

INDIAN CHRONICLE

12 March, 2025 | Wednesday | Volume No:13 | Issue No: 22

Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

Galore of errors in inter first year paper in Telangana

Hyderabad: A day after printing inconsistency was reported in English paper-II question paper, errors galore, ranging from improper grammar to misprints, were detected in the question papers of the first-year intermediate public examination, conducted on Tuesday. A total of six such errors were identified in the question papers of Botany, Mathematics and Political Science, causing confusion and concerns among students. According to an official on exam duty, question No. 13 in Botany Telugu medium, question No. 5 in Botany paper - I English medium, question Nos. 32 and 20 in Political Science paper - I English and Telugu mediums respectively, and questions Nos. 4 and 9 in Mathematics paper-IA Telugu medium had errors.

Hyderabad pub staff, management booked for abusing, assaulting customers

Hyderabad: The police booked a case against the staff and management of the 10 Downing Street pub in Begumpet for allegedly abusing and assaulting a group of customers. As per available information, a group consisting of private employees who had food and drinks at the pub, allegedly ended up in an argument with the staff over a trivial matter at the time of bill payment on Sunday night. Angered by this, a group of 6-7 bouncers and waiters abused and assaulted the customers. After enduring several fist blows, the customers were reportedly left with no choice but to forcibly pay the bill in full and leave the premises.

TGPSC releases Group - II general ranking list; Men bag top 10 ranks



GNS News Agency, March 11

Hyderabad: Men walked away with top ranks in the Group - II services recruitment examination, for which the Telangana Public Service Commission (TGPSC) released the general ranking list (GRL) on Tuesday. Men secured top 10 ranks with Naru Venkata Haravardhan from multi-zone-I who scored 447.088 out of 600 marks topping the list. Vadlakonda Sachin of multi-zone-I and B Manohar Rao of multi-zone-II secured second and third ranks. Lakkireddy Vinisha Reddy of multi-zone-II who secured 408.713 marks was the highest-ranking woman with 32nd rank followed by Baikudi Susmitha of multi-zone-I with 41st rank.

Following the Commission's meeting chaired by TGPSC Chairman Burra Venkatesham, the TGPSC declared the GRL of 2,36,649 candidates, along with the final key, which has been made available on the website <https://www.tspsc.gov.in/>. Candidates' OMR sheet images have also been released. A total of 5,51,855 candidates registered for the Group - II services recruitment and 2,49,964 appeared for the examination, which was conducted on December 15 and 16, 2024. The Commission has invalidated 13,315 candidates. The TGPSC had notified 783 Group - II vacancies.

Mauritius announces highest national award for PM Modi

GNS News Agency, March 11

Mauritius Prime Minister Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam announced that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be conferred the country's highest award, "The Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean." PM Modi is the first Indian to receive the honour. He is visiting the island nation at the invitation of Mauritius Prime Minister



Ramgoolam. Earlier on Tuesday, PM Modi announced the issuance of OCI cards to the Mauritian prime minister and his spouse Veena Ramgoolam. In his depart-

ture statement, Modi said, "Mauritius is a close maritime neighbour, a key partner in the Indian Ocean, and a gateway to the African Continent. We are connected by history, geography and culture.

Deep mutual trust, a shared belief in the values of democracy, and a celebration of our diversity are our strengths. The close and historical people-to-people connect is a source of shared pride."

Rajiv Yuva Vikasam For Unemployed Youth: Bhatti Announces New Scheme



Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka has announced a new initiative called 'Rajiv Yuva Vikasam' aimed at assisting unemployed youth in Telangana. He announced that this scheme will support self-employment opportunities for five lakh youth, allocating a budget of Rs. 6,000 crores for unemployed youth from SC, ST, BC, and minority groups in the State. During a media interaction at Veera Vanitha Chakali Iamma Women's University on Tuesday, the Deputy Chief Minister disclosed the government's plan to offer financial aid of Rs. 3 lakh to each beneficiary through the Rajiv Yuva Vikasam scheme via the SC, ST, BC, and Minority Corporations. He informed that a notification regarding the self-employment initiative for 5 lakh unemployed youth will be issued on March 15. "Applications for the self-employment scheme must be submitted online by April 5. The review of these applications will take place from April 6 to May 31, during which beneficiaries will be chosen. The selected beneficiaries will receive their sanction letters on June 2, coinciding with Telangana Formation Day," disclosed Bhatti Vikr. The Deputy Chief Minister noted that the authorities are developing suitable guidelines for selecting beneficiaries, and comprehensive information about the scheme will be provided in the forthcoming notification. Bhatti Vikramarka also shared that the State government has earmarked Rs. 540 crore for the establishment of Veera Vanitha Chakali Iamma University. A master plan has been created to construct outstanding facilities, aiming to make it the premier university in the nation. Plans are also in place to renovate the heritage buildings on campus. In addition to this, the State government is releasing Rs 15.5 crore for the renovation of heritage buildings on the university premises and Rs 100 crore for the construction of new buildings immediately," he added. Later, the Deputy Chief Minister personally inspected the heritage buildings and restoration plans along with the officials. (NSS)

Armenian Foreign Minister thanks EAM Jaishankar for warm welcome

GNS News Agency, March 11

New Delhi: Armenian Foreign Affairs Minister Ararat Mirzoyan expressed his gratitude to External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr S. Jaishankar on Tuesday for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to him and his delegation during their official visit to India. Taking to social media platform X, Mirzoyan posted, "Thank you Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar for the warm welcome & hospitality extended to me & my delegation today in Delhi." "We had a fruitful discussion on key topics of our bilateral agenda both reflecting on the significant progress we have made & outlining the ways to further deepen our partnership. Glad to continue the conversation also on regional & international developments," he added. The Armenian Foreign Minister is on an official visit to India from March 9 to 11 at the invitation of EAM Jaishankar. During this visit, the two leaders engaged in productive discussions, focusing on a wide range of issues aimed at further strengthening the growing India-Armenia bilateral relationship. According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the talks between the two leaders covered significant areas of cooperation, including political exchanges, trade, economic collaboration, education, culture, and enhancing people-to-people ties between the two countries. Both ministers emphasised the importance of exploring new avenues for cooperation in digital technologies and pharmaceuticals, highlighting the potential for growth in these sectors, the MEA stated.

The discussions included a strong focus on multilat-



eral cooperation, particularly within the United Nations and other global forums. Additionally, the MoU on Cooperation between the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service and the Diplomatic School of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and another MoU between CDSCO, India, and CDMTE, Armenia, on cooperation in the field of regulation of medical products was also signed, the MEA stated. Regional and global developments of shared interest were also part of the conversations, where both leaders exchanged views on critical issues impacting their respective nations and the international community. This official visit marks another important step in solidifying the India-Armenia partnership, with both sides expressing a mutual desire to explore new opportunities for cooperation across various sectors.

Fight On Public Problems In Budget Session: Former CM KCR



Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): BRS party chief K Chandrasekhara Reddy has called upon the party MLAs and members of the Legislative Council to put up an uncompromising fight on the issues of the people of Telangana. The BRSLP meeting was held under the chairmanship of KCR at Telangana Bhavan on Tuesday. Speaking on the occasion, he gave directions on various issues to be dealt with during the assembly session. All members of the BRS party legislative assembly and council have been asked to attend the House on time by KCR. He said the State government's corruption and anti-people activities should be raised in the House and added that government's false allegations against the BRS should be countered. He sug-

gested that their party members should fight in the assembly and council on various issues in the State like dry crops, unmet electricity, unmet irrigation water, burning motors and other farmers' issues and shortage of drinking water. He said their voice should be raised in support of the BC reservation and the SC reservation Bill. He said the party leaders should talk about the manner in which gurukul schools in the State are becoming defunct. He said the State government should be made to stand in the assembly council on retirement benefits of government employees, pendency of DAs and implementation of PRC while noting they have to fight to fulfil the promises made to women. KCR said the fraudulent attitude of the government in implementing the six guarantees should be discussed in the House and added that it should give Overseas scholarships of students. KCR said the deteriorating standards in the medical field and other public issues should be exposed and added that there should be a question on the suspension of Dalit Bandhu scheme.

The BRSLP meeting was held for nearly three hours under the chairmanship of BRS chief KCR. Several issues were discussed during the meeting. The meeting decided to fight on behalf of the people. KCR said deputy leaders would be appointed to coordinate with the members from time to time to fight the people's issues in the House. Party working president KT Rama Rao, legislators and council members participated in the meeting. (NSS)

Komatireddy Urges Nitin Gadkari For Sanction Of Rrr, Other National Highways

New Delhi, March 11 (NSS): Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy called on Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari at his official residence in New Delhi on Tuesday and requested him on the sanction of various pending highways and Regional Ring Road (RRR) in Telangana State. Komatireddy Venkat Reddy asked for the approval of the Union Cabinet for the Regional Ring Road. Responding to the request of Komatireddy, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has promised to complete the pre-work related to the Regional Ring Road (RRR) and start the work in two months. Later, he met Union Minister for Aviation Rammohan Naidu and thanked him for approval of Mamunur Airport. Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has brought the issue of land acquisition and said that the State government has sanctioned Rs. Rs 205 crore



for land acquisition. The Union Minister has assured that he will ensure completion of Mamunur Airport as soon as possible.

