

KCR's visit to Peddi Sudarshan Reddy's family sparks huge mobilisation in Warangal

Hyderabad: BRS president and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao on Sunday visited Nallabelli in Warangal district to pay his respects to former Narsampet MLA and Telangana activist Peddi Sudarshan Reddy, who died recently after a brief illness. He also handed over cheques of Rs 2.25 crore towards financial assistance already announced for the bereaved family on behalf of the party.City & Local GuidesChandrashekhar Rao reached Nallabelli at around 2 pm and paid floral tributes to Sudarshan Reddy's portrait before consoling his mother, wife and children.

Fly Tricolour From Every Home: Modi

New Delhi:, August 9

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged people to enthusiastically participate in the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, describing the national flag as the country's pride and a constant source of inspiration to give one's best for the nation, as BJP chief ministers and senior leaders led Tiranga Yatras across several states.

“Our Tricolour is our pride and a constant source of inspiration to always give our best for the nation. Let us participate enthusiastically in the #HarGharTiranga movement and renew our collective resolve to con tribute towards building a Viksit Bharat,” Modi said in a post on X.

The Prime Minister said he was glad that this year's campaign was dedicated to the national song 'Vande Mataram' as the country marks its 150th anniversary. The 2026 edition of Har Ghar Tiranga, launched on August 6, is being observed across the country from August 9 to 17. Started in 2022 as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the initiative has since become an annual campaign encouraging people to hoist the nation al flag at their homes and workplaces.

Seven arrested for gambling in Peddapalli

Peddapalli: Seven persons were arrested for gambling in Peddampet village in Anthargaon mandal on Saturday night. Police seized cash of Rs 14,730, six mobile phones and 52 cards from them.

Police said that Dharmaji Laxman, Layishetti Mahesh, Bangari Narayana, Adicharla Shiva Sai, Merugu Venkataswamy, Macharla Akash and Asarla Mallesh were apprehended when sleuths of a task force conducted a raid on a house, following a tip-off. The accused persons were handed over to Anthargaon police for further action.



Telangana Economy Shines In RBI Report

Hyderabad, AUGust 9

: RBI's latest report, Handbook of Statistics on the Indian Economy 2025-26, shows Telangana's economy recording strong growth, with services and allied activities emerging as major contributors.

The RBI data presented Telangana as an economy registering broad-based expansion, with gains visible not only in overall state income and per-capita income but also across manufacturing, construction, trade, transport, financial services, and real estate-related activities.

Telangana's economy continued to expand at a robust pace, with the state's net state domestic product (NSDP) at current prices rising to ₹16.15 lakh crore in 2025-26 from ₹14.58 lakh crore, up about 10.8 per cent. The data, compiled from the National Statistics Office, also showed that Telangana's NSDP at constant prices increased from ₹7.23 lakh crore to ₹7.86 lakh crore in 2025-26, reflecting real growth of around 8.8 per cent.

Sectoral data drawn from the report showed that Telangana's growth was increasingly supported by a diversified economic base. At current prices, agriculture, livestock, forestry, and fishing contributed ₹2,03,341 crore

last year, compared with ₹1,99,705 crore in 2024-25.

Mining and quarrying contributed ₹30,137 crore, while manufacturing increased from ₹1,04,472 crore to ₹1,12,490 crore. Electricity, gas, water supply, and other utility services rose from ₹24,731 crore to ₹27,396 crore. The construction component increased from ₹76,256 crore to ₹84,960 crore, while trade, repair, hotels, and restaurants expanded sharply from ₹2,83,799 crore to ₹3,31,528 crore.

Within the broader services economy, transport, storage, communication, and broadcasting-related services increased from ₹96,233 crore in 2024-25 to ₹1,09,996 crore in 2025-26. Financial services rose from ₹71,496 crore to ₹80,183 crore, while real estate, ownership of dwellings, and professional services increased from ₹2,99,694 crore to ₹3,34,688 crore. Public administration and other services also recorded increases, with the latter rising from ₹1,18,186 crore to ₹1,33,643 crore. As a result, total NSVA at basic prices climbed from ₹13,35,894 crore in 2024-25 to ₹14,81,185 crore in 2025-26.

The constant-price figures provide further evidence of real expansion across several sectors. Agriculture, livestock, forestry, and fishing rose from ₹94,195 crore in

2024-25 to ₹96,785 crore in 2025-26, while manufacturing increased from ₹75,413 crore to ₹79,025 crore. Electricity, gas, water supply, and other utility services rose from ₹8,838 crore to ₹9,132 crore. Construction increased from ₹34,343 crore to ₹37,769 crore, while trade, repair, hotels, and restaurants recorded a substantial increase from ₹1,24,905 crore to ₹1,45,624 crore.

The constant-price data for services-related activities also show continued expansion. Transport, storage, communication, and broadcasting-related services increased from ₹47,280 crore in 2024-25 to ₹48,664 crore in 2025-26; financial services rose from ₹42,272 crore to ₹46,771 crore; real estate, ownership of dwellings, and professional services increased from ₹1,33,803 crore to ₹1,44,300 crore; and other services rose from ₹46,806 crore to ₹50,903 crore. Total NSVA at basic prices consequently increased from ₹6,44,126 crore to ₹6,94,972 crore at constant prices.

The latest figures indicate a sustained expansion of the Telangana economy over the past few years. At current prices, the state's NSDP rose from ₹8.49 lakh crore in 2020-21 to ₹16.15 lakh crore in 2025-26. At constant prices, NSDP increased from ₹5.29 lakh crore in 2020-21 to ₹6.95 lakh crore in 2025-26.



The state's per-capita income has also witnessed a significant rise. Telangana's per-capita NSDP at current prices increased from ₹2,25,734 in 2020-21 to ₹4,18,931 in 2025-26. This represented an increase of more than ₹38,900, or about 10.2 per cent, in a single year. At constant prices, per-capita NSDP rose from ₹1,40,743 in 2020-21 to ₹2,04,022 in 2025-26.

Rajahmundry Hit-and-run: Medico Priyanka Dies

KAKINADA, AUGUST 9

Dr Kanike Priyanka, 29, a Hyderabad resident, died in a hospital on Sunday, nearly a week after she sustained grievous injuries when she was run over by a car driven by two allegedly drunk youths in Rajamahendravaram on August 3.

Her death was declared at 3.22 pm, police said. Dr



Priyanka, pursuing her MD at a private college, had been declared brain dead. Sources said the family had agreed to donate her organs, though this could not be confirmed.

The two accused, Suravarapu Daswanth of Morampudi and Desabhakhtula Andrew Joseph Edward of Lalacheruvu near Rajamahendravaram, were initially booked for “rash and negligent driving.” It appeared that the police did not book the duo for drunk driving; Deccan Chronicle is confirming this aspect with the police.

The Prakashnagar police of Rajamahendravaram have since altered the case to one of culpable homicide. The duo is currently in judicial custody. The duo was arrested only on August 6, three days after the incident.

Sources said that the family of Daswanth was in the real estate business and was friendly with local MLAs of all parties. Edward was said to be a Class 10 drop-out and was running a business.

East Godavari district superintendent of police D. Narasimha Kishore said the police would approach the court seeking custody of the duo for interrogation.

Kishore said that on August 3 at 9.40 pm, Daswanth

and Edward had quarrelled with the watchman of a mall at Rajamahendravaram. According to reports, the watchman had prevented the two from entering the cinema hall in the mall as they were allegedly drunk and failed a breathalyser check. Enraged at being denied entry, police said, Daswanth and Edward drove of the mall and thrice hit the two-wheeler on which Dr Priyanka was riding pillion, with her colleague Dr V.V.D. Sai Umesh driving the vehicle.

When the duo hit the car the third time, Dr Priyanka fell down and the car ran over her. She had been shifted to a local private hostel from where her parents shifted her to a Hospital in Hyderabad, where she died on Sunday.

Prakashnagar police arrested Daswanth and Edward four days later, and produced them before the court on August 7, which remanded them up to August 21.

In the interim, Dr Priyanka's father K. Venkatesh, who was in Rajamahendravaram when her death was declared, told media that while his daughter had been injured and undergoing treatment in Hyderabad, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu had bothered to inquire about her well-being and offer words of reassurance.

Telugu Desam social media condemned the comments on social media for distorting the comments of Dr Priyanka's father.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister ordered stringent action against those responsible for Priyanka's death and directed officials to provide ₹20 lakh financial assistance to her bereaved family, besides assuring them of all possible government support.

Opposition parties and social activists criticised the police action in the case and alleged that the accused had been booked under weak sections despite the seriousness of the incident. They noted that the accused had hit the vehicle of the victim thrice in quick succession.

After the death of Dr Priyanka was reported, a slew of political leaders, including Pawan Kalyan, expressed grief and promised strict action against the accused.



Four key Bills on House agenda as Opposition looks to corner Shah

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 9

The Lok Sabha is likely to take up four important Bills on Monday, with Home Minister Amit Shah scheduled to move two of them. However, uncertainty looms over the delimitation and the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) Bills amid the ongoing logjam.

The Opposition has been demanding an explanation from the Home Minister on the alleged police action on demonstrating students at Jantar Mantar on July 20 and has sought accountability. It is likely to corner Shah on the issue in Parliament.

The issue has already triggered protests both inside and outside Parliament, with members of the Opposition demanding that the government address their concerns.

The government, meanwhile, is scheduled to advance its legislative agenda, with the Tribunal Reforms Bill, 2026, among the key Bills listed for consideration in the Lok Sabha.

Shah will move two Bills for consideration — the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026, and the National Co-operative Development Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2026.

The Union Cabinet had approved a proposal to change the name of Kerala to Keralam. The Kerala Legislative Assembly had earlier, on July 1, 2026, unanimously endorsed the President's reference seeking the state legislature's views on the proposed change. Following the Assembly's approval, the state government's views have been conveyed to the Centre.

lowing the Assembly's approval, the state government's views have been conveyed to the Centre.

The Centre will now proceed with the legislative process and, upon the recommendation of the President, introduce a Bill in Parliament to formally effect the change of the state's name from Kerala to Keralam.

The Tribunal Reforms Bill is also expected to be a significant piece of legislative business. The proposed legislation seeks to provide a new framework for the functioning of tribunals and includes provisions for setting up a national tribunals commission.

The commission is proposed to be headquartered in the national capital and will comprise a chairperson and four members — two judicial and two technical. The Bill also lays down provisions relating to the qualification, selection, appointment, salaries, allowances, resignation and removal of tribunal chairpersons and members.

The Opposition is seeking a formal response from Shah on the Jantar Mantar episode, alleging that students and protesters were subjected to police action during “peaceful demonstrations”.

INDIA bloc leaders have publicly demanded that the government clarify who authorised the police action and the circumstances that led to the alleged use of force. The issue has triggered repeated disruptions in Parliament during the monsoon session, with Opposition protests leading to a logjam even as several important Bills have been passed amid the din.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

India's innovation challenge remains

Though India has emerged as one of the world's largest producers of scientific publications and patent filings, it continues to lag behind in research spending relative to the size of its economy. One of the reasons for this poor performance, compared with other major economies, is that R&D spending has traditionally been the exclusive domain of the public sector since independence, and the private industry was largely insulated from innovation. However, a positive shift is happening now. The latest report by the Department of Science and Technology on India's research profile reveals a major milestone. For the first time in the country's history, private industry's share of the Gross Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) stood at 51.8% in 2023-24, overtaking the combined spending of the central and State governments. This significant jump from 45.5% in 2021-22 is a welcome development. According to the Economic Survey 2025-26, India's GERD stands at roughly 0.64% of GDP — a figure that has been virtually stagnant for more than a decade and is dwarfed by those of Israel (5%), South Korea (4.8–4.9%), the United States (3.5%), Japan (3.3%), and China (2.4%). The R&D spending hovered in the range of 0.6% to 0.85% for nearly 20 years despite India's economy growing several-fold. The optics of private industry crossing the 50% threshold are encouraging, and they do bring India structurally closer to advanced economies where business enterprise typically funds 70–80% of national R&D. While the private sector's rising R&D share is a positive and necessary correction to India's historically state-dominated research funding model, it is by itself not sufficient to close the technology gap with the countries it wants to compete with. India crossing the 50% mark in private contribution while spending less than 1% of GDP on R&D is a very different achievement from the US or China doing so while spending 2.5-3.5% of GDP. Understandably, private R&D follows sectors that promise near-term commercial returns: generic and specialty pharmaceuticals, IT services and software products, automotive components and EVs, and consumer-facing digital technologies. These sectors are undoubtedly important for boosting exports and generating employment, but they are not fully aligned with the areas most consequential for India's strategic autonomy and long-term economic security: semiconductor fabrication, advanced materials, critical minerals processing, defence and aerospace systems, foundational AI models, and clean energy storage. A large share of private R&D is concentrated in a narrow set of sectors. Decades of a protected, import-substituting economy, followed by a services- and IT-outsourcing-led growth mode, meant Indian firms could compete and profit without deep in-house research — unlike Korean or Chinese firms, which were pushed by export-oriented industrial policy. Also, public research institutions and private industry have historically operated in separate silos, with limited co-funded research or faculty-industry mobility, unlike the tightly integrated innovation ecosystems of the US or Germany.

Parameshwar Reddy Participates in Bonalu Celebrations in Kapra Division

UPPAL, AUGUST 9 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy participated as the chief guest in Bonalu celebrations held at various temples in Kapra Division. He visited and offered special prayers at Sri Nalla Pochamma Temple in Sairam Nagar, Nalla Pochamma Temple in Indira Nagar, Yellamma Temple in Saibaba Nagar, Pochamma Temple in Sairam Nagar, and Pochamma Temple in Yellareddyguda. "On the occasion, the respective temple committee members felicitated Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy." Speaking at the event, Parameshwar Reddy said that the Bonalu festival is a symbol of Telangana's rich culture and traditions. He stated that Bonalu celebrations are conducted grandly across Hyderabad for nearly a month, with festivities being held in different areas every week. "He said that he participated in the Bonalu celebrations in Kapra Division and offered prayers to the goddess for the prosperity, peace and well-being of the people of Uppal Constituency." "Former Corporator Swarnraj Shivamani, Seetha Ram Reddy, DCC Secretary Murali, Battala Srinivas, District Minority Chairman Kobari Nagaraju, Aziz, Bhupal Reddy, Vitthal Naik, Vampooguda Division President Tilu Yadav, Kapra Division President Tennaru Srihari, Purna Yadav, Jagadish, Raju, Rakesh Yadav, Lingam, Satyanarayana, Prashanth Goud, Manoj, Imran, Santosh, members of the Divisional Congress Committee, senior Congress leaders, temple committee members and others participated in the programme."



Hyderabad Bonalu Celebrations Held with Devotion

Elaborate Security Arrangements in Malkajgiri Commissionerate for Devotees: CP Sumathi



atmosphere of devotees. "Our main objective is to ensure peaceful and safe Bonalu celebrations with devotion, discipline and security," CP Sumathi said.

Political Power Alone Can Empower Tribal Communities

Tribal Rights, Culture and Identity Must Be Protected Through Effective Implementation of Laws



KHAMMAM, August 9 (Indian Chronicle): Several speakers asserted that political power is essential for ensuring empowerment and justice for tribal communities across the country. An International Tribal Day programme was organised in Khammam on Sunday by the Lambadi Rights Struggle Committee and the Veeranareemanula Ashaya Sadhana Samithi at the Hotel Sridhar Conference Hall. "The programme began with floral tributes to the portraits of eminent personalities, followed by the hoisting of the tribal community flag." "Speaking on the occasion, Gatla Rajanna, State Secretary of the Rajyadhikara Party, expressed concern that the policies of ruling governments were threatening the identity and existence of tribal communities. He said the differences being created between tribal people living in plain areas and those in agency areas were becoming an obstacle to their empowerment." "He called upon all Bahujans to intensify their movements and struggles towards achieving political power and urged them to break down caste barriers and work together. He asserted that political power alone can ensure genuine empowerment for tribal communities." "Patel Vanaja, President of the Women's Wing of the Rajyadhikara Party, demanded strict implementation of laws enacted for the protection of tribal communities. She said that sincere implementation of these laws would help preserve tribal culture, traditions and identity. She called upon all Bahujans to unite and build move-



ments aimed at achieving political power and social empowerment." "Banothu Badru Naik, State President of the Lambadi Rights Struggle Committee, who presided over the programme, said tribal communities should rise above political affiliations, work collectively to resolve their problems and follow a clear agenda towards achieving political power." "Bhukya Upendra Bai, Khammam District President of the Veeranareemanula Ashaya Sadhana Samithi, said no major struggle or movement in history had been successful without the participation of women. She stressed the need to give women due importance in the movements and struggles for tribal political empowerment. She also recalled the significant role played by women in the Telangana Armed Peasant Struggle." "Bahujan leaders Sanjeeva Rao, Dasari Srinu, Yelamandla Jagadish and Veeranna Naik, among others, addressed the gathering." "Rajyadhikara Party State Vice-President Swarnakka, Vijayalakshmi, Srinivas, leaders Vishwanatham Goud, Vinay, Nageswara Rao and Somanna, and Veeranareemanula Ashaya Sadhana Samithi leaders Sarojini, Nagamani, Jyothi, Kalavathi, Bujji, Triveni, Usha, Lakshmi, Devi, Sujatha, Lalitha, Kavitha and Eeramma participated in the programme." "Bahujan leaders Anil Naik, Veeranna Naik, Nagendra Naik, Nehru, Surabhi, Srinivas Naik, Keshav and Murali, among others, were also present."

Manda Jagan Family Members Offer Bonam to Goddess

Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, August 09: "On the occasion of the Ashada Bonalu festivities, BRS senior leader, President of the Secunderabad Padmashali Sangam, and President of the Secunderabad SC, ST, BC and Minority Cells Manda Jagan, along with his family members, offered Bonam to the Goddess at the Pochamma Maisamma Temple in the Boudhanagar Division." "Speaking on the occasion, Manda Jagan wished that the blessings of the Goddess would always be upon the people of Telangana. He said he prayed for the well-being, happiness, prosperity, good health and longevity of all people." "He stated that the Bonalu festival stands as a symbol of Telangana's rich culture and traditional heritage."

Special Prayers Offered at Katta Maisamma-Muthyalamma Temple on Bonalu

Indian Chronicles, Secunderabad, August 09: "On the occasion of the Bonalu festival, Telugu Desam Party (TDP) Sitaphalmandi Division President G.V. Krishna, along with TDP Secunderabad constituency in-charge Vallurapu Srinivas Kumar, visited the Katta Maisamma-Muthyalamma Temple in Chilkalguda and offered spe-



cial prayers to the deities. "Speaking on the occasion, Vallurapu Srinivas said that he prayed for the blessings of the goddesses to be showered upon all Telugu people and for their lives to be filled with happiness, peace and prosperity." "Later, Vallurapu Srinivas visited various temples across the Secunderabad Assembly constituency and participated in special prayers." "TDP senior leaders Paritala Vijay Kumar, Chiranjeevi Raju, Jagadish Goud, Seshirekha, Garige Praveen, Devender, Sudhakar and others participated in the programme."

Bandari Lakshma Reddy Participates in Palaharam Bandi Programme in Cherlapally

UPPAL, AUGUST 9 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy participated in the Palaharam Bandi programme organised in Cherlapally Division. On the occasion, he took part in special prayers and sought the blessings of the goddess. "Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy said that the Bonalu festival is a symbol of the self-respect, culture and traditions of the people of Telangana. He said it is the



responsibility of everyone to preserve these spiritual traditions, which have been passed down through generations, with devotion and carry them forward to future generations." "He wished that the people would be blessed with happiness, prosperity, good health and longevity on the occasion of the Bonalu festival. He also prayed that the blessings of the goddess would remain upon every family." "BRS party leaders from Cherlapally Division, including Mahesh Goud, and others participated in the programme."

Police Raid Gambling Den in Errupalem Nine Persons Detained; Rs 23,800 Cash and Five Motorcycles Seized

KHAMMAM, Errupalem, August 9 (Indian Chronicle): Police raided an alleged gambling den on the outskirts of Sakhinaveedu village in Errupalem mandal of Khammam district on Sunday and detained nine persons who were allegedly engaged in gambling. "According to SI Ramesh Kumar, police received credible information that gambling was taking place on the outskirts of Sakhinaveedu. Acting on the information, the SI, along with police personnel, conducted a raid at the location." "During the raid, nine persons were taken into custody. Police seized ₹23,800 in cash and five motorcycles from the spot and registered a case, the SI said." "SI Ramesh Kumar warned that strict action would be taken against those involved in gambling and other anti-social activities. He urged people to stay away from such activities." "SI Ramesh Kumar and other police personnel participated in the raid."



Both Central and State Governments Have Failed to Keep Their Promises

People Will Not Tolerate Broken Promises; Governments Must Fulfil Their Assurances: CPI Leader Eenugu Gandhi

Public Awareness Yatra Receives Warm Welcome Across Villages

“Khammam, August 9 (Indian Chronicle): CPI District Executive Committee member Eenugu Gandhi warned that people would not tolerate governments forgetting their promises after coming to power. He demanded that both the Central and State governments work with sincerity and fulfil the assurances made to the people during elections.” “As part of the Public Awareness Yatra organised by the CPI, a padayatra was conducted across Bonakal mandal on Sunday. People in several villages came out to welcome the yatra. Rallies accompanied by dappu and kolatam teams added attraction to the programme. Public meetings were also held in several villages during the yatra.” “Addressing the gatherings, Eenugu Gandhi alleged that the Narendra Modi government had come to power promising to strengthen farmers, make agriculture profitable, create two crore jobs every year, eradicate poverty and deposit ₹15 lakh in the bank accounts of every citizen. He alleged that the government had failed to fulfil the promises made to the people.” “He claimed that unemployment was increasing in the country and alleged that several public-sector institutions that formed the backbone of the economy were being handed over to private corporate interests. He also criticised the alleged privatisation of important sectors, including railways, airports and ports, and claimed that the agricultural sector was also being exposed to corporate interests.” “Gandhi said that governments would have to respond if people’s movements became stronger. He called upon people to unite and intensify democratic struggles on public issues.” “Criticising the Telangana government, Gandhi alleged that the Congress government had also failed to fulfil several promises made during the elections. He alleged that the government was attempting to project schemes such as free bus travel and fine-quality rice as sufficient implementation of its assurances.” “He warned that people would not remain silent merely because a government was in power. “It is a mistake to think that anything can be done simply because one is in power,” he said.” “Gandhi stated that the CPI does not enter the



public domain only during elections and that the party continuously raises people’s issues. He said the Public Awareness Yatra was aimed at creating awareness among people, increasing pressure on governments and ensuring the implementation of election promises.” “CPI District Secretary Dandi Suresh and NFIW District President Battineni Neeraja said the Congress government was delaying the implementation of several election promises. They alleged that loan waivers had not been implemented completely and that the promised Indiramma Bharosa and financial assistance for rural poor had not reached all beneficiaries.” “They demanded the implementation of Rythu Bima, crop insurance, the promised monthly financial assistance of ₹2,500 for women and the Tula Gold scheme, among other assurances.” “CPI District Assistant Secretary Jammula Jitender Reddy, State Committee members Yerrababu, Aepuri Lathadevi and Siddineni Karlakumar, and District Executive Committee members Singu Narasimha Rao, Midikanti Chinna Venkata Reddy, Yengala Ananda Rao and Kuchipudi Ravi participated in the programme.” “Leaders of various people’s organisations, including Battineni Neeraja, Tati Nirmala, Ramkoti, Pagidipalli Yesu, Itikala Ramakrishna, Madupalli Laxman, Shravan, Mamidi Ramakrishna, Srujana, Madishetty Venkateshwarlu, Upender, Srinivasa Rao and Narasimha, were also present.

