them to tell Washington they would deny the U.S. permission ?to fly military aircraft out of a Saudi base or through Saudi airspace, NBC reported.The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the report.The U.S. military has kept up its own blockade on Iranian ships in the region. U.S. Central Command said forces fired at an un-laden Iranian-flagged oil tanker on Wednesday, disabling the vessel as it attempted to sail toward an Iranian port.The source briefed on the mediation said the U.S. negotiations were being led by Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared ?Kushner. If both sides agreed on the preliminary deal, that would start the clock on 30 days of detailed negotiations to reach a full ?agreement.

The sources said the memorandum did not mention several key demands Washington has made in the past, which Iran has rejected, such as the restrictions on Iran's missile programme and an end to its support for proxy militias in the Middle East, including Hezbollah.The sources also made no ?mention of Iran's existing stockpile of more than 400 kg (900 pounds) of near-weapons-grade uranium — one of Washington's central concerns.



respect China's core interests, properly manage differences, join hands to do more major, practical ?and good things that are beneficial to the two ?countries and ?the world." Wang was quoted in a statement by his ministry.In a separate meeting with the U.S. delegation in Beijing, Chinese Premier Li Qiang said China ?stands ?ready to enhance exchanges and cooperation with the ?U.S. side in various areas and expand practical cooperation, according to a pool report.

Flights carrying women and children linked to IS group land in Australia



Airliners carrying Australian women and children with alleged ties to the Islamic State group landed in Australia on Thursday.A plane reportedly carrying three Australian women and eight children landed in Melbourne, while a separate plane carrying a woman and her son arrived in Sydney soon after.The Australian government announced on Wednesday that after spending years in a Syrian desert camp, they planned to return to Australia.

Police said the women face potential criminal charges relating to their alleged time in the Islamic State group's so-called caliphate that spanned Syria and Iraq.Both Qatar Airways flights took off minutes apart from Doha bound for Australia's two largest cities. QR904, which landed in Melbourne first, was followed by QR908 in Sydney.The Australian government had condemned the women for supporting Islamic State militants by traveling to Syria and had refused to help repatriate them.Police have been investigating for more than a decade Australians' potential involvement in atrocities while in Syria, including terrorism offenses and crimes against humanity such as slave trading.Deakin University extremism expert Joshua Roose said Australian authorities were investigating abuses within the caliphate including enslaving Yazidi women and harsh policing of sharia law."Some of the worst forms of violence were in fact enacted by women, so we need to understand that it's a problem," Roose told Australian Broadcasting Corp.The child welfare-focused aid agency Save the Children failed

US judge orders release of controversial Epstein jail note

New York: A note Jeffrey Epstein's former cellmate claimed he found after the millionaire sex offender's first suspected jail suicide attempt was made public Wednesday, years after being sealed and locked in a courthouse vault as part of an unrelated legal dispute.

US District Judge Kenneth Karas in White Plains, New York, ordered the release of the note after The New York Times asked him last week to unseal it and other documents in a case involving the former cellmate, Nicholas Tartaglione. Federal prosecutors did not oppose the request. Few people had known about the note until Tartaglione, a former police officer serving a life sentence for killing four people, mentioned it last year on writer Jessica Reed Kraus' podcast.Tartaglione claimed he discovered the note in a book after Epstein was found on the floor of their cell at a Manhattan federal jail on July 23, 2019, with a strip of bedsheet around the financier's neck. That was about three weeks before Epstein was found dead in his cell in what authorities concluded was a suicide."They investigated me for month — found nothing!!!" said the short note, which is hard to decipher in some places. "It is a treat to be able to choose" the "time to say goodbye," the note continues. "Watcha want me to do — Bust out cryin!!!"

Unearthing lost timelines: Marungur Chapter



Nestled in a belt of lush green cashew groves at Panruti taluk in Cuddalore district, Marungur, an otherwise quiet village, has recently stepped into archaeological spotlight. A short 2-km detour from the Chennai-Kumbakonam Highway near Kollukkaran village leads to this site, where the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology (TNSDA) had recently completed excavation, bringing to light evidence of a long-forgotten past, and further proof of the rich heritage of Tamil Nadu. The region was part of the ancient Naduvil Mandalam or Naduvil Nadu (Central Territorial Division), flanked by the Thenpennai to the north and the Vada Vellar river to the south. Marungur was among eight locations where the TNSDA took up excavations in 2024-25.

While the exact period is yet to be confirmed through chemical dating, preliminary findings from Marungur pointed to a well-established settlement, likely inhabited by communities during the transition phase from the later part of the Iron Age to the Early Historic Period, said R. Sivanantham, Director of Marungur excavation, and Joint Director of the TNSDA. He was assisted by archaeologists K. Bakialakshmi and S. Subhalakshmi, as well as research scholars. The exploration by the TNSDA, using remote-sensing techniques such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) mapping and LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) to assess various attributes of the site, revealed that the habitation mound and burial site were positioned at an elevation of 100 metres above mean sea level. Subsequently, a formal excavation was launched to conduct methodical unearthing and analysis of material culture. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, on June 18, 2024, launched the archaeological excavation at Marungur from the State Secretariat, along with excavations at Keeladi and its cluster (Kondagai) in Sivaganga district; Vembakottai in Virudhunagar; Kilnamandi in Tiruvannamalai; Porpanaikottai in Pudukkottai; Tirumalapuram in Tenkasi; Sennanur in Krishnagiri; and Kongalnagaram in Tiruppur. The significance of Marungur came to light more than a decade ago. A report published in The Hindu on March 5, 2010, noted that three potsherds with Tamil Brahmi inscriptions were discovered at an urn burial site in Marungur. J.R. Sivaramakrishnan, a history lecturer at Annamalai University, had first noticed and collected the potsherds when an earthmover dug up the soil for strengthening the Vadalur-Panruti Road at Marungur.

"This is the first time such inscribed pots with Tamil Brahmi letters, usually placed as grave goods in urn burials, have been recovered from any archaeological site in Tamil Nadu. This opens a new chapter in archaeological research in the State," the report said, quoting three experts, including renowned archaeologist K. Rajan. According to official sources in the TNSDA, one was inscribed with "a-ti-y(a)-ka-n", and the others with "a-ma-?" and "a-ta". The inscribed potsherds could be dated back to the second or third century BCE, on paleographic grounds. Further explorations revealed a variety of artefacts on the surface of the habitation mound, located adjacent to a pond approximately 600 metres southwest of the burial site. Among the finds were light grey rouletted ware potsherds, black-and-red ware potsherds, microlithic tools, and a crescent-shaped iron chisel. On the southern flank of the habitation mound, remnants of a brick measuring 7x21x42 cm, flat terracotta stones of various sizes believed to have been used to play hopscotch, and beads of various colours – green, purple, yellow, black, and white – were found. Other artefacts included black-and-red ware pottery, terracotta pipes, an urn, circular stands, a lid made of black polished ware, and iron implements. Excavation at habitation mound On the eastern side of the tank at Marungur, a total of eight trenches, each varying in depth based on stratigraphic markers, were excavated at the habitation mound, which is situated in a zone predominantly composed of laterite soil. Decades ago, during the creation of the nearby pond, large volumes of silt must have been dumped over the mound. This anthropogenic activity resulted in the accumulation of nearly 2 metres of overlying silt, which was encountered during trenching,

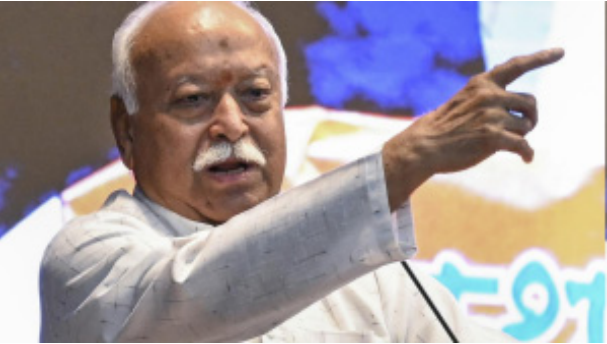
Mr. Sivanantham said. A significant discovery from one of the trenches was the unearthing of two large terracotta storage containers, each measuring approximately 1.25 metres, at a depth of 4.4 metres. In one of these containers, six bone points with sharp edges were found at the bottom. A few more bone points were also unearthed during the excavation. The exposed soil in and around the containers was clear evidence of firing activities. From the same stratigraphic layer, charcoal samples were retrieved, offering an opportunity for radiocarbon dating and further contextual analysis, he said.

Two inner cores of conch shells, one of which measured 7 cm in length, were unearthed at a depth of 3.6 metres. A 13-cm-long iron knife, broken into three pieces, weighing 22.97 grams and measuring 2.8 mm in thickness, was also recovered from a depth of 2.57 metres. Various potsherds, including black-and-red ware, red ware, red-slipped ware, coarse red ware, rouletted ware with intricate designs, grey-rouletted ware, brown-slipped ware, and perforated ware, were found during the excavation, indicating remarkable diversity in ceramic usage. They also include 12 graffiti-bearing potsherds, with some of the graffiti resembling Indus signs. Several burnishing tools, used to polish the surface of pottery and terracotta wheels, were also found. The excavation yielded a rich collection of 95 antiquities, including a polished stone axe, carnelian, agate, quartz, glass and terracotta beads, copper bangle fragments, an iron knife, and terracotta objects. Antimony rods were unearthed, their blunt edges indicating that they were used for ornamental purposes. A medieval copper coin from the period of Raja Raja Chola I was also unearthed from the top layers. "The mother trench excavated on the southwestern part of the habitation mound was nearly six metres deep. Beyond a depth of six metres, traces of natural soil were observed, indicating the absence of any further anthropogenic activity," said Mr. Sivanantham, adding that Marungur was one of the few places in Tamil Nadu where both the habitation mound and its associated burial site were found.

At the burial site located in a cashew grove, the archaeologists dug two trenches. During the course of excavation, two laterite stone circles were identified, confirming the presence of megalithic burials. In total, 10 urns were unearthed from these two trenches. The first megalithic structure revealed a laterite stone circle with a diameter of eight metres. The surface of the circle was covered with small laterite stones, which, upon removal, revealed two concentric stone circles – the inner circle composed of medium-sized laterite stones and the outer structure of larger stones. The stone circle was divided into four quadrants for methodical excavation. Initial layers yielded hard laterite stone. At the centre, a large capstone was found, placed to protect the burial urn beneath. The urn itself was placed within a laterite bedrock cavity. This megalith yielded two urns, Mr. Sivanantham said. In the second megalithic burial area, beneath the laterite layers, a fine red soil stratum was encountered, from which eight urns made of red ware were exposed at varying levels and in different sizes. Iron swords were found outside two of the urns, while other iron objects were recovered from inside the urns. One urn yielded red jasper beads, he said. In both the trenches, offering pots around the urns were recovered. These included black-and-red ware, red-slipped ware, black-slipped ware, and plain red ware pots. Proposed scientific analysis The samples collected from the habitation mound and the burial site will be subjected to a range of scientific analyses aimed at establishing the chronology of site formation, dating the artefacts and antiquities, and reconstructing the lifestyle and food habits of the communities that once inhabited Marungur, Mr. Sivanantham said.

The charcoal samples will be sent to the Beta Analytic laboratory in Florida, U.S., for Accelerator Mass Spectrometry analysis for dating, while the pollen samples collected will be sent to French Institute of Pondicherry. Further, archaeo-botanical investigations, phytolith and petrology analyses, and Optically Stimulated Luminescence and Thermoluminescence dating will be employed to determine the exposure of sediments and ceramics to heat or light. The continuous cultural development in this region – from the Iron Age to the Early Historic Period – will be established through chronological and scientific analyses based on the unearthed artefacts, Mr. Sivanantham added. The University of Madras had already conducted excavations near Marungur, at Karaikadu and Kudikadu. This site also holds significance as it is located close to the ancient port cities of Arikamedu in the Union Territory of Puducherry and Poompuhar in Mayiladuthurai district. The TNSDA has also mooted preliminary surveys at Manikkollai, nearly 30 km from Marungur, for conducting excavations during 2025-26.

Should political leaders retire at 75?



The suggestion of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat last week that leaders should step aside at the age of 75 triggered a debate. Opposition leaders saw Mr. Bhagwat's comment as a nudge from the RSS to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is turning 75 in September, to step down. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has maintained a studied silence on the issue. Should political leaders retire at 75? Manisha Priyam and Rahul Verma discuss the issue in a conversation moderated by Sobhana K. Nair. Edited excerpts:

Is politics across the globe and especially in India geared in such a way that politicians reach their peak only in old age?

