

Tiger safety: Forest dept turns to police for support in Adilabad

Adilabad: Amid unconfirmed news of the killing of a tiger in the forests of a neighbouring district, the forest department is now preparing to enlist the support of the police department to safeguard tigers and curb poaching of wild animals.

A male tiger, which was last tracked in Bheemangal mandal of Nizamabad district, is feared to have been shot dead by poachers along Nizamabad-Jagtial borders. While the Forest officials have not confirmed its death, the incident has heightened concerns over the safety of tigers wandering in the wild of the district. Presently, two tigers are said to have settled in the forests of the region.

Revanth Reddy seeks PM's intervention on key Telangana projects, softens stand on Maharashtra

New Delhi , June 12

Days after launching a sharp attack on Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis over Tummidihatti project, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy adopted a more conciliatory approach and sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention to facilitate discussions with the Maharashtra government on the utilisation of River Godavari waters.

During a meeting with the Prime Minister in New Delhi on Thursday, he stressed that access to Godavari waters was vital for Telangana's future irrigation and drinking water requirements.

The Chief Minister's request comes against the backdrop of his recent criticism of the Maharashtra government. Over the past few days, he had accused Fadnavis of failing to respond to Telangana's requests for talks on the Tummidihatti project.

Addressing a public meeting at Jadcherla last week, Revanth Reddy had alleged that the Maharashtra Chief Minister was avoiding discussions on the project.

"If required, pressure will be exerted on him, his neck will be bent and the project will be constructed," Revanth Reddy had said.

However, during his meeting with the Prime Minister, the Chief Minister focused on seeking the Centre's support for a range of infrastructure and development projects in Telangana.

He urged the Centre to approve the second phase of the Hyderabad Metro Rail project and informed the Prime Minister that proposals worth Rs.38,595 crore had been submitted for the development of 122.9 kilometres of metro connectivity across seven corridors.

Revanth Reddy requested that the Metro Phase-II project be sanctioned as a joint venture between the Centre and the State government.

He also sought immediate approval for the Hyderabad Regional Ring Road (RRR) project. The Chief Minister pointed out that the State government had agreed to bear 50 per

cent of the land acquisition cost for the northern section and had already released Rs.626 crore to the National Highways Authority of India.

According to him, the southern section of the RRR was equally important for strengthening Hyderabad's transport infrastructure. The proposed corridor connecting Choutuppal and Sangareddy would improve regional connectivity and support future urban expansion, he said.

Revanth Reddy informed the Prime Minister that alignment maps and HMDA Master Plan notifications related to the southern section had already been submitted to the Union Ministry of Road

Medak Collector stresses healthy food for future generations

Medak: Medak Collector Pratima Singh, who visited an organic farm of farmer Potharajula Balaraju at Usrikepally, called upon the farmers to follow the path of Balaraju in producing healthy food to the people.

After going through the field on Thursday, the Collector interacted with Balaraju and his family members to learn about the various practices he was following in avoiding pesticides and fertilisers in cultivation.



Transport and Highways. He urged the Centre to approve and implement both the northern and southern corridors simultaneously to ensure the project's timely completion. He also raised issues pertaining to a few other projects.



Prioritising the child's wellbeing over standard legal procedures, the verdict recognised that frequent or unnecessary testing can exacerbate the emotional strain on children already coping with the separation or conflict of their parents.

Psychological evaluation of children shouldn't be ordered routinely: SC

New Delhi , June 12

Noting that children cannot be treated as "mere evidentiary objects", the Supreme Court on Thursday said their psychological or psychiatric evaluation should not be ordered routinely to satisfy the competing claims of estranged parents involved in bitter custody-and-visitation disputes.

A bench of Justice Sanjay Karol and Justice N Kotiswar Singh issued guidelines for cases involving a psychological or psychiatric evaluation of minor children in proceedings arising out of custody, visitation or parental-access

disputes.

The top court modified a Bombay High Court order and set aside key directions that had allowed a four-member panel of psychologists and experts to evaluate a girl whose father is facing allegations under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Prioritising the child's wellbeing over standard legal procedures, the verdict recognised that frequent or unnecessary testing can exacerbate the emotional strain on children already coping with the separation or conflict of their parents.

"We have also, in that context, examined the provisions of the POCSO Act, which proceeds on the fundamental premise that child who has allegedly suffered sexual abuse must not be exposed to processes capable of causing further emotional harm, immolation, or secondary victimisation. Keeping that in mind, we have felt that minimum intrusion to the child's life should be the norm as acting as parens patriae for the child, we have to be more careful when we direct any kind of examination of the child," it said.

Now, before ordering

a psychological assessment of a child, family courts must first appoint an expert to assess the mental state of both parents, particularly the parent who currently has custody and if the expert opines that the child's evaluation is unnecessary or potentially harmful, it must not be conducted.

Writing the judgment for the bench, Justice Singh also directed family courts to periodically review the need for any psychological assessment, noting that a growing child's psychological needs may evolve over time. The parties were

granted liberty to seek modification of custody and visitation arrangements as circumstances change.

The top court introduced safeguards to ensure transparency and accountability as family courts are now mandated to have information about any pending proceedings under the POCSO Act involving the parties, affecting decisions on child custody and visitation rights.

The court took note of expert opinion of National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) on mental health challenges and maladjustment in children due to parental conflict.



Southern Command Chief Calls on Telangana Governor

Hyderabad , June 11

GOC-in-C Southern Command, Lt Gen Sandeep Jain, held a courtesy meeting with Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla at Lok Bhavan to discuss matters during his official visit to the state.

Lieutenant General Sandeep Jain, AVSM, SM, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), Southern Command, Pune, called on the Governor of Telangana, Shiv Pratap Shukla, at Lok Bhavan on Thursday.

Lieutenant General Jain, who is on an official visit to Telangana, met the Governor along with other senior Army officers. The meeting was held as part of his ongoing visit to the state.

Environmental clearance for Sitarama Sagar to be pursued on priority: Uttam

Hyderabad , June 11

Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Thursday directed officials to vigorously pursue and fast-track the environmental clearance process for the Sitarama Sagar Lift Irrigation Scheme.

He chaired a review meeting on major irrigation projects in the erstwhile Khammam district at Jalasoudha. Reviewing the Sitarama Lift Irrigation Project, the Minister stressed the need to expedite all pending environmental clearances.

The project had already secured Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) clearance, also known as Techno-Economic Clearance, from the Central Water Commission (CWC), officials informed the Minister.

They also informed the Minister that land acquisition had been largely completed in some project stretches, while certain forest clearances were still in process.



He said that diverting Godavari waters from the Sitarama Lift Irrigation Project to the Paleru Balancing Reservoir through the NSP Left Canal system should be accorded top priority.

The Irrigation Minister

gave in-principle approval to a proposal made by Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy to lift water from Sitarama Lift Package-I to the Bayyaram upland tribal areas in Yellandu Assembly constituency.

Addressing the issue

of submergence in Bhadrachalam Division due to Polavaram project backwaters, the Irrigation Minister assured that the matter would be taken up shortly with the Polavaram Project Authority (PPA). A dedicated review meeting

would be convened to find solutions, he said.

The Minister also announced that he would undertake a comprehensive tour of irrigation projects in the erstwhile Khammam district within a fortnight to review progress on the ground.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Use Bhakra's excess water, avert floods

THE Bhakra Beas Management Board's (BBMB) advisory urging Punjab and Haryana to draw more water from the Bhakra reservoir should serve as a wake-up call on the growing complexities of water management in north India. Far from being a routine operational decision, it reflects the pressures of climate uncertainty, unsustainable agricultural practices and fragile inter-state cooperation. The reservoir level currently stands at 1,578.07 ft — more than 21 ft higher than at the same time last year. With only about 102 ft of vertical buffer remaining before the full reservoir level, the margin for error is narrowing as the monsoon approaches. Snowmelt from the Himalayas and extreme rainfall events could rapidly transform abundance into vulnerability. Ironically, this challenge coincides with Punjab's paddy transplantation season. Although the state advanced the paddy calendar to June 1 partly to optimise water use, large tracts continue to depend heavily on groundwater while canal networks remain underutilised. When available surface water is not efficiently distributed, reservoirs are forced to retain larger volumes, shrinking the flood cushion needed to absorb sudden inflows. The lessons of the devastating floods of 2023 should not be forgotten. Delayed releases and disputes over reservoir operations fuelled political acrimony and raised questions about preparedness. Dam management cannot focus solely on power generation. Flood moderation must be an equally important objective. Irrigation departments must ensure timely delivery of canal water, particularly to tail-end farmers, allowing greater reliance on surface irrigation and reducing pressure on depleting aquifers. Partner states, meanwhile, must coordinate reservoir operations with foresight.

Mobile Phones Stolen from Sony Vision Showroom; Clues Team Collecting Crucial Evidence and Fingerprints



“Khammam June 11 indian Chronicle:”“Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt visits the crime scene”A burglary took place late in the night at the well-known Sony Vision showroom in Khammam city. Upon receiving information about the incident, Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt reached the spot and reviewed the situation. He directed police officials to take swift action to identify and apprehend the culprits. “According to the complaint lodged by the showroom management, unidentified miscreants broke open the shop locks and entered the premises. They allegedly stole several high-value, advanced mobile phones that were stored in the stock room.” Local police immediately reached the scene and launched an investigation. The Clues Team has begun collecting fingerprints and other crucial evidence from the showroom. Police are also thoroughly examining CCTV footage from the showroom and surrounding areas to trace the offenders and establish the sequence of events. “Further investigation is underway.

Agriculture Officer Inspects Fertilizer Shops; "Kheti Bachao" Program Held in Suryapalli



“Peddapalli District, ?Manthani: Mandal Agriculture Officer (MAO) Dr. Navya conducted inspections at various fertilizer shops across Manthani mandal today. “?As part of the drive, she thoroughly examined the seed stock registers and related documents. Dr. Navya instructed the dealers to ensure that adequate stocks of essential seeds and fertilizers are kept readily available for the farmers. Furthermore, she issued a stern warning that strict legal action will be taken against any dealers found selling seeds or fertilizers at exorbitant rates, or selling old fertilizer stock at newly increased prices.” “?Kheti Bachao” Program at Suryapalli Rythu Vedika” “?In a separate event today, a “Kheti Bachao” (Save Agriculture) awareness program was organized at the Suryapalli Rythu Vedika. Scientist Sri Venkanna from the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) participated in the event.” “?Addressing the farmers, he urged them to shift their focus towards organic farming and reduce the usage of artificial chemical fertilizers. He extensively explained the importance of soil health, emphasizing that soil is the foundational source of all agriculture. He concluded with a powerful message: “Soil is the foundation of everything; if we protect the soil, the soil will protect us.”

Collectorate set for inauguration as Karimnagar eyes administrative transformation

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to inaugurate new complex later this month; district officials asked to ensure public-friendly governance.



KARIMNAGAR June 11 (Correspondent): The newly constructed Collectorate complex in Karimnagar is set to be inaugurated by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy later this month, marking a significant milestone in the district's administrative infrastructure. Ahead of the inauguration, Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnamm Prabhakar inspected the facility and reviewed the arrangements with officials. He was accompanied by District Collector Chitra Mishra, Munnuru Kapu Corporation Chairman Bomma Sirram Chakravarthy, SUDA Chairman Komatireddy Narendra Reddy, corporators, officials and public representatives.

Addressing the media, Mr. Prabhakar said that although the Collectorate project had been initiated several years ago, substantial works remained incomplete. He credited District Collector Chitra Mishra with expediting the pending works after bringing them to the government's attention, leading to the completion of the project. The Chief Minister is expected to inaugurate the Collectorate during the last week of the month. The programme will also include the unveiling of a Telangana Thalli statue and the hoisting of the National Flag.

Mr. Prabhakar said the new Collectorate would serve as the district's principal administrative hub, with various government offices being shifted to the new premises after its inauguration. The existing Collectorate building, he added, would be upgraded and utilised for other official purposes. The Minister said landscaping and greenery development at the complex had been undertaken under the supervision of the Sathavahana Urban Development Authority (SUDA). Road widening works were also being carried out to improve public access to the facility.

Emphasising citizen-centric governance, he said the administration should ensure effective implementation of welfare initiatives, including ration cards, fine rice distribution, free electricity benefits, housing schemes, pensions and municipal services. He expressed confidence that Karimnagar would emerge as a model district in governance and service delivery. Highlighting the district's growth potential, Mr. Prabhakar said Karimnagar was developing as an education and healthcare hub with the presence of Satavahana University, the Medical College, and newly established professional institutions such as law and pharmacy colleges. He also said the Chief Minister's visit would include programmes at Satavahana University and the inauguration of several municipal and departmental development projects.

Minister reviews progress of Husnabad–Kothapalli four-lane road works

Directs officials to expedite power infrastructure shifting and complete pending culverts; 163.20 crore sanctioned for project.

KARIMNAGAR June 11 (Correspondent): Minister for Transport and BC Welfare Ponnamm Prabhakar on Thursday inspected the ongoing four-lane road expansion works between Husnabad and Kothapalli on the Rajiv Highway and directed officials to accelerate the pace of construction to ensure timely completion of the project.

During the inspection, the Minister reviewed the work related to the removal of electricity poles along the road alignment and the construction of transmission towers being erected as part of the shifting of power infrastructure necessitated by the widening project. He interacted with officials and field staff and instructed them to complete the pole-shifting works without delay. The Minister later visited Kondapur village outskirts, where culverts are being constructed as part of the road expansion project. Stressing the importance of uninterrupted progress, he directed officials to expedite the completion of pending culvert works. Officials informed him that the State government had sanctioned ?163.20 crore for the construction of the four-lane road between Husnabad and Kothapalli under Packages I and II. Of the total allocation, ?86 crore has been earmarked under Package I for the 10-km stretch between Kothapalli and Sundaragiri, while ?77.20 crore has been sanctioned under Package II for the Sundaragiri–Husnabad section. The project is expected to improve road connectivity,



reduce travel time and facilitate smoother movement of vehicles between Karimnagar and surrounding areas.

Congress Leader Ravella Krishna Rao's Birthday Celebrated Grandly



“Khammam Nelekondapalli, June 11 indian Chronicle:”“The birthday celebrations of Congress leader and former Muthapuram Society Director Ravella Krishna Rao were held in a grand manner on Thursday at the mandal headquarters. A large number of friends, Congress party workers, supporters, relatives, and well-wishers participated in the event and conveyed their greetings.” On the occasion, Krishna Rao cut a birthday cake and was felicitated with bouquets and shawls. Speakers praised him as a leader who maintains close relations with the people, actively participates in social service activities, promotes the ideals of the Congress party, and contributes to the implementation of government welfare schemes. “Several speakers

noted that Krishna Rao has earned public appreciation through the organization of Vinayaka Chavithi celebrations, Bathukamma festivities, Sankranti rangoli competitions for women, sports events for youth, and various social service programs across the mandal. They highlighted that his service-oriented approach, social responsibility, and continuous efforts to address public issues have brought him closer to the people. “The gathering wished him good health, prosperity, and a long life, expressing hope that he would celebrate many more birthdays and achieve greater heights in both political and social spheres. Friends and admirers felicitated him with shawls, presented bouquets, and extended their best wishes.” Speaking on the occasion, Ravella Krishna Rao expressed gratitude to everyone who conveyed birthday wishes. He said he would always cherish the love, affection, and support shown by the people. He added that with the blessings of the public, the cooperation of friends, and the encouragement of the party leadership, he would continue to work with greater dedication and a spirit of service. “Among those who attended the celebrations were District Congress Spokesperson Bachalakuri Nagaraju, Kadiyala Naresh, senior journalists Attuluri Hanumantha Rao and Polampalli Nageswara Rao, Golusu Anjaneyulu, P. Upender, Vadlamudi Venkateswarlu, Malleboyina Upender, Ramachandra Rao, Pentamalla Kotaiah, friends, supporters of Epuri Hari, and several others.

Drainage and CC Road Works Worth 1.35 Crore Underway in Uppal's Sathya Nagar and Shanti Nagar:

Former Corporator RAJITHA PARAMESHWAR REDDY “

““UPPAL, JUNE 11 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Former Corporator Rajitha Parameswar Reddy inspected the ongoing underground drainage and CC road works being taken up at a cost of ?1.35 crore in Sathya Nagar and Shanti Nagar of Uppal Division. “The works are being carried out in line with the assurance she had given during her recent visits to the colonies to address the residents' demand for improved roads and drainage facilities. The development works, including the construction of an underground drainage system and CC roads, are progressing at a brisk pace. Rajitha Parameswar Reddy, along with local residents, reviewed the progress of the works. “Speaking on the occasion, she urged the officials to ensure that the drainage works are completed before the onset of the monsoon season. She also stated that the CC road works would commence shortly and assured that Sathya Nagar and Shanti Nagar would be developed into model colonies as



promised. “Among those present were K. Vijay Kumar, K. Satish Mudhiraj, A. Shiva Kumar, P. Sanjeeva Reddy, U. Raju Gupta, Senior Satyanarayana, Naresh Chary, B. Raju, J. Bhanu, Karunakar Raju, Ramana, M. Vijay Kumar, M. Suresh, Satyanarayana, Eka Swamy, Lakshmi, Shiva Parvathi, Sirisha Vani, Vani, A. Lakshmi, Latha, Sarojini, Sujatha, Padma and others.