Pay Remunerative Price To Turmeric Farmers: BRS MLC Kavitha

Nizamabad, March 11 (NSS): BRS party MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha has made crucial comments on the turmeric farmers' agitation. She questioned whether the State government was not able to see the agitations of the Nizamabad turmeric farmers? "What is the Revanth government doing when the turmeric farmers are struggling to get remunerative prices," she asked. Speaking to media persons at Telangana Bhavan on Tuesday, Kavitha questioned as to why the Central and State governments were not coming forward to help the farmers? She recalled that during the assembly elections, AICC leader Rahul Gandhi and Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had promised to provide a price of Rs 15,000 per quintal for the turmeric crop. Claiming that the State government has not taken steps to provide the remunerative prices, Kavitha criticized that this was a betrayal of the turmeric farmers. She demanded that the State government immediately pay a support price of Rs 15,000 to the farmers and buy the turmeric crop. Targeting BJP MP Dharmapuri Aravind, she said the MP, who claims to have brought the turmeric board, was not even visiting the farmers. "Farmers are not getting benefits due to lack of legitimacy for the turmeric board. At the inauguration of the turmeric board, Union Minister Bandi Sanjay had said prices of the turmeric crop would be increased and more benefits would be provided to the farmers. But the Central government does not seem to be making efforts in this direction," she alleged. Kavitha demanded that the Central government also come forward and help the turmeric farmers. (NSS)

Dy Cm Bhatti, Shabbir Ali Review Arrangements For Cm's Iftar

Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka and Telangana Government Advisor Mohammed Ali Shabbir reviewed arrangements for Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's Iftar during a high-level meeting held at Praja Bhavan on Tuesday. The review meeting was also attended by TMREIS president Fahim Qureshi, Special Secretary for Minorities Welfare Tafseer Iqbal and Minorities Welfare Department Director Yasmeen Basha. During the meeting, plans were finalised for the 'Dawat-e-Iftar' event to be hosted by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy at LB Stadium on March 21 or 22. The High-Power Committee also decided to immediately release Rs 21 crore towards three months' pending salaries for Imams and Mujezzins across the State. Shabbir Ali stated the government is committed to ensuring timely payments and welfare measures for the minority community, especially during the holy month of Ramadan. The meeting further approved grand Iftar arrangements in 815 mosques across Telangana, including Hyderabad.

KTR Should Speak Facts Rather Than Making Baseless Allegations: Sridhar Babu

GNS News Agency, March 11

Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu said that BRS working president KT Rama Rao should speak based on facts rather than making baseless accusations against the State governor. Speaking to the media at Uppal Ward Office here on Tuesday, Sridhar Babu stated that having served as a minister for ten years, KT Rama Rao should uphold dignity in public discourse. "If not, it is he who will lose credibility. The state's financial downfall is a direct consequence of your ruling," he said. "The allegations against the State government regarding TDR (Transfer of Development Rights) are completely unfounded. It was during their tenure that irregularities occurred—have they conveniently forgotten," Sridhar Babu said. The Minister further stated that the State government is balancing development and welfare while actively working to restore the state's economy, which was pushed into crisis. "We are open to collaborating with anyone who genuinely contributes to the state's progress. Our approach is transparent and unbiased," he said. The Minister said the State government is fully prepared for a constructive Assembly session and urged that the opposition leaders should participate and offer their insights for the State's development.

Telangana Film Development Corporation Invites Entries For Gaddar Cine Awards

Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): The State government on Tuesday issued orders finalising the procedures for the Gaddar Telangana Film Awards. In keeping with his commitment, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has directed the issuance of a Government Order for the awards. The government has announced that special awards will be named after Paidi Jayaraj and Kantha Rao, recognising their significant contributions to the Telangana film industry. In addition to this, the award will be maintained for the popular film associated with esteemed actor M. Prabhakar Reddy.

Due to the previous Telangana government's failure to present film awards from 2014 to 2023, it has been decided to honour one best film for each of those years as well. In a notable change, the government will this year extend awards to Urdu language films within the feature film category. Applications for the Gaddar Film Awards can be obtained from the Telangana Film Industry Development Corporation office located in AC Guards starting March 13. The Gaddar awards will be presented across several categories such as feature films, national integration, children's films, and environment/heritage/history. Similarly, submissions are welcomed for debut feature films, animation, social impact, documentaries, and short films. Awards will also be given for categories that include books and analytical essays on Telugu cinema. In addition, personal awards for artists and technicians will be awarded. (NSS)

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Onus on champions

Living up to all the hype, Team India emerged worthy winners of the Champions Trophy. The squad, ably led by Rohit Sharma, just had too much firepower at its disposal. No wonder the resilient Kiwis, known for punching well above their weight, finished second best. Starting the tournament as firm favourites, the Indian team had a remarkable unbeaten run. However, the superb achievement was soured by allegations that India had been given preferential treatment, thanks to its financial muscle and clout in the International Cricket Council. The team stayed put in Dubai throughout the event, even as some of the others shuttled between Pakistan and the UAE. The bizarre rescheduling was necessitated by India's refusal to play in the neighbouring country, citing security concerns.

For hosts Pakistan, the tournament was a disaster in more ways than one. The home team got knocked out at the group stage itself, while India's relentless march denied the Pakistan Cricket Board the honour of hosting the final. The contrast between the fortunes of the two sides couldn't have been starker.

India's emphatic victory would have been all the more gratifying had it happened on Pakistani soil. Pakistan had crossed the border to take part in the ODI World Cup in 2023, but India chose not to reciprocate the gesture. A golden opportunity to initiate a thaw in bilateral ties was thus lost. But it's never too late to make amends and mend fences. Prime Minister Modi needs to take a leaf out of his mentor Atal Bihari Vajpayee's book. The latter didn't let the Kargil War cast a long shadow on cricket relations. An Indian team toured Pakistan in March-April 2004 and went on to win both the Test and ODI series. Efforts to revive a great rivalry through reciprocal tours can help in easing border tensions. India, which calls the shots in the cricket world today, must take the lead on this front.

Ai-Powered Fraud Detection Must: Sajjanar

Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): The Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI) organised a Conference on "Navigating Corporate Failure and Digital Fraud: Pathways to Success" at FTCCI Surana Auditorium, Federation House, here on Monday evening. The program was organised to explore how good governance practices can help companies prevent fraud and corruption. It also covered the consequences of failing to do so. Giving his opening remarks, Dr Suresh Kumar Singhal, President of FTCCI, said the program was a platform for dialogues, learning and collaboration to prevent digital frauds. Naresh Chandra and Dr Tasneem Sharif, Chair and Co-chair of the Corporate Laws, IBC & ADR Committee set the tone for the meeting, introduced speakers. V C Sajjanar, IPS, Vice Chairman & Managing Director, Telangana State Road Transport Corporation was the chief guest. Addressing the audience, Sajjanar said he was a hardcore police officer, then tasked to manage TGRTC as MD. "I didn't know business. When I took over, the Corporation was not doing well and it was loss-making. The total turnover of the corporation in September 2021, when he took over, was Rs 3800 crore. We turned it around now in four years. Today, it is a billion-dollar company. The turnover next year is likely to reach Rs 10,000 crore. The historical transformation happened because of passion, commitment, determination and hard work of our 50,000 employees, he said. This was also possible due to the strong government support, without which we couldn't have navigated the scenario. You need to have strong internal controls, and transparency. We have been paying TGRTC employees without defaulting salaries and paid salaries on the first of the month due to a bit of financial engineering", he said. Speaking about digital frauds, Sajjanar said "we have reached a stage, we can do without technology. We depend heavily on it. The rise of AI and Big Data also increased the scope of digital fraud. Digital frauds have been rising at an alarming pace. The cyber criminals are exploiting the increasing reliance on online platforms to steal personal information, money, and disrupt businesses. Hence, digital frauds have to be boardroom priorities of all the corporate houses. Sajjanar, a former top cop, suggested that AI-powered fraud detection must be used to analyze data and identify suspicious activity. Use Blockchain technology to secure financial transactions, which ensures tamper-proof and resistant to alteration. Training the staff on cyber security is important to prevent digital frauds, and focus on educating them about basic security practices. Digital fraud is no longer a business risk, it is a societal concern. Sajjanar said A. J. Jawad, Registrar of International Arbitration & Mediation Centre (IAMC), guest of honour, senior mediator and trainers said business and marriage have a similarity. In both cases, we don't anticipate trouble. The courts in India have five crore pending cases, to dispose of them we need 324 years, provided there are no more new cases added. Further, when the dispute gets locked, 1.5% to 2% of GDP is lost due to the delayed outcomes in the country. The only way out for this is mediation and arbitration. Don't wait for judicial reforms. Mediate the deal before you seal the deal. Then, if there is any dispute that arises, mediation can be FTCCI and IAMC signed a letter of support between the two organisations to spread knowledge and create awareness about the same.

Aruna Ravikumar, journalist and Author, talked on Red Flag in detecting corporate frauds, be aware, be prepared. She spoke about MLM (Multi-Level Marketing) and Ponzi scheme we believe the popular saying that an idea can change a life. But an idea can also destroy your business, she said. Answering a question, Aruna said fraud is not gender based. Women want to get into men's world. We see many women involved in digital fraud now. Though it is not gender specific, you need to be alert, use common sense, and don't fall prey to easy money. Chartered Accountant Sharath Kumar delved into Leadership Strategies for Navigating Fraud in Digital AI. AI-driven frauds are on the rise. Blind trust on it can be suicidal.

AI is a double-edged weapon. He gave a lot of case studies of recent frauds and how many corporate executives fell prey to cyber cheaters. Digital frauds happen when human intelligence fails. Human observation and common sense are very important. The father and son duo of Niloufer Cafe Babu Rao and his son Shashank Anumula, MD of ABR Cafe & Bakers Pvt Ltd spoke about The Silver Lining of Setbacks: Turning Failures into Strategic Advantage. They shared their success, challenges and future plans. The café, which had 30 people in 1978, has now risen to a 2000-employee café. We are the only café in the world to have 2000 employees with just five outlets. We have one lakh walk-ins into our cafes every day.