Son-in-Law Allegedly Kills Mother-in-Law Over Extramarital Affair

Police Arrest Two Accused in Murder Case; Sent to Judicial Remand Kalluru In-charge ACP Sadula Sarangapani Reveals Case Details

“Khammam”Sathupalli, August 9 (Indian Chronicle): “Police have arrested a man and another woman for allegedly murdering the man’s mother-in-law, who they reportedly considered an obstacle to their extramarital relationship. The accused, Vedula Tirupathi Rao and Pagutla Sunitha, were produced before a court and sent to judicial remand.” “Kalluru In-charge ACP Sadula Sarangapani disclosed the details of the case on Sunday.” “According to the police, Gundala Venkata Narasamma (65) of Thumbur village in Sathupalli mandal had been missing since the night of August 2. Her daughter, Vedula Mangamma, lodged a complaint at the Sathupalli Police Station on August 4. Following the complaint, police formed four teams and launched an investigation.” “During the investigation, police reportedly found that Vedula Tirupathi Rao, who was living with his second wife Mangamma in Thumbur, was allegedly maintaining an extramarital relationship with Pagutla Sunitha, a woman from the same village whose husband had died. Police said Tirupathi Rao and his wife Mangamma frequently quarrelled over the relationship.” “According to the police, on July 30, Tirupathi Rao, his wife Mangamma and his mother-in-law Venkata Narasamma went to the house in Duddupudi village where Sunitha was working and allegedly abused and assaulted her. Police said Sunitha felt humiliated following the incident and subsequently conspired with Tirupathi Rao to eliminate Venkata Narasamma, whom they allegedly considered an obstacle to continuing their relationship.” “As per the investigation, on the night of August 2, Tirupathi Rao and Sunitha allegedly went to Venkata Narasamma’s house. Police said she was sitting in a chair and watching television when the accused allegedly entered the house and strangled her using the end of her saree, resulting in her death.” “The accused allegedly transported the body on a motorcycle



to the outskirts of Narayannapuram village near an Anjaneya Swamy temple in Sathupalli mandal. Police said they placed the body beside the road, covered it with dry wood, coconut fronds and waste material and allegedly set it on fire using petrol.” “When they reportedly returned the following morning and found that the body had not been completely burnt, they allegedly covered it again with coconut fronds and waste. Police said the accused returned to the location around 11 p.m. on August 3, wrapped the partially burnt remains in a green mat and moved them to another nearby location, where they allegedly placed them among dry wood, coconut fronds and other waste, poured petrol over them and set them on fire.” “Police said the accused later informed Thumbur Sarpanch Veerababu and GP Secretary Ekkirala Laxman about the incident before leaving the area.” “Following the investigation, police arrested Tirupathi Rao and Sunitha, brought them to Sathupalli Police Station and produced them before the court, which remanded them to judicial custody.” “ACP Sarangapani said SI Veeraprasad, SI Pradeep and other police personnel played a key role in the investigation. Police also seized the mobile phones allegedly used by the accused and the motorcycle involved in the case.

Bonalu Celebrations Symbolise Social Harmony

People Should Celebrate the Festival Linked to Scientific Traditions with Joy: Padma Rao Goud

“Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, August 9: “Bonalu celebrations are a reflection of Telangana’s age-old culture and traditions, and people should celebrate the festival, which is closely associated with scientific traditions, with joy and enthusiasm, said Secunderabad MLA and former Deputy Speaker Teegulla Padma Rao Goud. “On the occasion of Bonalu, Padma Rao Goud visited several temples across the Secunderabad Assembly constituency and offered special prayers. He participated in special prayers at the historic Kattamaisamma Temple in Chilkalguda, where temple officials accorded him a traditional welcome.” “Speaking on the occasion, Padma Rao Goud said Bonalu reflected the rich cultural heritage and traditions of Telangana. He said the festival had traditionally been celebrated irrespective of political affiliations, caste or religion, fostering unity and harmony among people.” “He said funds had been provided for the development of the Kattamaisamma Temple and land had also been facilitated for its expansion. He urged people across the Secunderabad constituency to celebrate Bonalu festivities on a grand scale while maintaining communal harmony.” “Padma Rao Goud said more than ₹1.12 crore had been sanctioned for around 212 temples in the Secunderabad constituency for Bonalu celebrations.” “BRS youth leaders Teegulla Kishore Kumar and Rameshwar Goud, former corporators Samala Hema, Kandi Shailaja and Rasoori Sunitha, besides officials and party leaders, were present.

1987–88 TTC Batch Holds Emotional Reunion After 39 Years Former Trainee Teachers Revisit Fond Memories and Honour Their Teachers



“Khammam, August 9 (Indian Chronicle): Former trainee teachers who underwent training at the Government Teacher Training Centre (TTC) in Khammam 39 years ago held an emotional reunion in the city on Sunday. Members of the 1987–88 TTC batch gathered to reconnect with old friends and revisit their memorable days of training.” “The batch consisted of around 200 trainee teachers, of whom more than 150 have now joined a WhatsApp group created by four of their former classmates. The members contacted their old batchmates and decided to organise a reunion after nearly four decades.” “More than 100 former trainee teachers from Khammam, Mahabubnagar, Warangal, Mahabubabad, Hyderabad and Bhadradi Kothagudem districts attended the reunion held at a hotel in Khammam.” “The participants expressed immense happiness at meeting one another after 39 years. They introduced their family mem-

bers to their old friends and recalled memorable incidents from their training days at the TTC.” “More than 90 per cent of the members of the batch went on to work as teachers. While some have retired after serving in different districts, others are still continuing in service.” “The former students also honoured their teachers who had trained them at the TTC and expressed their gratitude for the guidance and education they had received.” “The reunion continued from morning until 6 p.m., with the participants spending the day sharing memories, exchanging experiences and enjoying the company of their old friends.” “The arrangements for the programme were supervised by former TTC representatives Chintamaneni Venkateswara Rao and Ravinder Reddy, along with Khammam-based Mohandas, Baburao, A. Nageswara Rao, M. Narasimulu and Vijay, among others.

Illegal Liquor Sale During Bonalu; Elderly Man Arrested Greed to Make Easy Money by Selling Liquor at Higher Prices – 43 Bottles Seized

“MEDIPALLY, AUGUST 9 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Taking advantage of the government’s ban on liquor sales during the Bonalu festival, a 64-year-old man was arrested by Medipally police for allegedly selling liquor illegally at inflated prices.” “Acting on credible information that liquor was being sold at Plot No. 9 in Bapuji Nagar, Medipally police conducted a raid and caught the accused, identified as Bandari Kistaiah (64), red-handed while allegedly selling liquor.” “During a search of his house, police seized a total of 43 liquor bottles (7.740 litres), including 18 bottles of Officer’s Choice, 7 bottles of Imperial Blue and 18 bottles of K.K.” “According to police, the accused had purchased the liquor bottles in advance and was selling them at higher prices after liquor shops were closed during the Bonalu festival.” “Medipally police registered a case and launched an investigation into the incident.



Why we need to take measles seriously again



Measles, that ghost from a distant past, is making an unwelcome return, in many countries around the world, including in developed nations. And it’s impossible to ignore. We could soon be staring at a ‘Measles Map’ indicating regions where the protection of herd immunity has now fallen apart.

How we got hereFor many years, the MMR vaccine (measles, mumps, rubella) has kept a sentinel watch on these dangerous viruses, offering protection not just with a 95% effectiveness for the vaccinated but also through “herd immunity” for those unable to be vaccinated. That wall of immunity has now begun to slowly break down. In the post-COVID years, many regions across countries saw reduced access to routine childhood vaccinations such as MMR, even critically low levels, due to increased strain on over-extended public health facilities overwhelmed by the COVID-19 outbreak. Additionally, due to lockdowns, a large number of parents couldn’t access hospitals for timely vaccinations for their children. India also reported over 32,000 suspected and confirmed measles cases in late 2022, with Maharashtra, Kerala, Jharkhand, and Gujarat being the hardest hit. Mumbai became the epicentre with its numerous clusters in high-density areas. Overall, the pandemic and its after-effects caused approximately 3 million children in the country to miss their routine measles vaccine doses.

Spartanburg’s shadowTo grasp the sobering truth of what the Measles Map of 2026 entails, one needs look no further than Spartanburg County in South Carolina, United States. What began with a small number of sporadic cases quickly mushroomed into a full-blown outbreak, with more than 550 reported cases as of January 2026. Schools were closed, hospitals prepared for overflowing paediatric wards, and people were caught unawares of the alarming rate of virus transmission. The situation in Spartanburg County is not unique: measles has reared its head in other countries too, including 14,000 reported cases in Indonesia, as well

as in Yemen and Pakistan. A worrying aspect is the fact that in 2025, Canada lost its measles elimination status and the USA and Mexico face the same reality in 2026, undoing decades of public health progress.

Measles is far more than just a rash and a fever. Its true danger lies in what scientists are calling “immunological amnesia”, which often gets lost in public discourse. When the measles virus infects a child, it doesn’t just cause acute illness; it systematically targets and destroys the very cells that form the backbone of the immune system’s memory. These are the cells that remember how to fight off other diseases—influenza, pneumonia, even chickenpox. Measles affects the immune system in such a way that sometimes, even years after recovery, a child is left with a compromised immune system, essentially reverting to an infant-like state of vulnerability. This means children who survive measles in 2026 will likely face a significantly higher risk of succumbing to other common infections for the next two or three years, creating a “secondary health crisis” that public health systems may be ill-equipped to handle.

Recognising measlesMeasles doesn’t start with a visible rash; rather, it begins as a cold, which is often mistaken for the common flu. This cold could also be accompanied by cough, runny nose, and conjunctivitis (red, watery, and light-sensitive eyes). After two or three days of these symptoms starting, tiny white spots may appear inside the mouth along with a fever. About 3–5 days from the onset of the first symptoms, a rash will appear, usually starting at the hairline or behind the ears, and it then spreads downward to the neck, trunk, and finally the hands and feet. For most people, two doses of the MMR vaccine provide permanent, lifelong immunity. You do not need booster shots as an adult, if you have completed the two-dose series.

With major outbreaks expected in 2026 across Europe, Southeast Asia, and parts of the U.S., here are some things to take care of before planning international journeys: Ensure you have documentation of two doses of the MMR vaccine. If you are unsure, you can either get a “catch-up” dose (it is safe even if you’ve had one before) or take a blood test to check for antibodies. If traveling with an infant (six–11 months old), they should receive an early dose of the vaccine before leaving. Get vaccinated at least two weeks before departure to allow the body to build immunity. Measles has a long incubation period. Monitor your health for 21 days after returning from an affected country. If you develop a fever and rash while travelling, wear a mask immediately and alert airline staff.

‘Feels good to be working... else family would get me married,’ Life and (hard) work of a 21-year-old in Gurgaon

She had arrived early in the morning for a cleaning job commissioned on Pronto, with a large, wide, green bag slung over her shoulders. It carried five types of chemical cleaners and at least eight kinds of cleaning tools, including a broom. “Namaste sir, good morning. Can I keep my kit bag inside?” she asked pleasantly. That’s how she opened conversations with every client; she would explain later — she’d been taught to do so during the five days of coaching she’d received after she signed up on the platform. She went about her job efficiently and with focus, and at the end, asked for feedback and a good rating on the app — again, as she had been taught. Asked if she liked what she did, she answered quickly.

“It feels good to be working; my family would otherwise be getting me married off.” She said she was 21, and her surname suggested she was a Dalit. Her family, originally from Bihar, now lived in West Bengal, she said. She had come to Gurgaon to work about a year ago, and she had been with Pronto for six months.

How much does she make?

“We are promised Rs 36,000 per month if we work 12-hour shifts, and Rs 27,000 for 8-hour shifts, with two days off every month,” she said. “But the actual income is less than that. I usually earn about Rs 800 daily.” What she earns is not her main grouse, though — it’s the heavy bag she has to lug around, and the fact that she often gets no time between jobs, not even for lunch. “Forget eating in peace, there is hardly any time to even rest for a few minutes. When I get too tired, I have to tell my manager I will not take slots for some time,” she said. The manager has promised her though, that a provision for a lunch break between slots is in the works, along with plans to make the bag lighter, she said. All workers on the app — Pronto calls them “professionals” — are women, and the 21-year-old

goes to her gigs riding pillion on a bike with a male ‘rider’. Women professionals who know how to ride come on Yulu electric bikes.

Has she ever had an unpleasant experience with a client?

Yes, she said, and mostly in homes that seem more affluent than the average. “They act as though they have bought us for that half hour or one hour, and want us to do whatever they want. They know we only have basic chemicals, but they demand deep cleaning that would take hours.” In her experience, young male professionals who live alone or with other men have been the most polite. “They always tell me to do only as much as is reasonably possible within that time frame, and they never raise their voices,” she said. She said she shared a room in Gurgaon’s Sector 52 with a woman who did the same job as hers at Pronto. “She her shift at noon usually, and does 8 hours. We have not told our landlord or neighbours what we do, we remove our uniforms and leave the kit bag at the ‘hub’. People will talk if they get to know, and the landlord may want to increase the rent.” Her roommate and she pay a monthly rent of Rs 5,500.

Does she manage to save?

Her uncle and aunt who moved to Gurgaon a few years ago had told her parents that women could work in the city, and that made it easier for her to leave home, she said. She got on to the app just as a lot of Bengali Muslims were leaving for fear of being rounded up as Bangladeshis last year, and she benefited from the spike in demand. She worked up to 16 hours daily in the Diwali week, and hit Rs 45,000 in earnings that month, including incentives. “I send at least Rs 10,000 home every month. Right now, I don’t mind doing this, but if I find 4-5 good homes who will employ me long-term, I will switch. In a way I will get to choose who I work for, unlike now.”

MC to organise land earmarking ceremony for compressed biogas plant at Dadumajra

Officials said the CBG plant will play a crucial role in reducing landfill pressure, cutting greenhouse gas emissions and producing clean fuel. (File Photo) Officials said the CBG plant will play a crucial role in reducing landfill pressure, cutting greenhouse gas emissions and producing clean fuel. The Municipal Corporation of Chandigarh will hold a land earmarking ceremony on January 19 at the Dadumajra dumping ground for the compressed biogas (CBG) plant, which is expected to enhance the city’s waste processing capacity, reduce methane emissions from landfills, decrease dependence on fossil fuels and generate renewable energy in the form of compressed biogas.

The ceremony will be held in the presence of UT Administrator Gulab Chand Kataria, marking a major milestone in the transformation of the Dadumajra dumping site into an environmentally sustainable facility. The land earmarking follows the successful bioremediation of legacy waste at Dadumajra, carried out by the MC in a phased manner since 2019. Through this process, nearly 28 acres of land have been reclaimed, reducing environmental hazards and opening avenues for scientific and productive utilisation of the site, said an MC official. Building on this achievement, the MC has partnered with Indian Oil Corporation Limited

(IOCL) to set up the CBG plant under the design–build–finance–operate (DBFO) model. Importantly, the project involves no financial investment from the MC, including operation and maintenance costs. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) between MC and IOCL was signed on November 20, 2025. During the ceremony, around 10 acres of land will be formally handed over to IOCL. The land has been leased at a nominal rate of Re 1 per acre per month. Provision has also been kept for future expansion on an additional five acres. Once operational, the plant will process around 200 tonnes per day (TPD) of segregated organic municipal solid waste, with up to 10 per cent mixed waste, along with 30 TPD of cow dung. The estimated project cost is around Rs 125 crore. The project will adhere to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) norms.

As part of environmental safeguards, IOCL will develop a mandatory 33 per cent green belt in the project area. Officials said the CBG plant will play a crucial role in reducing landfill pressure, cutting greenhouse gas emissions and producing clean fuel. The project is also expected to bring long-term environmental and health benefits, particularly for residents living in and around the Dadumajra area.

Shooter linked to Lawrence Bishnoi gang held in West Delhi

A shooter with the Lawrence Bishnoi gang was arrested on Friday from West Delhi’s Uttam Nagar area by the Delhi Police Crime Branch’s Anti-Gangster Squad (AGS) in coordination with Rajasthan Police, officers said. The accused, identified as Pradeep Sharma (23), a resident of Agra in Uttar Pradesh, was arrested in connection with two FIRs registered in Rajasthan relating to extortion, firing incidents, and illegal arms supply.

According to police, Sharma’s case dates back to March last year, when members of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang allegedly demanded an extortion amount of Rs 4 crore from a businessman in the Jawahar Nagar area of Sri Ganganagar in Rajasthan. After the businessman refused to pay, Sharma was allegedly tasked with carrying out a firing attack to intimidate him, officers said. In May last year, Sharma and his associates allegedly opened fire at the businessman’s residence, following which a case was registered and the accused were arrested, they

added. According to police, Sharma was later released on bail but continued his criminal activities and began supplying arms and ammunition to members of the Bishnoi gang. In December 2025, four Bishnoi gang members were arrested in Jaipur’s Jawahar Nagar area with a large cache of weapons. During the investigation, Sharma was identified as the source of the illegal arms, officers said. A separate Arms Act case was subsequently registered against him in Rajasthan. Following intelligence inputs, an AGS team tracked Sharma to Uttam Nagar in West Delhi. A raid was conducted on Friday, leading to his arrest. After questioning, he was handed over to Rajasthan Police for further investigation. Police said Sharma is an active associate of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang and was operating mainly in Rajasthan by supplying weapons and assisting in crimes. Further investigation is underway to identify his associates and trace the wider network, officers said.



dues. The government challenged the judgment, contending that the single-judge bench exceeded the scope of judicial review and that implementing the order would impose an unsustainable financial burden on the state. During the hearing before the division bench, the government pegged the liability at over Rs 14,000 crore. Government sources now estimate the liability at around Rs 25,000 crore. The high court’s direction comes at a time when the AAP government has spent around Rs 3,000 crore on disbursing financial assistance under its flagship scheme for women, adding to the strain on the state’s finances. The issue is expected to figure prominently during the forthcoming Assembly session, with the Opposition likely to target the government over the court’s observation linking publicity expenditure with the obligation to clear employees’ pending dues first.

International drug cartel busted in Delhi: 2 Nigerian nationals held, drugs worth Rs 5 cr seized

An international drug cartel was busted with the arrest of two Nigerian nationals and the seizure of cocaine and MDMA tablets worth an estimated Rs 5 crore, police said on Sunday. The arrests were made after Delhi Police’s Crime Branch conducted sustained surveillance of a drug supply network operating across South and South-west Delhi, officers said. During the operation, 418 grams of cocaine and 925 MDMA (ecstasy) tablets were recovered, they added.

According to police, the probe began after an officer received a tip-off about an individual previously involved in cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS). “On December 2, a tip-off was received by Head Constable Sandeep Kadian that one Nigerian citizen, Frank Vitus, who was previously involved in NDPS cases, was again supplying prohibited psychotropic drugs and MDMA in various parts of South Delhi. Soon, a team started technical as well as manual surveillance on the suspect, who was constantly changing his location throughout South and South-west parts of Delhi,” said DCP Crime Branch Harsh Indora. A raid was conducted, resulting in Vitus’s arrest, DCP Indora said, adding that 418 grams of cocaine and 910 tablets of MDMA were also recovered.

“Vitus told police that he was involved in supplying psychotropic drugs in various areas of Delhi and adjoining

states. Efforts were then concentrated on nabbing the source of the recovered drugs, who was using a Nigerian number for WhatsApp communication,” DCP Indora added. According to police, analysis of Vitus’s phone and further technical investigation led them to Southwest Delhi’s Mehrauli, where the second accused, identified as another Nigerian national, Sunday Otuu (53), was arrested from a rented accommodation.

Fifteen ecstasy tablets were recovered from Otuu’s room, police said. Otuu told police that he had been living in Delhi for the past two years and had been supplying drugs to Vitus, officers said. According to police, he told investigators that the syndicate was being run by a kingpin based in Nigeria, who coordinated deliveries through intermediaries, including an African woman residing in Delhi. Police said Vitus came to India in 2012 on a business visa for garment exports and was arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in 2015. After being released on bail in 2024, he allegedly re-established contact with drug dealers in Nigeria and began distributing narcotics in Delhi. Otuu, who arrived in India in 2015 for business, joined the racket after suffering losses in the garment trade, police said. Police said further investigation is underway to identify other members of the syndicate, including the overseas handlers and local facilitators involved in the supply chain.

Two men break into argument at dhabha in East Delhi, one beats another to death; arrested

A 26-year-old rickshaw puller was arrested on Sunday hours after he allegedly killed a man in East Delhi’s Geeta Colony, said police. The 36-year-old victim was allegedly beaten to death with a wooden log after they had a heated argument at a dhabha, officers said. A PCR call, said police, was received around 9:49 pm on Saturday to report that a man was lying in a pool of blood in Mahila Colony of Gandhi Nagar. When officers reached the spot, they found the man dead with severe head injuries.

The deceased was identified as Danua, a resident of Hathras district in Uttar Pradesh, worked as a pot maker and also pulled a cycle rickshaw in the area. The crime team inspected the scene and the body was sent to Guru Tegh Bahadur Hospital for post-mortem, said police. According to the statement of the complainant, Khushi Ram (62), who runs a roadside dhaba in the area, Danua and another rickshaw puller, Bunti, had allegedly arrived together at the eatery in the evening and consumed liquor. An argument broke out between the them and they began abusing each other. During the altercation, Bunti allegedly picked up a wooden log lying nearby and struck Danua



on the head with force, causing him to collapse and bleed from the mouth. Danua later succumbed to his injuries. A case of murder has been registered at Geeta Colony police station. The accused, Bunti, a resident of Aligarh district in Uttar Pradesh, has been arrested and the weapon of offence has been recovered, said officers, adding that further investigation is underway.

They jailed me ... remove your fear to bring change in Gujarat: Kejriwal to party workers

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal Sunday accused the BJP of running the government in Gujarat through “fear and corruption” and asked the party workers to remove fear from their minds to bring change in the state. “These (BJP) people have ruled the state for 30 years through the strength of fear and corruption... Now, it is time to remove the fear,” he said, addressing the party leaders and workers at an AAP convention held in Loderiyal village of Sanand. “They scare people of (sending them to) jail... They can only send (you) to jail, they cannot strangle you... There is no need to be scared of jail,” Kejriwal said. He cited the examples of AAP Gujarat leaders such as Pravin Ram and Raju Karpada who are in jail and Chaitar Vasava who has been jailed a number of times by the BJP government. He said that Ram and Karpada will come out of jail soon. The former Delhi Chief Minister said, “These people had jailed me. I stayed in jail for six months. There is no need to be scared of jail.” He also cited instances of national AAP leaders like Sanjay Singh, Satyender Jain and Manish Sisodia who were jailed in Delhi. “We did not commit theft. False cases were imposed on us. They thought that by sending top leaders of AAP (to jail), the party would break down. AAP has not broken down and it will now bring a change of power in Gujarat,” he said. Kejriwal said that as the Assembly elections come closer, the ruling BJP will bring in agencies like Enforcement Directorate, Central Bureau of Investigation and police to jail people. “If all of

us are ready to go to jail, nobody can stop the change of power in Gujarat,” he said. The AAP convention was scheduled to take place at a private party plot in the Nikol area of Ahmedabad. However, the party changed the venue to a farm in Loderiyal village of Sanand after the owner of the plot ‘withdrew’ permission for the function allegedly following “pressure from the ruling BJP”. Gujarat BJP president Jagdish Vishvakarma is an MLA from Nikol constituency. Speaking on the change of venue for the convention at a press conference, AAP MLA Gopal Italia alleged that the ruling BJP was behind the development. Quoting Italia, a party release stated, “All preparations for this programme (in Nikol) were completed nearly 20 to 25 days in advance. A private party plot was booked for the programme, the police were informed in advance, and all arrangements including sound systems and chairs were finalised. However, at the last moment, due to threats and pressure exerted by BJP members on the owner of the party plot, the programme was forced to be cancelled.” Chief spokesperson of Gujarat AAP Karan Barot said that the owner of the party plot in Nikol withdrew permission for the venue for the AAP event. The convention was attended by top leaders of Gujarat AAP such as Gopal Rai, Isudan Gadhi, Sagar Rabari, Manoj Sorathiya, Gopal Italia and others. When asked about the AAP allegations, Gujarat BJP spokesperson Anil Patel said, “We are not reacting to AAP.