Manisha Priyam: Do people prefer younger leaders? Yes. But why don't they get younger leaders? This depends on several imponderables such as who controls the party machinery, who controls the party purse strings, and whether such leaders can garner resources. We have often seen that those who reach the top hold on to their position. For instance, Lalu Prasad gained popularity at a young age. At the age of 42, he became Chief Minister of Bihar in 1990. He held on to the president's position at the Rashtriya Janata Dal. In Uttar Pradesh, Akhilesh Yadav had to fight his father Mulayam Singh Yadav for the leadership position in the Samajwadi Party. Regarding Mr. Bhagwat's suggestion: this is not the first time that such a remark is coming from the RSS. This (unsaid rule) was used effectively in 2014 to allow Prime Minister Narendra Modi to (push out some older leaders and) nominate his own people at the top levels. But come September, I don't see Mr. Modi stepping down. Today, the RSS requires the BJP machinery much more than the BJP requires the RSS. Mr. Bhagwat does not control the levers of power in India; they clearly remain with Mr. Modi. Rahul Verma: As per one research study, less than 10% of all elected representatives globally are below the age of 35. Once you come to India, this problem actually accentuates. From the first Lok Sabha in 1952 to the current Lok Sabha in 2024, the average age of our parliamentarians has actually gone up. The number of MPs who are below the age of 40 has declined over time and the number of MPs who are above the age of 60 has increased. The problem is not that we don't have newer faces coming into politics; the problem is, as Professor Priyam said, that the older generation of leaders does not easily cede space to younger ones. Also, perhaps, a political party itself is unwilling to bid farewell to an established leader fearing that it will destabilise the existing structure. At the same time, I am not sure that voters would actually prefer younger politicians. It might be alright to have a 30-35-year-old MP or MLA, but I think voters would prefer older candidates for the post of Chief Minister or Prime Minister.

As far as Mr. Bhagwat's comment is concerned, I concur with Professor Priyam that we are unlikely to see any change (regarding Prime Minister Modi's position).

Is there any evidence which shows that nations led by younger leaders perform better?

Manisha Priyam: We have a large number of nations where there is no form of democracy, let alone change of political leadership. These include China and Russia. And we see various forms of either party authoritarianism or one-man rule in these countries. In parallel, we also have the example of the U.K. where there have been several Prime Ministers taking office in their 40s, from Tony Blair to David Cameron. The British example tells us that when people want political change, that political change also comes by way of political leadership change. And I think we need to under-

A look at what is driving the trend of re-releasing popular and acclaimed movies

During Valentine's Week in 2023, when the film industry was still grappling with the pandemic's after-effects and production work was slow, the multiplex chain PVR INOX re-released a few popular rom-coms as 'fillers' to cope with the lean period. The shows of fan-favourite Jab We Met (2007) — which had Geet, who epitomises self-love and transforms Aditya — were sold out across India. This success prompted the re-release of the Imtiaz Ali directorial. This time, too, the movie pulled the crowd back to the theatres.

At a time, when cinema halls were struggling with dismal footfall, such overwhelming response to older movies, high on nostalgia, led to the return of much-talked about movies such as Rockstar (2011), Tumbbad (2018), Kal Ho Naa Ho (2003), Interstellar (2014) and Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani (2013). The focused re-release strategy under the multiplex chain's 'Curated Shows' segment brought a mixed bag of classics as well as the critically-acclaimed films, which may not have enjoyed box-office success earlier. About a year ago, PVR INOX did a week-long retrospective of Zoya Akhtar's movies that also marked her 15-year journey as a director.

The unexpected boost to this initiative came with the re-release of Laila Majnu, the film featuring Tripti Dimri and Avinash Tiwary, on August 9, 2024. With that, the 2018 movie that was not a box-office success in spite of being critically appreciated, finally, got a chance to reconnect with the audience. Laila Majnu, which had earlier registered a box-office collection of Rs 3 crore, earned about Rs 10 crore. The folk-horror film Tumbbad, which had earned Rs 15 crore earlier, earned about Rs 35 crore when it was re-released. Popular movies like Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani and Rockstar made around Rs 25 crore and Rs 10 crore, respectively. The romantic drama Sanam Teri Kasam (2016) earned Rs 50 crore worldwide (source: Sacnlk), becoming the highest-grossing re-released film. The re-release of movies has now evolved into a major celebration. A grand cinematic evening was rolled out at Maison PVR, Mumbai, recently to celebrate Muzaffar Ali's Umrao Jaan. Niharika Bijli, lead strategist, PVR INOX, shared: "We were surprised by the organic publicity its release triggered." The movie, which was restored by the National Film Development Corporation of India (NFDC), went on to be released in about 30 Indian cities. Moments before the premiere of Umrao Jaan's 4K restored version, Ali was excited that a new generation of cinema lovers will be watching the 1981 masterpiece on the big screen. "I am waiting with bated breath to know how

stand that link better. As for India, we are now the world's youngest nation. Our political leadership needs to reflect this aspect of our democracy. A political democracy survives by reincarnating legitimacy and renegotiating its social compact with people. On the question of age and political leadership, it must turn towards seeking younger people as political leaders. And these younger leaders should not come from established political families alone. Rahul Verma: As per the available performance analysis of Indian parliamentarians, we know that younger leaders may not necessarily be better parliamentarians. Data shows that MPs above 60 years of age have 80% attendance in Parliament, while those below 40 have 73-74% average attendance. The older MPs ask far more questions in Parliament. At the same time, I would add the caveat that age is not the only criteria; the health and mental faculty of a leader is equally important. Unfortunately, we have no empirical evidence to point at a direct correlation between a nation's economic health and the age of its leadership. Some studies have pointed out that the governance models of younger leaders may vary drastically from that of an older leadership. There can be material differences in the decisions taken by a younger or an older leader. Younger leaders are much more likely to invest their budget in economic activities of job creation and infrastructure development, while their budgets for social welfare measures, especially health-related schemes, may be low. Younger leaders do govern differently, but one can't say if it is necessarily better.

Should there be a concrete law or regulatory mechanism to retire political leaders or to ensure that a leader who is facing mental or physical challenges steps down?

Manisha Priyam: There has been a lot of speculation around Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's health, especially after some of his television appearances. Even in the election season, his political statements were few and far between. Under the provisions of the Constitution, it would be perfectly legitimate for the Governor to seek a health report of the Chief Minister. People have a right to know if the health of the Chief Minister has been severely compromised. But in Mr. Kumar's case, it is unlikely that such a step will be taken. I do feel this is a mockery of democratic processes. And it is not only Bihar; we have seen numerous examples in the past from various States. In Tamil Nadu, the truth about former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's health was concealed from the voters. The unfortunate reality is that in such cases, the people have to wait until the elections to force the change. Though we never had a similar situation at the Centre, considering that the Prime Minister is always under the public glare, should we have a hard cut-off date for retirement? I am not sure. But we must have a transparent mechanism by way of which the electorate is kept informed about their leader's health. Here though, the greater responsibility is of the political parties. We could have a term limit for the Prime Minister and for Chief Ministers, though. Rahul Verma: Yes, it is desirable to have politicians who are in the best of health and are able to make sound decisions. But how do we achieve this end? Every solution to address this issue comes with its own set of problems. Prescribing a retirement age will also require creating structures that enable career progression in politics faster. That can't be done if we have fixed the minimum age to contest elections at 25 years. Over 8,000 candidates contested the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Less than 100 competitive candidates were below the age of 30. So just bringing in laws won't change any of this. Even term limits are not exactly an effective solution. Look at the U.S. It has a term limit, yet we saw Joe Biden leading the country at 81 while struggling with cognitive issues. He was succeeded by Donald Trump, who is 79 years old. But as Professor Priyam says, there is a conversation across the globe about how the citizens are perhaps entitled to have access to health bulletins of their leaders. Though, again, this isn't exactly an elegant solution. What if the country is on the verge of a war or some kind of economic crisis? An adverse health bulletin of the leader would only add to panic in such a situation. It doesn't even have to be a catastrophic problem; even the markets could react badly if the medical bulletin of the leader is not good. So while it is desirable that no person should remain in office if they aren't mentally or physically fit, it cannot be regulated through legislation or any formal system.



they will receive it. There is a continuity of feelings related to Umrao Jaan — people have watched it on small screens and heard about it from their parents. There is also a time lapse. Some of them have watched it earlier and are watching it again," said Ali. Fresh energy and thoughts have gone into making the 'Cult Classics' segment stronger. Niharika says, "We are trying to devise it in a way that we have a large circuit. There are about 1,700 screens (of PVR INOX). In a week that's action packed and has Hollywood releases, we have the ability to offer something different. There is no compulsion that we have to release a certain number of films in a year. However, we are committed to preserving and reintroducing timeless films to newer generations through curated big-screen experiences." Presented by Viacom18 Studios and Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra Pictures, Bhaag Milkha Bhaag (2013) will release on August 8. The Godfather Trilogy and Pride and Prejudice (2005), too, will play in theatres soon.

Sanjeev Kumar Bijli, executive director, PVR INOX Ltd, said, "Everytime we look at the release, the idea is to make it big. Some movies organically become big, given the audience's love for them or depending on the starcast and director. We had 287 re-releases last year. That's a big number." Nearly 8.5 per cent of their overall revenue last financial year came from re-releases.

When asked about what's driving the audience to watch the re-released movie, Sanjeev emphasises on "the comfort of predictability" as the primary reason. However, describing "the film business as very mystical", he said, "Even today no one knows what will work. This is an industry where you can't serve the same dish again and again. The audience prefers a buffet. At the end of the day, whether the movie is a spectacle or not, the story has to resonate with the viewers and the execution has to be good."

Brain health requires lifelong attention and preventive care

World Brain Day is a global movement dedicated to raising awareness about brain health and sharing ways to keep our brains healthy throughout life. As we approach World Brain Day 2025, on July 22, it is more important than ever to remember that brain health isn't just a concern for older adults, it's vital for everyone, at every age. Brain health is a lifelong journey that begins at birth and continues through every stage of life. But what does "brain health" really mean? It refers to maintaining a well-functioning brain that allows us to think clearly, learn effectively, remember important information and fully engage with life. It is about keeping the mind sharp, staying emotionally balanced and supporting overall mental well-being.

Why is brain health important?

A healthy brain is crucial for everything we do. It allows us to learn and adapt, the brain's ability to learn and adapt is fundamental to our growth and development. We rely on our brains to make informed choices, solve problems, and navigate daily life. Our brains help us connect with others, communicate effectively, and build meaningful relationships. A healthy brain allows us to appreciate the beauty around us, experience joy, and find fulfillment in our lives. Brain health for children While often overlooked, brain development begins in utero and continues throughout childhood. Supporting a child's brain health involves several key practices. Providing a stimulating environment with toys, books, and opportunities for exploration can enhance cognitive growth. Encouraging interaction with both peers and adults helps foster social skills and emotional development. A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains supplies essential nutrients for brain growth. Regular physical activity improves blood flow to the brain and promotes cognitive function. Adequate sleep is crucial for brain development and memory consolidation. Maintaining brain health as an adult is just as important as it is for children. It requires a holistic approach through consistent, healthy lifestyle habits. Eating a balanced diet that includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins supplies the brain with vital nutrients nec-

essary for optimal function. Physical activity is equally important, as it increases blood flow to the brain, supporting cognitive sharpness and overall mental performance. Keeping the mind active with stimulating tasks such as reading, puzzle-solving, learning new languages, or playing musical instruments helps preserve and enhance cognitive abilities. Social engagement with family and friends nurtures emotional well-being and keeps the brain alert and engaged. It's also essential to manage stress effectively through methods like regular exercise, meditation or connecting with nature, since prolonged stress can impair brain health. Adequate sleep of around 7 to 8 hours a night is vital for the brain's restorative processes and for consolidating memories. As well as scheduling routine medical check-ups and screenings aids in early detection and management of any issues that may lead to cognitive decline. As we age, it's important to continue to prioritise brain health. Here are some strategies for maintaining cognitive function in older age: it is important to stay active by engaging in regular physical activities like walking, swimming, or dancing. Maintaining strong social connections with family and friends also plays a crucial role in mental and emotional health. Keeping the mind stimulated through activities such as reading, solving puzzles, or learning new skills can enhance cognitive function. A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains provides essential nutrients that support brain function. Managing stress through practices like meditation, yoga, or spending time in nature is equally important. Regular medical check-ups and screenings help in early detection and prevention of health issues. Additionally, participating in cognitive training programs may help improve memory and attention over time. Brain health for all ages -- a call to action World Brain Day 2025 is a call to action for all of us to take care of our brains. It is about protecting and promoting our brain health throughout our lives. By making healthy choices and reaching out for help when we need it, we can keep our brains strong and ready to live fulfilling lives. Let's make World Brain Day 2025 a chance to inspire everyone,

Vaishali Shadangule on being the first Indian woman to showcase at the Paris Haute Couture Week: ‘Puts you in a different league’



Exactly three years ago, the Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode invited Vaishali Shadangule to showcase her collection at the Paris Haute Couture Week (PHCW). Ever since, she has been a regular and feels like she belongs to a “different league” today. We caught up with the fashion designer—back after showcasing her Fall Winter ’24 Couture Collection Satori, this year—to learn more about her design process, her take on sustainability, what she feels about having showstoppers, and what the most challenging thing about being a designer is today. Read the edited excerpts below:Vaishali Shadangule: Everything changed dramatically, from different points of view. First, the widespread recognition of becoming a couturier sets a standard, like the 3 Michelin stars. People know that only a certain level of quality gets that stamp and don’t question it. You become an Olympian. Then, I must admit, self-esteem; you know you are part of an elite world, you dare more, believe more in the solidity of your creative ideas, and question yourself much less. However, this also requires you to always uphold very high standards of creativity and quality (in garments, processes, and customer service). All these factors, combined with added effort, put you in a different league from those who have never been selected.Tell us about your latest collection, Satori, and the inspiration behind the same.

