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Medak woman killed as lightning strikes; son injured

Medak: Lightning struck a woman, leading to her instant death at Tirumalapur in Narsapur mandal on Sunday. The woman V. Saritha (38) was grazing her cattle on the outskirts of the village when the area witnessed rains coupled with thunderstorms. Her 12-year-old son was just a few metres away when lightning struck her. The boy also sustained injuries due to impact. It was the third such death reported in the erstwhile Medak in the last four days. The police registered a case.

Tiger sighted on Telangana-Andhra border; forest staff alert villagers

Kothagudem/Warangal: Movements of a tiger have been reported along the Telangana-Andhra Pradesh borders in Aswarapet mandal of Bhadradi Kothagudem district.

The forest department staff spotted the tiger movements in the forest area at Sri Gubbala Mangamma Thalli Temple, Gogulapudi and Kavadi Gundla on Saturday night. The forest staff visited the villages on Sunday and alerted the locals not to venture into forests and not to let their cattle graze there.

In 'Mann ki Baat', PM Modi hails indigenous defence milestones

New Delhi, June 28

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday highlighted a series of indigenous achievements across the naval, aerospace and missile sectors, calling them milestones that inspire national pride. He said the successes underscore the country's growing strength in security, innovation and the vision of an Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Speaking during the monthly radio programme, 'Mann ki Baat', Modi said the country had achieved several milestones that have strengthened both national security and the vision of an Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Referring to his recent visit to Kolkata, he highlighted the induction of the indigenously built INS Dunagiri, INS Sanshodhak and INS Agray into the Navy, describing them as examples of India's growing defence manufacturing capabilities.

He also hailed the maiden flight of the Made-in-India C-295 transport aircraft, adding that 40 such aircraft were being manufactured domestically. He said the project was gener-

ating employment, strengthening the MSME and aerospace sectors, and reinforcing India's self-reliance in defence production.

He further highlighted the successful test of the indigenous long-range cruise missile developed jointly by DRDO laboratories and Indian industry partners, saying India was becoming increasingly secure "from the seas to the skies".

Moreover, he praised the overwhelming participation in International Yoga Day, noting that yoga events were organised at more than 2,500 locations worldwide. He also congratulated Indian athletes for topping the medal tally at the World Yogasana Championship in Ahmedabad with 114 medals, including 102 gold medals.

A significant portion of the address focused on citizen participation during the prevailing war-like situation in West Asia. Modi thanked people for responding positively to his recent appeal to avoid purchasing gold, postpone foreign holidays, adopt carpooling and promote chemical-free farming wherever possible.



Calling public participation India's greatest strength, Modi said such collective action would help the country overcome global challenges.

Citing the conservation of the endangered Hargila bird in Assam, the PM praised biologist Purnima Devi Barman and the women-led "Hargila Army" for changing public perceptions through awareness and scientific understanding.

Emphasising the need

to balance technology with India's intellectual traditions, Modi lauded Nalanda University's revival of the ancient practice of "Shastraarth" as part of its academic culture.

With Ganesh Utsav approaching in the coming months, Modi appealed to citizens to purchase only clay idols made by local artisans. He said the move would protect the environment and strengthen the "Vocal for Local" campaign.

Nitin Nabin Vows a Repeat of West Bengal in Telangana

Hyderabad, June 28

BJP national president Nitin Nabin on Sunday accused the Congress of cheating Telangana by not fulfilling the Six Guarantees and said that the results witnessed in West Bengal will be repeated in the Telangana Assembly elections in 2028.

Addressing booth-level party presidents from three corporation limits in Greater Hyderabad at the Exhibition Grounds, Nabin said that thanks to the Modi government, new Vande Bharat trains would be manufactured from the same Coach factory in Kazipet. The earlier UPA government insulted the son of the soil and former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao.

Sharing the last information, Nabin said the Central government has announced setting up the Civil Aviation Research Centre in Hyderabad for Rs 400 crore, besides completing several projects including a crucial flyover at Amberpet with Rs 400 odd crore, AIIMS Hospital at Bibinagar, renovation of Secunderabad Railway station with Rs 700 crore on par with an international airport, funding for MMTS Phase-II and 100 km rail line in the state among many other projects.

The earlier BRS government converted the Kaleshwaram irrigation project into an ATM and looted the public money. Instead of taking action against the guilty, the Congress continued the same kind of loot after coming to power. The



Congress had cheated unemployed youth by promising to fill 2 lakh jobs in the first year and release a job calendar.

The BJP will expose these two parties on how they cheated people and looted state resources, and adopted a development-oriented agenda. "If we have to change the fortunes of Bhagyanagar, every party worker must reach every house and voter and explain the works of the Modi government. The party workers must work to enrol every eligible voter in the voter list," Nabin said.

"Though the BJP tried hard to oust the corrupt and family rule by the BRS, there seem to be some gaps, which help the Congress to come to power. It is high time to go with a renewed spirit to defeat the Congress and the BRS, which are surrendering to the AIMIM and appeasement politics," Nabin said. He promised to bring real development, politics of development and not politics of dynasty and corruption by the Con-

gress and the BRS in the coming three municipal corporation elections in the city.

Union minister for coal and mines G. Kishan Reddy appealed to party workers to save Hyderabad from the MIM, which spread during the Congress and the BRS rule. The MIM is dictating the recruitment of police officers. Many bastis in the old city with a Hindu population have turned empty due to the pressure politics of MIM leaders, who are getting all the support from the ruling parties. The BJP workers must work with the BLOs and ensure that bogus voters are not enrolled, and every eligible Indian voter must be enrolled in the voter list," Kishan Reddy said.

BJP state president N. Ramchander Rao charged that Revanth Reddy turned the state into an adda (fiefdom) for his real estate and ignored the basic infrastructure in the city. After every rain, the roads in the city become like rivers with floodwaters.

He asked the party workers to ensure that all eligible voters were enrolled during the SIR, and warned that otherwise, the Rohingya and Bangladeshi people would join as voters.

Earlier, Nabin inaugurated the newly constructed Rangareddy district party office in Shamshabad and eight other district party offices virtually. He called on party workers to turn the premises into active centres of resolve and public service, intensify door-to-door outreach and strengthen public trust in the BJP leadership and policies.

He congratulated cadres on the openings in Rangareddy Rural, Adilabad, Asifabad, Nirmal, Kamareddy, Siddipet, Medak, Wanaparthy and Nagarkurnool. He described the offices as more than buildings — as "sankalp kendras" (centres of resolve) and service hubs designed to deepen the party's connection with citizens.

Nalgonda, June 28

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Sunday offered to convene a special session of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council to discuss the rule and manifesto implementation of the BRS, BJP and its Congress, if opposition parties requested.

Speaking at a public meeting at Nalgonda, he said that the state government was ready to discuss the 10-year-long rule of the BRS government and two-and-a-half year rule of the Congress government in the state and the 12-year rule of the BJP government at the Centre and manifestos of these political parties in the Legislative Houses.

He dared the opposition parties to write a letter to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and Chairman of the Legislative Council requesting a special session for the purpose. The state government was ready to conduct a special session for the number of days proposed by the opposition parties, he added.

In a scathing attack on the Opposition for obstructing the Musi Rejuvenation Project, Revanth Reddy reaffirmed that he will complete the Musi project. The Chief Minister warned that those who create hurdles for the Musi project will be dumped in the Musi River.

Pollution from the Musi River was causing women in Nalgonda to give birth to children with eye and limb deformities. "Should we step down just because we are cleaning up the Musi river?" the Chief Minister asked.

Stating that the Congress government has filled up 70,000 government jobs in 30 months, he said the state government was ready to discuss it in the legislative assembly and fur-



nish the department-wise filling of vacant posts.

Coming down heavily on the BRS for its propaganda against the Congress government, Revanth Reddy said only BRS leaders such as K. Taraka Rama Rao and his brother-in-law T. Harish Rao are claiming that the people desired the return of the BRS government. "Not the people of the state, a family and its supporters, who amassed wealth during the 10 years of the BRS government, wanted the return of the party to power again. The people were permanently socially boycotting the BRS, which has no future."

Stating that the indebtedness of the state was increased to ₹8,11,000 crore from ₹69,000 crore during 10 years rule of the BRS government, he said the destruction of the state equal for 100 years was done by the earlier BRS government in 10 years. The people of the state

would not allow this destruction in future, he added.

Revanth Reddy said the BRS leaders, who owned farmhouses in hundreds of acres, were not digesting the allocation of Indiramma houses to the poor by the state government and were even trying to politicise it. Nearly 20 lakh poor families might have got their own houses in the state if the earlier BRS government had shown sincerity in the housing scheme. After coming to power, the Congress government has revived the Indiramma houses scheme and sanctioned 4.5 lakh Indiramma houses to the eligible poor families.

Explaining the measures taken up for the welfare of the farmers, the Chief Minister informed that the state government has spent ₹1.56 lakh crore for Rythu Bharosa, Rythu Bheema and others. The state government was working with an aim to see happiness in

the eyes of the farmers by making agriculture a festival.

He blamed the earlier BRS government for the status of SLBC tunnel works and announced that the SLBC tunnel and Dindi Lift Irrigation Schemes would be completed soon. The Musi Rejuvenation Project was aimed at developing the Musi at the level of international delegates to visit it to see the change. Musi Rejuvenation would be implemented, not caring the hurdles created by anybody, he made it clear.

Congress MLA from Munugode Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy's absence from Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's public meeting in Nalgonda on Sunday triggered political speculation.

For the past few days, there had been widespread discussion on social media over whether Rajagopal Reddy would attend the Chief Minister's programme.

Ahead of July 1 launch, Congress flags financial, administrative concerns over VB-G RAM G

New Delhi, June 28

The Congress on Sunday criticised the BJP-led government at the Centre over its decision to replace the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) with the new Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar & Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G). The party said that objections raised by several states reflected growing concerns over the financial and administrative implications of the VB-G RAM G scheme.

In a post on X, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh accused the PM Narendra Modi-led government of "bulldozing" the repeal of MGNREGA through Parliament without adequate consultation with the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development, state governments or other key stakeholders.

"The Modi government, vengeful and petty as ever, bulldozed the repeal of MGNREGA through Parliament without any thorough consultation with the Parliamentary Standing



Committee on Rural Development, state governments or other stakeholders," said Ramesh.

He claimed that concerns had now emerged from several states over the implementation of its proposed replacement, the VB G RAM G scheme, which is scheduled to be launched on July 1, 2026.

According to the Congress leader, various BJP-ruled states such as Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and

Uttarakhand have objected to the additional financial burden that the new scheme would impose on the state governments. He added that four other states had opposed the proposed blackout period during the peak agricultural season, adding that it could adversely affect rural employment and agricultural activities.

Ramesh claimed that at least five states had demanded an increase in

wages for rural workers under the proposed scheme. "The Rural Development Minister's own home state is voicing concerns around the government's new pet project," he said.

Drawing a contrast between the two programmes, Ramesh claimed, "MGNREGA guaranteed right to work derived from the Constitution, while VB G RAM G will guarantee only centralisation and further financial stress on states."

EDITORIAL POLITICAL CRISES

Fixing India's labour wage crisis

Two recent experiences forced me to confront a question India can no longer avoid: Are wages in our economy structurally broken? Malleshham, National President of the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, highlighted the distress among contract workers, even in public sector undertakings. Globally, US Senator Bernie Sanders revealed that 60% of American workers live paycheck to paycheck. If that is the reality in a developed economy, India's situation is even more fragile. Here, a large part of our workforce is not just living paycheck to paycheck; they are living on borrowed money to survive each month.

According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS, 2023), over 45% of regular wage/salaried workers earn less than Rs 10,000 per month, far below what can be considered a dignified living wage. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2024) further notes that India's real wage growth has been among the lowest in Asia over the past decade. This is not merely a labour issue. It is a systemic economic risk, a national risk that can derail the future of our youth.

Over the past two decades, managerial compensation has surged and frontline wages have stagnated in real terms. An article published in Economic and Political Weekly reveals the reality of the organised manufacturing sector compensation: Nominal wages have increased. But real wages — adjusted for inflation — have remained stagnant for over a decade. In more than half the industries, real wages have actually declined. Meanwhile, managerial wages have grown 200% to 400% faster than worker wages. This divergence is not accidental. It is policy design, not market logic. Within organisations, the wage structure shows a clear pattern: Immediate managers earn 3 to 7 times as much as workers. Even more striking: wage growth rates for managers are 1.5 to 4.8 times higher than those of workers, despite clear evidence that labour productivity has risen. Growth has been diverted to the top, not shared across the workforce. India has built a system to reward managers. It has not built a system to reward workers.

India's demographic dividend has tilted the balance against workers: Excess supply of labour, weak bargaining power, and employers able to suppress wages. In many sectors, the difference between unskilled and semi-skilled wages is negligible due to supply imbalance. This has broken the economic case for skilling. Minimum Wage Regime: A Broken System. The current system suffers from multiple flaws: infrequent base wage revisions, inadequate inflation adjustments, weak enforcement, and widespread underpayment. The theoretical progression from living wage to fair wage to minimum wage has not been implemented in practice. The trade-off has consistently gone against workers. An economy where workers borrow to survive cannot sustain growth. The public sector demonstrates lower wage dispersion and better protection for direct workers. But even here, contract workers are heavily underpaid, and labour contractor exploitation persists. This duality must be addressed as part of reform. NASSCOM data shows that entry-level IT hiring fell by nearly 40% in 2024 due to automation and AI adoption. This forces a structural shift from knowledge-driven wages to execution-driven wages. But this transition demands wage correction, skill alignment, productivity linkage and from cost of labour to productivity of labour. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS, 2023), over 45% of regular wage/salaried workers earn less than Rs 10,000 per month, far below what can be considered a dignified living wage.

Ensure Every Eligible Citizen's Name is Included in the Voter List Through Coordination Between Officials and Party Representatives: Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy

UPPAL, JUNE 28 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): As part of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls being undertaken by the Election Commission of India, Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy on Sunday inspected the ongoing voter list revision process at Lakshmi Narayana Colony in the Uppal Division. "On the occasion, he held discussions with Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and Booth Level Agents (BLAs), directing them to conduct the programme transparently and strictly in accordance with



the prescribed rules and guidelines. "The MLA instructed officials to take special care to ensure that genuine and eligible voters do not face any inconvenience during the process and to examine every application carefully before taking action as per the Election Commission's guidelines. "He also urged officials to distribute the necessary SIR application forms to all voters and create awareness among them about filling out the forms correctly and submitting them within the stipulated time. "Bandari Lakshma Reddy emphasized that the right to vote is one of the most valuable rights in a democracy and called upon officials and party representatives to work in coordination to ensure that the names of all eligible citizens are included in the electoral rolls. "He further stated that everyone should participate responsibly in making the Election Commission's special revision programme a success. BLOs, BLAs, officials, leaders and workers of the BRS party, and others participated in the programme.



Telangana BJP President Shri N. Ramchander Rao garu paid floral tributes to former Prime Minister Bharat Ratna P.V. Narasimha Rao on his 105th birth anniversary at PV Ghat.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Ramchander Rao garu said that the historic economic reforms of 1991 changed the direction of India's economy, and the credit for that bold and visionary decision must go to P.V. Narasimha Rao garu. "He said that P.V. Narasimha Rao garu was the first Prime Minister outside the Nehru-Gandhi family to complete a full five-year term, and this was something the Gandhi family could never accept, as they believed only their family had the right over the Prime Minister's chair. "Shri Ramchander Rao garu said that despite being a former Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao garu was never given the respect he deserved by the Congress party. Even Sanjay Gandhi was given a samadhi in Delhi, but a former Prime Minister like P.V. Narasimha Rao garu was denied that honour. "He said that the Congress and the Gandhi family could never truly accept or respect any leader outside their own family. "Shri

Ramchander Rao garu also recalled the great bond of mutual respect between P.V. Narasimha Rao garu and Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji. He said that PV Narsimha Rao ji respected Atal ji stature so much that he sent him to represent India at the United Nations on the issue of Kashmir. "He further said that it was under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji that P.V. Narasimha Rao garu received recognition he long deserved. The Modi government gave him due respect by honouring at Rashtriya Smriti in Delhi, giving him a rightful place in the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya, and conferring upon him the Bharat Ratna. "On the birth anniversary of P.V. Narasimha Rao garu, we once again remember his immense contribution to the nation. On behalf of the entire Telangana BJP Parivaar, I pay my humble tributes to this great son of Telangana," Shri Ramchander Rao garu said.

MLA Donthi Madhava Reddy Inaugurates Gram Panchayat Building and Mineral Water Plant

"Nekkonda/Warangal, June 28 (Indian Chronicle) : Narsampet constituency MLA Donthi Madhava Reddy inaugurated a newly constructed Gram Panchayat building and a mineral water plant at Venkat Naik Thanda in Nekkonda Mandal on Sunday. "Speaking on the occasion, the MLA congratulated the tribal community on the inauguration of the new administrative building. He stated that the state government is committed to the development of tribal villages under an administration dedicated to public welfare. "He mentioned that 10 houses were sanctioned for this Gram Panchayat under the first phase of the Indiramma housing scheme, and the beneficiaries have successfully completed their construction. He assured that Indiramma houses would be sanctioned in the second phase as well to all eligible families who possess their own house sites. "The MLA also assured that funds would be sanctioned for the construction of remaining



CC roads to provide better infrastructure and transport facilities in the village. "Sarpanch Malu Naik, mandal-level leaders, village party leaders, public representatives, party activists, and a large number of villagers participated in the event.

"Every Child, Every Drop" MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy Inaugurates Pulse Polio Campaign A Step Towards a Polio-Free Future: MLA

Hanumakonda, June 28 (Indian Chronicle) : As part of the National Pulse Polio Immunization Programme, Warangal West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy inaugurated the campaign on Sunday by administering polio drops to children below five years of age at the Government Maternity Hospital in Hanumakonda. "The programme was attended by District Collector Chahat Bajpai, District Medical and Health Officer Dr. Ram Kumar, Development Committee Member E.V. Srinivas Rao, Hospital Superintendent Nirmala, and other officials. "Speaking on the occasion, MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy appealed to parents to ensure that every child below the age of five receives the mandatory polio vaccine. He emphasized that everyone should actively participate in the mission to eradicate polio and make the Pulse Polio campaign a grand success for the health and well-being of children. "The MLA stated that Hanumakonda district has a population of approximately 990,334, including 84,301 children be-



low the age of five, of whom 33,313 reside in urban areas. "To ensure complete immunization coverage, 460 Pulse Polio booths have been established across the district. He urged parents to utilize the services available at nearby Pulse Polio booths, Primary Health Centres (PHCs), Anganwadi centres, schools, and community halls, and make sure that every eligible child receives the life-saving polio drops.

Two Drops for a Healthier Tomorrow: MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy Launches Pulse Polio Initiative

"Warangal, June 28 (Indian Chronicle) : Parkal MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy, along with Warangal District Collector Satya Sharada, inaugurated the National Pulse Polio Immunization Programme on Sunday at Dharmaram in the 16th Division of the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation. "Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said that it is the responsibility of every parent to ensure that every child below the age of five receives the mandatory polio vaccine. He emphasized that the government's goal is to build a polio-free society and called upon the public to actively participate in making the Pulse Polio campaign a success. "He urged parents to make full use of the Pulse Polio centres established across the district and ensure that every eligible child receives the life-saving polio drops.



"Two Drops for a Better Life": Councillor Vemula Sandhya Sambayya Goud Launches Pulse Polio Drive Government aims to build a Polio-Free Society

"Narsampet, June 28 (Indian Chronicle) : Pulse Polio Immunization Programme was launched on Sunday in the 29th Division of Narsampet town by Division Councillor Vemula Sandhya Sambayya Goud, who administered polio drops to children. "Speaking on the occasion, Councillor Sandhya Sambayya Goud said that the government's objective is to establish a polio-free soci-



ety. She urged parents to ensure that every child below the age of five receives the polio vaccine, emphasizing that "Two drops can ensure a healthier and brighter future." She appealed to the public to actively participate in the campaign and make sure that all children under five are administered the life-saving polio drops. "The programme was attended by ASHA workers Vadalakonda Saritha and Golkonda Padma, Town Congress Party Secretary Nampally Venkateshwarlu Goud, 29th Division Youth President Jijula Karthik, M.D. Wajid, M.D. Nizamuddin, Thokala Srinivas, and several others.

Former Uppal Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy Inspects Polio Centers and Administers Polio Drops to Children

UPPAL, JUNE 28 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Former Uppal Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy visited Pulse Polio centers set up in various colonies, including the center at Shanti Nagar Community Hall in Uppal Division, and administered polio drops to children. Speaking on the occasion, she urged parents to ensure that all children below five years of age receive the mandatory two drops of polio vaccine. She emphasized that collective



efforts are essential to eradicate polio completely and build a polio-free nation. "Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy stated that polio drops provide lifelong protection to children and contribute to their healthy lives and bright futures. She highlighted the importance of every individual playing their part in creating a polio-free society and appealed to parents to make time and ensure that their children receive the vaccine without fail. The program was attended by Uppal SC Cell President Lingampalli Ramakrishna, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Alugula Anil Kumar, Praveen Kumar Ganesh, Balaraju, women leaders Ruthamma, Janagama Saritha, Jangamma Sushila, and several others.

Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Launches Pulse Polio Immunization Drive in Uppal

UPPAL, JUNE 28 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy inaugurated the National Pulse Polio Immunization Programme by administering polio drops to children at the Uppal Primary Health Centre (PHC) and the Lakshminarayana Colony Primary Health Centre under Uppal Division in the Uppal constituency. "Speaking on the occasion, the MLA emphasized that every parent has a responsibility to ensure that their children below the age of five receive polio drops, which is crucial for maintaining India's polio-free status. He urged the public to make full use of the health initiatives undertaken by the government and stressed that no child should be left out of the immunization programme. "District Medical and Health Officer (DMHO) Dr. Uma Gowri, who also addressed the gathering, stated that public cooperation is essential for the eradication of polio. She appreciated the efforts of the Health Department staff, who are working tirelessly and conducting door-to-door visits to ensure the success of the immunization drive. The programme was attended by Uppal Primary Health Centre Medical Officer Dr. Saushiliya Rani, doctors, health department officials, ASHA workers, ANMs, party leaders, activists, and local residents. The speakers appealed to all parents and guardians to ensure that every child receives polio drops and to contribute towards building a healthier society.



Congress Leaders Pay Rich Tributes to Bharat Ratna P.V. Narasimha Rao DCC President Inagala Venkat Ram Reddy and MLA Naini Rajender Reddy Pay Tributes



“Hanamkonda, June 28 (Indian Chronicle) : The 105th birth anniversary celebrations of Bharat Ratna and former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao—renowned as the architect of India's economic reforms and a great scholar—were held with great enthusiasm on Sunday at the Hanamkonda District Congress Committee (DCC) office, under the leadership of DCC President Inagala Venkat Ram Reddy. “The celebrations began at the DCC office with the hoisting of the national flag by Inagala Venkat Ram Reddy, Warangal West MLA Naini Rajender Reddy, and other party leaders. Subsequently, they paid tribute by garlanding the portrait of P.V. Narasimha Rao at the party office. “Later, the leaders visited the statue of P.V. Narasimha Rao at the JNS Stadium Junction in Hanamkonda and offered floral tributes. On this occasion, they recalled the invaluable services rendered to the nation by the great leader. “Hanamkonda District Collector Chahat Bajpai, former Husnabad MLA Vodithala Satish

Kumar, Hanamkonda District Kisan Congress Chairman Pingili Venkat Ram Narasimha Reddy, District Library Organization Chairman Aziz Khan, and TPCC member E.V. participated in the event. Srinivas Rao, DCC executive committee members, chairpersons of various party wings, district executive committee members, former corporators, division leaders, presidents of affiliated organizations, mandal presidents, senior Congress leaders, Women's Congress leaders, and numerous party activists participated in the event. “Speaking on the occasion, the leaders praised P.V. Narasimha Rao for rescuing India from a severe economic crisis through his visionary economic reforms and for laying the foundation for the country to emerge as one of the strongest economies in the world. They described him as a beloved son of Telangana and a great statesman who transformed the face of modern India. They noted that the conferment of the 'Bharat Ratna' award upon him is a matter of pride for the entire nation.