Telangana BJP State President Shri N. Ramchander Rao garu addressed the media in Siddipet and spoke at length on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. ““Shri Ramchander Rao garu said that the Congress, BRS and AIMIM are spreading false information and misleading people on SIR. He stated that SIR is not a BJP programme, but a periodic and constitutional exercise carried out by the Election Commission of India to cleanse and update the voter list. ““He said that such voter list revision exercises have been conducted several times since 1951, with the last intensive revision having taken place in 2002. He added that from 2002 to 2026, many voters may have passed away, shifted residence, or may be registered in more than one place. Therefore, it is necessary to remove deceased voters, duplicate entries and illegal names from the voter list to ensure the principle of “One Person, One Vote”. ““Shri Ramchander Rao garu said that the purpose of SIR is to strengthen democracy by ensuring a clean and transparent voter list. He stated that every genuine voter has the right to vote wherever they are residing, and no eligible voter will be removed from the voter list. He strongly condemned the false propaganda being spread by BRS and Congress that people will lose property rights if they shift their vote to the place where they work or live. ““He said that on one hand, the Congress Government has appointed BLAs, while on the other hand, Congress leaders are misleading and spreading false propaganda on it. He also pointed out that AIMIM has set up help desks for SIR, but at the same time opposition parties are creating fear among people by alleging that their votes are being removed. While they participate in SIR, they are also creating false propaganda on SIR. ““He said that the voter list is prepared and revised by the Election Commission, which is an independent constitutional authority, and neither the BJP nor the Central Government has any role in removing voters. He added that the State Government appoints BLOs, and therefore blaming the BJP for every issue is nothing but drama. ““Shri Ramchander Rao garu said that when the BJP was in opposition, it participated in SIR and other electoral processes with full faith in democracy. However, today the Congress, BRS, AIMIM and INDI alliance parties are opposing the process only for vote bank politics. ““He questioned Congress leaders, asking why SIR, EVMs and the Election Commission are praised when Congress wins, but blamed when Congress loses. He cited examples of Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka, where Congress won elections, and asked why Congress did not raise doubts about EVMs or electoral processes in those states. He said that if the INDI alliance wins, they call it people's mandate, but if they lose, they blame EVMs, SIR and the Election Commission. ““Shri Ramchander Rao garu said that BRS and Congress are speaking the same language on SIR, just as they have done on several issues, including One Nation One Election, delimitation and the Women's Reservation Bill. He asked the people of Telangana to observe how Congress, BRS and AIMIM are working together. ““He further stated that BRS has no moral right to speak about Telangana. He said that BRS MPs did not vote for Telangana Bill in the parliament, and after the formation of Telangana, only the KCR family benefited while farmers, youth, employees and common people continued to suffer. ““He criticised both BRS and Congress for failing the people of Telangana. He said that farmers' distress and suicides remain a serious concern, Rythu Bharosa has not been properly implemented, fee reimbursement dues are pending, government employees are facing unresolved issues, and the promises made to the people have not been fulfilled. ““Shri Ramchander Rao garu said that the BJP is the only real opposition in Telangana and is continuously fighting for the rights of farmers, youth, women, employees and all sections of society. He stated that people of Telangana have already given opportunities to both BRS and Congress, and there is now a growing feeling among the people that the BJP must be given a chance. ““He asserted that the BJP is a people's party and will continue to stand with the people of Telangana on every issue.

Vijay Kumar Appointed as Aryavysya Mahasabha State Secretary

“Peddapalli District, Manthani, June 1: Komaravelli Vijay Kumar, a prominent businessman and dedicated social and spiritual activist from Manthani, has been appointed as the State Secretary of the Aryavysya Mahasabha. The announcement was made by the Mahasabha's State President, Amaravadi Laxminarayana, on Thursday. “?Laxminarayana stated that Vijay Kumar was chosen for the role in recognition of his extensive services toward strengthening the Aryavysya Mahasabha across the Manthani region, the undivided Karimnagar district, and the state, as well as his ongoing commitment to various social and spiritual welfare initiatives in Manthani. The official appointment letter was handed over during the announcement, following which Vijay Kumar was felicitated by the State President with a traditional shawl. “?Speaking on the occasion, Vijay Kumar expressed his gratitude and assured that he would work to the best of his abilities to



further strengthen the organization in the state and actively promote the welfare and development of its members. “?Several local leaders and community members expressed their happiness and extended warm congratulations to Vijay Kumar on his new appointment, including: “?Vodnala Srinivas (Manthani Municipal Chairman)? “?Nalmasu Prabhakar (Aryavysya Sangham District President)? “?yellanki Vamsidhar (Town President)? “?Kotta Srinivas (Sri Vasavi Kanyaka Parameswari Temple Committee President)? “?Racharla Thirumala (Women's Wing President)? “?Keshetti Ashok Kumar, vollala Satyanarayana, and Nagaraju (Community Leaders)

Special Programme Held in Uppal Division Marking 4,399 Days of P M Narendra Modi's Governance



“UPPAL , JUNE 11 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): A special programme was organized at New Shantinagar Colony in Uppal Division to mark the completion of 4,399 days of the successful tenure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. “Following the directions of Uppal Division President Marineni Phanindra, the event was conducted under the leadership of Uppal Division SC Morcha President Bhaja Jayaram. Special prayers were offered at Bangaru Maisamma Temple, after which tributes were paid to the portrait of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution. A ceremonial milk abhishekam was also performed for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. “BJP SC Morcha State Secretary Surekha, who attended the programme as the chief guest, explained to local residents the welfare schemes introduced by the Central Government and highlighted Prime Minister Modi's governance initiatives. “Speaking on the occasion, Uppal Division President Marineni Phanindra said that Prime Minister Narendra

Modi has been continuously striving for the welfare of the poor and weaker sections of society while leading the country on the path of development. He also stated that the BJP would always stand by the people and work towards resolving public issues in Uppal Division. “Among those who participated in the programme were BJP senior leader Balwant Chari, Division General Secretary Teega Vittal Rao Mudiraj, Vice President Anji Reddy, senior leader Sridhar Gupta, Mahila Morcha President Maddela Padma, OBC Morcha President Amarender, Yuva Morcha President Aadepe Ramesh, Girijan Morcha President Raju Naik, Minority Morcha President Sridharla John, Social Media Convener Abhiram, Dalit Morcha leaders Shivakumar, Vinod, Siliveru Sudarshan, Satish, Ram Niwas, Raviteja and Just Beer Shekhar, Yuva Morcha spokesperson Venkat Sai Mudiraj, Rajender, and Mahila Morcha leaders Navata, Jyothi, Sharada, Komalatha, Vijetha, Pooja, Madhavi and Sravanti, among others.

Uppal Youth Congress President Akarapu Arun Patel Condoles Demise of Devika, Extends Support to Family

“UPPAL , JUNE 11 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Uppal Constituency Youth Congress President Akarapu Arun Patel expressed deep sorrow over the demise of Devika, a resident of Venkat Reddy Nagar, who passed away due to illness. He visited the residence of the deceased, paid his last respects, and conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family. “Praying for eternal peace to the departed soul, Arun Patel wished that God grant strength and courage to the family members during this difficult time. “He stated that an LOC (Letter of Credit) assistance of Rs. 8 lakh had been sanctioned and provided to Devika's family through the government. The family members expressed their gratitude to Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Parameshwar Reddy for extending support and facilitating the assistance. Arun Patel said that although financial and medical assistance was provided by the govern-



ment for her treatment, fate took an unfortunate turn and they could not save her. He expressed his heartfelt grief over the loss and extended his sympathies to the family.

BRS Leaders Meet MLC Shambhipur Raju, Discuss Strengthening Party in Uppal 10th Division



UPPAL , JUNE 11 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Under the leadership of BRS contested corporator Aratikayala Bhaskar, senior leaders of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS)

met former Medchal district president and MLC Shambhipur Raju and briefed him on the current political situation in Uppal's 10th Division. They also explained in detail the issues raised during a press meeting held last Sunday. “Responding to the leaders, MLC Shambhipur Raju said that the matter would be brought to the notice of BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) and assured them that necessary steps would be taken in the coming days to strengthen the party in the 10th Division. “Among those present were former Uppal Division president Vemula Santosh Reddy, former general secretary Somasani Praveen, former social media president Vemula Venkat Reddy, former vice-president Anya Venkatesh, former joint secretary Suravi Satyapal Reddy, former BRS youth president Aratikayala Vamsi Mudiraj, BC Cell former general secretary Murali, and joint secretary Thummalapalli Yadagiri Reddy.

Tender Policy Dealing a Death Blow to Handloom Sector – G.O. No. 1 Must Be Restored: Eega Mallesham

Warangal, June 11 (Indian Chronicle): “As the indefinite protest launched by handloom workers in Warangal district entered its seventh consecutive day, former National President of the All India Padmashali Association and former Director of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), Eega Mallesham, extended his solidarity to the ongoing agitation. Speaking on the occasion, he expressed serious concern that the tender-based procurement system being implemented by the State Government is inflicting severe damage on the handloom sector. “He demanded that the government immediately revoke the existing tender policy and restore the earlier procurement mechanism under which handloom products were directly purchased from cooperative societies through TESCO. He cautioned that if the government fails to respond promptly, the agitation would be intensified across Telangana and, if necessary, protesters would lay siege to the TESCO office. “Mallesham stated that lakhs of handloom workers across Telangana depend entirely on the weaving industry for their livelihood, with thousands of families in the erstwhile Warangal and Karimnagar districts relying solely on this traditional occupation. He noted that the erstwhile Warangal district has earned a distinguished reputation for the production of bed sheets and jamakhanas, providing direct employment to nearly 10,000 weavers. “Recalling the provisions of G.O. No. 1, he said that TESCO previously procured bed sheets and jamakhanas directly from handloom cooperative societies and supplied them to government hostels. However, with the introduction of the tender system, cooperative societies have been deprived of procurement opportunities, resulting in a massive accumulation of unsold products. Consequently, employment opportunities have sharply declined over the past two months,



pushing handloom families into a deep economic crisis. “He further pointed out that, in protest against these developments, handloom workers in Warangal district have suspended weaving activities and launched an agitation since June 1, 2026. As a result, thousands of workers and their family members are facing severe financial hardships. “Appealing to the State Government, Mallesham urged Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to intervene immediately, abolish the tender-based procurement system, and restore G.O. No. 1 in its original form. He emphasized that direct procurement through TESCO would revive employment opportunities, strengthen handloom cooperative societies, and safeguard the livelihoods of thousands of weaving families. “The programme was attended by Handloom Joint Action Committee (JAC) State President Veera Mohan, along with Vadnala Narendra, Aadepe Ravinder, Bachu Anandam, Gorantla Raju, Chippa Venkateswarlu, D.S. Murthy, Bethi Ashok, Bairi Shyam, Yelugam Chinn Komuraiah, Yelugam Bhadrachari, Mega Raju, Kumaraswamy, Srinivas, leaders and representatives of various handloom workers' unions, and a large number of women handloom workers.

Providing Excellent Medical Services is the Congress Government's Main Goal

MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy

New 100-bed Area Hospital to be Dedicated to the Public as Soon as Possible” “Parakala, June 11 (Indian Chronicle) : Reaffirming that providing quality and accessible healthcare services to the public is a top priority for the Congress government, Parkal MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy directed officials to expedite the operationalization of the newly constructed 100-bed government area hospital by equipping it with state-of-the-art medical equipment and modern infrastructure. “A meeting of the Hospital Development Committee was held on Thursday at the newly constructed area hospital, presided over by MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy. The meeting was attended by the Hospital Development Committee Chairperson and Hanumakonda District Collector Chahat Bajpai, Parkal Municipal Chairman Pavushetti Sunil Kumar, RDO D.S. Venkanna, Area Hospital Superintendent Dr. Gautam Chauhan, Municipal Commissioner Potharaju Pavan, and other committee members. “The committee conducted a comprehensive review of various issues, including hospital development, the expansion of healthcare services, the procurement of advanced medical equipment, the stocking of essential medicines, and the creation of necessary infrastructure for surgeries. The MLA held detailed discussions with officials and committee members regarding the procurement of medical equipment worth ₹79.18 lakh using Arogyasri funds. “Revuri Prakash Reddy sought detailed information on various aspects, including the current number of doctors and daily patient volume, monthly delivery and surgery statistics, medicine stocks, additional equipment required for the new hospital, outpatient and inpatient figures, and the healthcare needs of the mandals served by the hospital. Subsequently, he reviewed the hospital administration's bills and records, expressing dissatisfaction with the way the records were being maintained. “Addressing the meeting, the MLA directed officials to ensure that the Parkal Area Hospital provides quality healthcare services around the clock without interruption. He instructed them to ensure that



doctors are always available to treat patients and that an anesthesiologist is constantly on duty. He also ordered that adequate stocks of all essential medicines be maintained at all times. “The MLA mentioned that during his visit to the new hospital last month, he had brought the requirements regarding medical equipment, infrastructure, and pending development works to the attention of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. He advised the officials to maintain complete transparency and accountability in the handling of bills, receipts, and records. He directed the concerned agencies to expedite all pending works and dedicate the hospital to public service as soon as possible. “He instructed the Municipal Commissioner to accelerate the long-pending market complex construction project in Parkal town. “Speaking on the occasion, District Collector Chahat Bajpai reviewed the availability of specialist medical services, surgical procedures, delivery statistics, and the overall quality of healthcare services being provided. She advised officials to adhere to the highest standards in hospital administration and service delivery to ensure better healthcare facilities for the public.

Former Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj Conducts Extensive Tour in Srinagar Colony

UPPAL , JUNE 11 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): At the request of Srinagar Colony president Om Prakash, former Chilukanaagar Corporator and former GHMC Standing Committee member Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj conducted an extensive tour of Srinagar Colony in Beerappagadda Division and identified several civic issues affecting the area. “During the inspection, residents brought various long-pending problems to her attention. They requested the construction of new stormwater drain pipelines in some streets, replacement of badly damaged CC roads with new ones, construction of the first floor of the community hall, installation of new drinking water pipelines in certain localities, and provision of streetlights at several junctions within the colony. “Addressing the residents, Geetha Praveen Mudiraj assured them that, with the support of Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, necessary funds would be allocated and all the developmental works would be taken up and completed at the earliest. “The residents appreciated her continuous efforts towards the development of colonies and



bastis and thanked her for regularly interacting with the public and striving for the resolution of their issues. BRS State leader Bannala Praveen and residents of Srinagar Colony also participated in the programme.

A Hub of Soil Mafia Atrocities Narsampet : “Officials Attacked for Questioning Illegalsities



– Takkallapalli Ravinder Rao” “Narsampet/Warangal, June 11 (Indian Chronicle): “Takkallapalli Ravinder Rao, the BRS party coordinator for the Narsampet constituency, has expressed deep concern over the rise in illegal soil excavation activities backed by ruling party leaders. He noted with alarm that government officials are facing attacks and intimidation while attempting to enforce regulations as part of their official duties. “He alleged that certain public representatives and high-ranking officials have colluded to facilitate illegal soil excavation in violation of government norms.

Consequently, lower-level employees and officials who question these unlawful activities are reportedly facing undue pressure, threats, and physical assaults. “Ravinder Rao criticized ruling party leaders across the Narsampet constituency for pressuring Revenue and Irrigation department officials to grant permissions in violation of rules, thereby allowing illegal soil excavation and transportation activities to continue unchecked. “He described the attacks on officials who insist on upholding the law as highly unfortunate and dangerous for democratic governance. Questioning the government's commitment to law and order, he emphasized that government officials should be able to discharge their duties without the fear of intimidation or violence. He emphasized the issue, questioning how ordinary citizens could feel safe when such duties cannot be performed securely. “Strongly condemning the indiscriminate attack on Madannapet GPO official Narasimhaswamy, Ravinder Rao demanded the immediate arrest of those responsible and urged that strict legal action be taken against the accused. “He called upon the District Collector and senior officials from the Revenue, Irrigation, and Police departments to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the incident and take decisive measures to ensure the safety of government officials in the future. “Warning against the unchecked rise of the soil mafia in the Narsampet constituency, Ravinder Rao stated that if the government fails to immediately curb these activities, the BRS party, together with the public, would launch direct democratic agitations and public protests.

Congress Leaders Submit Representation to Collector Seeking EV Bikes for SC Beneficiaries in Uppal Constituency



“UPPAL , JUNE 11 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Congress leaders submitted a representation to the Medchal-Malkajigiri District Collector requesting that eligible Scheduled Caste (SC) beneficiaries from the Uppal constituency be provided electric vehicles under the EV Bike Scheme being implemented by the Telangana SC Corporation. “The representation was submitted under the leadership of Medchal-Malkajigiri District Congress Committee President Thotakura Vajresh Yadav and Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar

Reddy. “Speaking on the occasion, the leaders stated that the Revanth Reddy government is committed to the welfare and upliftment of Scheduled Castes and is determined to ensure that government welfare schemes reach every eligible beneficiary. They urged the District Collector to examine the list of eligible applicants from the Uppal constituency and sanction EV bikes without delay. “Among those who participated in the programme were Medchal District General Secretary H.R. Mohan, Uppal A-Block SC Cell President Lingampalli Ramakrishna, Akiti Agam Reddy, Polepaka Anjaiah, Noothanakanti Raju, Vamsi, and Sarfaraz, along with other party leaders and workers.

Hyderabad to host largest free Kathak workshop on June 13

Hyderabad: Hyderabad is set to witness a landmark cultural event as Archana Misra, Founder & Director of Naad Bhed – The Dance Studio, hosts a free and open-to-all Kathak workshop.

Ph.D. Research on Postmodern Trends in Hyderabad Awarded at Osmania University



OU JUNE 11 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):Ms. B.S. Sushmita has been awarded the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Sociology for her groundbreaking research titled The Postmodern Condition: Traits, Trends and Implications

A Descriptive Study of Hyderabad City." The study was carried out under the supervision of Dr. Ram Shepherd Bheenaveni. This research is recognized as one of the first comprehensive sociological inquiries into postmodernism within the context of Hyderabad. By adopting an empirical approach, Ms. Sushmita examined the evolving traits and trends of postmodern life, documenting how cultural and social aspects have undergone significant transformation in recent years. Her findings reveal that the postmodern condition in Hyderabad has shifted considerably, reflecting new patterns in lifestyle, media, and social interaction. The study not only contributes to academic discourse but also provides insights relevant to contemporary urban society. The work stands out as a unique and original contribution, offering a descriptive account that bridges theory with lived realities. It is expected to inspire further research in sociology and related disciplines. The achievement of Ms. Sushmita marks a proud milestone in her academic journey and highlights the importance of innovative scholarship in understanding changing social conditions.