Gitam Signs Mou With Phytec Embedded Systems



Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, has officially entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with PHYTEC Embedded Systems, Bengaluru, marking a significant milestone in fostering academic collaboration, research, and technological innovation. The agreement was signed on March 11, 2025, by key representatives from both institutions, including Prof. D.S. Rao, Pro Vice-Chancellor of GITAM; Prof. V.R. Sastry, Director of the School of Technology; Arun Kumar Singh, Director-Sales of PHYTEC; and Murugan Ranganathan, Chief of Marketing of PHYTEC. The occasion also saw the inauguration of a two-day student workshop focusing on 'Embedded Systems and Industry 4.0'. In his address, Arun Kumar Singh emphasized the importance of bridging the gap between academia and industry, noting, the young minds coming forward will make the future of India bright. Through this partnership, we are joining hands to enhance the clarity of education and the practical application of tech-

nology. Our goal is to nurture budding engineers and support them in their entrepreneurial endeavors. Singh also highlighted PHYTEC's commitment to student development, stating, 'This is not just an MoU; we will nurture students like parents, guiding them towards innovation and excellence'.

Prof. V.R. Sastry expressed optimism about the collaboration, stating, 'We are committed to ensuring that this MoU is more than just a formal agreement. We aim to implement it at all levels—students, faculty, and research scholars. This partnership will transform the research culture not only within the EECE department, but also across all disciplines at GITAM'. He also noted that PHYTEC is prepared to offer B.Tech. projects and support M.Tech. students with dissertation work in Bengaluru. Prof. D.S. Rao shared his vision for the partnership, asserting that it would be a "live and working MoU" that enhances students' skills and bridges theoretical knowledge with practical application. He encouraged students to embrace lifelong learning and stay updated with industry advancements. Earlier, Prof. T. Madhavi, Head of the Department of EECE opened the event with a welcome address, outlining how the MoU will benefit students. "PHYTEC will establish a center of excellence at GITAM, providing training programs, internship opportunities, and resources for research in embedded systems," she explained. Prof. P. Trinatha Rao also spoke highlighting PHYTEC's investment in rugged boards for TEP labs, which will significantly benefit third-year and final-year students in their internships and projects. This partnership aims to enhance the educational experience at GITAM Deemed to be University and equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in the rapidly evolving technological landscape. (NSS)

Yflo To Host An Event Featuring Royal Families In One Program



Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): India has many royal families. They have transitioned from being monarchs of kingdoms to wealthy members of a post-colonial society. Despite the abolition of princely States and discontinuation of royal privileges, the royal families have not only preserved their heritage but also continue their influence on us. The Royal families too have adopted along with the changing times.

In a rare and first of its kind attempt, YFLO (Young FICCI Ladies Organisation) has planned a unique session

'The Regal Empowerment', a confluence of Indian Royalities. This rare and unique program is scheduled on March 12 at The Leela Hyderabad. The esteemed speakers Maharaj Kumar Sahib Dr Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar- Royal Family of Udaipur, Rajasthan; H.H. Maharani Radhikaraje Gaekwad - Royal Family of Baroda, Gujarat Nawabzadi Aaliya Sultana Babi - "Dinosaur Princess," Royal Family of Balasinor, Gujarat; Rani Preeti Singh - Royal Family of Nabha, Punjab; Princess Meenal Kumari Singh Deo - Royal Family of Dhenkanal, Odisha will participate, deliberate. We are blessed to be surrounded today by women whose legacies speak of royal heritage, but whose actions are the true measure of leadership. It is not another YFLO event. This is different from our regular programs. The contributions of these distinguished royal people echo through time, showing us that true royalty is not defined by titles, but by the way we uplift others and make a difference in the world says Ridhi Jain, Chairperson of YFLO. Women like them have not only inherited royal legacies, but have transformed them into platforms for empowerment. These women were not just queens—they were warriors, educators, and visionaries—trailblazers who reshaped history, and whose voices continue to inspire new generations, Ridhi Jain added. (NSS)

Hindu Religious Groups Demand Action Against Jogulamba Temple Priest, Eo

Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): In collaboration with Hindu religious groups, a protest took place outside the Telangana Endowments department office at Boggula Kunta on Tuesday. The demonstrators called for a comprehensive investigation into corruption allegations involving Jogulamba Temple Chief Priest Anand Sharma and Executive Officer Purenadar. Sivananda Swami, a priest from Kothakota Ashram, was also present at the protest. In his speech to the crowd, he emphasised the need to protect the integrity of the Alampur Jogulamba Temple, recognised as one of the Shakti Peethas. The protesters insisted that Anand Sharma be suspended immediately due to the criminal

cases pending against him. They expressed concern that, despite the serious accusations against him over the past three months, officials from the Endowment department have failed to take any action and seem to be ignoring the situation. Sivananda Swami expressed that a comprehensive investigation by the government into the corruption claims would reveal the truth. Subsequently, the protesting people met Endowments Minister Konda Surekha at her residence to inform her about the situation. After a discussion lasting thirty minutes with the priests and Sivananda Swami, the Minister directed the Commissioner to promptly initiate an inquiry and provide a report on the matter. (NSS)

Women Should Use Shakti App For Their Safety: Ap Cm



Amaravati, March 11 (NSS): Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has warned that those who raped girls and women would no longer be able to escape the clutches of law. He wished that there should be an atmosphere free of communal hatred in the State. He made it clear that there can be no rowdies in the State and added that it was not possible to escape by rowdism. He reminded that land disputes as well as land grabbing were terrible and added that there were special laws on the land grabbing issue and added that they were being implemented by Gujarat State. CM Chandrababu Naidu said strict laws were being brought to punish those indulging in the land grabbing issue.

Speaking in the assembly on Tuesday, CM Chandrababu explained that he too was in a hurry for elections and did not understand the murder of YS Vivekananda Reddy. "Despite the presence of Home Minister, top officials and DGP, YS Viveka's murder was not solved. "We all thought of a heart attack at first," he said and added that there was no politics of murder in his political career. He said they had launched Shakti App for the safety of the girls and women of the State and added that the women would have to shake it thrice to get it activated. "The police will come to you in six to nine minutes and rescue you. The

police should be vigilant. Otherwise, action will be taken against them," he warned. Stating that in the past, the app was called Disha App, he said it had become a formidable app now while noting that the Shakti app is a 100 per cent functional app. (NSS)

Guv to Inaugurate Summit On Role Of Executive & Judiciary In Shaping Gst

Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): The Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FTCCI) to organise a day-long Summit on The Role of Executive and Judiciary in shaping GST during challenging times on March 15 at the Hotel Taj Deccan, Hyderabad. Governor Jishnu Dev Varma will be the chief guest and inaugurate the same. Justice SVN Bhatti, Judge, Supreme Court of India and V. Sridharan, Co-founder, Lakshmikumar & Sridharan Senior Advocate, Bombay High Court will be guest of honour and keynote speaker. The Summit aims to bring together eminent personalities from the executive, judiciary, and industry to deliberate on the critical role played by these pillars of governance in shaping the Goods and Services Tax (GST) framework, especially during times of economic and regulatory challenges.

The GST Summit will serve as a thought-provoking platform to discuss the transformative role of the executive and judiciary in shaping and streamlining the Goods and Services Tax (GST) framework. This comprehensive program will bring together policymakers, legal experts, tax professionals, and industry leaders to delve into critical issues, emerging challenges, and progressive solutions within the GST ecosystem. The summit will have technical sessions and a panel discussion. (NSS)

Lecture On "Artificial Intelligence In Healthcare" Today

Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): The upcoming 12th Dr Manohar V.N. Shirodkar Memorial Lecture, presented by the Telangana Academy of Sciences, promises significant insight into the evolving landscape of healthcare. This year, Dr D. Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman of AIG Hospitals and a newly conferred Padma Vibhushan recipient, will address the crucial topic of "Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare." Scheduled for 4 pm on March 12, 2025, at the auditorium CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology, the lecture honours the legacy of Dr Shirodkar through an endowment established by Indira Devi Dhanrajgir. Dr Reddy's extensive experience in gastroenterology, his pioneering work at AIG, and his numerous accolades, including multiple ASGE Crystal Awards, position him as a leading voice on this subject. As Dr Ch. Mohan Rao, President of TAS, emphasizes, the lecture is intended to disseminate knowledge, stimulate research, and benefit students, researchers, and the public alike, furthering the Academy's mission to promote science and public well-being, said Dr Ch Mohan Rao, President, TAS, former Director, CSIR-CCMB Head, Dept. of Biological Sciences, BITS-Hyderabad. (NSS)

Counter Misinformation Of Opposition Parties: Tpsc Chief



Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): Tpsc president Mahesh Kumar Goud has urged the newly nominated MLCs to challenge the misinformation disseminated by Opposition parties and to actively advocate for the government's development and welfare initiatives to the people. The newly nominated MLCs from the Congress party—Addanki Dayakar, Shankar Naik, and Vijayashanthi—along with CPI MLC Nellikanti Satyam, visited Tpsc president at the MLAs' camp office on Tuesday. During the meeting, Mahesh Kumar Goud advised the MLC candidates to continuously engage with the people regarding government programs and ensure they are well-informed about them. He reassured the CPI MLC candidate of the party's supportive partnership and highlighted the importance of maintaining this collaboration. The Tpsc chief also honoured the newly appointed MLCs with a ceremonial welcome and later shared a meal with them. (NSS)