Protecting Every Child: MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy, Collector Chahat Bajpai Inaugurates Pulse Polio Campaign

“Hanumakonda, June 28 (Indian Chronicle) : As part of the National Pulse Polio Immunization Programme, Warangal West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy, along with Hanumakonda District Collector Chahat Bajpai, inaugurated the campaign on Sunday by administering polio drops to children below five years of age at the Government Maternity Hospital in Hanumakonda. “Speaking on the occasion, MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy appealed to parents to ensure that every child below the age of five receives the mandatory polio vaccine. He emphasized that everyone should actively participate in the mission to eradicate polio and make the Pulse Polio campaign a grand success to safeguard the health of children. “The MLA said that Hanumakonda district has a population of approximately 990,334, including 84,301 children below the age of five, of whom 33,313 live in urban areas. “To ensure complete immunization coverage, 460 Pulse Polio booths have been established across the district. He urged parents to utilize the services available at nearby Pulse Polio booths, Primary Health Centres, Anganwadi centres, schools, and community halls, and ensure that



every eligible child receives the life-saving polio drops. “The programme was attended by District Medical and Health Officer Dr. Ram Kumar, Development Committee Member E.V. Srinivas Rao, Hospital Superintendent Nirmala, and other officials.

Congress Senior Leader Karipé Shankar Vanjari Administers Pulse Polio Drops in Vivek Nagar and Kamakshipuram

“UPPAL, JUNE 28 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): As part of the Pulse Polio campaign conducted in Vivek Nagar and Kamakshipuram under the Venkat Reddy Nagar Division, senior Congress leader Karipé Shankar Vanjari participated in the programme and administered polio drops to children. “Speaking on the occasion, he urged parents to ensure that all children below five years of age receive polio drops as part of the mission to build a

polio-free society. He stated that the two drops of the polio vaccine serve as protection for life and provide assurance for a healthier future for children. He further advised parents not to forget to vaccinate every child under the age of five and emphasized the importance of safeguarding children's health through timely immunization. Others who participated in the programme included Gyaneshwar, Santosh, Naveen Chary, Srinu, Durgesh, and Prabhakar, among others.

Pulse Polio Programme Successfully Conducted at Peddathanda Anganwadi Centre



“KHAMMAM, EDULAPURAM, 28 JUNE (INDIAN CHRONICLE): “The Pulse Polio Immunization Programme organized by the Government of Telangana was successfully conducted with great dedication at Peddathanda-2 Anganwadi Centre under the jurisdiction of Edulapuram Municipality in Khammam city. “The programme was carried out efficiently with the support of ANM Sangamma from Sai Prabhat Nagar, ASHA Worker Subhadra, and Anganwadi helpers Ushasri and Nandini. “Special Pulse Polio booths were established across the district to administer polio drops to children below five years of age. Parents voluntarily brought their children to the booths to ensure they received the life-saving polio vaccine. “Medical and Health Department staff, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, and volunteers worked in close coordination to conduct the programme effectively in both urban and rural areas. Special teams also visited households to administer polio drops to children who could not reach the vaccination booths. “On this occasion, officials emphasized that every child under the age of five should receive polio drops during every Pulse Polio campaign to help build a polio-free society. They appealed to parents to actively participate in all future Pulse Polio programmes and ensure their children are immunized. “The District Medical and Health Department expressed gratitude to the medical staff, ASHA workers, Anganwadi staff, voluntary organizations, public representatives, and parents for their valuable cooperation in making the programme a success.

Lalapeta Gadi School 1993-94 batch alumni pay tribute to teachers

“OU JUNE 28 (INDIAN CHRONICLE) : Lalapeta Government High School (Gadi School) 1993-94 academic year class 10th alumni organized a grand reunion on Sunday in the school premises. The alumni, who met at the same place after almost three decades, spent the day reminiscing about their childhood memories and enjoying themselves. On this occasion, the then teachers who taught them academics and guided them in life were invited as chief guests and honored with shawls and bouquets. The services of the teachers Remembering their blessings Getting is unforgettable in life Ghattamani Alumni “stated. The teachers taught Discipline, values, and education are their “They are the foundation of success “They said. Such a soulful “The Sammelanas strengthen the Guru-Shishya bond. “will strengthen further “Opinion. Afterwards “The teachers said, “to higher positions in various fields Seeing their disciples arriving, He said he was proud. To the community. Serving more high peaks “Wishing to ascend “The students were blessed. 1993–94 tenth in the program Alumni of the class batch “Venkatesh Yadav, Balakrishna, Srinivas, “Yadav, Krishna Rao, Satyanarayana, “Nagaraju, Prakash, Mohan Chary, Venkateshwarlu, S. Ramesh, V. Mahesh, Ramchander, Rajender, Athreya, Balraj, Nagesh, Krishnamurthy, Baburao, Kishore, Venkat Reddy, Pawan, A. Mahesh, N. Kiran Kumar, Tirupati Reddy, B.S. Yadav, Bheerappa, Venugopal, Mohan, Y.B. Sashikanth and others participated



Polio Immunization Drive Conducted Successfully in Habsiguda – Kandi Shravan Kumar Reddy Inspects Polio Booths and Administers Drops Following the Directions of Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy

“UPPAL, JUNE 28 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Polio immunization centers were set up for children at the Basti Dawakhana in Gandhi Girijan Basti, Street No. 1, and at the JSN Colony Community Hall in Habsiguda Division. “Following the directions of Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, former Medchal-Malkajgiri District Youth Congress President and senior Congress leader from Habsiguda Kandi Shravan Kumar Reddy visited the polio centers and inspected the arrangements. He later personally administered polio drops to children. “Speaking on the occasion, Kandi Shravan Kumar Reddy urged parents to ensure that all children below five years of age receive the two drops of the polio vaccine without fail. He emphasized that collective participation in the immunization program would help eradicate polio and build a polio-free society. “Among those who participated in the program were DCC Vice President Boppanapalli Sudhakar Reddy, Habsiguda Division President Gannaram Vijay Kumar, District ST Cell President Ganesh Naik, General Secretary Dharma Naik, Murali Krishna Mudiraj, Chintala Baburao, Gundu



Rajanna, Malu Naik, Raju Naik, Vasu Naik, Sai Kumar, Sai Kiran, Shiva, Narsing Rao, Ravi, and several others.

"Two Drops for a Healthy Life": Every Child Must Receive Polio Drops – Dr. Anita Reddy



“Hanumakonda, June 28 (Indian Chronicle): Calling upon every family to embrace the slogan “Two Drops for a Healthy Life,” Dr. Anita Reddy, Chairperson of Anurag Society and Member of the Kakatiya University Governing Council, urged parents to ensure that every child below the age of five receives the Pulse Polio vaccine. “As part of the National Pulse Polio Immunization Programme, Dr. Anita Reddy visited Pulse Polio centres at Balasamudram and Vaddera Basti on Sunday, where she formally inaugurated the campaign by administering polio drops to children. “Speaking on the occasion, she emphasized that a polio-free society can only be achieved by ensuring that every child from birth to five years of age is immunized with polio drops. “She appealed to the public to make the Pulse Polio campaign, being conducted on June 28, 29, and 30, a grand success. Dr. Anita Reddy urged parents to act responsibly and ensure that every child between 0 and 5 years of age receives the life-saving vaccine. “Highlighting the crucial role of parents in the eradication of polio, she requested them to bring their children to the nearest Pulse Polio centres and ensure they receive the mandatory two drops. She further called upon the public to work collectively to make the Pulse Polio programme a success and contribute towards building a healthy, polio-free society.

Chief Minister's Relief Fund Brings Light into People's Lives; MLA Naini Rajender Reddy

“----Cheques worth ₹32.25 lakh distributed in Hanamkonda “Hanamkonda, June 28 (Indian Chronicle): Warangal West MLA Naini Rajender Reddy stated that the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) serves as a vital support system for economically disadvantaged families requiring medical treatment. He emphasized the government's sincerity in ensuring that the benefits of welfare schemes reach every eligible beneficiary, transcending political affiliations. “During a program held on Sunday at his camp office in Balasamudram, MLA Naini Rajender Reddy distributed CMRF cheques worth a total of ₹32.25 lakh to 96 beneficiaries from his

constituency. “Speaking on the occasion, the MLA noted that the CMRF provides crucial financial assistance to poor families during medical emergencies, helping to alleviate their financial burden. He reiterated that the state government's goal is to extend welfare schemes to all eligible citizens without any discrimination. “Stating that public welfare is the government's top priority, he urged eligible beneficiaries to make full use of the welfare schemes introduced by the government. “The beneficiaries expressed their gratitude to the Chief Minister and MLA Naini Rajender Reddy for providing timely financial assistance during their time of need. “Public representatives, party leaders, and beneficiaries participated in the event.

Traffic police remove illegal window tints in special drive

Vehicles fitted with unauthorised black films booked under the Motor Vehicles Act during enforcement in Karimnagar.

Karimnagar June 28 (Correspondent): The Karimnagar Traffic Police conducted a special enforcement drive on Sunday to remove illegal black films affixed to car windows, intensifying action against violations of traffic safety regulations.

The inspection was carried out near the Bus Stand In-Gate on the directions of Police Commissioner Gautham Alam, IPS. Traffic personnel used a tint meter to verify the permissible level of window tint on cars. Vehicles found with unauthorised black films exceeding the prescribed limits were booked under the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, and the films were removed on the spot.

Police also used the drive to sensitise motorists about the need to comply with traffic regulations, stating that excessive window tint compromises transparency during vehicle checks and poses concerns for road safety and law enforcement.

Traffic officials appealed to vehicle owners not to install unauthorised black films and warned that similar enforcement drives would continue, with stringent action against repeat violators.

Traffic ACP Yadagiri Swamy, Traffic Inspectors Sanjeev and Anjaiah, Sub-Inspectors Srikanth and Hanumantha Rao, along with other traffic personnel, participated in the drive.



Severe Injustice to Mala Community in SC Categorisation – Mala Mahanadu Urges Review of Roster Points.

“Representation Submitted to Minister Ponguleti. “KHAMMAM 28 JUNE (INDIAN CHRONICLE): “Leaders of Mala Mahanadu submitted a representation to Telangana Revenue, Housing, Information and Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, alleging that the roster points allocated by the government under the implementation of SC categorisation are causing serious injustice to the Mala community and its sub-castes in education and employment opportunities. “The delegation met the Minister at his camp office in Khammam and explained that, under the present roster system, the 22nd roster point allotted to the Mala community in the Group-III category is adversely affecting their chances in educational admissions and government recruitment. “The leaders urged the Minister to shift the 22nd roster point to the 16th position, taking into account the Mala population ratio and their constitutional rights. They also requested the government to undertake a comprehensive review of the entire roster system to ensure fair representation. “They expressed concern that the implementation of SC categorisation is depriving the Mala community of opportunities they are rightfully entitled to and appealed to the government to take immediate corrective measures. “Responding to their concerns, Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy reportedly assured the delegation that he would bring the issue to the attention of the government and make efforts to resolve it. “Among those who participated were Gunjeti Veerabhadram, Lingala Ravi Kumar, Varada Narasimha Rao, Korivi Dayanand, Kama Prabhakar, Dasari Srinivas, Karate Venu, Jammi Veerababu, Gummadi Kanaka Raju, Pamba Nageswara Rao, Koppula Somayya, Pushparaj, Nagender, Postal Krishna, Binde Ramesh, Ayodhya, G. Anji, Narumalla Venkanna, Koppala Rama Rao, and Paga Yona, along with other leaders.





Telangana State Protocol & Coordination Vice Chairman Bongunoori Kishore Reddy's Team Donates ₹66,308 for Muslim Graveyard Wall Construction
 Hyderabad: The team of Telangana State Protocol & Coordination Vice Chairman Bongunoori Kishore Reddy, represented by BKR members Shafi and Kavali Ganesh, contributed ₹66,308 towards the construction of the boundary wall of the Muslim graveyard at 214 Church, Gagillapur. Expressing gratitude, Majid Khan, President of the 214 Church Gagillapur Mohammedia Masjid Committee, thanked the donors for their generous contribution. He stated that the support for this noble cause is deeply appreciated by the entire community and will significantly help in completing the graveyard wall construction. [8:32 PM, 6/28/2026] +91 96528 88070: End

Development and Welfare Are the Goals of the People's Government: Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy

“Minister Inaugurates and Lays Foundation Stones for Development Works Worth ₹3.5 Crore in Palair Constituency

“Khammam, June 28 Indian Chronicle: “State Revenue, Housing, Information and Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy stated that development and welfare remain the primary objectives of the people's government. On Sunday, the Minister inaugurated and laid foundation stones for several development projects in villages of Nelakondapalli Mandal under the Palair constituency. The Minister laid the foundation stone for the construction of a BT road from Appalanarasimhapuram to Gandrai at an estimated cost of ₹3.10 crore. He also inaugurated the construction of a new Gram Panchayat office building in Koratlagudem with an estimated cost of ₹20 lakh and inaugurated a newly constructed Gram Panchayat office building in Rajarampeta, built at a cost of ₹20 lakh. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that the government is taking steps to improve transportation facilities and strengthen infrastructure in rural areas through better road connectivity. He noted that under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the people's government is implementing various development and welfare programs with the welfare of the poor as its primary objective. He emphasized that every welfare scheme introduced by the government is being implemented transparently to ensure that benefits reach poor households directly. The Minister stated that the government has sanctioned interest-free loans worth approximately ₹63,000 crore to women's self-help groups across the state, helping strengthen them economically. He also announced that, in addition to allotting petrol pumps to women for self-employment opportunities, a rice mill will soon be sanctioned to women's groups in Nelakondapalli Mandal. He remarked that this government is the first in the state to provide a rice mill to DWCRAs women and added that efforts are underway to sanction rice mills to women's self-help groups in every mandal across Telangana. The Minister further said that the government is providing 200 units of free electricity, quality fine rice, new ration cards, and houses under the Indiramma Hous-



ing Scheme to poor families. He informed that the first phase of housing allocations has already been completed and the second phase is underway, while eligible beneficiaries will continue to receive houses in the third and fourth phases. He clarified that the government is not only issuing sanction letters to beneficiaries but is also directly depositing funds into their bank accounts every Monday according to the stage of house construction, without any scope for corruption or bribery. The Minister said that the government, formed with the trust of the people, is continuously working for the welfare of the poor, empowerment of women, and prosperity of farmers. He expressed confidence that, just as people delivered a positive verdict in the past, they would continue to support a government committed to development and welfare in the future. He assured that all necessary development works would be taken up on a priority basis and completed in phases, stressing that rural development forms the foundation of the state's overall progress. Among those present at the event were MLAs Koram Kanakaiah, Jare Adinarayana, Payam Venkateswarlu, and Tellam Venkat Rao, along with Additional Collector P. Srinivasa Reddy, PR SE Venkat Reddy, Khammam RDO Srinivas, public representatives, officials from various departments, and others. Issued by the District Public Relations Officer, Khammam.

Pulse Polio Drive Successfully Conducted at Deenabandhu Colony

“415 Children Administered Polio Drops; Colony President Mahender Naik Appreciates Health Workers

“Deenabandhu Colony successfully conducted the Pulse Polio Immunization Drive today, with a total of 415 children receiving life-saving polio drops. The impressive participation reflected the community's strong commitment to safeguarding children's health. The programme was efficiently led by Team Leader M. Karuna, while C.H. Sabita, B. Rajeswari, and Sushilamma worked with dedication to ensure that every eligible child received the polio vaccine. Speaking on the occasion, Deenabandhu Colony President Mahender Naik congratulated the medical staff, ASHA workers, volunteers, and parents for making the programme a success. He emphasized that administering polio drops to every child is a collective social responsibility in building a polio-free society. He noted that vaccinating 415 children reflects the awareness and health consciousness of the colony's residents. He also urged everyone to actively participate in such public health initiatives to ensure the well-being of future generations. The programme concluded successfully with the message: “Every child's health is the nation's future – every drop of polio vaccine is a step toward a safer and healthier life.”



Ward Councillor Mahipal Participates in Pulse Polio Campaign

Administers Polio Drops to Children, Urges Parents to Ensure Every Child is Vaccinated... “Zaheerabad, June 28 (Indian Chronicle): “Ward Councillor Mahipal participated in the Pulse Polio Immunization Campaign held in Ward No. 37 of Zaheerabad Municipality, Sangareddy district. On the occasion, he inaugurated the drive by administering polio drops to children below the age of five. Speaking on the occasion, Councillor Mahipal appealed to parents to actively support the government's Pulse Polio programme and ensure that every child under the age of five receives the life-saving polio drops. He emphasized that collective public participation is essential to achieve a polio-free India and urged parents not to miss this opportunity. Medical staff, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, local public representatives, and residents of the ward participated in the programme.



Ward Councillor Mahipal Participates in Pulse Polio Campaign

“??Administers Polio Drops to Children, Urges Parents to Ensure Every Child is Vaccinated... “Zaheerabad, June 28 (Indian Chronicle): “Ward Councillor Mahipal participated in the Pulse Polio Immunization Campaign held in Ward No. 37 of Zaheerabad Municipality, Sangareddy district. On the occasion, he inaugurated the drive by administering polio drops to children below the age of five. Speaking on the occasion, Councillor Mahipal appealed to parents to actively support the government's Pulse Polio programme and ensure that every child under the age of five receives the life-saving polio drops. He emphasized that collective public participation is essential to achieve a polio-free India and urged parents not to miss this opportunity. Medical staff, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, local public representatives, and residents of the ward participated in the programme.



Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Requests Rs 12.37 Crore Funds for Development Works in Ramanthapur Division



Ramanthapur, June 28 (Indian Chronicle): “Bandari Lakshma Reddy, along with BRS leader Gantham Nageswara Rao, submitted a representation to Vinay Krishna Reddy, requesting the sanction of development works worth ₹12.37 crore in Ramanthapur Division. During the meeting, they handed over a detailed list of proposed development projects to be taken up in various localities of the division. The proposed works include: Construction of a CC Road in Gokhale Nagar at an estimated cost of ₹60 lakh. Construction of a Box Drain in Nehru Nagar costing ₹60 lakh. Construction of a Community Hall in Gandhi Nagar with an outlay of ₹60 lakh. Construction of a Community Hall in Indira Nagar at a cost of ₹40 lakh. Construction of the second floor of the Community Hall in RTC Colony with an allocation of ₹45 lakh. Construction of a CC Road in RTC Colony costing ₹45 lakh. Another CC Road project in RTC Colony with an estimated cost of ₹35 lakh. Construction of a Community Hall in Ganesh Nagar costing ₹60 lakh. Construction of a CC Road near GD Bak- ery Junction in Srinagar Colony at a cost of ₹1 crore. Development works for the Netaji Nagar Graveyard in Rajendra Nagar costing ₹72 lakh. Construction of a Box Drain in Shanti Nagar with an estimated expenditure of ₹2 crore. Construction of a Box Drain connecting Madhura Nagar and Ganesh Nagar at a cost of ₹4.5 crore. Construction of a Box Drain in Peace Colony costing ₹75 lakh. Development of the Settlement Court in Peace Colony with an allocation of ₹10 lakh. Construction of the first floor of the Community Hall in Pragathi Nagar for senior citizens at a cost of ₹45 lakh. MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy requested the Commissioner to sanction these works at the earliest to facilitate the overall development of Ramanthapur Division. Responding positively, Commissioner Vinay Krishna Reddy assured that the proposals would be processed and the necessary sanctions would be granted soon.

Wyra MLA Ramdas Naik Unveils Rythu Ashirvada Sabha Poster

“Khammam Enkoor, June 28 Indian Chronicle: “Wyra MLA Maloth Ramdas Naik unveiled the poster for the Rythu Ashirvada Sabha scheduled to be held on June 30 at Jagannadhapuram village in Chinthakani mandal of Madira constituency. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA called upon party leaders and workers to work in coordination to ensure the grand success of the farmers' meeting. He also urged them to widely publicize the government's farmer welfare schemes among the people. The event was attended by Enkoor Mandal In-charge Roshayya, Mandal Congress President Swarna Narendra, Society Chairman Shettipalli Venkateswara Rao, Market Committee Chairman Lachhiram Naik, District Committee Secretaries Koppula Prabhavathi Reddy and Sameelu, former MPTC Meda Dharma Rao, former Market Chairman Lalu Naik, former MPP Mukthi Venkateswarlu, Vasireddy Nageswara Rao, Nallamala Shivakumar, OBC Mandal President Mogili Nagaraju, former Deputy Sarpanch Maloth Narasimha Rao, Panthagani Naresh, along with sarpanches, deputy sarpanches, party leaders, supporters, and activists. [7:20 PM, 6/28/2026] +91 96187 88997: End



Elaborate Arrangements Must Be Made for Rythu Ashirvada Sabha: Minister Tummala

“Khammam, June 28 Indian Chronicle: “State Agriculture, Marketing, Cooperation, Handlooms and Textiles Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao on Sunday reviewed the arrangements for the Rythu Ashirvada Sabha scheduled to be held on June 30 at Jagannadhapuram village in Chinthakani mandal of Khammam district. The Minister, accompanied by Agriculture Department Secretary K. Surendra Mohan, Agriculture Director B. Gopi, Khammam District Collector Divakar T.S. and Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt, conducted an on-site inspection of the venue and reviewed preparations in detail. Emphasizing that thousands of farmers from across the district are expected to attend the event, the Minister directed officials to ensure flawless arrangements without any shortcomings. He inspected the main stage, seating areas, parking facilities, traffic management systems and security arrangements, and issued necessary instructions to the concerned departments. In view of weather forecasts predicting rainfall over the next few days, Mr. Tummala instructed officials to take precautionary measures to ensure that farmers do not face any inconvenience. He stressed the need for contingency plans, proper drainage facilities and alternative arrangements so that the programme can proceed smoothly even in the event of rain. The Minister also reviewed vehicle parking arrangements, traffic flow management, entry and exit routes for participants and other basic amenities at the venue. He directed officials to address any gaps immediately and complete all preparations well ahead of the event. The inspection was attended by Ramdas Naik, State Warehousing Corporation Chairman Rayala Nageswara Rao, SUDA Chairman Puvalla Durgaprasad, public representatives and officials from various departments.