‘Police report inconsistent with medical reports... raised suspicion’: Why court ordered FIR against cop

While ordering the registration of an FIR against the then Sambhal Circle Officer Anuj Chaudhary, the then inspector of Sambhal police station Anuj Kumar Tomar and other policemen in connection with the bullet injuries sustained by 23-year-old biscuit seller, Mohammad Alam, during violence over the survey of the historic Jama Masjid in November 2024, a Chandausi court observed that the report submitted by the police raised “suspicion” and appeared to be “inconsistent with medical reports and circumstances of the incident”. The incident took place on November 24, 2024, when Alam, a street vendor selling pape biscuits on a handcart, was injured with gunshot injuries. His father, Mohammad Yamin, in his plea in the court, said his son sustained three gunshot wounds. Yamin said he had been unable to lodge a complaint earlier due to fear and added that after approaching officials with no success, he decided to seek the court’s intervention to direct the registration of an FIR. While the Sambhal police, in its response, denied the allegations and said the bullet allegedly removed from Alam’s body was not one used by the police, they also claimed that Alam was wanted in one of the violence-related cases and that his name had surfaced during investigation. The court, in its order on January 9, said: “... medical documents filed in relation to the victim, Alam, record that he sustained a ‘gunshot wound’ and also refer to ‘police firing in a riot’, rendering the matter suspicious and indicating the commission of a cognisable offence arising from the incident.” As per the police report submitted, it was stated that the bullet removed from Alam was sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory, Agra, for examination. According to the FSL report, police said the recovered bullet was of 7.65 mm (32 bore), a calibre not used by the police. Based on this, police claimed the available evidence does not establish that Alam was injured by a bullet fired by

police personnel. The court, however, said, “The medical records clearly show Alam suffered two bullet injuries to his back and one bullet injury to his hand. They further indicate a fracture to a bone in his hand, with relevant medical papers and X-ray reports placed on record... The police have themselves placed Alam’s medical documents on record and recorded statements of treating doctors. However, these statements appear to be inconsistent with medical reports and circumstances of the incident, thereby casting doubt on the police version and indicating the commission of a cognisable offence.”

Delhi CM inaugurates development projects worth Rs 100 crore

CM Rekha Gupta inaugurates Rs 100 crore development projects in RK Puram, focusing on roads, community spaces and parks. CM Rekha Gupta inaugurates Rs 100 crore development projects in RK Puram, focusing on roads, community spaces and parks.

Maintaining that development activities had remained stalled in the Capital under the previous governments, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Sunday inaugurated development projects worth approximately Rs 100 crore in the RK Puram Assembly. Under these projects, roads in the area will be constructed and repaired, old and dilapidated community platforms (chaupals) will be renovated, community centres will be upgraded, and parks will be beautified, officials said.

To promote public health, open gym equipment will also be installed in parks, while boundary walls will be constructed at locations where required. “

BSE expects record-breaking IPO run to continue unabated in 2025, CEO says



India's record-breaking capital-raising spree will continue in 2025 given the strong pipeline of firms looking to go public, the head of the country's oldest exchange told Reuters. "There are 90-plus companies that have already filed their draft prospectus with the regulator, looking to raise an estimated 1 trillion rupees (\$11.65 billion) at some point this year," Sundararaman Ramamurthy, the CEO of BSE said on Thursday. Last year, 91 large firms went public on the BSE, earlier known as the Bombay Stock Exchange, and the NSE, or National Stock Exchange, raising a record 1.6 trillion rupees via initial public offerings (IPOs), according to analytics firm Prime Database. Overall public equity fundraising more than doubled to 3.73 trillion rupees. Mr. Ramamurthy said the IPO boom has more Offers for Sale (OFS), where large shareholders sell existing shares, with the proceeds going to them, instead of fresh issues that provide firms with capital to invest. "I would like to see the OFS percentage coming down and fresh capital raising go

up." BSE earned 1.57 billion rupees in listing fees in the first half of 2024-25, according to East India Securities. This compares to 1.3 billion rupees in fees reported a year earlier.

Mr. Ramamurthy declined to comment on BSE's financials ahead of its upcoming quarterly earnings. The gains from the IPO pipeline, however, are being tempered by tighter rules for trading derivatives. The notional value of derivatives traded in India has declined 40% since September, in anticipation of the new rules, while premiums have fallen 15%-20%, Mr. Ramamurthy said. A further decline could be expected since three of the six new rules introduced by the markets regulator will be implemented by April. "We have to wait till April to judge the final impact," he said. BSE's shares have doubled since November 20 when the rules were implemented as analysts expect a lower impact on the exchange compared to the NSE, which has larger derivative trading volumes. DIVERSIFYING REVENUE STREAMS BSE, which earns a major chunk of revenue from transaction charges and services to firms including listings, is looking to diversify its income streams, Mr. Ramamurthy said. It aims to grow its index business, which licences indexes used by funds to benchmark investments. "We have launched 15 indices since the middle of last year and there is room to continue working on that front," he said. It is also considering expanding its co-location services, which are in demand as high-frequency and algorithmic trading increase. "There is good possibility of generating revenue (in co-location), but we have not made a decision yet. We will look at it after April once market volumes settle down."

All about the utility of hybrid mutual funds

When we think of mutual funds (MFs), we think of equity funds. There are also hybrid funds with their own utility. These funds can add to tax efficiency. To recap, taxation of equity funds, for a holding period of more than one year, is 12.5% plus surcharge and cess. For a holding period of less than one year, it is 20% plus surcharge and cess. For debt funds, it is your marginal slab rate, irrespective of the holding period. For most investors, it is 30% plus surcharge and cess. Hybrid funds with allocation of more than 65% of portfolio to equity, are equity funds for tax purposes. In the process, the debt component of the fund also gets taxed at a lower rate i.e. 12.5%.

Fund details There are six hybrid fund categories defined by Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI). We start with the category called Aggressive Hybrid funds. These funds are mandated to have allocation to equity in the range of 65 to 80% of the portfolio. It is compulsory to have this allocation to equity, hence, this category is just one notch below equity funds. The allocation to debt, 20-35% of portfolio, leads to lower volatility than pure-play equity funds. Equity allocation being more than 65% of portfolio, taxation is that of equity. Then there are Balanced Hybrid funds with equity allocation 40-60%. As per rules, an Asset Management Company (AMC) can have either Aggressive or Balanced Hybrid fund not both. Given a fund with over 65% allocation to equity is taxed as equity and investors prefer equity taxation, AMCs have not initiated Balanced Hybrid funds. SEBI defines Dynamic Asset Allocation or Balanced Advantage Funds (BAFs) as "investment in equity/debt that is managed dynamically". However, the MF industry has positioned BAF in a particular manner.

Equity component is maintained at over 65%, to be eligible for equity taxation. A part of the equity exposure is 'hedged'. Hedging is done by taking a contra position i.e. sell/short position in stock futures. The effect is the net equity exposure, subject to market volatility, is much lower. As an illustration, let us say the in a BAF with a corpus of ₹100, equity exposure is ₹75 and debt exposure is ₹25. There is a short position in equity of say ₹35. Thus, the net equity exposure is ₹40. The extent of the hedge is decided by the fund manager as per market valuations. The reason to make the net equity exposure lower than the apparent exposure is to make it defensive. If the equity market were to correct, the adverse impact would be to the extent of ₹40 and not ₹75. In Equity Savings Funds, SEBI norm sets mini-



mum investment in equity and equity-related instruments at 65% of total assets and minimum investment in debt at 10% of total assets. There has to be an usual or unhedged exposure to equity, and a hedged exposure to equity adding up to minimum 65% of portfolio. The balance portfolio is in debt. The industry practice is the usual equity component is maintained in the range of 20-40%, and so is the hedged portion. Though Equity Savings Funds are equity funds from a tax perspective, the equity (unhedged) portion in the range of 20-40%, resembles fixed income or debt-oriented funds. Arbitrage Funds earn returns from the price differential between equity stocks in cash market and stock futures market, for 65% of the portfolio.

The price at which a stock is sold in the stock futures market is higher than the price at which it is purchased in the cash or spot market. These funds have 65% or more of the portfolio in cash-futures arbitrage and 35% or less in debt or money market instruments. Returns come from price differential between the two segments. Multi Asset Funds (MAFs) are those with exposure to a minimum of three asset categories and minimum 10% in each category. Here as well, most AMCs run portfolios with equity exposure of over 65% to be eligible for equity taxation. The balance is invested in debt and gold, or some other asset class. As we can see in the above fund categories, exposure to equity being less than that of pure-play equity funds, you have diversification built in the fund. At the end of the holding period, you may end up with returns less than equity-only funds, but volatility during holding period will be relatively lower. If you want to maintain equity exposure at a certain level, in a disciplined manner, you may resort to the relevant hybrid fund.

Why are fertility levels declining in India? | Explained

The story so far: A comprehensive demographic analysis of global fertility in 204 countries and territories from 1950-2021 has found that fertility is declining globally and that future fertility rates will continue to decline worldwide, remaining low even under successful implementations of pro-natal policies.

What has it noted about India?

The Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study (GBD) 2021, noted that India has moved from a fertility rate of 6.18 in the 1950s to a Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 1.9 in 2021. This, it pointed out, was below the replacement fertility level of 2.1 (which is the average number of children a woman should have to replace herself and her generation, for population stability). The GBD study projected that the TFR could fall further to 1.04 — barely one child per woman — by 2100. The steep fall in fertility levels has triggered concerns about the political and socio-economic fallout, especially in the southern States, which fear the loss of parliamentary seats post the delimitation exercise in 2026.

Why is fertility falling?

Even though the country has had one of the oldest birth control/family planning programmes, increased female literacy, workforce participation of women, women's empowerment and improved aspirations could have contributed more to the steady drop in fertility rates over the decades than the faithful adoption of family planning initiatives. The decline in fertility rate has also a lot to do with changing societal attitudes towards marriage and reproduction, with women increasingly exercising their choice. They often prefer to marry late or not at all, often choosing career and financial independence over motherhood. Rising rates of infertility in both men and women and abortions are important factors which could be contributing to this decline in fertility though no absolute data is available. With an increasing number of young men and women opting to go abroad for higher studies and jobs and choosing to settle down and raise their families there, migration is another key factor that could be in play when one considers the decline in fertility levels. Declining fertility rates have resulted in a rapid

demographic transition in many southern States. The consequences of this — an ageing population, a declining young workforce and increased demands on healthcare and social security measures for the care of an increasing population of the elderly — are being acutely felt in States such as Kerala. Migration of youngsters in search of better prospects is also an issue.

What is happening in the southern States?

There is concern over the irreversible fertility decline across the country, but more so in the southern States, where fertility rates had dropped below the replacement levels much earlier than the rest of India. Kerala led the demographic transition in the South, achieving the replacement level fertility rate in 1988, with the other four States achieving this by mid-2000. Along with education and women's empowerment and development in the social and health sectors, which were the hallmark of Kerala's high human development index, the State has also seen low economic investments and growth. Educated youth are leaving the State; the proportion of the aged population is expected to surpass that of children (23% in 2036). Changed attitudes towards marriage and motherhood are beginning to reflect in the health of women, leading to an increasing proportion of older mothers and pregnancy-related morbidities. Kerala's high labour wages and high quality of life index are attracting internal migration from other States to supplant a shrinking workforce. The State Planning Board reckons that by 2030, the proportion of migrant labour could be close to 60 lakh, about one-sixth of the State's population. Fertility decline is almost always irreversible and the graph, once it starts going down, may never bounce back. Countries like South Korea, which tried to stem the demographic crisis by pumping in millions have failed and the fertility rate plunged from 0.78 in 2022 to 0.73 in 2023. Demographers suggest that socio-economic policies that propel the growth of the economy, improve job prospects for the youth and tap the potential of a growing population of senior citizens, can help in reducing the impact of a long spell of low, sub-replacement level fertility rates on countries.

Reiterating the cancer risks of alcohol consumption



Alcohol consumption is the third-leading preventable cause of cancer in the U.S., after tobacco and obesity. Photograph used for representational purposes only In early January, United States Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, who released the new Surgeon General's Advisory on Alcohol and Cancer Risk, called for cancer risk warnings on alcohol-containing beverages.

The health risks associated with alcohol consumption are well-known; with the advisory stating that alcohol consumption is the third-leading preventable cause of cancer in the U.S., after tobacco and obesity. The World Health Organization (WHO), in its Global status report on alcohol and health and treatment of substance use disorders, noted that "the global burden of disease and injuries caused by alcohol consumption can be quantified for 31 health conditions on the basis of available scientific evidence for the role of alcohol use in their development, occurrence and outcomes." "When it comes to alcohol consumption, there is no safe amount that does not affect health," the WHO said in a statement published in The Lancet Public Health.

However, how far this message has penetrated and how much of it was understood, especially in a setting like India, remains debatable. The fact remains that consuming alcohol increases the risk of at least seven types of cancer — mouth, pharynx, voice box, esophagus, breast (in women), liver, colon and rectum. According to the National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-2021), 18.8% of men and 1.3% of women aged 15 and above consume alcohol in India. Myths surrounding alcohol Surendran Veeraiah, professor and head, Psycho-oncology and Resource Centre for Tobacco Control, Cancer Institute (VIA), said that there was confusion among the people due to misinformation about alcohol and cancer. "Some doctors say that drinking alcohol in moderation or drinking red wine is good. Such myths and misconceptions only mislead people. It is clearly established that alcohol is carcinogenic. So, it is important for healthcare professionals to take this up seriously and communicate to people that alcohol is carcinogenic. They should discourage alcohol consumption," he said. Reducing the availability of alcohol is not a deterrent, he said, adding: "Policy makers should understand that alcohol is not a substitute for revenue generation. Revenue making was how it started off for tobacco — stating that tobacco companies pay tax," he said.

India's real growth rate and the forecast

The First Advance Estimates (FAE) of National Accounts for 2024-25 show a real GDP growth of 6.4% and a nominal GDP growth of 9.7%. These numbers have fallen short of the Reserve Bank of India's revised growth estimate of 6.6% for real GDP, as in its December 2024 monetary policy statement and 10.5% for nominal GDP growth as in the 2024-25 Union Budget presented in July 2024. The annual growth of 6.4% can be seen as consisting of 6% growth in the first half and 6.7% growth in the second half. There is, thus, a clear improvement expected over the Q2 growth of 5.4%. The sharp fall in 2024-25 annual GDP growth from that of the previous year at 8.2% is seen only in the case of GDP. With respect to Gross Value Added (GVA), this difference, between 7.2% and 6.4%, is much less. On the GVA side, it was the manufacturing sector which suffered a sharp fall in sectoral growth from 9.9% in 2023-24 to 5.3% in 2024-25. Growth prospects for 2025-26

The Gross Fixed Capital Formation rate at constant prices has ranged between 33.3% and 33.5% during 2021-22 to 2024-25. Thus, it appears to have stabilised around 33.4%. It is expected to continue at this level in 2025-26. The average Incremental Capital Output Ratio (ICOR) has been marginally higher than 5 in recent years. Assuming ICOR to be 5.1 in 2025-26, we may consider a 6.5% real GDP growth to be realistic. There may not be much change in the global economy even though Donald Trump's assumption of office may create more uncertainty. India will have to largely depend on domestic demand. In particular, the Government of India has to ensure that there is no relaxation in its investment expenditure. In fact, the slightly lower growth in 2024-25 is largely linked to the slowdown in the Government of India's investment growth which has remained negative at (-) 12.3% even after eight months into the fiscal year.

With a lower nominal GDP growth in 2024-25 of 9.7% as compared to the budgeted nominal GDP growth of 10.5%, the budgeted Gross Tax Revenue (GTR) of ₹38.4 lakh crore may not be realised if the budgeted buoyancy of 1.03 is maintained. As per Controller General of Accounts (CGA) data, GTR growth for the first eight months was 10.7%. If this growth is maintained for the remaining months also, the realised buoyancy would be about 1.1, which is higher than the budgeted buoyancy. In such a case, tax revenue shortfall will be minimal. In other words, any revenue constraint or likely pressure on fiscal deficit would not constrain the government's ability to achieve its capital expenditure target of 11.1 lakh crore. Reason for the dip However, after the first eight months, the level of the Government of India's capital expenditure has remained limited to ₹5.14 lakh crore, that is 46.2% of the Budget target. In the remaining four months, the Government of India's capital expenditure may be accelerated. It may still fall well short of the target. This has been the main reason for the dip in overall real GDP growth in 2024-25. Going forward in 2025-26, the Government of India will have to continue to rely on an accelerated capital expenditure growth which can be kept at least at 20% on the revised estimates for 2024-25. Sustained government capital expenditures can have a favourable effect on private investment. The size and the pattern of investment expenditure of the government should be designed to accelerate private investment as well. Medium- to long-term growth prospects Over a period of next five years, the best that India may hope for is a steady real GDP growth rate of 6.5%. This is in line with the International Monetary Fund's real GDP growth projection for the Indian economy, as in its October 2024 release, which is at 6.5% over the period 2025-26 to 2029-30. This real GDP growth may be accompanied by an implicit price de-

Senior surgical gastroenterologist R. Surendran, who was formerly the director of Institute of Surgical Gastroenterology, Government Stanley Medical College Hospital, said alcohol is the main cause of cirrhosis of liver in India. "Nearly 20% of cirrhosis cases could progress to liver cancer. So, alcohol is directly a cause for liver cancer. Alcohol is definitely dangerous to health and there are many myths that surround its consumption," he said. He added that consuming alcohol was bad for the health and both drinking in moderation or binge drinking were an absolute no-no.

Treatment for alcohol use disorder remains low The WHO observed that access to screening, brief intervention and treatment for people with hazardous alcohol use and alcohol use disorder remains very low, as well as access to medications for treatment of alcohol use disorders. "Overall, the proportion of people with alcohol use disorders in contact with treatment services varies from less than one per cent to no more than 14% in all countries where such data are available," it said.

India's Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare had developed standard treatment guidelines for management of alcohol dependence in 2017. The objectives were: to provide advice on assessment, investigations, short-term and long-term medical management of individuals presenting with alcohol dependence and provide advice on psychosocial interventions for patients with alcohol dependence. Talking about support services in Tamil Nadu, P. Poorna Chandrika, professor of psychiatry, Institute of Mental Health, said the psychiatry departments in all government medical college hospitals offered special de-addiction services that included inpatient de-addiction services. "In every district, the District Mental Health Programme provides de-addiction services. All psychiatrists are also trained in de-addiction," she said. Motivation, a key factor for de-addiction

Motivation is key in alcohol de-addiction, she said, adding that people come for treatment for various reasons: insistence by relatives, financial constraints, workplace consequences and a small percentage walk in wanting to quit. "There may be multiple relapses and slip-ups may occur. It is a difficult path but regular follow-up, medication along with motivation and a support system will help," she said. In addition, co-morbidities associated with alcohol dependency including anxiety and other mental health issues should be addressed. "Pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatments should go hand in hand. Attending alcoholic anonymous meetings alone without medication is also a risk factor for relapse," she said. There are many concerns. One of the main causes for worry is the early initiation of drinking, doctors said. Lack of continuous monitoring of private de-addiction facilities is another area of concern, they say. As a result, human rights violations do occur. There have been instances of patients crowded in a single room, scabies as well as deaths. The only solution is continuous monitoring and regular review of these centres. Increasing



flator (IPD)-based inflation of about 4% which can give a nominal GDP growth in the range of 10.5%-11%. In years in which global conditions improve and the contribution of net exports to GDP growth becomes significant, real GDP growth may touch even 7%. If a real growth of around 6.5% and a nominal growth in the range of 10.5%-11% are maintained over the long run with an average exchange rate depreciation of 2.5% per annum, India should be able to reach a per capita GDP level consistent with a developed country status in the next two and half decades. But the task is not going to be easy. It will be hard to grow at 6.5% as the base keeps on increasing. In fact, in the earlier years, the growth rate will have to be higher. But, at present, the potential rate of growth appears to be 6.5%. However, it can change. In the light of a potential growth rate of 6.5%, the achievement of 6.4% in 2024-25 should not be considered as disappointing. In fact, the achievement of 8.2% in 2023-24 should be considered as a flash in the pan. The current year's growth rate of 6.4% as in the first advance estimates should be seen in the context of India's potential growth rate. C. Rangarajan is former Chairman, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, and former Governor, Reserve Bank of India. D.K. Srivastava is Honorary Professor, Madras School of Economics, and Member, Advisory Council to the Sixteenth Finance Commission. The views expressed are personal

TGSPDCL invites firms for installation of underground cables in Greater Hyd

HYDERABAD: The Southern Power Distribution Company of Telangana Limited (TGSPDCL) is inviting firms for replacing the existing overhead lines with underground cables in the entire GHMC area and adjoining municipal corporations, municipalities and panchayats within Outer Ring Road (ORR). There are 498 substations of 33/11 KV, 1,280 kms of 33 KV underground cables, 3,725 kms of 33 KV Overhead (OH) lines, 1022 Power Transformers (PTRs) provided in substations, 957 kms of 11 KV UG cables, 21,463 kms of 11 KV OH lines, 1,50,992 distribution transformers and 58,271 intermediate poles in the region. TGSPDCL intends to implement the underground power cabling project under the Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) or any other feasible funding model. As part of the project work, a detailed survey and feasibility study would have to be conducted, besides design and engineering, procurement and installation, integration with existing infrastructure, testing and commissioning and Operation & Maintenance (O&M). All the interested parties would be called for making a presentation on February 7.

Record smog in Lahore as pollution reaches hazardous levels



The streets of Lahore are choking under a toxic blanket of smog, with air quality reaching unprecedented hazardous levels, putting the city's 14 million residents in peril. Smog stings eyes and burns throats, and for many, the only refuge is staying indoors, though even that offers little relief. With air purifiers a luxury few can afford, people like Rafia Iqbal, a primary school teacher, are facing a growing health crisis, The Express Tribune reported. "The children are constantly coughing, they have constant allergies," she said. "In schools, we saw that most of the children were falling sick."

The pollution crisis has grown so severe that the Punjab provincial government, which includes Lahore, has temporarily closed schools until November 17 to minimise children's exposure, particularly during their morning commutes when the pollution is most concentrated. However, for residents like Muhammad Safdar, a 41-year-old advertising professional, life has become nearly impossible. "We cannot move around, we cannot go outside, we can do nothing at all," he said. Lahore regularly ranks among the world's most polluted cities, and this month, the city has exceeded hazardous levels on the Air Quality Index (AQI), with values often soaring above 1,000. In Multan, about 350 kilometres away, AQI levels passed a staggering 2,000 — a height that left many residents in disbelief.

The severe pollution is not just an inconvenience, but a health crisis that affects the most vulnerable groups in the city, including children, the elderly, and those with respiratory issues. With parks, playgrounds, and other recreational areas closed, and bans in place on polluting vehicles and businesses, Lahore is trying to mitigate the damage, reported

The Express Tribune. However, the city's grim reality is underscored by the absence of effective solutions. Air purifiers, often priced at \$90 or more, are out of reach for most families. "Preventive measures should have been taken. It's a yearly occurrence," Mr. Safdar said. "Obviously, there is something missing in their solution." The toxic haze blanketing Lahore is primarily caused by a mix of emissions from industrial factories, vehicle exhaust, and seasonal agricultural stubble burning. These pollutants are trapped by cooler temperatures and slow-moving winds, leaving the city at the mercy of a persistent, unhealthy atmosphere. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), exposure to such high levels of pollution can lead to strokes, heart disease, lung cancer, and respiratory diseases. Children, babies, and the elderly are especially at risk. In hospitals across the city, doctors are witnessing a surge in patients suffering from the effects of the smog. Qurat ul Ain, who has been practicing medicine for 15 years, reported a noticeable increase in patients this year. "This year smog is much more than previous years, and the number of patients suffering from its effects is greater too," she said. Many arrive with laboured breathing, coughing fits, and reddened eyes, particularly the elderly and children who have been exposed to the toxic air while commuting.

"We tell people not to go out and otherwise to wear a mask," she added. "We tell them not to touch their eyes with their hands, especially children." The pollution levels in Lahore have exceeded the WHO's recommended levels by dozens of times, with fine particulate matter (PM2.5) concentrations reaching dangerous heights. Climate activist Alia Haider calls for greater awareness about the dangers of smog, especially for children living in already polluted areas. "We are stuck in our own poison," she said, describing the city's atmosphere as "like a cloud of gas over the city." As residents continue to endure the smog, the Punjab government's efforts to alleviate the situation have been largely unsuccessful. Last year, the government tried artificial rain, and this year, trucks with water cannons sprayed the streets, but these measures have not yielded significant results, The Express Tribune reported. "The government needs to do more. It's not enough," Ms. Haider said, emphasising the urgency of tackling the problem. Until more sustainable solutions are found, the residents of Lahore will continue to live under the toxic shadow of smog, hoping for change that may come too late for many.

Trump attends UFC championship fight in New York, taking a break from Cabinet picks

President-elect Donald Trump walked out to a roaring standing ovation just ahead of the start of the UFC pay-per-view card at Madison Square Garden on Saturday (November 16, 2024) night, combining two things close to his heart: fierce battles inside the octagon and New York City. Mr. Trump was accompanied by UFC President Dana White and the pair headed to their cageside seats to Kid Rock's "American Bad Ass."