Lecture On "Artificial Intelligence In Healthcare" Today



Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): The upcoming 12th Dr Manohar V.N. Shirodkar Memorial Lecture, presented by the Telangana Academy of Sciences, promises significant insight into the evolving landscape of healthcare. This year, Dr D. Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman of AIG Hospitals and a newly conferred Padma Vibhushan recipient, will address the crucial topic of "Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare." Scheduled for 4 pm on March 12, 2025, at the auditorium CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology, the lecture honours the legacy of Dr Shirodkar through an endowment established by Indira Devi Dhanrajgir. Dr Reddy's extensive experience in gastroenterology, his pioneering work at AIG, and his numerous accolades, including multiple ASGE Crystal Awards, position him as a leading voice on this subject. As Dr Ch. Mohan Rao, President of TAS, emphasizes, the lecture is intended to disseminate knowledge, stimulate research, and benefit students, researchers, and the public alike, furthering the Academy's mission to promote science and public well-being, said Dr Ch Mohan Rao, President, TAS, former Director, CSIR-CCMB Head, Dept. of Biological Sciences, BITS-Hyderabad. (NSS)

Congress Leaders Demand Speaker To Withhold Kcr's Salary

Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): Congress leaders have lodged a complaint against former chief minister and BRS party chief K Chandrasekhar Rao. They submitted a memorandum complaining to Speaker Gaddam Prasad and Legislature secretary that KCR was not coming to the assembly as the leader of the Opposition. The Congress leaders demanded that the former CM's salary be withheld. They also demanded that the salary given to KCR for so many days should also be recovered from him. The leaders said KCR had not been fulfilling the post given to him properly for the last 14 months and had completely failed to fulfil the responsibility given to him. The Congress leaders had been demanding that the salary should be stopped as KCR is using people's money to get his salary. "If KCR comes to the assembly, there is a possibility of him being insulted and he is not coming to the assembly because there is a possibility of making fun of him," they said. They also said as leader of the Opposition and as a person, who had been chief minister for 10 years; he would be given the respect he deserved. The Congress leaders are saying that they will take the suggestions given by KCR. (NSS)

53% surveyed experience sleep-related disorders without a consistent bedtime routine: YouGov and Amazon Alexa Study

Hyderabad: Ahead of World Sleep Day, YouGov and Amazon Alexa have released insights from a survey to understand sleep routine habits of Indian households across 10 cities. The survey indicates that 53% of respondents experience sleep-related issues when not following a consistent bedtime routine. The study further infers that adults actively follow bedtime routines—with 54% of respondents having seen a noticeable improvement in sleep when following a regular sleep routine.

52% of surveyed respondents follow a consistent bedtime and pre-sleep habits

86% of the surveyed start their bedtime routine 8 PM onwards every day, within this 53% choose to start their routine after 10:30pm. Top activities that are a part of bedtime routines amongst all respondents include watching video content (63%), connecting with family and friends (59%), listening to podcasts, music, or audiobooks (58%), and scrolling through social media apps (57%). Households with only couples rank highest in following these activities as part of their bedtime routine, amongst all other household types.

One in two respondents use voice assistants to set-up their sleep routines—with more people between 35-45 years using voice assistants compared to those aged between 25-34 years.

"Sleep routines are gaining popularity, and what's noteworthy is that smart technologies, especially voice assistants like Alexa, are increasingly becoming a valuable aid in helping people follow their bedtime routines. Personalised voice AI experiences are emerging as practical alternatives to handheld screen devices before bedtime. Whether it's playing meditation sessions or relaxing sounds, listening to audiobooks or music, setting reminders and alarms, or controlling smart devices to adjust the room's sleep environment, people are finding innovative ways to use Alexa as part of their bedtime routines. Alexa users can easily set up their bedtime routine through the Alexa app, customizing it to their specific needs and preferences," says Teena Sidana, Country Manager, Alexa India.

Households with couples and kids use voice assistants to set up sleep routines more than household types

Households with couples and kids rank higher in taking help of voice assistants to follow routines, followed by other household types*. Across all respondents, 45% take help of voice assistants in smart devices for listening to music, podcasts, meditation playlists, ambient sounds, movies, and audiobooks. About 23% use voice assistants to set up reminders and alarms, and 22% use it for controlling smart home appliances such as smart lights in the bedroom or baby room, automated curtains, smart ACs, etc.

Listening to meditation playlists and journaling before bedtime see increased interest among adults.

66,961 sanitation workers validated under NAMASTE scheme: Govt tells Parliament

GNS News Agency, March 11

New Delhi: The Centre on Tuesday told Parliament that a total of 66,961 sewer and septic tank workers (SSWs) have been validated under the National Action Plan for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) scheme as of March 2025, marking a 22.7% increase compared to December 2024, when the figure stood at 54,574. The scheme was launched in 2023-24 with an aim to address the persistent issues in sanitation work by promoting mechanised solutions and providing rehabilitation support to workers. According to the government, 425 deaths were reported between 2019 and 2024 due to hazardous sanitation work, particularly related to cleaning sewers and septic tanks. To be sure, under the scheme—the workers are "profiled" and then "validated" according to the guidelines. The Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry had included "Waste pickers engaged in Solid Waste Management" under NAMASTE in 2024. The Centre reported that 45,292 personal protective equipment (PPE) kits were distributed by March 2025, a rise of 170% from the 16,791 PPE kits distributed by December 2024. Additionally, 43 safety devices kits for emergency response sanitation units (ERSUs) were provided by December 2024, with this number remaining unchanged by March 2025. The government released Rs. 17.23 crore in capital subsidies to 599 sanitation workers by March 2025, marking an increase of 23% in capital subsidies from ₹13.96 crore, which benefited 503 workers by December 2024. The number of workshops focused on preventing hazardous sewer and septic tank cleaning also saw growth, with 1,837 workshops conducted by March 2025, up from 837 workshops by December 2024. Despite the legal ban on manual scavenging under the "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013," the practice persists in some areas. No reports of manual scavenging have been received from Indian Railways or other districts in the past five years. However, two surveys conducted in 2013 and 2018 identified 58,098 manual scavengers across the country. The government has been working to assist these individuals by offering one-time cash assistance, skill development training, and capital subsidies for self-employment.

LG Electronics India and Saksham Bharti Foundation Organize Four-Day Blood Donation Camp in Gurugram

Hyderabad: LG Electronics India, in collaboration with Saksham Bharti Foundation, successfully organized a four-day blood donation camp from March 7th to March 10th in Gurugram. This impactful initiative witnessed overwhelming participation, with nearly 2,000 donors stepping forward to contribute to the cause. The collected blood will be used to support cancer patients and children suffering from thalassemia, who require regular transfusions for survival.

A spokesperson from Saksham Bharti Foundation expressed gratitude, stating, "Every drop counts, and together, we can save lives. This blood donation drive is a testament to the power of collective goodwill and social responsibility."

Blenders Pride Fashion Tour Transforms Vizag with a Futuristic Fusion of Fashion, Technology & Entertainment



Hyderabad: Blenders Pride Fashion Tour took over Vizag with an electrifying showcase that seamlessly merged fashion, technology, and entertainment. The evening brought a futuristic vision of fashion to life, where cutting-edge designs met high-energy performances, shaping a next-gen en-vogue universe. Tamannaah Bhatia stole the spotlight, commanding the runway as the showstopper and embodying the bold, avant-garde vision of Akshat Bansal's Bloni. As the stunning creations unfolded, Ritviz's pulsating live performance amplified the energy, transforming the event into a mesmerizing fusion of style, sound, and innovation, offering a thrilling glimpse into the future.

In partnership with the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI), Blenders Pride Fashion Tour continues to redefine India's fashion landscape with iconic showcases that celebrate the country's rapidly evolving style narrative. The synergy between FDCI's expertise and the tour's pioneering spirit culminated in a spectacular presentation in Vizag, that not only set a new benchmark for immersive fashion experiences but also reinforced the Fashion Tour's position

Canon celebrates the transformative journey of Parivali Village under its 'Adopt a Village' Initiative

Reinforcing its dedication to community development, Canon India marked four years of its adoption of Parivali Village, Maharashtra, under its 'Adopt a Village' initiative. The celebrations were kicked off by Mr. Toshiaki Nomura, President & CEO, Canon India, who inaugurated the newly constructed rainwater harvesting facility & recharge pit to address the foreseable issue of declining water levels in the regions of Maharashtra. Furthermore, these sustainable, cost-effective and eco-friendly solutions will meet the demands of water required by the school for toilet facilities, cleaning the school premises and ensuring watering of the plantation.

With a larger aim of providing quality education, as a part of its 4Es policy, Canon India has facilitated enrolment of total 594 students through its focused initiatives at the Resource Centre and Computer Classes. Notably, the school was twice recognised by Maharashtra Chief Minister's 'My



School, Beautiful School' campaign for overall development. Further strengthening the local infrastructure, Canon has made significant contributions to the establishment of drinking water stations, construction of toilets for boys and girls, and setting-up of a functional library. Additionally, 354 students have benefited from skill-based training programs aimed at improving employability and self-reliance. Through the establishment of the 'Vision Centre,' the facility has provided over 4174 community people with timely eye camps and check-ups. Subsequently, fostering efforts towards a healthy environment, a total of 1685 trees have been planted,

empowered a community but also deepened our commitment to sustainable progress. The positive changes witnessed in Parivali have deeply inspired me, and strengthened our resolve to shape a better future, fostering growth and ensuring brighter opportunities for them." Along with 'Adopt a Village' project, the organization also launched the Skill Development and Livelihood programme last year in alignment with the Skill India mission. The project demonstrates Canon India's commitment to contributing to Indian society by uplifting youth aged 18-25 years, living in urban slums by preparing them for seamless placement in customer-centric, grey-collar jobs, ensuring a pathway to stable and meaningful employment. As a significant impact, the program has enrolled 541 youth so far with 234 youth placed in jobs doubling their family income.