Explosion at Qatar gas terminal: Over 50 injured, search on for missing



Dubai: An explosion tore through Qatar's key natural gas export terminal Sunday night as workers tried to resume operations there after Iran bombed it during the

war, causing a fire that hurt at least 54 people, with another 18 still missing hours later. The blast at the Ras Laffan industrial area could cause further chaos in global energy markets, particularly as Qatar remains one of the world's top natural gas producers. Qatar shut down its production after Iran's chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz meant it couldn't get shipments out to its clients. With Iran loosening its grip on the strait as negotiations continue over a permanent end to the war, Qatar began work to try to restart its export terminal. night, that work sparked an explosion and fire at the Barzan gas supply facility, the state-run firm QatarEnergy said. The scale of the damage remains unknown after the blast, with officials initially saying only a few people had been hurt. But hours later, Qatar's interior ministry offered the far-greater casualty figures.

Iran to resume oil exports under US framework



Washington: The Trump administration said on Sunday that Iran will once again be able to sell oil on international markets as part of the emerging diplomatic framework between Washington and Tehran, a move that could have significant implications for global energy prices and major oil-importing nations such as India. Speaking on ABC's "This Week", Energy Secretary Chris Wright said Iran's return to energy markets would be one of the immediate outcomes of the ongoing negotiations, even as discussions continue over Tehran's nuclear programme.

"Oh, Iranians have been selling oil most of the last 47 years," Wright said. He noted that Iranian exports had fallen sharply during the first Trump administration but increased significantly during the Biden years. "That's all they're getting, is the ability to yet sell their oil again." According to Wright, Iran is expected to return to export levels of more than 1.5 million barrels a day, roughly matching volumes seen before the latest conflict. He said the United States

had demonstrated during the confrontation that it could stop Iranian oil exports entirely, giving Washington leverage in the negotiations. "We proved to them for two months we could cease them from selling a drop of oil," Wright said. The administration also sought to reassure consumers that energy markets were stabilising following weeks of uncertainty linked to fighting in the Gulf and disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz.

Wright said oil and natural gas flows through the strategic waterway had already returned to normal levels. "Flows of oil and natural gas through the Strait have already returned to normal," he said, adding that American production, increased output from Venezuela and cooperation among major energy producers would support further declines in energy prices. The prospect of renewed Iranian oil exports has become one of the most debated elements of the emerging agreement. Former Obama National Security Adviser Susan Rice argued that Tehran was receiving major economic benefits before agreeing to a comprehensive settlement. "As the secretary just acknowledged, Iran, as of the signing of the agreement, so on Thursday, is now able to sell all of its oil and all of its oil products on the market unimpeded," Rice said. She also criticised the administration for allowing Iran to use the international banking system and gain access to frozen assets. Rice called the arrangement a "jaw-dropping, horrific surrender" and said key concessions should have been tied to a final agreement rather than granted at the outset. The disagreement highlights the broader debate in Washington over whether economic incentives should be used to encourage Iranian cooperation or withheld until Tehran accepts stricter limits on its nuclear and military programmes.

US and Iran conclude high-level talks in Switzerland, mediators say



BUERGENSTOCK, The first round of talks between high-ranking U.S. and Iranian officials in Switzerland ended Monday, mediators said, after a tense opening marked by Tehran's announcement it had again closed the Strait of Hormuz and U.S. President Donald Trump repeating his threats to resume attacks on Iran. A joint statement from mediating nations Qatar and Pakistan said the U.S. and Iran agreed to a roadmap toward a final deal within 60 days. Technical talks will continue for the rest of the week in the Qatari-owned Swiss mountain resort of Buergenstock, according to the statement, which was released by the Qatari foreign ministry. The Reuters Inside Track newsletter is your essential guide during the World Cup. Sign up here.

The parties agreed to a mechanism to end the fighting in Lebanon and opened a communications line to help ensure safe passages for commercial ships through the contested strait, the statement said. U.S. Vice President JD Vance began talks with Iranian officials on Sunday under the terms of a memorandum of understanding reached last week to extend a tenuous ceasefire from April for at least another 60 days. The discussions continued until the early hours of Monday. In a post on social media, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said this country had secured waivers for oil and petrochemical exports, the release of some frozen assets and the launch of a reconstruction and development plan for Iran. The White House had no immediate comment when asked if high-level talks had wrapped for now. Just before talks officially began on Sunday, Fox News reported that Trump said he told Iranian officials "you won't have a country" if they tried to close the strait again. Trump also reiterated an earlier threat that the U.S. would take over the waterway and possibly charge a toll of its own, Fox News said. Trump said he agreed to last week's memorandum of understanding to avert a global economic depression from high oil prices caused by the strait's closure. Oil prices had tumbled over the past week to levels unseen since the war started on February 28 with U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran.

After the joint statement, Brent crude futures fell further, dropping more than \$1 to \$79.44 a barrel. U.S. and Iranian sources provided separate accounts of the discussions in Switzerland. Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency, citing an informed source, said that after Trump's threats became public, the Iranian delegation refused to return to the room where talks were held, though messages were still being traded via Pakistani and Qatari mediators. According to Tasnim's source, Iranians said that the start of negotiations on nuclear matters required the delivery of other parts of the MOU, including the release of frozen assets and U.S. waivers authorizing Iranian oil exports. "The Iranians never left and are still here meeting and negotiating deep into the night," a U.S. diplomat involved

in the talks told Reuters. "We've talked about the Strait, Lebanon, nuclear issues, and details of implementing the MOU, among other topics." The agreement calls for reopening the Strait of Hormuz, a choke point for global energy shipments, and ending all hostilities, including in Lebanon, where Israel has continued to launch deadly strikes as Iranian ally Hezbollah fires at Israeli targets. Iran, arguing that the U.S. had failed to meet its commitment to halt fighting in Lebanon, said on the weekend that it had again stopped maritime traffic through the strait and that Sunday's talks would not cover substantive issues such as Iran's nuclear programme. At the talks in Switzerland, where U.S. and Iranian officials met in the presence of Qatari mediators, Vance played down the impact of violence in Lebanon, saying progress had been made towards ending hostilities there. "These things are always a little bit messy," he said.

Back in the United States, Trump threatened to resume attacks on Iran if it did not rein in its allies. "Iran must immediately stop their highly paid PROXIES in Lebanon from causing trouble," Trump wrote on social media, apparently referring to Hezbollah. "If they don't, we'll hit Iran very hard again, just like we did last week, only harder!!!" Even as Trump was threatening Iran, Vance told reporters the U.S. president had "asked us to turn over a new leaf to transform our relationship with the people of Iran." A U.S. diplomat late Sunday said discussions included "clarifying some of the confusing messaging from Iran on the Strait and building deconfliction mechanisms to ensure the Strait will remain fully open." IRAN CITES LEBANON AS REASON TO CLOSE STRAIT Despite the announcement of a new ceasefire in Lebanon on Friday, there has been scant sign of an end to fighting there. Iran said on Saturday that as a result, it had again shut the strait, whose closure for nearly four months caused the biggest disruption of global energy supplies in history. Five vessels passed the strait on Sunday, a sharp drop from the 26 ships spotted a day earlier, data from analytics firm Kpler showed. The data may exclude vessels that switch off their transponders while travelling in the Gulf. Sunday appeared to be the quietest day in Lebanon for some time, with no reports of major violence by nightfall, after two days of heavy Israeli strikes and fire from Hezbollah fighters on Israeli positions. More than 1 million people have fled their homes in Lebanon since Israel invaded in March to pursue Hezbollah fighters who fired across the border in support of Tehran. Reuters journalists in southern Lebanon on Sunday saw some of the heaviest traffic since the memorandum was signed, with residents returning to their homes. Some stood beside cars backed up on the highway and waved Hezbollah flags.

Philippines' Marcos orders probe into school shooting that killed three

MANILA, EMS News Agency, June 27 Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr ordered an investigation on Monday into a school shooting in the city of Tacloban that killed three people and injured five others. "The President is saddened by the incident," his office said in a statement, adding that he had ordered a thorough investigation and directed authorities to ensure safety and security in all areas, offices and establishments, especially schools.

Ethiopian prime minister's party gets another big parliamentary majority



NAIROBI, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity Party won another large parliamentary majority in this month's elections, results released by the national election board on showed. Abiy, whose party had been widely expected to dominate the elections against a fragmented opposition, was appointed in 2018 following mass protests against the long-ruling EPRDF coalition. He created the Prosperity Party the following year. The Reuters Inside Track newsletter is your essential guide during the World Cup. Sign up here.

Abiy's party won 438 seats, roughly 90% of those for which results were announced at a ceremony broadcast on Facebook. It needed 274 to secure a majority. Not all the lower house of parliament's 547 seats were up for grabs, as voting did not happen in the Tigray region and some parts of Amhara. At the last elections in 2021 the Prosperity Party won a similar percentage of the available seats. ABIY HAS CONSOLIDATED POWER DESPITE INSURGENCE The Prosperity Party replaced an often

unwieldy multi-party coalition that governed Ethiopia for more than a quarter-century and has helped Abiy, 49, to consolidate his grip on national politics even as he has faced violent opposition in some of the country's largest regions. Prosperity Party candidates this time touted improved food security and strong economic growth in Africa's second-most populous country that officials forecast will top 10% in 2026, one of the fastest rates on the continent. More than 750 million people were registered to vote, but there was no election in the northern Tigray region, where organisers had cited "unfavourable conditions" in the aftermath of a two-year civil war and amid continuing political turmoil. The government also faces insurgencies in the country's two biggest regions, connected to grievances among different ethnic groups about alleged marginalisation within Ethiopia's federal system. NO VOTING IN SOME PARTS OF COUNTRY In Abiy's native Oromiya in the south, fighting between government forces and the Oromo Liberation Army separatist group has killed hundreds of people in the past few years. In neighbouring Amhara, a militia known as Fano has captured swathes of the countryside since 2023. As a result, voting did not take place in at least eight of Amhara's 138 constituencies. Though a 2022 peace deal ended the civil war in Tigray, which researchers say caused hundreds of thousands of deaths, a move last month by the main political party there to reassert control over the region's political administration led Ethiopian officials and analysts to warn of the risk of fresh unrest. Opposition parties accuse the federal government of undermining them by arresting their leaders and imposing legal roadblocks to their political activities, charges denied by the government. Reuters has not been able to report from inside Ethiopia since mid-February, when the Ethiopian Media Authority declined to renew the accreditation for its three Addis Ababa-based journalists.

Ramiro Valdes, lauded as hero of Cuban revolution, dies at 94

Ramiro Valdes, one of Fidel Castro's earliest collaborators who was lauded at home as a hero of the Cuban revolution, has died at the age of 94, President Miguel Diaz-Canel said on social media on Sunday. The president did not provide a cause of death. The Reuters Inside Track newsletter is your essential guide during the World Cup. Sign up here. A top government official for decades after Castro's rebels came to power in 1959, Valdes held the honorary titles "Hero of the Republic" and "Commander of the Revolution" and formed part of the powerful Political Bureau of the ruling Cuban Communist Party until 2019. In a post on X, Diaz-Canel said that Valdes' death "hurts deeply, like that of a father." "Until victory, always," Commander! the Cuban president added.

Born on April 28, 1932, Valdes was just 21 when he fought alongside Fidel Castro at the assault on the Moncada barracks that launched the 1953 uprising against the government of Fulgencio Batista. Exiled with Castro in Mexico, he was one of 82 men who sailed the yacht Granma to Cuba in 1956 to restart the insurrection - and one of only 12 to survive. Those included Castro, who died in 2016, his younger brother and later president and head of the Communist Party Raul Castro, and Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, the Argentine revolutionary who was shot in Bolivia in 1967 while attempting to start an insurrection there. Valdes joined the Castro brothers in the Sierra Maestra mountains of eastern Cuba, serving as Guevara's deputy commander. He fought alongside Guevara in the decisive Battle of Santa Clara in the final days before Batista fled the country on January 1, 1959.

He then headed the security agency created after Fidel Castro took power. Valdes shared some of the charisma exhibited by Castro and Guevara, and like them he wore olive-green fatigues in the corridors of power. Until the end he kept the Leon Trotsky-style goatee that he had worn from his early days in the revolution. As a fitness fanatic, he maintained an exercise program well into his



80s. Among the positions he held over the years were interior minister, vice minister of defense, minister of information and communications, and vice president. Even as Raul Castro sought to oversee the handover of power from his so-called "historic generation" to younger leaders, passing on the presidency that he inherited from his brother to 60-year-old Diaz-Canel in 2018, Valdes remained in key government positions, most recently as deputy prime minister with a focus on the island's energy crisis. Still actively involved with the minutiae of the island's regular electricity shortages, he regularly appeared in military garb alongside Diaz-Canel encouraging Cubans to turn off the lights, cut back on demand and maintain their "revolutionary" fervor. Valdes always remained loyal to the revolution, its leaders and one-party system, including during the country's most difficult periods. "We cannot forget we arrived here thanks to the unity of the people and their trust in the revolution," Valdes said at the 61st anniversary celebration of the Moncada attack in 2014. We must preserve this unity above all things because we are aware this fight has not ended."

Europe braces for prolonged heatwave as temperatures approach 40C



ROME/MADRID/PARIS,- A severe heatwave gripped much of Europe on Sunday, with temperatures nearing 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit), prompting nationwide warnings, transport disruption and signs of strain on wildlife and at tourist hotspots. The heat surge on June 21, the summer solstice in the northern hemisphere and typically the start of the three hottest months of the year, raised concerns of an early and persistent onset of extreme conditions. Make sense of the latest ESG trends affecting companies and governments with the Reuters Sustainable Switch newsletter. Sign up here. After several days of temperatures above 35C, Italian authorities issued a red alert for June 21 in eight cities, including Bologna, Florence, Milan, and Turin.

In Rome, pilgrims in St Peter's Square used parasols and umbrellas to shield themselves from the blazing sun as the Pope led a traditional Sunday prayer from a window of the Apostolic Palace. The spike in temperatures is being driven by a mass of hot air moving north from the Sahara, fuelled by a strong high-pressure system known as the "African anticyclone." Meteorologists say the system is creating a so-called "heat dome," trapping hot air over western and central Europe and allowing temperatures to build day after day. Madrid residents and tourists used fans and drank plenty of cold drinks as they browsed the city's famous El Rastro flea market. "I'm dressed all in white because it's so hot, and I'm carrying my little electric fan everywhere I go," said Haily San Cesario, a 22-year-old engineer from Miami. Spain's AEMET weather agency issued red and orange alerts across several regions, warning of temperatures exceeding 39 to 40 C across large parts of the Iberian Peninsula and Mallorca, and said the heatwave would last at least until midweek.

Andhra govt to launch Amaravati Quantum & AI Innovation Center

Amaravati: The Amaravati Quantum & AI Innovation Center (AQAIIC), a flagship initiative of the Andhra Pradesh government in association with IBM, will be launched on Thursday. The launching of AQAIIC will serve as the foundation of "India's largest organised quantum problem-solving force," said an official press release. "AQAIIC, a flagship initiative of Amaravati Quantum Valley, Government of Andhra Pradesh, in association with IBM, will be launched on June 18, marking a significant milestone in the state's efforts to build a world-class quantum innovation ecosystem," it said late on Wednesday. AQAIIC was conceived as a platform to bridge industry challenges with academic talent and global technology expertise.

Why Punjab keeps turning to three men, long gone, for its politics



It is strange that Punjab's politics continues to be defined by just a handful of men. One is the most famous Sikh ruler who ruled over the largest trans-regional empire in the north. Another is a freedom fighter, an extraordinarily brave, bright, and uncompromising young revolutionary who gave up his life for India's freedom. The third is a deeply contentious figure, a separatist ideologue who perished during Operation Blue Star but remains a visible face on vehicles, in gurdwaras, and across social media in Punjab.

These three diametrically different personalities offer a window into Punjab and Punjabis. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the one-eyed, pockmarked ruler who never formally anointed himself a maharaja, remains a near-universal favourite. He is admired for his just rule, his large-hearted administration that was religion-blind, and his forward-looking outlook that led him to recruit the best military experts and weaponry from Europe. For many Punjabis, he embodies the ideal Punjabi: devout yet secular, brave yet compassionate, adventurous yet rooted. Little wonder that Punjab's political parties repeatedly invoke his legacy. The Shiromani Akali Dal under Parkash Singh Badal, the five-time chief minister who was also a Dhillon like the maharaja, frequently referred to his rule, presenting itself as custodian of Ranjit Singh's Sarkar-e-Khalsa. More recently, newly appointed BJP Punjab president Kewal Singh Dhillon unveiled a portrait of the Maharaja and promised a return to those golden years.

Then there is Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh, whom the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government led by Bhagwant Mann repeatedly invokes. The CM often recounts his frequent pilgrimages to Bhagat Singh's ancestral village of Khatkar Kalan even before he joined politics: once when he bought his first car, another time to found a new short-lived political outfit. It came as no surprise then that the AAP government was also sworn in near the martyr's village in 2022 and continues to unveil some of its flagship programmes there. For Punjabis, Bhagat Singh, who is forever 23 in public memory, evokes an intensely emotional response. Young and old adore him. His portraits adorn barber shops, college campuses, kabaddi tournament banners, and roadside eateries. Ever since the AAP came to power on promises of

badlav (change), often presented interchangeably with inqilab (revolution), his image has also found pride of place in government offices. To the common Punjabi, Bhagat Singh represents selfless courage and integrity. Some of the criticism Mahatma Gandhi continues to face in Punjab stems from the belief that he failed to save Bhagat Singh from the gallows. Ironically, increasingly, his image is being appropriated by gangsters and student organisations alike. Lawrence Bishnoi once appeared in a Chandigarh court wearing a T-shirt bearing the revolutionary's image.

And then there is Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. When the AAP government came to power, there was an order to remove his posters from Punjab state roadways buses, but it was quickly rolled back. More recently, there was outrage in several sections when Maharashtra minister Girish Mahajan attended a function organised by the Damdami Taksal, the seminary once headed by Bhindranwale, to commemorate Operation Blue Star on June 7. Its present chief, Harnam Singh Dhumma, has openly supported Prime Minister Narendra Modi, yet it was Bhindranwale's portrait in the backdrop that triggered the controversy. But as former CM Amarinder Singh observed, to someone unfamiliar with Punjab, everyone displaying Bhindranwale's image may appear to be a Khalistani. But the reality is more complex.

Bhindranwale, who died during Operation Blue Star in June 1984, remains one of the most polarising figures in Punjab's history. He shot to prominence through his amrit prachar (baptism) campaigns and provocative speeches during a turbulent period when Punjab's grievances against the Centre had crystallised into the Dharam Yudh Morcha. Many Punjabis, including Sikhs, remain very uncomfortable with his divisive rhetoric and the violence that engulfed the state in the 1980s, often called the dark decade when militancy wracked Punjab. Yet one simple reason why Bhindranwale has endured is that he died fighting. Reportedly, given the option to surrender, he chose to stay and resist. Had he survived and faced trial, he might have met a different fate. His death instead made him a symbol of resistance to the perceived excesses of the then Dilli Sarkar in the fight for Punjab's rights. As Punjab heads towards the Assembly elections in early 2027, these three figures offer a telling insight into the many threads that make up the state's political and cultural psyche. Punjab is deeply nationalistic yet fiercely parochial; often agitated by perceived or real injustice and always inclined to rally behind those who stand up to any form of "dhakka (injustice)". But the recurring presence of these long-dead men in the collective consciousness points to something deeper: a profound leadership vacuum, and the consequent tendency to seek answers in the past. Punjab continues its search for a statesman extraordinaire, capable of embodying its aspirations, anxieties, and sense of self, while steering it towards a prosperous and peaceful future. It's this void that the parties should aim to fill.

The curious case of Yusuf Pathan's Vadodara land and a Rs 20.5 crore question

A 978 square-metre plot in Vadodara that has been at the centre of a long-running dispute involving former India cricketer and Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Yusuf Pathan is set to go under the hammer after the Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC) initiated the process for its public auction. The plot is among seven municipal land parcels whose valuations were cleared by the civic body's Standing Committee this week and are expected to be placed before the VMC General Board in July. The move comes even as Pathan has been given time by the Gujarat High Court to seek relief under a state government policy that provides for allotment of land to international sportspersons.

The disputed plot, identified as plot number 90 in Town Planning Scheme 22 in the city's Tandalja area, has now been valued at Rs 2.10 lakh per sq m. At the approved rate, the land is worth about Rs 20.5 crore. The valuation is nearly three times the rate at which the plot was proposed to be allotted to Pathan 14 years ago. The dispute dates back to 2012 when Pathan approached the VMC seeking allotment of the land on a 99-year lease. The VMC Standing Committee and General Board approved the proposal and agreed to allot the plot at Rs 57,270 per sq m without conducting a public auction. However, the proposal ran into trouble when it was sent to the state's Urban Development Department for approval. In June 2014, the department rejected the allotment, holding that the land could not be transferred without following a public bidding process. The rejection effectively stalled the proposal, but the land remained fenced and under Pathan's possession.

The issue resurfaced in June 2024, shortly after Pathan was elected to the Lok Sabha from West Bengal's Baharampur constituency on a TMC ticket. The BJP-controlled civic body issued him an encroachment notice, alleging unauthorised occupation of municipal land. Pathan challenged the VMC's action and sought recognition of his claim over the plot. In August 2025, however, the High Court upheld the state government's decision rejecting the original allotment proposal, ruling that the Urban Development Department had acted within its powers in refusing approval to the transaction. Hearing Pathan's appeal against the High Court order on June 15 this year, a Division Bench headed by Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal granted him four weeks to pursue relief under a 1999 state policy that permits allotment of land to international sportspersons under certain conditions. At the same time, the Bench questioned how he had continued to occupy the land since 2014 despite the rejection of the allotment proposal and without making any payment to the civic body. The court also indicated that compensation for unauthorised occupation of public land, if found payable, could be calculated at prevailing market rates. Against this backdrop, the VMC's latest valuation of the land could assume significance not only for any future auction but also for determining potential recovery arising from its prolonged occupation. Municipal officials, however, have maintained that the sportsperson policy cited by Pathan may not apply in the present case because the land belongs to the civic body rather than the state government.

"The policy does not apply to civic body plots. The state may allocate land, but such allotment cannot be imposed on the municipal corporation," a VMC official said, adding once the General Board approves the valuation, the plot can be auctioned through a public bidding process as and when the land and estate department decides. Of the seven plots cleared for valuation, five are reserved for public and government infrastructure projects, while two have been designated for residential use. Both residential plots are located in Tandalja. Besides Pathan's plot, the second residential parcel — plot number 97 — measures 2,878 sq m and has been valued at Rs 1.5 lakh per sq m. The remaining plots are earmarked for public facilities, including a neighbourhood centre in Akota and three parcels in Bhayli reserved for a



bus stand, a central health centre, and a school-cum-games ground. Civic officials said plots already sought by government departments for public projects may not require auction. The land dispute has also acquired a political dimension amid the ongoing unrest within the TMC's Lok Sabha ranks. Pathan is among the party MPs who have backed a dissident group seeking recognition as a separate bloc in Parliament, drawing criticism from sections of the party leadership. The controversy spilled into the public domain on June 15 when National Conference MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi alleged on X that during a protest in Parliament's Well in the Winter Session, a Muslim MP had warned Pathan that the BJP could "bulldoze" his house in Gujarat and advised him to stay away from the agitation. Ruhullah claimed that TMC MP Mahua Moitra had reassured Pathan that the Opposition would stand by him. Responding on X, Moitra identified the MP as AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi and criticised Pathan after he joined the dissident camp. "What a pity I fought for a 'gaddar (traitor)' with no courage and no spine. He was better off doing commentary," she wrote. In an apparent reference to the row, Owaisi wrote on X on Thursday, "Some UBT MPs are also looking to defect to the BJP. Maybe we should ask the two prominent MPs to tell us who 'threatened' these MPs to defect to the BJP? Why did the other 19 TMC MPs defect? Maybe it'll take a month to blame someone. As the Qur'an says "Woe to every backbiter, slanderer" (104:1). Why are large-scale defections to BJP so easy? Why are all these people running away? You cannot blame one 'prominent MP' for all your failures."