G.O. No. 1 Must Be Restored to Safeguard the Handloom Sector – Gundu Sudharani

Warangal, June 11 (Indian Chronicle) : Gundu Sudharani, former Mayor of the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation and former Rajya Sabha member, has urged the Telangana government to immediately restore G.O. No. 1 and scrap the currently implemented tender-based procurement system. She emphasized that these measures are essential to protect the welfare and livelihoods of the lakhs of workers across the state who depend on the handloom sector. "While submitting a representation to the State Minister for Handlooms, Textiles, Agriculture, Marketing, and Cooperation, Sri Tummala Nageswara Rao, on Thursday, Sudharani explained the crisis facing the handloom community. She noted that thousands of weavers, particularly in the undivided Warangal and Karimnagar districts, rely entirely on the handloom industry for their livelihood. However, she pointed out that the introduction of the tender system for procuring handloom products has halted direct purchases from handloom cooperative societies, leading to a severe employment crisis among the weavers. "She highlighted that the undivided Warangal district is renowned across the state for the production of bedsheets and jhankanas (floor mats), with approximately 10,000 weavers depending on this traditional craft for their sustenance. Referring to the previous policy, she mentioned G.O. No. She explained that under G.O. No. 1, bedsheets and floor mats were procured directly from handloom cooperative societies through TESCO and supplied to government hostels, thereby providing continuous employment and financial stability to thousands of weaving families. "Sudharani expressed concern that the suspension of G.O. No. 1 and the implementation of a tender-based procurement system had led to a massive accumulation of unsold stock within the cooperative societies. She noted that weavers are facing severe financial hardship due to limited market opportunities. She stated that the situation has deteriorated further



over the past two months, creating a scenario where weaving activities in many parts of Warangal district could come to a complete halt starting June 1. "She highlighted that this crisis has severely impacted approximately 10,000 handloom weavers and their families across the undivided Warangal district. She urged the government to intervene immediately to support the struggling handloom sector. Emphasizing the need to preserve traditional weaving skills while ensuring employment security and welfare for the weavers, Sudharani demanded the withdrawal of the tender-based procurement system and the restoration of G.O. No. 1 to its original form. She also urged the government to continue the direct procurement of handloom products from cooperative societies through TESCO for supply to government hostels, thereby restoring sustainable livelihoods and financial security to thousands of handloom-weaving families.

Lokayukta Fact-Finding Commission Deputy Director Jaipal Reddy, Inspector Mahender Visit Uppal Bhagayath HMDA Layout

UPPAL , JUNE 11 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Residents of Uppal Bhagayath HMDA Layout, who had been struggling for years with several serious civic issues and had grown frustrated after repeatedly approaching public representatives and officials of various departments, approached the Lokayukta Court in 2024 through the Uppal Bhagayath Welfare Association. "Acting on the complaint, a team led by Lokayukta Court Deputy Director Jaipal Reddy and Inspector Mahender Reddy visited the HMDA Layout on Thursday. In the presence of Welfare Association members and officials from HMDA and GHMC, who were named as respondents in the case, the fact-finding team conducted a detailed inspection of the problems prevailing in the layout. "Following legal advice from senior members, the association had filed a complaint against HMDA and GHMC, holding them responsible for the unresolved issues. The Lokayukta Court admitted the petition and conducted several hearings, during which association members explained the severity of the problems. Subsequently, notices were issued to HMDA and GHMC seeking their explanations. "During the course of the hearings, the Lokayukta Court reportedly expressed displeasure over the functioning of both departments. Thereafter, HMDA and GHMC initiated certain remedial measures, including laying blacktop roads, repairing overflowing drainage manholes, deploying sanitation workers, and installing new



streetlights. "As part of the ongoing inquiry, Deputy Director Jaipal Reddy and Inspector Mahender reviewed the present conditions in the layout along with association members. GHMC Uppal Circle Deputy Commissioner Shailaja, Town Planning ACP Nagireddy, HMDA Deputy Engineer Satya Prasad, and Assistant Engineer Venkatesh were also present and briefed the Lokayukta officials on the current status of the civic issues. "Officials stated that the Fact-Finding Commission would prepare a comprehensive report based on the inspection and submit it before the Lokayukta Court. "The programme was attended by Welfare Association president Mekala Madhusudhan Reddy and members Ravinder Reddy, Chandrasekhar, Narottam Reddy, Madhav Reddy, Kamal, Allam Shivaprasad, Suman, Koteswara Rao, Mallikarjun, Aditya, Santosh, Sandeep and others.

Congress Government Has Plunged the Handloom Sector into a Severe Crisis: Ganta Ravikumar

--Open tender system must be withdrawn; GO No. 1 must be immediately restored""Kothawada/Warangal, June 11 (Indian Chronicle): BJP Warangal District President Ganta Ravikumar severely criticized the Congress government for pushing Telangana's prestigious handloom sector into a deep crisis through its adverse policies, noting that thousands of handloom families have lost their employment and are struggling for a livelihood. "On Thursday, BJP leaders extended their full support to workers from handloom cooperative societies who have been staging a peaceful protest and a loom shutdown for the past five days at the statue of Acharya Konda Laxman Bapuji in Kothawada, Warangal. "Addressing the gathering, Ravikumar alleged that Congress leaders—who had made numerous promises during the elections to stand by handloom workers and prioritize the sector's development—have neglected this community after coming to power. He criticized State Minister Konda Surekha and former Mayor Gundu Sudharani—who had received significant support from handloom workers and the Padmashali community—for failing to resolve the issues facing the sector. He alleged that the Congress government has undermined G.O. No. 1, which was designed to provide continuous employment to handloom weavers by procuring necessary uniforms, carpets, bedsheets, and other items for government schools, residential educational institutions, and hostels through TESCO. He stated that the introduction of an open tender system has severely weakened handloom cooperative societies and disrupted the tra-

ditional procurement process. "He noted that, as a result, the procurement of handloom products has stalled, massive stocks of unsold goods have piled up in cooperative societies, and thousands of weaver families have been plunged into financial distress. Ravikumar expressed concern that the livelihoods of workers are in jeopardy due to the government's failure to safeguard the handloom sector. "Highlighting the significance of the Warangal handloom industry, he recalled that Warangal carpets have earned international acclaim through the 'Geographical Indication' (GI) tag. Despite this recognition, he alleged that the cancellation of procurement orders meant for local handloom cooperative societies has caused severe hardship to approximately 10,000 weavers and their families. Demanding immediate corrective measures, Ravikumar urged the government to withdraw the 'open tender' procurement policy and restore 'G.O. No. 1' to its original form. He also urged that orders for over a lakh carpets and bedsheets required by government hostels and educational institutions be exclusively allocated to the primary handloom cooperative societies in Warangal district. "Furthermore, he demanded the restoration of welfare schemes for handloom weavers—such as insurance coverage and yarn subsidies—and the immediate release of pending loan waivers and other outstanding dues. "Warning that protests would be escalated, Ravikumar stated that if the Congress government continued with policies detrimental to the livelihoods of handloom weavers, they would intensify their agitation across the undivided Warangal district.

Khammam Minor Assault Case Reflects Breakdown of Law and Order: BJP Leaders



"Hyderabad/Khammam, June 11 indian Chronicle: BJP leaders have expressed deep concern over the alleged sexual assault of a 12-year-old girl from Khammam, describing the incident as a shocking crime that has brought shame to society and exposed the deteriorating law-and-order situation in the state. "A delegation of Telangana BJP leaders visited the victim, who is currently undergoing treatment in critical condition at Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences in Hyderabad. The delegation included state secretary and Khammam district in-charge Baddam Mahipal Reddy, state treasurer Devaki Vasudeva Rao, district president Nelluri Koteswara Rao, and state spokespersons Vakadani Pulla Rao Yadav and Namburi Ramalingeswara

Rao, among others. "After meeting the victim and her family, the BJP leaders said they were deeply distressed by her condition. They stated that the girl had suffered severe injuries and that doctors had indicated a long and difficult recovery process. The leaders also met with NIMS doctors and requested that the best possible medical care be provided without any compromise. "The delegation interacted with the victim's family members, who were reportedly in deep distress, and assured them of the party's support throughout their pursuit of justice. "Criticizing the state government, BJP leaders alleged that its response to the incident had been insensitive and inadequate. They questioned why the family had not received sufficient support despite Khammam being represented by senior ministers and the Deputy Chief Minister. The leaders also accused the government of focusing more on deploying police personnel for political purposes than on assisting the victim and her family. "The BJP further claimed that law and order had deteriorated under the Congress government and cited recent crimes against children in different parts of the state as evidence. Referring to crime statistics, the leaders alleged that cases of crimes against children had increased and called for stronger measures to ensure public safety. "The BJP leaders also accused the ruling parties of failing to act decisively against repeat offenders and alleged that victims in some cases were being intimidated. They demanded the establishment of a fast-track court to ensure speedy justice in the Khammam case and called for the harshest possible punishment for the accused if found guilty under the law. "In addition, the BJP demanded that the state government provide 750 lakh as ex gratia assistance to the victim's family and bear all medical and surgical expenses until the girl fully recovers. The party assured the family that it would continue to support them until justice is delivered. "Note: The allegations and demands mentioned above were made by BJP leaders during their visit and have not been independently verified.

Congress Alleges Misuse of Power by BJP Over Meenakshi Natarajan's Nomination Rejection

"Khammam Nelakondapalli, June 11 indian Chronicle: Congress District Official Spokesperson Bachalakuri Nagaraju alleged that the BJP is misusing its power and influencing constitutional institutions for political gain. "Speaking at a press conference held in Nelakondapalli on Thursday, Nagaraju strongly condemned the rejection of the Rajya Sabha nomination of Meenakshi Natarajan. He alleged that the rejection was part of a conspiracy orchestrated jointly by the BJP and the Election Commission. "According to Nagaraju, leaders like Meenakshi Natarajan in the Rajya Sabha would expose and challenge the BJP's alleged conspiracies, which is why her nomination was rejected. He questioned whether the Returning Officer had the authority to reject the nomination and claimed that the decision violated guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court of India. "Nagaraju further alleged that the Election Commission acted under pressure from the BJP in rejecting Meenakshi Natarajan's nomination. He criticized what he described as political interference in the elec-



toral process and demanded accountability. "Among those present at the press conference were former Sarpanch Gandu Janayya, former Mandal SC Cell President Potta Panjara Ravi, Palair Constituency Youth Congress Vice President Gattikonda Vijay, Mandal Youth Congress leader Gundu Mahesh, Kadiyala Naresh, and other party workers.

Extensive Publicity for Government Welfare Schemes Urged

"Khammam Nelakondapalli, June 11 indian Chronicle: "Tumburu Dayakar Reddy, Camp Office In-charge of State Revenue, Housing, and Information Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, emphasized the need for extensive grassroots-level publicity of government welfare and development programs. "He distributed Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) cheques to beneficiaries from various villages in the mandal during a program held on Thursday at the party office in Nelakondapalli. "Speaking on the occasion, Dayakar Reddy stated that the state government is committed to the welfare of all sections of society. He noted that, with the special initiative of Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, financial assistance through CMRF cheques had been sanctioned to numerous beneficiaries. "He urged party workers and local leaders to ensure that information about the government's welfare measures and development initiatives reaches every household through effective field-level campaigns. He expressed confidence that the party would emerge as an unbeatable force in the upcoming MPTC and ZPTC elections and called upon every party worker to work with dedication and discipline like a soldier. "Among those



who attended the program were Market Committee Chairman Vennapusala Seetharamulu, Mandal President Kodali Govinda Rao, Shakhamuri Ramesh, Sarpanches Boyina Venu and Dheeravath Ashoka Rani, along with party leaders Jerripothula Anjani, Pasupuleti Srilatha, Rayapudi Naveen, Venkanna, Garidepalli Rama Rao, Kadiyala Naresh, and Rayapudi Rohith, among others.

42-Day Buttermilk Distribution Service Program Concludes Successfully in Bonakal



Khammam Bonakal, June 11 Indian Chronicle: "A 42-day buttermilk distribution service program, organized by the Bonakal Mandal Arya Vysya Association, concluded successfully on Thursday in Bonakal mandal headquarters. "The initiative, launched on May 1 to provide relief from the intense summer heat, served hundreds of travelers, workers, farmers, and local residents every day by distributing chilled buttermilk free of cost. "Speaking at the closing ceremony, Mandal Arya Vysya Association President Chede Venkateswara Rao expressed gratitude to the donors, association members, and volunteers whose support contributed to the program's success. He specially acknowledged and thanked Konathalapalli Nageswara Rao and Krishnaveni for continuously providing drinking water services throughout the 42-day campaign. "He stated that the overwhelming response from donors and people from different sections of society was encouraging and reflected a strong sense of social responsibility. He praised all contributors who came forward to support the humanitarian initiative aimed at providing relief during the summer

season. "Later, association leaders honored Chede Venkateswara Rao with a shawl and garland in recognition of his leadership and efforts in successfully organizing the program. "On the final day, the expenses for the buttermilk distribution were sponsored by the family members of the late Banothu Ganesh in his memory. "Service Initiative Praised""CPM State Leader Ponnam Venkateswara Rao and former ZPTC member Banothu Konda lauded the Arya Vysya Association for organizing the continuous buttermilk distribution program. "Addressing the gathering, they said the initiative had become a model of community service by helping quench the thirst of people during the scorching summer months. They described the free distribution of buttermilk to travelers, laborers, farmers, and the general public as a remarkable humanitarian effort. "The leaders noted that voluntary participation and support from people belonging to different sections of society were commendable. They emphasized that such service-oriented activities help strengthen social responsibility and foster a spirit of cooperation and unity among the people. "They congratulated the association leaders, donors, and volunteers for making the program a success and expressed hope that more welfare and community-service initiatives would be undertaken in the future. "Leaders from various political parties, representatives of social organizations, and members of the public attended the event and appreciated the service program. Speakers highlighted that such humanitarian activities promote social harmony and unity and encouraged the Arya Vysya Association to continue organizing similar social service initiatives in the future. "A large number of association leaders, members, donors, political leaders, and local residents participated in the concluding program.

He was a shooting coach in Delhi. Then AI exposed his 25-year double life



GNS News Agency, june 11

For nearly a month, an Agra police team camped in Delhi’s Nangloi area, discreetly monitoring 50-year-old Sahdev Yadav, a shooting instructor in a school. Their suspicion: Yadav could be Samuel, from Agra’s Shahganj area who had carried out a robbery of Rs 1.75 lakh in 2002. Samuel, who was wanted in two criminal cases – robbery and illegal confinement of a woman – and carried a reward of Rs 50,000, had successfully evaded arrest for nearly a quarter of a century by drifting between different cities, repeatedly changing his name and adopting new identities. With no recent photographs available and his whereabouts unknown, police turned to technology for help. Using a photograph of him, dating back to 2001, the police employed Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to generate multiple age-progressed images showing how Samuel might appear more than two decades later. The digitally enhanced images were then circulated through various databases and social media channels. Eventually, officers identified a man bearing a striking resemblance to the AI-generated profile: Sahdev Yadav, a shooting instructor at a school.

Soon, a team of UP Police was dispatched to Delhi to monitor him. “From the very start, his (Yadav’s) movement was suspicious. He used to leave home in Nangloi’s Prem Nagar area on a motorbike and park it somewhere far, before boarding a bus to school. His wife was also employed at the same school. She was a taekwondo teacher.” According to police, as they started digging deeper into Yadav’s life, they found surprisingly little official paperwork linking him to his identity. The only document they were able to trace in Yadav’s name was a driving

licence. Police also scrutinised the people who regularly met him, hoping to uncover details about his past. “Most of the people in his social circle knew little about his background,” a police officer, involved in the probe, said. A surprise discovery The breakthrough came when the probe team found a traffic challan issued against the vehicle used by Yadav.

“We were surprised to find that the vehicle was registered under the name of Poonam, whose family had accused Samuel in 2001 of kidnapping her. The same woman was now married to Yadav,” said the officer. “The more we observed the couple, the more convinced we became that he Yadav was none other than Samuel, the person we were looking for,” the officer added. In 2002, three unidentified men robbed Rs 1.75 lakh from a man in the Lohamandi area of Agra. Within months of the robbery, on November 8, 2002, police made the first arrest – Deepak Shahi, alias Sonu. The second accused – Amit alias Monu – was arrested four years later, on November 17, 2006. However, the third accused, Samuel, remained at large. In the meantime, the court convicted Deepak and Amit and sentenced them to four years of prison. While probing the robbery case, police found that Samuel was earlier booked for illegal confinement of a woman, Poonam, at Hariparwat police station. The complainant was Poonam’s family. “It seems that the woman remained with him and is believed to have been living alongside him during the years he spent on the run,” said a police officer. Following the discovery that the owner of the motorbike was Poonam, the suspicion of the police that the man they were tracking could indeed be the long-absconding fugitive strengthened. “For nearly a month, a police team remained in Delhi, discreetly monitoring his daily routine and activities. The more we observed, the more convinced we became that he was the person we were looking for,” said the officer. On May 2, the team went to his Prem Nagar home and detained him. “The accused had been absconding for the past 25 years. Using a combination of Artificial Intelligence and traditional intelligence-gathering methods, we were able to trace and arrest him... During questioning, he admitted to his involvement in the robbery crime,” said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Agra) Syed Ali Abbas. Police believe that with Samuel’s arrest, they have closed one of the district’s longest-running pursuits, though many questions remain unanswered. “Further inquiries are underway to reconstruct Samuel’s movements and his activities in all these years he spent on the run, and to determine whether he was involved in any other criminal activities while living under different identities,” said the officer, adding that Samuel has been sent to judicial custody by the court.

‘Inquilab Zindabad... Satta ke galiyaron mein’: At CJP’s first protest, youngsters gather outside Parliament Street station

GNS News Agency, june 11

For most 17-year-olds, a Saturday morning means sleeping in, scrolling through Instagram, or squeezing in a few extra hours of coaching classes. Aarav has chosen something else. Standing outside Parliament Street police station, sweat already gathering on his forehead in the June heat, the Class 12 student from Noida waits for a protest to begin. In less than a year, he will sit for the NEET examination. Today, that uncertainty has brought him here. Cockroach Janta Party Protest Live Updates “What has happened with the exams has scared me. I don’t want to go through it,” he says, glancing towards a growing cluster of television cameras and police personnel.

A few steps away stands Sarthak, a public relations professional who has come carrying an unlikely protest accessory: a copy of Shashi Tharoor’s Ambedkar: A Life. He flips through its pages as reporters rush past him, chasing updates about a political outfit that did not exist a few weeks ago. “I have come here to support the issues CJP is talking about,” he says. “I don’t see it as a political party or anything. It’s about saying what’s right.”