Designer Akshat Bansal, Founder of Bloni, sharing his thoughts on the show, said, "Fashion is no longer just about clothing; it's an evolving cross-cultural dialogue between innovation, technology, and self-expression. With this collection for Blenders Pride Fashion Tour, I wanted to push the syntax of design itself, blending unconventional and organic earth materials, visuals that are driven by both humans and machines, and handcrafted engineering to create something truly transformative. It's a vision of the future for the present—bold, dynamic, and ever-evolving."

and further with the support of the village residents has conducted regular cleanliness drives. Speaking on the four year journey with Parivali Village, Mr. Toshiaki Nomura, President & CEO, Canon India said, "At Canon, holistic development of the villages is at the core of our flagship project 'Adopt a Village', which is paramount for a self-sustained nation. The remarkable progress of Parivali Village over the past four years stands as a powerful reminder of the difference we can make through our collective efforts. By providing the village with essential resources and imparting critical skills, we have not only

empowered a community but also deepened our commitment to sustainable progress. The positive changes witnessed in Parivali have deeply inspired me, and strengthened our resolve to shape a better future, fostering growth and ensuring brighter opportunities for them." Along with 'Adopt a Village' project, the organization also launched the Skill Development and Livelihood programme last year in alignment with the Skill India mission. The project demonstrates Canon India's commitment to contributing to Indian society by uplifting youth aged 18-25 years, living in urban slums by preparing them for seamless placement in customer-centric, grey-collar jobs, ensuring a pathway to stable and meaningful employment. As a significant impact, the program has enrolled 541 youth so far with 234 youth placed in jobs doubling their family income.

PhonePe Crosses 600 Million Registered Users



Hyderabad: PhonePe, today announced that it has crossed 600 million (60 crore) registered users on its platform. This marks a significant milestone for the company, which will celebrate its 10-year anniversary this year, and has grown to serve hundreds of millions of customers with its financial services and technology solutions.

PhonePe's consistent enhancement of its product and service offerings, combined with growing customer preference for the platform, has contributed to reaching this milestone. The company's development of a secure payment system focused on reliability, speed, and personalized transaction experiences has gained traction among millions of users. This growth can also be attributed to PhonePe's widespread adoption across its merchant network throughout the country, creating a robust digital payment ecosystem that serves both consumers and businesses alike.

Speaking about the milestone, Sameer Nigam, Co-founder & CEO, PhonePe said, "Reaching 60 crore registered users is a proud moment for all of us at PhonePe. Every milestone we achieve brings us a step closer to realising our vision of building a truly inclusive financial ecosystem. We will continue building homegrown solutions to meet the evolving needs of our users and help drive India's digital transformation."

Sparkling Cyberabad' lifts 24,000 Liters of Dry Litter in Just One Month



Hyderabad: In a significant step towards reducing urban waste in Cyberabad, Inorbit Malls' 'Sparkling Cyberabad' initiative, launched in partnership with Nirmaan NGO and supported by GHMC Serilingampally, has successfully lifted 24,000 liters of dry litter including plastic waste, paper waste, and other in just one month i.e., February 2025. This milestone comes within a short span of the initiative's launch in January. The initiative introduced six automated electric litter pickup machines as part of Inorbit Malls' CSR environmental program. These machines, currently operating within a 4 km radius of Inorbit Mall, provide an eco-friendly and automated solution for efficient litter collection. The management of Inorbit Malls, on Tuesday said that between February 1, 2025, and February 28, 2025, they were overwhelmed to witness the impact of automated electric litter pickup machines. These machines have been strategically deployed in high-traffic locations to enhance sanitation and cleanliness in the city.

The Adilabad District Co-Operative Central Bank Ltd., Adilabad

Cinema Road, Adilabad — 504 001 (T.G.)

Ph: 08732-232339, 2322, Fax: 08732-232941, Email Id : ceo_adb@adbdccb.org, adccadilabad@yahoo.com

FINAL DECLARATION FOR OPENING OF LOCKERS (BREAK OPEN) AND PAYMENT OF RENT ARREARS

This is to inform that three Notices have been issued to the address available for non-payment of rent arrears and non-maintenance of Lockers for the following members in Central Office of The Adilabad District Cooperative Central Bank Ltd., who have been provided with lockers for several years. But there was no response or answer from them. Therefore, as a last resort, we request that the entire dues be paid after this press release on or before 29.03.2025. Or else, Lockers in your name will be break opened as per Bank rules. And we hereby inform you that we will hold you responsible to bear all expenses and take other legal action. No objections will be entertained after this date.

Sl. No.	Branch Name	Customer Name	Father Name / Spouse Name	Address	Locker No	Rent Due Amount	Rent Due Date	Locker inoperative since
1	Central Office	G. Srihari	Ganganna	Cinema Road Adilabad	11/1	10000	21.06.2015	24.10.2013
		Chandrashekar	Srihari					
2	Central Office	Poddukuri Kishu Reddy	Ramulu	Bhoraj Adilabad	4/1	16950	08.05.1993	08.05.1993
		Poddukuri Narayana	Kistudu					
3	Central Office	Bhagavathi Vanaja	Waman Waman	Gandhi Chowk Adilabad	6/1	6000	12.09.2019	30.04.2016
4	Central Office	Jawaji Triamabak	Udhav Rao	Vasavi Nilayam Adilabad	31/1	14200	17.09.2008	17.09.2008
5	Central Office	K Vibha K. Rajesh	Shivaram Shivaram	Mahesh Medical Hall Adilabad	32/1	12000	26.09.2011	26.09.2011
6	Central Office	Pundru Rukma Reddy	—	Deepapadga Jainad Adilabad	7/2	21100	21.04.2005	21.04.2005
		Jaishree	Rukma Reddy					
7	Central Office	Madhav Uplanchiwar	Venkanna	Venkanna Cloth Merchant Adilabad	11/2	9000	30.01.2017	30.01.2017
8	Central Office	Bhaskerwar Shankar	Janardhan	H.No.4-7-50, Brahmanwada Adilabad	24/2	12000	24.01.2014	24.01.2014
9	Central Office	Vasudev Agarwal	Ravinder	Rani Sathiji Mandir, Road Adilabad	27/2	20100	02.11.2006	02.11.2006
		Susheela Bai	Vasudev					
10	Central Office	Siddam Shankar	Sadashiv	Laxmi Fertilizers, Gunj Road Adilabad	38/2	10000	30.01.2016	30.01.2016
11	Central Office	Saleema Sulthana	Usman Khan	Thosham Adilabad	6/3	21500	05.05.2002	05.05.2002
		Usman Khan						
12	Central Office	G. Srinivas Kumar	Mohan Rao	Ranisathiji Mandir Road Adilabad	7/3	22550	09.07.1999	09.07.1999
13	Central Office	M. Narayana M. Anasuya	Rajaram Narayana	H.No. 77/44, Vidhya Nagar Adilabad	39/3	4000	10.12.2022	21.01.2020

For further details contact Head Office, Adilabad Manager No. 8498053857.

Sd/-
Chief Executive Officer

DU prepares for first 4-yr batch under NEP 2020, student-teacher ratio, infra, timetable among key concerns



GNS News Agency, March 11

It's a race against time for Delhi University as it prepares for the fourth year under the Undergraduate Curriculum Framework 2022 (UGCF-2022). This is the first time that students will undertake a four-year undergraduate course under the National Education Policy 2020. It, however, is not the first time that DU will implement a four-year undergraduate programme. The Four Year Undergraduate Programme or FYUP was first introduced in 2013 and scrapped a year later following widespread protests by teachers and students. Meanwhile, students and teachers at the university can now look forward to longer days, with the varsity and colleges planning to offer classes till late in the evening, officials said. This is being done to make sure that the extra batch of students can be managed with the existing infrastructure. While the new framework, aligned with NEP 2020, allows greater flexibility and research-oriented learning, the lack of clarity regarding faculty, infrastructure, and student interest continues to divide the stakeholders.

Under the NEP 2020, the fourth year offers students three specialisation tracks — Dissertation Writing, Academic Projects, and Entrepreneurship. The first is designed for those considering academic research, the second focuses on applied research, and the third aims to guide students through market research, business development, and financial planning. Under the new framework, a student can earn a certificate after completing one year of college, a diploma on completing two years, bachelors (honours) in one core subject or a bachelor (multidisciplinary) in different subjects. The fourth year will earn students bachelors (honours with research) or bachelors (honours in multidisciplinary courses). For students who want to pursue a dissertation in the fourth year (Honours with Research), Research Methodology as a General Elective (GE) course must be taken in either Semester VI or VII. This

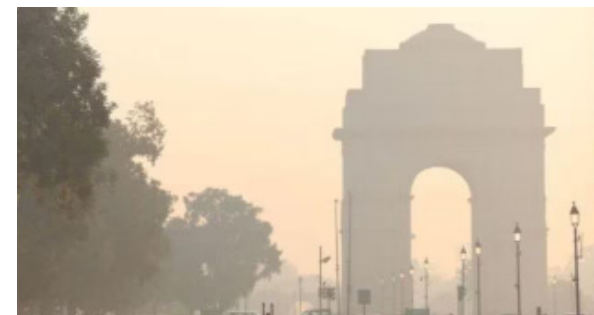
would provide a foundation, however, students choosing any of the other two specialisation tracks in the fourth year need not take this. There are also Discipline-Specific Elective (DSE) requirements, as per the UGCF framework. The university has also revised its definition of Generic Electives (GEs), expanding course selection flexibility. "From Semester 5, all students of BA (Programme) can opt for GEs from the open pool other than that of the core disciplines they are studying," a university notification states.