Coal tipper mows down Bhupalpally DTO Venkanna in front of his office

Bhupalpally: The district transport officer (DTO) Venkanna (47) was killed in a road accident while he along with staff was engaged in vehicle inspections in front of the road transport office on Monday morning. According to police, the incident took place while a harvester, seized during a vehicle check, was being moved to a secure location at the office on the outskirts of Chelpur in Ghanapuram mandal. A speeding coal tipper that went out of control first collided with the harvester; then plowed into Venkanna, who was standing there leaning against his car parked by the side of the road. He died on the spot after being hit by the truck while his car was partially damaged. Venkanna hails from Hanamkonda and belongs to the 2012 batch. Upon receiving information, Bhupalpally police rushed to the spot; took the tipper driver responsible for the accident into custody; registered a case and initiated questioning.

Former CEC S Y Quraishi writes: Constitution's promise of fraternity matters more than ever



Every schoolchild can recite the Preamble to the Constitution: Justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. The first three have generated debate in courts, politics and academia. The fourth, however, has passed almost unnoticed. Yet fraternity may be the most consequential of all the constitutional values because it is the one value that law alone cannot create. The neglect is curious because the Constitution does not treat fraternity as an afterthought. It appears in the same sentence as the other three, carrying equal constitutional weight. The framers placed it there deliberately. The question is why we have spent 75 years largely ignoring it, and what that neglect has cost us.

The answer begins with a distinction that was explicit during the Constituent Assembly debates but has since faded from constitutional discourse. Liberty and equality define the relationship between the citizen and the state. Fraternity defines the relationship between citizens themselves. That distinction makes all the difference. If the state violates liberty or equality, courts can intervene. But what recourse exists when citizens cease to regard one another as fellow citizens? When disagreement hardens into hostility and difference into suspicion, fraternity begins to disappear. B R Ambedkar understood this with unusual clarity. In his final address to the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949, he warned, "Without fraternity, equality and liberty will be no deeper than coats of paint." His warning stemmed from a frank assessment of Indian society. "How can people divided into several thousands of castes be a nation?" he asked. He was reminding us that nationhood is not a given but an achievement, and fraternity both its condition and proof. The Constitution's concern with fraternity did not end with the Preamble. Article 51A(e) makes it a Fundamental Duty of every citizen to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood across religious, linguistic and regional differences. Seventy-five years later, the original anxieties have not diminished. Though we have never been more connected technologically, we have rarely been more estranged socially. Public debate has grown louder, sharper and more vicious, while mutual understanding has become thinner. The greatest damage caused by hate-filled discourse — whether political, religious or digital — is not that it offends. Democracies have always survived offence. Its deeper damage lies in the erosion of trust. Trust is the invisible infrastructure of a functioning society — the assumption that strangers can deal with one another in good faith. When that assumption erodes, no law can fully restore it. The economy depends upon it. Democracy depends upon it.

Liberty and equality are justiciable, enforceable and actionable before a judge. Fraternity belongs to a different

When our children use violence

Invariably, there is silence, as there is a lot of shame around it. As a parent shared, "We act as if nothing has happened every time he hits his mother." Often, the aggression remains confined to the family, making it harder to discuss. To name it as violence would make it real, and that would be too painful to accept. Self-blame and guilt can keep parents silent, out of fear of being judged in society as "bad parents" and having "failed as a parent." Blame can shift to the children, too. "There is something seriously wrong with him" is a sentiment I have heard often. When children are seen as at fault, then there can be immense rage directed at them. Violence is met with violence, and it might reach a point when it is not possible to keep quiet. Things spiral out of control, other family members, school, neighbours might be pulled in or, in extreme conditions, the police might have to be called in too. Unwittingly, we all might be complicit in this shaming, and dismiss them as "violent child," "nalaayak," "bad seed", or even find fault with the parents, "bad parenting," "bahut chhoot de di to bigadna to tha hi." Or have other simplistic explanations, "it is all that violence in the video games they watch nowadays", etc. But violence comes with complexities, and easy answers rarely hold.

Curiosity over judgment Nysa pushed her mother so hard that she hit her forehead against the door and had to be rushed to the hospital. Arif hit his mother with a bat when she tried to take his gadgets away. These stories sound horrifying, and we could easily jump to the conclusion that all these children, aged 13 and 17 years, were plain evil and headed towards a life of crime. Some psychiatrists and psychologists might end up colluding in these totalising descriptions by being quick to label them as having Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder or even a Personality Disorder. Labels that restrict the child's identity to a problem-saturated story with no possibilities. Let's pause a little and ask ourselves the question, "Are our children disordered or the culture in which they grow up disordered?" As Resmaa Menakem, anti-racist therapist and author, explains, "Many times trauma in a person decontextualised over time can look like personality. Trauma in a family decontextualized over time can look like family traits, trauma decontextualized in a people over time can look like culture and it takes time to slow it down so you can begin to discern what's what." If we took time to unpack each child's story, maybe we would understand the "why" and "how" a little better. There might be stories of the child being a witness to violence, of abuse, of neglect, of intergenerational trauma. Of children internalising the patriarchal patterns of fury that are legitimised when directed at women at home. Of being insidiously trained by some dangerous discourses on social media that vilify parents, especially mothers. Children's behaviour always makes sense. On the same note, children's violence always makes sense, too. Every single time, and there are no exceptions. Connection over correction We might start the conversation with them by taking what narrative practitioner Caleb Wakhungu from Uganda calls the riverbank position. Metaphorically speaking, when there is violence at home, then children and their parents might end up stuck in a swirling river of shame. To gain clarity of thought or even get out of the damaging, repetitive patterns, they have to climb up to the solid ground of the riverbank. This would mean taking small steps to rebuild the connection. This could take the form of time spent away from blame talk and engaging them through their interests, inviting them out for coffee or a meal.

category. If liberty and equality are the fundamental rights of citizens, fraternity, for me, is the fundamental right of the nation. No court can manufacture mutual respect. No statute can create a sense of common belonging. No government programme can legislate trust. Yet it would be wrong to conclude that fraternity lies entirely beyond the reach of law and the government and the courts are helpless spectators. The Constitution and the criminal law contain a substantial architecture designed to protect social harmony. Article 14 guarantees equality before the law. Articles 15 and 25 protect citizens against discrimination and safeguard freedom of faith. Article 51A(e) imposes a duty to promote harmony and common brotherhood. Criminal law goes further. Sections 153A, 153B, 295A and 505 of the IPC, along with provisions protecting places of worship, were enacted to preserve civic peace and prevent communal hostility. These provisions may not create fraternity, but they exist to prevent its systematic destruction. The challenge, therefore, is not the absence of legal safeguards. It is their uneven enforcement. Courts cannot command affection, but they can act against hatred, intimidation and attacks on equal citizenship. The law cannot manufacture fraternity, but it can — and must — prevent its destruction. It is worth asking what 75 years of neglecting fraternity has produced. Consider what the government's own data tell us. For more than a decade, roughly 2 lakh Indians have been surrendering their citizenship every year, amounting to nearly 9 lakh in the last five years alone, according to information placed before Parliament. Many of those leaving are successful entrepreneurs and professionals. Their decisions reflect multiple factors, but the scale of the phenomenon raises a legitimate question: What role do social climate and civic confidence play in such choices? History suggests that prolonged social conflict leaves economic scars that persist long after the headlines disappear. India has already learned this lesson. Punjab was once the most prosperous state in the country, with the highest per-capita income as recently as the mid-1980s. The decade-long militancy and communal discord that followed devastated the investment climate. Punjab slipped from first place in per-capita income rankings and, between 2014-15 and 2022-23, it ranked 18th in economic growth among 21 major states. The damage was not merely economic; poisoned atmospheres take generations to clear. The irony is difficult to miss. We have spoken of India becoming the world's third-largest economy and a fully developed Viksit Bharat by 2047. Yet public institutions have often appeared insufficiently concerned about an atmosphere of anxiety and periodic lawlessness that seems to corrode such ambitions. Lynchings, targeted demolitions and the normalisation of communal hostility are not merely law-and-order failures. They are fraternity failures. When such acts go unpunished, they send a signal — not just to minorities, but to every entrepreneur, investor and family weighing its future. Polarisation may have delivered electoral dividends to those who have practised it. But a nation cannot continuously inflame its divisions for short-term political advantage and expect to contain its economic consequences. Fraternity is not a pious wish inscribed in a preamble and ceremonially quoted on national occasions. It is the social oxygen without which neither liberty nor equality can survive, and without which no economy, however ambitious its targets, can truly flourish. Ambedkar warned that without fraternity, liberty and equality would be no deeper than coats of paint. For three-quarters of a century, we barely noticed the paint peeling. We are beginning to see the cracks now.



Parents have to find ways to have conversations with them that open up possibilities rather than close them. There is no rushing this. It has taken them years to reach this point, and one fun evening might not change everything. It is possible that there is no way to have a conversation. I hear children very often talk about how they have "blocked off" their parents, like pesky spam. Then parents can practise the riverbank through their presence, words of appreciation, cooking their favourite food, and doing small things that express their love. They might not show it, but when children are hurting, they are clocking in every bit of care towards them. Accountability over blame So, am I saying that everything goes, and we should just throw our hands up in the air and say, "Children will be children" and hope one day they will grow out of it? Not at all. I have too much respect for children and believe that they are not using violence as a preferred way of being. Sometimes rage becomes the only language they think is available to them to express their anguish, frustration or even as a wall of protection. In my conversations with young people, we unpack the idea of "justified anger" or "justified violence." Often it shows up as, "My mother shouts so much that I had to hit her to shut her up." We might even discuss how violence is generally directed towards women in the house — the mothers, the sisters and the domestic workers. And the politics and the patriarchy of violence, and how we can get recruited into it. Then how do we hold them accountable without judgment or shaming? I turned to the collective wisdom of parents I have worked with to understand what has helped them. Invariably, parents talked about starting with an apology. As a father shared, "I had to say sorry to my son for years of rage that he had been witness to when I was struggling with my alcohol problem." This father also showed that accountability is not just words and gave up alcohol to heal his relationship with his son. A family committed to respectful language and to "not spreading shaming stories in the family grapevine" that had damaged relationships. A mother shared that she realised that, "I have been walking on eggshells and making excuses for my son's rage, and it became important for me to sit with him and name it as violence. It's only when we did that, we knew we had to do something about it." Another mother sat down with her child and made a list of what they called "above the line" (acceptable ways of expressing frustration) and "below the line" (unacceptable ways of expressing frustration) for all the family members, with a list of household chores that would have to be done as community service if anyone lapsed.

How teletherapy empowers patients with access and affordability



The advent of teletherapy has meant a compound metamorphosis for the paradigm of mental health. This trend has precipitated a discourse among mental health professionals and patients regarding the relative efficacy of teletherapy versus face-to-face psychotherapy. With the Indian government's Tele-MANAS scheme gaining increasing momentum and popularity, the delivery efficiency of teletherapy is being scrutinised even more than before. There is no doubt that there are a number of benefits that teletherapy brings, to enable access and reach more people than physically possible, advantages that seem particularly dear, after the pandemic. However, while acknowledging the reach, it is important to have a sense of the not-so ameliorative effects as well. Technology-assisted therapy has made it possible for therapy to be delivered remotely aka teletherapy. This means that one does not have to drive down, or make the journey to the therapist's clinic, but can access therapy from the convenience of their home. Teletherapy can reach those individuals from underserved areas, and has been efficacious in catering to those who have mobility issues. Teletherapy also helps those with hectic schedules who may not find the time to travel to therapy sites or people with a phobia of new places, or those with social anxiety.

At the heart of the issue is this: a therapeutic relationship is an intricate, intimate one. The one receiving therapy is in a space of emotional vulnerability, to be able to reap fruits from the sessions. This means that the encounter with the therapist can go very well, or go south. It may take a few tries, before finding the therapist with whom you fit in well with a seamless working relationship. If someone in Mumbai was to find the right therapist for themselves from Chennai, a lengthy commute or relocation is overcome with the ease teletherapy provides. The vulnerability in receiving therapy is sometimes compounded by an individual's apprehensions about being subject to shame or stigma. Although India has made strides in making mental health help more accessible and socially acceptable, there is still a long way to go in terms of getting rid of the stigma of consulting a doctor for mental health issues. Here, teletherapy allows the convenience of an added layer of anonymity, alleviating concerns about being seen accessing mental health services.

There are definitely advantages. For instance, Karan, a 30-year-old doctor from Kerala, struggled with the stress of being in the frontline during the pandemic. He struggled with a diagnosis of depression, anxiety and work burn-out. He was able to make full and complete use of the Indian government's Tele-Manas online counselling scheme from the comfort of his home, he says. Another 35-year-old home-maker from Maharashtra who lost her 7-year daughter to

COVID-19 was able to cope with the loss of her child with the help of this helpline, which came at the right time, providing her with a solution when she found it difficult to meet too many people. The traditional paradigm, the stalwart of mental health treatment for several decades now, has been face-to-face psychotherapy. This also calls for a conventional, stereotypical therapist couch, with the person getting help sitting or lying, speaking about what troubles them most. The benefits are many. To begin with, being face to face with your therapist enhances access and receipt of your therapist's personable, empathic energy output. Similarly, the therapist can read the patient's non-verbal cues such as body language, gestures, and so on which deeply complement the patient's verbal accounts of their feelings and thoughts about things. The therapist gets to hear the unspoken, and can gain a holistic understanding of the patient's problems. The success of a fruitful therapy relies heavily on a well-founded therapeutic relationship. This comes from trust and a smooth rapport. These are positively fostered in face-to-face interactions.

A therapeutic session is tailor-made to an individual's needs. Although the principles of therapy can be used as a generic template for all patients, no two patients present with the same needs and therapy is always individualised. This means that the sessions must be made more personalised, interactive, or delivered in specific ways to support the patient receiving this. An individual struggling with PTSD from being displaced from their homeland due to war will present with significantly different needs to another individual struggling with PTSD from being the victim of long-term domestic violence. Although both present with the same diagnosis, the approach, the way the communication and conversations are structured, will be different. It is more likely this happens with face-to-face therapy.

If you are considering teletherapy, some of the questions you may want to consider are: Do you prefer to have an in-person connection tinged with deep rapport? Would you be comfortable with limited availability of sessions and sometimes changes to appointments based on weather or transport issues? Do you find yourself financially stable to be able to pay recurrent, high rates? If the answer to all this is a yes, then you would benefit the most from face-to-face psychotherapy. Are you someone who loves the convenience of accessing things from the comfort of your home? Do you enjoy flexibility in contrast to regimented schedules? Do you live in a rural area, yet would like to receive therapy from a professional based in a neighbouring city? Do you find yourself struggling with paying the usually high prices for in person therapy sessions? If the answer to all this is a yes, then you would benefit from teletherapy. The Indian government launched the brilliant initiative, the Tele-MANAS scheme in 2020. MANAS stands for Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States. This initiative is aimed at expanding the reach of teletherapy to millions of Indians across the country. The effectiveness and success of this scheme have been applauded by many experts, apart from patients who have benefitted from the online counselling/therapy it offers. While keeping these factors in mind, it is possible to evaluate if teletherapy would indeed work for you. The goal, however is to access mental health care, either in person or online, and not let distance or affordability come in the way of getting such care.

What are the safe levels of iodine for pregnant women and general health?



Hyderabad: What are the safe iodine intake levels for an average individual or pregnant woman? Does consuming iodized salt cause thyroid problems, especially among women? With the market getting flooded with pink salt, are they more beneficial for pregnant women?

Noted developmental pediatrician from Hyderabad Dr Sivaranjini Santosh on Friday said that an appropriate amount of iodine is extremely important for the normal functioning of the human body. "Anything in excess is bad for the

body. Consuming 6 to 10 times more than the recommended intake of iodine, taking separate iodine supplements, and eating too much salt will definitely create health problems. However, an appropriate amount of iodine is absolutely essential for everybody, especially pregnant women," Dr Sivaranjini Santosh said. The daily requirement of iodine in the diet varies from 90 micrograms per day to 200 micrograms per day based on age and pregnancy status. Iodine is extremely important for the normal functioning of the thyroid gland. Low thyroid hormone levels (hypothyroidism) cause serious health problems. Iodine is also abundant in certain food products such as fish, dairy, and eggs, prunes, potatoes etc. Taking an appropriate amount of salt is also important for the normal functioning of the thyroid glands, the noted pediatrician added.

"Thyroid hormones are very important for the growth of the fetus in terms of brain development, as well as physical growth. Only if the iodine intake is 6 to 10 times the recommended intake, then it may cause problems with thyroid functioning. Now, most iodized salts have 15 micrograms of iodine per gram of salt. The daily maximum recommended salt intake is 2.3 grams per day for an adult. So, even if we consume double the recommended intake, we will still be getting only 75 micrograms of iodine from the iodized salt," Dr Sivaranjini said. The pediatrician made it clear that trace amounts of minerals, which are claimed to be present in pink salt, do not add great value to the average person's diet. "These salts are sold at a price 3 to 5 times the price of the normal iodized salts. Make an informed choice based on this information," she said.

Why we have FOMO for events that are not even fun

New York: Imagine you've planned the trip of a lifetime for your animal-loving family: a cruise to Antarctica with the unique opportunity to view penguins, whales and other rare wildlife. Your adventure-loving kids can kayak through fjords, plunge into icy water and camp under the Antarctic sky. But rather than being ecstatic, as you anticipated, your kids whine about skipping an after-school scout meeting at a neighbour's house. Missing this ordinary weekly event triggers such intense FOMO — "fear of missing out" — for them that they don't want to go on your amazing expedition. If this kind of debacle sounds familiar to you — or at least if you find it perplexing — you're not alone. Over the years, researchers learned what really drives intense feelings of FOMO — which explains why a run-of-the-mill meeting might feel more crucial than an over-the-top vacation. People use the term FOMO in many different ways. In the research, the social scientists focused on a very specific type of FOMO: the kind that occurs when people miss out on events that involve valued social connections. With this kind of FOMO, they found that the pain of missing out is not related to missing the actual event or opportunity — although that could be there as well. The FOMO, they studied happens when people miss the chance to bond with friends, co-workers or teammates they care about. So, the critical part of FOMO is missing out on interactions with people you value. FOMO about a group dinner at a restaur-

ant isn't really about the food and great lighting. Nor is FOMO about a concert just about the band's performance. Instead, it's about the lost opportunity to connect and make memories with people who are important to you.

Why is this upsetting?

Imagine the scenario where all your best friends go out to dinner without you. They bond and make lasting memories with each other — and you're not there for any of it. If they get closer to each other, where does that leave you? What happens to your social relationships and your sense of belonging? Do you become a less important friend? Less worthy of future invites? Or even kicked out of the group altogether? The anxiety of FOMO can begin to spiral. People with what psychologists call an anxious attachment style chronically fear rejection and isolation from others. Because FOMO involves anxiety about future social belonging, it may not come as a surprise that people who are naturally more anxious about their friendships tend to get more intense FOMO. When people were asked to scroll social media until they encountered something social they missed, we found that the more anxiously attached a participant was, the more intense FOMO they experienced. Getting FOMO for an amazing event you can't attend makes sense. But if FOMO is less about the event itself and more about the social bonding, what happens when you miss something that's not really fun at all?

A thief in the crowd, a match on screen: How Delhi Police is using face-tech to fight crime



Three days later, the district police fed a screengrab of the robber from the camera's footage into their Facial Recognition System (FRS) and got a hit. The man was Mohammad Ali; he had been involved in two similar robbery cases. While unique, facial recognition technology isn't a new phenomenon

On March 17, Ajmal Bhai Ganesh (49) was heading home after collecting Rs 80 lakh in cash from a firm. He's an Angadia trader — an informal sector courier boy of sorts for a traditional form of banking system. Unbeknownst to him, he was being followed. Suddenly, near North Delhi's Fateh Puri, a masked man pointed a gun at him. Petrified, Ganesh handed over the cash.

Three days later, the district police fed a screengrab of the robber from the camera's footage into their Facial Recognition System (FRS) and got a hit. The man was Mohammad Ali; he had been involved in two similar robbery cases. While unique, facial recognition technology isn't a new phenomenon. The Delhi Police has been using the technology, an Israeli software, since 2018. Delhi hoodlook, Delhi Police, Delhi Police surveillance, AI-powered surveillance, facial recognition tech across Delhi, facial recognition tech, Delhi facial recognition tech, Delhi news, India news, Indian express, current affairs A Facial Recognition System van parked in Northwest district.

Since then, it has been acquired by two police districts — North and Northwest — for more localised scanning. Currently, FRS vans, armed with cameras and computers, are stationed in different parts of the two districts every day, scanning faces and alerting them of potential hits. In the Northwest district alone, the FRS has enabled the police to nab at least 200 criminals since April 2024. This February, police in the district solved two burglary cases using the software. On a warm spring afternoon, the Northwest district's FRS van, with the Delhi Police logo emblazoned on the sides, stands conspicuously in front of Deep Market in Ashok Vihar. "Jis din camera wali gaadi lagti hai uss din area mein crime down ho jaata hai (On days the van is stationed somewhere, the crime in the area goes down)," says Constable Mukesh Kaushik, one of the two policemen manning the van that day. The van has six CCTV cameras — four outside and two inside — along with two Automatic Number Plate Reader (ANPR) cameras which have been configured to scan faces instead of licence plates. Inside the van, the set-up is tight: A desk sits in the middle with two screens, and a couch is pushed towards the back. On the screens, feed from the CCTVs plays as the ANPR cameras scan people passing by. People appearing on-camera are projected with green squares around their faces. A small text above the square shows the software's estimates of the person's age and height. Age: 30-39, Height: 5-5.5 feet, it reads for one. The screen is split into two halves, with one half showing possible matches to suspects. "We have set the limit to 60% and above; anything with a match rate higher than 60% will

All of a sudden, a red square appears on the screen and the other half pops up with the picture and dossier number of a criminal from their database. "Oh, looks like we've caught someone," says Constable Kaushik. He walks over to the van's window, spots the man in question, and calls him over. As the man enters the van, Kaushik asks, "Have you ever committed a crime before?" He denies it. Kaushik then enters the dossier number provided by the system. "Is this you? Were you arrested in 2019 under the Excise Act?" Kaushik points at the mugshot on the screen, his voice has a harsh edge to it now. The man wipes his brow and says, "Yes, but the case was dropped in 2020... my boss got into trouble, I was only working in the bar." Kaushik asks for the man's Aadhaar card details and notes them down in a register. "Go to the police station with the court order and get your name removed from the dossier," he says. According to DCP (Northwest) Bhisam Singh, the software is sophisticated enough to recognise faces despite age or disguises. It can also recognise faces behind masks or beards. While the van has been in use in the Northwest district since April last year, the Delhi Police has been using FRS for security for at least six years. Following a High Court order, Automated Facial Recognition Software (AFRS) was acquired in March 2018 by the Delhi Police to identify lost and found children by matching photos. Since then, it has been used to scan crowds for possible suspects during high-profile events. The Indian Express earlier reported that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Ramliila Maidan rally in December 2019 was the first political rally where police used the software to screen the crowd. Come June, the Delhi Police hopes to expand the ambit of the FRS to all of Delhi.