Around them, the scene seems much bigger than the crowd itself. Only about 20 protesters have gathered, but Parliament Street police station looks as if it is preparing for a major political event. On most mornings, the road outside the station is quiet, with office-goers and commuters passing through central Delhi. But on Saturday, it is packed with police personnel and television crews. Delhi Police officers stop and direct vehicles. CRPF jawans stand in a line along the station wall. Reporters prepare for live broadcasts while photographers keep their cameras trained on the entrance, waiting for the next arrival.



The excitement is not for a BJP roadshow or an opposition dharna. Instead, it centres on an unlikely newcomer: the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP). Around 8.30 AM, one of its founders, journalist-turned-activist Saurav Das, arrived at the police station and was immediately surrounded by cameras. Police officers gently but firmly ushered him away from the middle of the road. CJP founder, Abhishek Dipke, arrived from Boston and went to Jantar Mantar with a small group of core members to secure permission for a protest at Jantar Mantar. Their principal demand is the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Then comes the news everyone has been waiting for: permission for the protest has been granted. Within moments, the crowd finds its voice. “Inquilab Zindabad... Satta ke galiyaron mein...” CJP became all the rage – at least on Instagram – after a page was created in its name, inspired by Chief Justice Suryakant’s remark in which he loosely used the term “cockroach” to describe “certain people who become activists and media persons”. He later clarified the comment, but by then the idea had already taken hold.

Lodhi Crematorium wall collapse: As a labourer dies, a family loses its home



GNS News Agency, june 11

A wall collapse at Delhi’s Lodhi Crematorium during rainwater drain and sewage line construction killed a labourer, injured two others, and destroyed the home of a family living inside the complex. (Express Photo) A wall collapse at Delhi’s Lodhi Crematorium during rainwater drain and sewage line construction killed a labourer, injured two others, and destroyed the home of a family living inside the complex. Hours after a boundary wall and an adjoining storage room collapsed during rainwater drain and sewage line construction work at Lodhi Crematorium in Lodhi Colony, killing one labourer, Rahul Kharwan was seen searching through the rubble for his family’s belongings. A worker at the ritual supplies and memorial keepsakes shop at the crematorium, he lived in a one-room home – now completely damaged – inside the complex with his wife and children. Early morning, a 55-year-old labourer was killed and two others injured after the boundary wall and the storage room collapsed at 1.08 am when excavation and pipe-laying work was being carried out by the PWD using a JCB

and a Hydra machine, DCP (Southeast) Hemant Tiwari said. Three PWD labourers got trapped under the debris, said DCP II Jasbir Singh. Among them, while a person identified as Devendra was declared dead at AIIMS Trauma Centre, other labourers – Rajesh (48) and Umar (20) – are under treatment, said police. Police, fire department and ambulance personnel carried out a joint rescue operation before securing the site. For 67-year-old Bhagwan Das, a security guard at the crematorium, the sounds of the collapse remain vivid. Das had been staying at Rahul’s quarters while the latter was away. “Every day, after 9 pm, excavation work had been happening for the past week,” Das said. “I heard a loud noise and screams. I woke up abruptly to find that an entire wall had disappeared and people were trapped under the debris,” he said. Rahul, meanwhile, who had just returned from Gorakhpur, emerged carrying a few utensils and a child’s bicycle – remnants of the home his family had occupied for five years.

Malkajgiri police to seal two spa centres over alleged illegal activities

Hyderabad: The Malkajgiri commissionerate police will be sealing two establishments where immoral activities were being organized under the garb of a spa and massage centre. B Sumathi, Commissioner of Police, Malkajgiri said that during the special operation aimed at curbing illegal activities under the cover of body massage, the police had registered 47 cases including

Jathedar Giani Kuldip Singh Gargajj calls for Sikh unity on 42nd anniversary of Operation Blue Star



Jathedar Sikh unity Operation Blue Star. Jathedar Giani Kuldip Singh Gargajj addressed a gathering of Sikh leaders, organisations, and youth at Sri Akal Takht Sahib on the 42nd ‘Ghalughara Diwas commemoration’ on Friday. Giani Kuldip Singh Gargajj, the Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Sahib, on Friday delivered an address on the 42nd ‘Ghalughara Diwas commemoration’, paying tribute to those who died in Operation Blue Star and urged Sikhs worldwide to remain united against what he described as continuing threats to their identity, institutions, and autonomy.

Speaking before a gathering of Sikh leaders, organisations, and youth, the Jathedar called the events of June 6, 1984, the “Third Ghalughara”, a term used to refer to the Army operation to flush out militants from the Golden Temple, saying the “assault was launched by the country’s own democratic government, which deployed tanks and artillery against the holiest seat of Sikh spiritual authority”. “The resistance put up by Sikh fighters that day had no parallel in modern history, a fact acknowledged by

scholars and thinkers around the world,” he added.

The Jathedar drew parallels between the 1984 anti-Sikh riots that followed the Army operation and what he alleged are ongoing efforts to undermine Sikh identity today. He cited incidents of harassment of Sikhs in Himachal Pradesh and said, “Sikhs face discrimination when they step outside Punjab, while people from across India freely settle within the state. We are equal citizens of this country. We are not second-class citizens.” He also warned against the new Anti-Sacrilege Act and alleged that it was part of active conspiracies to bring Guru Granth Sahib Ji and Sikh institutions under state control, weaken the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), and place gurdwaras under government authority. He also reminded the gathering that the perpetrators of the Bargari Guru Granth Sahib desecration case remain at large, and that the accused behind the 2017 Maur incident are yet to be arrested. The Jathedar also raised the issue of Sikh political prisoners, appealing for their release. Addressing the global Sikh diaspora, the Jathedar said that Punjab remains their homeland and spiritual root. He said, “I urge them to never permanently sever their ties with Punjab, to bring their children to Darbar Sahib, to teach them the glorious history of the Sikh nation, and—with particular emphasis—to never sell their ancestral land in Punjab.” He also highlighted the upcoming 450th foundation day anniversary of Sri Amritsar Sahib, appealing to the government to clean up the holy city, noting that while all other Punjab cities have a plastic ban in place, Amritsar remains exempt. Posters displaying pro-Khalistan militant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, once the head of the Damdami Takasal, and his associates were seen at Sri Akal Takht Sahib. Pro-Khalistan slogans were raised after the Jathedar’s speech concluded.

Chandigarh schools converted parking into playgrounds, swimming pools; DC: restore original plan or face action

GNS News Agency, june 11

Leading private schools in Chandigarh are under the UT Administration’s scanner for allegedly turning sanctioned parking areas into playgrounds and swimming pools, a move – according to officials – has compromised student safety and contributed to daily traffic chaos outside school gates. The administration said spaces originally approved for vehicle parking and safe student pick-up and drop-off were diverted for other uses, forcing hundreds of parents to stop on the roads, undermining the objectives of the Safe Transportation Policy for Students (STRAPS). A comparison of approved building plans and actual site conditions suggests that schools allegedly converted designated parking zones into playgrounds. The administration said the deviations reduced internal parking capacity and increased the risk of accidents by pushing student boarding and de-boarding activities onto busy roads.

Speaking with The Indian Express, Chandigarh Deputy Commissioner Nishant Yadav said, “Officials gave me a presentation, showing how these schools deviated from the sanctioned plans. We showed the schools concerned these presentations about violations in their parking areas. We observed that many schools had serious violations in their parking areas by converting them into playgrounds, swimming pools, rooms, etc. We have asked schools to rectify these violations on their own. After that, we will start enforcement.” The presentation showed Sacred Heart Senior Secondary School, Strawberry Fields World School and St Kabir Public School allegedly deviated from their sanctioned building plans by converting designated parking areas into playgrounds and other institutional uses, undermining key safety provisions of STRAPS, an official said. The official added that these alterations had reduced internal parking capacity, forcing parents to stop vehicles on the roads during pick-up and drop-off hours, leading to traffic congestion and increased safety risks for children.



According to records presented by the administration, the original approved plans for these three schools earmarked specific areas for vehicle parking to facilitate safe boarding and de-boarding of students on school premises, but it was found during inspections that these designated parking zones were no longer being used for their intended purpose. At Sacred Heart Senior Secondary School, parking areas marked as P1 and P2 in the sanctioned site plan were allegedly found to have been converted into a playground. Similarly, at Strawberry Fields World School, parking zones G and H were allegedly being used as a playground. At St Kabir Public School, designated parking

areas B1 and C had allegedly been turned into a playground. During the presentation, UT Administration officials said the original intent behind the approved parking provisions was to ensure children could be picked up and dropped off safely on school campuses without having to board or alight from vehicles on public roads.

Under the STRAPS policy, schools are required to provide adequate internal arrangements for student transportation, regulate traffic movement during opening and closing hours, deploy staff for traffic management where necessary, and maintain one-way vehicular circulation to minimise road crossings by children. Officials said the conversion of parking spaces directly affected the implementation of these safety measures, with insufficient internal parking available, parents are compelled to queue on surrounding roads, resulting in congestion, unsafe roadside boarding and de-boarding, and a higher risk of accidents involving students. The UT Administration said designated parking areas must be restored in accordance with approved building plans and that all constructions or deviations within parking zones would have to be removed. “The Estate Office will verify compliance with sanctioned plans and initiate action wherever violations are found,” the DC said.

Director of Strawberry Fields World School Atul Khanna said, “It must be other schools, not ours. Must be an error. We have a full completion certificate.” St Kabir Public School Chief Administrator Gurpreet Bakshi said, “We haven’t done any of this. The issue with St Kabir is that the sports complex is under construction, and the parking space as passed in the sanction plan is in the construction area. So, we have given an undertaking to the administration that the sanctioned plan will be followed to the letter. In case of any violation, we are liable.” When contacted, the Sacred Heart Senior Secondary School spokesperson refused to comment on the matter.

Government extends benefits of eight schemes to Marathas



Days after announcing to set up a special cell for Maratha reservation and a helpline number for assistance, the state government on Friday extended benefits of around eight schemes applicable to OBCs to the Maratha community as well. The “Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme” applicable to the Other Backward Class (OBC) category in the state will be applicable to students from the Maratha community.

The cabinet sub-committee on Maratha reservation met earlier this week, after Maratha social activist Manoj Jarange-Patil called off his fast unto death. After the end of the fast, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had said, “The government is committed to Maratha reservation. At the same time, it has ensured the OBC quota is not diluted. You don’t take reservation from one community to give to another.” He had added that the government has initiated several welfare measures for the Maratha community. The Maratha sub-committee headed by BJP minister Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil met earlier this week where various measures were announced. On Friday, the state gov-

ernment announced additional set of measures.

The training scheme for motor vehicle drivers and conductors to be implemented by the Planning Department through the SARATHI institute; the scholarship scheme applicable to students of primary, secondary, and higher secondary classes from the OBC category will be made applicable to students from the Maratha community; the scheme applicable to OBC candidates for seats available under the PPP (Public-Private Partnership) scheme in government Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), as well as for candidates admitted to private Industrial Training Institutes, will be implemented as the “Professional Training Fee Reimbursement Scheme” for students of the Maratha community by the Department of Skills, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation. The government has asked the concerned department to take action to extend the reimbursement scheme regarding 16 other items, which is applicable to students from the OBC category studying in aided and unaided colleges, to students from the Maratha community as well. The scheme applicable to candidates from the OBC category, who are residents of Maharashtra and have taken admission for aided and unaided professional courses in other states, to students from the Maratha community as well.

For all courses where students from the OBC category are eligible to receive educational concessions and facilities, students from the Maratha community shall also be eligible to receive these educational concessions and facilities. Just like the students from the OBC category who have taken admission at the institutional level against vacant seats approved by the Admission Regulating Authority after the completion of the Centralized Admission Process (CAP), students from the Maratha community will also be granted educational concessions.

A Delhi neighbourhood called Hauz Rani: What changes when a city grows



There is something about the way Mohammad observes the action unfolding beyond the police tape that reminds you of Peepli Live, the 2010 satire on the media circus that typically follows big news events. In front of charred buildings are multiple TV reporters talking into cameras, with OB vans just out of sight. They are shrill in their demands for accountability, for the arrest and prosecution of Lavkesh Bajaj, the proprietor of Flourish, the bread and breakfast facility in Delhi's Hauz Rani neighbourhood where at least 21 people died on June 3 in one of the worst fire incidents in the national Capital.

"Dekhbe dada (Brother, you will see), in a day or two, things will go back to normal... the government will make a noise for a bit, but there are just too many people who need a place to stay. Where will they all go?" says Mohammad, who doesn't want his full name revealed. In his mid-30s, he is both a local and an outsider to Hauz Rani. From West Bengal, he has lived and worked in the neighbourhood as an odd-job man for over two decades. As he takes a deep sip of his chai, you can sense an almost sardonic sense of resignation in him. He speaks of both the fire and the fact that he has had to change homes multiple times because of rising rents and the political conversations around Bengali Muslims with the same detachment, even humour. The tragedy is on everyone's lips in the few square kilometres where the layers of Delhi — in all their beauty, complexity and sadness — sit together.

Hauz Rani is one of Delhi's several urban villages, 'Lal Dora' colonies that sit uncomfortably between the realities of a burgeoning demand for land and space, and municipal laws and rules. In the days after the yellow tape at the end of the lane is removed, the neighbourhood, with all its fault lines and sharp edges, will be back. The broken sewage lines, the buildings that jostle for space, the tangled electricity wires that pretend to be the sky — all of which come up when the city, or a part of it, grows and no one has time to plan for it. Hauz Rani could be any urban neighbourhood in India: in the headlines for the fire, and then forgotten as residents return to living with the conditions that made it possible.

"They all need a place to stay' Hauz Rani's origins are almost mythical: About 800 years ago, it was a hauz or bath house for a queen forgotten to history, and a village emerged around it. Over years, post-Independence, the agricultural land was acquired by the government, while the residential areas were not.

A DDA sports complex is a street away, and upper-middle-class colonies such as Press Enclave, Ekta Apartments and Golf View Apartments are across the road, in Saket. In recent years, the massive Saket malls and the Max Super Speciality Hospital have made the difference between the two sides of the street all the more stark. The hotel that burnt down was once a Khadi Bhandar, where people bought clothes and other trinkets. The basement, where the fire broke out, was a photocopy shop that serviced the neighbourhood. "It's with the expansion of Max Hospital that construction exploded in Hauz Rani," says Rinku Awasthi, owner of Rinku Beauty Parlour, about 30 metres from the site of the fire. For much of the three decades that she has run her establishment, "there was a connection between the Saket colonies and our lane. Many of my clients came from there". But as Hauz Rani became more diverse, it also became more closed off. "As more and more Nigerians, Somalians and people from Central Asia came to get treatment at Max, people here began opening guest houses and building extra floors. But then, it got crowded and my older clients from Saket don't come any more. There were more barricades, less municipal attention as well. Buildings grew, but sewer lines didn't. The point is, the hospital expanded, but no one planned for the extra people that would bring... they all need a place to stay, don't they?" says Awasthi.

The demands for accountability, for heads to roll, are well taken by those in Hauz Rani, who are shaken by the fire and the deaths many of them witnessed first-hand. But there is also an undercurrent of fear. Sharib, a carpenter's apprentice, puts it bluntly: "Delhi's home minister has said shut all hotels that don't have permission... Next, they will come after us, some of us more than others. Who are the people who work here, or even the people who died? Workers, people who have come from far away for medical treatment and can't afford fancy hotels? If there hadn't been the fire, no one would care about these hotels... Do you think the government didn't know about this before?" Sharib's questions do not have easy answers. After those responsible for this fire are held accountable, what will it take to ensure that the underlying problems are fixed?

The neighbourhood, its twin "There is a symbiotic rela-

tionship between the planned and unplanned in our cities," says Amita Baviskar, Professor of Environmental Studies and Sociology & Anthropology at Ashoka University. "For every Saket, there is a Hauz Rani; for Delhi University, there's Mukherjee Nagar; for JNU and the middle-class colonies around it, Katwaria Sarai, etc.... The 'legal' part of the city has an 'illegal' evil twin where the service class stays. Often, the older areas of Delhi, the villages, are repurposed to meet this need."

Onyinye, 23, is reluctant at first to talk about the conditions in Hauz Rani and neighbouring Khirki village, as are many of his compatriots from Nigeria who are sitting at a tea shop opposite Max Hospital's East Wing. He opens up, finally, when the phrase "medical tourist" comes up. He detests it. "I am not a tourist, nor an immigrant. We are here because my mother's disease could not be treated back home, and we cannot afford to go to the West." He has been staying in a hotel much like the one that went up in flames because "that's where our agent suggested". He shudders visibly at the thought that he could just as easily have been a guest at Flourish B&B, that he likely passed some of the dead in the hospital corridors or sat next to them at a restaurant. "We are paying for medical treatment and need to be close to the hospital. What choice do we have? It's not like they are giving us rooms for free."

Hotels are not the only cogs in this new economy. The only shop open in the otherwise shuttered lane where Flourish B&B stood is Priya Chemist. M Shopan, a customer, recalls how he was woken up by his son and had rushed out as the fire began to roar. He was staying at Lemon Green Hotel next door. In town from Dhaka to get treatment for a heart ailment at Max, he is stocking up on the medicines. His face wrinkles as he swipes his card for Rs 43,302. "It's still cheaper than going outside South Asia," he remarks. The hotel he stayed at was "decent enough" for Rs 3,500 a night, and only slightly above budget, and there were other Bangladeshis in the area for treatment. At 64, Shailendra Tilak has seen many customers pause at their medical bills in his 47 years behind the counter. He assures him of the quality of the medicines. "There's a lot that has changed over the last few years," Tilak says. "My old customers from Saket still come here, and I deliver medicines home for many of them. More and more, though, people are ordering regular medicines online, searching for the cheapest deal from apps. The overflow from Max has helped make up the shortfall."