UFC aired a video package of Mr. Trump's road to reclaiming the White House, calling it, "The great comeback in American History," while fans stood and applauded. Mr. Trump, wearing a suit and red tie, pumped his fist toward the crowd when the video ended. The President-elect also had his clenched fists pumping back and forth and briefly danced to the Village People's "YMCA" just outside the cage. He later again thrust his fist skyward as "Takin' Care of Business" played. Elon Musk, picked by Mr. Trump to lead a new Department of Government Efficiency, and House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., joined the president-elect and White at the Garden, as did Robert Kennedy Jr., Mr. Trump's choice to lead the Department of Health and Human Services in his incoming administration. Mr. Trump was flanked on his front-row seat by White on his right and Mr. Musk on his left and politely applauded the fight winners. Besieged by photographers and nearby fans, Mr. Trump stood to pose for pictures with White, Mr. Musk and other associates in breaks between fights. Mr. Trump even had a brief conversation with country singer Jelly Roll after the pair shook hands. UFC fans wore red Mr. Trump hats and some waved flags emblazoned with his image during breaks in the action. Mr. Trump shook hands with the UFC broadcast team including Joe Rogan. Mr. Rogan hosted Mr. Trump on his podcast for hours in the final stages of the campaign ahead of his election win last week. The announcers for the pay-per-view audience later declared, "Festive doesn't even begin to describe" the scene before later proclaiming, "47's in the building. Let's go."

The MSG crowd chanted "USA! USA!" right before the main card was about to start and then again throughout the action. After a year delay, Stipe Miocic is getting his shot at a third heavyweight championship reign when he battles current champion Jon Jones in the main event at UFC 309. Mr. Trump is a longtime UFC enthusiast and frequent attendee of major fights. He made promoting hypermasculine tones a signature of his campaign — as he looked to further widen the gap among male voters between himself and his Democratic opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris. Mr. Trump and his top supporters embraced alpha-male terms and often accentuated them with vulgar and demeaning language.



While campaigning, Mr. Trump appeared frequently on podcasts, gaming platforms, and with key supporters who described a vote for Mr. Trump as a way to demonstrate true manliness. While Mr. Trump taped a podcast with Mr. Rogan, who himself has spoken about hypermasculinity, Ms. Harris failed to do a similar appearance, citing scheduling conflicts. A return to Madison Square Garden means revisiting the place where a comedian caused an uproar at a Trump rally last month by likening Puerto Rico to a "floating island of garbage." Yet Trump continues to relish visits to New York, where he lived for decades, before moving to his Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida. Except for a day trip to Washington this week to meet for nearly two hours with President Joe Biden, and separately address House Republicans, Mr. Trump has been spending his time since his Election Day victory at Mar-a-Lago. The club has hosted galas and conservative events throughout the week. Mr. Trump has been close to White for more than two decades. White hosted a 2001 UFC battle at Trump Taj Mahal, a former casino hotel in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and Mr. Trump has frequently attended UFC matches since — including during his 2024 campaign. Mr. Trump has turned up at fights recently with famous entourages, including White, musician Kid Rock and former Fox News Channel host Tucker Carlson. In 2018, during Mr. Trump's first term, he and White starred in a UFC video where the then-president was called the "Combatant in Chief." As Mr. Trump has strengthened his grip on the national Republican Party over the last near-decade, White's personal political profile has grown exponentially. Mr. White spoke at the 2016 and 2020 Republican conventions, and when the party gathered in Milwaukee this past July. He also addressed the crowd at Trump's Florida victory party in the wee hours of the morning after Election Day. "This is what happens when the machine comes after you," Mr. White said then. "What you've seen over the last several years, this is what it looks like: couldn't stop him. He keeps going forward. He doesn't quit."

Dengue death toll in Bangladesh crosses 400 as outbreak worsens

Bangladesh is battling its worst outbreak of dengue in years, with more than 400 deaths as rising temperatures and a longer monsoon season drive a surge in infections, leaving hospitals struggling to cope, particularly in urban areas. At least 407 people have died from related complications in 2024, with 78,595 patients admitted to hospitals nationwide, the latest official figures show.

By mid-November, 4,173 patients were being treated, with 1,835 of them in Dhaka, the capital, and 2,338 elsewhere. "We're witnessing monsoon-like rainfall even in October, which is unusual," said Kabirul Bashar, a zoology professor at Jahangirnagar University. Shifting weather patterns caused by climate change provided optimal conditions for the Aedes aegypti mosquito, the primary carrier of the disease, he added. "These changes in the season are fostering ideal conditions for the mosquitoes to breed." Dense populations in cities exacerbate the spread of the disease, usually more common in the monsoon season from June to September though it has spilled beyond that window this year. A rise in temperatures and longer monsoons, both linked

to climate change, have caused a spike in mosquito breeding, driving the rapid spread of the virus. Mr. Bashar called for year-round vector surveillance in Bangladesh to monitor and rein in the disease. If detected early and treated properly, deaths from dengue can be reduced to less than 1%, said a renowned physician, Dr ABM Abdullah, adding, "Early diagnosis and prevention are key to controlling dengue." Last year was the deadliest on record in the current crisis, with 1,705 deaths and more than 321,000 infections reported. The growing frequency and severity of outbreaks strains Bangladesh's already overwhelmed healthcare system, as hospitals battle to treat thousands of patients. Health officials have urged precautions against mosquito bites, such as mosquito repellents and bed nets, while experts want tougher measures to eliminate the stagnant waters where mosquitoes breed. Delays in seeking treatment, particularly among rural populations who must travel long distances to specialised facilities in Dhaka, are swelling the toll, doctors said. The disease can often show only mild initial symptoms that go undiagnosed until patients are critical.

Hezbollah firing in Haifa: Israel issues evacuation orders for Beirut residents



Israel issued evacuation orders on Sunday (November 17, 2024) for parts of south Beirut where it is targeting Hezbollah militants, hours after the Iran-backed group said it fired on several Israeli military bases around the coastal city of Haifa. Israel ordered residents of three areas in the capital's southern suburbs to leave ahead of planned strikes on multiple buildings, in a warning published on X by military spokesman Avichay Adraee.

What to know about Hezbollah's capabilities after its recent ... Further south, overnight Israeli airstrikes and artillery shelling hit the flashpoint southern town of Khiam, some 6 km (four miles) from the border, Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported early on Sunday (November 17, 2024). The bombardment came after Israel's military reported a "heavy rocket barrage" on Haifa on late Saturday (November 16, 2024) and said a synagogue was hit, wounding two civilians. Israel has escalated its bombing of Lebanon since September 23 and has since sent in ground troops, following almost a year of limited, cross-border exchanges of fire begun by Iran-backed Hezbollah militants in support of Hamas in Gaza. Two flash bombs fired into garden of Netanyahu's home in north Israel.

In the Palestinian territory, where Hamas's attack on Israel triggered the war, the civil defence agency reported that 24 people killed in strikes on Saturday (November 16, 2024). Security services in Israel said two flares landed near Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's residence in the town of Caesarea, south of Haifa, but he was not home. The incident comes about a month after a drone targeted the same residence, which Hezbollah claimed. Israel's military chief said on Saturday (November 16, 2024) Hezbollah had already "paid a big price," but Israel will keep fighting until tens of thousands of its residents displaced from the north can return safely. AFPTV footage showed fresh strikes on Saturday (November 16, 2024) on the southern suburbs of Beirut, a Hezbollah stronghold, after Israel's military told residents to leave. The Israeli military said aircraft had targeted "a weapons storage facility" and a Hezbollah "command centre". Hezbollah fired around 80 projectiles at Israel on Saturday (November 16, 2024), the military said. "Israeli forces also shelled the area along the Litani River, which flows across southern Lebanon," NNA said on Sunday (November 17, 2024). The agency earlier reported strikes on the southern city of Tyre, including in a neighbourhood near UNESCO-listed ancient ruins. Israel's military on Saturday (November 16, 2024) said it had hit Hezbollah facilities in the Tyre area.

Dr Reddy's, FDC recall products in U.S. for manufacturing issues

Dr Reddy's Laboratories and FDC Ltd are recalling generic medications in the US market due to manufacturing issues, according to the US health regulator. As per the latest Enforcement Report by Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), the US-based subsidiary of Dr Reddy's Laboratories is recalling multiple strengths of Morphine Sulfate extended-release tablets in the US. The medication is used to relieve severe and persistent pain.

As per the USFDA, Princeton-based Dr Reddy's Laboratories Inc is recalling 2,040 bottles of 15 mg Morphine Sulfate extended-release tablets due to "Failed Impurities/Degradation Specification". The drugmaker is also recalling another 532 100-count bottles of the medication in 30 mg strength for the same reason, USFDA stated. Dr Reddy's initiated the Class II nationwide recall on October 22 this year. USFDA said Mumbai-headquartered FDC Ltd is recalling 1,55,232 bottles of Timolol Maleate ophthalmic solution in the US market. The company is recalling the affected lot due to "Defective Container: Unable to get the solution out of the bottle as the spike of the cap was lodged in the nozzle of the product bottle", the US health regulator stated. The company initiated the Class II recall on October 29, 2024. Timolol Maleate ophthalmic solution is used to treat high pressure inside the eye due to glaucoma. As per the



USFDA, a Class II recall is initiated in a situation in which the use of, or exposure to, a violative product may cause temporary or medically reversible adverse health consequences or where the probability of serious adverse health consequences is remote. India is the largest supplier of generic medicines with around 20% share in the global supply by manufacturing 60,000 different generic brands across 60 therapeutic categories. The products manufactured in the country are shipped to over 200 countries around the globe, with Japan, Australia, West Europe, and the U.S. as the main destinations.

Beirut businesses struggle to stay afloat under Israeli raids

Lina al-Khalil has fled her south Beirut home to escape escalating Israeli attacks on Hezbollah, but she still returns daily to the bombarded area to keep the family business running. "It's more important than my house," said the pharmacist, in her 50s, of the business she inherited from her father in Haret Hreik, a southern suburb of the Lebanese capital where Iran-backed Hezbollah militants hold sway. Whenever the Israeli military issues a warning to evacuate before a strike -- a near-daily occurrence for nearly two months -- she closes down the shop and rushes out.

Despite the ever-present fear and the steep decline in business activity, Ms. Khalil does what she can to keep her business afloat, like many other shopkeepers in Beirut's southern suburbs. The vast majority of the area's estimated 600,000-800,000 residents have fled, seeking refuge elsewhere. "With the drop in customers, the financial impact has been severe," Khalil told AFP, adding that she has had to halve the salaries of her employees due to the pinch.

Ms. Khalil has moved most of the pharmacy's stock to her second home in the mountains for safekeeping. To serve the few customers she still has, she drives up to collect the medicine they need, and even delivers it to their homes when they can't reach the pharmacy. Some areas of south Beirut have been devastated by strikes since Israel intensified its campaign against the powerful Hezbollah movement on September 23, after nearly a year of limited cross-border clashes over the Gaza war. Hide-and-seek South Beirut grocer Mehdi Zeitar, in his 50s, has had to find a place to live after an Israeli strike destroyed his home. For the time being, his vegetable stall has survived, but "all the surrounding buildings have been damaged", he said. "We're playing hide-and-seek," Mr. Zeitar added bitterly, referring to Israeli attacks. "We leave by car until the strikes are over, then we



go home. "He comes in for two or three hours a day to run his shop, saying he has no other option to support his family. But he told AFP that he spends much of his time waiting for customers, who never come. "We are truly unemployed." In a recent report, the World Bank estimated that the Lebanese commercial sector incurred losses of \$1.7 billion over 12 months of conflict, on top of billions more in losses to the economy and material damage. Lebanon had already been reeling since 2019 from an intense economic crisis that pushed most of the population into poverty. According to the World Bank report, around 11 percent of establishments in the conflict zones have been damaged, particularly in the southern areas of Tyre, Sidon and Nabatieh, where Israel's military campaign has targeted Hezbollah strongholds. It said that the "displacement of both employees and business owners from conflict-affected areas" has led to a near-complete halt in business activity as well as "disruptions to supply chains to and from conflict districts". Many consumers now buy only essentials, the report said.

Kancha Gachibowli row: Price discrepancy in land valuation blows lid off potential scam



Hyderabad: Fierce student protests and timely intervention of the courts that halted the felling of trees in Kancha Gachibowli may have done more than just save green cover — they may have inadvertently blown the lid off a potential multi-thousand crore land scam. A stunning discrepancy of Rs 9,200 crore in the valuation of 400 acres of prime government land has raised serious questions about whether the Congress-led government was quietly paving the way for one of the biggest land scams in recent memory under the guise of industrial development. The Kancha Gachibowli land issue has grabbed nation-wide attention after students opposed clearance of the green cover for auction of the land. But long before this caught public attention, the Congress government had transferred the land to the Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation Limited (TGILC) in June last year, with reported plans to develop it into an IT hub. But a close look at the government documents, which 'Telangana Today' has accessed, hints at a whopping Rs 9,200 crore difference in valuation, raising questions over the government's motives. The contentious 400 acres were handed over by the then erstwhile Andhra Pradesh government to IMG Bharatha in 2003 for development of sports facilities, but were reclaimed in 2006 due to non-use. Following a lengthy legal battle of more than 16 years including 10 years of BRS regime, the Supreme Court in May 2024 declared that the Telangana government was the sole owner of the land. Here is how the latest episode unfolds. Shortly thereafter, the 400-acre land was alienated to the TGILC with the land value pegged at a rate of Rs 75 crore per acre. The total value of the land is estimated at Rs 30,000 crore and the corporation was tasked to develop it and auction plots "for IT and mixed-use". As per the Government Order (GO 54) issued on June 26, 2024, the price of Rs 75 crore per acre, was fixed after considering the land values at places like Kokapet (where one acre fetched Rs 100 crore in auction). Officials say that the current government's plan was to promote "walk-to-work" concept where both office, commercial and residential spaces at the 400-acre site.

But in the meanwhile, the government faced an acute financial crisis and it proposed to raise Rs 10,000 crore initially through market borrowings and later, auction the land

in five phases where part of the sale proceedings was meant, to clear the loan and utilise the remaining amount for infrastructure development. The TGILC, is tasked to develop the land for industrial purposes and allot them at incentivised prices to attract investments. But surprisingly, for the first time, the corporation was asked to auction the lands. Subsequently, to raise the Rs 10,000 crore, the government hired valuers Parish Rao Panse and Rao Associates, to prepare a valuation report of the land. The company, in November 2024, estimated the price at Rs 52 crore per acre. This was completely inexplicable as the earlier registration price was Rs 75 crore per acre (as mentioned in June, 2024). Thus, the total worth of land was Rs 20,800 crore which the company termed as "fair market value" based on the market price of lands in surrounding areas. This was in contrast to the total value of Rs 30,000 crore done in June with a difference of Rs 9,200 crore. This Rs 9,200 crore mismatch has set off alarm bells, questioning the intent behind such divergent figures. If the market value truly was Rs 75 crore as the government order states, why is the valuation report for mortgaging set around Rs 52 crore? Who stands to gain from the understatement? Here comes the interesting part. The GO 54 claims that the price of Rs 75 crore was determined based on "recent auction sales made in Kokapet and other nearby villages" and realtors too admit that the TGILC could have easily fetched the same price for auctioning the Kancha Gachibowli land, despite realty market taking a hit under the Congress regime. It is not clear what prompted the valuation report to cite local registration benchmarks and market sources to arrive at the significantly lower Rs 52 crore figure. Sources disclose that the Request For Proposals (RFPs) invited by TGILC was to auction the land in a phased manner with at least 100 acres in the first phase. While the undervaluation of the land itself raised numerous suspicions, sources pointed fingers at power-that-be, alleging that this discrepancy was not accidental, but a deliberate ploy to engineer a backdoor windfall by undervaluing public land. It is learnt that a major pharma-cum-real estate company had already been sounded to buy land in the first phase at reduced prices as part of a closed-door deal. "Assuming that even if the said 100 acre is auctioned at Rs 60 crore per acre, (while the actual value is Rs 75 crore per acre), the buyer would get benefitted by at least Rs 15 crore per acre, totalling to Rs 1,500 crore profit. Then, if the prices are raised for the auction of land in second phase, the land bought earlier would also get enhanced value and it would be a windfall deal for those who bought in first phase," sources explained. Unless a clear official explanation reconciling both the GO and the valuation report is given, the perception of foul play will only deepen. The glaring valuation mismatch cannot be brushed aside as a clerical oversight — it reeks of a well-orchestrated land scam cloaked in official sanction.

Farmers leave tomatoes in fields as price drops to 2 a kg

Summer is the time when most fruits and vegetables get expensive. But in a twist of events, the price of tomatoes has crashed to as low as ₹2-₹5 per kg in Kolar district, which is a major vegetable growing belt in Karnataka. This has led to many farmers leaving the tomatoes in the field, unharvested during the onset of summer. The farmers said the selling price of one box (15 kg) of tomatoes is anywhere between ₹30 to ₹200 (₹2 per kg to ₹13 per kg) at the Kolar Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC).

"To get the labour to harvest the tomatoes and then transport them, we have to incur a cost of ₹70 per box. If what we are getting in the market is only ₹30 - ₹50 per box, we will go through a loss of ₹20 per box. There is no point in harvesting it and taking it to the APMC where we also have to pay a commission," said Venkat Reddy, a tomato farmer from Kolar district. In both Kolar and Chickballapur districts, the situation is similar. Tomatoes have sold at record highs in the last couple of years and the current prices are the lowest they have been in a long time. So, what has caused the price crash? Farmers say the prices have been falling for almost six months, more so in the last two months and now in the last few days have hit their lowest. Increased production, inflow from neighbouring states and reduced quality are also other reasons why the price has taken a hit. "The exports have almost stopped in recent days due to the reduced shelf life of our tomatoes. We previously used to send them to Pakistan, Bangladesh, and many other



South Asian countries. To send them to these countries from Kolar would take two to three days. But tomatoes are getting rotten in that period. The overall yield has not been high due to binghi (leaf curl disease) in the last five years," said Nalini Gowda, president, Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha, Kolar district. While farmers are struggling with the crashed prices, the selling price of tomatoes in Bengaluru markets was around ₹25-₹30 per kg. The traders say there is a mismatch in the prices due to the logistical charges they have to incur. "Transport charges have only gone up now with the diesel prices. We have to pay by the load and irrespective of the prices of the commodity, we have to pay those transport charges. Plus, we have to keep at least a small profit margin. Hence, we are selling at ₹25 per kg," said Narayana a vegetable vendor in Yelahanka.

Pune woman's death: probe panel finds hospital guilty of denying immediate treatment



A state-appointed probe committee has found Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital in Pune in violation of emergency care norms after it allegedly denied admission to a pregnant woman, Tanisha Bhise, due to the inability to pay a ₹10 lakh deposit. Bhise later died at another hospital after giving birth to twins. A State-appointed probe committee has found Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital in Pune in violation of emergency care norms after it allegedly denied admission to a pregnant woman, Tanisha Bhise, due to the family's inability to pay a ₹10-lakh deposit. Bhise later died at another hospital after giving birth to twins. The four-member committee, headed by Dr. Radhakishan Pawar, Joint Director of the Maharashtra Health Department, submitted its report to Pune police on Monday.

The panel concluded that the hospital had failed to comply with the Bombay Public Trust Act, which requires charitable hospitals to provide emergency medical treatment without insisting on advance payment. According to the report, the hospital did not fulfil its obligation of providing immediate care and stabilising the patient, as mandated under the Maharashtra Nursing Home Registration Act. While hospital authorities claimed that the patient left "without informing the management" after spending five-and-

a-half hours on the premises, the panel stated that the hospital failed to provide essential emergency care or arrange for a safe transfer, as required under law. The committee has recommended that the Charity Commissioner take appropriate action against the hospital for breaching statutory obligations. The case has drawn widespread public attention as Bhise was the wife of the personal secretary of BJP MLC Amit Gorkhe. Meanwhile, Dr. Sushrut Ghaisas, a consulting gynaecologist at the hospital, has resigned. Confirming the development, the hospital's medical director, Dr. Dhananjay Kelkar, said Dr. Ghaisas cited intense public pressure and threat calls as reasons for stepping down.

Two booked for abusing, assaulting woman forest officer in Mancheria

Mancheria: Two persons were booked for allegedly abusing and assaulting a woman forest beat officer in the Jannaram forest division on Monday. Jannaram Sub-Inspector Gundeti Rajyavardhan said a case was registered against Azajuddin and Riyazuddin from Kawal village for abusing and thrashing FBO Rubina for thwarting the duo's attempt to illegally mine and transport sand from a stream in Barhanpet beat on April 4, based on her complaint received on Monday. He added that investigations were taken up. Earlier, Rubina and Forest Section Officer Hanumantha Rao, while addressing pressmen in Jannaram mandal centre said staffers of the forest department were discharging duties in Kawal Tiger Reserve facing assaults and abuses from the timber and sand smugglers at regular intervals.

India overtakes Germany to become 3rd-largest generator of wind, solar power: Report



India became the world's third-largest producer of electricity from wind and solar energy in 2024, overtaking Germany, according to a new report published on Tuesday (April 8, 2025). The sixth edition of global energy think tank Ember's Global Electricity Review said wind and solar together generated 15% of global electricity last year. India's share stood at 10%. The report said low-carbon sources, including renewables and nuclear power, together provided 40.9% of the world's electricity in 2024. This is the first time the 40% mark has been crossed since the 1940s. In India, clean sources accounted for 22% of the electricity generation. Hydropower contributed the most at 8%, while wind and solar together accounted for 10%. Globally, renewables led the growth in clean electricity, adding a record 858 terawatt hours (TWh) in 2024 — 49% more than the previous record in 2022.

Solar was the largest source of new electricity for the third straight year, adding 474 TWh in 2024. It was also the fastest-growing power source for the 20th year in a row. In just three years, global solar power generation doubled to 6.9% of the electricity mix.

India, too, saw a rapid increase in solar power. Solar contributed 7% of the country's electricity in 2024, the generation doubling since 2021. India added 24 gigawatts (GW) of solar capacity in 2024, more than twice the addition in 2023, becoming the third-largest market after China and

the US. It also recorded the fourth-largest increase in solar generation globally, adding 20 TWh. "Solar power has become the engine of the global energy transition," said Phil MacDonald, Ember's managing director. "Paired with battery storage, solar is set to be an unstoppable force. As the fastest-growing and largest source of new electricity, it is critical in meeting the world's ever-increasing demand for electricity." The report, released on Tuesday (April 8, 2025) along with an open dataset on electricity generation in 2024, covers 88 countries that account for 93% of global electricity demand and includes historic data for 215 countries. Ember's Asia Programme Director Aditya Lolla said the clean energy transition in Asia is accelerating, led by record growth in solar and other renewables.

"With electricity demand set to rise across the region, a robust clean energy market is crucial for the continued expansion of clean power. This will not only strengthen energy security and economic resilience, but also help emerging countries access the benefits of a new clean energy market economy." Neshwin Rodrigues, Senior Energy Analyst at Ember, said India has made notable progress in adopting renewables but now faces a major challenge: ensuring its clean generation grows fast enough to meet rising demand. Calling India a "solar superpower", UN climate change chief Simon Stiell in February said that fully embracing the global clean energy boom would accelerate India's economic rise. As part of its climate commitments or Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) submitted to the UNFCCC in 2022, India aims to achieve 50% of its installed electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030. In 2021, the country also announced a goal of achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030. While this target was not officially included in India's updated NDCs, it remains a key guiding reference in national energy planning documents, including the 14th National Electricity Plan. The report from Ember in February said India will fail to deploy 500 GW renewable energy capacity by 2030 if the funding is not increased by 20% annually from current levels.

India's aviation arbitration cases will still fly off overseas



In 1934, India's skies were not its own. Under British colonial rule, the Aircraft Act of 1934 governed aviation in India, a law that was designed not to foster a burgeoning aviation sector but to ensure British control over airspace. The idea of ordinary Indians flying in commercial aircraft seemed like a far-fetched dream. Designed to control air traffic for military and administrative purposes, the Act soon showed that it was ill-equipped to handle rapid technological advancements, soaring passenger numbers, and the rise of private sector participation in aviation. Despite India's growing aviation industry over the decades, the legal framework has remained stuck in the past.