Special provisions have been introduced for students who did not study Hindi up to Class 8. The amendment specifies: "Students of BA (P)/ B Com (P) with two non-language core disciplines, and who have not studied Hindi up to class 8, shall be allowed to opt for GE from the open pool if he/she cannot be provided GE (L) of their mother tongue. However, the principal of the college shall have to seek permission for the same." A similar provision "may be made for students from South India or the Northeast who do not have the proficiency to study the GE (L) Hindi prescribed for those who have studied Hindi up to Class 8. Further, those who have not studied Hindi/Modern Indian Language up to Class 8 may also be exempted from studying the second language of GE(L)," the document outlining the framework states. To accommodate the increased academic load, the university plans to implement longer class hours as suggested by the University Grants Commission (UGC). A senior DU official told The Indian Express, "We are going to implement the optimum utilisation of infrastructure as suggested by the UGC from 8 am to 8 pm. The labs might be an issue as they function only till 4 pm, but their timings will also be extended. Every student will have a mixed timetable, holding classes in the evening too on several days of the week to make sure that all credits are covered in the timetable." Ajay Arora, Principal, Ramjas College, said, "There was a misconception among students that they need a CGPA of more than 7.5 to enter the fourth year but that's not the case. The promotion criteria remain the same from the third year to fourth year, as it was from first to second and second to third. We cannot ascertain the number of students who will opt for the fourth year but the university will offer this to any eligible student... Some universities are already running the fourth year of their courses." Talking about the challenges, he said, "The college infrastructure is designed for a three-year program. Extending to a fourth year would require significant adjustments, including increased utilisation of resources like classrooms. This will change the college's working culture..." Arora added that this would result in reduced flexibility in student schedules, as timetables would need to be adjusted to accommodate increased academic

requirements. Meanwhile, Anju Srivastava, Principal, Hindu College, said, "There's a degree of uncertainty surrounding the fourth year, and we've done a round of queries, but there's still room for clarification. The response so far from the students has been lukewarm, partly due to the timings." "Students in social sciences seem to be showing more interest... with at least sixty or more per cent of students wanting to continue to fourth year because of the research methodology aspect being offered... But the science students are preparing for their Master's programmes and are unsure whether to continue or prepare for IIT." Meanwhile, Delhi University Teachers' Association president AK Bhagi said research project requirements at the undergraduate level would be unmet because of a lack of UGC special grants. "Currently, DU doesn't seem to be prepared for the fourth year," he said, adding, "There are no teachers for the fourth year who are sanctioned to date. DU colleges have not been given teaching positions in lieu of EWS expansion of student strength in 2019." According to Bhagi, there should be a comprehensive review of the batch to make the fourth year relevant. Karuna Singh, a third-year BA Political Science (Hons.) student at DU, spoke about divided student opinions, stemming from a lack of clarity on syllabus, as well as guidelines. "The complete syllabus is still not available, and we've only been told that a research subject in the fifth semester is necessary for a foundation," said Singh. "Some of my batchmates plan to take competitive exams after the third year, while others will prepare for CUET PG. I'm part of a third category of students — fascinated by the idea of doing research with graduation... but we're apprehensive about whether the syllabus will match the MA first-year curriculum."

Talking of the prevailing uncertainty, she said, "We are the first NEP batch until we experience this ourselves... we can't say anything. This one year could be problematic or innovative — only time will tell." For students considering postgraduate studies abroad, uncertainty is even greater. Some universities, particularly in the US and UK, have started accepting students with a three-year UG degree. "I was planning to apply for a Master's abroad, but now I don't know if staying for the fourth year will help or delay my chances," said a student. To accommodate the fourth-year students, the Hindu College Principal said, special arrangements are being made. "By April-end, we'll start preparing the timetable that will require speculative planning and calculated risks. We need to make arrangements for varying student numbers, adopting a more open-minded approach. Considering the 13 to 14-week semester duration, we will face challenges with teacher-student ratios, requiring innovative solutions under NEP framework," she said.

Brace for warm days ahead in Delhi, rain likely on Holi



It's a race against time for Delhi University as it prepares for the fourth year under the Undergraduate Curriculum Framework 2022 (UGCF-2022). This is the first time that students will undertake a four-year undergraduate course under the National Education Policy 2020.

GNS News Agency, March 11

Delhi is expected to see light rain on Holi on Friday, preceded by a warm week, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Sunday. The maximum temperature on Sunday was recorded at 32.8 degrees Celsius, 4.4 degrees above what is normal for this time of the year. The minimum, at 13.5 degrees Celsius, was half a degree below normal. The warmest place in Delhi-NCR was Noida, with a maximum temperature of 33.1 degrees Celsius.

The temperature is expected to rise till Thursday — the maximum is expected to be around 32 degrees Celsius on all days except Tuesday, when it is expected to touch 33 degrees Celsius. The highest-ever maximum temperature in March was recorded at 40.6 degrees Celsius, on 31st in 1945. Strong winds, meanwhile, are expected on Tuesday and Wednesday. Light rain is expected on Friday, when the minimum is forecast to be 30 degrees Celsius and the minimum is likely to rise to 16 degrees Celsius.

The air quality index (AQI), meanwhile, dipped to poor, at PM 10, on Sunday. The primary pollutants were Ozone and PM 10. The overall AQI in the warmer months, however, is better than that in winter months, as low temperatures and calm winds aid the accumulation of particulate matter. The IMD forecast for Tuesday and Wednesday — strong surface winds — is expected to bring improvement in the AQI, from poor to moderate. "The predominant surface wind (on Tuesday) will likely be from the northwest direction with a wind speed of less than 18 kmph during morning hours. The wind speed will gradually increase thereafter becoming 20-22 kmph from the northwest direction during the afternoon. It will decrease to less than 8 kmph, coming from northwest direction, during evening and night on Wednesday," the forecast from the Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi, Ministry of Earth Sciences, said.

Cellphones stolen from crowded places in Delhi, smuggled to Bangladesh: Police bust international syndicate, 1 arrested

GNS News Agency, March 11

CELLPHONES stolen from Metro stations, public buses, and crowded marketplaces across Delhi, swiftly transported out of the city to leave no trail and then smuggled to Bangladesh — this is how an international syndicate, which has now been busted, operated, the police said on Sunday. As the Delhi Police's Crime Branch busted the syndicate, a West Bengal-based "smuggler" was arrested, and 48 high-end mobile phones worth approximately Rs 20 lakh were recovered, officials said.

Identified as Abdush, 24, the alleged smuggler was intercepted near Salimgarh Bypass in North Delhi's Kotwali while attempting to flee with a consignment of stolen phones. Officers said that Abdush is allegedly a key operative in the bigger network responsible for large-scale theft, smuggling, and illegal sale of mobile phones across international borders. The Crime Branch was recently tipped off about several mobile theft syndicates operating in Delhi that target commuters at Metro stations, public buses, and crowded marketplaces across the city and smuggle the phones across the border to Nepal or Bangladesh, said police.

"The syndicate, which has been busted, ensured that stolen mobile phones are swiftly moved out of Delhi-NCR, making it difficult for law enforcement agencies to trace them. Once stolen, the mobile phones were never sold or used locally to avoid detection. Instead, they were immediately collected by smugglers, who purchased them at a nominal price of Rs 2,000-3,000 per device," said DCP (Crime Branch) Aditya

Gautam. "These smugglers then transported bulk consignments to West Bengal, where the phones underwent modification before being dispatched to Bangladesh.

These phones were then sold for Rs 8,000-10,000 each in the illegal markets across borders," he added. Investigators used a combination of human intelligence, surveillance footage, and digital tracking to trace the key players in the syndicate. After weeks of monitoring, police received intelligence that Abdush was attempting to transport a large consignment of stolen phones to West Bengal, said officials. Acting swiftly, a team laid a trap at Salimgarh Bypass. When Abdush allegedly sensed police presence and tried to escape, he was swiftly overpowered, according to police. Upon searching his backpack, officials recovered 48 stolen mobile phones. He was immediately taken into custody, and the mobile phones were seized as evidence. During interrogation, Abdush allegedly admitted to being involved in smuggling stolen mobile phones for the past 1.5 years.

"(Abdush) revealed that he was struggling with financial difficulties. In search of easy earnings, he got involved in illegal activities in 2023. Initially, he was engaged in the scrap trading of mobile phone parts and during this period, he came in contact with Sameer and Salim, the key players in the stolen mobile phone trade," said DCP Gautam. "Seeing an opportunity for quick profits, he started purchasing stolen mobile phones from them at significantly low prices. He then sold these devices in the local markets of West Bengal and smuggled them into Bangladesh. He further admitted to having smuggled more than 800 stolen phones from Delhi to West Bengal in the past one-and-a-half years," he added. Following Abdush's arrest, police are now focusing on identifying his associates, including the key players Sameer and Salim, and tracking down the larger network involved in this illegal trade, said officials.

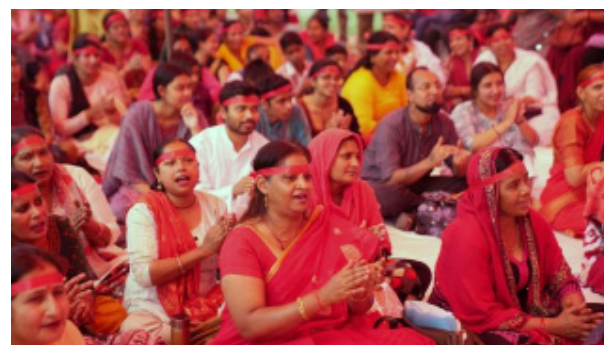
Sacked 3 yrs ago, Anganwadi workers in Delhi say: 'Will not give up now... were never at fault'

GNS News Agency, March 11

Most of them dressed in red, more than a hundred Anganwadi workers and helpers, terminated from service by the Women and Child Welfare Department three years ago over a protest, gathered at Ambedkar Bhavan in Jhandewalan on Sunday afternoon to participate in an event titled 'The Festival of Struggle'.