The severed relationship with "across the road" is a refrain heard often from shopkeepers and workers across Hauz Rani. "There was a time when so much of our lives were there, in Hauz Rani," recalls Nikhil Deshpande, a 46-year-old filmmaker who grew up in Press Enclave and moved back just before the pandemic. "The small gate was open, and before getting on the school bus, we would grab a chocolate from the local store. Now, Press Enclave has only one gate that opens onto the main road; the rest were gradually closed." Menaka Neotia, Nikhil's wife, who works in conflict management, remembers the difference between when the couple lived in Hauz Rani for four years up to 2018, and now. "The hotel that caught fire is at the same distance from here as our old front door. But if I were there, I know I would have rushed down to see what happened, to check in with Mahadev and his son Rahul, whom I chatted with every day as I bought vegetables. Here in Saket, my privilege means I can be in a bubble."

That bubble, though, may well be an illusion. "The existence of places like Hauz Rani, or Saidulajab abutting Saket, where six people were killed in a building collapse on May 30, is a structural necessity in a city like Delhi," says Ekta Chauhan, Assistant Professor, Jindal School of Art and Architecture and author of Sheher Mein Gaon.

"What we need, however, is a larger conversation about how these spaces are so essential to the city... The expanded homes, small eateries and hotels serve a growing working and service class population that makes the malls, hospitals and posh homes run." On the other hand, she says, "if we just continue construction as is happening right now, then you're putting safety at risk... that's the dilemma." The solution, if there can be one, must be radical, according to architect and urban planner Ashok Lall. "The imagination of Delhi, in Masterplan after Masterplan, has been of a middle-class city, with no thought to a growing population that does not belong to this section." "What has made matters worse in the last few years is a government and planning mindset that sees land as an asset through which the city can enrich itself. The value of the land is determined by how much you can build on it, and the taxes on the increased value make the city's income go up. But this has left half the population behind." What's needed, according to Lall, is to view land as a lever for development. "Developmental planning, like in Singapore or Amsterdam," could be the answer, "where the state plays a greater role in determining value and allocating space for affordable housing in a manner that people don't have to choose between location and safety and environment." Mohammad, though, will be cynical about any such radical change in governance. As he gives directions to Flourish Inn & Guest House, another hotel reportedly owned by Bajaj, he is sure it will be empty today, and perhaps filled with guests next week. "Even if they demolish it, there will be 10 more close by. People need what they need, and governments just need votes."

The entertainer who lost the script



From writing history to the world etching his legacy in stone, it has all happened quite quickly for Suryakumar Yadav. Less than three months after leading India to its second successive T20 World Cup triumph, he is poised to lose his captaincy and also place in the side he led to the ICC title. So how will Indian cricket remember only the fourth men's team captain in its history to lift an ICC trophy?

In the pantheon of India's World Cup-winning captains—Kapil Dev, MS Dhoni and Rohit Sharma among them—Suryakumar easily is the least charismatic and lacks the gravitas that the legends around him exude. As a batsman though, he is one of a kind. A daring T20 innovator, he explored the areas on the cricket field that no other player in this land of world class batsmen ventured into. Is this the true synopsis of the Suryakumar story? Not really. There are a few firsts that thankfully no one can match. At the dramatically eventful Asia Cup last year, he refused to shake hands with the rival captain at the toss, avoided post-match pleasantries and turned the end of the tournament award ceremony into a farce by refusing to receive the trophy. Pakistan's captain Salman Agha, right, walks past India's captain Suryakumar Yadav after the coin toss ahead of the Asia Cup cricket match between India and Pakistan at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Sunday, Sept. 14, 2025. (AP Photo) Pakistan's captain Salman Agha, right, walks past India's captain Suryakumar Yadav after the coin toss ahead of the Asia Cup cricket match between India and Pakistan at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Sunday, Sept. 14, 2025. (AP Photo)

Suryakumar's actions in that game against Pakistan, makes him a path-breaker – a disruptor who unabashedly mixed sports and politics. India, under Suryakumar, lacked the nuance, grace and maturity that sportspersons carry to the field when thrown in a difficult situation.

Asia Cup happened with tensions on the Indo-Pak border, Operation Sindoor still fresh in the minds of the two nations. This wasn't new, India and Pakistan cricketers in the past have taken the field in times of war. Over the years, players from both sides haven't allowed political acrimony to dictate their behaviour on field. Regardless of the outcome of the game or the importance of the moment, they have shook hands, hugged after games and even joked while bunched together at the award ceremony. Google the viral video of Virat Kohli and Yuvraj Singh laughing their guts out listening to a very animated Shoaib Malik after the Champions Trophy final in 2017. From those endearing frames it was impossible to fathom which team had won the game. It was not so at the Asia Cup, where Suryakumar would make a few disparaging comments about the losing side and also take a stab at cricket's most storied rivalry. It had started with a modest query from a Pakistan journalist that had no mention of the rivalry. It was after India's second win over

their arch rivals in the tournament.

Reporter: Do you think that Pakistan competed better this time?

Suryakumar: I want to say one thing: You should stop asking this question about rivalry. If two teams play 15 to 20 matches and it is 7-7 or 8-7 and they are playing good cricket then it is called a rivalry. If it is 10-1, or whatever it is ... it is no longer a rivalry. Those audacious last five words would have sunk the hearts of fans who relish cricket contests with a past and fight. Not to mention the TV broadcasters who in Suryakumar's words heard the last wailing quack of their golden goose. In sports, responsible captains don't make sweeping statements or indulge in one upmanship. That's what juvenile fans do.

Those audacious last five words from Suryakumar about the India-Pakistan rivalry would have sunk the hearts of fans who relish cricket contests with a past and fight. Not to mention the TV broadcasters who in Suryakumar's words heard the last wailing quack of their golden goose. (ANI Photo) Those audacious last five words from Suryakumar about the India-Pakistan rivalry would have sunk the hearts of fans who relish cricket contests with a past and fight. Not to mention the TV broadcasters who in Suryakumar's words heard the last wailing quack of their golden goose. (ANI Photo) Suryakumar never came across as someone known to say anything remotely hurtful or controversial. His teammates and reporters who have covered him since his junior days see him as an affable man. A die-hard fan of goofy Bollywood comedies, he has a movie dialogue for every occasion. He was into funny retorts, never ugly rebukes.

It was this Suryakumar that had taken the 2022 World T20 in Australia by storm. Cricket wasn't ready for a batsman who went down on one knee and swept a 145 kph ball for a six over square leg. He had the ramp stroke and also the reverse ramp. Suryakumar could also use his hands like the arm of a mechanized excavator – JCB to the world – to lob the ball behind his head, over the wicket-keeper and into the stands. He was a riot.

Growing up, Suryakumar was a classical batsman groomed on the Mumbai maidans under strict coaches. In the T20 era, he would dismantle his game to find new scoring zones. Surya, in his prime, was not an art film doing festival circuits, he was an all-out entertainer that ran to packed houses. The fans loved him for he reminded them of their street cricket days and the strokes they dreamt of playing but could never pull off. Runs put him in captaincy contention. He got lucky and got a lucky break. He was put in charge of a settled team that had found a winning formula. Captain Rohit Sharma had given the team a template that really suited them. The all-aggressive batting approach – falling wickets was no reason to slow down – worked wonders. The proven match winners – Jasprit Bumrah and Varun Chakaravarthi – too were the trusted fire-fighters in the bowling department. Though Surya should get credit for marshalling and managing the champion side, it was this that helped him lift the World T20 Trophy despite his long run slump. On that magical March night in Ahmedabad, Suryakumar thought his long loss of form would be forgotten by those celebrating the historic win. At the post-win media conference, he had dared to dream. He spoke about the Olympic gold at Los Angeles 2028 and success at the World T20 after that. Next day, in a long interview, he said how after "winning this World Cup as captain ... my life will change again." It certainly did but not the way he thought. These days in Indian cricket, those not scoring runs aren't advised to plan too far ahead.

RBI has held rate, tries to stem exodus of capital

The Monetary Policy Committee's second bi-monthly meeting for the year unfolded in line with our expectations, with a unanimous status quo on the policy rates and stance. The tone of the policy document was expectedly hawkish, amid uncertainty owing to the West Asia conflict, the potential El Niño development, and sub-par monsoons.

While the committee pared its real GDP growth projection for FY2027 by 30 bps to 6.6 per cent from 6.9 per cent in the April policy, the commentary around growth outcomes was fairly benign. This stems from expectations of a continued momentum in urban consumption, investment activity, and services exports, and the impact of the government's programmes to mitigate the effect of the sub-par monsoon on rural demand and agricultural activity. The quarterly growth trajectory for FY2027 has been lowered, although unevenly, with a 20-40 basis points cut in the projections for the first and second quarter, and a 40-50 basis points cut in those for the third and fourth quarters. The MPC expects GDP growth to lie in a narrow range between 6.3 and 6.8 per cent.

We are somewhat less sanguine, particularly for the first half of this year. Elevated energy prices and heightened uncertainty around the duration of the conflict could compress corporate profitability and investment demand. This, along with higher inflation, could also dampen consumer sentiments. Besides, the weak monsoon forecast for 2026 has dulled the agricultural outlook and rural demand prospects, although the distribution of rainfall remains key. Moreover, a modest fiscal slippage following the West Asia conflict could pare the government's discretionary spending, including that on capex. Assuming an average crude oil price of \$95 per barrel in FY2027, ICRA projects the GDP growth at 6.2 per cent. We expect the GDP growth to slump to sub-6 per cent in the first half, before recovering in the second half of the year, to around the levels projected by the MPC in the fourth quarter.

Simultaneously, the MPC has raised its CPI inflation projection for FY2027 by 50 bps to 5.1 per cent from 4.6 per cent earlier, amidst a sharp 70 bps hike in the forecasts for the second, third and fourth quarters. The core inflation forecast has been raised by a milder 30 bps to 4.7 per cent. It has stressed that inflation risks remain tilted to the upside owing to the sub-par monsoon and global supply-chain risks. The committee's CPI inflation projections are largely in line with our estimates. We concur with the upside risks and remain particularly concerned around the generalisation of food and fuel price pressures to the rest of the CPI basket.

Interestingly, unlike the usual trend of balanced risks around its projections in the past, the MPC placed upside risks to inflation and downside risks to growth for the second consecutive policy review, with the outlook being mired by unpredictable nature of the conflict, the sustained global commodity price shock and supply disruptions as well as deficient rainfall in the southwest monsoon season. Unlike us, some market participants had argued for an early rate hike on account of two factors. First, the upward revision in the CPI inflation trajectory has compressed the real policy rate, fanning arguments around the need for immediate rate hikes. However, the paring of growth projections justifies a lower real policy rate. at least in the immediate term, as



inflation projections remain below the upper bound of the MPC's target range of 2-6 per cent. In our view, any premature policy tightening would have only exacerbated the weakness in growth outcomes.

Nevertheless, the next move on rates is likely to be a hike, although its timing will depend on how geopolitical and macro developments, including the severity of El Niño, transmit to a generalisation of inflationary pressures. We believe that the October and December 2026 policy meetings will be live for potential rate hike(s), after there is some clarity on the monsoon impact. In addition to the compression in the real policy rate, the weakness in the rupee was cited as a reason for bringing forward rate hikes. The surge in energy prices in the aftermath of the West Asia crisis will undoubtedly enlarge India's current account deficit (CAD) materially. We project it to more than double to around 2 per cent of GDP in FY2027 from the 0.9 per cent expected in FY2026. While this does not seem large, financing deficits of sub-1 per cent of GDP in the past two years posed a challenge, amid a drying up of capital flows, which has brought the USD/INR pair under pressure.

As anticipated, the MPC acted within its flexible inflation-targeting framework mandate, and appropriately kept the repo rate unchanged, despite the weakness in the rupee. But, alongside, the RBI governor made several announcements to attract capital flows, in line with our expectations that the RBI and not the MPC would address the issues surrounding the currency.

The announcements made by the RBI are aimed at incentivising more foreign capital inflows, especially in government securities (G-secs). With the Govt exempting foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) from capital gains tax on investments made in G-secs, the RBI also made a coordinated move, expanding the list of specified securities under the fully accessible route (FAR). It also removed various limits for FPIs under the general route. These moves are likely to boost demand for G-secs, auguring favourably for bond yields, given the risks from an expected fiscal slippage. Besides, this could potentially facilitate the inclusion of Indian G-secs in the Bloomberg Bond index, in the next round of the review due later this year. Further, in order to support equity inflows, the RBI proposed to increase limits for investments by non-resident Indians and Overseas Citizens of India in equity instruments traded on the stock market without SEBI registration, while extending the same facility to persons resident outside India as well.

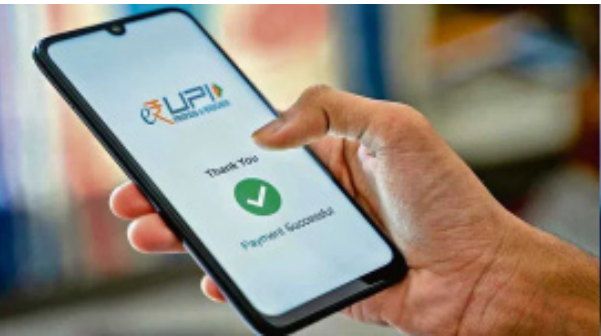
UPI transactions rise 24 pc YoY to 23.2 billion in May; value nears Rs 30 lakh crore

GNS News Agency, June 11

Mumbai: India's digital payments ecosystem witnessed continued growth, with Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transaction volumes rising 24 per cent year-on-year to 23.20 billion and transaction value nearing the Rs 30 lakh crore mark in May, according to data released by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) on Monday.

According to NPCI, UPI transaction value stood at Rs 29.90 lakh crore during the month. On a year-on-year basis, transaction value rose 19 per cent. On an average basis, UPI processed around 748 million transactions daily in May, with average daily transaction value standing at about Rs 96,465 crore.

However, on a month-on-month basis, UPI transaction volumes rose around 3.8 per cent from April, while transaction value increased nearly 3 per cent. Apart from that, Immediate Payment Service (IMPS) transactions stood at 358 million in May. Meanwhile, Aadhaar-Enabled Payment System (AePS) transactions reached 88 million in May. In April, digital payment transactions increased 25 per cent year-on-year to reach 22.35 billion, with transactions worth Rs 29.03 lakh crore in terms of value, which marked



a 21 per cent annual growth. On a daily basis, the average number of transactions saw a notable increase to 745 million in the month of April (from 730 million in March). Notably, UPI is now live in more than eight countries, including the UAE, Singapore, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, France, Mauritius and Qatar, positioning India as a global leader in digital payments.

India's flagship digital payments platform has recorded an extraordinary 12,000-fold surge in transaction volume over the past decade, according to the government.

The old city changeth, yielding place to new



In Srinagar’s historic Gadi Kocha spice market, the heady smell of dried cockscomb and dandelion mix with the aroma of pear and apple, and the sinus-hitting turnip. Jute sacks, used as curtains to shops, protect these delicate ingredients. Abutting the shops is Zaina Kadal the wooden bridge built by Sultan Zain-ul-Abideen in the 15th Century. This is Srinagar’s city centre.At one end of the Zaina Kadal bridge, off the ghats of the Jhelum, live the Qureshis, who trace their ancestry to 16th Century preacher Makhdoom Haji Ahmad Qari. “Srinagar’s old city is changing. Concrete is replacing wood. Markets like Gadi Kocha and the mohallas (small neighbourhoods) around it, with old structures barely survive now,” Zahoor Qureshi, in his 70s, says. The Qureshis have been witness to the changing character of the city, both in terms of architecture and the way of life, in this city of seven bridges. “The ghats were buzzing social spaces for men and women. No one visits them anymore, except for those who wash shawls in the traditional way. The Jhelum used to be the highway of Kashmir, to travel and ferry goods,” he says. Before the affluent lived by the ghats; today, they live by the highways.

With the widening of roads and the change in people’s professions and lifestyles, more modern houses are taking the place of bungalows. Srinagar’s cityscape and skyline are changing. Laws now allow for taller buildings, dwarfing the natural elements that the city prided itself in. The easy availability of modern materials like cement, and the imminent entry of real-estate companies, are motivating inhabitants to sell the land on which old structures stand. A walk from Zaina Kadal up to Ali Kadal, two old bridges 290 meters apart, reflects the erosion of traditional homes, ghats, even bylanes.Citizens have mixed feelings about these shifts. Some feel nostalgia for the old way mixed with the reality of the mounting expense of maintaining heritage homes; some look forward to new ideas of living; some find the changes a threat to the ecology and social fabric of Srinagar.Migration has left behind unattended houses, with many caught in property disputes. “It’s hard to find place to park cars. The old city lacks basic amenities like drainage. There are no parks for kids to play in. It’s better to shift and buy property on the outskirts of the city,” says Amir Khan, 44, an engineer who works with a private company. Srinagar was founded by emperor Ashoka in 250 B.C. with its centre at Panderethan. With 4,000 recorded history, the city offers a layered architectural grammar from the Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim periods, often described as a rare example of syncretism. Saleem Beg, former director general of tourism, and currently the convener of the non-profit Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Kashmir, sees Srinagar’s architecture as a key element that shaped the identity of the city like its music and literature.

Beyond the shrines, mosques, graveyards, and temples, the old city is a hub of handicrafts. Government figures say there are 20,822 craftspeople in multiple clusters, each mohalla (locality) houses residents that pursue a particular craft. “The qalamdanpora (design work) and sheshgari (mirror-work) mohallas are examples of how trade pursued by its residents resulted in naming the localities,” Qureshi says. In the narrow by-lanes, where houses almost lean into each other, the slope-roofed houses had distinct handcrafted elements, such as walnut wood carvings and khatamband, where geometrical wooden pieces were used for ceilings. In Ashai Kocha lane, near Mujahid Manzil, Ayesha Jan, 62, a retired school teacher, lives in an old wooden mansion. The lane is a living example of the old. Houses maintain local external features like lattice (pinjarakari) work and a projected wooden balcony with foliated arched screens (dub). The maharaji bricks are half the thickness of modern ones, there is coloured glasses, and murals on walls.