This legal inertia has led to significant challenges for India's aviation sector. Private and public airlines faced bureaucratic delays that hampered their growth. New ventures struggled to enter the market due to the cumbersome licensing process. Air traffic management was inefficient, and even fundamental issues such as passenger compensation for flight delays or cancellations were not adequately addressed. It became painfully clear that the old laws were no longer fit for a nation whose aviation sector had evolved far beyond what the Aircraft Act anticipated. Fast forward to 2024, where India has moved beyond its colonial past. The Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024 marks a new era, introducing reforms and replacing the 1934 Act, and promising a future where Indian aviation can truly take flight. However, there is one issue that remains: Will India's new aviation reforms also help its arbitration system align with global norms? Or will commercial aviation disputes continue to move to Singapore, London and Paris? A forward step but still incomplete.

The Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam 2024 is a breath of fresh air for India's aviation industry. By streamlining licensing procedures and tackling the inefficiencies of air traffic management, it aims to position India as a global leader in aviation. Passengers also stand to benefit, with enhanced rights and compensation mechanisms for delays and cancellations. However, despite these impressive reforms, there is one critical aspect that remains unaddressed: arbitration. While the Adhiniyam overhauls much of India's aviation infrastructure, it has done little to modernise the legal framework to resolve international disputes. So, with the lack of specialised aviation arbitration in India, will the country continue to lose aviation cases to global arbitration hubs? India's current framework for commercial arbitration, governed by the Arbitration and Conciliation Act of 1996, does not address the unique needs of aviation disputes. These often involve specialised issues that range from technical matters to international treaties. India's courts and arbitration centres lack the expertise to handle such complex cases effectively without a dedicated aviation arbitration framework. This gap in expertise and specialisation means that aviation companies that deal with issues such as cross-border regulations, airline contracts, and aviation safety standards are unlikely to look to India as a preferred venue for dispute resolution.

India versus overseas centres Despite establishing institutions such as the Delhi International Arbitration Centre and the Mumbai Centre for International Arbitration, India has yet to make a significant mark on the global arbitration stage. The Singapore International Arbitration Centre currently handles around 90% of corporate arbitration cases involving Indian parties, a statistic that highlights India's failure to build the necessary institutional support for high-stakes arbitration. This lack of infrastructure for specialised sectors such as aviation is why its arbitration sector remains underdeveloped. Without a dedicated focus on aviation disputes, cases will continue to move abroad. The issue is not about laws alone but about the right people, the systems and the infrastructure to handle complex international disputes. If India is serious about becoming a global leader in aviation, it must make a concerted effort to develop a specialised aviation arbitration framework. This would involve establishing dedicated institutions with panels of experts in aviation law, technology and international treaties. It is not enough to have a generic arbitration framework. Aviation disputes require a deep understanding of the sector's unique challenges.

India should also look to jurisdictions such as Singapore and the United Kingdom, which have built strong and specialised arbitration systems catering to the aviation sector. India needs to adopt a similar approach by creating specialised arbitration panels, creating incentives for private sector involvement and focusing on building expertise

in aviation law. Law schools can play an important role in this. This arbitration exodus is a procedural economic and policy failure that affects India's global standing. Every case that moves abroad means lost revenue for Indian arbitrators, law firms and legal institutions. More importantly, it sends a troubling signal to foreign investors and aviation companies — that India lacks the confidence and the infrastructure to handle high-stakes disputes. However, with a robust aviation arbitration system, India could attract more aviation businesses, increasing investments, economic growth and having a more substantial global aviation presence. India must ensure neutrality in arbitrator appointments. The government should appoint arbitrators only through mutual agreement or by an independent arbitration body. This is standard practice in leading arbitration hubs, and India must follow suit if it wants to be taken seriously. Further, India must reduce judicial and executive interference in arbitration. Indian arbitration awards often get dragged into long court battles. A stable and predictable legal environment is essential if India wants to attract more arbitration cases.

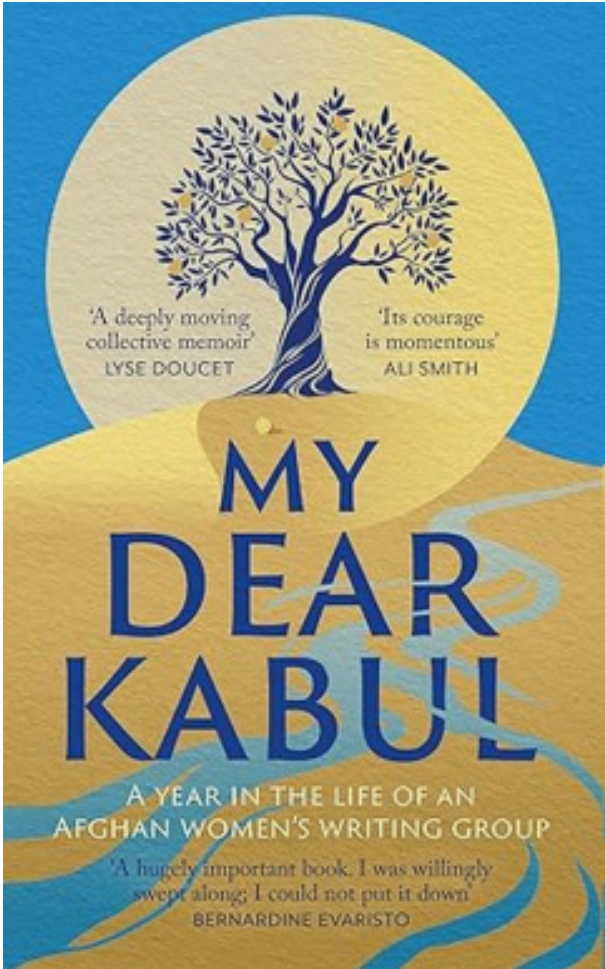
Key areas to focus on The path forward is clear: India must prioritise neutrality, transparency, and institutional strength. It must align itself with the best global practices and eliminate provisions that create a perception of bias. The Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam 2024 is a landmark step but remains incomplete without arbitration reform. The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 provides a general framework, but aviation disputes demand specialised expertise. Unless India builds a dedicated aviation arbitration ecosystem with expert arbitrators, specialised institutions, and global credibility, disputes will keep flying off abroad, and investments may follow suit. The time for reform is now. G.S. Bajpai is Vice Chancellor, National Law University Delhi. Garima Tiwari is Associate Professor, National Law University Delhi. Shrawani Shagun is Senior Research Fellow, National Law University Delhi. The views expressed are personal.

Dentists demand establishment of dental departments in all Govt medical colleges

Hyderabad: Students pursuing Bachelor and Masters in Dental Surgery (BDS) and (MDS) and senior dental surgeons urged the State government to create dental departments and appoint qualified manpower in all the government medical colleges across Telangana.

Except for Gandhi Hospital and Osmania Medical College, none of the other tertiary medical colleges in the State have dedicated dental teaching and treatment departments. As a result, patients who cannot afford treatment at private dental care facilities, are forced to come to Hyderabad for treatment at Government Dental College, Afzalgunj. On Tuesday, members of All India Dental Students and Surgeons Association (AIDSA) met the Director of Medical Education (DME) and submitted a memorandum, urging the State government to establish exclusive dental departments in medical colleges as mandated under National Medical Commission (NMC) guidelines. As per the guidelines, every medical college with an intake of 100 MBBS students must have a dedicated department of Dentistry with at least one Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Junior Resident and four Dental Technicians. "At present, Telangana has 38 government medical colleges and we urge the government to establish fully functional dental units as per NMC guidelines," the AIDSA said.

Behind the veil: recounting the lives of Afghan women in books



The Taliban government's Morality Ministry in their November 2024 decree banned women from speaking to one another. They not only disallowed women from singing or reciting but also introduced a "vice and virtue" law that imposed sweeping behaviour codes, including the mandate that women's voices, like their bodies, should be "concealed" when outside their homes. This disturbing move even prompted Oscar-winner Meryl Streep to address the issue at a United Nations event, drawing a stark comparison by stating that "even a cat in the country has more freedom than the women." In a recent move by the Taliban, the authorities on December 30 ordered the closing down of all national and foreign non-governmental groups in Afghanistan employing women, allegedly because they didn't wear the Islamic headscarf correctly. However, for centuries, Afghan women have displayed remarkable courage as their country endured invasions and upheaval.

Voices of heartbreakMy Dear Kabul (2024) is a vivid portrayal of a year in the life of an Afghan women's writing group, translated from Dari and Pashto by Parwana Fayyaz and Dr. Negeen Kargar. A group of 21 women writers came together in August 2021 as the Taliban closed in on Kabul. The various authors — a final-year university student, a lawyer, a teacher, and many others — joined a WhatsApp group to share their everyday experiences of horror, uncertainty, and despair.

What unfolds is a collective narration of brutality and heartbreak yet tinged with resilience and hope. Sadaf, a teacher, writes to Maryam, a law graduate from the University of Kabul: "I don't know who sold this country again. But I saw that some named its price." Her anguish is palpable as she confronts a reality where the President has fled, paving the way for the Taliban's return. Marie, another mem-

ber, in her plaintive observation writes, "The barbaric Taliban won't follow any rules," encapsulating the shared fear of what the future holds. In The Bookseller of Kabul by Norwegian journalist Asne Seierstad, readers gain a profound understanding of the impact of Taliban rule on Afghan women's lives. Even after the Taliban's fall in the early 2000s and the establishment of democracy, women continued to live as second-class citizens. Seierstad, who spent months with the family of Sultan (a pseudonym for a bookseller in Kabul), poignantly recounts the stark differences in the lives of men, women, and children. Walking through the streets of Kabul in a burka, she describes: "Burka-women are like horses with blinkers; they can only look in one direction. Where the eye narrows, the grille stops, and thick material takes its place; another trick by the burka-inventor: a man must know what his wife is looking at."

Unequal societyThe book also reflects on pivotal moments in Afghanistan's history, like in 1959, when then-Prime Minister Prince Daoud's wife appeared in a national daily without a burka, sparking a wave of women abandoning the purdah (veil). Women stepped out in long coats and hats, and by the 1970s, they were wearing skirts and working shoulder-to-shoulder with men in various professions.

Yet, Seierstad's account of early 2000s Kabul reveals the grim inequality that persisted within households. Behind four walls, women had little autonomy, with the man of the house reigning as the ultimate authority. While some may argue that Seierstad's perspective is shaped by a Western lens, the discomfort at the systemic denial of even the simplest joys of life to women based solely on gender is undeniable. The book also equally depicts the challenges faced by the men, often caught between ambition and duty, and battling a lack of opportunity in a broken economy. However, to explore the compelling history and enduring mystique of Afghanistan, one can turn to Shadow City: A Woman Walks Kabul by Taran N. Khan. In this deeply personal narrative, the Indian author recounts her experience of Kabul through a series of extended visits spanning eight years. Her journey captures a city in flux — taking tentative steps toward recovery from decades of conflict, only to spiral back into instability. Discovering Kabul on foot

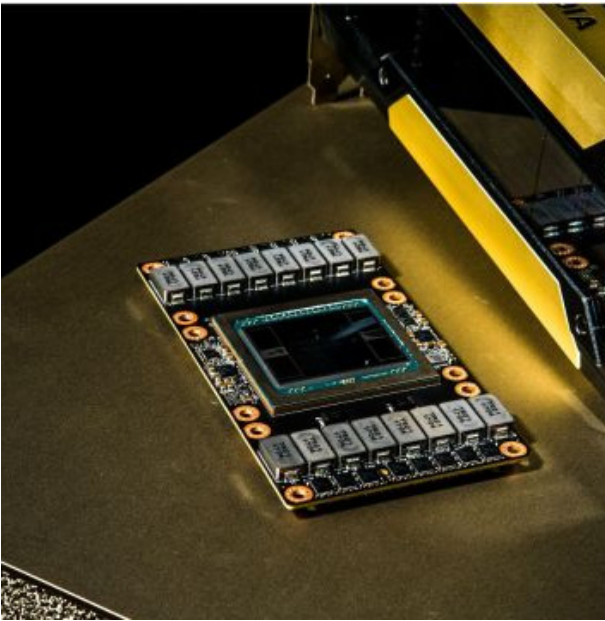
Arriving in Kabul five years after the Taliban's initial fall, the author navigates the city on foot, inviting readers to join her as she uncovers its layers. From the muddy paths leading to ancient Buddhist monasteries to the vibrant yet chaotic markets, she paints a vivid picture of Kabul's streets and its resilient spirit. Through bullet-pocked windows, she witnesses a city shaped by both history and hardship. Khan's narrative offers a sharp and heartfelt exploration of a nation trapped in a cycle of destruction and renewal, portraying Kabul as a place of both profound beauty and enduring tragedy. While all the books mentioned here are non-fiction, there are hidden gems like The Taliban Cricket Club by Timeri N. Murari, which weaves a fictional yet hard-hitting narrative about the life of a woman striving to survive atrocities by the Taliban and ultimately escape her beloved country. In times like these, when every day brings a new challenge and another freedom is stripped away, forcing women to the margins of life, perhaps Afghanistan needs its own Svetlana Alexievich. The Nobel laureate, in her moving work The Unwomanly Face of War, gave voice to over 200 women whose bravery and sacrifices during World War II were long forgotten. As we begin a new chapter in the new year, it's crucial to keep reading and remembering the stories of Afghan women who continue to fight, endure, and resist in the face of unimaginable hardship. Let us hold on to the message of Afghan sprinter Kimia Yousofi, who held a placard after completing the women's 100m at the Paris 2024 Olympics: "Education, Sport, Our Right."

New US AI export rule excludes India from benefits of closest allies. What could be the impact?

Days before demitting office, the Joe Biden administration has released an expansive regulatory framework on the export of artificial intelligence (AI) hardware such as graphics processing units (GPUs), which could have far-reaching consequences for India's AI ambitions. In an "interim final rule", titled 'Framework for Artificial Intelligence Diffusion', the US government has proposed to create three tiers of countries with specific restrictions on the export of AI chips and GPUs for each. India is in the middle tier of this classification and will face some restrictions on the number of GPUs it can import from the United States. That could impact the ongoing process of procuring 10,000 GPUs to build up India's domestic AI computing capacity. The first tier, which includes 18 of the closest allies of the United States, has almost no export restrictions. The third tier has countries of concern to the US, to which the export of technology is all but prohibited. The rules seem intended to keep advanced chips and AI models under the control of the US and its closest allies. Their enforcement, however, will depend on the incoming administration of President Donald Trump. The three tiers of countries

TIER 1: The first tier comprises 18 of the closest allies of the US: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom. US companies can deploy as much computing power as they like in these countries, and the security requirements are relatively straightforward. **TIER 2:** The vast majority of countries in the world, including India, are in this category. These countries will face a limit on how much computing power they can import from American companies, unless that computing power is hosted in trusted and secure environments. There are caps on the levels of computing power that can go to each of these countries: roughly around 50,000 advanced AI chips through 2027, although that can double if the state reaches an agreement with the US. India is trying to procure 10,000 GPUs for its India AI Mission, and it remains to be seen how this classification could impact large companies looking to build large AI data centres. Smaller firms are not likely to be impacted. **TIER 3:** Export of US technology to these countries — including Russia, China, Libya, North Korea etc. — will be almost prohibited.

Special provision for India, China Apart from this tiered classification, the law also envisions a special review called the General Validated End User. This list includes only two countries: India and China. Indian companies that get this authorisation can use the exported items for civilian and military purposes, but not for nuclear use. Chinese companies with this authorisation can only use the technology for civilian use. Nvidia's criticism of the rules Nvidia, which has a near monopoly on AI GPUs currently, has released a scathing statement against the AI diffusion rules. "In its last days in office, the Biden Administration seeks to undermine America's leadership with a 200+ page regulatory morass,



Days before demitting office, the Joe Biden administration has released an expansive regulatory framework on the export of artificial intelligence (AI) hardware such as graphics processing units (GPUs), which could have far-reaching consequences for India's AI ambitions.

drafted in secret and without proper legislative review," the company said in a statement. "This sweeping overreach would impose bureaucratic control over how America's leading semiconductors, computers, systems, and even software are designed and marketed globally," it said. The statement compared the difference in approach between the Biden and Trump administrations, contributing to the visible trend of tech companies seeking to reach out to the incoming President. "The first Trump Administration laid the foundation for America's current strength and success in AI, fostering an environment where US industry could compete and win on merit without compromising national security," Nvidia said. "Rather than mitigate any threat, the new Biden rules would only weaken America's global competitiveness, undermining the innovation that has kept the US ahead."

OYO's new policy may be at the cost of rights



Payal Kapadia's award-winning film All We Imagine As Light depicts the journey of a young couple, Anu and Shiaz, struggling to find a private space. They may be fictional, but their problem certainly is not. Across the country, young people in pre-marital relationships have long found it difficult to come by privacy. This issue is likely to be exacerbated by policies such as the one recently implemented by OYO. Last week, OYO announced that unmarried couples would be disallowed from accessing its partner hotels. The hotels have been given the discretion to implement this policy in accordance with local sensibilities. Going forward, all couples will be required to present 'valid proof of relationship' while checking in. Explaining the reason for its move, OYO stated that civil society groups and citizens had requested it to institute this rule.

Initially, the policy will apply only to hotels in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, but reports suggest that OYO may expand its application to other cities. Beyond the practicalities of providing 'valid proof of relationship,' it is clear that OYO is encouraging partner hotels to discriminate against customers based on their marital status. The burning question, however, is whether those adversely affected by this policy may find legal redress either in the Constitution or otherwise. In various decisions, the Supreme Court has recognised individuals' right to enter pre-marital relationships. In Shafin Jahan vs Asokan K.M. (2020), the court held that Article 21 of the Constitution includes the right of individuals to choose their partners 'whether within or outside marriage'. Similarly, in Navtej Singh Johar vs Union of India (2018), the court recognised the right of all individuals to physical, emotional, mental, and sexual companionship. Other decisions of the apex court have affirmed that the rights to privacy, dignity, and autonomy — emanating from Article 21 — mean that people have the freedom to engage in consensual, intimate, or sexual relationships and to cohabit with their partners if they choose. At their core, these decisions acknowledge the freedom to conduct oneself in a manner of one's choosing. For many unmarried couples, accessing hotel services is one way to exercise these rights. Individuals in pre-marital relationships apart, persons of different genders who are friends, colleagues, or cousins may also travel together and require OYO's services.

How India can become the world's leading startup ecosystem

India's startup ecosystem has witnessed extraordinary growth, transforming from a fledgling stage to becoming the world's third-largest hub for innovation and entrepreneurship. With over 1,30,000 recognised startups today — up from approximately 400 in 2015-16 — India's progress is remarkable. During this period, startup funding grew 15 times, the number of investors increased nine-fold, and the number of incubators rose seven-fold. This transformation owes much to India's robust digital public infrastructure, which has addressed pressing global challenges such as achieving Sustainable Development Goals, combating climate change, fostering financial inclusion, and improving agricultural productivity.

India stands at the threshold of a technological revolution, presenting immense opportunities in areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), big data, energy transition, electric vehicles (EVs), quantum computing, genomics, 3D printing, robotics, drones, and space exploration. The government has actively fostered this progress through initiatives like the National Quantum Mission, India AI Mission, and Semiconductor Mission, alongside allocating Rs 1 lakh crore for research and development (R&D). Progressive policies have opened up new sectors, including space, geospatial technology, defence, and drones, encouraging startups to venture into cutting-edge domains. Realising the full potential of these advancements requires collaboration between policymakers, entrepreneurs, and educational institutions. Despite their success, Indian startups, particularly in deep tech sectors, face challenges in accessing patient capital. The Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS), launched in 2016, has been a game changer. With Rs 11,688 crore committed through 151 AIFs, it has catalysed a capital pool of Rs 81,000 crore, creating a significant multiplier effect. However, India needs a specialised fund of funds for deep tech startups that require long-term investments. Increasing domestic capital sources is also essential. Although Indian startups raised over \$12 billion in 2024, about 75 per cent of this funding came from international sources. Large domestic institutions like insurance companies and pension funds can allocate a portion of their surpluses to support startups, while family offices and businesses should take on more active roles as angel investors. Private equity (PE) and venture capital (VC) have significantly shaped India's startup ecosystem. Funding from these sources grew from \$19.7 billion in 2015 to a peak of \$77.07 billion in 2021, and in early 2024 alone, it stood at \$49.54 billion. Over 50 per cent of India's unicorns have been backed by PE and VC investments.

To ensure sustainability, domestic funds must grow and focus on long-term value creation. A shift toward profitability, quality over quantity, and more robust business models can help startups achieve sustainable growth. In designing Startup India, we prioritised avoiding excessive regulations that could hinder startups. India's startup ecosystem thrives on minimal regulatory interference, fostering innovation. However, recent incidents of corporate mismanagement in startups such as Byju's, Dunzo, and BharatPe have raised concerns. Startups must adopt self-regulation frameworks that emphasise accountability, transparency, and ethical conduct. This involves strong mentorship, professional boards, and sound financial management. Venture capitalists and angel investors play a vital role by ensuring governance and mentoring startups to balance growth with long-term stability.

India's premier educational institutions, including the IITs, IIMs, and IIITs, are integral to the startup ecosystem, producing skilled professionals and fostering innovation. To keep pace with emerging needs, curricula must address skill shortages in areas such as product development, data science, and AI-ML. Collaboration between academia and

Under the constitutional scheme, fundamental rights enshrined in Part III of the Constitution are ordinarily enforceable against the State and its instrumentalities, not against non-State actors. In other words, citizens may seek constitutional remedies from courts when the State infringes upon their fundamental rights but not when a private party hinders their exercise. This is because constitutional rights are generally thought to apply "vertically" (i.e., against the State) and not "horizontally" (i.e., between private individuals or entities). However, the Constitution contains three express provisions which depart from the traditional "vertical" model of rights: Article 15(2) stipulates that no citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, or any of them, be prevented from accessing shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment or using wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads, and places of public resort funded by the State or dedicated to public use; Article 17 forbids the practice of untouchability; and Article 23 prohibits human trafficking and forced labour. In Kaushal Kishor vs State of Uttar Pradesh (2023), the Supreme Court travelled beyond this schema of horizontal rights by holding that the right under Article 21 could be enforced even against private parties.

While Article 15(2) would prevent OYO from denying its services to customers based on caste, religion, or the other grounds listed, it may not readily constitute a bar against discrimination on the ground of marital status. Separately, the effect of the decision in the Kaushal Kishor case remains to be seen — commentators have criticised it for being unclear, and in the absence of coherent and consistent jurisprudence on this subject, it is uncertain whether unmarried individuals can enforce their rights under Article 21 against OYO. Apart from constitutional rights and remedies, statutes may provide a model for the exercise of fundamental rights in transactions between private parties. While some enactments confer certain rights on women irrespective of marital status, the time may have come for lawmakers to enact an anti-discrimination law which protects individuals (regardless of their gender) against discrimination based on marital status, in the private sphere. The full and free exercise of our rights as citizens depends not only on State (in) action but on private actors — be it as a member of the public, a family unit, a business undertaking, or a corporation — creating the conditions for their exercise. This applies not only in the context of individuals in pre-marital relationships who may seek commercial services but also more broadly, say, to people who may wish to rent homes, who apply for employment in private establishments, or who make offers to purchase land — but are denied access on the basis of their marital status, caste, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other attributes. The tyranny of the majority is often nowhere as evident as in the private sphere. An act may not meet with social approval but the Constitution guarantees our right to do it anyway. The law — regardless of the form it takes — must protect this right.



India stands at the threshold of a technological revolution, presenting immense opportunities in areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), big data, energy transition, electric vehicles (EVs), quantum computing, genomics, 3D printing, robotics, drones, and space exploration

industry is vital to ensure that educational programmes align with market needs. Programmes for internships, apprenticeships, and recruitment can attract talent to startups and bridge existing skill gaps. As new technologies disrupt industries, regulators must adapt to the changing landscape. India's regulatory framework must balance innovation with oversight, enabling startups to thrive while mitigating risks associated with unregulated growth. Pro-innovation policies will be crucial in maintaining India's competitive edge. India produces approximately 24,000 PhD graduates annually, driving advancements in science and engineering. However, the country paid \$14.3 billion in IPR royalties in 2024, while earning only \$1.5 billion, highlighting a significant gap. Greater innovation and breakthroughs are essential to bridge this gap. Creating a vibrant ideas ecosystem, one that rewards and protects intellectual property, can establish India as a global hub for innovation. Startups must lead this charge, contributing to advancements in science, technology, and intellectual property.

most read India's startup ecosystem is no longer confined to metro cities like Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Delhi. Nearly 50 per cent of the country's startups originate from Tier II and Tier III cities, including emerging hubs like Indore, Jaipur, and Ahmedabad. With nearly half of India's urban population living in smaller cities, these regions offer immense potential for growth. Tech companies are increasingly establishing operations in cities such as Chandigarh, Visakhapatnam, and Ahmedabad. Supporting these regional hubs with infrastructure, educational opportunities, and inclusivity — especially by increasing women's representation in leadership roles — will unlock untapped talent and drive innovation. India is well-positioned to become the world's leading startup ecosystem. Favourable policies, a thriving culture of innovation, and collaborative efforts across sectors provide the foundation for scaling startups into global enterprises. As India works towards its vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047, startups will play a pivotal role in driving economic growth, creating jobs, and positioning the country as a leader in innovation.