Vaishali Shadangule: My career reflects my path of self-discovery. I draw my inspiration and guidance from nature, and the flow of her energy is my language. Each collection depicts a different stage of this journey. With this collection, I wish to express the realisation that every secret and discovery lies within us. It is only through moments of enlightenment that we suddenly recognise their presence. For this reason, this collection features themes very dear to me, combined with a new handwork technique that highlights the many layers of thought.We have learned that the embellishments used for this collection are leftovers! Tell us about that.Vaishali Shadangule: In all my collections, leftovers are used to create embellishments. My work upholds the values of village life—never throwing anything away. In fact, it was in the quest to maximise the use of leftovers that I discovered my proprietary cording technique, years ago. By rolling these remnants by hand, I found they could provide structure to my garments, all made with soft handwoven fabrics.

What are your views on sustainability in fashion — in India and (vs) abroad?

Vaishali Shadangule: Sustainability in fashion is essential. By now, we all know how unsustainable fashion can be—in its processes, non-circularity, etc. Making fashion ecologically sustainable can truly help the world. At the same time, fashion can become critical in having a social impact. The visibility of fashion allows it to influence people’s mindsets, particularly the younger generation, who are already more sensitive to sustainable practices and often demand them.Generally speaking, sustainability has not greatly evolved in India and is often reduced to a mere marketing gimmick, especially by some top couture brands.

In contrast, countries like Italy treat sustainability as a very serious matter. We must remember that soon Europe will not allow our garments in if we do not abide by the latest rules.Despite the international catwalk not having the concept of a ‘showstopper’, many Indian designers seem to be obsessed with it. With Radhika Apte walking for you, why do you feel the need to have a celeb face on the ramp? Does it not take away focus from the creations?Vaishali Shadangule: In many cases, this practice does steal away focus from creations, but it also attracts wider attention, resulting in a net positive effect. But yes, just making anybody walk on the ramp, as per basic marketing and branding rules, dilutes the brand equity. On the contrary, if the celebrity’s values align clearly with the brand, like Radhika with Vaishali S, it becomes a very strong brand extension and multiplication. The wider audience tends to know the celebrity very well, often much better than the brand.

Following your tryst with the global fashion scene, who would you say are your buyers today? Has the demography changed in the last three years?

Vaishali Shadangule: The more I have been showcasing during the Paris Haute Couture, where I also use more aggressive and more Western silhouettes, the more I have been widening my audience towards younger age brackets. Geographically, while I have kept my Indian and US audiences, large and fast-growing Middle East and Saudi women have started buying Vaishali S.

You focus a lot on getting your textiles right. Tell us about it in the case of Satori. Also, does it often lead to delays and extra work?

Vaishali Shadangule: My fabrics are all studied by me and all woven on hand looms. Delays are thus long and never precise. That is why I have an ongoing production of fabrics to ensure constant availability of at least ones I use the most. In each collection, I always introduce either new hand-weaving techniques or new materials on old hand-weaving techniques. This requires a head start long before the Paris shows, normally around a year.

On average, how long does it usually take to create a Vaishali S piece — from conceptualisation to sketching to final production?Vaishali Shadangule: As I said, the timeline for ongoing production fabrics is relatively quick. New projects can take years. And it does, because ideas need time to settle in my mind and feelings—this is the part that typically consumes the most time. Once the prototype fabric enters production, the timeline varies based on the level of intervention needed on the loom. Fabrics like woven pashmina, for instance, are extremely delicate and may require extensive adjustments to the loom weights, involving multiple trial and error iterations.

After experiencing the best (and also perhaps bits of the bad) of the Indian and global fashion scenes, how would you describe the two? Also, how does the former fare?

Vaishali Shadangule: India and the global fashion markets are very different. Fashion weeks in India are well-organised with highly talented stylists and show directors, often surpassing those abroad. However, design is more widely understood and appreciated internationally, whereas in India, there seems to be a waning interest among people and media.

The most challenging thing about being a designer today, and why?

Vaishali Shadangule: For a creative designer, the most challenging aspect is often striking a balance between pure creativity and commercially viable designs. I understand that for new independent designers, gaining recognition and exploring their artistic identity through their work is no simple task. It is a largely polarised world where small independent designers have to find a very specific positioning and be extremely focused and resilient.

What is PM SHRI, the ‘showcase’ schools scheme that Centre is pushing in states?



GNS News Agency, May 13

The Centre has stopped funding for the umbrella program for school education in three opposition-ruled states that have refused to implement its PM SHRI scheme. The Samagra Shiksha Scheme, for which funding has been stopped in West Bengal, Punjab, and Delhi, supports implementation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Samagra Shiksha funds for the third and fourth quarters of 2023-24 and the first quarter of 2024-25, amounting to Rs 330 crore, Rs 515 crore, and Rs 1,000 crore for Delhi, Punjab and West Bengal respectively, have not been released.While the Education Ministry has given no official explanation, a senior official told The Indian Express that states cannot receive Samagra Shiksha funds without implementing PM SHRI (PM Schools for Rising India), which is part of the program.PM SHRI scheme

The scheme, approved in 2022, seeks to develop 14,500 schools to “showcase” the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, and be “exemplars” for other schools in their region. The scheme is for existing elementary, secondary, and senior secondary schools run by the central government and state and local governments around the country.The PM SHRI dashboard online currently lists 10,077 schools, of which 839 are Kendriya Vidyalayas and 599 Navodaya Vidyalayas, both run by the Centre. The remaining 8,639 schools are run by state or local governments.

The Centre had declared a total project cost of Rs 27,360 crore for five years until 2026-27, of which the Centre would bear Rs 18,128 crore. At the end of the five-year period, states and Union Territories (UTs) would be required to “continue to maintain the benchmarks achieved by these schools”.The government told Lok Sabha in February that Rs 3,395.16 crore had been approved for 6,207 PM SHRI schools for 2023-24, of which the Centre’s share was Rs 2,520.46 crore and that of the states Rs 874.70 crore.

UP has the most PM SHRI schools (1,865) followed by Maharashtra (910) and Andhra Pradesh (900). No state

Why the embrace between Hindu nationalists and American Christian nationalists can’t last

Depending on how you look at it, the recent warm embrace by Christian nationalists in the United States, of Hindu nationalists in India is either very strange or, perhaps, inevitable. The modern American nationalist is a curious specimen: A self-described patriot whose friends and models are all in foreign countries and whose enemies are all at home. He loves America, except for: Wall Street, Silicon Valley, Hollywood, Washington, the Ivy League, the scientific establishment, the medical and legal professions, the urban centres where most of the people and the GDP are, New England, the Mid-Atlantic, the West Coast, and the cities in Texas and Florida with more than one million people.

They have even turned against the military command and the upper echelons of law enforcement, which were once sacrosanct to the right. (I might have phrased that last sentence slightly differently for an American audience, but I am sure readers of this newspaper have heard quite enough about sacred cows.) Other than that, America is the bee’s knees in the estimate of the American nationalist, whose idols are Viktor Orban, Geert Wilders, and, now, strange as it may seem, Narendra Modi.Advertised as the leading voice of Indian conservatism to an American audience somewhat surprised to learn that there is Indian conservatism, Swapan Dasgupta, lately of the Rajya Sabha and often of newspaper pages, recently addressed NatCon 4, the fourth annual convention of so-called national conservatives.This is a populist-rightist faction at odds with what remains of traditional American conservatism and the old guard of the Republican Party, aligned with Donald Trump — current presidential frontrunner and, this being America, recent shooting victim.It is fascinated by nationalist movements abroad, from AfD and Giorgia Meloni’s Fratelli d’Italia to the Dutch Partij voor de Vrijheid, with a special interest in religiously oriented parties such as the BJP. The fact is that American nationalism is, perversely, an internationalist tendency — Dasgupta wryly described the convention organisers as the “Coninterm.”Speaking extemporaneously, Dasgupta made a familiar case for Hindu nationalism, characterising it as a movement based on religiously encoded civilisational values rather than an attempt to impose some sort of Iran-style theological regime on India. He pointedly informed the audience that US-funded Christian evangelism in India is a considerable barrier to long-term cooperation between the Indian Right and the American Right — and then, of course, patiently fielded questions from earnest young Christians who wanted to ask about “the caste system” and sati.At another panel, anti-immigration activists raised the alarm about Hindu-Sikh riots in the Canadian city of Brampton: “Import the Third World, you get the Third World,” one sneered. Many American nationalists would prefer that Indian nationalists were kept in India, and many of them regard the large, prosperous Indian diaspora in the United States, praised as exemplary by Dasgupta, as an embarrassment, a surrender of jobs, prestige, status, and political power to unwanted immigrants — and, the occasional Nikki Haley or Bobby Jindal notwithstanding, to non-Christian immigrants at that.India often doesn’t get the United States,” Dasgupta said, “and Americans don’t get India at all.” About that, he is correct. The so-called national conservatives do not know very much about Modi or his BJP, but they know enough to satisfy them: They know that he keeps winning elections, while those carrying their banner —from the segregationist George Wallace in the 1960s to the billionaire demagogue Ross Perot in the 1990s to Donald Trump in 2020 — generally fail at the polls. They know that he is despised by the same secular-minded liberals and Davos men who despise them. They know that he makes his enemies feel fearful

or local government-run schools in the non-BJP states of Punjab, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, and Bihar, as well as Odisha, which got a BJP government only last month, have been included in the scheme.PM SHRI schools are selected through the “challenge mode” — schools that meet certain minimum benchmarks (including a pucca building in good condition, barrier-free access ramps, at least one toilet each for boys and girls) can apply online.They are evaluated on a set of parameters that include infrastructure, teaching staff, and learning outcomes. Schools in urban areas must score at least 70%; those in rural areas 60% to be selected. States are supposed to send a list of recommended schools to the Ministry, and an expert committee headed by the School Education and Literacy Secretary draws up the final list. Up to two schools — an elementary school and a secondary/ senior secondary school can be selected per block/ urban local body.