“Original residents like the Ashias, the Chistis have left the city to newer areas. Like this house, the city’s old charm is dying fast. The courtyards that once grew grapes and creepers are fast turning into godowns. It’s difficult to maintain these dilapidating houses,” says Jan, who will need to spend over ₹4 lakh to restore the wooden lattice of the dub. She hopes that the government will help in maintenance and in building new amenities while retaining the old structures, so it becomes fashionable to live here.INTACH listed 349 properties in a survey held across the city in 2023 as heritage sites. A fresh survey, conducted in 2021, showed that 13% of these properties had been dismantled, 33% showing signs of deterioration, 3% were in danger of disappearance, and 3% in an advanced state of decay. The survey captured the changing architectural mood of the city where “repair and restoration was carried out without consideration for preserving traditional vernacular character”. It also pointed out the scarcity of traditional skills contributing to “huge loss of vernacular construction techniques”.The Ashias and Chisti, who Jan talks about, have kochas (bylanes) named after them. The houses that have stood for over a century, include those of the Khanyaris in Fateh Kadal, the Bhats in Nawab Bazar, the Matoos in Kachgari Mohalla, the Shahs in Qalamdanpora, the Dhars in Zaina Kadal, and the Mirwaizs at Rajouri Kadal.

Most of these structures extend to three floors or four floors, with attics, creating a horizontal skyline. Beg, from INTACH, says houses built today are “more functional than luxurious”. He speaks of the loss the dhajji dewari, a technique of a timber-framed structure filled with brick masonry that. “There are many unique elements to Kashmir houses that are appropriate for the weather here,” Beg says, adding that newer structures that can be found across the country may not have that advantage. For instance, they miss the hamam, a room used in Srinagar’s winter that extends to four months, with temperatures dipping up to -8 degrees Celsius. Here, people sit on a carpet laid over stones heated with a fireplace beneath.Each room in old homes was defined by function, Beg says. For instance, there was a the bana kouth to store utensils and grain, which was separate from the daan kouth, the kitchen. The top floor usually had a kaeni, an open hall with wooden screen features to adjust its size as per the occasion.

“I have attended Sufiana mehfils and Khatami Quran ceremonies in such houses in the city as a young boy,” says Beg, whose was born in the old city’s Khankah area. He recalls sitting in ghulam gardesh, a big hall with a sunken central space with floor seating. “It was supported by an ornamental arched arcade with carved and coloured

wooden columns. This kind of setting made it easy for those serving tea or hookah during a mehfil or religious musical nights.”Now, the religious gatherings once held at least twice or thrice in both wealthy and middle-class households in the city are dwindling. “Even the attendance of local devotees on Urs (specials days dedicated to local saints) is thinning,” Anjum Rashid, a shopkeeper from the city’s Kalashpora mohalla, says.

The built-up area in Srinagar has seen a significant change in the Land Use Land Cover (LULC), an indicator of fast urbanisation. A survey conducted by the Sher-i-Kashmir University for Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST) between 2000 and 2020 concluded that these two decades saw “the high rate of urbanization, population growth, migration, and tourism”.The LULC changes have been experienced at the urban hotspots of Srinagar city, like Lal Chowk, Natipora, Hyderpora, Rajbagh, Nowgam, Dangarpora, the Dargah area, Chhatabal, Batamaloo, and Bemina. “These places have experienced the highest level of urbanization in Srinagar city,” it records.According to the SKUAST data, Srinagar increased from 34.53 square kilometres in 2000 to 60.63 sq km by 2020. Population too has grown from 0.1 million in 1901 to 1.2 million in 2011, when the last census was carried out. It was projected to be 1.7 million in 2024. Water bodies in Srinagar city reduced from 19.36 sq km in 2000 to 14.44 sq km.It suggested that the extent of vegetation in Srinagar city was 43.87 sq km in 2000 and came down to 26.23 sq km by 2020. The vegetation area has decreased mainly in the northern and eastern parts of Srinagar, at places like Khaja Bagh Colony, Pahal, Mazgam, and Mughal Gardens, due to a population increase and developmental area build-up.

Similarly, the dense forest area in Srinagar city was 1.02 sq km in 2000 and reduced to 0.38 sq km by 2020. Sparse forest area was 0.76 sq km in 2000 and came down to 0.7 sq km by 2020. The extent of open areas in Srinagar city was 131.95 sq km in 2000 and stood at 124.39 sq. km by 2020. The reduction, according to the survey, was attributed to construction of hotels, buildings, and amusement parks at places like Lal Chowk, Batamaloo, and Boulevard Road.“The urbanization process causes chaotic expansion, deteriorates living conditions, and degrades environmental scenarios, all of which have negative consequences for human health,” the study concludes.Sameer Hamdani, author of the book The Syncretic Traditions of Islamic Religious Architecture of Kashmir (Early 14th to 18th century), says Srinagar was put on the list of Endangered sites of the New York-based World Monuments Fund watchlist in 2008.“The city was described as one of the world’s last surviving intact examples of pre-engineered wooden architecture. Many people have been impressed by the medieval charm of the historic city with its narrow gullies and kuchhas, wood and masonry houses, and tall wooden shrines,” Hamdani says, drawing attention to the quintessential Kashmiri spire on several religious structures.Tracing architectural influences to Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Timurid, Mughal, and Tibetan, Hamdani says change was inevitable but “the apathy of its residents to the historical architectural traditions is unfortunate”.He speaks of aspiration, more than functionality. “A vast majority of people find that by using costly, non-native materials and designs and motifs, they are fulfilling an aspirational goal,” Hamdani feels.There is architectural and human chaos at Lal Chowk, Srinagar’s commercial hub, where several buildings retain elements of the Dogra and British colonial period. Located just 3.5 km away from historic Zaina Kadal, Regal Cinema has been turned into a massive shopping mall with more than eight floors. It’s one among dozens.Srinagar Municipal Corporation (Building) Bye Laws, 2011, limited houses and commercial structures to three floors and an attic. This was because the Kashmir valley falls under Seismic Zone V (very high damage risk zone), according to the Jammu and Kashmir State Disaster Management Authority.The J&K Lieutenant Governor’s administration, however, introduced Urban Building By-Laws (UBBL), 2020, only to be withdrawn, and fresh by-laws introduced in 2021. Officials say these by-laws had no local inputs and were aimed at deregulation and densification of Srinagar to accommodate its growing population.Itfikhar Ahmad Hakim, who retired as Srinagar’s chief town planner (CTP) in 2023, says the proposed by-laws deregulate Floor Area Ratio (FAR), ground coverage, and height in building. For the first time in Kashmir there is no bar on the number of floors that can be constructed, no leeway for fire gaps.Srinagar’s European style of living in bungalows comes from previous by-laws that ruled in favour of a 15- to 30-foot distance between two houses as a fire gap. Here, people would lay lawns, adding to the green cover around the houses. The latest by-laws have also done away with zoning to delineate the city into compartments of commercial and residential pockets. “Earlier regulations existed to balance development with the need for liveable, resilient, and equitable cities. Removing them without careful planning and alternative safeguards can have long-term disastrous consequences for both current and future generations,” Hakim says. He adds this will lead to “spatial anarchy” leading to “social anarchy” because communities will be displaced and cultural networks broken. He warns that water will soon become scarce and sanitation will become “inefficient or overwhelmed” if these bylaws are implemented.Author Hamdani too warns against densification of Srinagar, “which is already a congested city”. “We need to de-densify and not increase the building footprints viz-a-viz open green spaces. The city could go vertical in certain corridors that do not affect the horizontal character of the historic city,” Hakim suggests. He adds that the whole idea of going vertical is to save open spaces and demarcate more green areas.

Heat waves forecast for 17 mandals across Andhra Pradesh

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority forecasted heat wave conditions in 17 mandals across the State on Thursday.

“Out of the 17 mandals, six in Krishna district, four in NTR, two each in Parvathipuram Manyam, Guntur, and Palnadu, and one in Eluru are expected to suffer heat waves,” APSDMA Managing Director, Kurmanadh said in a press release.Scattered rains with thundershowers are also expected in 13 districts on Thursday including Parvathipuram Manyam, Alluri Sitaramaraju, Anakapalle, and East Godavari, he added.Other districts that may receive thundershowers due to surface circulation over central India: Konaseema, Kakinada, Eluru, NTR, Guntur, Prakasam, Nandyal, Anantapur, and Sri Sathya Sai, said the press release.The maximum temperature was recorded at 40.8 degrees Celsius in Ulindakonda of Kurnool district, 40.3 degrees Celsius in Darimaduga of Prakasam district, and 40.1 degrees Celsius in Thavanampalle of Chittoor district, Kurmanadh added.

Tanks battle polluted groundwater in Haryana



Ikbal Khan, 60, speaks in Hindi accented with a strong, rough Mewati accent. He recalls a time, over 25 years ago, when women from his village of Ghaghas would fetch drinking water from a well on the outskirts of the village. As the groundwater diminished, borewells were sunk. “But over the past four to five years, the groundwater has turned salty,” he says. People in Nuh district in Haryana began constructing kundas, underground water tanks, some with government support.Ikbal, like most of his fellow villagers, constructed one a month ago. He spent ₹60,000, with financial aid from the Block Samiti, a rural government body. Ikbal lives below the poverty line, with an annual income of less than ₹1.8 lakh. His tank, like most others, has a capacity of around 20,000 litres. The farming family uses the water only to drink, relying on the rain to feed the crop. This cuts the produce per acre to less than half that well-irrigated land brings in.

Before his family of six got their own tank, Ikbal used to share one with other families. This is common in this village of about 5,000 people, which now has close to 200 tanks. Together, three or four families bear the cost of water, supplied by privately owned water tankers. This way, they share the financial burden.Ghaghas is situated in the foothills of the Aravali mountain range, 10 km off National Highway 248A, connecting Gurugram in Haryana to Alwar in Rajasthan. Nuh figures among the government think-tank NITI Aayog’s list of 100 ‘Aspirational Districts’, for faring poorly on various development parameters. But it’s not just Nuh. More than two-thirds of Haryana’s districts face a groundwater crisis. Harmful chemicals have entered underground streams, making the water unfit for drinking and irrigation.

The Annual Ground Water Quality Report, 2024 released by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) in December 2024, stated that fluoride concentrations exceeded the permissible limit in Haryana, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana. Haryana was second on the list, with 208 out of 879 samples containing excessive fluoride. In addition, several samples had arsenic beyond permissible limits. Long-term exposure to both these contaminants can have severe health consequences, including fluorosis that degrades the skeletal system and causes cancer.Out of Haryana’s 22 districts, anomalous values of uranium (over 30 parts per billion) were found in 16 districts. This makes it part of the “over-exploited, critical, and semi-critical groundwater stress zones”, the report says. Chronic exposure to uranium can lead to kidney damage. The report was based on groundwater samples collected from 15,259 background monitoring network stations in May 2023 across India.In Haryana, 19 districts had a high electrical conductivity (EC) groundwater value. This is a measure of the ease with which water conducts electricity, indicative of the degree of salinity.Referring to the CGWB report, Indian National Lok Dal leader and Rania MLA Arjun Chautala raised the issue of deteriorating groundwater quality during the Budget Session in the Haryana Assembly this year. The first-time MLA said the report had made alarming revelations. He said groundwater contamination is a serious matter and that attention must be paid to ensure testing and reducing rising uranium levels in the Ghaghar and other rivers.Haryana Public Health Engineering Minister Ranbir Gangwa, in his reply, informed the House that a water testing laboratory had been established in every district of the State.Activist and convener of community-led Mewat RTI Manch Rajuddin Meo, who led a campaign, Jal Care Mission, for clean drinking water in Nuh in 2009, says, “The groundwater crisis is now serious. The water here has become so salty that even birds and animals do not drink it.” He adds that Nagina block bore the brunt. Out of 68 villages, 26, including Ghaghas, were the worst hit.“A survey by the Haryana government in 2022 identified these 26 villages as having levels of total dissolved solids (TDS) beyond the permissible limit,” he says. Nuh district water testing laboratory sources confirm this. “Of 860 borewells, 70 had a TDS over the permissible level of 2,000 mg/litre,” says a source.Meo says a locality of around 100 families in Ghaghas continues to use the groundwater as they cannot afford water from the tankers. He claims that the government’s free piped drinking water to Nuh villages is yet to cover the entire district. “Also, the ₹2,100 crore three-phase Mewat Canal project, announced by former CM Manohar Lal, is yet to take off.” A pipeline of the Central government’s Jal Jeevan Mission and the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation for Rural and Ur-

ban Areas was laid in Ghaghas last year. Villagers say it is being tested, so there is no regular drinking water supply.About half an hour’s drive from Ghaghas, down the highway, across the road, is Madhi village. Mohammad Jubair, 58, sits under a thorn-ridden keekar tree, often the only foliage in this water-starved area. His white beard matches white turban and kurta. He claims that the village is divided into three localities for water supply through pipelines. “Each locality gets only 10 minutes of piped water supply every third day. We need at least 30 minutes a day to meet our household’s water needs,” he says.

Mohammad Sabir, 42, on a handicap tricycle, joins the conversation, adding that the water supply is only in name and the village is dependent on private water tankers. People in Jhajjar and Hisar had similar stories. Agroha, Barwala, and Adampur blocks of Hisar are the worst hit.Many village panchayats in Hisar have bought their own tankers. “Dushyant Chautala (former Deputy CM) had facilitated a donation of 50 tankers through a private firm four years ago,” says Suresh Kumar, the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (Hisar) president. He lives in Durjanpur village.Raj Kumar, Jhajjar’s Kheri Khumar village sarpanch, says, “The two wells in the village have been abandoned, as the water is not fit for drinking. We are dependent on a canal for irrigation and drinking water.” Around a dozen villages in Jhajjar district, including Gudha, Dhor, and Palra, also face similar problems. Sushila, the sarpanch of the neighbouring Khatiwass village, wonders what will happen when the canal dries up.Sandeep Kumar, an executive engineer at the Public Health Engineering Department in Punhana block, Nuh, says the whole district has piped water. “About 100 villages face difficulties, including those pertaining to illegal connections, but Madhi does not have a problem.”When Arjun Chautala raised the issue of groundwater in the Assembly, Chief Minister Nayab Saini had said that the government had, as part of its commitment to ensure the supply of clean drinking water, worked to provide tap water to every household in the last 10 years.Hazi Fateh Mohammad, who has been running a water supply business for the past decade, selling water to three or four villages in Nagina block, Nuh district, says the demand for tankers has decreased since the arrival of the pipeline. “We supplied 25-30 tankers during the month of Ramzan last year. Now it is down to 5-10 tankers.” He has installed a common water point fed by his tanks in his village of Nagina, where he gives water free of cost.Maya, 65, a fellow resident of the village, says she fetches drinking water from her twice a day despite the piped water supply to her home. “Almost all households prefer groundwater from the filling point for drinking. It tastes better. The piped water is mostly used for washing, cleaning, and for animals,” she says.Dilshad Khan, 32, is a marginal farmer in Madhi. He owns less than an acre of land and works as a truck driver to supplement his income. He shares a kunda with a neighbour, but they still find the water bill high. “A tanker costs ₹1,200 in winter, but it’s hard to find one for even ₹2,000 in summer. There’s often a five-to six-day waiting period. We need at least two tankers a month,” he says.Like him, many others in Nuh own agricultural land, which is often too little to live off. People either rear cattle or work as drivers and helpers to make ends meet. “We are at the mercy of god! There is neither a canal nor any drain for irrigation,” says Irfan Khan, 35, who holds a vocational diploma from an industrial training institute. “The groundwater here is so salty that we cannot even bathe with it. It causes a burning sensation. We put out clay pots filled with the tanker water even for the birds,” he says.

In Haryana, 1.14% samples have high sodium levels and 0.34% have very high levels making the groundwater unfit for irrigation, as per the CGWB report. The CGWB has listed some of the reasons for deteriorating groundwater quality. These included an excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides in farming, improper waste disposal, sewage leakage, landfill contamination, and the over-extraction of groundwater, among others.Kumar from Hisar says the government’s approach to the crisis seemed short-term, with the stress mainly on supplying water through a pipeline. “Instead of focusing on long-term sustainable solutions, such as recharging groundwater and promoting crop diversification to reduce the extraction of groundwater, the government is taking stop-gap measures,” he says.Shiv Singh Rawat retired as a superintending engineer in the Haryana government’s Irrigation and Water Resources department. He is now the convener of the Yamuna Bachao Abhiyan, a movement to clean up the river ghats and protect the river from pollution.He advocates for a comprehensive and sustainable water management strategy to move from water scarcity to water security. He suggests “holistic solutions adopted globally for water management, such as floodwater aquifer rechargers, large-scale rainwater harvesting, and the reuse of treated wastewater”.He also wishes that States would cooperate to resolve interstate water disputes, like the ongoing Sutlej-Yamuna Link canal and Ravi-Beas water allocation issue between Haryana and Punjab. “Investment in climate-resilient infrastructure is needed to withstand the impact of erratic rainfall and rising temperatures,” says Rawat. He also calls for improving public awareness and participation in water conservation efforts.

Hyderabad-Amaravati greenfield expressway gets Centre’s nod after 11 years wait

Decks are finally cleared for the much awaited Hyderabad-Amaravati greenfield expressway project, connecting the capital cities of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh respectively. It ends more than 11 year wait since the bifurcation of the erstwhile united Andhra Pradesh.The Ministry of Home Affairs, the nodal agency to resolve the pending bifurcation issues, has directed the Ministry of Roads, Transport and Highways (MoRTH) to prepare a detailed project report (DPR) of the Hyderabad-Amaravati greenfield expressway on Tuesday (April 9, 2025). The development follows the meeting Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan had with heads of departments concerned after the Telangana government made a strong pitch for the implementation of the assurances given in the Andhra Pradesh State Reorganisation Act (APRA), 2014 during a meeting convened by the Ministry of Home Affairs on February 3, 2025.The Telangana government has been insisting on the implementation of the assurance given in Schedule XIII of the APRA for the greenfield expressway. “The Central Government shall take measures to establish rapid rail and road connectivity from the new capital of the successor State of Andhra Pradesh (Amaravati) to Hyderabad and other important cities of Telangana,” Schedule XIII of the Act says.

The issue figured in the February 3 meeting yet again and the MoRTH secretary informed that this was a new proposal and therefore, alignment clearance is needed before proceeding further. Mr. Govind Mohan suggested that the Union Ministry could consider initiating the process for



detailed project report and also accord in principle approval for the project resulting in the approval by the Union Government.Telangana wanted expressway up to MachilipatnamThe approval however falls short of the Telangana government’s expectations as Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy is in favour of a greenfield expressway up to Machilipatnam for faster movement of goods to and from Telangana. The Chief Minister discussed the matter with his Andhra Pradesh counterpart N. Chandrababu Naidu during their face-to-face meeting on July 8 last year and explained about Telangana’s plans to set up a dry port in area abutting Hyderabad-Vijayawada highway.Mr. Naidu too concurred with Mr. Reddy’s views claiming that the improved connectivity between the two capitals would act as a confidence building measure for further strengthening the relations between the two Telugu speaking States.