The initiative, part of the 'Safe City' project, will see the installation of 10,000 high-resolution cameras across the Capital whose live feed will be beamed directly to a command centre at the Police Headquarters. Over time, the feeds will be integrated with CCTV footage from "legacy networks" such as the New Delhi Municipal Council, Residents' Welfare Associations, Market Welfare Associations, Railways, etc. "We will ask them to share their footage but there are storage concerns over replicating such vast amounts of footage," says B S Jaiswal, who was Joint Commissioner (Tech and PI). He has recently been transferred to his next assignment as Joint CP (Central Range). Apart from fixed cameras, Prakhari Vans with mobile cameras scan crowds and crime-prone areas. Currently, 88 Prakhari Vans — each equipped with four CCTVs — are in use across the city, said Jaiswal. The city-wide project, however, will not be using the Israeli software. Instead, the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, an R&D organisation of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, has undertaken the massive project. It is in charge of not only training AI models for more accurate results on facial recognition but will also be responsible for setting up the Integrated Command, Control, Communication & Computer Centre — C4I — where integrated video feeds will be beamed. C4I will also have a data centre, that will store collected video feeds, and two Emergency Operation Centres which will flag and deal with crimes taking place in real-time. For this to be possible, district headquarters and police stations will be equipped with command centres where they can view live CCTV footage of their jurisdictions. All video analytics (VA), including facial recognition and ANPR, however, will be managed centrally at the C4I data centre. "The centre will

also be enabled to play footage from 1,000 cameras simultaneously, which will include those from legacy networks," said Jaiswal. Alongside this, the Picture Intelligence Unit (PIU) will keep track of VA data — it will not store actual video or incident data but will maintain audit logs to help in investigations. The PIU will be given access to various government databases such as passport, CCTNS (Crime & Criminal Tracking Network & Systems), prisons, AMBIS (Automated Multi-Modal Biometric Identification System), ZIPNET, criminal dossier, and other sources. It will then collect and categorise photos from police sources, such as newspapers, raid images, and photos sent by the public, tagging them with features like gender, age, scars, and tattoos, creating a repository for the FRS. However, there are significant challenges to be surmounted before the lofty heights of such technology can be reached. "Facial recognition has worked 100% of the time when we have tried them in constrained environments," says Jaiswal. "Take DigiYatra for instance. There is good illumination, the angle of the person's face is straight, the camera is fixed and at a certain height and distance... it's easier for the system to recognise and pinpoint the identity of the person." However, CCTVs face a multitude of issues — the illumination of the area, angle of the camera's placement, the subject's distance from the camera, weather conditions, motion blur in the footage because of wind shaking the camera, and the camera's quality — making it a challenge to get high confirmation rates with FRS. Similarly, changes in the subject — disguises, aging, a beard or a lack of one, masks and sunglasses — can also bring false negatives in the FRS results. Nonetheless, Jaiswal assures the bugs will be ironed out before the rollout in June. However the real challenge, he says, is training machines to read data in real-time. According to the project proposal, ideally, the machine should take less than five seconds to pinpoint matches from an input given. "Foundation models of FRS are mammoth systems trained on mammoth datasets... these become the backbone of the models that are used for security apparatus," says Jaiswal.

He also explains how models exported from other countries are usually trained in recognising faces from those countries, and often get confused or flag high false rejection or false acceptance rates when inputs are from other demographics. "A model used in India needs to be trained specifically on demographics," he says... we can't scrape pictorial data from the internet anymore because of privacy concerns. There used to be publicly available datasets that one could use before but those have been withdrawn because of privacy issues," he adds. But even training an FRS model with tailor-made datasets presents problems. "If we put all the pictures available to us and feed it to the system, it already knows what to look out for... it's like training a student for an exam with a set of questions that he knows will be the only one asked," Jaiswal says, explaining that fresh inputs, outside the datasets, would again lead to higher rates of false acceptances or rejections. The sweet spot, the officer says, would be a range between false acceptance and rejection rates — an equal error rate. Simply put, an Equal Error Rate (EER) is the point where a biometric system makes mistakes at an equal rate, meaning false acceptance and false rejection rates occur equally. A lower EER indicates a more accurate and efficient biometric system, especially in facial recognition technology. Additionally, what can help improve the EER is enhancing AI and machine learning capabilities. For this, the Delhi Police has plans as well. For its AI-based video intelligence platform, the police plan on using machine learning for systems to estimate the number of people in a crowd in dense environments such as rallies and festivals, identify jaywalkers, identify people who collapse suddenly, and, most interestingly, identify a person in distress.

"Over time, we can develop the capability of the system in sending alerts to the local police if a person is waving their hands for help or if they seem to be in trouble... machines learn like how beat officers learn — over time, beat officers learn on the job about spotting anomalous situations. It'll be the same with machine learning..." says Jaiswal. While technological hurdles remain, Apar Gupta, co-founder of the Internet Freedom Foundation, argues that the more urgent concerns are legal and ethical. "India currently lacks a comprehensive legal framework governing use of facial recognition," says Gupta.

At a minimum, we need a robust, bespoke law that addresses its deployment. This includes a data protection law recognising facial data as sensitive personal information, with strict rules on how it's collected, stored, and used. It also requires an electronic surveillance law dedicated to regulating technologies like FRT, setting out clear limits and independent oversight for law-enforcement agencies," he says. Experts have warned that the increasing integration of such technology across platforms may come at a cost. "Facial recognition technology is a quantum leap in the state's ability to identify and monitor individuals. Unlike conventional CCTV, which captures footage but still preserves a degree of anonymity, FRT can instantly put a name to every face in a crowd, eliminating the practical obscurity we once had in public," says Apar Gupta, co-founder of Internet Freedom Foundation, a digital rights organisation.

"This technology creates a biometric map of one's face — a unique identifier as precise as a fingerprint — and links it to databases in real-time. Modern FRT systems can be integrated with analytics platforms that draw on multiple databases — social media, call detail records, vehicle registrations, and more — building an instant, 360-degree view of a person's life. That transforms ordinary cameras into powerful tracking tools, with a chilling effect on civil liberties," Gupta adds. He says integrated command centres being developed across India represent a step toward predictive policing: "Some vendors even propose 'emotion analysis', claiming to detect intent or agitation from facial expressions — an area of research widely questioned for its scientific reliability."

Gupta adds that such systems are notorious for reflecting and amplifying existing biases in law-enforcement data. "If the underlying data is skewed — disproportionately targeting certain neighbourhoods or communities — the algorithm's 'predictions' will be equally skewed. This can result in further over-policing of marginalised groups, creating a feedback loop where these communities are constantly singled out for scrutiny."

False matches, too, can have devastating consequences, he says. "If the police treat a poor match as a positive identification, an innocent person can be pulled into an investigation or even detained. At one point, the Delhi Police considered an 80% match as 'positive', meaning a one-in-five chance of error was deemed acceptable. Even lower matches might not be discarded entirely, putting people who only vaguely resemble suspects on watchlists." He cites the Northeast Delhi riots as an example of where the deployment of facial recognition created real danger. "A false match can lead to wrongful arrests, criminal charges, and denial of bail. Socially, once someone is mistakenly labeled a 'criminal' or 'rioter', their reputation may suffer permanent damage."

Tracing the naval prowess of King Rajendra Chola from Eelamandalam to Kadaram



Naval supremacy drove the Chola empire to the height of glory. Under the dynamic leadership of Rajendra Chola I, who ascended the throne in 1012 CE, the Chola navy reached the zenith of its power. With nearly the entire southern peninsula of India under their dominion, the Cholas commanded an unobstructed access to the seas, which they turned into a theatre of unprecedented political expansion. Rajendra's reign marked the most assertive phase of Chola overseas ambition. The naval campaigns launched during this period led to the annexation of Sri Lanka and an audacious expedition across the Bay of Bengal to the distant shores of the Malay Peninsula. The defeat of Malay Peninsula earned Rajendra the title Kadaram Kondan (the Conqueror of Kadaram).

Historians pointed to the existence of a well-organised fleet of ships and boats of various grades in Chola's navy, serving both commercial and military purposes. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, in his book *The Cholas*, offered a detailed account of Rajendra's naval campaigns, particularly those targeting Eelamandalam (Sri Lanka) and Kadaram, the strategic stronghold in the Kingdom of Srivijaya. In 1017 CE, Rajendra launched a decisive campaign against Sri Lanka. This was the fifth year of his reign, and it marked the culmination of the efforts initiated by his father, Raja Raja Chola I. According to inscriptions and the Ceylonese chronicle *Mahavamsa*, the Chola conquest coincided with the thirty-sixth regnal year of the Sinhalese ruler Mahinda V, also dated to 1017 CE. Sastri noted that the campaign was timed with precision, with political instability in the island kingdom factored in.

The Chola involvement in Sri Lanka stretched back to the reign of Parantaka Chola I, who ruled from 907 to 955 CE. However, it was Raja Raja who annexed the northern parts of the island. Though some territories remained under local Sinhalese control, the Chola grip steadily tightened. Rajendra's offensive went further than that of his father. His forces captured Mahinda V and seized the royal regalia, including the crown. His control over the island was comprehensive enough to convert it into a full-fledged Chola province, said Sastri. Inscriptions bearing the title, *tirumanni valara*, attributed to Rajendra, were found near Polonnaruwa in Sri Lanka. Temples built in the Tamil Chola architectural style, dedicated to deities such as Shiva and Vishnu, further underscored Chola influence, the historian said. Fresh wave of unrest

Despite these gains, resistance simmered beneath the surface. Around 1029 CE, 12 years after the invasion, a fresh wave of unrest erupted. Kassapa, son of Mahinda V, who had been raised in secrecy, led a successful rebellion. After six months of conflict, he regained control and ruled as Vikkamabahu I, re-establishing Sinhalese sovereignty. Rajendra's imperial vision did not stop with Sri Lanka. In 1025 CE, soon after his campaign to the Ganges, he turned his gaze eastward towards the thriving maritime Kingdom of Srivijaya. This Southeast Asian empire controlled vital sea lanes connecting India to China and ruled over territories that included the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, and Java. Initially, relations between the Cholas and Srivijaya were cordial. Raja Raja Chola had granted land in Nagapattinam to Mara Vijayottunggavarman of the Shailendra dynasty for the construction of the Chudamani Vihara. Diplomatic missions moved regularly between the two kingdoms and China. Srivijaya sent envoys in 1003 and 1008 CE, while the Cholas reciprocated the gesture in 1015, 1033, and 1077 CE, noted Sastri.

The exact reason for the conflict remains unclear. Inscriptions on the Tiruvallangadu copper plates merely mentioned the conquest of Kadaram, while a Tamil prasasti (an inscription in praise of a ruler) provides some more details. However, several scholars offered different theories. One view attributes the conflict to interference by Srivijaya in Chola maritime trade, while another sees it as part of Rajendra's broader ambition to achieve maritime supremacy and secure overseas prestige. Decades of commercial and diplomatic engagement with Southeast Asia had equipped the Cholas with familiarity in navigating these waters. Rajendra's Southeast Asia campaign was swift and decisive. Chola ships crossed the Bay of Bengal and struck at the heart of Srivijayan power. Kadaram was captured and Sangrama Vijayottunggavarman, successor to Mara Vijayottunggavarman, was taken prisoner. While the campaign projected Chola might across the seas, there was no immediate attempt to establish direct rule over the conquered territories. According to Sastri, local rulers were reinstated, likely after they were made to pay tribute and acknowledge the Chola emperor's superiority. Kadaram reconquered. However, this control was not permanent. Rajendra's successor, Virarajendra I, claimed to have reconquered Kadaram and restored its ruler, indicating that earlier gains were only temporary. A Tamil inscription from Sumatra, dated to 1088 CE, provides further evidence of continued Chola activity in the region, at least in terms of commerce, noted Sastri. Beyond military conquests, these expeditions highlighted the Chola empire's broader diplomatic reach. Inscriptions in the Karandai copper plates indicated that the King of Kambhoja (the Kingdom of Angkor ruled by Suryavarman I) had solicited the friendship of Rajendra by sending him a victorious war-chariot with which he had defeated hostile armies. Rajendra's naval expeditions marked a bold chapter in history. They extended both political and cultural reach of the Chola empire beyond the Indian subcontinent. Though not all territorial gains endured for long, these campaigns had left a legacy on cross-cultural engagement.

Lost song of the Sundarbans' fisherfolk

In the Sundarbans, which hosts the world's largest mangrove forest, monsoon used to be different. Not the weather itself so much as the activities connected to it. Even in the first decade of the century, fisherman Swapan Kumar Mandal used to have his evenings packed with rehearsals. He used to manage Bishnupriya Opera, a jatra pala (folk theatre) troupe that specialised in Bonbibir Pala, a folk theatre form based on the legend of Bonbibi, the Sundarbans' guardian deity who protects fishers and honey gatherers from tiger attacks. This year, however, among the members of the troupe, lead singers Shreemonto Sheet and Khokon Sana are in Andhra Pradesh, working as agricultural labourers. Once the fishing season begins, they are engaged in marine fishing. Some of the other musicians and actors will also soon travel to Kerala to work in the fishing trawlers.

"Dwindling income from fishing in West Bengal has left the state's fishers in dire straits. Folk music and drama troupes are disintegrating due to migrations. Besides, television and smartphones are taking away the space for traditional outdoor entertainment," says Mandal, in his 50s. A farmer-cum-carpenter, he lives in Sonaga village, Gosaba, the largest island in the Indian part of the Sundarbans deltaic landscape.

The Sundarbans, West Bengal's prime fishing hub, made up of mangrove forests, islands and criss-crossing rivers, creeks and channels, is home to about 250 fish species. It serves as the biggest supplier of fish to the capital city of Kolkata, which has a population of six million, and where fish is an essential part of the daily diet. Yet, small and marginal fishers of Sundarbans are struggling to survive. With reduction in fish hauls, income is dwindling. This year, the mood is additionally sombre, with the hilsa, the golden crop of Bengal's waters, largely eluding the nets.

"Only about 10% of the boats got hilsa in mid-to-end-June. There was absolutely nothing for about a month. At the end of July, roughly 10-15% boats had some hilsa hauls. The rest returned with other fish," says Narayan Das, the South 24-Parganas district unit president of Dakshinbanga Matsyajibi Forum (DMF), an organisation of small and marginal fishers. A vendor with the Bengali's favourite fish, hilsa. Das cites decreasing fish haul to be the impact of trawling, increasing pollution, and rising salinity in the rivers, among other reasons.

He says that laws prohibit bottom trawling — wherein fishing nets go up to the floor of the sea — as it destroys the seabed ecosystem. Besides, trawling is only allowed 12 nautical miles away from the coast, as the coastal waters are reserved for traditional fishers. However, there is no mechanism to monitor or implement these regulations and, therefore, there are rampant violations. "We have seen trawlers engaging in bottom trawling within the prohibited zone of 12 nautical miles. As a result, the seabed ecosystem is damaged and inland fishing has been badly hurt," says Das. Migration of fisherfolk from the Sundarbans began on a large scale after Cyclone Aila, in 2009, devastated the region, especially by increasing soil salinity in thousands of acres of farmland and filling freshwater ponds with saline water. While land fertility has recovered over time, decreasing fish haul has kept up the out-migration momentum. Take the case of Krishna Das, a 45-year-old resident of Shibpur Paschim village in Kaddwip block. Starting this month, Krishna and his two brothers, Chaitanya and Prabir, will be working in Kerala for the next 10 months, with occasional visits back home. Since the last four years, they have been spending time in their Sundarbans home — where their



parents, wives and children live — only in the months of June and July, when Kerala implements the annual trawling ban. "By mid-August, more than 200 men from our village will be in Kerala," says Krishna.

There is another section of migrant workers who fish in the Sundarbans till September, but move to Kerala during the drier months (October-March/April), the lean period for fishing in West Bengal. In Kerala, migrant workers who work on larger vessels that go on fishing trips lasting one or more weeks usually live on the boat itself when it's docked at shore. Some also live in cheap lodging facilities, sharing small rooms among three to four persons. A 2023 working paper that focused on migration of traditional fishers from Sundarbans to the harbours of Ponnani and Beypore in Kerala — a migration corridor has developed over the past couple of decades — says that continuous in-migration of workers from other states has been a major factor that seems to have helped boat owners in Kerala increase their fleet size.

However, the migrant workers have to deal with "informal work arrangements, non-standard forms of wage payment, lack of proper amenities like housing and sanitation, and a near absence of state initiatives to protect their rights and entitlements", says the paper, co-authored by Roshan Menon, Tara Nair and Atanu Ghosh. A 2024 Jadavpur University research paper, titled 'Ma Bonbibi: A Goddess in the Folk Culture of Sundarbans Region in India & Bangladesh', says that migration from Sundarbans to other parts of India "is not only affecting the population of the region, but also has a significant impact on local perception and attachment to the deltaic landscape". Traditional folk art forms are mostly kept alive by amateurs, who do other work to earn a living. In the Sundarbans, the folk singers, dancers and theatre actors usually depend on fishing, farming or honey gathering. Puranjan Mandal, a Gosaba resident who works with the Kolkata-based Banglanatak Dot Com, a social enterprise to conserve intangible cultural heritage, says that migration is one of the key reasons behind the disintegration of folk art groups in the region. "A decade ago, there were about 20 Bonbibir Pala teams in our locality. Now, there are only five," he says. The organisation has been working towards documentation and promotion of the art form, including using it for awareness campaigns on human trafficking. Migration-prone areas are also trafficking-prone, say experts. Sanjoy Ganguly helms the theatre group Jana Sanskriti, which has been working in the Sundarbans region for over two decades. Their activities among the adolescents in Patharpratima block of Sundarbans mostly get female participants today. "Teen boys are migrating for work.

Breast crawl as a strategy to ensure more newborns breastfeed within an hour after birth



breast while they are skin-to-skin with their mothers. This can take 30 to 60 minutes when uninterrupted. In most cases of normal delivery and in some C-sections, when a baby is on their mother's chest, the breast odour will encourage the baby to move towards the nipple, and the baby will latch for feeding. This practice of breast crawl and skin-to-skin is recommended and promoted by the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI), supported by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF, as well as the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI), a network of organisations and individuals promoting breastfeeding. However, breast crawl is not a part of standard medical or health curriculum, an FAQ prepared by BHFI Maharashtra and UNICEF notes. This World Breastfeeding Week, which is held every year from August 1 to August 7, and is supported by the WHO, let us understand the importance of practices that can initiate breastfeeding within the golden hour.

Studies show breast crawl and uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact are free and cost-effective interventions to increase the exclusive breastfeeding rate and improve breastfeeding success rates. It regulates a newborn's body temperature, leads to faster and effective achievement of feeding skills, enables the baby to get colostrum as the first feed (colostrum has a high concentration of antibodies), and colonises the baby with safe germs from the mother.

It also reduces anxiety among mothers, reduces pain and improves behavioural responses from women during episiotomy suturing. India has some of the lowest rates of feeding within an hour of birth: only 41.8% babies are breastfed within an hour of their birth as per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5. India ranked 46 out of 76 countries on the Global Breastfeeding Scorecard in 2018. I learnt of newborn breast crawl from a Lamaze childbirth education workshop and from UNICEF Maharashtra's documentary film on the practice. "The moment you put the baby on the breast without any interventions, you are pushing the baby towards that goal of initiation (of breastfeeding) within one hour, which is natural," said Prashant Gangal, paediatrician and training coordinator of the mother support group, BPNI Maharashtra.

Earlier this year, I was preparing to give birth. During an antenatal visit to the gynaecologist, my partner and I requested two things: that our newborn do the breast crawl, and we initiate breastfeeding within the "golden hour" or the first hour of birth (some recommend breastfeeding within 30 minutes). While skin-to-skin contact with the mother and initiating feeding within the first hour is standard practice in most places, including where I delivered—a maternity home in Chetpet, Chennai—breast crawl isn't common. Most parents or parents-to-be are unfamiliar with it.

What is breast crawl?

A newborn will slowly crawl, unassisted, toward the

Can the ICJ ruling force rich nations to pay for historical emissions?

On July 23, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued a landmark advisory opinion reaffirming states' legal obligations to mitigate climate change. The court emphasised that countries are required to reduce their greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions and support vulnerable nations. The ruling has sparked debates over sovereignty, enforcement, and global equity. Can the ICJ ruling force rich nations to pay for historical emissions? Ted Nordhaus and Anand Grover discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Kunal Shankar. Edited excerpts:

What are your thoughts on the ICJ's ruling?

Ted Nordhaus: There are a set of problems here. If you're saying international law could eventually impose obligations or criminal proceedings against nations responsible for emissions and resulting climate impacts... sure, in theory. But for that to materialise, we would need clear impacts — driven not just by climate variability but by climate change. You would have to detect trends in underlying physical phenomena and attribute those specifically to climate change. But with global warming around 1-1.5°C, we don't yet have strong anthropogenic signals in most events. Yes, the planet has warmed, but it is amplifying existing phenomena, not creating entirely new ones. Then there is the question of consequences — how many people are in harm's way? Populations are moving into coastal zones for economic opportunity, not away from them. All this makes adjudicating these cases difficult. I'm sceptical that this will result in compelling or actionable international legal findings. Anand Grover: The ICJ opinion is a legal statement, not an enforceable judgment. It doesn't allow states or individuals to easily show causality between a state's inaction and specific harm. That linkage is hard to prove. Say you want to show that a state failed to act and that caused a temperature rise of 1.5°C — how do you prove that link? And as Ted mentioned, these events would likely have occurred regardless, though climate change may exacerbate them. Also, the structural problems in the international legal system remain. The U.S., a major emitter, backed out of the Paris Agreement and continues to subsidise fossil fuels. If you can't hold such states accountable, how will you hold anyone else? Even if the ICJ issued an enforceable order — unlikely — the UN Security Council could block enforcement. As we have seen in other cases such as Gaza, enforcement is political. That said, there is a positive: the ruling provides legal grounding for domestic courts. Countries that have ratified and incorporated treaties can now use this to hold their own governments accountable. That is useful, particularly for vulnerable island nations. But attributing harm to specific countries remains difficult.

Anand, the court reaffirmed the 1.5°C threshold from the Paris Agreement, but we are likely to cross that soon. Should the court have gone further in addressing that?

Anand Grover: I don't think so. The court can't invent scientific facts. It must rely on established findings from the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) or other expert bodies. It can only say that there is a duty to reduce emissions to stay below 1.5°C, based on those findings. But it cannot prescribe emission limits or action plans. That is not its mandate. Also, as we know, targets have never really been met. The U.S. has withdrawn (from the Paris Agreement); others aren't cooperating. Ted, U.S. President Donald Trump has announced a rollback of Obama-era regulations meant to curb carbon emissions that were undermined by the Endangerment Finding. How do you see the ICJ's references to historical responsibility in this context? Ted Nordhaus: This all comes back to sovereignty. No sovereign nation will dismantle its energy system because a court tells them to — not the U.S., not India, not China. That is the reality. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 'endangerment finding' never really had teeth. The Biden administration tried to use it to phase out combustion engines by 2032, but it became a political liability. There is this idea that international courts or legal mechanisms will force painful transitions onto reluctant countries. That is just not going to happen. The ICJ ruling doesn't change that. The politics aren't there. You won't get international legal action to translate into significant domestic shifts in major economies.