The state, UT, or Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan/ Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti is required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Education committing to implement the provisions of the NEP “in entirety within the entire State/ UT”, and to prefix PM SHRI to the name of the selected school.States/ UTs have to work to ensure zero dropout rates in all grades within two years of implementation, comply with norms for pupil-teacher ratio, and implement “innovative pedagogy” such as activity-based, sports-based, art-based, and toy-based learning.Samagra ShikshaThe PM SHRI scheme is to be implemented at the state/ UT level through the existing administrative structure available for Samagra Shiksha, which the government describes as “an overarching program for the school education sector...from pre-school to Class 12...”, prepared with the broader goal of improving school effectiveness measured in terms of equal opportunities for schooling and equitable learning outcomes”.Samagra Shiksha, which was proposed by the Union Budget of 2018-19, subsumed the erstwhile Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), and Teacher Education (TE) schemes.The scheme is funded in a 60:40 ratio by the Centre and states, barring the 11 Northeastern and Himalayan states, which have to bear only 10% of the cost.Delhi and Punjab have declined to participate in PM SHRI because the Aam Aadmi Party governments in these states are already implementing similar schemes for exemplar schools called “Schools of Specialised Excellence” and “Schools of Eminence” respectively. West Bengal has objected to the requirement of prefixing PM SHRI to the names of the schools, especially since the state bears 40% of the cost.

The states that have not signed the PM SHRI MoU have not received funds from the Centre under the Samagra Shiksha scheme. After holding out initially, Kerala, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, and Odisha agreed to participate in the scheme in March this year.



They have even turned against the military command and the upper echelons of law enforcement, which were once sacrosanct to the right. (I might have phrased that last sentence slightly differently for an American audience,

and humiliated, as they desire to make their enemies feel fearful and humiliated.

And they know, though they would never admit as much, that whatever the court theologians may have to say about it, Narendra Modi and Donald Trump are devotees of the same god: Power.India has often miscalculated in its relationship with the United States, but Indians have never had the luxury of being able to romanticise the United States. Americans, committed to our twin national principles that all men are created equal and that ignorance is bliss, have rarely done anything except romanticise India. Being too complex to comprehend, India provides an expansive blank screen upon which to project American yearnings: Americans know very little of Mohandas Gandhi the political leader, but Mahatma Gandhi the movie character remains very popular, even among those who have never seen the film.New Dealers who hoped for a more Fabian postwar order saw a kindred spirit in Jawaharlal Nehru, who disdained them. One suspects that if Modi had the choice between being embraced by Christian nationalists in Washington or being rid of Christian evangelists in Uttar Pradesh, he would not hesitate to prefer the latter.I suspect that the NatCon-BJP love affair will end in heartbreak because there is no such thing as religious nationalism: There is Hindu nationalism and there is Christian nationalism, and these are not only distinct tendencies but also — given the size of India’s Christian minority and the prominence of America’s Hindu minority — ultimately incompatible.It is unlikely that the sort of Christian nationalism being contemplated by Dasgupta’s new friends in the United States will enjoy the kind of success Modi’s Hindu nationalism has achieved in India, but any such success would necessarily involve the general humiliation of American Hindus and other religious minorities, whatever rhetorical camouflage might be deployed to deemphasise the fact. After all, American political factions do not compete among themselves for mere material resources — the country is far too rich for that: They compete for status. The same already is true, or soon must be true, of India at the commanding heights.And that is the limiting factor — and the danger — of identity politics. A rising economic tide may lift all boats, but status is, by definition, a zero-sum game. As the unhappy events of September 1, 1939 — September 2, 1945 attest, successful nationalists invariably soon turn their attention to the nationalists next door.Williamson is national correspondent for The Dispatch and a writer in residence at the Competitive En

India gets its first Alzheimer’s therapy, will cost nearly a lakh per dose

Alzheimer’s patients in the country will now have the option of receiving a new treatment, with pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly launching donanemab in the Indian market under the brand name Lormalzi. The once-a-month 350 mg infusion has been shown to slow the progression of the disease by dissolving the amyloid beta protein plaques in the brain — a classical sign of the neuro-degenerative disease.

It is a monoclonal antibody treatment for Alzheimer’s. This is a disease-modifying therapy that uses laboratory-made proteins to target and remove amyloid-beta plaques from the brain, slowing cognitive decline in early-stage patients by roughly 30%. Approved therapies, including lecanemab (Leqembi) and donanemab (Kisunla), are administered intravenously to reduce plaque buildup.Winslow Tucker, president and general manager, Eli Lilly and Company (India), said in a release: “Alzheimer’s is a complex, progressive condition that places a significant emotional, clinical and societal burden on patients, caregivers, and healthcare systems. The launch of Lormalzi in India reflects our long-standing commitment to advancing innovation and supporting evidence-based intervention for people living with Alzheimer’s.” He added: “We are committed to strengthening patient access by collaborating closely with stakeholders across the healthcare ecosystem.”

many now, they present hope for more affordable options becoming available in the future.

What do we know about the treatment so far?

Donanemab is a monoclonal antibody that reduces amyloid beta protein plaques in the brain to slow down cognitive decline in patients with early Alzheimer’s disease.The phase 3 study with 1,736 patients, 860 of whom received the infusion every four weeks till the amyloid clumps cleared, showed that donanemab slows down cognitive decline in early Alzheimer’s patients by 35.1% in 76 weeks. The drug is, however, known to cause amyloid-related imaging abnormalities (ARIA) such as swelling or bleeding in the brain, most of which is asymptomatic. The study showed that 24% participants had ARIA involving brain swelling, and 19.7% involving brain bleeds. The study reported three treatment-related deaths.Donanemab remains a preferred choice because the infusion needs to be given every four weeks instead of two weeks with lecanemab. Also, the treatment can be halted, with the patients switching over to placebo after there was a certain level of protein clearance in the donanemab study. “In the absence of amyloid PET imaging, which is currently not available in India, the evidence-based approach is to treat patients with donanemab for 18 months,” the company said.

What are the challenges of the drug in India?

Treatment with donanemab would require an early diagnosis, something that hardly happens with Alzheimer’s patients in India. It would also require careful selection of patients, screening the eligible among them, and following up with expensive tests while watching for severe adverse events that may lead to death. Those being screened would have to be tested for the APOE4 gene, which has been associated with a higher risk of adverse events.The health systems in India may not be ready for this and it would further add to the cost of the medicine. An editorial published alongside the phase III data on donanemab in the journal JAMA said: “... The modest benefits would likely not be questioned by patients, clinicians, or payers if amyloid antibodies were low-risk, inexpensive, and simple to administer. However, they are none of these.”

What are the other drugs available globally?

There are two other therapies approved by the US FDA, both of which work on the same principle. The two therapies by Eisai-Biogen were approved within two years of each other. While the approvals led to a lot of excitement among clinicians treating the condition, the approval for the first drug aducanumab was mainly based on a “surrogate endpoint” of reducing the amyloid beta plaques, which does not guarantee better cognition in the patients.

Indian companies pledge to invest record \$20.5 billion in US; pharma in focus



Indian companies have pledged to invest a record \$20.5 billion in the United States, which includes \$19.1 billion in pharmaceuticals, the US embassy said on Wednesday. The commitments were made during an investment summit in Maryland, US. According to the US embassy, the commitments span key sectors including pharmaceuticals, advanced manufacturing, energy infrastructure, and emerging technologies, and are expected to create thousands of jobs in both countries while expanding US production and joint innovation capacity.

The US embassy statement quoted Ambassador Sergio Gor saying, "I am proud to advance our goal to double US-India bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030. Through fair, balanced, and mutually beneficial trade, we're attracting world-class investment to the United States and creating shared prosperity for both nations." It said that a significant share of the investment is driven by India's pharmaceutical sector, with more than \$19.1 billion in planned investments in US manufacturing, research and development, and new facilities. In addition, 12 Indian companies announced more than \$1.1 billion in new greenfield and expansion projects across multiple states, supporting jobs in manufacturing,

technology, and engineering. Pharmaceuticals & industrial capacity

Indian pharmaceutical companies announced plans to invest more than \$19.1 billion in the US, anchored by Sun Pharmaceutical's planned \$11.75 billion acquisition of New Jersey-based Organon & Co. Participating companies include Aurobindo Pharma Ltd, Biocon Group, Cipla Ltd, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Ltd, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Granules India Ltd, Jubilant Group, Lupin Ltd, Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd, Piramal Pharma Ltd, and Zydus Lifesciences Ltd, the statement said. These investments will support manufacturing and network expansions, new greenfield facilities, and increased research and development, helping expand the supply of essential medicines, address drug shortages, and strengthen the resilience of the US healthcare supply chain. Abhyuday Group (Ahmedabad) will invest over \$900 million across five US sites, creating 1,500 American jobs. Jindal Pipe and Jindal Tubular USA (PR Jindal Group) will invest \$87 million to expand in Texas and Mississippi, creating 140 jobs. Jivo Wellness (Delhi) will invest \$15 million, creating 50 direct jobs and up to 150 indirect jobs. Polyhose Inc. will invest \$2 million in Los Angeles to support the US shipbuilding industry. Mumbai-based Sterlite Technologies Ltd will invest \$100 million, creating up to 500 jobs and supporting AI and telecom infrastructure. Kerala's RoshAI will invest \$5 million in Texas, creating 20 jobs. Chennai's Atri AI will invest \$2 million in Menlo Park, California. Kissflow will invest \$2 million in Houston. SatoriXR will invest \$1.5 million in Michigan, creating 25 jobs. Magnolnnovation Lab (Kerala) will invest \$2 million to establish US field operations and support energy sector applications. Indian Institute of Technology Madras Global Research Foundation will invest \$4.5 million to establish a US research and collaboration hub in California, with plans for an additional East Coast.

India's largest domestic refinery to shut for maintenance, govt sees no impact on LPG output

India's largest domestic market-oriented refinery—Reliance Industries (RIL) domestic tariff area refinery at Jamnagar—will be taking a routine maintenance shutdown later this month, but the government doesn't expect the shutdown to impact fuel availability in the country, particularly that of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), a senior Petroleum Ministry official said on Wednesday. The government is also involved in coordinating refinery shutdowns by different refiners to ensure ample fuel availability amid the West Asia crisis, which has reduced energy flows to India. RIL 33-million-tonnes-per-annum (mtpa) refinery is the largest refinery supplying fuels for the Indian market. The company's Jamnagar refinery complex also has a 35.2-mtpa special economic zone (SEZ) refinery that is export-oriented.

Refineries take periodic planned maintenance shutdowns, or turnarounds, to ensure operational safety, comply with regulations, and replace equipment that needs to be changed. These scheduled refinery outages help with inspection, cleaning, repairs, and upgrades to maintain and even improve operational efficiency. Due to the West Asia war, wherever feasible, refinery shutdowns have been postponed to ensure stable and adequate fuel supplies in India. According to Petroleum Ministry Joint Secretary Sujata Sharma, RIL's refinery shutdown—likely to last about four weeks—will begin after Nayara Energy's 20-mtpa Vadinar refinery comes back on stream after its maintenance turnaround is completed by the middle of May. The Vadinar refinery's maintenance shutdown started last month after facing months-long delays.

"Shutdowns or turnarounds are part of normal operations as far as refineries are concerned. We in the ministry try to ensure that all shutdowns don't happen at the same time. It has to be scattered so that the supplies for the domestic market are not affected, and that's what we are ensuring now also. Right now the Nayara refinery is under shutdown, and by the mid of this month or even before that, it will come back (on stream). And then the Reliance shutdown will start," Sharma said. She added that the shutdown will not have any impact on the domestic production of LPG as not all units of the RIL refinery are going to be offline. As for other fuels like petrol, diesel, and aviation turbine fuel, the country is self-sufficient and a net exporter, which means that there is no real supply constraint. While the West Asia war and the consequent closure of the Strait of Hormuz has impacted India's energy imports, LPG supplies are the worst affected due to the country's heavy reliance on the cooking fuel's imports from large West Asian suppliers.

India depends on imports to meet about 60% of its LPG consumption, and a whopping 90% of those imports came via the Strait of Hormuz. This means that the Strait of Hormuz effectively saw the movement of around 54% of India's LPG consumption. In the case of LNG imports, on which India depends to meet half of its natural gas require-



ment, the Strait accounted for 55-60% of the supplies. As for crude oil, about 40% came through the shipping corridor. The disruption has forced India to ration LPG supplies to industrial and commercial consumers in a bid to prioritise crores of households that depend on the fuel to run their kitchens. There are over 33 crore households in India with LPG connections. As a demand management tool, the minimum gap between LPG refill bookings by households has also been increased.