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



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.

The night R Praggnanandhaa won Norway Chess on Magnus Carlsen’s home turf



The meticulously-maintained silence of Oslo’s Deichman Bjørvika, the biggest public library in Norway, was shattered late on Friday evening by spontaneous applause that rang out from the fourth floor and reverberated till the ground floor. For the past two weeks, the Deichman has been even quieter than you would expect a library to be. It’s hosting the Norway Chess tournament after all and silence is non-negotiable. So much so, that at various times, volunteers have had to rush to the children’s playing area in the library to request parents to quieten their boisterous kids.

Late on Friday evening, no one was bothering to hush anyone. R Praggnanandhaa, newly-minted Norway Chess champion, had just walked into one of the three broadcast studios and the 50 or so people who were waiting for him to autograph their chess boards broke into a well-deserved applause. The Indian grandmaster had won one of the strongest invitational tournaments on the calendar after a remarkable run in the second half of the 10-round tournament. He won his final four games on the trot, clawing back after being last in the standings. In 14 editions of Norway Chess, Praggnanandhaa became the first Indian to win the event on Magnus Carlsen’s home turf.

It’s a measure of how popular Indian chess players are that even an hour after Praggnanandhaa’s victory over Vincent Keymer in the final round of Norway Chess, fans refused to leave the library without an autograph or a selfie from the Norway Chess champion. Chessboards held aloft, kids, well past their bedtimes, stood patiently for the 20-year-old to sign them. Their parents were on their toes too, cellphone cameras ready to snap away as soon as Pragg posed with their children. In his media commitments after the win, Praggnanandhaa mentioned more than once that he was ravenously hungry and had not spoken to his fam-

ily since his phone had been left behind in his hotel room. But despite those twin urges — to talk to his family and to grab a bite — he patiently obliged everyone who had hung back for him. A couple of days ago, he had been asked by members of the Indian media who are in Oslo about him being a role model at the age of 20. “I don’t think too much about it. I just do what I do, which is play chess,” Praggnanandhaa had said. “But wherever there is a kid coming to me to get an autograph, I try to do my best. When I started, this is how it was, you look up to someone and start playing the game.” At some stage in the night, officials announced over the PA system that the library was officially shut. But the crowd wouldn’t relent. The boards for Praggnanandhaa to sign kept coming at him. He occasionally paused only to look at someone’s cellphone for a photo. Over the years, he’s perfected the art of signing a chessboard in the blink of an eye. But even at that pace, he was struggling to make a dent into the wave after wave of requests that kept coming.

For the past two weeks, a steady stream of Indian-origin kids and their parents have made their way to Deichman Bjørvika for similar pursuits. They cornered Praggnanandhaa and the other Indian players with autograph requests as they walked the 50-metre-long zebra crossing that separates the playing hall from their hotel. They’ve beseeched players for selfies at the entrance of the Deichman. Some have handed them handmade greeting cards. The other Indian players — world champion D Gukesh, Koneru Humpy and Divya Deshmukh, all three of whom had finished at the bottom of the standings in their sections — had long retreated to their hotel rooms when Pragg was navigating his way through the crowd. Finally, when Praggnanandhaa decided to leave as well, there was a cavalcade of his fans riding with him down two floors on the narrow escalators, shouting congratulations in more than one language. Some kids made futile attempts to ride escalators going the other way just to catch up. Between acknowledging the wishes while going down the escalator, Praggnanandhaa had his mind on chess, not the adulation. He talked shop with his second Vaibhav Suri. His mind was on the bishop a3 that he allowed from his opponent, Keymer. Both times he got off the escalator, he was stopped again by fans with more requests. Finally, when he got out to pavement and waited for the signal to turn green, he was surrounded by fans again, many of whom spilled over onto the busy street as they clamoured for one final piece of him. A kid who had been in lockstep with Pragg from the time he left the broadcast studios seized his opportunity at the signal. He wanted to know about the best opening reply to an opponent’s e4. “e5 is the best,” said Pragg with a warm smile.

The hand of a God, goal of the century, grudge of a lifetime

GNS News Agency, June 11

He hadn’t meant to be part of any of it. In the 51st minute of a World Cup quarter-final in Mexico City, he had tried to clear a ball, got it badly wrong, and looped it back towards his own goalkeeper. What followed — in less than a second, in the space that mistake created — would follow him for the rest of his life. After the final whistle he found Maradona in the tunnel and asked to swap shirts. He kept it for twenty years, loaned it to a museum, then held on a little longer. In 2022, he sold it at Sotheby’s for £7.1 million. World record for sports memorabilia. June 22, 1986. The Azteca Stadium, Mexico City. 114,000 people inside. Four years since the Falklands War ended with Argentina humiliated, 600 soldiers dead, Las Malvinas still British. Maradona had told the press beforehand it was only about football. He knew that wasn’t true. So did everyone on the pitch.

Peter Shilton — nearly 20 centimetres taller than the man running alongside him — came forward to punch the looping ball clear. Maradona raised his left fist and pushed it into the net. Referee Ali Bin Nasser awarded the goal. Shilton turned and chased him. The England players swarmed. Linesman Bogdan Dochev kept his flag down. His teammate Sergio Batista got to him first. “You knocked it in with your hand, right? Did you use your hand?” Maradona’s answer, as he wrote in *Touched by God*, was immediate: “Shut the f*** up and keep on celebrating.” He was terrified. The TV replays were so conclusive he thought they might disallow the goal at half-time. He kept celebrating anyway. At the post-match press conference, a journalist asked how he scored it. “A little with the head of Maradona,” he said. “And a little with the hand of God.” On Argentine television in 2005 he finally said what everyone knew: “As a kid in Florio I would score goals with my hand all the time. And I did the same thing in front of a hundred thousand people. But no one saw it.”

What Shilton felt, and never stopped feeling, is worth understanding precisely. “People say I should have cleared the ball anyway and that I let a smaller man outjump me,” he told the *Daily Mail*. “That’s rubbish.” The part that never healed was not the goal. It was the silence after. “He never once said he had cheated. Instead, he used his ‘Hand of God’ line. That wasn’t right. He had greatness in him but sadly no sportsmanship.” Shilton never spoke to Maradona again. When Asif Kapadia’s documentary premiered in 2019, he refused to attend.

Gary Lineker, at the other end of the pitch, told a FIFA documentary: “I don’t have rage in me. I like Diego. He cheated us, but I’ve forgiven him.” Then, on the second goal: “I felt like applauding. It was impossible to score such a beautiful goal.” The referee and his linesman spent the rest of their lives blaming each other. Bin Nasser’s account never changed. “The two players were facing me from behind. I was obliged to give the goal,” he told Spanish sports portal AS in 2022. Dochev, the Bulgarian whose flag stayed down throughout, reached a different conclusion before he died in 2017. “Diego Maradona has ruined my life. He is a brilliant



footballer but a small man. The goal scarred me for life. I was accused when I was not guilty.” Bin Nasser visited Maradona in Tunisia in 2015. Maradona called him his eternal friend. Then sold the match ball for £2 million. Two men. One second. Combined: over £9 million at auction. Dochev got nothing. He had refused to meet Maradona. He said there was nothing to discuss. Four minutes after the hand, Maradona picked the ball up and beat five England players across 60 metres, scoring what would be voted the Goal of the Century. Argentine commentator Victor Hugo Morales sobbed into his microphone: “Cosmic kite, what planet are you from that you can leave so many Englishmen in your wake? Thank you God! For football! For Maradona! For these tears!” Maradona described the ball dropping to him in Yo Soy El Diego: “It floated down to me like a little balloon. Oh boy, what a treat.” “It was the goal you dream of as a kid. Whenever I see it again, I can’t believe I managed it. Not because I scored it, but because it seems a goal like that just isn’t possible.”

Former Argentine footballer Roberto Perfumo once said what many felt but few admitted: “In 1986, winning that game against England was enough. Winning the World Cup was secondary for us.” “Somehow we blamed the English players for everything that had happened, for everything that the Argentinian people had suffered. We were defending our flag, the dead kids, the survivors,” Maradona wrote. In Kapadia’s documentary he called it a beautiful feeling, a type of symbolic revenge against the English for las Malvinas. On his television show *La Noche del 10* he told his audience that those who steal from a thief get a hundred years of forgiveness.

On his 59th birthday, on Argentine radio, a journalist asked Maradona whether VAR would have ruled it out. “I promise the English I wouldn’t score with my left hand. I’d do it with my right.” In Yo Soy El Diego, he wrote about what that afternoon made of him. “That goal became part of soccer history. There are still 10-year-old kids out there today with ‘Maradona’ on their backs. And that kind of insanity can only be explained by one goal.”

contest.

India continued to dominate possession and create opportunities in the attacking circle. Their persistence paid off in the 16th minute when Captain Sweetu Kujur (16’) found the back of the net with a field goal to double India’s advantage heading into the second quarter. With a comfortable two-goal cushion, India maintained control after the break and further extended their lead in the 33rd minute. The tournament’s top scorer, Nousheen Naz (33’), added her name to the scoresheet with a clinical field goal, taking her tally to 12 goals in the competition and strengthening her position at the top of the scoring charts.

World No. 1 Minakshi, Deepak to lead India at World Boxing Cup 2026 Stage 2



Hyderabad: World No. 1 Minakshi and seasoned campaigner Deepak will spearhead India’s challenge at the World Boxing Cup 2026 (Stage 2), scheduled to take place in Guiyang, China from June 15 to June 21.

India enters the tournament on the back of an impressive run in the previous World Cup cycle, where the team consistently secured multiple medals across stages and delivered a strong overall tally in the finals, underlining its growing stature on the global stage. The Boxing Federation of India (BFI) has named a well-rounded squad featuring a blend of established performers and emerging talent across both men’s and women’s categories. India currently stands third globally in terms of overall Top 10 ranked athletes, including a second-place position in the women’s category and fourth in the men’s. Notably, India leads the world in the women’s division when it comes to Top 3 ranked athletes, highlighting its dominance at the elite level.

The tournament presents a key opportunity for Indian boxers to gain valuable ranking points and continue building momentum in a crucial competitive season. Speaking

India opts to bat against Afghanistan in one-off Test; Manav Suthar makes debut

New Chandigarh: India won the toss and elected to bat against Afghanistan in the one-off four-day Test here at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium in Mullanpur on Saturday. While the game does not contribute World Test Championship (WTC) points, it is viewed as an important step in India’s preparation for a challenging Test season that includes series against Sri Lanka, New Zealand, and Australia in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

The match marks a transitional phase for Indian cricket, with key senior players absent. Led by coach Gautam Gambhir, the team focuses on nurturing younger players and giving them extended chances. This approach influences selection choices, like favouring Sai Sudharsan at No. 3 over Devdutt Padikkal and handing Manav Suthar his maiden Test cap. India’s IPL success reflects the country’s white-ball talent, but the upcoming week will test players’ red-ball skills, patience, and endurance as they play a Test match after a six-month gap. The Afghanistan Test is a chance to reinforce standards and build momentum before tougher challenges.

For Afghanistan, the match represents a significant milestone. Under new head coach Richard Pybus, the team will hope to continue their growth beyond white-ball cricket. Having played relatively few Tests since gaining Full Member status, Afghanistan sees the fixture as an important chance to strengthen its red-ball culture, gain experience, and showcase its progress on the international stage. Winning the toss, India skipper Shubman Gill said, “We are gonna bat first. Very hot and humid. It’s going to get slower and lower. Very special. I grew up playing here. It’s a great privilege to captain here. The preparation has been good. Got a good couple of days of sleep. Nine Test

on the squad, BFI President Ajay Singh said “The World Boxing Cup is an important platform for our athletes to test themselves against top international competition. The systems and structures we have put in place are now consistently translating into results, with strong performances across weight categories. We are seeing depth like never before, and this consistency is helping India establish itself as one of the leading boxing nations in the world.”

In the women’s division, Minakshi (51kg) leads a formidable lineup alongside Poonam (54kg), Prachi (57kg), and Mahi Lama (60kg). The squad is further strengthened by Saneh (65kg), Gitimoni G (70kg), Sanamacha C (75kg), Naina (80kg), and Alfiya Tarannum Akram Khan Pathan (+80kg), ensuring strong representation across weight categories. On the men’s side, Deepak (70kg) brings experience and leadership, supported by Rishi S (50kg), Nikhil (55kg), and Anmol (60kg). Abhinash Jamwal (65kg), Malsawmtluanga (80kg), Jugnoo (85kg), and Harsh Choudhary (90kg) add depth, while Sawan G (+90kg) rounds off the squad in the super heavyweight division.

The team has been training at the national camp, with preparations focused on technical sharpness, fitness, and tactical execution ahead of the tournament. India heads into the competition with sustained success at recent international events, including strong performances at the World Boxing Cup stages and the World Championships, reflecting the steady rise of Indian boxing on the global stage. Minakshi (51kg), Poonam (54kg), Prachi (57kg), Mahi Lama (60kg), Saneh (65kg), Gitimoni G (70kg), Sanamacha C (75kg), Naina (80kg), Alfiya Tarannum Akram Khan Pathan (+80kg) Men: Rishi S (50kg), Nikhil (55kg), Anmol (60kg), Abhinash Jamwal (65kg), Deepak (70kg), Malsawmtluanga (80kg), Jugnoo (85kg), Harsh Choudhary (90kg), Sawan G (+90kg).



matches after this, we’ve got quite a few home Test matches. It’s about getting the combination right. We’ve got Manav Suthar making his debut.” Meanwhile, Afghanistan captain Hashmatullah Shahidi stated, “We wanted to bat as well, as the wicket looks good. We need to play good cricket. We are ready for the challenge. We like challenges. We are well prepared for this game. We had a good preparation camp in Kabul. (On Richard Pybus) He’s good, he’s also a very positive person, his mindset is positive. We have three seamers and two spinning combinations.. We have one debutant – Nangeyalia Kharote.” India: KL Rahul, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Sai Sudharsan, Shubman Gill (c), Rishabh Pant (wk), Dhruv Jurel, Washington Sundar, Manav Suthar, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna Afghanistan: Sediqullah Atal, Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Abdul Malik, Rahmat Shah, Hashmatullah Shahidi (c), Afzar Zazai (wk), Azmatullah Omarzai, Sharafuddin Ashraf, Nangeyalia Kharote, Ziaur Rahman, Mohammad Saleem.

Messi nears injury return as Argentina gear up for World Cup title defence



New Delhi: Defending champions Argentina could receive a timely boost ahead of the World Cup, with captain Lionel Messi edging closer to a return from injury and potentially featuring in one of the team’s two warm-up matches in the United States. Argentina’s coach Lionel Scaloni said on Friday that Messi’s recovery from left hamstring soreness is proceeding well, and the eight-time Ballon d’Or winner could get some game time against either Honduras on Saturday in College Station, Texas, or Iceland on Tuesday in Auburn, Alabama.

“Leo is doing well,” Scaloni told reporters ahead of Argentina’s first friendly match. “Leo trained for a portion (of Friday’s practice) with the group, which is important. He’s not fully segregated. He’s coming along. He could participate in the friendlies, get some playing time in these two friendlies. We’ll see if it’s this one (Saturday’s) or the next

one. But he’s doing much better and that gives us peace of mind.”

The 38-year-old forward has not played since sustaining the injury in a match on May 24 for Inter Miami CF, the club’s final fixture before MLS suspended play for two months to accommodate the World Cup. Messi goes into the tournament as one of its major draws after leading Argentina to the World Cup title in Qatar in 2022 where he also won the Golden Ball as the best player in the competition. Despite the injury setback Messi has continued his productive season with Inter Miami where he has 12 goals and eight assists in 14 appearances. Earlier on Friday it was also revealed that he would play in the July 29 MLS All-Star game against top players from Liga MX in Charlotte. Argentina captain has continued to build an extraordinary international career he is second to only Cristiano Ronaldo on the all-time international goalscoring list with 116 goals in 198 games.

Messi has the most World Cup appearances of any player with 26, one ahead of Germany legend Lothar Matthaus. Both Messi and Ronaldo are set to make their sixth World Cup appearance which would be an all-time record. Argentina will defend their title starting in Group J when they open against Algeria on June 16 in Kansas City then face Austria on June 22 and Jordan on June 27, all matches will be played in Arlington, Texas. The update on Argentina’s talisman comes with just days left before the World Cup begins and the reigning champions’ talisman is now likely on course to be available when their campaign gets underway.

‘Even Kohli was out of form for two years’: Kaif backs Suryakumar Yadav

Suryakumar Yadav’s form has dipped in T20Is. As noted in a previous publication, the Indian management has decided to move on from the batter. However, former cricketer Mohammad Kaif supported Surya and has compared him to Virat Kohli. “Suryakumar Yadav is not a new batter. He is a proven player. Just in the last IPL, he scored 700 runs. Not being in form is one thing. Even Kohli was out of form for two years, but the belief was there that once he got the touch, he would score again. Suryakumar is on par with Kohli in T20S, he is not less,” Kaif said on his YouTube channel. “Don’t compare in World Cups. I agree he has not scored in World Cups, but he is not a light player. Even a player like Kohli had a bad patch, but he got the backing.

Every player has a bad time. You could drop him after a series or two, then I would not have had a problem. At least give the winning captain some respect,” he added. Kaif urged Surya to get one more series. “I feel the timing is wrong. You can remove Surya, but you should have given him at least one more series. If he did not score there, then you could say now we are moving on. We gave you a chance, but you are not able to get back to form, and now we are looking towards other players. But the one who becomes captain now will have different pressure that if this has happened to Surya after winning as well, what can happen to me? He should have gotten a few more chances, and then you could remove him,” he said. Speaking of Shreyas Iyer captain Kaif said: “

Sunil Dutt mortgaged home to make film with Amitabh Bachchan, nearly went bankrupt



There are very few artists in the Hindi film industry who remain highly respected even years after they have passed, and late actor-producer Sunil Dutt is one such rare gem of the film industry. Sunil started his career in the movies in 1955, and just a couple of years later, he married the love of his life Nargis. Soon after, they welcomed their son Sanjay, and Nargis stopped working in the movies and Sunil accepted the sole financial responsibility of the household. In 1963, he turned producer with Yeh Rastey Hain Pyar Ke, but as he kept producing films, it became evident that Sunil was the kind of producer who wasn't too careful with production expenses. For the first few years, this did not affect the company but the making of the 1971 film Reshma Aur Shera led him to mortgage his bungalow in Bandra and brought him close to bankruptcy.