A chemical invasion that people need to stop to save their health



A typical day in most households could look like this. The non-stick pan is made ready in the kitchen to make a delicious morning dosai or paratha. Snacks for the day come out of plastic wrappings. The dishes in the kitchen sink are washed with dish soap. After a nice meal, the family members settle down on the glistening furniture in the living room. The floors of the house are swept clean with a conventional cleaning product. What is common to all these actions? The answer: harmful chemicals or Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CECs). Quietly, but surely, these chemicals have embedded themselves in every facet of our living environment and related products.

On April 7, 2025, as we celebrate World Health Day, it is time to pause, reflect and take stock of how these products, and in turn the chemicals, have infiltrated our lives. Chemicals such as Per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) — often called “forever chemicals” — found in non-stick cookware, water-resistant clothing, food packaging, and cosmetics, silently creep into our surroundings and affect us through food, water, air and dermal contact. Consumer product usage from household cleaning products to indirect exposure to industrial waste or chemicals unknowingly gets into our food systems and can cause irreparable damage to overall health. These chemicals derail the immune system, the nervous system and, more specifically, the liver and kidneys.

These contaminants termed Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), are toxic chemicals that resist degradation, persist in the environment for decades, and accumulate in the food chain, leading to long-term exposure risks. These compounds include pesticides (DDT, Chlordane), industrial chemicals (Polychlorinated biphenyls or PCBs, PFAS) and unintentional by-products (dioxins and furans). They have been linked to cancer, reproductive disorders, immune dysfunction, neurological diseases, and endocrine disruption. Industrial production, agricultural practices and waste incineration generate POPs. The long-lasting nature of the POPs make them persist in ecosystems long after their intended use. While some of the pesticides and agricultural chemicals such as DDT, aldrin, and dieldrin have been banned, their residues persist in soil and water, exposing communities through contaminated food and water. Similarly, household and consumer products such as flame retardants in furniture, non-stick cookware, and plasticisers in packaging materials pose a threat to human health. Several banned substances persist in older products and landfill sites, where they continue to leach into the environment.

The extent of damage these chemicals can have on our health is alarming. But more than being alarmed, the need of the hour is awareness backed with intentional action. Let us look at the multitude of ways in which these chemicals can hurt our health. Many of these chemicals and certain pesticides cause endocrine disruption as they

mimic hormones, leading to reproductive disorders, developmental issues, and even some types of cancers. Prenatal exposure to endocrine disruptors has been linked to birth defects, reduced fertility and neurodevelopmental disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Some of the pollutants can mimic or interfere with hormones, particularly estrogen and testosterone. Exposure to these chemicals and pesticides has also been linked to infertility, menstrual irregularities, and birth defects. Fetuses and young children are especially vulnerable, with prenatal exposure leading to congenital disabilities, neurological impairment and increased risk of miscarriage. The list goes on and on. From the suppression of the production of white blood cells to heart disease, diabetes and obesity, these villains are responsible for increased cholesterol, hypertension, and insulin resistance. Chronic inflammation, which is a key driver of metabolic syndromes and cardiovascular conditions, is perpetuated by these chemicals.

It is not only humans but also animals that are highly impacted by these harmful chemicals. Multiple organ systems in animals are affected, leading to chronic diseases, reproductive failure and population decline. Endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) found in POPs mimic or interfere with hormones, leading to infertility, birth defects and skewed sex ratios in affected populations. The industrial chemicals accumulate in the fatty tissues of animals and persist for decades. Species such as whales, polar bears, and birds of prey at the top of the food chain experience the highest concentrations and have led to their population declining. These chemicals cause cognitive deficits, learning difficulties, and altered behaviour. In marine mammals, it impairs their ability to communicate, hunt, and navigate. Studies on seals and dolphins have linked this chemical exposure to high mortality from viral and bacterial infections. In birds, they cause eggshell thinning, reducing hatching success. PCB contamination spreads globally through air, water, and soil, and gets deposited in colder regions, such as the Arctic.

There needs to be awareness and action. Despite international efforts to regulate these substances, they continue to affect millions worldwide, particularly in under-resourced countries. Thus, urgent action is needed to eliminate these chemicals from the environment and protect the health of millions of people. The harmful effects of human industrial activity must be prevented. Current waste disposal technologies should improve, and those managing these technologies should be trained in cutting-edge techniques. Research organisations have a key role in tracking the presence, levels, and degree of pollution in air, water, soil and biota. Environmental protection and consumer protection have to get more teeth. Best practices from similar contexts around the world can help others learn from mistakes and replicate success stories. With growing evidence of their dangers, regulations for these emerging pollutants should be strengthened all over the world and this includes India. Cost-effective, environment-friendly alternatives such as bio-pesticides should be used instead of traditionally used pesticides. We need to focus on enhanced monitoring of these chemicals, improve wastewater treatment, and implement policy reforms to mitigate their health impacts. Policy changes, public awareness and scientific research must drive sustainable solutions to safeguard human health and the environment. Girija K. Bharat is MD, Mu Gamma Consultants in Gurugram, India and works towards the management and the mitigation of contaminants of emerging concern. Venkatesh Raghavendra is a philanthropy adviser and a global social entrepreneur working on access to safe water, youth entrepreneurship

What will the doctor-patient relationship be like in 2028?



1968: I entered Medical School 57 years ago. Trained in the BC era, my generation today, belongs to the Neanderthal Age. I injected air into the brain, and dye directly into a major artery going into the brain. Displacement of normal anatomical structures was a surrogate marker for a possible brain tumour. Getting the patient's consent for surgery was a one-sided conversation. No questions were asked. Such was the faith and trust reposed in the surgeon. The role of patient and family in the decision-making process was minimal. We could not share our responsibility with anyone. We were both Amicus Curae and Devil's Advocate rolled into one. We entered the brains of our patients, even before surgery, trying to understand what he/she and their families would want, and took a surrogate decision on their behalf, in their interests. It was a one-to-one personal relationship between a patient and a doctor, involving primarily, diagnosis and treatment. I am not sure if today's medical students are reminded of Sir William Osler's observations 150 years ago “ --- the good physician treats the disease, the great physician treats the patient who has the disease,” and “Listen, listen, listen- he is telling you the diagnosis”. Will such doctor-patient relationships become history ?

2028: Digital Health will be 5P (Predictive, Personalized, Precision, Participatory, and Preventive) medicine with Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a major component. Powerful AI techniques are already unlocking clinically relevant information, hidden in massive amounts of data. Digital Health has a Healthcare Provider, a beneficiary, a 12-digit unique ABHA number, insurance policy coverage, and so on. Preventive healthcare, very early diagnosis, keeping people healthy and promoting wellness – the ‘e-way’ will be tomorrow's mantra. Digital doctors are experts in deploying telemedicine. They handle connectivity issues, video conferencing systems, apps on smartphones, digital manipulation (pun intended!) UPI, EMR, PHR, HIS etc. The tech-savvy AI-enabled Digital Health clinician runs the risk of becoming dehumanised and depersonalised – no longer the family physician of yesteryear, the be-all and end-all of a family. In a few years, technology-enabled remote healthcare will be centre stage. Building patient rapport, confidence and trust is vital in a teleconsultation. 5G, 200

Mbps bandwidth, user-friendly intuitive software at both ends, real time access to all relevant medical records, super smartphones or giant screens will help in making the experience of a virtual personal touch, truly memorable. Customer delight should not be the prerogative of virtual shoppers on Amazon alone! Technology is only a means to an end. A fool with a tool is still a fool! SoPs and protocols are at best, guidelines. In healthcare, one size does not fit all. We need to cater to the specific wants and needs of the individual beneficiary, whom we are seeing on a screen. Producing a “wow” effect during a teleconsult: Infrastructure alone will not suffice. Communication is a dynamic, complex process, a multi-dimensional, multi-factorial phenomenon related to the environment in which an individual's experiences are shared. Self-learning chatbots and humanoids competing with humans to display empathy and sympathy perhaps may be available in the future – only if the powers-that-be give appropriate weightage to this. Healthcare is personal: To get 10/10, those treating you from a distance must introduce themselves, make eye contact and communicate what they are doing and why. Recommending cutting-edge, technologically-advanced treatment alone, in a teleconsult is insufficient. A patient's goals and requirements also need to be factored in. Patients do not care how much you know. They want to know how much you care. 80% of communication is non-verbal, through body posture, voice intonation, the way one looks/sits, attire used, movement of hands and arms and spontaneous smiling. “Bedside” manners need to be upgraded to “webside” manners. Exercising clinical judgement and wisdom contextually, customised for the individual beneficiary, in every single teleconsult, is critical. The unbelievable progress of digital health globally and particularly in India (one wag opined that AI stands for And India, Always India, Anytime India) should be supplemented with what a doctor has always stood for – “To cure sometimes, to relieve often, and to comfort always”. In my lifetime, using Haptic technology, I may perhaps be able to actually wipe the tears off my patient, in another continent, virtually. I need to understand that even for Gen Alpha born in the digital health era, a comforting word will still make all the difference. This may not come up as a pop screen on the display. This must come spontaneously from the heart (or brain to be precise!).

Indian nurses in great demand, says Indeed India data

Hyderabad: Trained Indian nurses are in huge demand abroad and across India, especially in the tier-2 towns and smaller cities, new data released by Indeed India, the job listings portal, on Tuesday indicated.

Nursing job postings in India have grown 44 per cent since March 2020, with jobseeker interest surging 75 per cent. “The data tells us that India has the potential to lead the world in supplying skilled, compassionate healthcare talent,” says Sashi Kumar, Head (Sales), Indeed India.

All you need to know about: dysthymia



A therapy memoir by Korean author Baek Sehee, ‘I Want To Die But I Want To Eat Tteokbokki’, has, in recent years, sparked an important conversation about a mental health condition that is often overlooked: dysthymia. Dysthymia, or persistent depressive disorder (PDD), is understood as a ‘milder’ form of depression, but it is no less serious than its more severe counterpart. In the 2018 bestseller, the author, through her interactions with a psychiatrist, describes her struggle with dysthymia — how it affects her self-esteem, relationships, and work. The book narrates the ups and downs of her considerably long and tedious journey toward recovery, emphasising that it is far from linear.

That's the thing about dysthymia: though perceived as ‘low-grade’ depression, differentiating it from a major depressive disorder, which has far severe symptoms ranging from lethargy to suicidal thoughts, dysthymia can last for two years or more in adults. It can also occur alongside major depression, leading to what is known as ‘double depression’. Dysthymia is common, according to research, but its epidemiology is not studied enough, and it often goes undiagnosed and untreated. Here is all you need to know about the condition:

Dysthymia is essentially marked by a chronic depressed mood that lasts for at least two years in adults and one year in children and adolescents, according to the American Psychiatric Association. Symptoms of the condition include changes in eating habits, such as poor appetite or overeating, as well as sleep disturbances like insomnia or excessive sleep. People with dysthymia may also experience low energy, poor self-esteem, difficulty focusing or making decisions, and a lingering sense of hopelessness. To be considered dysthymic, individuals must experience

at least two of the symptoms mentioned above, for most of the time. Both dysthymia and major depression share similar symptoms, but the latter also includes two additional symptoms not typically seen in dysthymia: anhedonia (the inability to experience joy) and psychomotor symptoms (like agitation or slowness), according to a Harvard Medical School article. To be diagnosed with major depression, an individual must experience at least five symptoms, and the episode must last for a minimum of two weeks, unlike dysthymia, which has a longer duration. Studies also show dysthymia has a more gradual onset and does not necessarily have distinct triggers.

Who is affected by dysthymia?

It is unclear what causes dysthymia, but chemical imbalances in the brain are largely attributed to be behind it. Besides this, research shows that like major depression, dysthymia is influenced by stress and trauma experienced in both childhood and adulthood, as well as social conditions, particularly isolation and a lack of support. While dysthymia appears to run in families, it is unclear how much of a role genetic factors play in its occurrence. The condition also tends to affect women more than men, according to a Harvard Medical School study from 2007. Further, people with dysthymia may suffer from chronic physical illnesses or other mental health conditions, such as anxiety disorder or alcoholism.

What are the treatment options?

Because it requires fewer symptoms for a diagnosis, unlike major depression, dysthymia is often considered less serious, resulting in inadequate treatment. But without proper treatment, symptoms can last for several years. Like major depression, dysthymia is treated with therapy and medications. Common medications include selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) or dual-action antidepressants. Therapy options may vary, from supportive and cognitive therapies to behavioural, psychodynamic, and interpersonal therapies. Their purposes differ, but the idea is to address negative thought patterns, improve social skills, work through unresolved trauma, especially from childhood, and manage stress, among other aspects. Studies also suggest that recovery from dysthymia can be a lengthy process, with symptoms often reappearing over time.

Comprehensive sex education: Overcoming cultural barriers and enhancing safety for children

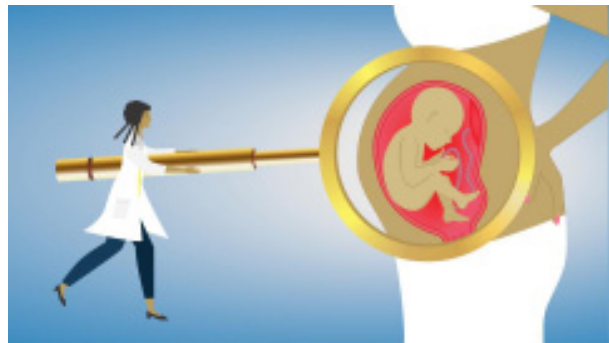
The National Education Policy (NEP) places sex education within the broader category of “ethical and moral reasoning.” This component aims to support “basic health and safety training, as a service to oneself and to those around us.” It offers limited references to topics such as consent, harassment, respect for women, safety, family planning, and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), with even less emphasis on digital safety. NCERT textbooks introduce the ideas of “good touch” and “bad touch” in early Environmental Studies (EVS) classes. Experts have questioned whether this terminology is sufficient or appropriate. Psychologist and counsellor Ms. Akhila Phadnis said, “Sex education should not be associated with morality. What happens when unsafe touch feels good to the child? How are we teaching them consent and ‘No’ means ‘no.’ Both parents and schools should guide children in understanding their boundaries and encourage them to communicate safely with trusted adults. We need a generation that is well-equipped with knowledge about health, hygiene, and safe expressions of sexuality.”

She added, “In today's world, it is essential to equip children with the right tools to stay safe and ensure they have a trusted adult to talk to — whether it's about their bodies, online predators, or offline threats. As adults, we must provide them with the right information and resources so they are informed rather than fearful.” Many schools in India do not provide adequate sexual education. Teachers often lack the training and resources required to handle the subject effectively. Some schools address only the biological aspects in a clinical manner, while others exclude the topic altogether, replacing it with general workshops on health and hygiene, Ms. Phadnis says. Sex educator Ms. Swati Jagdish said, “It is crucial to train both parents and teachers, as they are the primary sources of culturally sensitive education for children. The current curriculum is highly clinical, whereas sexual education involves emotions, hormones, bodily intelligence, and discussions on boundaries. Parents also require a support system to openly discuss these topics. Celebrity endorsements can amplify these movements.”

The environments in which students grow up — both at school and at home — play a significant role in shaping their understanding of sexual education. Researchers Tripathi, N. and Sekher, T. V., in their article “Youth in India Ready for Sex Education? Emerging Evidence from National Surveys,” argue that sex education should be implemented at the school level in a culturally sensitive manner. Their work underscores the importance of a curriculum that reflects the link between social change and sexuality. Sexual education includes more than just lessons on reproduction. Topics such as gender identity, interpersonal relationships, and social justice are also integral. Instruction in consent, personal boundaries, and abuse prevention aims to foster a more equitable society. India has over 2.5 million people living with HIV, the second-highest number globally, according to the World Health Organization. Public health outcomes may be improved by educating young people on STIs, HIV/AIDS, and the consequences of unprotected sex.

Counselling psychologist Ms. Namrata Thomas said, “Comprehensive Sexuality Education covers more than periods and safety. The curriculum includes age-appropriate topics such as health, hygiene, consent, hormones, digital literacy, substance use, and risky behavior. Engaging children through art, music, and brainstorming enhances learning. Parents should be aware of the content their children consume and create an environment where open discussions are encouraged.” Child psychologist Ms. Ektha YP said, “Sex education is not just about intercourse; it encompasses bodily changes, hormones, and emotions. Children will inevitably receive information online or from peers, which may be inaccurate. Providing them with age-appropriate, factual knowledge is essential. Consent should be taught from an early age, beginning with simple interactions like asking for permission before helping a child change. With the rise of digital communication, parents and schools must educate children on online grooming and recognizing red flags. This can be done through conversations, behavioural observations, and understanding children's mindsets.”

Counter-intuitive benefits Studies indicate that comprehensive sexuality education can delay the onset of sexual activity, reduce its frequency, and reduce the occurrence of risky sexual behaviour. It can also improve awareness and acceptance of individuals within the LGBTQA+ community. Improved understanding may enhance relationships and communication across gender identities.



Research also shows that implementing sex education in schools can influence gender dynamics both in homes and communities. Respect, mutual understanding, and open communication are outcomes associated with well-designed sex education programs.

Access to sex education is affected by social structures. Students from lower castes may face barriers such as discrimination, harassment, and school-based violence, limiting their access to reproductive health information. Differences in cultural beliefs between caste groups may also influence perspectives on gender roles and sexuality. Gender-based barriers persist. Studies show that girls often face more significant restrictions than boys due to stigma, safety concerns, and mobility issues. Transgender and non-binary students frequently encounter exclusion, as curricula and delivery methods do not always reflect gender diversity. Volunteers at Karpom Karpipom, an NGO working in the area of child safety and comprehensive sexuality education, have developed a curriculum for government schools in Tamil Nadu. Ms. Subhashini, a volunteer, said, “Children are curious but often do not know whom to turn to for answers.” She added that social conditioning begins early, and children start perceiving the world through a gendered lens even at a young age. Mr. Sharath Kumar, also a volunteer, stated, “Eighty percent of our work involves educating adults on how to listen to children when they express concerns about safe and unsafe behaviour.”

We developed a curriculum tailored for government schools in Tamil Nadu by referencing UNESCO Heritage materials, Netherlands school frameworks, and Samacheer Kalvi textbooks. This approach helps us engage children in discussions on stigma, myths, patriarchy, and social conditioning. “He added, “I regularly talk to students about bodily changes, self-esteem, handling rejection, gender identity, and character assassination.”

POCO launches C71 smartphone first sale on Flipkart for Rs 6,499

New Delhi: POCO, India's leading performance-driven smartphone brand, on Tuesday launched the first sale of its blockbuster C71 smartphone on e-commerce site Flipkart for Rs 6,499. The POCO C71 redefines the smartphone experience with a 6.88" HD+ 120Hz display combined with wet touch display support and triple TUV certification for eye protection. It also features a 32MP dual camera and a massive 5200mAh battery — all at an unbelievable price. The POCO C71's 4GB RAM + 64GB storage model is available for Rs 6,499 and a 6GB RAM + 128GB storage model for Rs 7,499, making flagship-level features more accessible than ever. POCO C71 has the segment's largest and smoothest display — 6.88" HD+ 120Hz display for ultra-fluid scrolling and gaming. It is sleek and sports a stylish design and features a golden ring camera deco and a distinctive split-grid design for a bold, eye-catching look. The smartphone is just 8.26mm in size and is available in three colours: Desert Gold, Cool Blue, and Power Black. The smartphone is Triple TUV certified and comes with blue light reduction, flicker-free display, and low motion blur for the safest screen experience. With 12GB dynamic RAM (6GB + 6GB virtual) and an Octa-Core processor, the smartphone aces in seamless multitasking, ensuring a power-packed performance.

Bank frauds amount rises 46 pc to Rs 48,000 crore in FY26: RBI Annual Report



The amount involved in fraud cases reported by the banking sector shot up by 46 per cent to Rs 48,021 crore during FY2026 as against Rs 32,803 crore in the previous year. However, the number of fraud cases dipped to 10,114 from 23,722 a year ago, the Reserve Bank of India's Annual Report said. Of this public sector banks accounted for Rs 35,709 crore in FY 26 as against Rs 23,617 crore last year and private sector Rs 11,399 crore (Rs 8,927 crore), the RBI said. Data pertaining to 2025-26 includes fraud classification in 314 cases amounting to Rs 30,199 crore, pertaining to previous financial years, reported afresh during the current financial year after re-examination and ensuring compliance with the judgement of the Supreme Court, dated March 27, 2023, the RBI said.

Amount involved in advances of banks shot up to Rs 40,774 crore in 8,640 fraud cases as against Rs 30,367 crore (7,924 cases) in the previous year. "Frauds reported in a year could have occurred several years prior to the year of reporting," the RBI said. Interestingly, fraud amount involved in cards and digital payments fell to Rs 29 crore (293 cases) in FY26 against Rs 517 crore (13,332 cases)

in FY25 and Rs 1,452 crore (28,836 cases) in FY24, RBI said. "An assessment of bank group-wise fraud cases over the last three years indicates that although the number of frauds for public and private sectors banks have reduced, the amount involved has increased over the years," the RBI report said. While number of frauds was highest under card internet/ digital payments category during 2023- 24 and 2024-25, advances category accounted for the largest share in 2025-26. In value terms, frauds were concentrated in the advances category across the three years, the RBI said. The RBI is exploring the possibility of introducing a 'switch on' and 'switch off' facility for all digital payment modes along with a 'kill switch' to block all debits from the account in one stroke. This facility would help bolster consumer confidence and contribute towards controlling frauds in digital payment transactions, the RBI Annual Report said. A 'kill switch facility' is a mechanism that allows a system, device, account, or service to be shut down, disabled or blocked immediately in an emergency or under specific conditions.

The RBI report said 'switch on' and 'switch off' facility for domestic and international card transactions is available to customers which has helped customers exercise greater control. The RBI said it will address the continuing challenge of authorised push payment frauds – where customers themselves initiate payments despite the various safeguards already in place such as mandatory additional factor of authentication (AFA), payee name lookup, card controls, tokenisation, and related measures, introduction of certain frictions in digital payment processes would be explored, with a view to enhancing customer protection and facilitating more effective recovery of funds. The RBI's initiative to introduce an exclusive '.bank.in' domain, marked India as the first country globally to mandate a secure domain for the banking system thereby strengthening cybersecurity and reducing digital payment frauds.

West Asia crisis could pose headwinds to growth, inflation in the short run

The Reserve Bank of India on Thursday said the West Asia conflict and risks such as higher energy prices, supply chain disruptions, financial market volatility, global trade uncertainty and weather disruptions could affect growth and inflation in the short term. However, India's growth outlook remains positive, it said. Considering various factors, and on the assumption that the adverse impact of the West Asia conflict would remain contained in the near-term, real GDP growth for 2026-27 is projected at 6.9 per cent with risks tilted to the downside, the RBI said in its Annual Report for 2025-26. The RBI Annual Report said inflation in 2026-27 is likely to remain aligned with the target on the back of adequate foodgrain stocks, sufficient reservoir levels and stable agricultural prospects despite possible El Niño conditions and above-normal summer temperature. However, the evolving upside risks to inflation may emanate from multiple other factors such as spike in global fuel and commodity prices amid geopolitical tensions, potential spillovers to input and wage costs, and volatility in exchange rate, the RBI said. Considering all these factors, CPI inflation for 2026-27 is projected at 4.6 per cent with risks tilted to the upside, it said. The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will announce the new interest rate policy on June 5.