Would the Loss and Damage Fund may be more effective than the ICJ ruling?

Ted Nordhaus: That is a false choice. Neither the ICJ ruling nor the fund is likely to push wealthy nations to provide substantial compensation. History shows they have



not been serious about it. What little has come through is mostly rebranded development aid. If developing nations are waiting for climate reparations to finance development, they will be waiting a long time. Worse, the idea of reparations and legal redress has kept many of these countries tethered to frameworks that often restrict their access to energy. That is a poor trade-off. These mechanisms were created by Western environmentalists. Trying to co-opt them to advance equity has failed. Developing countries should focus on their own development using whatever resources they can muster.

Anand Grover: I agree in part. Many international conventions were created to hold developing countries accountable. They were not applied equally to the West. For instance, human rights standards were used against countries in the Global South, but the West ignores them at home — take U.S. immigration policy, for example. Now, the West is in economic decline. Mr. Trump wants manufacturing back in the U.S. because wages are high and companies moved to China. To do that, he is relaxing environmental regulations. Yet he won't be held accountable. If the U.S. can ignore global norms, how can we expect compliance from others? Still, I believe domestic courts can use the ICJ ruling effectively. Environmental groups can argue that governments failed to act. That is more feasible locally. But even this is getting harder. Courts in India, like in the U.S., are increasingly weak and politicised. Ten years ago, we couldn't imagine the Indian Supreme Court functioning as it does now. Just as in the U.S., we would not have expected the Supreme Court to undo affirmative action 10 years ago.

Would you agree with Ted that developing nations should not rely on reparations?

Anand Grover: Yes, we shouldn't. But that doesn't mean we abdicate responsibility. India's emissions impact Indians. Look at Delhi's air — every winter the city becomes unlivable. We must reduce emissions for our own sake. Technology can help, and if we develop it, we can even lead globally. But governments are beholden to corporate interests. During COVID-19, pharmaceutical companies dictated policy. The same is happening with energy. They resist upgrades because it cuts into profits. So we must act on our own, not wait for compensation. Ted, your advocacy of economodernism hinges on technological solutions. But if these technologies don't reach developing countries, won't that hinder decarbonisation? Ted Nordhaus: The idea that the West develops tech and hands it off is outdated. China now leads in clean tech and exports to both the West and developing countries. India may follow. Technology flows aren't unidirectional any more. The 1990s framework of common but differentiated responsibilities and tech transfer is no longer valid. Yet the ICJ ruling still operates on that model. It doesn't reflect today's reality where clean tech flows in many directions. If we were crafting a framework today, we wouldn't do it the way the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) did in 1990.

Ted, do you see any positives in this ruling?

Ted Nordhaus: Honestly, no. It feels like a zombie ruling — left over from a framework that has lost relevance. With the collapse of the post-Cold War order, this is just another effort to keep old institutions looking relevant. Anand Grover: It still has value domestically. Activists and lawyers can use it to push their governments to act. But internationally, prospects are bleak.

The U.K.'s Shadow Energy Secretary claims that the ruling will trigger a wave of litigation against developed nations. Do you agree?

Anand Grover: No, that is alarmist. The ruling is vague on obligations and proof standards. Internationally, it won't result in litigation. Domestically, it can be used to argue that governments have failed to act. That is where the real potential lies.

What is the current political situation in South Korea? | Explained



The story so far: On April 4, South Korea’s constitutional court upheld the impeachment of former President Yoon Suk Yeol. The Court unanimously (8-0) agreed in favour of the impeachment. Mr. Yoon is the second president to be removed from office in the last eight years. According to the constitution, South Korea will have to elect a new President within 60 days.

On December 3, 2024, President Yoon announced an emergency and declared martial law to protect South Korea from “anti-state forces” and to eliminate “despicable pro-North Koreans.” This was the 17th martial law in the history of independent South Korea. Six hours later, the National Assembly convened and 190 members voted in favour of lifting the martial law under Article 77. On December 14, 2024, in its second motion, the Assembly succeeded in voting President Yoon out of office with 204 votes in favour. Of the 300 seats in the National Assembly, the Democratic Party of Korea (DPK) holds 170, while the People’s Power Party (PPP), to which Mr. Yoon belongs, has 108 seats.

What happened after impeachment?

The declaration of martial law and the impeachment motion ignited public protests across South Korea. It polarised society; thousands protested against the impeachment, supporting Mr. Yoon, while 2,00,000 people gathered outside the parliament, supporting his removal. On January 17, the Corruption Investigation Office requested an arrest warrant against Mr. Yoon, which was approved, leading to Yoon supporters attacking the courthouse. The 11th and final hearing on the martial decree took place on February 25. In his last hearing, he stated that his intention was only to warn the public of anti-state forces.

What does the verdict say?

The constitutional court upheld the impeachment of Mr. Yoon and expressed disillusionment with his reasoning. It held that Mr. Yoon did not follow the constitutional mandate, rules, and procedure. While Mr. Yoon argued that he imposed martial law due to the presence of anti-state forces, the verdict contradicted the same and stated that he declared martial law to overcome the National Assembly, which composed mostly of the opposition. The verdict ruled that his actions threatened the military’s political neutrality and placed the soldiers serving the nation in direct confrontation with its people. Furthermore, the verdict argued that the political and economic cost of impeachment is more acceptable than the negative repercussions of a violated constitutional and democratic process. Mr. Yoon’s claims of alleged election fraud were also dismissed. Based on all the above, the court upheld the removal of Mr. Yoon and said he “abandoned his duty to uphold the Constitution and gravely betrayed the trust of the sovereign citizens of Korea.” Mr. Yoon will now face a series of criminal charges that he was shielded from during his tenure.

What is next for South Korea?

The Presidential elections will be held on June 3. As crowds of supporters and protestors clear off the streets, the interim heads and security forces are on high alert to maintain peace and order. The PPP is now in disarray, with Mr. Yoon being seen as a wronged leader by many of his supporters. Lee Jae-Myung of the DPK is the most favoured contender for the elections. He had led his party to victory in last year’s parliamentary elections. South Korea also faces an external challenge with the U.S. imposing 25% “reciprocal tariffs”. Thus, the next President will have to address both political and economic challenges. Fery Francis is a researcher at Global Politics Area Studies on China, East Asia and the Pacific at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru

Are Sustainability development rankings relevant to universities in India?



In the last few years, sustainability has emerged as a critical priority for mankind, all over the world. Global ranking agencies like the Times Higher Education (THE) and the QS have been ranking World Universities for Sustainability. In the last two years, the number of Indian Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), participating in these rankings, has more than doubled, reflecting the popularity of these Rankings. The Ministry of Education, Government of India introduced Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), as a sub-parameter for overall rankings for the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2024. In NIRF-2025, SDG, as a new category, was introduced for ranking of institutions.

Concerns are, however, expressed by several people, on the relevance of these rankings for the HEIs in India. Only one of the 17 SDGs, Quality of Education (SDG-4), is directly concerned with education. Besides, HEIs do not have any active role in either causing or controlling the rest of the sustainability issues. In such a situation, the questions that arise are: how does participation in SDG rankings help the major stakeholders like students, teachers, the HEIs, or for that matter, the society, at large? Is it yet another case of commercialisation of rankings? In this context, this article examines the origin of these rankings, potential benefits, participation, and performance of Indian universities in major global sustainability rankings over the last three years, challenges faced by the institutions, and suggests the way forward. The origin of sustainable development rankings can be traced to the increasing focus on global climate action and the adoption by the United Nations, in 2015, of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to be achieved by 2030. It is a global call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. They address the major global economic, environmental, and societal challenges, related to poverty, education, health, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice.

Although all the SDGs are not focused directly on higher education, HEIs, as the knowledge creation and dissemination hubs, were identified as the critical players, in advancing these goals through education, research, and community outreach. The universities are expected to prepare students for a sustainable future, by incorporating the principles of Sustainability and Green Skills in the curricula of all the programmes. A number of career opportunities are emerging in Sustainability Sectors like Renewable Energy, Sustainable Agriculture, Urban Planning and Infrastructure, Waste Management, and Circular Economy. In addition, the universities are expected to take up inter-disciplinary research so as to address the real-life sustainability problems and publish the findings in journals. They should also build awareness in the society on the SDGs, by demonstrating their practice of sustainability in their campuses. Global sustainability development rankings

In order to encourage and reward the HEIs to integrate the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into education and research, the United Nations launched the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI), which was supported by global ranking agencies like QS and Times Higher Education. Recognising this, ranking agencies have started to evaluate institutions based on their contributions to the SDGs, alongside traditional metrics like academic reputation, research output, and teaching quality. HESI also has been facilitating academic publishers in promoting the SDGs among editors and authors. UI GreenMetric World University Ranking, initiated by Universitas Indonesia in 2010, even before SDGs were established, evaluates universities based on their environmental sustainability efforts, including energy use, waste management, and green infrastructure

The UI GreenMetric evaluates university’s policy and on environmental sustainability performance, on the basis of six criteria: setting and infrastructure, energy and climate change, waste management, water use, transportation, and education. It is focused primarily on environmental sustainability, with less emphasis on social and economic aspects. Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, launched in 2019, the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings evaluate universities, based on their contributions to the individual SDGs, across four broad areas: research, stewardship, outreach, and teaching, by way of response to 15-20 different questions for each SDG. Participation in the overall ranking requires universities to submit data, along with evidence, for at least four SDGs, one of which must be the SDG 1, partnerships for the goals. Universities receive a score and a rank for their activities in each of the SDGs for which they submit data, besides an overall rank. The Rankings are open to any university that teaches at either

undergraduate or postgraduate level. They were designed to encourage, as many universities as possible, to participate, by limiting the amount of data required for participation. In the last 2 years, there has been a 60% growth in the number of global participants to reach 2,540. QS world university rankings for Sustainability Introduced in 2023, QS rankings for Sustainability evaluate universities based on 53 sub-parameters, categorized under environmental impact (of environmental education, research and sustainability), social impact (education, health, employability, equality and knowledge sharing) and governance (good governance practices). In order to be eligible for the Sustainability Rankings, an institution must be eligible for at least one of the QS rankings (global, by region, or by subject). Business Schools are not currently eligible to participate. It captures data on energy consumption, water consumption, and carbon emissions in the campus. It uses technology tools to assess the knowledge of staff and students on sustainability. Though it is the most recent one to get into SD rankings, the number of participating universities grew by 149% in the last two years to reach 1,743 in 2025. During the Group of 20 countries (G20) meet in India in 2023, an action plan was drawn up to accelerate Progress on the SDGs in G20 countries. In line with the G20 Mission of LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), criteria related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were introduced, for the first time, to rank institutions under the Overall category for NIRF-2024. For NIRF-2025 rankings, SDG, as a new category, was introduced. NIRF SDG rankings-2025 seeks to capture quantitative data on the environment, for the last 3 years, covering aspects like green area in the campus, consumption of water, energy, air quality, waste generation, food waste, and more. Besides, it captures qualitative data on sustainable living practices, covering initiatives and programmes of the university in areas like elimination of plastics, reduction of carbon footprint, renewable energies, tree plantation, addressal of social issues, minimization of food waste, sustainable transportation, and more. Participation of Indian HEIs in global sustainability rankings Over the last two years, the number of Indian HEIs participating in global sustainability rankings has grown significantly. Participation in THE impact ranking has more than doubled to 148 institutions, whereas in the case of QS Sustainability rankings, it grew five fold to 77 universities. Though it is the earliest to start SD ranking, number of participating universities UI GreenMetric Rankings from India has grown only by 11% in the last 3 years. Are sustainability rankings evaluating the real contribution of universities to SD Goals? The impact rankings focus on contribution of a university on each of the SDGs, covering policies, practices and outputs, along with evidence. QS rankings evaluate the environmental and the social impact of the initiatives of the university and the governance practices but does not map with each SDG.

A cursory study of data captured by the first edition of the NIRF SDG Rankings 2025, however, covers infrastructural inputs quantitatively and initiatives to address SDGs qualitatively. The collection of relevant data on the academic and research contribution of the university and their impact on achieving the SDGs seems to receive less priority when compared with infrastructural inputs. It is not yet known how the data will be analysed to arrive at the ranks, as the methodology is not yet communicated in the public domain. NIRF methodology for SDG rankings seems to be contextually relevant but lacks the depth and rigor of global ranking frameworks, in terms of collection of relevant data, evidence for validation, evaluation of impact and analysis of the data to arrive at the rankings. In the absence of such a comprehensive framework and transparent communication, there could be possibilities of green washing, during submission of the data, particularly on the infrastructural inputs, thereby defeating the purpose of the rankings. Challenges faced by Indian HEIs while participating in sustainability rankings

Currently, most of the institutions lack robust systems to collect the infrastructural / utilities data like green area in the campus, consumption of water, energy, air quality, waste generation, food waste etc, as they are not part of the academic processes of the university. While the HEIs have been investing on academic infrastructure, most of them, particularly the state government funded universities, lack financial resources to spend on SDG initiatives like renewable energy, waste water recycling, sustainable transportation etc. In this process, these rankings do not offer a level playing field, for all the participating institutions. How to make the sustainability rankings more viable and relevant to the universities? The sustainability rankings need to focus more on what HEIs can contribute to SDGs, as a part of their day-to-day operations, like sustainability education, interdisciplinary research to address SD issues and dissemination of the same by way of publications and societal outreach to build awareness on SDGs. HEIs may be allowed to focus on specific SDGs, identify problem areas, therein and find solutions, implement them on a pilot basis and provide details of the same, as a real life case study, as a part of the data capture. The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) offer a wealth of traditional knowledge to address the contemporary global challenges and achieve the SDGs cost effectively. The universities must be encouraged to integrate the IKS, as a part of their interdisciplinary research, to address the specific sustainability issues. The evaluation framework may be designed to capture not only inputs but also outcomes and impact of the same for furtherance of the SDGs, supported by verifiable evidence.

Kashmir’s lesser-known spring blooms



Kashmir’s agroclimatic conditions are distinct from the rest of the country. The valley’s long, harsh winters leave the vegetation in dormancy. When spring arrives, it breathes new life into the landscape. The mountainous region is a home to a variety of endemic plants, including indigenous bulbs, herbs, shrubs, and trees. These floral species play a crucial role in maintaining the valley’s biodiversity. Some of the most prominent spring flowers are: Colchicum luteum (veer kaum): A delicate yet vibrant bloom, often seen carpeting hillocks and grooves; Sternbergia vernalis (goul tour): A golden-yellow flower that marks the arrival of spring; Salix (braed mushuk), a plant with significant cultural and ecological value; Viburnum grandiflorum (kulmash), a shrub with large pink flowers; and daffodils, whose bright yellow and white hues symbolise renewal and have deep roots in Kashmiri folklore.

Beyond their aesthetic appeal, these plants also provide essential ecosystem services. They serve as vital food sources for pollinators, ensuring the pollination of horticultural fruit trees that also bloom during spring. “The Valley’s vast altitudinal variations — from 1,600 metres in the basin to over 4,500 metres at mountain peaks — create diverse habitats suitable for these plants,” Anzar Khuroo, professor at Department of Botany, University of Kashmir, said. “The gradual blooming from the valley plains in early spring to the alpine meadows in late summer showcases their remarkable diversity and adaptability.” For centuries, ethnic communities have used these endemic blooms for medicinal and cultural purposes. Many traditional uses have been

preserved through oral traditions, passed down from generation to generation. These flowers don’t symbolise Kashmiri heritage: they also hold potential therapeutic benefits. Threats and conservation But for their significance, these species face numerous threats. Unsustainable development activities, deforestation, and increasing human encroachment pose significant risks. Climate change has also started to alter their blooming patterns. Research has found that relatively milder winters and early warming in February have led to premature flowering in the Valley, disrupting the natural seasonal cycle.

For example, a recent study conducted by the Khuroo’s group at University of Kashmir reported a shift in the spring flowering phenology (the study of flowering patterns and cycles influenced by seasonal changes) of the model plant species Sternbergia vernalis, in response to the changing climate in Kashmir region of the Himalaya. At present, there are no dedicated conservation programmes targeting the plants that bloom in spring. National parks and wildlife sanctuaries currently serve as safe havens, preserving their populations. On the flip side, unregulated tourism and a growing trend of trekking without environmental consideration pose new challenges. “As Kashmir’s ecology and environment faces increasing pressures, it is imperative to strike a balance between development and conservation,” Khuroo said. “Protecting these endemic blooms is not just about preserving biodiversity: it is about safeguarding the cultural and ecological essence of the Valley for generations to come.”

Nadda launches patient referral portal for AIIMS; pilot to connect AIIMS Delhi and Bilaspur

New Delhi: Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare JP Nadda has launched a patient referral portal that will enable seamless and secure healthcare within the All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) network nationwide. The Inter-AIIMS Referral portal is expected to revolutionise healthcare management as well as patient referral systems across India. According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the project will initially connect AIIMS New Delhi and AIIMS Bilaspur.

“This pilot phase will serve as a critical testing ground to refine operational protocols and address practical challenges, laying the foundation for an integrated, nationwide system,” the Ministry said. The portal will also introduce technological solutions within the AIIMS network. The cutting-edge technologies, include facial recognition systems and automated workflows, that will ensure seamless, secure, and transparent referral processes, said the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. “By harnessing the power of technology, we can transform the medical sector and enhance the lives of millions,” said Nadda. He emphasised that all the AIIMS should come together as a community and share good practices and learn from each other. “The highest standards of quality in processes and outcomes should be ensured through appropriate accreditation/certi-

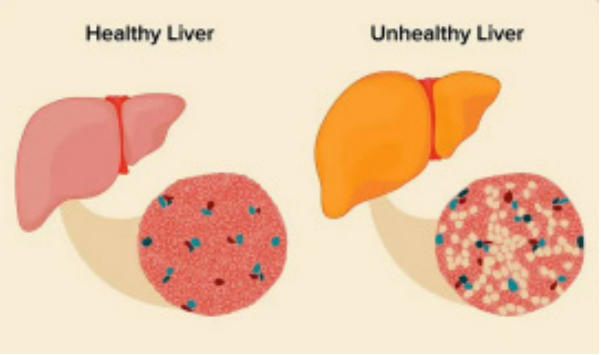


fication and Information Technology should be effectively used for improved governance and patient convenience,” the Health Minister said. The portal will significantly reduce waiting times, minimise manual errors, and also create a more patient-centric healthcare experience. Nadda also emphasised that while maintaining uniformity in principles, flexibility in operation is essential to bring out the best in each institute. He launched the portal at the eighth Central Institute Body meeting of AIIMS, where various agenda items relating to developing AIIMS as an Institutes of Excellence in teaching-learning, clinical care.

Non alcoholic fatty liver disease on the rise, Apollo Health of Nation report

Hyderabad: Cases of non-alcoholic fatty liver (NAFLD) disease, which is connected to obesity, overweight, and diabetes, are on the rise not only in Telangana State but even in other parts of the Country, the fifth edition of Health of Nation 2025 report released by Apollo Hospitals on Monday indicated.

The Health of Nation report, based on the health screenings of 2.5 million individuals at Apollo Hospitals in the Country, has indicated that NAFLD has emerged as an important health issue linked to obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. “Of the 2,57,199 individuals screened across all the units of Apollo Hospitals in the country, about 65 per cent had fatty liver, and 85 per cent of those were non-alcoholic,” the report said. In Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, nearly 1 in 2 individuals (47 per cent) showed signs of Grade I fatty liver, an early-stage condition tied to obesity and metabolic imbalances. About 24 per cent of the individuals in TG and AP had hypertension while a combined 82 per cent of the screened were obese and overweight. About 81 per cent of patients screened in TG and AP are Vitamin D deficient and 27 per cent screened were found to be anaemic.



• 24 per cent of individuals have hypertension • A combined 82 per cent of the screened population is overweight/obese • 81 per cent were Vitamin D deficient • Nearly 1 in 2 individuals (47%) showed signs of Grade I fatty liver • 27 per cent were anaemic, pointing to nutritional gaps, especially in iron-rich foods • 83 per cent of people have reduced flexibility, an indication of no physical activity

Moving fast to close ‘open-ends’; first tranche of India-US trade deal by mid-July: Piyush Goyal



A day after India and US trade officials concluded negotiations, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said that India and the US will sign the “first tranche” of the bilateral trade deal by mid-July. The US has already proposed new Section 301 tariffs on 60 countries, which are expected to come into effect after July 7. Washington has set 12.5% tariffs on 54 countries, including India, China and 10% of 6 countries, such as Pakistan and the European Union.

“We had excellent discussions from June 2-4 this month. We had a full team of officials from different divisions of trade from the US in New Delhi. I also met them yesterday. We are fast-moving towards closing all the open ends. Sometime by the middle of next month or so, we should be in a position to execute a very vibrant first tranche of the bilateral trade agreement. It will give preferential access to India over our competitors. I expect a higher level delegation by the end of this month,” Goyal said at a press conference in Andhra Pradesh.

US President Donald Trump on Thursday also said that India and the US would finalise a trade agreement. Speaking to reporters at the White House, Trump said, “For years, India took advantage of the United States. They charged us tremendous tariffs and paid nothing. Now it is the exact reverse, and we are making a lot of money with India. But we will get to a deal... I like your Prime Minister a lot. He is a good friend of mine, and we get along well. We have a good relationship,” Trump said. The Commerce and Industry Ministry on Thursday had said that a delegation from the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), led by the Chief Negotiator, visited India from 1-4 June 2026 to advance discussions on the trade agreement.

FY26 growth estimate raised to 7.7 per cent; momentum strong: PM



The Indian economy ended 2025-26 on an unexpectedly strong note, with the GDP estimated to have grown 7.7% on the back of higher growth in investments, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) said on Friday. GDP growth in the last quarter of the year, or January-March 2026, declined slightly to 7.8% from 8% in October-December 2025 – revised upwards from 7.8% – despite the West Asia war overlapping with the final month. Marginal revisions have also been made to the GDP growth estimates for April-June 2025 (6.7% to 6.8%) and July-September 2025 (8.4% to 8.3%). The full-year GDP growth figure of 7.7% released Friday, called the provisional estimate, is higher than MoSPI's second advance estimate of 7.6% announced in February. India's GDP had grown by 7.1% in 2024-25.

“India's growth momentum remains strong!” Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a post on X. “GDP growth rate of 7.7% in FY 2025-26 and 7.8% in Q4 of FY 2025-26 reflect the inherent strength of our economy, the success of reforms and the hard work of 140 crore Indians. We shall leave no stone unturned to further ‘Ease of Living,’ ‘Ease of Doing Business’ and increase opportunities for our youth.” While growth in the Gross Value Added (GVA) by the agriculture sector eased to 3% in 2025-26 from 4.2% the previous year, the manufacturing sector expanded at a double-digit rate of 10.7%, up from 9.3% in 2024-25. The services sector also grew at a faster clip last year, with the category of ‘trade, hotels, transport, communication and services related to broadcasting and storage’ growing 11% as against 6.6% in 2024-25, “reflecting the trend of higher mobility in the economy and higher travel and tourism activity,” said Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist at Bank of Baroda.