Video messages from around the world, including from England, Pakistan and New Zealand, expressing solidarity with the Delhi State Anganwadi Workers and Helpers Union (DSAWHU) played on a large screen as the women, some accompanied by young children, watched keenly. On March 13, 2022, 884 Anganwadi workers and helpers were terminated from their jobs following more than a month-long protest to press for better wages. This was after the Essential Services Maintenance Act was imposed, following a protest by the women in front of the Delhi Secretariat under the banner of 'Anganwadi Stree Adhikar Rally' on March 8. While around 750 of the women have been reinstated since then, the matter has reached the Delhi High Court, which will hear the case next on March 21.

One of the women, who is yet to be reinstated by the department, said, "The exploitation continues... While we have not backed down, we are afraid. A large group of workers has been reinstated, but a small section has been left behind. I was told that I was not reinstated, as I was outspoken. I don't even expect a wage increase... how could I, when they didn't even pay us on time?" Savita Yadav (53), also yet to be reinstated, is a single mother. She had worked as an Anganwadi worker since 2007 in Karawal Nagar. "They are not allowing Anganwadi workers to live. Everybody is threatened by the department. Those who have re-joined work are constantly under pressure. They did not pay me my salary for January 2023," she said, adding that while she used to be paid Rs 9,741 every month, helpers received an honorarium of Rs 4,739. "My husband has passed away... I worked as a tailor and as a cook in house-



holds to survive. My elder daughter was forced to start work because we could not make ends meet. With the union's help, we have fought for three years, and we will not give up now. I am confident that we will win this case. We were never at fault." Priyambada Sharma, the DSAWHU convenor, said a representation will soon be sent to the newly-formed BJP government in Delhi seeking reinstatement of the remaining workers and helpers.

"Today, we mark three years of the struggle... Many women are afraid... Their families are suffering. They have not even been guaranteed minimum wages, which should be their basic right... instead they are being overburdened and exploited." As part of Sunday's event, a documentary titled When They Painted The City Red — produced by the Progressive Artists League — was screened. The film chronicles the 2022 protest. A play, Kahani Ek Anganwadi Aurat Ki, inspired by famous playwright Sufdar Hashmi's work, was also presented by the Anganwadi workers' theatre group Aparajita. A book stall featuring literature on women's and children's issues was set up, along with a dedicated children's corner filled with toys and paintings. The festival concluded with a rally, as the workers took to the streets in protest. One of the attendees was Supreme Court advocate Colin Gonsalves.

'Delhi's vastness makes it a world unto itself... a microcosm of India's unity in diversity': Ambassador of France to India

GNS News Agency, March 11

A career diplomat and a scholar specialised in Asian studies, Dr Thierry Mathou, Ambassador of France to India, came to Delhi in September 2023. Since then, he has discovered multiple places in the city where he and his wife, Cécile, "enjoy getting lost". Counted among French diplomacy's foremost experts on Asia, Dr Mathou has served in the continent for more than 25 years. He was Consul General in Shanghai and Ambassador to Myanmar, then to the Philippines, and more recently to Thailand. He is fluent in several Asian languages, including Chinese. As a scholar, Dr Mathou's main focus is on India-China relations and Himalayan studies. A specialist in Bhutan studies, he has written several articles and books on Bhutan in French and English and has been involved in many academic projects in this country. His wife too is involved in Bhutanese studies. The couple has three children: Alexandra, François, and Charles. Dr Mathou speaks to The Indian Express as part of a series of interviews with Ambassadors about Delhi — their home. I joined my post in 2023 in Delhi, a city that never ceases to amaze me with its great diversity and richness, both architecturally and socially. There are many places in the city where my wife and I enjoy "getting lost": Old Delhi with its labyrinths of narrow streets, markets, havelis and lively atmosphere, and New Delhi for its tree-lined avenues and parks. My favourite area, however, is Humayun's Tomb at dusk — and its magnificent museum,

the vast wilderness of Sunder Nursery, and Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya Dargah, which exudes deep spirituality and a sense of harmony, and offers the magic of qawwali. This combination makes Delhi an eternal city. Another area that I really like because it reminds me of cherished places in the Himalayas is Majnu ka Tila — Little Tibet. Three words come to mind spontaneously when I think of Delhi: diversity, vastness, and pollution. Delhi's diversity reflects that of India — we could speak of "Delhi" in the plural as the city is a microcosm of India's unity in diversity. There's the Old Delhi-New Delhi duality, but really, the diversity is more encompassing — culturally, socially, and economically. You hear Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali, and many other languages, and, of course, not enough French indeed, except if you go to the lively Alliance Française de Delhi, near Lodhi Gardens, to learn my mother tongue and discover French culture. Delhi is a city of immigration whose traditions and way of life have been influenced by the cultures of neighbouring regions. Its cuisines and architectural styles contain elements spanning South to North India. That's why I am proud that France is contributing to shaping the Yuga Yugeen Bharat National Museum. Delhi's vastness makes it a world unto itself. This feeling comes from both the size of its population — roughly half that of France — and the expanse of its territory, which is over ten times that of Paris, plus the sprawl of Delhi-NCR. Delhi's dynamism attracts people.

Wife approaches Delhi Police, UP MLA Raja Bhaiya booked for domestic abuse

GNS News Agency, March 11

Uttar Pradesh MLA Raghuraj Pratap Singh, also known as Raja Bhaiya, was booked by the Delhi Police on Friday on charges of domestic abuse following a complaint filed by his wife Bhanvi Kumari Singh. According to the FIR, lodged under Section 498A (husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty) of the Indian Penal Code, Bhanvi Kumari has accused her husband of prolonged domestic abuse spanning nearly three decades, citing severe physical assaults, and emotional trauma. She has also alleged numerous instances of violence, including an attack in 2015 that left her with fractured ribs and internal injuries. Further, the Kunda MLA has been accused of making death threats against his wife. In 2023, Bhanvi Kumari had approached the National Commission for Women and the Delhi State Legal Services Authority but withdrew her case, hoping for reconciliation. In her complaint, she has written that in November 2022, her husband filed for divorce, which remains pending in a district court in Delhi. As per her complaint, continued abuse and alleged death threats have compelled her to seek legal action.

Medak Mp Raghunandan Gets Relief In Hc

Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): Medak MP Raghunandan Rao had got relief from the Telangana High Court. The High Court has dismissed an electoral offence case registered against Raghunandan Rao in Nagarjuna Sagar Police station limits. An FIR was registered against Raghunandan Rao in connection with the Nagarjuna Sagar by-election campaign in the year 2021. It was complained that he campaigned without permission while the Model Code of conduct was in force. He participated in the election campaign in Utlapalli and Pulicherla villages. A case was registered against Raghunandan on the basis of a complaint of MPDO Dubba Satyam. This case was now dismissed by the High Court. Meanwhile, it is known that when the previous BRS government was in power, its MLA Nomula Narsimhaya died untimely. Due to this, the by-election was held in Nagarjuna Sagar assembly seat in 2021. The BRS party won the by-election. The people of Sagar gave victory to BRS party candidate and the son of Narasimhaya Nomula Bhagat, who won with a majority of 18,872 votes. (NSS)

Sndp Works Should Be Completed Expeditiously: Ilambarthi

Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): GHMC Commissioner Ilambarthi has instructed the officials concerned to complete the storm water drain and SNDP works at Durgam Cheruvu at the earliest. The Commissioner inspected the surroundings of Durgam Cheruvu along with the GHMC officials on Tuesday. On the occasion, he reviewed the problems of pond management, flood water and sewage water. Opinions were collected from local residents and walkers. The Additional Commissioner of Lakes has been instructed to take up the construction of the sewer lines after a thorough examination of the current situation of flood water and sewage water by SWD consultant and HMWSSB. The GHMC CE has been directed to continue the SNDP works after taking adequate precautions at high tension cable lines. Serilingampally zone commissioner has been instructed to coordinate with traffic and allied departments and complete the works. Lakes Additional Commissioner Shivakumar Naidu, Serilingampally Zonal Commissioner Upender Reddy, SNDP Chief Engineer, SE Maintenance Bhaskar Reddy, Lakes Executive Engineer, Metropolitan Water Supply.

Suvendu hits out at CPM and TMC over 'setting' on Jadavpur University campus



GNS News Agency, March 11

The West Bengal Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday held a protest rally from Nabina Cinema to Jadavpur Police Station, against the violence that occurred inside the Jadavpur University campus on March 1 after the visit by State Education Minister Bratya Basu. The rally which began around 12.15 pm was led by the Leader of the Opposition in the As-

sembly Suvendu Adhikari. The Calcutta High Court on Friday had granted permission for the rally after amending the route of the rally. Justice Tirthankar Ghosh had ordered that the rally, with 750 participants, be held from Nabina Cinema on Anwar Shah Road to the Jadavpur police station.

Alleging that the CPM and the Trinamool Congress are responsible for the JU

campus scenario, Adhikari said, "Main function of a university is education. CPM and TMC are the same for Jadavpur. Ragging, drugs and anti national activities all this happens here... Everything is a setting here, everything is got up just to give some importance to CPM. All these antisocial gangs will come together before the Assembly polls and chant slogans against Prime Minister Modi, and say no vote to BJP. We will not give up." "The sanatanis of Bengal are united after the Maha Kumbh and Saraswati puja incident, but the TMC and CPM are trying to divide the Hindu. TMC is patronising and encouraging CPM in Jadavpur and other areas. Jadavpur is a very prestigious university but there is no education. In 2026, the people of Bengal are ready for change in state," Adhikari

said while speaking to mediapersons.