Moreover, domestic refineries have been maximising domestic LPG production to partly offset the loss in imports, and refiners are scrambling for LPG cargoes from alternative geographies like the US, Australia, and Russia, among others. Through diplomatic efforts, India has also managed to get nine of its LPG tankers stuck in the Persian Gulf. Efforts by refiners to maximise domestic LPG output have led to an increase of about 40% in India's LPG production vis-à-vis pre-West Asia conflict levels, which means that the country's own LPG production is now meeting roughly 55% of the demand versus 40% earlier. Sharma assured that the domestic LPG production is expected to remain high despite one of the largest refineries in the country shutting down for maintenance. She also said that no supply tightness is expected in other major fuels—petrol, diesel, and aviation turbine fuel—as India is a net exporter. Moreover, The government has also imposed export duties on diesel and aviation turbine fuel to disincentivise exports in order to keep the domestic market well-supplied. India is the world's third-largest consumer of crude oil and the fourth-largest refiner, with a bulk of the petroleum fuels—like petrol and diesel—and petroleum products consumed within the country, and some volumes exported. India has a refining capacity of roughly 260 mtpa, which usually operate at over 100% of their nameplate capacity. Indian refineries cumulatively produced over 280 million tonnes of fuels and other petroleum products in 2025-26 (FY26); the country's domestic consumption was about 240 million tonnes, according to data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) of the Petroleum Ministry.

Prem Watsa's Fairfax to hike stake in IIFL Capital to 51 pc via Rs 2,000 cr fund infusion

Fairfax group of Canada has proposed to hike its equity holding in IIFL Capital Services Ltd to 51 per cent through capital infusion of Rs 2,000 crore at a price of Rs 350 per share. Fairfax India Holdings Corporation, founded by Prem Watsa, will increase its stake in IIFL Capital Services through its wholly owned subsidiary, FIH Mauritius Investments Ltd. The increase will be carried out through a combination of transactions, including a preferential allotment of equity shares, an open offer and arrangements with the existing promoters, raising its shareholding in the company to at least 51 per cent from 30.5 per cent.

Upon completion of the transaction, Fairfax India and its affiliate, HWIC Asia Fund Class A will join the existing promoter group alongside Nirmal Jain and R Venkataraman. Fairfax acquired CSB Bank in 2018 and it currently holds 40 per cent stake in the bank. It was also in the race to acquire stake in IDBI Bank. India-born Watsa has been the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Fairfax Financial Holdings Limited since 1985 and the Vice Chairman of Hamblin Watsa Investment Counsel Ltd since 2019. The Fairfax Group has been a longstanding shareholder of the company. Fairfax currently holds about 30.5 per cent in IIFL Capital. Subject to shareholder and regulatory approvals, FIH Mauritius will have the right to nominate two directors on the board of the company. The proposed transaction remains subject to customary regulatory, and shareholder approvals, including applicable open offer requirements under SEBI regulations. "The proposed capital infusion of Rs 2,000 crore at Rs 350 per share, will sig-

nificantly strengthen the company's balance sheet and support the next phase of growth across its capital markets, wealth management, asset management, institutional equities, investment banking, and related financial services businesses," IIFL said in a statement. "Fairfax's global reputation, long-term investment philosophy, financial strength, and international network are expected to further enhance IIFL Capital's strategic positioning, strengthen institutional credibility, broaden global relationships, and support a lower cost of capital over time," it said in the statement. The induction of Fairfax representatives onto the board is also expected to further strengthen governance standards, oversight, risk management frameworks, and institutional processes, while preserving the entrepreneurial and execution-focused culture of the company. Prem Watsa, Founder of Fairfax India, said, "with this new capital infusion we believe the company is well positioned for the future as it expands its wealth and asset management services offerings, while maintaining its leading position in retail broking and financial services." "Fairfax India (and its affiliate) has been a trusted long-term partner of the IIFL Group for over 15 years, and together we have created significant value for all stakeholders. Over the years, this relationship has been built on deep mutual trust, shared values and a long-term commitment to institution building," said Nirmal Jain, Promoter, IIFL Capital. "At a time when the Indian economy and financial markets are at a major inflection point, we believe this is the right moment for IIFL Capital to benefit from strong parentage and position itself for the next phase of growth.

How AI is transforming desi weddings: From planning to deepfake memories



In 2010, Shruti (played by Anushka Sharma) and Bittoo (played by Ranveer Singh) in Band Baaja Baaraat spent their days navigating Delhi on a secondhand scooter, armed with notepads and sheer jugaad to build their wedding-planning business, Shaadi Mubarak. Their biggest hurdles were sourcing vendors, negotiating with them, auditioning every cook, and physically visualising decor themes that existed in their clients' heads. If Shruti and Bittoo were launching Shaadi Mubarak today, the scooter might still be there, but the hustle would be minimal and hyper-charged by artificial intelligence.

AI has introduced speed and precision into extravagant Indian weddings that were once painstakingly manual. However, the AI revolution in India's wedding ecosystem goes far beyond using tools like ChatGPT to search for lehenga inspiration, create Pinterest-style mood boards, or finalise the menu.

Indian couples are now using AI to create deeply immersive experiences like digitally recreating the presence of loved ones who are no longer alive. In a culture where the blessings of elders are paramount, couples are now using deepfake and voice-cloning technology to include deceased family members in their celebrations. Imagine a bride walking down the aisle to a personalised message recorded in her late grandfather's recreated voice, or a family portrait where AI seamlessly integrates a lost loved one. For tech-forward entrepreneurs, applying AI to a wedding isn't just a trend but an operational necessity. Gayatri Agrawal, founder of ALTRD, views her wedding planning through a "systems" lens. Having run an AI company, she had an "AI-first" approach to her wedding by default. "A wedding has a lot of moving parts, and I saw it as another system that could be optimised," Agrawal tells indianexpress.com. She notes that AI's greatest gift is visualisation without the overwhelm. For her, a tool like Nano Banana was a lifesaver, allowing her to match jewellery with outfits that weren't physically in the same room.

AI not for emotional choices However, Agrawal draws a firm line at the "heart" of the event. She suggests that while AI should handle the "backend ops" and coordination to save time, the emotional choices must remain human. "I didn't use AI for decision-making... I didn't want to over-optimize something that's meant to be felt," she shares. "I'd definitely recommend it, but with boundaries. Use AI for backend ops, coordination, visualisation, anything that saves time. But for moments, choices, and emotions, be fully present," Agarwal says. If early AI tools focused on inspiration and visualisation, a new wave of platforms is tackling the most stressful part of Indian weddings: execution. Prakhar Jain, co-founder and CEO of Envito AI, positions his product as something fundamentally different from traditional planning tools. His AI assistant, Nayna AI, is designed to handle the "guest experience layer" of weddings, essentially acting as a central intelligence system that operates over WhatsApp. "In Indian weddings, stress does not come from creating plans. It comes from executing them across hundreds of guests, multiple functions, and constant moving parts," Jain explains.

Jain says that Nayna AI functions as a conversational assistant for guests. It responds instantly to queries, manages requests, and routes them to the appropriate organisers through a ticketing system. Guests can ask about travel, outfit suggestions, or event details, and receive real-time answers. Jain says the system also collects RSVPs, manages arrivals and departures, coordinates room allocations and pickups, and sends targeted updates based on guest segments. "Couples are no longer coordinating hundreds of micro-decisions," Jain says. "Nayna AI executes them."

According to Jain, Envito AI has been deployed across more than 150 events, serving over 43,000 guests in collaboration with 30-plus wedding planners in just seven months. "Nayna AI does not prescribe culture," Jain says, adding, "It executes what the hosts design, accurately and at scale." One of the most gruelling tasks for any Indian couple is the seating chart, a literal minefield of family politics and social hierarchies. Jaime, founder of SeatCanvas, explains that while AI is powerful, it cannot yet navigate the "Cold War" between two aunts. The personalisation in a wedding comes from the couple because they know which aunt shouldn't sit near which cousin," he notes. Instead, he uses AI to handle the "manual" drudgery: fast guest imports, duplicate detection, and identifying empty seat clusters. However, the challenge is "context impoverishment". A spreadsheet doesn't tell an AI that a bride's divorced parents are on good terms or that two cousins haven't spoken in years. "The judgment call about who sits next to grandma is going to be made by a human for a long time," he said, highlighting that in weddings, people pay for

"human attention and human judgment".

Shweta Ratanpura and Mithilesh Katkar of Studio Mish have found a way to use AI to enhance high-end customisation rather than replace it. They use AI to analyse long "how we met" stories from clients to extract keywords and emotional beats. "We use AI to quickly put our ideas into something virtual and then share it," Shweta says, explaining how AI-generated sketches help clients pick a creative direction faster than traditional pencil drawings. However, they ensure manual input at every stage to prevent the "generic output" that plagues many automated platforms. AI for motif variations For their venture, AI is a tool to replicate elements such as designing 20 different versions of a specific traditional motif, while keeping the soul of the design unique to the couple.

"While we would use AI in the process, we do not entirely rely on it for the idea creation. This is important to sort of maintain their choices, ideas, or aesthetics, because you know how AI can just create generic output, and it could be the same for everyone. So I know that a lot of people today would prefer to just get their illustrations or invites made on Canva or through an AI feature, where they can just create their illustration," Ratanpura explains. If logistics is one side of the story, creativity is the other, and here, AI is proving transformative. Rajesh Satankar, co-founder of Knotting Bells, describes AI as "absolutely integral" to modern wedding photography workflows. Tools like Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Lightroom have dramatically reduced the time required for culling, colour correction, and retouching. "What once took days now happens with a prompt or a click," he says. But the impact goes beyond efficiency. AI-powered design platforms like Canva are enabling photographers to create albums, social media content, and reels in minutes rather than days. This shift allows creative professionals to focus more on storytelling and less on repetitive tasks.

"Wedding photography is about real moments," Satankar emphasises. "There's a rawness people want to preserve." One particularly moving example involved using AI to include a bride's late grandparents in a family portrait. The result wasn't just visually striking, but emotionally profound, illustrating how AI can move beyond utility into something deeply human.

"The bride wanted her grandparents who are no longer with us to be part of a family portrait. We worked with existing photographs, used Photoshop carefully, and placed them into the frame. When the family saw that image, it felt like they were truly there at the wedding," Satankar says. Nitin Arora of Nitin Arora Photography believes AI's role is primarily efficiency. "If the emotion changes, it's too much," Arora says. He shared that he uses AI to clean up chaotic backgrounds, but draws the line at altering the reality of the moment. "If everyone starts using the same tools in the same way, everything starts looking similar," Arora says. Even the wedding soundtrack is evolving. DJs are using AI to analyse musical preferences, identify patterns, and experiment with custom mashups. However, celebrity DJ Krish explains, AI remains a support tool. "It helps me map preferences and experiment," he says, "but reading a crowd is instinct."

That instinct, knowing when to switch tracks or build energy, remains deeply human, especially in the unpredictable environment of a live wedding celebration. "Those calls happen in real time, often without thinking. Technology can assist, but it cannot feel the room the way a DJ does, he shares. For startups building AI-driven wedding platforms, the goal is not to eliminate complexity but to make it manageable. Gowtham H N, CTO of It's Forever, a company that builds digital wedding albums, points out that weddings involve multiple decision-makers and competing preferences. AI helps couples explore options quickly and iterate across themes, significantly reducing the time required for decision-making. "It (AI) doesn't hand you a finished answer, but it gets you to the right answer much faster. What used to require days of research and design exploration now comes together in a matter of hours," he explains.

As AI becomes more embedded in wedding planning, its psychological impact is increasingly relevant. Dr Rimpa Sarkar, PhD, of Sentier Wellness, Mumbai, suggests that AI can enhance a sense of control by simplifying decisions and reducing overwhelm. This can make the planning process smoother and more enjoyable. However, over-reliance on AI may subtly affect authenticity if decisions begin to feel driven by algorithms rather than personal meaning. "When it supports the couple's vision, it can enhance the experience. When it replaces personal involvement, it may create a sense of emotional distance," Dr Sarkar explains.

Emphasising how AI tools can help reduce conflicts between couples and families during wedding planning, Dr Sarkar states that AI can act as a neutral reference point in decision-making. However, it might also create new tensions among family members if they feel their emotions are being replaced by technology. "Weddings are not just logistical events; they are emotional and cultural experiences, so balance is important. Using AI as a support tool rather than a decision-maker can help maintain harmony," the expert says. As the wedding industry continues to boom in the upcoming years, today's planners and couples still need that "spark" of human connection, but they are no longer limited by manual labour.