The multi-starrer film had Sunil in the lead role, and also starred Waheeda Rehman, Rakhee and Amitabh Bachchan, and was directed by Dutt himself. He made the film with a lot of love, but as production went on, he and Nargis both realised that they had bitten off more than they could chew. S Ali Raza wrote the film after Dutt shared the idea with him as he truly believed in it. This was a love story set in Rajasthan, where a family feud leads to bloodshed, and the hero turns into the villain as he hunts his own brother for killing his lover's family. Raza wasn't keen on the story, but upon Dutt's insistence, came on board.

Amitabh was cast in the role of Dutt's mute brother in the film and it is popularly believed that it was upon former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's insistence that Bachchan was cast in the film. Indira Gandhi shared a close bond with Nargis, and the two shared a friendship until Nargis' last days. Indira and Amitabh's mother, Teji Bachchan, had also been close since their days in Allahabad. Since the request came from Nargis, Sunil couldn't say no and cast Amitabh. Actor Sheeba Akashdeep Sabir even recalled her interaction with Sunil about Amitabh. She shared with Siddharth Kannan, "In fact, Dutt sahib told me, 'We hated his voice. His voice sounds similar to a radio jockey.' They made him play a mute character in Dutt sahab's movie." Sunil had initially planned to wrap the shoot in just 15 days but eventually, he realised, that this was just a distant dream. The crew had almost 100 people, including director Sukhdev. Sunil set up his unit's tents 80 miles from Jaisalmer, in a village called Pochina. The planned shoot of 15 days eventually went on for over two months, which increased the cost of the project tremendously. Nargis handled the production requirements from Mumbai and was in constant touch with Sunil but when she saw the initial rushes of the film, she expressed her displeasure over them. Sunil quickly

Peddi director Buchi Babu addresses intense backlash over Janhvi Kapoor scenes



Peddi director Buchi Babu Sana has admitted that certain portions of the film did not work as intended, noting he was caught off guard by the intense backlash over the portrayal of Janhvi Kapoor's character. In an interaction with SCREEN, Buchi said, "I had not anticipated that the scenes would be perceived so negatively by audiences." The director added that the experience would change how he approaches female characters going forward. "The idea was to showcase a playful romance story between Ram Charan and Janhvi Kapoor. However, we'll be more careful and make better representations." To understand why this acknowledgment matters, it helps to understand exactly what audiences objected to.

Peddi is a sports drama set in the Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh, built around a story about nameless villages and the fight for identity and recognition. Ram

Ram Charan breaks silence on doing a Bollywood film after 2013's 'Zanjeer'

New Delhi: It was in 2013 that Ram Charan first tried his hand at Bollywood with the remake of the 1973 film "Zanjeer". He was later seen in a cameo in a song from the 2023 film "Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan". The superstar has now shared his thoughts on doing Hindi cinema, saying that instead of distinguishing between Hindi and Telugu films, he believes he is doing Indian films.

Ram was seen alongside star Priyanka Chopra Jonas in the Telugu-Hindi bilingual film Zanjeer, where he played the role of ACP Vijay Khanna who swears vengeance on his parents' killer. In Salman Khan's "Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan" he made a brief appearance in the song "Ventamma". Asked when do his fans get to see him doing a Hindi film, Ram Charan told IANS: "I don't know Hindi cinema or Telugu cinema. I'm doing an Indian film. I think let's keep it that way."

"I would like to work with a director from Bombay. I'd like to work with a director from Bengal. I would like to work with a director from Tamil Nadu. I'd like to work with every-

made a pivot and took over the directorial duties from Sukhdev. Sunil Dutt wanted 100 camels, refused to shoot when he got 99

Despite the setbacks, Sunil was striving for perfection. His daughter, Namrata Dutt, shared in the book Mr and Mrs Dutt: Memories of Our Parents that once Sunil wanted 100 camels for a shot, but he could only get 99. He refused to shoot. Rakhee shared that for the first 15 days, Sunil wanted her to observe the locals and get into the mood of the character. The lack of planning thus resulted in the increased costs, which led him to mortgage his family home in Bandra. Sunil was also investing all the money he was getting from other films, where he was hired as an actor, and by this point, everything he owned was on the line. The film released in theatres, and bombed. While Reshma Aur Shera managed to win three National Film Awards, and become India's official entry at the Oscars, this couldn't save Sunil from the financial ruin that seemed almost inescapable. At one point, as per Kishwer Desai's book Darlingji, Sunil was nearly bankrupt and had sold many of his cars in trying to get by in the aftermath of Reshma Aur Shera. Sunil signed Heera, Pran Jaaye Par Vachan Na Jaaye and Geeta Mera Naam in a signing spree so he could get out of the financial hell he was in.

'Nargis was darning socks, school uniforms to save money'

The situation got so bad that he decided to shut down his production office. He called a meeting and told everyone, "As an actor, I am not that great. As a producer as well, there are a lot of expenses. I want to take it easy and apart from the accountant, I should let everyone else go. The circumstances are very bad." His employees were stunned but decided to stick by him, even without any pay, as they had complete faith in him. Namrata, in her book, recalled the "terrible days" that her parents faced. "Dad would find Mom darned socks and school uniforms because they couldn't afford to buy us new clothes. He described how Mom used to deal with those trying times: In my wife's attitude, I found neither condemnation nor complaint. She went about her daily business without any resentment. She had a way of accepting life and it showed in how she brought up the children," she wrote. Nargis collected coins in a piggy bank and when the family was broke, Nargis broke it open and found enough money for them to get by for at least a month. "Mom had a habit of collecting coins in a tall box. Dad told us one day, when they were really broke and had no money even for household expenses, Mom opened the box, threw all the coins on the bed and started counting. It took her a couple of hours to count all the change, but she was delighted to find they now had enough money to last the next 30 days. I think it was because of her positive attitude that none of us experienced what our parents were really going through at the time," Namrata recalled. As the family was struggling, Vinod Khanna learnt of their circumstances. Vinod had gotten his first break in Dutt's 1969 film Man Ka Meetha and he rushed in to help. "Dutt saheb, start a film," he said, and Sunil then made Nehle Pe Dehla. It took Sunil many years to get out of the financial mess of Reshma Aur Shera but he eventually came out on the other side largely due to his acting assignments.

Charan plays Peddi, a cricketer-for-hire from one of these unnamed settlements, whose journey forms the emotional core of the film. The second half, by most accounts, delivers on that ambition. It is the first half, specifically the romance track, where the film runs into serious trouble.

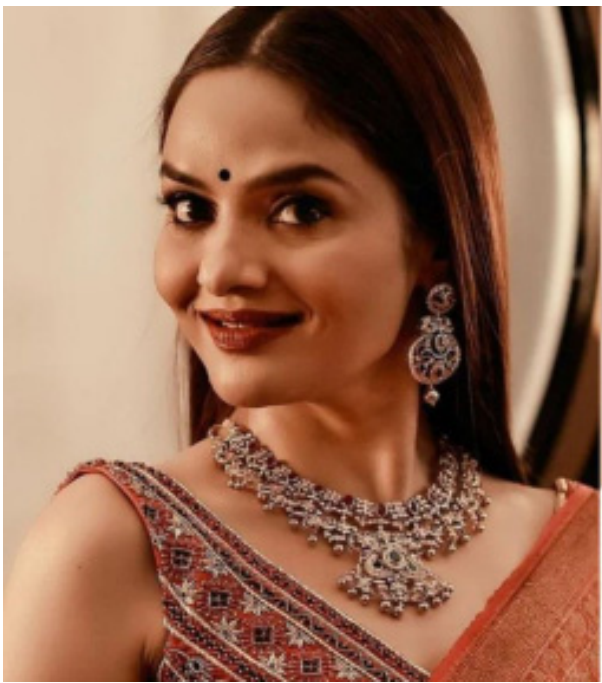
The criticism centred on the film's romance track. Janhvi Kapoor's character Achiyyamma is introduced through a sequence where the camera lingers on her body for several minutes without showing her face. What follows is a courtship where the hero openly tells friends he will touch Achiyyamma without her consent, enters her space and does exactly that, and later tells her, after she slaps him, that assault was his way of expressing love. The film resolves this arc with her kissing him. At no point does anyone face a consequence. Viewers, particularly women, argued that what Peddi was calling a playful romance was in reality a scene-by-scene normalisation of harassment, non-consent and the logic that a woman's objection is an obstacle rather than a boundary. The criticism spread well beyond the Telugu film audience. The controversy around Peddi did not emerge without context. Buchi Babu Sana's debut film Uppena, which released in 2021 and won the National Award for Best Feature Film in Telugu, featured Krithi Shetty in a romantic role. Shetty was 17 years old during filming. The film's framing of the hero's obsessive pursuit of her character drew some criticism at the time, though it was largely drowned out by the movie's critical and commercial success. The conversation did not last long, and it did not appear to change how the director approached the writing of his female lead in his next project. Peddi is a much bigger film, with a much larger audience and a much louder reaction. The scale of the backlash has made it harder to move past, which may be why Buchi Babu Sana is addressing it at all.



body,” said Ram Charan.

It was in the Telugu version of Zanjeer, when Ram Charan had also made his debut as a playback singer with the song "Mumbai Ke Hero", composed by Chirrantan Bhatt, from the album Thooftan. Talking about the 1973 film "Zanjeer", it was directed by Prakash Mehra.

‘Nana Patekar slapped me in a scene, I had tears in my eyes so I slapped him back’: Madhoo



Nana Patekar is famously known for his intense acting style, fiery temperament, and occasional on-set clashes. One such incident occurred during the making of the 1997 film *Yeshwant*, when he ended up slapping his co-star Madhoo during a scene — only for her to immediately slap him back. The two actors played husband and wife in director Anil Mattoo's film. Recalling the incident in an interview with *Hindi Rush*, Madhoo revealed that the scene required her to cry, but Nana strongly objected when she reached for glycerin.

"With Nana Patekar, I became a method actor," she

Shah Rukh Khan's film gets 3 on 10 from Imtiaz Ali, director calls it 'an opportunity lost'



One of the biggest blemishes on filmmaker Imtiaz Ali's career remains his 2017 romantic comedy-drama *Jab Harry Met Sejal*, which marked his first collaboration with Shah Rukh Khan and Anushka Sharma. The film generated immense buzz ahead of its release for obvious reasons, but upon hitting theatres, it was met with a largely negative response from both critics and audiences, eventually emerging as a major box office disappointment. Over the years, Imtiaz has repeatedly reflected on the film and why it continues to remain one of his biggest regrets as a filmmaker.

Recently, during an appearance on *Unfiltered by Samdishi*, Imtiaz was asked to rate the film out of 10. His answer was blunt: “3”. When asked why, he said, “I feel it was an opportunity lost, because of the potential of the story. I should have dealt with it in a different way.” He further added, “I liked the potential of the story more than the story

Film body urges Maharashtra CM to intervene in Shilpa Shinde's false sexual harassment case

accusations and genuine victims seeking justice.”

Shilpa Shinde has been making headlines ever since she admitted that she had falsely accused Bhabiji Ghar Par Hain producer Sanjay Kohli of sexual harassment. The confession, made nearly a decade after the incident, has sparked widespread criticism from industry bodies and actors alike. Now, the All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) has demanded "strict action" against the actress. In a statement, the film body said, "The reported admission by actress Shilpa Shinde during comedian Bharti Singh and Haarsh Limbachiyaa's podcast regarding the alleged false sexual harassment allegations made against Bhabiji Ghar Par Hain producer Sanjay Kohli is a matter of serious concern for the entire Bollywood film and television industry."

The statement further noted: "A false sexual harassment allegation can cause irreparable damage to a person's reputation, family, children, career, and mental well-being. Such accusations can permanently tarnish an individual's image and have devastating consequences not only for the accused but also for their family members and loved ones."

AICWA added that knowingly making false accusations harms both the accused and genuine victims. "It not only harms the accused but also undermines the credibility of genuine victims who come forward seeking justice. Such incidents can create doubt around legitimate complaints and make it more difficult for real survivors of harassment within the Bollywood film industry to be heard and believed." At the same time, the association stressed that one case should not be used to discredit women who have genuinely experienced harassment. "Thousands of women in the film and television industry have genuinely faced harassment and exploitation and deserve support, respect, and justice. The actions of one individual should never be used to discredit or question the experiences of genuine victims." Considering the seriousness of the issue, AICWA urged Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to ensure a thorough examination of the matter. "The All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) urges the Honourable Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shri Devendra Fadnavis, to ensure a fair and thorough examination of this matter. If it is established that false allegations were knowingly made, strict action should be taken in accordance with the law. Accountability is essential to protect both innocent individuals from false

said. "There was a scene where I was supposed to use glycerin. He didn't let me use it. He was like, 'Feel it, you should have natural tears.' But I couldn't do it. What he did then was slap me for real. He slapped me so hard that naturally had tears in my eyes." The actress admitted that the unexpected slap left her furious. "I was extremely mad at him because we had done rehearsals and he hadn't done anything like that. His sudden slap shocked me. And I am so short-tempered that I slapped him back. He hit me and my reflex was to hit him back," she recalled. Ironically, the emotionally charged moment ended up working for the scene. "It was the most crucial scene of Yeshwant, and director Anil Mattoo had dedicated an entire day to shoot it. Because everything happened so naturally, we wrapped it up in half a day. Nana was like, 'After this scene, what more shots do you want? Finish. Scene over.' I became a method actor with him."

Despite the incident, Madhoo clarified that Nana was never disrespectful towards her. "Nana was never rude to me. He only showed displeasure when he wanted me to improve my performance. He would get upset when I used glycerin or stepped out of the character's mood after a shot. I am a switch-on, switch-off actor, but Nanaji was against it. He believed in living the character you are playing." This isn't the first time stories about Nana's demanding nature on set have surfaced. Previously, filmmaker Sai Paranjpye recalled her experience working with the actor on the 1990 film *Disha*. Speaking about an argument over a pair of slippers, she said, "I lost my temper and asked him to leave. I told him to either do this or walk out. I said, 'I have had enough of your tantrums. Can't you behave like a professional?'" According to Sai, Nana stormed off the set but returned about half an hour later. "He came back and warned me, 'You are safe because you are a woman, otherwise you would not have been here,' and then he stormed out again," she recalled.

and definitely more than the film."The filmmaker then elaborated on the core idea that had inspired the story in the first place. "So in Harry Sejal, I felt there are many people like this, for instance, a man from a small village who, being Punjabi, is fascinated by the idea of going abroad. He goes there with the tenderness and innocence of his heart, but gradually becomes hardened by life. Say he falls for a girl there, and when he gets a chance to be intimate with her, it becomes a deeply tender moment for him. If he misses that opportunity, he would keep thinking about it all night."He continued, "But when this man sees that same girl being intimate with another man, what he goes through emotionally is something he cannot deal withIt would have been extremely difficult for him. Perhaps this happened to him once or twice. He is, after all, a boy from a small village, but in that environment, sex is often a transactional thing. So over a period of time, he decides that whenever he experiences intimacy, he will leave immediately after it ends. He will not stay back and allow himself to be tender, because that would hurt too much."A few years ago, Imtiaz had also spoken about the film's failure and the emotional toll it took on him. In an interview with Ranveer Allahbadia, he recalled, "So what if it didn't do well, it is still your film," I was told. Toh mujhe bohot dard hua. It is an unfortunate child. I felt a sense of ownership over the film, I felt like telling it, 'I am not embarrassed of you brother, you are mine, as much as any other film of mine.' So, in that moment, I felt a strange melancholy, ek ajeeb sa dard mehsos hua, that oh this was an unsuccessful film, which I didn't feel it in this manner back then. But I could feel at this point. Back then, calculations were happening, I was reading people's faces, I could sense disappointment. I had dengue, so I was also bed ridden for a month."

accusations and genuine victims seeking justice.”

The association concluded by stating, "Truth, fairness, and justice must prevail. False allegations and genuine harassment are both serious matters, and the law must deal with each appropriately." Shinde made the controversial revelation during her appearance on Bharti Singh's YouTube talk show. The dispute dates back to 2016, when she accused the makers of Bhabhi Ghar Par Hain of non-payment of dues and mistreatment. After deciding to quit the show, she allegedly received legal notices aimed at preventing her from participating in Bigg Boss. Recalling the episode, Shinde said, "I filed a sexual harassment case because I felt I had no other option. The police told me that if I wanted an FIR registered, I would need to make serious allegations. Since I come from a legal background, I understood the process." Sanjay Kohli thanked her following the backlash over her admission, Shinde defended her decision in an interview with IANS. "People called me psycho. Rumours were spread about me. Criminal defamation cases were filed against me. CINTAA also took action against me. Leaving that show was not easy. There were attempts to stop me from participating in Bigg Boss. I finally confessed because I did not want to carry this lie with me forever." She further claimed that Sanjay Kohli personally thanked her after she publicly admitted the truth. "I spoke to them. They told me to let people say whatever they want. They called me to thank me. I told them that we both know the reality, and I am not afraid of telling the truth. I simply wanted to set an example that nobody should be scared of speaking the truth. Unfortunately, many people hold back because of the kind of situations and backlash that get created." Shilpa Shinde quit Bhabhi Ji Ghar Par Hain! in March 2016 following a highly publicised fallout with the show's makers. At the time, she objected to an exclusivity clause in her contract and alleged mental harassment, unequal treatment, and a lack of support from the production team. During the dispute, Shilpa also accused producer Sanjay Kohli of inappropriate behaviour, claiming that he had made uncomfortable remarks and touched her inappropriately. However, nearly a decade later, the actress has admitted that those allegations were false, sparking fresh controversy and widespread debate within the entertainment industry.