Meanwhile, financial, real estate, IT and professional

RBI cuts FY27 GDP growth forecast to 6.6%, sees inflation higher at 5.1%

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday cut its GDP (gross domestic product) growth forecast for the current financial year to 6.6% from 6.9%, and raised the inflation projection to 5.1% from 4.6%, cautioning that elevated energy prices and global supply constraints were having “adverse spillovers” on economic activity. And while domestic demand remains resilient, “there are energy incipient signs of moderation in some sectors”, Governor Sanjay Malhotra said.

He added that there are indications that average crude oil prices in 2026-27 would be “substantially higher” than the \$85 per barrel the central bank had assumed in its forecasts in April. As per the new forecast, growth is seen at 6.6% in April-June 2026, 6.3% in July-September 2026, 6.5% in October-December 2026, and 6.8% in January-March 2027. Back in April, the central bank expected the country's GDP to increase by 6.8%, 6.7%, 7%, and 7.2% in the four quarters of 2026-27. Meanwhile, the quarterly average inflation forecasts, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), have been revised from 4%, 4.4%, 5.2%, and 4.7% to 4.2% in April-June 2026, 5.1% in July-September 2026, 5.9% in October-December 2026, and 5.4% in January-March 2027. The RBI is mandated to target a CPI inflation of 4% in the medium-term in a range of 2-6%. The new forecasts show inflation reaching the upper bound of the RBI's target range towards the end of 2026, with Malhotra

“During the visit, the teams held constructive and positive discussions across a wide range of issues covering Trade in Goods, Non-Tariff Measures, Customs and Trade Facilitation, Economic Security Alignment and other areas of mutual interest,” the ministry said. Experts have said that Section 301 is a far more potent tool than the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) tariffs, which were used to impose reciprocal tariffs but did not pass muster in the US Supreme Court. This legal tool was mostly used by the US against countries such as Europe & Japan, dominant export powers then, before the WTO came into existence in 1995. The Trump administration has resurrected Section 301 again amid a weakening WTO.

Singapore-based Henrich Foundation explained that under Section 301, USTR gets sweeping powers not only to impose duties but also other kinds of restrictions. USTR can “withdraw or suspend trade agreement concessions”, enter into binding agreements with the foreign government to eliminate the conduct or unburden US commerce, or compensate the US with satisfactory trade benefits. “After consultations, USTR is meant to investigate to determine whether the action is unfair and harms US trade. This investigation can result in a determination of either mandatory or discretionary actions. The former includes trade agreement violations, unjustifiable or burdensome, or restrictive behaviour. Because Section 301 need not apply only to goods, other retaliatory actions are allowed, such as restricting the terms or conditions or denying the issuance of any ‘service sector access authorisation,’” the Henrich Foundation report said.

Deborah Elms, Head of Trade Policy at Hinrich Foundation, said that the Section 301 could have a firmer legal standing and tariffs imposed could reach any level as long as the required procedures are followed. USTR started the investigation in March and has come out with the findings after the required duration. It has also allocated time for public comments. “The courts, if asked to examine the use of Section 301, are likely to give the President wide deference as long as the required procedures are followed. Recall that the law provides maximum timelines, not any minimum. Past cases were often narrowly targeted. Future cases need not be so constrained. Tariffs may be part of any retaliatory package, set to any level, alongside a wide range of other actions to address the charge of unfair trade practices,” Elms said.

services saw their GVA increase 10.4%, up from 10%. On the whole, real GVA growth in 2025-26 rose to 7.9% from 7.3% the previous year. GVA measures the value addition, or the difference in value of output produced and the value of input used. It is also calculated by subtracting net product taxes from the GDP. “The fact that GVA growth at 7.9% outpaced GDP growth suggests that India's expansion was not solely demand-driven but also backed by strong production momentum,” said Rumki Majumdar, Economist at Deloitte India. “Performance across services, manufacturing and construction indicates that the economy has entered a period of global uncertainty from a position of strength, which should help it better absorb potential supply-side shocks.” Last year, Private Final Consumption Expenditure increased 7.7%, sharply higher than the 5.8% growth recorded in 2024-25. Gross Fixed Capital Formation – a proxy for investments – also rose at a faster rate of 8.2% as against 6.4%. Investment growth was particularly strong in the January-March 2026 quarter, rising to a 13-quarter high of 10.8%.

The latest GDP data came hours after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cut its forecast for 2026-27 to 6.6% from 6.9%, with Governor Sanjay Malhotra warning that while domestic demand remains resilient and manufacturing and services sectors activity continue to expand, “there are incipient signs of moderation in some sectors”. As per the central bank's latest forecast, growth is seen at 6.6% in April-June 2026, 6.3% in July-September 2026, 6.5% in October-December 2026, and 6.8% in January-March 2027. In April, the central bank had expected the country's GDP to increase by 6.8%, 6.7%, 7%, and 7.2% in the four quarters of 2026-27. While the Indian economy entered the West Asia war on a strong footing, economists widely expect growth to slow down meaningfully in the coming months – as indicated by RBI's own forecasts.

According to Devendra Kumar Pant, Chief Economist at India Ratings & Research, the higher energy prices and weak rupee due to the conflict as well as weaker rainfall because of El Nino “is likely to have an impact on India's growth-inflation dynamics”. Pant expects GDP growth to slow down to 6.7% in 2026-27 and inflation to increase to 5%, broadly in line with what the RBI has predicted. “Markets are likely to move on from the backward-looking data and focus on potential spillover risks into FY27, particularly given the prospect of a prolonged disruption in the supply of critical inputs to downstream industries, higher energy as well as food costs impacting purchasing power and tighter financial conditions,” said Radhika Rao, Senior Economist at DBS Bank.

saying the impact of the energy price shock is seen waning thereafter.

The core inflation forecast for the current year has also been increased to 4.7% from 4.4%. Core inflation is a measure of inflation that does not include food and fuel items, whose prices can be volatile. As such, it is seen as an indicator of underlying demand in the economy. The revised macroeconomic forecasts of the RBI were announced by Malhotra while detailing the Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC) interest rate decision. The governor said that the global environment has deteriorated since the last policy meeting with the conflict lingering amidst a fragile truce. “The adverse implications of the extended disruption in supply chains and elevated energy prices are reflected in the moderation of growth and increase in inflation projections from the April policy,” he said.

Prices of several inputs such as commercial LPG, industrial raw materials, chemicals, base metals, rubber, and plastic products, among others, have increased. “These could exert upward pressure on CPI inflation in the coming months as firms pass on higher input costs,” he said. Generalisation of inflation through second-round effects on expectations and wages is a distinct possibility, warranting a close vigil. “The outlook also remains clouded due to the sub-normal south-west monsoon forecast and El Niño risks.

The 2 PM cutoff and other golden rules for an ultimate afternoon power nap



A health educator affiliated with the Stanford School of Medicine recently shared three simple “rules” for napping: keep naps to 20–30 minutes, take them before 2 pm, and avoid them altogether if they disrupt your nighttime sleep. Intrigued, we decided to dig deeper and understand these rules in detail. According to Dr Chirag Tandon, Director – Internal Medicine, ShardaCare–Healthcity, the advice is largely sound. Dr Tandon agrees that short naps usually work best. “A short nap of around 20–30 minutes can help improve alertness, mood, and concentration without making a person feel groggy.”

The reason? Sleep depth. Longer naps can push your

body into deeper sleep stages, making it harder to wake up and leaving you with that heavy, disoriented feeling many know all too well. They may also interfere with your sleep later that night. “Short ‘power naps’ are usually the safest and most effective option for boosting daytime energy,” Dr Tandon tells indianexpress.com “Yes, timing matters when it comes to naps,” says Dr Tandon while adding that earlier naps tend to work better because they align with the body's natural sleep-wake rhythm. “Taking a nap before 2 pm is usually better because it matches the body's natural sleep-wake cycle.” A late-afternoon snooze, on the other hand, may steal from your nighttime sleep. “They may reduce sleep pressure, making it difficult to fall asleep at night.” An early afternoon nap is less likely to disrupt your regular sleep pattern. Rule 3: Don't nap if you already sleep badly

This one is not about discipline but about knowing your body. “Not everyone benefits from daytime naps,” Dr Tandon clarifies. If you already struggle with insomnia or poor sleep at night, napping may end up making the problem worse. That is why Dr Tandon says quality nighttime sleep should remain the bigger priority. “Good quality nighttime sleep is more important than daytime naps. Naps should support health, not interfere with regular sleep habits.” So yes, the “Stanford rules” broadly check out—but like most health advice, context matters. A power nap can be refreshing, but only if it works with your sleep, not against it.

‘Takes 45 mins to stitch you back’: Rubina Dilaik on C-sections; doctor reacts

Television actor Rubina Dilaik is calling out a childbirth myth many women are tired of hearing—that C-sections are somehow the “easy way out.” Speaking candidly in an interview with MissMalini, Rubina said, “I've heard ‘aapka c-section kaunsi badi baat hai yaar. Excuse me, seven layers are cut deep in, and then the child comes out. It only takes 10 minutes to bring the child out and 45 minutes to stitch you back. And you almost lose 1 to 1.5 liters of blood.”

Her remarks have struck a chord with many mothers who have faced similar judgment. But medically, is a C-section really the “easy” option? According to Dr Ruchi Srivastava, Director – Obstetrics and Gynaecology, ShardaCare–Healthcity, the idea is deeply misleading. “A C-section is often wrongly called the ‘easy way out,’ but in reality, it is a major abdominal surgery. It involves cutting through multiple layers of tissue and requires careful medical management and recovery.” Many women undergo C-sections not by choice, but because of emergencies or complications where the safety of the mother or baby comes first. “Every birth experience is different, and no delivery method should be judged or minimised,” the gynaecologist points out. The baby may be delivered within minutes, but recovery lasts far longer, as Rubina had shared. “Medically, a C-section is considered a major surgery. During the procedure, doctors make incisions through the abdomen and uterus to safely deliver the baby. Recovery does not end after the surgery itself.” Women may experience pain, weakness, difficulty moving, fatigue, and discomfort during basic activities such as coughing, walking, or even breastfeeding. “In many cases, complete internal healing can take several weeks to months, even if the external stitches look healed earlier.” That is why the assumption that surgical delivery is somehow the “easier” route often frustrates mothers.

Rubina Dilaik Rubina Dilaik delivered her twin baby girls via C-section in November 2023 (Image: Instagram/ Rubina) Recovery is not only physical. “After a C-section,



many women face physical challenges such as pain around the incision, back pain, fatigue, difficulty sleeping, and limited mobility.” Dr Srivastava says emotional strain can also be significant. “Some women may feel anxious, overwhelmed, or guilty due to social pressure around childbirth methods. Lack of sleep, hormonal changes, and recovery stress can also affect mental health.” The gynecologist also cautions against treating childbirth like a competition while confirming that C-sections are not painless or easier than vaginal delivery. “Recovery after a C-section is usually longer and more physically demanding compared to vaginal birth because it involves major surgery.” Rubina's frustration reflects what many women feel. Childbirth—whether through surgery or vaginal delivery—is not something to be trivialised. Mothers deserve support, not casual judgment.

The Menin breakthrough: How a newly identified brain protein could reverse aging



A newly identified brain protein may play a major role in how the body ages. According to the latest research published in PLOS Biology, a study led by Lige Leng and colleagues at Xiamen University in China focused on Menin, a protein that helps suppress brain inflammation. The results of the study, conducted primarily on mice, suggest that Menin may act as a protective “anti-ageing” factor inside the brain. The researchers also found that declining levels of Menin in the hypothalamus triggered inflammation, memory problems, bone loss, and other ageing-related changes in mice. This represents a breakthrough in fighting age-related health decline.

Edwina Raj, Head of Services – Clinical Nutrition & Dietetics, Aster CMI Hospital, Bangalore, explains that Menin is a protein produced by the body from the MEN1 gene. It plays an important role in controlling how cells grow, repair themselves, and respond to different signals in the body. Scientists have recently become interested in Menin

because research suggests that it may influence brain function, memory, learning, and healthy ageing. Raj referenced recent studies that indicate Menin helps “maintain communication between brain cells and may support cognitive functions such as memory and concentration”. Some research also found that Menin levels can decrease with age, and lower levels may be associated with reduced brain performance. According to her, Menin also appears to help regulate inflammation and cellular stress, both of which can affect brain health. However, she reiterated that research and its direct role in improving brain health are still ongoing, and more studies are needed to fully understand its effects in humans.

Raj says that there is currently no specific food that directly increases Menin protein levels. However, she believes a healthy diet may support the body's natural production and function of proteins, including Menin. “Foods rich in high-quality protein such as lentils, sprouts, eggs, fish, lean chicken, milk, curd, paneer, soy products, and nuts provide the amino acids needed for our daily requirement of protein,” she shares. To add to that, Raj says foods rich in antioxidants, including berries, citrus fruits, spinach, broccoli, tomatoes, and carrots, may help protect cells from damage. Healthy fats from walnuts, almonds, flaxseeds, chia seeds, avocado and fatty fish can also support brain function. To conclude, “regular exercise, good sleep, stress management, and a balanced diet remain the most effective ways to support overall brain health and the body's natural cellular functions, including those involving Menin,” stresses Raj.

How decluttering your space can improve daily life

Hyderabad: A messy room does not necessarily mean a messy mind, but cluttered spaces can sometimes make everyday life feel more stressful than it needs to be. From overflowing wardrobes to crowded desks and packed storage shelves, excess clutter can make a space feel overwhelming and difficult to navigate.

When there are too many items competing for attention, a room can feel busy and distracting. Clearing unnecessary objects from frequently used spaces can make the environment feel calmer and more organised. Even something as simple as tidying a bedside table or work desk can create a sense of order. Decluttering is one of those tasks

where the results are immediately visible. Finishing a small organising project, whether it is sorting a drawer or cleaning out a cupboard, can provide a feeling of achievement and productivity. A well-organised space can also save time. Knowing where things are stored reduces the frustration of searching for misplaced items and can make daily routines run more smoothly. Decluttering does not require a complete home makeover. Small changes, tackled one area at a time, can make a noticeable difference. While it may not solve every problem, creating a cleaner and more organised environment can help make a home or work space feel more comfortable, functional, and enjoyable to spend time in.

‘Not having the criticism’: Ronaldo could respond with hat-trick in Uzbek match, says Owen



Cristiano Ronaldo's indifferent start to his record sixth World Cup appearance last week against DR Congo has sharpened the criticism of the waning abilities of the Portugal superstar. Ronaldo endured a forgettable night, with just three shots to show, after playing full 90 minutes in a tame 1-1 draw against Congo in their Group K opener. The 41-year-old soon became the face of criticism, with pundits and former footballers slamming Ronaldo's contribution, besides being obsessed with the idea of hunting for goals from the box. Ronaldo's lacklustre performance was in sharp contrast to his long-time rival Lionel

Messi's sparkling hat-trick for Argentina earlier that day in a 3-0 win over Algeria. While their recent outings have widened the gulf between the duo, former Ballon d'Or winner Michael Owen has backed Ronaldo to turn around his poor form around.

Portugal next play Uzbekistan in Houston on Tuesday night, and Owen said he expected the response from the record international goal-scorer to appear in the form of a hat-trick. "It did not help Cristiano Ronaldo that Lionel Messi scored a hat-trick the night before Portugal played, but I'm not having the criticism of him," Owen wrote in his DailyMail column. 'Hasn't he always played like this?' "But how many times has this happened and he's shut everyone up in the next game? If you're picking Ronaldo then you have to accept what he is there for – and I wouldn't be surprised if he responds with a hat-trick of his own against Uzbekistan," the former Manchester United and Real Madrid striker said. Owen also brushed aside critics for targeting Ronaldo's one-dimensional style, insisting that he has remained a box-to-box poacher for a considerable period now. "But hasn't he always played like this, to a degree? He has never been a player, especially in recent years, who involves himself in the game. "He will be there for the big moments, though. If he's not scoring, it's too easy to blame Ronaldo. At 41, he is going to be questioned."

A statistical breakdown of Messi & Ronaldo's first World Cup games

Messi's hat-trick in the defending champions' 3-0 romp over Algeria was contrasted with the sorry figure the Portuguese superstar cut in 1-1 draw with underdogs Democratic Republic of Congo. With the two legends on the final legs of their careers, we analyse why.

1. Productivity in attack

Messi attempted six shots in his first game, four of which were on target, yielding a conversion rate of 66.7 per cent. More remarkably, three of those attempts came from outside the penalty area. Ronaldo, in comparison, attempted three shots — all from inside the box — and failed to test the goalkeeper even once. Messi not only exerted a greater influence on the game, but was significantly more involved in it. He recorded 57 touches, with neither Lautaro Martinez nor Thiago Almada — his partners in attack — surpassing that figure. Ronaldo had 25 touches against Congo — his fewest in a major tournament game for Portugal when he played the full 90 minutes. Lionel Messi's heatmap from first match against Algeria. Lionel Messi's heatmap from first match against Algeria. The 41-year-old attempted 20 passes — second-lowest among Portugal's starters, behind only Bernardo Silva, who was taken off at half-time. The corresponding figure for Messi was 40. Nor was the disparity confined to distribution. Messi excelled at the receiving end too. He received 44 passes — much more than Ronaldo's tally of 17. Cristiano Ronaldo's heatmap from match against DR Congo. Cristiano Ronaldo's heatmap from match against DR Congo. Delve deeper into receive success percentage — a measure of whether a player positions himself optimally to receive a pass directed towards him — and the divide becomes starker still. Messi posted a success rate of 50 per cent. Ronaldo's corresponding statistic stood at 21.3. Ronaldo was well behind in this metric as well. If one goes by line breaks — a pass that penetrates the opposition's defensive structure, essentially an antidote to low blocks like that of Algeria and Congo — Messi attempted 15 of them. In the Argentine team, only Enzo Fernández attempted more, at 16. For Portugal, Ronaldo attempted a line breaking pass only once. Even Refeal Leao had three attempts, despite coming on in the 71st minute. Messi also recorded a carrying distance of 252.3 metres, of which 125.9 metres constituted progressive carrying — advancing possession towards goal by bypassing opponents. Ronaldo's corre-



sponding figures were 49.4 metres and 27.3 metres. This is a metric where Ronaldo is ahead — he ran 8.39 km in the game, while Messi covered 6.81 km. Yet the Argentine's heat map was considerably more expansive. Ronaldo ran only 1.19 km of his 8.39 (13.4%) in high intensity against DR Congo. (AP Photo) Ronaldo ran only 1.19 km of his 8.39 (13.4%) in high intensity against DR Congo. (AP Photo) There is a simple explanation. Messi remained dormant for long spells, conserving himself for a decisive intervention. On the contrary, Ronaldo kept jogging for the entirety of the game, which did not yield any fruitful results for his team. For a statistical inference, Ronaldo ran only 1.19 km of his 8.39 (13.4%) in high intensity; that is, at a minimum pace of 15kmph. Messi ran 1.79 km of his 6.81 (27%) in high intensity.

5. Positioning

For Argentina's opening goal, Messi occupied the only vacant pocket amid four Algerian shirts. One simple pass from Rodrigo De Paul pierced the defensive line. Analysing Ronaldo's spatial awareness — or the lack thereof — makes it difficult not to revisit Thierry Henry's observation: there needs to be an understanding of who needs to score: Portugal or Ronaldoln one passage of play, Francisco Conceicao dribbles past his marker and finds vacant land down the right flank. With two men consistently marking him, Ronaldo had initially made a run towards goal, which led to Bruno Fernandes being unmarked. The midfielder would have found himself one-on-one with the goalkeeper had Ronaldo reversed the direction of his run. If one judged Ronaldo solely on the basis of his display against Congo, he would not be considered one of the greatest players the game has ever produced.

Sheep herder, car washer, street cleaner to Iran's WC hero



The eldest son from a nomadic family suffered his father's beatings, ran away from home to pursue the game he loved but wasn't allowed to play

The Belgium forwards must have been spooked by Iranian goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand. No matter how hard they tried, they couldn't get anything past Alireza's elastic, ever so reliable giant fists. At one time during their World Cup group game, the Belgium star Kevin De Bruyne stood stunned when Iran's hero for the day saved a close-range shot hammered at him by Maxim De Cuyper. When De Cuyper took the shot from a deflection that fell at his feet, Alireza had slipped and was wrong-footed. Yet the Iranian somehow managed to stretch out his left hand and palm the ball away from danger. If not a footballer, Alireza would have certainly made it big as a gymnast. But then such has been his life of hardships, he has taken up several odd jobs to pursue his dream of becoming a footballer.

The eldest son of a sheep-herding, nomadic family, in Iran's Lorestan province, he didn't remember a permanent dwelling until he was in his teenage years. "We moved from one village to another, rearing our sheep, ensuring they don't stray from the herd, or from being stolen," he told Varzesh3.com. In spare time, he played football and Dal Paran, a game which involved pelting stones into a distance. "It helped me with my distribution later in football," he would say. The football dream ignited only after his family settled

down at Sarabias. Evading his stern father's attention, he joined a local club when he was around 12. He was a striker, but one day kept between the sticks when both the regular goalkeepers got injured. But one day, his father found out that he was playing football, leaving the herding to the younger siblings. "I was the eldest, so I had to take on my father's lineage, but I wanted to be a footballer," he said. In a fit of rage, his father tore his gloves. And he didn't have the money to buy another pair. There was only one solution: board the bus to Tehran at night when his father was asleep. So he borrowed some money from a cousin, and escaped clandestinely. The 600 kilometre journey was arduous, and he had little money. In the bus he met the coach of a local team. His name was Hussein Faiz. He explained his dream, but the coach demanded a token money. "It's not his fault, it was a club on meagre budget, and it can't provide free training for everyone," he reasoned. From the money his relative had given him, he paid the first month's fee.

In Teheran, he had no relatives or shelter. He trained in the evening and slept in mosques, sometimes on streets. One day, he slept off near the club, and when he woke up he felt coins all over his body. "They had thought I was a beggar! Well, I had a delicious breakfast for the first time in a long while," he told The Guardian. Moved, the coach told the club owners to let him train for free and room with a senior player. But still, he had to meet his ends. His roommate introduced him to a car-washing firm. "The owner was delighted because I was tall and I could wash the SUV's without straining," he said. From a car-washer, he became a bearer in a pizza shop. His coach found out and stopped him from going and gave him a stipend., which ran dry by the end of the month. He became a street cleaner by night so that no one would see him. But the nightly shifts took a toll on his body and his game time diminished. But a local powerhouse, Nafta, noticed him and asked him to train with the U-23 side. "My career took off, I started to get money for appearances and got into Iran's U-23 side," he told Varzesh3.com. In 2015, he made his Iran's debut, just four years after he had escaped his hometown in the dead of the night. Three years later, he would famously save a Cristiano Ronaldo penalty in the 2018 World Cup. In between he returned home and patched up with his father. "He told me that I had made him proud, and that he was sorry that he didn't support me. It was an emotional moment, but in life, you have to make some tough decisions," he would say. And on Sunday, he made all the right decisions. And he could spook Belgium's forwards in their nightmares.