While the ongoing geopolitical tensions are likely to exert pressure on the availability and prices of key inputs, particularly fertilisers, the government's continued efforts in ensuring adequate availability of fertiliser and other key inputs through diversified sources and buffer management are expected to mitigate these potential concerns, the RBI said. The central bank said geopolitical risk has re-emerged as the dominant drag on global growth in 2026. "The adverse impact of outbreak of the conflict in West Asia in end-February 2026 is reflected in the forecasts of global growth and inflation," the RBI said. With continued geopolitical tensions, inflation faces upside risks globally, the RBI said. "The surging energy prices and disruptions in key shipping routes could intensify supply-side pressures," the RBI said.

Outlook for oil remains extremely vulnerable to geopolitical risks: RIL

Global oil demand growth is expected to be sluggish due to higher oil prices and economic slowdown in FY 2026-27 amid West Asia conflict, RIL said in its annual report. Crude oil has been highly volatile since March this year when the US-Israel conflict started. "Refinery and oil infrastructure damages which caused product supply losses are likely to take a longer period to recover, resulting in continual volatility in the market," RIL said.

In FY 2026-27, volatile product and feedstock prices, supply disruptions from the West Asia, Government of India directives on SAED, petrochemical feedstock usage and duty exemption on key petrochemical products may weigh on domestic demand and margins, it said. Fuel prices have gone up by Rs 8 in Mumbai in the month of May alone.

RIL said natural gas is expected to play an increasingly critical role in India's energy transition, with its share in the energy mix targeted to rise from around 6% to 15% by 2030. "RIL's gas portfolio remains well-positioned to support this structural shift, contributing nearly 30% of the country's domestic gas production," RIL said. Continued development of deepwater and CBM assets, supported by existing infrastructure and operational efficiencies, is expected to further augment supplies and cater to India's growing gas demand in FY 2026-27 and beyond, it said. RIL set to operationalise 40 GWh BESS capacity. RIL said its battery energy storage system (BESS) giga-factory is nearing commissioning, with the company set to operationalise 40 GWh of annual capacity—scalable to 100 GWh—as production ramps up in the second half of 2026. BESS is a technology that stores electrical energy in batteries so it can be used later when needed. Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) has already commissioned a cumulative 3.37 Gigawatt-hour (GWh) BESS this week. According to RIL's latest annual report, the company is progressively commissioning its HJT (Heterojunction Technology) cell and module lines. The first 200 MWp of high-efficiency HJT modules have been delivered — demonstrating 10% higher energy yield and 25% lower degradation versus industry standards, with 720 Wp BIS — certified panels. "Reliance remains on track to scale to 10 GWp per annum, with expansion to 20 GWp planned, targeting 26% module efficiency. Polysilicon, glass, ingots, and wafers are being commissioned in phases toward full integration," it said. It said Reliance is progressively commissioning its HJT (Heterojunction Technology) cell and module lines. The first 200 MWp of high-efficiency HJT

modules have been delivered — demonstrating 10% higher energy yield and 25% lower degradation versus industry standards, with 720 Wp BIS-certified panels. "Reliance remains on track to scale to 10 GWp per annum, with expansion to 20 GWp planned, targeting 26% module efficiency. Polysilicon, glass, ingots, and wafers are being commissioned in phases toward full integration," it said. The Dhirubhai Ambani Green Energy Giga Complex at Jamnagar — being developed across 5,000 acres with 44 million sq. ft. of manufacturing and operational built-up area — is envisaged as the world's most integrated clean energy manufacturing ecosystem outside China, the Annual Report said. RIL is building India's largest integrated CBG (Compressed Bio Gas) platform. CBG production has reached 270 plus TPD across 35 operating plants (capacity 700 TPD), and is on track to reach 1,100 TPD with 55 operating plants by end of FY 2026-27. The platform is being built towards the Rs 75,000 crore committed investment in clean energy.

Nil salary for Mukesh Ambani. RIL Chairman and MD Mukesh Ambani has declined to draw a salary from the company for the sixth straight year, despite the conglomerate posting its highest-ever consolidated net profit for FY2025-26. The 68-year-old chairman and managing director drew nil in salary, allowances, perquisites, commission and retiral benefits for the year ended March 31, 2026, according to the company's latest annual report. However, the promoter group which holds over 50% stake in RIL has received over Rs 3,721 crore as dividend out of the total payout of Rs 7,443 crore in FY26. RIL Executive Directors Nikhil Meswani and Hital Meswani got remuneration of Rs 25 crore each, PMS Prasad Rs 20.58 crore and Anant Ambani Rs 12.17 crore, according to the annual report.

Why escaping an abusive marriage requires more than financial independence



Twisha Sharma. Deepika Nagar. In recent days, headlines have been dominated by the alleged dowry death cases of these two young women. Disturbingly, they came from well-to-do families and were financially independent too. The Supreme Court has taken cognisance of these cases, but an alarming question lingers: Is money alone not enough to help someone walk away from an abusive relationship? Sangita Durbha Gopinath, whose partner allegedly cheated on her, says financial independence gave her the strength to walk away from the relationship. Not only did it allow her to take a stand, but it also helped her provide for her child and herself. "The job gave me a safe space. It was my life away from a difficult environment," Gopinath, Director-Growth and Business Initiative at PR Pundit, shares with indianexpress.com.

India reported 5,737 dowry death cases in 2024, involving 5,811 victims, according to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data. This statistic holds up a mirror to a worrying reality that, though dowry has been banned in the country since the Dowry Prohibition Act was passed on May 1, 1961, dowry-related violence continues to claim thousands of lives each year.

Dr Parin Somani, the CEO of London Organisation of Skills Development, a company focused on upskilling, says that throughout her years of research, she has met several individuals who shared deeply painful experiences of feeling trapped as they lacked economic security. "One survivor explained that although she wanted to leave her abusive partner, she feared homelessness and could not financially support her children independently. Another revealed that their spouse controlled all household finances, restricted access to bank accounts, and prevented them from pursuing employment opportunities," she adds. Somani points out that abuse also extends beyond physical violence and often includes emotional manipulation, psychological control, and financial dependency. "In many situations, the inability to access financial resources becomes one of the greatest barriers preventing victims from leaving abusive environments," she elaborates.

Trapped in a silent prison. Dr Saurabh Mehrotra, Director-Neurosciences, Medanta Gurugram, adds that many continue to tolerate emotional, psychological, or even physical abuse because of concerns around financial security, social stability or fear of uncertainty. This prolonged stress can contribute to anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and feelings of helplessness over time.

Dr Munia Bhattacharya, Senior Consultant, Clinical Psychology, Artemis Hospitals, agrees. Financial dependence often creates a silent psychological prison, she says. Financial independence, on the other hand, creates emotional agency, she adds. It gives people the confidence that they have options. And psychologically, Dr Bhattacharya explains that the moment a person feels they have options, they begin to reclaim their voice. "They set healthier boundaries, tolerate less disrespect, and are less likely to stay stuck in cycles of manipulation," she shares. Women empowerment. Many women realise the importance of financial independence only during separation, divorce, or family disputes. (AI generated)

So does having money save you from abuse?

No, Dr Bhattacharya says this does not mean financially independent people never experience abuse. They do. But they often feel more empowered to seek help, walk away, rebuild, and heal. "Financial security reduces helplessness, and helplessness is one of the core emotions that keeps people trapped in unhealthy dynamics," she reiterates. Kolkata-based homemaker Mousumi Dasgupta got out of an abusive marriage with legal and police support. A decade ago, she reflects, working women were more compliant and tolerant in relationships. "In today's day and age, young women are a lot less tolerant of disrespect. Abuse should not be tolerated in any shape or form, but things definitely change when children come into the picture. It's not so easy to leave a marriage then," she tells indianexpress.com.

Tanvi Singh, mental health expert and founder of Leap of Foundation, highlights that for many Indian women, this conversation carries an added emotional reality. "Many grow up feeling like they move from one form of dependence to another, from their father's homes to their husband's homes, without ever fully experiencing ownership over their own lives," she says. In that context, financial independence becomes far more than income; it becomes the freedom to make choices without fear. Men, too, are deeply affected by financial expectations, says Singh. "Society often measures masculinity and self-worth through the ability to pro-

vide, leaving many men feeling inadequate, disrespected in relationships, or diminished when they struggle financially," she points out. Why financial security matters

Delhi-based lawyer Bani Kaur Allagh says one of the biggest misconceptions many women have is that marriage automatically guarantees long-term financial security. According to Allagh, many women realise the importance of financial independence only during separation, divorce, or family disputes—when they discover that emotional partnership does not necessarily translate into financial ownership. "Maintenance as a remedy is very insufficient," she cautions, adding that many women do not have independent assets in their own name—whether savings, investments, or property—which can leave them financially exposed during major life transitions.

Adding, Priti Rathni Gupta, founder of Lxme, a woman-first financial app, points out that there's a marked difference between being financially independent and secure, and it's often the key to making important life decisions. "Financial independence comes from earning money, having skills, and creating the confidence to stand on your own feet. But financial security comes from what you build over time—an emergency fund, investments, retirement savings, a child's education fund and importantly, having ownership and control over them yourself," she says. Gupta says women must actively manage their money and understand where it is invested, "so that when life demands strength, they can access and use it without fear or permission". Binitha Dalal, Founder and Managing Director, Mt K Kapital, says financial freedom is no longer about bringing home a paycheck, but true independence means understanding money, building assets, and participating in wealth creation. Dalal tells us that women have already started moving in that direction. "They are continuously breaking barriers by actively participating in conversations related to investments, real estate, or alternative assets." Become financially aware first: Understand the basics of money management, even if your income is modest. Build disciplined saving habits: Start small, but set clear long-term financial goals.

Diversify your investments: Spread your money across assets such as real estate, equities, and fixed-income instruments for more balanced wealth creation. Think long-term: Financial planning requires patience, consistency, and resisting short-term market panic. Divorce There is also an urgent need to strengthen legal awareness at the grassroots level. (AI generated)

Is the law on your side?

Ashwini Kumar, advocate and founder of My Legal Expert, believes fear of economic instability, especially where children are involved, discourages women from initiating legal action or seeking protection. While laws do provide several safeguards, including protection orders, residence rights, maintenance, child support, and relief under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, Kumar says the real challenge often lies in timely implementation and accessibility. "Lengthy legal proceedings, social stigma, financial coercion by abusive spouses, and lack of immediate support can make the process extremely intimidating for survivors," he tells indianexpress.com.

According to him, there is also an urgent need to strengthen grassroots legal awareness. "Many women are unaware that they are entitled to maintenance, shared household rights, custody protections, and interim financial relief even while legal proceedings are ongoing," he shares. Beyond legal remedies, Supreme Court lawyer Sana Raees Khan, founder of SRK Legal, says society must focus on "financial education, knowledge of law, and also on available support services for women". Women empowerment. Empowering people financially and emotionally is essential for long-term healing. (AI generated) Rebuilding the self. Mahalakshmi K, senior health and wellness coach, says that leaving an abusive relationship is enabled by a constellation of factors, with money as a critical but not singular pillar. "Having independent income, savings, and financial literacy is not merely about access to money, but the confidence and competence to manage it independently," she explains.

Recognising and beginning to untangle the trauma bond is also essential. This often requires therapeutic support, and cannot happen through willpower alone. "The presence of trusted people—family, friends, colleagues, community organisations—who can offer shelter, solidarity, and practical help matters," says Mahalakshmi. According to her, isolation is itself a tool of control, and connection is its best antidote. Without this, financial independence is insufficient. "Many survivors return to abusers not because they lack money, but because they lack a safe roof. Practical plans for schooling, childcare, and emotional support for children during and after the transition..." she elaborates, adding that the invisible and yet most profound factor is that abusers systematically dismantle a person's sense of self. The key lies in rebuilding it, knowing that one has value independent of the relationship, which becomes foundational to a sustained departure. It's not about ego or power, but psychological safety. It allows a person to stay in a relationship out of love and choice, not out of fear, survival, or dependency. And at the end of the day, empowering people financially and emotionally is essential for long-term healing.

‘No one asked me’: Saif Ali Khan says his dad spoke less but taught a lot; expert weighs in

Speaking at the Tiger Pataudi Memorial Lecture 2026 in Kolkata, Saif Ali Khan reflected on his father, Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi, and described him as someone who communicated differently from those around him. Recalling his relationship with his father, Saif said, "I knew him respectfully as Abba, a man of very few words who somehow said everything to us as a family that mattered. He never raised his voice and was always there for us. He taught us to respect people at a very early age." Saif also spoke about his father's quiet nature in social situations and how it often stood out during gatherings. "At home, he rarely spoke about achievements. He rarely spoke about anything. My mother would be exasperated at dinners and gatherings, where people who knew less than him would be giving their opinions. He would say, 'No one asked me,' but he wouldn't speak because no one had asked him. It was a very different brand of confidence," he shared. Reflecting further on his father's influence, Saif added, "He believed in belief, instilling self-belief in Indian players who had never before been told they could dominate world cricket. At a time when Indian teams were expected merely to participate, he insisted they compete to win. That massive change in mindset, I think, was one of his greatest contributions." He also noted that his father may have been "slightly embarrassed" by the attention but "quietly pleased" that discussions remained centred around cricket, ideas and the future. Families can

tell the difference between personality and emotional distance. Counselling psychologist Athul Raj tells indianexpress.com, "A quiet person is not necessarily emotionally distant. Emotional withdrawal has a certain absence to it. The person checks out emotionally, avoids difficult conversations, and often makes others feel alone, even while being physically present. But some people are simply not wired to express affection verbally. They communicate through dependability, routine, and quiet presence." In many Indian families, Raj states, especially older ones, love was rarely spoken out loud. Care showed up as responsibility. Picking you up at midnight. Sitting silently beside you during a difficult time. Remembering what you need without asking. Families need to look at emotional consistency, not just words. Silence can feel rejecting, but it can also feel deeply reassuring. What separates healthy quiet confidence from social hesitation or low self-esteem? Quiet confidence comes with ease. "The person is not trying hard to impress anybody. They are comfortable listening, comfortable not being the centre of attention, and they do not collapse when someone disagrees with them. There is a steadiness to them," says Raj. Low self-esteem carries a different energy. You usually see self-doubt underneath the silence. Raj explains, "The person hesitates constantly, second-guesses themselves, apologises too much, or avoids visibility because they fear judgment. Quiet confidence is not about being silent.

‘System was trying to protect him’: Vinesh Phogat slams Brij Bhushan’s acquittal, vows to appeal



A Delhi court on Monday acquitted former Wrestling Federation of India chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh in the sexual harassment case filed by six women wrestlers, a verdict that has left the sport’s most prominent faces “deeply saddened”. “We had to gather a lot of courage to come out on the streets and get an FIR registered against a musclemán leader of the ruling party,” Olympian Vinesh Phogat said in a statement on X. “Using his power and influence, Brij Bhushan had frightened several young women and forced them to withdraw their complaints.” Phogat, who had revealed earlier this year that she was among the six complainants, said the wrestlers were disappointed with the court’s decision. “We are deeply saddened that the court did not find Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh guilty in the sexual

harassment case filed by the women wrestlers,” she said. Alleging a systemic bias, Phogat added, “From the very beginning, the entire system, the government, and this establishment were all trying to protect Brij Bhushan.” However, she made it clear that the fight was not over. “The women wrestlers have instructed their lawyers to file an appeal against this verdict, and it will be done at the earliest. We have not lost hope, and the wrestlers will continue their fight.”

Former Wrestling Federation of India president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. (File) Former Wrestling Federation of India president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. (File) The Rouse Avenue Court acquitted Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh and former WFI assistant secretary Vinod Tomar, bringing to a close one of Indian sport’s most high-profile legal battles. The case emanated from allegations by six women wrestlers who accused Singh of sexual harassment during his tenure as WFI chief. The allegations had sparked nationwide protests in 2023, with wrestlers staging a months-long sit-in at Delhi’s Jantar Mantar. Meanwhile, reacting to the verdict at Rouse Avenue Court, Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh said: “Meri pehli baat sahi hai. Mujhe saamne waale ke baare me pata nahi tha... Meri first pratikriya yehi thi ki main swatah faansi par latak jaaunga. Ab baaki aaj prasannata ka vishai hai (What I said initially has turned out to be right. I didn’t know about people against me... I had said that I will hang myself knew about the persons. The court acquitted me with honour. It is a matter of joy for me and my supporters... Today is a happy day....”

Sunil Chhetri urges Jamshedpur FC stay in ISL, avert ‘a disaster with no alternative’

Chhetri, while acknowledging it “takes a lot to be a stakeholder in Indian football”, urged the Tata Group, which owns the club, to reconsider their decision. (File Photo) Chhetri, while acknowledging it “takes a lot to be a stakeholder in Indian football”, urged the Tata Group, which owns the club, to reconsider their decision. Sunil Chhetri, India’s record goalscorer and former captain, has urged Jamshedpur FC’s team management to reverse their decision to pull out of the Indian Super League (ISL). The club, who had won the ISL Shield in the 2021/22 season, announced on Friday that it will not be part of the league from the next season onwards.

It was a decision that has left their players in a lurch and Chhetri, while acknowledging it “takes a lot to be a stakeholder in Indian football”, urged the Tata Group, which owns the club, to reconsider their decision. “To know that Jamshedpur has folded first team operations is a punch to the gut. The players and staff will be without clubs, and they might find one by the end of it all. The League will have a team less, but the season will go on. However, not having the TATA group involved in the top tier of Indian football – that would be a disaster with no alternative,” said Chhetri in a lengthy statement that he posted on X. It takes a lot to be a stakeholder in Indian football. It has been like that for some time now. But when everything around looks like it will crumble, you bank on family to hold on to each other. And more often than not, it is the elders in the house that you turn to, for...“I understand that some tough decisions in sport are down to what makes sense in the board room. But I can only request and hope that the think tank at TATA picks their heart over head and reconsiders this call. It might be a poor business decision, but it will be the one Indian football needs the most at this hour.”

Jamshedpur will be the latest name to have exited the



league. Pune City FC folded under financial strain, Delhi Dynamos relocated to become Odisha FC, while Hyderabad FC too succumbed to prolonged monetary trouble, relocating to Delhi to become Sporting Delhi FC. However, club captain Pronay Halder said that Jamshedpur’s exit feels different because the owners also operate the TATA Football Academy — which has produced players like Renedy Singh and Subrata Paul — and is known for a rich history of nurturing footballers. “I have been a professional footballer for 16 years, and this is the most difficult thing I have ever faced. All of us knew that Indian football is struggling at the moment, but no one could imagine that a club like Jamshedpur FC would withdraw from the top league. This club is run by TATA, who have a rich history of contributing towards Indian football. Even during Covid, when other clubs were struggling to pay salaries, all of our needs were taken care of. So this news has caught us blindsided. We believed that regardless of the difficulties, this is one club which will never fold. Turns out, the assumption was wrong,” he had told the Indian Express.

Jasprit Bumrah set to miss Sri Lanka Tests with knee injury

India will take the trip to Sri Lanka without premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah. The Indian Express understands that the 32-year-old, who picked up a knee injury during the second ODI against England last month is far from attaining full fitness and hence will miss the two Tests starting in Galle on August 15.

When the BCCI released the squad for the two-match Test series, Bumrah’s inclusion was subject to him clearing fitness test. With nearly four-week break before the first Test, India were hoping that Bumrah would regain full fitness by then and were keen to take him on board even if it is unlikely to feature in the warm-up fixture. However, during the rehab process, Bumrah is understood to have felt discomfort in his knee and as a result his comeback is expected to take time. While there is a chance that Bumrah could be available for the second Test, India are unlikely to take any risk with the fast bowler. Rushing players in the past in desperate situations have only resulted in them suffering long-term setbacks, which India are keen to avoid. Bumrah was expected to start bowling this weekend, but the setback he suffered during the rehab process means, it could take another couple of weeks.

Though Bumrah has played 52 Tests, his career continues to remain stop-start because of injuries. Having overcome a career-threatening back injury, India have been managing his workload carefully. Last year in England, he played only three of the five Tests, but played in all four



home Tests against West Indies and South Africa. Given India are struggling in terms of qualifying for the World Test Championship final, Bumrah’s unavailability is a big dent in Sri Lanka. For India to be in the race for the final, they need to win at least three of their four Tests in Sri Lanka and New Zealand. With his ability to take the conditions out of equation, Bumrah’s absence is a huge blow to India which is also fretting over the availability of Washington Sundar. Bumrah’s unavailability means, India will have to work around their pace pack which will now be led by Mohammed Siraj. Alongside Siraj, there is Prasidh Krishna, but none of them have the experience of playing Test cricket in Sri Lanka.

Abhishek blasts 233 in 91 balls in local 50-over match amid form struggles



Abhishek Sharma has been going through a bit of a dry spell in international cricket but the opener has given a reminder of his abilities with a ridiculous knock in a senior inter-district one-day match in Punjab. Opening the batting for Amritsar Men Senior against Tarn Taran Men Senior, Abhishek smashed 233 runs in just 91 balls, hitting 15 fours and 25 sixes along the way. It allowed his team to pile on a score of 533 runs for the loss of eight wickets in 50 overs. Abhishek finished his innings with a strike rate of 256.04. He had a monumental 305-run opening partnership with

Abhay Choudhary.

Abhishek, who has thus far played in 56 T20Is but is yet to make his debut in any other form of international cricket, boasts a strike rate of 187.24 over the course of his career. He has also scored two centuries and 11 half-centuries. However, he has hit a lean patch in recent games, which has coincided with India struggling to find their feet after winning the 2026 T20 World Cup. Abhishek’s form was up and down in the early part of India’s tour of Ireland and England, scoring 49 in the first match against Ireland but then falling for a duck in the second. India ended up suffering a historic 2-0 defeat in the series. He then scored 59 and 43 in the first two T20Is against England but followed that up with scores of 10, 16 and three. India lost that series 4-0 as well. India then beat Zimbabwe 3-0 away from home but Abhishek only managed scores of 1, 8 and 2. Abhishek spent a long time at the top of the T20I batting rankings. However, his form has been shaky since the start of the T20 World Cup, in which he was dismissed for a duck on three consecutive occasions. The rut effectively ended with a 55 against Zimbabwe themselves. In matches played since the end of the tournament, Abhishek has averaged 19.41, as opposed to 37.05 before that.

Home favourite Josh Kerr wins chaotic, marquee CWG men’s Mile in Glasgow

Josh Kerr blazed down the final lap as the partisan crowd in Glasgow’s Scotstoun Stadium rose to its feet and applauded. Their star runner had just clinched the gold medal in men’s One Mile at the Commonwealth Games (CWG) 2026 with a timing of three minutes 54.12 seconds. At one moment, it looked like it might be a Scottish one-two on the podium but Jake Wightman faded away in the last 100m, as Australia’s Cameron Myers took silver and Kenya’s Timothy Cheruiyot bagged bronze.

“It means everything — this was the championship of my season. With the World Indoors and going after that record in London, this was the one I had circled in the calendar before any of that,” Kerr told TNT Sports. Coming into the CWG, Kerr was the outright favourite after breaking Hicham El Guerrouj’s 27-year-old record in London last month. The race was a fitting tribute to the return of the famous event to the CWG programme after a 60-year absence. Kenyan great Kip Keino won the last men’s Mile race at the Games, clocking a Games-record time of three minutes 55.34 seconds in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1966. Men’s Mile was one of the blue-riband events of CWG before the metric era took over and 1500m was included into the program. The race was immortalized in 1954 when the two athletes who breached the four-minute barrier, Roger Bannister and John Landy, ran in the race dubbed as ‘The Miracle Mile’. While it lost relevance due to the metric system, the race was resurrected in the 1980s with a series of epic battles between Britons Steve Ovett, Sebastian Coe and Steve Cram, who swapped the world record six times between them. One of those men from the 1980s, World Athletics president Sebastian Coe, was responsible for getting the event back to the CWG programme. “The One Mile is the quintessential Commonwealth athletics event whose return to the Games in Glasgow 2026 I very much welcome,” Coe had said. “The event’s place in international sporting lore was secured when Sir Roger Bannister broke the four-minute barrier in May 1954. Ever since, the world has enjoyed the Miracle Mile, the Golden Mile, the Dream Mile and countless other similarly dubbed races over the distance.” Kerr’s dominance The 2023 world champion in 1500m, Kerr announced two weeks before the London Diamond League that he would break El Guerrouj’s world record. Staying true to his word, Kerr clocked 3:42.66, obliterating Guerrouj’s record. On Saturday night, he again produced an audacious performance. At the 1100m mark, Kerr was placed



ninth. As the last lap started, he elbowed and barged his way to the front before producing a devastating kick, leaving everyone chasing him behind and crossing the finish line comfortably. “London was a big stress, pushing my body to the absolute extreme limit. Doing a championship race is a nice clean palate, really using your brain instead of your body, and it’s how I love to race. It doesn’t get any better than this — this is absolutely incredible. To do it in front of a Scottish crowd where I learned to race — I came here week after week growing up as a kid,” Kerr said.