Milind Soman swims 15 km from Europe to Africa in a unique challenge, calls it 'beautiful'

Milind Soman does the unthinkable yet again. Taking to Instagram recently, the 60-year-old shared that he swam from Europe to Africa across the Strait of Gibraltar, a 15km stretch. "1st of May, I swam from Europe to Africa, across the Strait of Gibraltar, 15km at the closest point, from Tarifa in Spain to the coast of Morocco. Beautiful beautiful beautiful swim," he wrote, captioning a series of photos which show his well-sculpted physique. The post quickly grabbed attention online with many hailing the fitness aficionado's mindset. "Incredible," wrote Shenaz Treasury, while actor Aashka Goradia commented, "STARRRRR". This display of endurance highlighted how extreme physical challenges push the body's immunity, resilience, and recovery systems to their limits.

"Swimming, especially in open water, places a unique demand on the body. Unlike land workouts, it combines cold exposure, breath control, and full-body muscular engagement. Cold water, in particular, can act as a stressor that temporarily challenges the immune system. The body responds by activating adaptive mechanisms, which over time may improve resilience and tolerance to stress," said consultant dietitian and fitness expert Garima Goyal. From a clinical perspective, moderate and consistent exercise is known to support immunity by improving the circulation of



immune cells, reducing chronic inflammation, and enhancing metabolic health. "However, intense endurance challenges like long-distance swimming can create a short-term dip in immunity, often referred to as the "open window" phase. During this period, the body is more susceptible to infections due to physical stress and energy depletion," said Goyal. Another key factor is recovery and nutrition. "Activities like open-water swimming require adequate protein for muscle repair, carbohydrates for energy replenishment, and micronutrients like zinc, vitamin C, and vitamin D to support immune function."

IPL to hit Pakistan cricket with several Australian players likely to miss ODI series



GNS News Agency, May 13

When the dates of the Pakistan Super League were announced, overlapping to a great extent with those of the Indian Premier League, there was going to be only one winner in this mismatch. This year, the IPL is also expected to impact international cricket involving Pakistan. More than one player has ditched the PSL to become part of the biggest domestic T20 league in the world, under some pretext or the other. The former could do little else than cry foul and ban those players for a certain period. Corbin Bosch joined Mumbai Indians last year as a replacement player, ditching Peshawar Zalmi, and was candid enough to admit that the decision was taken with an eye on his long-term career prospects, and he accepted the fine and a one-year ban from the IPL. This year, Zimbabwean pacer Blessing Muzarabani joined Kolkata Knight Riders despite, according to the PSL, a verbal agreement to join Islamabad United. Apart from better monetary and career prospects in the IPL, Muzarabani claimed he had not received any formal con-

tract from PSL. Nevertheless, he was banned from the tournament for two years. Now, with Pakistan's limited-overs home series against Australia scheduled to begin the day before the IPL final, it's highly likely that some of the biggest players in the ODI world champion side will not make the trip, according to a report in cricket.com.au.

The three ODIs will be played in Rawalpindi and Lahore on May 30, June 2 and 4, with the IPL final scheduled for May 31 in Ahmedabad. Australia captain Pat Cummins, Travis Head (both Sunrisers Hyderabad) and Josh Hazlewood (Royal Challengers Bengaluru) are almost certain to miss the series in Pakistan. Mitchell Starc's Delhi Capitals still has a slim chance of making the IPL Playoffs. The regular season ends on May 24 while the Australian squad is scheduled to land in Pakistan the previous day. After the Pakistan tour, the Aussies will travel to Bangladesh for an ODI and T20 series beginning June 9. Other Australian players whose teams are still in the running for the IPL Playoffs include Cooper Connolly, Xavier Bartlett, Mitchell Owen and Ben Dwarshuis (all Punjab Kings), Spencer Johnson and Matthew Short (Chennai Super Kings) and Tim David (RCB). Others such as Mitchell Marsh and Josh Inglis (both Lucknow Super Giants) and Cameron Green (Kolkata Knight Riders) represent teams that are, more or less, out of the playoff race. But it remains to be seen whether even those players whose involvement in the IPL ends before the playoffs or who don't feature regularly for their teams will be released by their franchises. Even those who are let go may choose that period to rest, recover and recuperate after a hectic season. After all, Starc and Green are coming off injury layoffs and Marsh is never too far from breaking down.

Amanpreet Singh Gill passes away: Former teammate Virat Kohli mourns loss

GNS News Agency, May 13

Amanpreet Singh Gill, former India U-19 and Punjab pacer who was once Virat Kohli's U19 teammate, passed away at the age of 36 in Chandigarh on Wednesday. He was also part of the Punjab franchise (Kings XI Punjab) in the inaugural Indian Premier League season, and later served as a member of Punjab's senior selection committee. The cause of death is not yet known. After his passing, the cricket fraternity, including Kohli paid tribute. "Shocked and saddened to hear about Amanpreet Gill's passing. Sending prayers and strength to his family and loved ones. Rest in peace. Om Shanti," Kohli posted on X. "Punjab Cricket Association deeply mourns the sad demise of Amanpreet Singh Gill, former Punjab cricketer and Member, Senior Selection Committee Punjab. Our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and loved ones. May Waheguru grant eternal peace to the departed soul and strength to the family in this difficult time," the Punjab Cricket Association announced on X. "Deeply saddened to hear about Amanpreet Singh Gill's passing. Shared the dressing room in our early days, he was a quiet, hardworking cricketer who loved the game. My heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones. Rest in peace Om Shanti," Singh posted on X. Gill played five Youth ODIs and one Youth Test for India in 2007. In the



longer format, he claimed the wicket of former Sri Lanka all-rounder Thisara Perera. Punjab Cricket Association deeply mourns the sad demise of Amanpreet Singh Gill, former Punjab cricketer and Member, Senior Selection Committee Punjab. "Deeply saddened by the passing of Amanpreet Singh Shergill, who proudly represented Punjab and was a part of the Punjab Kings family. Our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and the entire cricketing fraternity," Punjab Kings posted on their official Instagram account.

Jos Buttler backs Kyle Jamieson's send-off to 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi

GNS News Agency, May 13

Jos Buttler has backed Kyle Jamieson's fiery send-off to teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, saying the reaction was understandable given the fearless way the 15-year-old has battled in the IPL this season. Speaking on the For the Love of Cricket podcast, the Gujarat Titans wicketkeeper-batsman said the controversy around the incident was mainly because of Sooryavanshi's age. The incident took place during the Rajasthan Royals' defeat to Delhi Capitals last week. After dismissing Sooryavanshi for four runs, Jamieson celebrated aggressively in the youngster's face and was later handed a demerit point for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct. "I don't know if it's been big news. It's not something I've seen a lot of," Buttler said. "I saw him get him out and, you know, I think the fact that he is 15 is probably the thing that makes it so big, doesn't it?" Buttler said Sooryavanshi's batting this season has forced bowlers to treat him like any other dangerous batter, irrespective of his age. "But I would say Vaibhav hasn't been showing any remorse to any of the bowlers for the fact that he's only 15. It's not like he's only hitting twos and fours. He's smashing bowlers into row Z," Buttler said. "So the excitement when you get him out, I think, is justified, to be honest. He's been playing that well, and he's been that destructive."

The former England white-ball captain also joked that Jamieson himself would probably find it amusing that one of his most emotional celebrations came after dismissing a teenager. "I'm sure Kyle Jamieson probably has a bit of a laugh when he's back in his room thinking, 'One of the most excited I've been and emotional I've been, and in the batter's



face I've been has been for a 15-year-old boy," Buttler said. "But, you know, I think that's the only mitigation, isn't it? Other than that, he's been one of the stars of the tournament. He's been one of the most destructive players and, as I said, he's not showing any remorse to the bowlers." Buttler also said he had no problem with emotional celebrations on the cricket field and felt players should be free to show passion in high-pressure moments. "So, fair play to him, and I'm sure you'll be in that camp that we like to see emotion in the game, don't you? You want to see a bit of enjoyment," he said. "Vaibhav's playing men's cricket as if he's been one of the best players of the tournament. So, I think the fact that he is only 15 is kind of the only talking point there. Otherwise, it would just be a normal sort of celebration for a bowler." Sooryavanshi has been one of the breakout stars of IPL 2026, with his fearless strokeplay and clean hitting making him one of the most talked-about young players in the tournament.

the vehicle and conducting a roadside breath test. The former Australian batsman was then taken to Maroubra Police Station, where a second test allegedly returned a blood alcohol reading of 0.104 – more than twice the legal limit of 0.05 for fully licensed drivers in New South Wales. He was subsequently charged with a middle-range prescribed concentration of alcohol (PCA). One aspect of the case that remains disputed, according to Hill, concerns the timing of the second breath test and its impact on the final reading. Warner retired from international cricket in 2024 after a career spanning 112 Tests, 161 ODIs and 110 T20Is for Australia. He remains one of the country's most accomplished white-ball batsmen and played key roles in Australia's ODI World Cup triumph in 2015 and T20 World Cup success in 2021. Despite stepping away from international cricket, Warner continues to play franchise cricket around the world. He is currently captain of the Karachi Kings in the Pakistan Super League and also leads the Sydney Thunder in Australia's domestic T20 competition. Following the charge in April, Cricket NSW chief executive Lee Germon described the allegations as "concerning" and said the organisation took the matter "very seriously". Warner's next court appearance is scheduled for June, when the matter is expected to proceed further.

Michael Clarke compares Sooryavanshi hype to Tendulkar: 'Haven't seen this before'



Well, I haven't seen this before. I haven't seen a 15-year-old doing this." Former Australia captain Michael Clarke perhaps summed up the disbelief around Vaibhav Sooryavanshi better than most after the teenager's extraordinary rise in IPL 2026. Speaking on Beyond23 Cricket Podcast, Clarke compared the scale of the hype around the 15-year-old to the early days of Sachin Tendulkar, while also cautioning against rushing expectations around the youngster's future in Test cricket. "You know, I think back, and again, you can't compare. Two very different players. But I remember Sachin Tendulkar coming to Australia as a 17-year-old and, mate, that hype was real. I think he was 16. Was 16. And that hype was earned. That legacy is there for everyone to see," the 45-year-old said. Sooryavanshi has become one of the biggest talking points of the IPL season, with his fearless strokeplay and composure drawing atten-

tion far beyond India. He has made 404 runs in 10 matches for RR in IPL 2026 at a strike rate of 237.64 with two fifties and a hundred. The teenager's rise has triggered excitement around what he could become, but Clarke stressed that the conversation needs to remain grounded in the present. "I don't think anybody's saying he can walk into Test cricket and be, well, I hope nobody's saying he can walk into Test cricket and be one of the greats tomorrow," he said.

The former Australian captain pointed out that Sooryavanshi's current game appears naturally suited to the T20 format, where his attacking instincts and range of strokeplay have already made an impact. "I think the way he plays is very much, at the moment, in what I'm watching, is very much suited to this format," Clarke observed. At the same time, Clarke made it clear that performances at such a young age naturally put him on the pathway towards higher honours. "Now, that doesn't mean he shouldn't get picked at some stage. If he keeps scoring runs, no matter what format, he'll play T20 cricket for India, one-day cricket for India, and hopefully Test cricket for India," he said. Clarke added that the real challenge for Sooryavanshi would begin once he steps beyond franchise cricket and into the demands of international cricket across formats and conditions. "And then the challenge is going to be to adapt to three formats, adapt to different conditions around the world," Clarke said. Still, Clarke believes age remains firmly on the youngster's side. "There's no reason, he's young, he's 15," he added.

'You're on my hit list': Gautam Gambhir, claims ex-India pacer

GNS News Agency, May 13

Former India bowler Atul Wassen has slammed Gautam Gambhir's tenure as head coach of the senior men's side, claiming that several players are uncertain about their position across formats. Wassen, a former Delhi selector, alleged that players were unhappy with the aggressive nature of Gambhir's leadership.