Spain bounce back; ride Lamine Yamal magic to thrash Saudi Arabia



There is little that could have jolted the Goliathesque Spain more strongly than being kept at bay by Cape Verde's veritable David. Coach Luis de la Fuente said as much before the World Cup favourites' meeting with Saudi Arabia. "The team is stung and sometimes criticism is motivating. The players do read things, they're angry, and for sure tomorrow, the game will be very different." Six nights after failing to break through Cape Verde's resistance at the same Atlanta Stadium, La Roja made amends in style. Lamine Yamal's maiden World Cup start sparked a ruthless 4-0 hammering of their Asian opponents. The Green Falcons, seeking to emulate the great Cape Verde escape, employed five men at the back in a departure from their usual 4-4-2 formation. But it was scant insurance against the artistry of an 18-year-old. Yamal showed what Spain were missing in their opener from the outset, prancing around the Saudi defence threateningly in the very first minute. Ten minutes of pressing in the Saudi half bore fruit after a delightful transition in midfield, as the ball found Mikel Oyarzabal on the left flank. The frontman, who could only get his first touch after 30 minutes against Cape Verde, eyed a charging Yamal to his right and squared the ball across. The teen Barcelona sensation slid in smoothly and tapped it deftly through the narrow gap past custodian Mohammed Al-Owais. Just like that, the luminous new superstar had arrived on the biggest stage.

The creative incision that went missing against the Blue Sharks was on full display. Provider Oyarzabal soon

turned finisher, netting twice in the space of three minutes. First, Dani Olmo sent a corner to Aymeric Laporte, who was able to nod it onwards to Oyarzabal. The Real Sociedad captain did the rest, beating Al-Owais to his right. Another cross cracked the Saudi defence open, and Olmo set Oyarzabal up to stab in his second. Spain were up 3-0 before the first hydration break, and looking good for many more. Oyarzabal very nearly completed his hat-trick in the 36th with a masterful trivela that flicked the crossbar. That no more goals were scored by half-time was down to Spain's minor follies rather than the Green Falcons' resistance. Unfortunately for Georgios Donis' men, the Spanish party resumed post lemon break. Substitute Ferran Torres' corner delivery was flicked on to Marc Cucurella, who pile-drove it with his left foot. The powerful shot was goal-bound and took a deflection off Hassan Al-Tambakti before going in. Saudi's first shot on target came in the 81st minute, a tame effort easily pouched by Unai Simon. Spain found the back of the net for the fifth time, only for the goal to be ruled out on video review. A neat stoppage-time move saw Pedro Porro knock the ball across the six-yard box for a waiting Torres to slot home, but the Barcelona attacker was deemed to be marginally offside. Unlike their previous outing, where Spain were hardly able to move the ball centrally, La Roja found ample acreage on the wings as well as down the middle. Saudi Arabia are not yet out of contention and Spain are still a point away from the knock-outs. But the game depicted just how potent the European champions can be, when at full tilt.

Marizanne Kapp takes South Africa to famous win as India's semifinal hopes hit



All-rounder's 81 off 45 balls takes Proteas to 159-run target with five balls to spare; Harmanpreet & Co may have to beat Australia to stay alive

At 45/2 after nine overs in pursuit of 159, South Africa's chase was threatening to unravel. India had squeezed the scoring, struck twice in the PowerPlay and appeared firmly in control despite defending a rather modest score. But standing between them and victory was Marizanne Kapp, whose innings of remarkable composure turned the contest on its head as the Proteas won by six wickets in Manchester on Sunday to keep their campaign alive. The defeat puts India in a precarious position as they now most likely have to win their remaining two fixtures — against Bangladesh and Australia — to remain in contention for a semifinal spot. When they look back at the game, the inability to capitalise on a decent start and a forgettable fielding effort may come back to haunt the 50-over world champions.

Kapp's first task with the bat was simply to survive. With Laura Wolvaardt and Annerie Dercksen dismissed in Sree Charani's double-wicket maiden and the ball gripping just enough to keep the batters guessing, the all-rounder resisted the temptation to force the pace. Instead, she absorbed the pressure through singles and twos, waiting patiently for India to err. The release came in the 10th over when Kapp carved Prema Rawat over extra cover before a top-edged sweep just evaded Nandini Sharma's desperate one-handed attempt at deep backward square, sailed over for six, helping South Africa collect 14 runs from the over and shift the momentum. From there, Kapp steadily moved through the gears. She mixed innovation with classical strokeplay, scooping Nandini over short fine, stepping out to loft Sree Charani over mid-off and repeatedly sweeping anything drifting into her arc. Her reading of the conditions was exemplary as she targeted the right bowlers without ever allowing the required rate to climb out of reach. India's fielding only made her task easier. On 31, Kapp survived when Radha Yadav overran a chance at long-on off Charani. Four overs later, the same fielder grassed a far more straightforward opportunity at long-on

off Shafali Verma, the ball popping out of her hands after Kapp had picked out the fielder perfectly. The reprieves proved costly.

Kapp brought up a superb half-century with consecutive boundaries off Arundhati Reddy before taking complete control of the innings. A crunching drive through extra cover, a towering straight six off Shafali and two more sixes off Deepti Sharma in the penultimate over extinguished India's hopes as she remained unbeaten on a masterful 81 off 45 balls. Taznim Brits played the ideal supporting role. Her 40 off 36 balls lacked Kapp's fluency but was no less valuable as she absorbed pressure early, rotated the strike effectively and chipped in with timely boundaries. Together, the pair added 97 runs in just 63 balls, a partnership that took South Africa from a position of crisis to one of control and ultimately sealed a memorable victory. India's innings consisted of two contrasting halves. The opening pair of Smriti Mandhana and Shafali attacked from the outset, but once South Africa struck, the innings lost momentum on a surface that became harder to score on. Mandhana continued her tournament form with a 17 off 12 balls, driving and pulling Shabnim Ismail before scooping Marizanne Kapp. But the latter had the last word, producing a wobble-seam delivery that jagged back to bowl the left-hander. Shafali maintained the early momentum. After settling in, she took 17 runs off a Chloe Tryon over and raced to 31 off 15 balls. But a faint glove off an Ismail bouncer was detected on review, ending her innings. India reached 59/2 after the Powerplay, but that proved their high point. Promoted to No.3, Yastika Bhatia struck three boundaries before Ayabonga Khaka trapped her LBW for 15. Jemimah Rodrigues struggled for fluency and chipped a return catch to Nadine de Klerk after scoring 10. India slipped from 54/1 to 83/4 by the 11th over. Harmanpreet Kaur and Deepti added 33 for the fifth wicket in a rebuilding phase. Playing her 200th T20I, the skipper made 24 off 22 before chopping an Ismail off-cutter onto her stumps. Deepti kept India afloat with 29 off 21, using the sweep before miscuing Nonkululeko Mlaba. Richa Ghosh, unlike earlier in the tournament, never found her rhythm. South Africa denied her pace, restricting her to 15 off 14 before Kapp dismissed her. India's promising start faded into a below-par total as South Africa's disciplined bowling prevented any late acceleration. Brief Scores: India 158/7 in 20 overs (Shafali Verma 31; Marizanne Kapp 2/27) lost to South Africa 161/4 in 19.1 overs (Marizanne Kapp 81 not out, Taznim Brits 40; Sree Charani 3/24) by 6 wickets.

From ‘Ilaya Thalapathy’ to Chief Minister: The unusual journey of Vijay

In 1984, a 10-old-boy was paid 500 rupees for a small role in his father's film, a black and white drama called Vetri. Forty two years later, that boy, known across India simply as ‘Thalapathy’ Vijay, stood on a stage in Chennai and took the oath as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, after a political party he had founded just two years earlier became the first non Dravidian outfit to lead the state in 59 years.

Vijay was born to filmmaker S.A. Chandrasekhar and playback singer Shoba Chandrasekhar. After Vetri, he appeared in a handful of other films directed by his father through the rest of the decade, including Kudumbam, Naan Sigappu Manithan, Vasantha Raagam, Sattam Oru Vilayaattu and Ithu Engal Neethi. These were modest beginnings, with Vijay credited in small parts while his father built a career as a commercial filmmaker known for action dramas. He stepped into a lead role for the first time in 1992, in Naalaiya Theerpu, again directed by his father. The film did not do well, and Vijay faced criticism over his look and his performance, an inauspicious start for an actor who would go on to become one of the most bankable names in the industry. His father responded by pairing him opposite an established star, Vijayakanth, in Senthorapandi the following year, which turned out to be a hit and gave Vijay his first real foothold with audiences. The real shift in his image came with Rasigan in 1994, after which fans began calling him ‘Ilaya Thalapathy’, meaning young commander, a title that would stay with him in different forms for the rest of his career.

Through the rest of the 1990s, Vijay built a following as a romantic lead, with films such as Poove Unakkaga, Kadhalukku Mariyadhai, Thullatha Manamum Thullum and Kushi doing well with younger audiences. It was in the early 2000s that his on screen identity changed more decisively. Thirumalai in 2003 marked his shift toward a harder, action driven persona, and Ghilli in 2004, a remake of the Telugu hit Okkadu, became a genuine turning point, transforming him from a popular hero into a mass entertainer with a much wider reach. Pokkiri followed in 2007, another remake of a Telugu original, and pushed his stardom further still, placing him firmly among the top tier of Tamil cinema alongside contemporaries like Ajith Kumar and, a generation above him, Rajinikanth. From the 2010s onward, Vijay's films grew in scale and box office ambition, with titles such as Thuppakki, Kaththi, Theri, Mersal, Sarkar, Bigil, Master and Leo regularly featuring among the highest grossing Tamil releases of their respective years. Alongside his film career, he built a large organised fan base, which he formalised in 2009 into a welfare body called Vijay Makkal Iyakkam. The political turn



became official on February 2, 2024, when Vijay announced the formation of Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam, stating that the party would contest the 2026 Tamil Nadu assembly election. He converted his fan club network, reportedly tens of thousands of units across the state, into the new party's organisational base. His final film as a lead actor, Jana Nayagan, was positioned as a cinematic farewell, though its release has been delayed by a prolonged dispute with the Central Board of Film Certification over its content. The election itself, held on April 23, recorded the highest voter turnout in the state's history. When results were declared on May 4, TVK had emerged as the single largest party, winning 108 of 234 seats in its very first electoral outing. Vijay himself won both seats he contested, Perambur in Chennai and Tiruchirappalli East, while the sitting Chief Minister, M.K. Stalin, lost his own seat in Kolathur. TVK fell ten seats short of a majority, leading to several tense days of negotiation before the Indian National Congress broke away from its alliance with the DMK to back a TVK led government. Vijay was sworn in as Chief Minister on May 10, and his government won a floor test in the assembly three days later. His rise has drawn frequent comparisons to M.G. Ramachandran, the actor who founded the AIADMK and became Chief Minister in 1977, as well as to J. Jayalalithaa, both of whom built political careers on the back of film stardom. Analysts have pointed to anti incumbency against the outgoing DMK government, the scale of Vijay's existing fan network, and a heavily digital, youth focused campaign as key factors behind TVK's debut performance. Whatever the explanation, the journey from a child actor earning a few hundred rupees for his first film to the Chief Minister's office is, by any measure, an unusual one.

Alia Bhatt gets roasted by Trump impersonator on Samay Raina's show: ‘Give her a script’

When Alia Bhatt appeared on the premiere episode of India's Got Latent Season 2 as a guest panelist, she would have expected to get roasted by host Samay Raina. However, Alia wouldn't have expected getting roasted by a contestant impersonating US President Donald Trump. The act went on to win the episode.

‘Not your Ranbir Kapoor’ Contestant Avinash Agarwal, who copied Trump's mannerisms and accent to the T, said, “Thank God your other guy Ranbir is not here,” much to the puzzlement of Alia Bhatt. He soon clarified that he's not referring to Alia's husband and fellow actor Ranbir Kapoor, but to YouTuber Ranveer Allahbadia, whose inappropriate joke on India's Got Latent Season 1 led to three FIRs against him and Samay, and even the latter's show getting pulled off YouTube. The contestant even joked that he's banned Ranveer from “the islands”, referring to the US President's alleged links to late child sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

When an overwhelmed Alia Bhatt couldn't comment anything when Samay Raina asked her to, the Trump impersonator slid in his mic-drop moment, “Somebody give her a script and a director.” That evoked the loudest cheers of the episode, as Samay even blew a party popper. Later, when Alia tried to unsuccessfully blow a party popper, the contestant said in signature Trump accent, “Somebody give her an action director.” He didn't even spare Sharvari as at one point, after the actor commented loudly, he said, “Keep the volume down. I don't like women being empowered.” That got even a riled up Alia to throw water bottles at him. Clearly impressed by the contestant's consistent im-

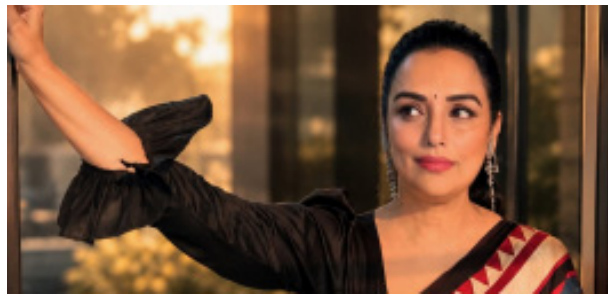


personation of Donald Trump, all the panelists awarded him 10 points, with the exception of Sharvari, who gave him 9.5 points. However, since the average score was 10 — which matched with his prediction — he emerged as the winner of the premiere episode of India's Got Latent Season 2. However, earlier in the episode, another contestant got as much, or more, love from Alia Bhatt and other panelists. Sukrut Deo, who refused to break his character of a drunken man right till the end, also got a perfect average score from the panelists, but he predicted his average to be 8. Visibly emotional, he got a shoutout from all panelists, including Alia who also cheered him on on her Instagram Story on Sunday night. “What a star! Give this legend all the love and more (sun emojis),” wrote Alia along with a picture of Sukrut.



Reportedly, the couple will take the plunge in an intimate ceremony and later throw a grand reception at the Madison Square Garden venue. The reception is said to span over the entire July 4 weekend. Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce had announced their engagement in August last year. Sharing photos on social media, Taylor wrote, “Your English teacher and your gym teacher are getting married.” Earlier, it was reported that Taylor and Travis would get married at the Rhode Island Mansion, but due to privacy issues, the venue had to be changed. While fans are excited to witness their big day, it is also being said that the couple has a massive guest list for the reception. Interestingly, just days ahead of the wedding, Travis' father, Ed Kelce, introduced his girlfriend, Doree Herpner, on social media, sparking major buzz.

AMMA's 1st woman president Shweta Menon resigns in latest blow to Malayalam actors' body



Shwetha Menon announces resignation from AMMA Shwetha Menon announces resignation from actors' body AMMA. The first woman president of the Association of Malayalam Movie Artistes (AMMA), Shweta Menon, resigned from the post on Sunday along with the other office-bearers following a dispute within the actors' body. Menon, who was elected as president of the three-decade-old association, announced that she was also stepping down as a member of AMMA. The 17-member executive body of AMMA, led by Menon, had assumed office in August last year after the previous committee, headed by Malayalam superstar Mohanlal, was forced to step down in 2024 in the wake of the controversies surrounding the release of the Justice Hema Committee report on the treatment of women in the Malayalam film industry. Menon announced the decision at the end of the annual general body meeting of the association held in Kochi. “There are attempts to take the association into the hands of people who are facing allegations. I cannot remain as a puppet,” she told the media. Following the resignation of the executive committee, an ad hoc committee led by actor-turned-MLA Ramesh Pisharody was constituted until a new committee is elected. Mohanlal on Sunday issued a statement calling for unity within the association. From the outset of the annual general body meeting, members engaged in heated exchanges over AMMA's annual receipts and payments accounts. When the association's general secretary, Cuckoo Parameswaran, presented the accounts, a section of members led by actors Siddique and Edavela Babu raised a protest alleging a lack of transparency. More members then joined in, leading to a stalemate in passing the annual statement of accounts. Subsequently, Menon announced the resignation of the entire executive committee as well as her decision to quit the body. Actor Baburaj told the media that an ad hoc committee, headed by Ramesh Pisharadi, has been established.

Simmering tensions AMMA has been under close public scrutiny since the Justice Hema Committee report led to accusations that the actors' body did not do enough to prevent sexual misconduct against women working in the Malayalam film industry. Several male members of the association were accused of sexual misconduct soon after

the Hema Committee report came out in 2024. Moreover, allegations against actor Dileep, who was acquitted in December 2025 by a sessions court of conspiracy charges in the 2017 actor sexual assault case, are still a source of tension among a section within AMMA, sources said. “There is still a strong Dileep lobby in AMMA. There are other lobbies led by other actors who are accused of sexual misconduct. Hence, it is very difficult to run the ship in AMMA,” a source said.

Trouble in AMMA started brewing once again with actor and former general secretary of AMMA, Ansiba Hassan, raising a character assassination complaint against actor Tini Tom. Hassan, who is known for her role in the Mohanlal-starrer Drishyam series of films, had the support of other members of AMMA, who issued public statements against the artiste body's management. AMMA issued a gag order to actors to prevent them from appearing before the media to make statements in this case. “This was strongly opposed by a section within AMMA,” a source said. “Despite electing a woman president, AMMA remained a male organisation led by male stars,” the source added. Veteran actor Jagadish, a senior member of AMMA, told reporters that the executive committee led by Shwetha Menon could not present the accounts in a transparent manner. “There was a major lapse on their part in this regard. Further, the disputes between members have been dragged to the media, damaging the image of the association. Members sought permission to present a no-confidence motion against the leadership. Before the no-confidence motion was taken up, the executive committee decided to quit,” Jagadish said.

‘Ten-year-old Shah Rukh Khan would supply samosas to us at NSD’: Pankaj Kapur

Shah Rukh Khan delivered one of the most profitable careers of his career three years ago at the box office. Two of his three releases — Siddharth Anand's spy thriller Pathaan and Atlee's Jawan — emerged as blockbusters both in India and worldwide. Despite enjoying sustained superstardom over the past 30 years, Shah Rukh is also known for his humility, having not forgotten his humble beginnings in Delhi. Now, veteran actor Pankaj Kapur has revealed another insight about Shah Rukh's humble childhood in the capital city. What Pankaj Kapur said



While recalling his time as a student at National School of Drama (NSD), Delhi back in the mid-1970s, Pankaj revealed that a very young Shah Rukh would take care of his fellow stage performers' refreshments during the interval of the plays. “Those samosas were supplied by no other than Shah Rukh Khan. He was a little boy, 10 years old at that time,” said the actor. Pankaj remembers the 10-year-old Shah Rukh as standing in the NSD canteen. “I think his uncle or father used to run the canteen at that time,” the actor said on a podcast on Kindle Cast's YouTube channel. Little did he know that he'd go on to play a supporting role in Rajiv Mehra's 1995 action thriller Ram Jaane, headlined by that 10-year-old boy who would grow up to be a Bollywood superstar. Shah Rukh's father Mir Taj Mohammed Khan was a restaurateur in Delhi, where he owned the popular outlet Khatir. After his father died in 1981, his mother Lateef Fatima Khan would run the restaurant, until her death in 1990. While their primary business was Khatir, located in Safdarjung, Shah Rukh revealed that his father spent most of his time running the mess at NSD. He'd visit NSD after school and wait for his sister Shehnaz Lalarukh Khan for two hours every day before going home together. “I was a very cute child and my entire childhood was spent there in the laps and roaming around with arguably India's finest actors,” Shah Rukh told the Times of India in 2014. These actors included not only Pankaj Kapur, who graduated in 1976, but also his

batchmate Raghubir Yadav, seniors Raj Babbar (1975), his future wife Nadira Babbar (1971), Naseeruddin Shah (1971), Rohini Hattangadi (1974), and his juniors like Anupam Kher (1978), most of whom worked with Shah Rukh in films a couple of decades later. “I have watched all their plays and rehearsals for months. I have only grown up wanting to be an actor growing up watching these actors. I may not meet them now, but they have taught me how to act,” said Shah Rukh. He had special fondness for Raj Babbar, whom he used to refer to as “Babbar sher uncle”. Raj Babbar, who would later star with Shah Rukh in Ketan Mehta's 1993 mystery film Maya Memsaab, would teach him “some of the greatest” plays like Suraj Ka Satvan Ghoda, Razia Sultana, and Tughlaq. “I remember watching Raghu bhai (Raghubir Yadav), who was the junior most then, singing the Ganapati puja during rehearsals,” recalled Shah Rukh. Later, when he joined the Theatre Action Group under the tutelage of his mentor Barry John, along with Manoj Bajpayee, Raghubir and other NSD actors “used to help with our syntax and enunciation when we were doing theatre in Delhi”.

Sunil Pal hits back at Samay: ‘Why is there filth in your mouth if you brush your teeth?’

Sunil Pal has hit back at Samay Raina after the young stand-up comic doubled down on his “aap brush kyun nahi karte?” (Why don't you brush your teeth?) on the premiere episode of his popular roast show India's Got Latent season 2. Sunil has now responded to Samay with a joint Instagram Reel with a young mimic who copied Samay to the T.

In the reel shared by Jay Verma and Sunil Pal, the former is seen mimicking Samay on point. In his signature old-school humour, Sunil says, “I forgive you Samay Raina only because your show drops at night, and your name means it's nighttime. Samay = Time; Raina = Night.” Jay then continues to mimic Samay before Sunil decides to give it back for the running joke he cracks on his teeth. “You say I don't brush my teeth? But you brush your teeth, right? Then why is there so much filth in your mouth? Take all that filth out of your mouth and then brush your teeth,” says Sunil, as Jay signs off in Samay Raina style. “@maisamayhoon mimicry in front of Sunil Pal sir (laughing with tears, shocked, and face with sunglasses emoji),” wrote Jay in the caption.

What's the beef between Sunil Pal and Samay Raina?

The beef between Samay and Sunil started last year when the latter slammed the former for the inappropriate language used on season 1 of India's Got Latent. He even asked Samay to learn clean comedy from Kapil Sharma. Samay gave it back to Sunil on his comeback standup special, Still Alive, earlier this year, where Samay revealed that Kapil himself wanted to appear on India's Got Latent. He also called Sunil “insecure” and “frustrated”.

The two came face-to-face on The Great Indian Kapil Show on Netflix India last month, when Sunil doubled down on his issues with Samay's brand of comedy. Samay then asked Sunil, “Ye sab toh theek hai, aap ye batao ki aap brush kyun nahi karte?” (All this is fine, but tell me why you don't brush your teeth). When Kapil asked Sunil to forgive him, he



In the reel shared by Jay Verma and Sunil Pal, the former is seen mimicking Samay on point. In his signature old-school humour, Sunil says, “I forgive you Samay Raina only because your show drops at night, and your name means it's nighttime. Samay = Time; Raina = Night.” Jay then continues to mimic Samay before Sunil decides to give it back for the running joke he cracks on his teeth.

just said he can just give him advice as a senior. However, that didn't Samay from doubling down on his joke on the premiere episode of India's Got Latent season 2 this past Saturday, which dropped simultaneously on Netflix India and his YouTube channel. Days after Sunil suggested Samay invites his parents as the guest panelists of his roast show, Samay took a dig at him and asked a contestant which toothpaste she uses. After she mentioned the brand, Samay suggested her to give it to Sunil Pal as well.