Australia sweep women’s Mile The return of One Mile marked another historic moment as for the first time, women athletes participated in the famous race. While the men’s final was chaotic, the women’s final was lopsided with Australia sweeping the podium. As Abbey Caldwell, Jess Hull and Claudia Hollingsworth went around the track four times, there was no one who could better them. Lining up alongside each other, Caldwell burst off the line while Hull held back as Hollingsworth settled into the pack ahead of her. It was a slow race but with 200m to go, Caldwell burst clear and Hull joined her. While Hull couldn’t match Caldwell, she won her second silver medal after finishing behind Rose Davies in the 5000m. As these two Aussies finished the race, Hollingsworth found the space and energy to burst past Naomi Korir and claim bronze. With no clarity over the future of event in the CWG programme, the return of the once fabled event was suitably chaotic and colourful.

Why Bumrah’s absence for Sri Lanka tour leaves India with more than one headache

India are yet to board the flight to Sri Lanka for a crucial two-Test series, but even before they land on the Emerald Isle, they have suffered a massive setback. The surfaces are likely to assist spin, but even in those conditions, Jasprit Bumrah’s importance could not be understated. On Sunday, the 32-year-old was ruled out of the series after failing to recover in time from the knee injury he sustained in England. India are fifth on the World Test Championship (WTC) table and the two Tests in Sri Lanka are crucial to keep their WTC final qualification hopes alive. A fragile batting unit on turning tracks notwithstanding, India will have to take on Sri Lanka without their pace spearhead. Ever since Bumrah injured his left knee (via impact in the game), the expectation was that he would be available for the series starting in Galle on August 15. When the BCCI named the squad for the series, they added an asterisk to say that Bumrah’s availability was subject to fitness. The hope that the 32-year-old would play at least one of the Tests has also evaporated. The Indian Express understands that the impact injury he sustained at Cardiff has only aggravated the knee issue that has been persisting since the T20 World Cup. While Bumrah did recover from that injury and was cleared to feature in the IPL without any trouble, the blow he suffered in England aggravated the underlying issue. The Indian Express understands that as per the rehab programme, after taking an injection, Bumrah was expected to resume bowling over the weekend and gradually build his workload ahead of the Tests. But that is unlikely to happen any time soon with the pacer advised to rest. Given his importance, India were even ready to wait for a week and fly him to Sri Lanka, where they will first play a three-day warm-up fixture from August 7 at Colombo. If not, the idea of training and recovering with the team was also explored, but the medical team at the Centre of Excellence has preferred to tread cautiously, keeping the long-term future in mind. Instead, the focus has shifted towards finding a long-term solution rather than merely managing the injury. “The solution is not a stop-gap. If we rush him now, then there is a strong chance he could break down again,” sources in the know revealed. The 50-over World Cup next year, along with the New Zealand tour in October and the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in January, remains top priority. India are hesitant to take any risks with Bumrah by hurrying him up. Since suffering a career-threatening back injury, he has managed his workload with utmost care, preferring not to rush. Bumrah remains firm on playing all three formats, and the decision not to hasten his return has been taken with an eye on future challenges. File image of Jasprit Bumrah during the India vs West Indies Test cricket match at the Arun Jaitley



Stadium in New Delhi in October last year. (Express Photo by Praveen Khanna) File image of Jasprit Bumrah during the India vs West Indies Test cricket match at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi in October last year. (Express Photo by Praveen Khanna) Search for Plan BBumrah’s absence means India will have to alter their plans significantly in the bowling department. With Washington Sundar already ruled out of the first Test and doubtful for the second, they will no longer enjoy the luxury of batting depth. The question that confronts them is, in case Sri Lanka opt for flat decks that start turning later on in the Test, who will partner Mohammed Siraj? Beyond him, the other options available in the squad are Prasidh Krishna and Gurnoor Brar, with Jammu and Kashmir’s Auqib Nabi being the front-runner to replace Bumrah. While Prasidh’s natural length may not be suited to the conditions in Sri Lanka, he has worked, off late, to rectify the issue. If India prefer to go with a pacer who takes conditions out of the equation, then they might turn to Brar, as his raw pace can be a factor across conditions. Nabi, if he joins the team, offers something unique, but whether they play him straightaway remains the question. Though Bumrah featured in all four Tests at home last year against West Indies and South Africa, he played in only three out of the five Tests in England last year. Given his back trouble, he didn’t play successive Tests, and in Sri Lanka, there is only a three-day gap between the two matches that will be played in Galle and Colombo’s SSC. India leave for Sri Lanka

Sitender Malik wins second U17 world title as India finishes with 13 medals in Baku

Hyderabad: India’s freestyle wrestling contingent concluded their campaign on a highly positive note at the 2026 Under-17 World Championships in Baku, Azerbaijan, headlined by an electrifying Gold medal victory that evoked memories of Indian wrestling royalty. With three final-day podium finishes, India’s overall medal tally across Women’s Wrestling and Men’s Freestyle swelled to an impressive 13 medals.

The undeniable story of the championships was 17-year-old Sitender Malik in the 60kg division. Defending his U17 world title from 2025, Sitender squared off against Russia’s Sergei Karmian in a tense championship bout. Delivering a masterclass in composed, clinical wrestling, the young Indian secured a 3-1 victory to capture the Gold medal. This historic triumph elevates Sitender into the rarest of company. He etched his name in the history books as only the second Indian male freestyle wrestler to ever win two Under-17/Cadet World titles. This incredible feat mir-

rors the early career trajectory of Indian wrestling legend and two-time Olympic medalist Sushil Kumar, who won his Cadet World titles in 1998 and 1999. The second coming of such dominance at the cadet level has sent ripples of excitement throughout the Indian sporting fraternity. In the 45kg category, Hanumant Rajendra Jadhav showcased exceptional agility and technique in his bronze medal playoff. The Maharashtra grappler dominated Iran’s Mahdi Davoud Damercheli to register a comprehensive 7-1 victory. Adding a third medal on the final day, Saksham FNU engaged in a tightly contested 92kg bronze medal match against another Iranian opponent, Mohammad Reza Behrang Isazadeh. Displaying solid defensive composure in the clutch moments, Saksham edged out a thrilling 3-2 victory on points (VPO1) to take home the bronze. With the conclusion of the Men’s Freestyle categories, the curtains have officially drawn on the 2026 Under-17 World Championships.

Why Bombay courts are reversing FDA's instant restaurant closure orders



For nearly three months since Tukaram Mundhe took charge of the Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the headlines have been relentless. Big-name restaurants, sweet shops, dairies and milk vendors forced to down shutters over food safety violations, an FDA press release landing every evening with a fresh name and photographs of the lapses. Now a pushback has emerged, and it has come through the legal route. Establishments that believe the action was harsh relative to the violations went to court, and over the past month the Bombay High Court in Mumbai, Nagpur, and Aurangabad has sided with them in at least nine cases, holding that due process was not followed before licences were suspended. The Indian Express looks at how and why the courts have disagreed with the 'Mundhe method'.

The benches have restored food licences, stayed suspension orders or directed that suspensions be treated as improvement or show-cause notices. Suspending a licence on the spot, the court held, cannot be justified except in "compelling" circumstances involving public health risks, and actions, though laudable, must be proportionate, fair and impartial. At the heart of every case is one question. Can the FDA shut an eatery straight away, or must it warn the owner first and give time to fix the lapses?

The Food Safety and Standards Act lays down a sequence. Under Section 32, an officer who finds violations must first issue an "improvement notice", in effect a written warning listing what is wrong and how to correct it, and give the business at least 14 days to comply. Only if the owner fails to act can the licence be suspended, and only after a further show-cause notice can it be cancelled. The litigation turns on the law's lone exception under section 32 (3) of the Act. An officer can suspend a licence immediately "in the interest of public health", skipping the warning, provided reasons are recorded in writing. The FDA leaned on it across the state. The courts have asked whether it was entitled to. The state defended the "extraordinary" measure, arguing surprise inspections revealed serious lapses in hygiene, sanitation, storage and handling. There was "no pick and choose", it told the court, noting canteens of the BMC, KEM Hospital and top Mumbai clubs were also shut. The Nagpur bench set the bar high. Compelling circumstances, it ob-

served, "could be of a nature that on assessment of risk and other factors there must be the possibility of harmful effects on health or where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the food may present a risk for human health." And, "In the absence of such circumstances, the improvement notice is must." Put simply, a slippery floor does not justify shutting shop on the spot. Food that can make people sick does. The first relief came on July 7, when Justice Anil S Kilor-led bench sided with Goras Bhandar, an 80-year-old dairy and sweets shop in Wardha ordered shut after an inspection and its licence suspended the next day, without warning. Holding that buttermilk made using industrial ice was the "only item" posing a "risk to human health", the court said deficiencies such as inadequate storage and slippery floors were not "exceptional circumstances". It set aside the action, allowing authorities to act against the buttermilk alone. Last week, the Aurangabad bench, in at least six pleas, stayed suspensions of several milk suppliers and vendors accused of adulteration and synthetic milk production. "Without issuing improvement notice, directly action of suspension of licence is taken," Justice S G Chapalgaonkar observed. In another case, it held that broken tiles and an open drainage chamber line were not of a "serious nature that would require closure of milk processing units or abrupt suspension of licences", finding "no exigencies" warranting "drastic action".

On July 29, a bench led by Acting Chief Justice Ravindra V Ghuge restored the licence of a four-star Navi Mumbai hotel, suspended a day after a surprise inspection. "Two insects" in an otherwise "satisfactory" kitchen report were no ground to continue the suspension, the court said, after its appointed committee found the hotel had "substantially remedied the deficiencies" and reached 95 per cent compliance. The sharpest questioning came on July 31, on a plea by Poornima Restaurant, the iconic Udipi eatery in Fort. Comparing FDA reports with those of four court-appointed lawyers who inspected the Mantralaya, Vidhan Bhavan and Annexe canteens and found refrigeration in shambles, the court said, "The law has to be enforced impartially and no litigant before the court should feel that private commercial establishments are meted out with different standards of inspection than statutory establishments." "Either suspend the licence of the Mantralaya canteen or restore Poornima restaurant's licence... We want parity, we want everyone to be treated equally. None, and especially VVIPs, are above the law. Even we virtually told you to inspect canteens in High Court premises. We are in India, you (FDA) have to take realistic step," Justice Ghuge remarked. The FDA was doing a "laudable job", the bench said, but "medication should not be worse than the disease", and authorities were "shooting first and then asking questions". Noting the canteen inspections lasted only 30-40 minutes against lengthy ones at Poornima and the hotel, the court deemed those reports unreliable and directed Mundhe to scrutinise them. The FDA then told the HC Poornima's suspension would be treated as an improvement notice, and the restaurant and Mantralaya canteens would be reinspected on Wednesday after time to rectify.

Gaurav Khanna gets severely injured by pellet gun during a task



Filmmaker Rohit Shetty-hosted Khatron Ke Khiladi 15 has raised the bar of its stunts this season. On the first day, Rubina Dilaik suffered a medical emergency after a task, while Shagun Sharma nearly fainted. And on its second day, the task only got more intense, leaving Gaurav Khanna severely injured. During one of the tasks, Gaurav, Vishal Aditya Singh, Shagun Sharma, and Karan Wahi had to stand as targets for pellet guns being shot at them. During that task, all four got injured; Gaurav Khanna also shared a video of his bruises on social media. On the latest episode of Khatron Ke Khiladi 15, Rohit Shetty introduced the 'fear fanda' (given to contestants in danger). The contestants were asked to choose two people from their teams who would perform the eviction stunts. While Gaurav and Shagun Sharma were chosen from the new batch, Karan and Vishal took the challenge from the old batch. Rohit explained that all four had to stand in line with their back towards the shooter, and rubber bullets would be shot at them. "You guys have to keep bearing the pain even if it's for the whole day; until the first two players abort the task, the firing will continue," Rohit Shetty said.

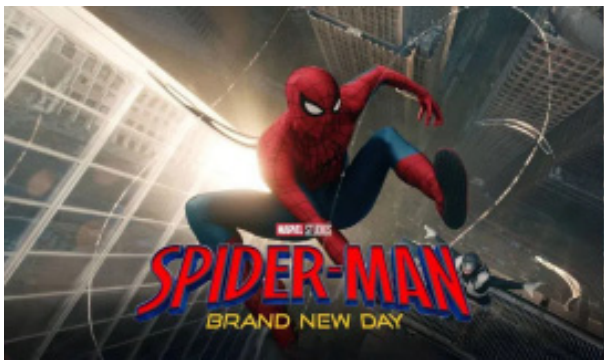
While Gaurav Khanna was tense before the task, he said, "These bullets on the back will be very painful. But if you are on KKK, if you don't play with danger, what kind of a player are you?" Karan Wahi said, "This is something completely new; the good thing is they have given us spine protectors." As the task continued, Shagun and Gaurav aborted the task. Later, Gaurav shared glimpses of his bruises on social media and wrote, "Thanks, Orry, for making this. I could still feel this pain watching it on TV. Most painful experience ever. All four of us went through this and still have these marks."

Shagun Sharma breaks down, screams in pain

During the task, Shagun Sharma broke down, crying in pain. Jasmine Bhasin took a stand for her and said, "By telling the poor girl that she's acting like a child, she is not quitting to prove herself. This is a pain auction; she can give up." Jasmine later told Shagun, "Don't be a hero; you don't have to go straight to the hospital from here. It's getting too much; if you continue, you won't be able to do anything beyond this. It will be pointless. You are a very strong girl, but don't injure yourself to prove it; think about yourself." After

the task, Sagun Sharma said, "It was not at all a great experience." Gaurav teared up as he said, "So far, only my throat was aching due to the wire. Now, my entire body is aching." Ahead of entering the show, Gaurav had spoken about his health concerns. In an interview with SCREEN, he had said, "My colour blindness is going to be a problem on the show. I also have Golfer's elbow and frozen shoulder, which is my main concern. There are a lot of things I want to overcome. I am my biggest competitor on the show." On the personal front, Gaurav Khanna's relationship with Akanksha Chamola had been in the news after she announced their divorce on Lock Upp Sach Ya Sazaa.

Brand New Day' earns over US\$ 900 million at global box office



Los Angeles: "Spider-Man: Brand New Day", featuring Tom Holland and Zendaya, has earned over US\$ 900 million on the opening weekend at the global box office. The film, which is directed by Destin Daniel Cretton, released on Friday and has Holland reprise his role of Spider-Man and Zendaya as Michelle Jones-Watson. It also features Jacob Batalon as Ned Leeds, Krondon as Tombstone and Sadie Sink as Jean Grey, among others.

The project has earned US\$ 927 million at the global box office, according to the entertainment news outlet Variety. The film follows Holland as he faces a new and powerful threat while grappling with a surprising physical evolution triggered by the demands of his crime-fighting life.

"Brand New Day" is the 38th film in the Marvel Cinematic Universe and is produced by Kevin Feige and Amy Pascal. Actors Mark Ruffalo as Bruce aka The Hulk, Jon Bernthal as the Punisher, and Michael Mando as Scorpion round off the cast of the film. Besides "Spider-Man: Brand New Day", Holland and Zendaya have recently collaborated on "The Odyssey". The film is directed by Christopher Nolan and revolves around the Greek King Odysseus on a perilous 10-year journey after the Trojan War. The film has earned over US\$ 900 at the global box office.

From living next to Jayalalithaa to staying in old-age home: How Mohan Sharma lost it all



No matter how prolific a person may be, a small misstep or setback can reset their film career, even taking them back to square one. Staying at the top forever is a feat few have achieved. The number of lives and careers that have withered away in Tinseltown far exceeds that of the successful. Take the multi-hyphenate Mohan Sharma, for instance. Despite once being a prominent figure in the South Indian film industry, particularly Tamil cinema, he now lives in an old-age home, struggling to afford his monthly medical expenses. According to Mohan Sharma, he has produced 20 films, acted as the male lead in over 100 movies, portrayed strong character roles in about 50 films across various languages, was the first to produce films in all four South Indian languages, and even served as the president of the South Indian Film Chamber of Commerce. However, he now leads a largely isolated life, having no one to look after him. **Must Read | 'Stop embarrassing your partner': Kangana Ranaut hits back at Hrithik for 'teasing' her**

In a recent interview, Mohan opened up about his hardships and revealed that "Superstar" Rajinikanth was the only person to lend him a helping hand when he needed it the most. Discussing his health issues, Mohan Sharma told Trend Talks, "I needed major surgery on my leg due to a growth. It left me unable to walk, so I had to have the surgery. I also had a ligament tear. I spent Rs 4-5 lakh on those surgeries. Besides, I also have vertigo, hypertension (high BP), and diabetes. I need daily insulin injections. I require around Rs 35,000 a month just for medicines." Revealing how he ended up at the old-age home, he said, "At one stage, I didn't even have money for my medicines. I couldn't tell anyone about my situation. At that time, my friends from the Rotary Club, who are trustees of this institution, suggested I stay here." But how did Mohan Sharma, a renowned actor, producer, director, and screenwriter, reach this stage? He shared that cinema, which initially took him to great heights, also caused his downfall. "My last film, the bilingual Gramam/ Namma Gramam, won many awards, but I struggled to release it. I had to spend on theatres, publicity, and posters myself. My budget went way over; it soared up to Rs 2 crore instead of the planned Rs 1.25 crore."

To clear the debts, he even had to sell off his home in Poes Garden, a posh residential locality in Teynampet, Chennai, which he bought at the advice of former Tamil Nadu

Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa. "My house was in Poes Garden, right next to Jayalalithaa's house. I bought that place because she told me to. One day, at AVM Studios, she was sitting outside reading something. I went and greeted her. Seeing me, she told me a good housing project was coming up in her neighbourhood of Poes Garden and advised me to buy a 2,500 sq ft flat there. I bought it based on her word. In the end, I had to sell it to settle my debts."

Mohan Sharma further noted that he shared a warm bond with Jayalalithaa until her demise and was the last person from the film industry to meet her at her residence. "One day, her maid told me she (Jayalalithaa) was unwell and that it was serious. She was being admitted to Apollo Hospitals. I went to her house. She asked why I looked so anxious. I told her I heard she was seriously ill. She replied, 'No, Mohan, I'm just going to Apollo for two days, and I'll be back.' I was the last person from the film industry to see her at her home as she never came back from Apollo. That was a huge blow to me. I was deeply affected by her death. It hurt me both mentally and physically. I couldn't handle it," he recalled. As the conversation continued, Mohan Sharma praised Rajinikanth and thanked him for helping him without him even asking. "Rajinikanth saved me by entering my life like a god. He called me and asked for my bank account number. He sent me Rs 1 lakh the next day. That's what really saved me. It saved my dignity. I am very indebted to him. To the world, he is a superstar, but to me, he is God's incarnation." When asked if his family doesn't support him, Mohan shared, "I only have one son. He is in Germany. My wife and I are separated. My son had asked if he should come and take care of me. I told him not to do that since he and his wife are earning well there." On why his son wasn't helping him financially, the actor-producer revealed, "He has bought a house and has to pay EMIs. He said he couldn't help me immediately, so I didn't press him." He further revealed that while he lived with his wife in an apartment in her name, she and her brother eventually asked him to leave, rendering him homeless. "My wife's brother wanted me to leave that apartment. It's her property. He made sure I left and convinced her as well. Then they sent a divorce notice." Mohan Sharma added, "I have a few relatives. One sent Rs 2 lakh, another sent Rs 21,000, and another sent Rs 50,000. But my medicines alone cost Rs 35,000 a month. That's why I'm here (at the old-age home)." The actor-producer concluded by saying he has contacted the team of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay for help. "Vijay is my friend. I've known him for 25 years and worked on his films. I've sent a request to meet him. I haven't received a reply yet. If I meet him, I'll tell him my problems. If he does something, it will be a big help."

About Mohan Sharma Mohan Sharma is best known for his performances in movies such as Chattakari (1974), Nelli (1974), Akkarai Pachai (1974), Prayanam (1975), Chuvanna Sandhyakal (1975), Thoondil Meen (1977), Nadakame Ulagam (1979), Kaanthavalayam (1980), Saagara Sangamam (1983), Veta (1986), Suyamvaram (1999), Dada Sahib (2000), Friends (2001), Kuberan (2002), Parthiban Kanavu (2003), Priyamana Thozhi (2003), Sachien (2005), Mayamohini (2012), Mamangam (2019), and Forensic (2020) among others. He was initially married to actor Lakshmi; his co-star in movies like Chattakari, Raagam, and Prayanam. They tied the knot in 1975, according to Manorama Online, but their marriage lasted only five years, and they parted ways in 1980. He then reportedly married a woman named Shanthi. **Disclaimer:** This feature reflects personal recollections of financial hardship, emotional grief, and individual health experiences shared strictly for informational and reflective purposes. It is non-advisory in nature and does not constitute professional medical, financial, or psychological advice.

Mira Nair's mother Praveen Nair dies at 94, inspired Zohran Mamdani's viral rap song 'Nani'

Praveen Nair, filmmaker Mira Nair's mother, died on Saturday at the age of 94. A renowned and accomplished social worker and philanthropist, she co-founded Salaam Baalak Trust, a New Delhi-based Non-Profit Organization that aids underprivileged street kids. Interestingly, Praveen Nair was inspired by a seminal piece of work by her daughter which prompted her to further walk on the path of philanthropy.

How Salaam Bombay! inspired Praveen Nair Before co-founding Salaam Baalak Trust, Praveen Nair had already worked for over a couple of decades in the development sector. Primarily based out of Odisha, she headed several development-related committees for the Red Cross, the DAV Public School, and the Deaf and Dumb Association. But it was her daughter's 1988 Oscar-nominated Hindi film Salaam Bombay! that inspired her to start something of her own.

Salaam Bombay! revolved around the plight of street children in Mumbai. It went on to premiere at the Cannes Film Festival, and even won the Caméra d'Or (Golden Camera) and the Audience Award. It also became only the second Indian film to secure a nomination in the Best International Feature category at the Academy Awards, back in 1989. An enduring incident of Praveen Nair from the Cannes premiere of Salaam Bombay! gives an insight into her sense of humour. When she walked the red carpet, and the paparazzi assumed she's an actor, they asked her what role she plays in the film. Only for her to respond in her signature wry sense of humour, "I'm the producer of the director!" Deeply moved by her daughter's film, Praveen Nair co-founded Salaam Baalak Trust in 1988 along with Mira, Anjou Chopra, and Sanjoy K Roy, best known for heading the Jaipur Literature Festival. "End of an era! Praveen Nair passes away at the age of 94," he wrote on X this past Saturday. "We have cared for over 170,000 children in our homes and contact points in Delhi. Her extraordinary eye for detail, empathy, love for children and commitment to social work will be her abiding legacy," he added.

Salaam Balak Trust, which started with just 25 children and three staff members, now has over 25 shelter homes and have impacted over 80,000 children so far, as per the trust's official website. They provide shelter and care, nutritious food, clothes, education, healthcare, counselling, and recreational facilities to street children. Praveen Nair inspired grandson Zohran Mamdani's viral rap song Praveen Nair lived with such an infectious zest even in her 80s that it inspired her grandson and future New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani to write, sing, direct, and produce a rap song dedicated to his maternal grandmother. Thus, came "Nani", which he made under his artist name Mr Cardamom. It featured yet another octogenarian, veteran actor and ce-



lebrity cook Madhur Jaffrey, as the unhinged, badass titular character. "Fu*k any other Nani says they better than Praveen," Mamdani's lyrics stated, making it very clear that "Nani" was a tribute to his own nani. He then met Jaffrey over tea through their mutual friend and actor Poorna Jagannathan. When Mamdani pitched the song to the veteran actor, she had no qualms in taking it up, including hurling all the profanities to underline his grandmother's innate swagger.

Music composer Devi Sri Prasad to feature in 'Yellamma'

The film is directed by Venu Yeldandi and features Bhagyashree Borse. It is produced by Shirish and presented by Dil Raju under the banner of Sri Venkateswara Creations Productions. Production banner shared the poster featuring Prasad on the official X handle on Sunday as they announced his casting in the project. He will essay the role of Parshi in the film. "The birth of an actor... On the day of his birth. A name called. A world called #Yellamma. A journey we are all waiting to witness," read the caption.