Wassen and Gambhir have had their share of tiffs in the past during the latter's playing career. Gambhir had slammed the selection committee headed by Wassen after he was sacked as Delhi captain in the 2017-18 domestic season. The two-time World Cup winner later said that he was not made aware of the decision by the selectors. Speaking on the Vicky Lalwani show on YouTube, Wassen, who appeared in four Tests and nine ODIs for India, detailed Gambhir's aggressive nature from his formative days. "I have known him personally since he was a child. I have had my issues with him. With him, it's about my way or the highway. He is like that, and he would bully a lot, even in Delhi cricket. His nature is only like that. From the start, he was from money, that nature only, an excellent player, and he is intelligent." "His ego is on a different level. He thinks that if he says it's night when it's morning, it will be believed to be night. Fall in line. If you don't fall in line, you are on my hit list. He will try to harm you, but he has achieved a lot in cricket, and his nature helped him in cricket," he said. The 58-year-old said that Gambhir's success on the field also hinged on his aggressive nature and that is flair for charged confrontations have continued even in his role as a coach. "The player he became is because of his nature. He couldn't give his best unless he fights. He probably goes and fights in the mirror at home. He thinks it still drives him. That's why he is confronting [Virat] Kohli... over-aggressiveness and an alpha-male kind of personality from Delhi. He has lost and has also won also."

Gambhir's coaching tenure has been a mixed bag



since taking over from Rahul Dravid in July 2024. While he oversaw the Champions Trophy (2025) and T20 World Cup (2026) wins, India's home record has suffered several setbacks across formats. In Tests, India endured series defeats to New Zealand and South Africa while the Kiwis also trumped Gambhir's men in the ODIs earlier this year. "His report card has blemishes. The home series that we have lost, two or three. There's still time to evaluate his record," said Wassen. The former Delhi bowler also said claimed that multiple national team players are constricted by Gambhir's coaching style. "I am sure that all the players cannot be in a happy place. Somebody will be sleeping on needles; this happens. Personal likes and dislikes, and that too with such a strong personality. With personal likes and dislikes, and leading them with a stick, if you keep on winning, then it's fine. But if you lose, then you need to listen to criticism," he said. Wassen deflected from taking names, but said: "I know 1-2 of them; they won't say it openly. I can't say their names in this show. Everyone knows what's happening. But after sidelining those 2-4 players, if you win, then it's your world. It's a team sport; nobody will listen to the player. If the coach wins even after all this, then the coach is right, and the player is wrong."

'You signed the death warrant for Delhi': Manjrekar slams KL Rahul's strike rate inconsistency

Former India batter Sanjay Manjrekar minced no words as he slammed wicketkeeper-batter KL Rahul following Delhi Capitals' stinging defeat against the Chennai Super Kings on Tuesday night. After a series of poor outings, Delhi surprisingly opted to bat first on a slower pitch at the Arun Jaitley Stadium against CSK. Opening the batting, Rahul only mustered a run-a-ball start before falling midway through the Powerplay.

Delhi's batting progressively slumped as they could only set up a 156-run target for CSK. Led by a superb unbeaten 87 from Sanju Samson, CSK crushed DC by eight wickets, handing them their sixth loss of the season. Manjrekar put the blame of the defeat squarely on Rahul's slow-knock and lamented his inconsistency with intent in the Powerplay. "It's almost like odd and even games, where sometimes he goes after the bowling straightaway, which is the KL Rahul you want. But then he feels like he has earned the right, and he feels responsible for the rest of the batters to come, and then plays an innings like that. Once you get out after getting to 12 off 12, you've signed the death warrant for your team. Once they had those insipid first six overs, DC were done for the game."

"KL Rahul, after playing a brilliant innings the match prior, got 12 off 12 balls in the first six overs. That's two



overs going at a strike rate of 100. When you have openers going at 200, you can't be having an opener getting 12 off 12 in the hope that he'll explode later," Manjrekar elaborated. Despite the poor outing, Rahul has been among the runs in recent games. His 75 had powered DC's successful 226-run chase against the Rajasthan Royals last week. The 34-year-old had also broken the record for the highest individual score by an Indian with an unbeaten 152 at the Kotla against Punjab Kings, only to see his team drop the plot while defending a record 264-run total at home.

Shreyas Iyer reacts to Punjab's third successive loss in IPL 2026: 'Easy to talk negatively...'

With the 33-run loss against hosts Sunrisers Hyderabad on Wednesday night, the Shreyas Iyer-led Punjab Kings suffered their third consecutive loss of this year's IPL. After being unbeaten in their first seven matches this season, Punjab are now placed second in the points table with 13 points. Punjab have lost against the hosts Hyderabad for the ninth time in as many years since 2017. Following their third successive loss, skipper Shreyas Iyer said that continuing in the same form is not going to help the team. "Yes, absolutely. I feel we got a fairytale start in this tournament and everyone was in great space. And the mindset was top notch. I think it's important that we stick to the same mindset. It's easy to get diverted and talk negatively about things. But if we are going to continue with the same form, that's not going to help us. But definitely we are going back and reflecting on things that we did not do well in particularly the last three matches. And see to it that we come back strong," said Iyer while speaking in the post-match presentation.

With Iyer winning the toss and electing to bowl first, Sunrisers posted a total of 235 for 4 in 20 overs. During the

Hyderabad innings, Punjab dropped as many as three catches. Cooper Connolly dropped Ishan Kishan in the eighth over before Shashank Singh dropped Heinrich Klaasen at a score of nine runs in the ninth over. Lockie Ferguson also dropped Kishan in the 11th over off the bowling of Yuzvendra Chahal. Iyer shared how dropping catches played a much bigger role as that could have resulted in a much lower target set by Hyderabad. "I think it was too much because we dropped too many catches at the start and we could have easily delayed their score by 30-40 runs. Because the wicket kept getting slower and the cutters were holding up a bit. So we were not comprehensive enough on the field, neither in bowling nor in batting. So I think they played comprehensive cricket and they showed us how to win the match," added Iyer. Chahal claimed one wicket for 32 runs in the match and his economy of 8.00 was the lowest among Punjab Kings' bowlers in the match. Chahal now has a total of nine wickets in this year's IPL in 11 matches. Iyer showered praise on the leg-spinner for his spell. "Certainly the way he bowled, he was fearless and his attitude was fantastic against left-handers.

Fahadh Faasil ‘mediocre’ in Patriot? Even Mammooty, Mohanlal couldn’t save it



While the movie itself opened to mixed reviews, director Mahesh Narayanan's *Patriot* also dealt a significant blow to Fahadh Faasil, as his performance was met with criticism. While drawing parallels to his portrayals as Shammi (Kumbalangi Nights), Pastor Joshua Carlton (Trance), and even Agent Amar (Vikram), many dubbed Fahadh's performance as Shakthi Sundaram in *Patriot* as marred by familiar antics and theatrics often found in his grey-shaded and/or eccentric roles. However, to single out Fahadh Faasil and criticise him for a perceived mediocre job, particularly when discussing a movie in which even the two legends headlining it delivered only decent-at-best performances, may be unfair. This is not to say that he is above scrutiny or to senselessly argue that he is better than Mohanlal or Mammooty. But my suggestion is that the purported monotony in his performance may be a result of characterisation and writing that failed to provide novelty, and carried shades or ghosts of the past.

One of the easiest ways to map and understand Fahadh Faasil's evolution as an actor is to analyse his performances in grey characters over the years and how he handled them. This also provides ample evidence that he often strives to ensure vividness and diversity in his portrayals, given that the characters themselves are different in essence, handling each one as individually and intricately as possible. Although not a grey-shaded role by definition, Fahadh's Naveen Krishnamurthy in *Cocktail* (2010) offered an early glimpse of his acting prowess. One of the earliest notable characters in his career's second phase, Fahadh impressively played the elite, slightly pompous Naveen. However, his fake anglicised accent and unfamiliarity with finding the right pace in dialogue delivery and ensuring perfect throw in dubbing were evident.

But in his performances in *Chaappa Kurishu* (2011) and *22 Female Kottayam* (2012) — which played a key role in establishing him as a strong actor — he displayed significant improvement. While *Chaappa Kurishu*'s Arjun was grey-shaded, *22 Female Kottayam*'s Cyril was an out-and-out villain initially disguised as a hero. Unlike conventional patterns in Malayalam cinema, where actors followed set styles and depicted appropriate emotions in line with norms, Fahadh delved deeper into Arjun. He did not add any extra embellishments to highlight Arjun's greyness; instead, he simply focused on portraying him as honestly as possible, including in his vulnerable and emotional moments, thus making the character even more impactful. This was also the period when Malayalam cinema began blurring the line between so-called noble and antagonistic characters. Previously, the heroes were good to the core, and the villains were the opposite, almost incapable of diverting from their prescribed paths. By the early 2010s, the industry began acknowledging that even the so-called heroes could have grey shades, and that conventional villains could be more than their wrongdoings. Fahadh Faasil played a key role in solidifying this understanding. He often went beyond perfecting his performances to focus on portraying his characters, their emotions, and life journeys with precision and impact, giving them distinct identities.

In *22 Female Kottayam*, when Cyril is simply Tessa's (Rima Kallingal) lover, he appears to be a compassionate young man. He smiles heartily, jokes, does lovey-dovey things, and enjoys quaint moments with her. However, once the movie reveals his true colours, Fahadh didn't go loud as one might have expected, nor did he portray Cyril as a psychopath. He maintained restraint and demonstrated a strong command of the character and its emotions, following the “less is more” approach in his portrayal.

Towards the end, upon realising that Tessa had performed a penectomy on him, he internalised the pain, and his outbursts became more suppressed. After coming to terms with his new reality, Cyril exudes a fresh shade of evil, suggesting he will continue his crimes without a purpose from then on. Fahadh showcased his mastery of acting by maintaining subtlety even in the most menacing moments. In movies like *Natholi Oru Cheriya Meenalla*, *Akam*, and *5 Sundarikal*, Fahadh demonstrated his keen understanding of his characters' psychology, ensuring authentic depictions without relying on stock expressions. The distinctiveness in his performances as Preman and his alter ego, Narendran, in *Natholi Oru Cheriya Meenalla* showcased the depth of these characters, with Narendran embodying much that Preman lacked. The intensity and complexity of *Akam*'s Srini further underscored Fahadh's ability to grasp his characters' emotional and mental scars, transcending their character journeys across the narrative.

Samantha Ruth Prabhu’s ‘Maa Inti Bangaaram’ postponed to June 19 amid IPL season

Mumbai: The makers of “Maa Inti Bangaaram” on Thursday announced that the film starring Samantha Ruth Prabhu has been postponed to a June 19 release to avoid a clash with the ongoing IPL season. A statement on behalf of the makers read: “Tralala Moving Pictures has announced that its upcoming production Maa Inti Bangaaram, starring Samantha Ruth Prabhu, will now release worldwide on June 19, 2026, moving from its previously announced date of May 15. “The decision was made to avoid a clash with the IPL season, and to give audiences across the Telugu states the opportunity to fully support the Sunrisers Hyderabad during their campaign.” The IPL finale will take place on May 31 at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

Maa Inti Bangaaram is a family action drama directed by Nandini Reddy, produced by Samantha Ruth Prabhu, Raj Nidimoru, and Himank Duvvuru. The film features

If one cannot classify Thondimuthalum Driksakshiyum's Prasad as a grey-shaded character, that's because of Fahadh's performance too. In Malayalam cinema, certain character types tend to follow a set template in writing and performance. Thieves, toddy-tappers, barbers, teashop owners, astrologers, and bartenders are often portrayed with little individuality from film to film, frequently delivering similar dialogues in the same manner. Aside from a few exceptions, such as Kallan Pavithran (1981) and Meesa Madhavan (2002), most thieves in Malayalam cinema appear cut from the same cloth, with similar emotional bandwidth and depth. In Thondimuthalum Driksakshiyum, director Dileesh Pothan and writers Sajeev Pazhoor and Syam Pushkaran revolutionised this archetype, and Fahadh's sharp, understated performance breathed new life into on-screen thieves, avoiding the trap of stock expressions, lines, jokes, and emotions. However, Velaikkaran's (2017) Aadhi was, for the most part, a rehash of Cocktail's Naveen and Immanuel's (2013) Jeevan, albeit with a touch of greyness. As a result, Fahadh's performance wasn't particularly extraordinary, largely due to the lack of freshness in characterisation. Nonetheless, he delivered a serviceable performance, marking one of the earlier instances demonstrating how staleness in character may affect (his) acting quality.

The reason why Shammi in *Kumbalangi Nights* (2019) remains one of the finest performances in Malayalam cinema is not just due to the brilliance with which Fahadh Faasil handled the role, but also because of the magnificent conception by Syam Pushkaran and director Madhu C Narayanan. Shammi was created by subverting the once-celebrated patriarchs in middle-class households, and Fahadh magnificently drew from such heroes of the past, particularly the fake calmness and compassion they exhibited to assert power. What added to the performance's splendour was a dash of psychopathy, which made the role more chilling. The sturdy and intricate source material gave Fahadh ample space to explore the depths of Shammi, which he did astonishingly well, setting a benchmark for on-screen acting. Unlike typical villains, his outbursts were few and far between, as he communicated villainy through calmness often.

On the other hand, he increased the decibel significantly in *Trance* (2020) as the character demanded a more intense portrayal. While one can't label Joshua Carlton a villain, he indeed possessed enough shades of grey, and Fahadh brought out his absoluteness with substantial command. It is when we compare this with his handling of the titular antagonist in *Joji* (2021) that Fahadh's mastery of acting becomes even more evident, as he adeptly shifted to an understated portrayal in the latter film. Unlike Shammi from *Kumbalangi Nights* or Joshua from *Trance*, *Joji* was more like an inflated balloon — hollow on the inside. He had lofty ambitions but made reckless mistakes/crimes without a second thought. Fahadh magnificently portrayed *Joji*'s fake courage and underlying cluelessness with subtlety, avoiding any heavy-handedness with the audience. In *Malayankunju* (2022) and *Maamannan* (2023), he brought forth different shades of casteism, while allowing the environment around him to dictate how direct he could be about it. While both Anikuttan and Rathnavelu were bigots, the level of humanity in them differed significantly, and Fahadh communicated this through his body language and expressions rather than overt theatrics. One of the reasons his antagonist characters in *Maamannan*, *Pushpa: The Rise* (2021), and *Pushpa 2: The Rule* (2024) proved noteworthy was his physique. Fahadh isn't as strong as Amjad Khan or Amrish Puri, nor does he appear as threatening as Pran or Balan K Nair. His voice and dialogue delivery may not be as impactful as Murali's. Yet, his eyes exude an eerie sense of devilishness, prompting one to wonder how far he could go if he possessed the commanding physique typical of conventional villains. This has undoubtedly added depth to many of Fahadh's villainous performances. However, in *Patriot*, the character of Shakthi Sundaram is underwritten. Although he is provided with an arc, it remains somewhat superficial and fails to add depth to the character. Moreover, we rarely see Shakthi in mundane moments. Whenever the film cuts to him, he is either striking deals, looking tense, or furious. Consequently, we rarely witness him interacting as a normal human being. When he speaks, it's usually to demand that someone be tracked down or eliminated. The only other thing he utters in between is praise for Colonel Rahim Naik (Mohanlal).

In a way, it can be said that Fahadh was simply trying to establish his character in the most impactful manner with the limited material he had. Even Mammooty and Mohanlal's performances in the movie were at best serviceable, with some moments even coming across as dull. One cannot claim this was due to Mammooty and Mohanlal being average performers; they have proven themselves as acting legends time and again over the decades. However, all their mediocre performances may well be a result of *Patriot*'s underwhelming script — a possibility we shouldn't ignore. After all, an actor is only as good as their director. Yes, there have been ample instances where Fahadh's performance fell flat, with some of the most recent examples being *Odum Kuthira* *Chaadum Kuthira* (2025), *Dhoomam* (2023), and *Irul* (2021). In these movies, even his acting choices were unimpressive, compounded by equally poor narratives. Yet, in *Patriot*'s case, I would still argue that Fahadh was one of the few saving graces in an otherwise drab film. Cinema cannot exist in a vacuum; it's all about the discussions that follow. In the *Cinema Anatomy* column, we delve into the diverse layers and dimensions of films, aiming to uncover deeper meanings and foster continuous discourses.

Diganth and Gulshan Devaiah in key roles alongside a supporting cast of Sree Mukhi, Gautami, Anand, Lakshmi, Srinivas Gavireddy, and Manjusha. Just last month, the makers of the action comedy family drama dropped the first song from the film titled “Thassadiya”, a high-energy wedding celebration number. The track, “Thassadiya”, is a high-energy wedding celebration number composed by Santosh Narayanan, with lyrics by Rehman and vocals by Chinmayi Sripada and Punya Selva. In the film, the actress has done most of the action sequences in a saree. A source close to the film had previously shared: “After ‘The Family Man’ and ‘Citadel’, Samantha wanted to challenge herself further. In Maa Inti Bangaram, she's doing most of the action herself, and doing it in a saree. It's physically demanding and visually powerful, a portrayal audiences rarely get to see”.

Why Rajiv Rai is suing over ‘Oye Oye’; and debate over a 1989 contract



Last year, Aditya Dhar's blockbuster spy thriller *Dhurandhar* has reintroduced the audience to a wide variety of songs, from “Ramba Ho” from Anand Sagar's *Armaan* (1981) to “Hawa Hawa” from Hassan Jahangir's 1987 album of the same name. Its sequel, *Dhurandhar 2: The Revenge*, is no different, as its jukebox ranges from “Aari Aari” Bombay Rockers' 2003 album *Introducing to “Tirchi Topiwale”* from Rajiv Rai's *Tridev* (1989). However, Rai's production house Trimurti Films has objected to the use of “Tirchi Topiwale” as “Rang De Lal (Oye Oye)” in *Dhurandhar 2*. He sued the makers, Aditya Dhar and Lokesh Dhar's production house B62 Studios as well as the company Super Cassettes Pvt Ltd (which owns Bhushan Kumar's music label T-Series), for alleged copyright infringement.

“They have mutilated ‘Oye Oye’, and the young producer feigns innocence. They have crossed the line. Where is their conscience? My lawyer said (the case) becomes too ambiguous (due to the contract). But where have I given permission to mutilate my song?,” Rai told *Mid-Day* earlier, calling the makers of *Dhurandhar 2* “thieves”. However, last month, Delhi High Court asked Rai not to speak on the case to the media since the matter was still subjudice. The court also asked the parties to enter into mediation. However, a month later, the court was informed that the mediation has failed. It's now stated that the next hearing will take place this Friday on May 8, as per Bar and Bench.

As per the makers of *Dhurandhar 2*, their official music label holds the rights of the songs from *Tridev*. As a result, they claim they're liable to use and remix the song for their film. It's not the first song T-Series has remixed. Previous instances include “Dilbar” for *Tum Se* (1999) for Satyamev Jayate (2018), “Aankh Marey” from *Tere Mere Sapne* (1996) for *Simmba* (2018), “Ek Do Teen” from *Tezaab* (1988) for *Baaghi 2* (2018), and “Hawa Hawaii” from *Mr. India* (1987) for *Tumhari Sulu* (2017) among several

others. However, Trimurti Films' argument is that while it did sell the distribution rights of the music of *Tridev* to T-Series, that doesn't include changing the song and its visuals in service of another film. Original artists like lyricist Anand Bakshi, music composers Kalyanji-Anandji, and singers Amit Kumar and Sapna Mukherjee have been credited in the *Dhurandhar 2* version too, but the complete rehashing of the song doesn't sit well with the makers. Another contention with claiming that the music rights rest with T-Series, with no explicit barring from reproducing it for films like *Dhurandhar 2*, is that the concept of remixing songs wasn't that prominent in the 1980s. Thus, the producer couldn't have insisted on adding a clause about not reproducing the songs as the concept itself didn't exist as prominently back then.

The first part, *Dhurandhar*, benefitted immensely from Saregama Music being its official music partner. Saregama boasts of a massive catalogue consisting of songs old and new, which probably allowed the makers to reproduce tracks like “Na To Caravan Ki Talash Hai” from Barsaat Ki Raat (1960) as “Ishq Jalakar” and “Na De Dil Pardesi Nu (Jogi)” from the 1995 album *Muhammad Sadiq And Ranjit Kaur Da Akhada* as “Jogi”, and “Ramba Ho” as *Madhumati* Bagchi's recreated version. Besides the soundtrack, *Dhurandhar* also used some old gems as part of its background score. For instance, for the entry scene of Sanjay Dutt's character SP Chaudhary Aslam, composer Shashwat Sachdev borrowed “Hawa Hawa”. Though the popular Pakistani song has been recreated in Indian films multiple times without authorization, singer-composer Hassan Jahangir confirmed he was paid \$50,000 (Rs 47.25 lakh) as compensation. However, with its sequel, the makers opted for T-Series instead of Saregama as their official music partner. They roped in original singers, Bombay Rockers, to recreate “Aari Aari” with Shashwat, singer Jasmine Sandlas, and rappers Reble and Token. They also recreated *Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan*'s 1977 qawwali “Dil Pe Zakhm Khat Hain” for the film. T-Series has previously recreated Khan's popular ghazals like “Mere Rashke Qamar” for *Baadshaho* (2017), “Dekhte Dekhte” for *Batti Gul Meter Chalu* (2018), *Sanu Ek Pal Chain for Raid* (2018), and “Ye Jo Halka Halka Suroor” for *Fanney Khan* (2018). “Rang De Lal (Oye Oye)” isn't the first recreation from his films' music that Rajiv Rai has objected to. Last year, he also sued *Karan Johar*'s *Dharma Productions* and *Saregama Music* for recreating the iconic song “Saath Samundar Paar” from his 1992 action thriller *Vishwatma* in *Sameer Vidhwans*' romantic comedy *Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri*. The court refused to put an injunction on the film's release (due that week on December 25, 2025) owing to the huge financial investment gone into the movie. However, no outcome has come from the case yet, even though the film has released on OTT, on Prime Video India on February 19, 2026. As the next hearing in the *Trimurti Films vs B62 Studios* and *Super Cassettes Pvt. Ltd.* case is slated for May 8, it's only less than a week before *Dhurandhar 2*'s expected OTT release date on *JioHotstar* on May 14, eight weeks after its theatrical release on March 19. Given the ambiguity of the case, it's not likely that a verdict will be reached in such a limited time before *Dhurandhar 2* is available on streaming.

50,000 people, one balcony, \$107.5 million impact: What BTS's Mexico visit actually means



BTS visited Mexico's National Palace on Wednesday evening, ahead of their three concerts in Mexico City this week. Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum invited the group for a meeting that lasted around 40 minutes, after which the seven members appeared on the palace's central balcony to greet fans gathered in the Zócalo square below. About 50,000 people had assembled in the square, according to the capital's government. Con una hermosa sencillez BTS saludó a su “A.R.M.Y.” y a cerca de 50 mil personas que se congregaron en el zócalo para saludarles. Me da mucha alegría haber podido darles este momento de júbilo. El grupo transmite en sus canciones mensajes positivos que fomentan una cultura de paz... That balcony is where the Mexican president stands on September 15 to mark the Independence Day. However, no international musical act had ever appeared there alongside a sitting president, making BTS the first one to do ever so.

Saif praises SRK’s sensibility as producer of ‘Kartavya’

Mumbai: Actor Saif Ali Khan says producer Shah Rukh Khan gave the team of “Kartavya” a free hand to make the film the way they wanted. In fact, Shah Rukh was the one who called Saif to inform about the script that they were developing at Red Chillies. “He said, ‘There’s a lovely script, and I would like you to hear it, and do it’. Then I listened to it and met the director. Once the film was complete, he said, ‘It has come out as a lovely movie’. He was very happy,” Saif said/ “Sometimes the presence (of Shah Rukh) can be overwhelming on sets and I think he understands that. He gave us room to make the film on our own. I felt I was working for his production with his kind of sensibility,” the actor added. Directed by Pulkit of “Bhakshak” fame, the film stars Rasika Dugal opposite Saif and the actor said he is a huge fan of the “Mirzapur” star.

“It was elevating (to work with Dugal). When you work with an artist of this calibre, and she (Rasika) is such a wonderful actor, I was challenged and tried my best and it brought out the good work in me also... I’m a

big fan of hers and it was nice working with her,” the actor said at the trailer preview of the movie here. Dugal said she has long admired Saif and had a fun experience working with him. “I’ve been an admirer of his work for many years. I had heard that Saif is the most fun co-actor to work with and that was true and more. He has a fantastic sense of humour and he brought in a certain energy to the set, which was beautiful. I wish we had more days to shoot. We unanimously agree (that he is handsome),” she said. Produced by Gauri Khan under Red Chillies Entertainment, “Kartavya” follows a police officer (Saif), as he navigates rising threats while grappling with the weight of duty and the safety of his family. As the lines between right and wrong begin to blur, the film unfolds as a layered exploration of power, guilt, and the consequences of silence, inviting audiences to question morality and the true cost of justice. Saif said that what drew him to “Kartavya” was its layered narrative and his character of a police man, named Pawan. “We did the film because it’s a good story.