The senior BJP leader further said that the party will be holding continuous programmes in and around Jadavpur. "We are not just taking up the programme today. On March 16, we will hold a civic convention in Jadavpur. After the completion of the higher secondary, we will work outside the university to create awareness, meanwhile, the ABVP will work inside the university. Already several students from the university have joined ABVP." "Meanwhile, the interim VC of Jadavpur University Bhaskar Gupta was on Sunday discharged from the hospital. According to hospital sources, Gupta has been advised 15-days rest by the doctors, but he can work from home. On Saturday, the interim VC asked students and "other

stakeholders" to take steps to restore normalcy in the greater interest of the university, particularly in the matters of academic activities, research and administrative work. "I hereby appeal to my beloved students and other learned stakeholders to take all necessary steps to restore normalcy in the greater interest of the university; particularly in the matter of academic activity; research and administrative activities of the university. Let democracy prevail and all issues be resolved through dialogue," Gupta had said in his email from the hospital. The appeal from the VC came a day after the students affiliated to the Left-wing organisations threatened an administrative shutdown on the campus starting Monday if the VC did not come to the campus and concede their demands.

10 days before Hampi rape, accused made chain snatching attempt: Police



GNS News Agency, March 11

The three accused in the alleged gang rape of two women, including an Israeli tourist, near Hampi, the UNESCO World Heritage Site in northern Karnataka, were allegedly involved in a chain-snatching bid about 10 days before the incident, a police officer said. "The attempt failed but their target did not complain to police. If police had been informed, maybe this incident (gang rape) could have been averted," the officer said. From preliminary investigations in the alleged gang rape, the officer said, police suspect that "the accused, who are construction workers from the Gangavathi region nearby, were under the influence of illegal substances" at the time. According to a representative of local homestay owners, "the incident was first reported as a robbery before the women informed police of the gang rape". Police have nabbed all the three accused, identifying two of them as Sai Chetan and Mallesh, both hailing from the Gangavathi region in Koppal district where the tourist hotspot is located. While Chetan and Mallesh were arrested Saturday and sent to two-day police custody, the third accused was apprehended

Sunday. "There was only one way to exit the site and the victims had run the other way. After going through CCTV footage on that route, police found that a bike had travelled in that direction at 11.17 pm that night," the officer said about the key clue that led to the arrests. According to police, the three accused allegedly assaulted a group of five at around 10.30 pm near Sanapura Lake on March 6, pushing three men into a canal leading to the death of one and gangraping the two women. The victims of the alleged gang rape included a homestay owner who had taken the group out for "stargazing", police said. Hampi rape case: As shaken tourists pack up, owners of homestays brace for crack-down. Police investigate the gang rape and murder in Hampi. Police have identified the deceased as Odisha native Bhibas Nayak (30) and the two other men as US national Daniel (23) and Maharashtra resident Pankaj. Gangavathi Rural Police have registered a case under BNS sections 309(6) (robbery and voluntarily causing hurt), 311 (dacoity), 64(L) (committing rape causing grievous bodily harm or maiming or disfiguring or endangering the life of a woman), 70 (1) (gang rape). "We are inves-

tigating the case," the officer said. The homestay owner hails from a neighbouring state and has been running the guest house for several years, according to Ravi Sanapur, who represents accommodation owners in the region. "I received a call around 11.30 pm on March 6 from the resort where Daniel and Pankaj had rushed to after the incident. They informed me that they had been robbed while they were star-gazing near a canal close to the Sanapur lake, about 3 km from their accommodation. I immediately informed the Gangavathi rural police inspector and rushed to the spot. When we reached the spot, the women said they had been robbed, and that Daniel, Pankaj and Bhibas had been pushed into the canal. While Daniel and Pankaj had managed to swim ashore, Bhibas was missing," Sanapur said. "I called about 20 locals to search in the night but there was no result. It was only the next day we found his (Bhibas) body. The other four others had left with the police. On Saturday morning, we came to know that the women were gang raped," he said. On Saturday, police retrieved the body of Bhibas. "He had a head injury, possibly caused by a stone, leading to his death," said the officer. According to Mallikarjuna, an elderly local resident, "The village had not heard of such a crime after an Indian and a foreign national were murdered in the area in the 1990s." Homestay and guesthouse owners said they have been cautioning foreign nationals against stepping out at night.

Maharashtra gov't removes special public prosecutor in suicide abetment case

GNS News Agency, March 11

Days after the special court allowed an application to add an accused in the abetment of suicide case of Dr Payal Tadv, filed by special public prosecutor Pradip Gharat, the state government has removed him from the case. A notification has been issued by the law and judiciary department stating that Gharat's appointment has been cancelled with immediate effect. The notification dated March 7 does not give any reasons for the decision. It states that a new special public prosecutor, Mahesh Mule, has been now appointed for the case.

On February 28, the special court hearing the abetment to suicide case, had allowed an application filed by Gharat to add as accused Dr Yi Ching Ling, the then unit head of the gynecology department, at the T N Topiwala National Medical College and BYL Nair Hospital where Tadv was studying in 2019. "I have not been informed about the cancellation of my appointment. I am an officer of the court first and I had filed the application to add an accused based on evidence, which the court has accepted," Gharat said. On May 22, 2019, Tadv died by suicide in her hostel room. The police arrested three of her seniors, Dr Bhakti Mehare, Dr Ankita Khandelwal and Dr Hema Ahuja on allegations that they had harassed Tadv, including on the basis of her caste, as she belonged to the Tadv Bhil community, a Scheduled Tribe, and based on a suicide note left by Tadv naming the three. The case is currently at the stage of framing of charges against the three, with them currently out on bail. Gharat had made an application under Section 319 of the Criminal Procedure Code (power to proceed against other persons appearing to be guilty of offence). It said there is a prima facie case against the professor as she turned a 'deaf ear' to complaints that Tadv was facing harass-



ment from her three seniors.

"The impleaded/added Accused Dr Yi Ling Chung Chiang be tried together with trio charge-sheeted accused," the court said directing that summons be issued to her and directed the investigating officer to submit a report by next date on March 20. Tadv's husband, Salman, said that the state's decision to cancel Gharat's appointment is unacceptable. "This is not acceptable. The case is al-

Orders Issued To Present Gaddar Telangana Film Awards

Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): The State government today issued an order finalising the modalities for the Gaddar Telangana Film Awards. The G.O.M.S. No.25 G.O. (I&PR) dated March 11, 2025 for the Gaddar Awards was released by the government as per the promise of CM Revanth Reddy. The government has decided the Special awards should be given in the names of Paidi Jayaraj and Kantha Rao, who have made significant contributions to the Telangana film industry. Since the then Telangana government did not give film awards from 2014 to 2023, it was decided to give an award for the best film per year for those years as well. For the first time in the feature film category, the State government has decided to give awards to Urdu language films as well. The applications for the Gaddar Film Awards will be made available from March 13, 2025 onwards at the Office of The Telangana Film Industry Development Corporation at AC Guards in the city. (NSS)

Fight On Public Problems In Budget Session: Former Cm Kcr

Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS): BRS party chief K Chandrasekhar Rao has called upon the party MLAs and members of the Legislative Council to put up an uncompromising fight on the issues of the people of Telangana. The BRSLP meeting was held under the chairmanship of KCR at Telangana Bhavan on Tuesday. Speaking on the occasion, he gave directions on various issues to be dealt with during the assembly session. All members of the BRS party legislative assembly and council have been asked to attend the House on time by KCR. He said the State government's corruption and anti-people activities should be raised in the House and added that government's false allegations against the BRS should be countered.

Man buried with excavator, kin face endless wait — for body, death certificate

GNS News Agency, March 11

In the end, closure — or some sense of it — came in the form of a five-foot-something cast made of atta and a garlanded photograph of Rakesh Yadav placed on a bamboo frame. Months after 35-year-old Rakesh and his excavator were buried under 60 feet of mud and rubble at the site of a water supply project in Palghar's Navghar area, over 1,600 kilometers away, at Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh, Rakesh's family carried out his last rites.

"The pandit said since the body was never found, we can get a cast made to roughly match Rakesh's height. We made one with atta, put his photograph on it and carried out the cremation," says Rakesh's father Balchandra, 62. But for the family, the wait continues — this time, for a death certificate. Though the administration called off the search operations four months after the accident, the authorities are yet to officially declare Rakesh dead. Rakesh's brother-in-law, Santosh Yadav, says, "When we came to Vasai (in Palghar, soon after the accident), we spoke to several authorities there, but at that time, we were told that since the body had not been found, no one could issue a death certificate."

Man buried with excavator, kin face endless wait — for body, death certificate The site in Palghar, Maharashtra, where Rakesh Yadav was buried after a mishap in May 2024. "Rakesh had invested some money in LIC policies, and his wife and three children need the money for their future, which is why his death certificate is very important for us. We will need the certificate in the future too, for other formalities," he added. When contacted on the matter of Rakesh's death certificate, Collector and District Magistrate Govind Bodke directed The Indian Express to Resident Deputy Collector Subhash Bhagade, who said that Rakesh has "not been officially declared dead". "I will understand the procedure and get back," he added. On May 29, 2024, Rakesh and his eight-tonne excavator were buried when one of the concrete walls of a trench he was working in collapsed on him. He was part of a team working to excavate a tunnel to lay a pipeline for a water supply project under the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority's (MMRDA) Surya Regional Water Supply Scheme. Excavator The trench inside which Rakesh Yadav (inset) and his excavator lie buried.

Soon after the accident, a team of the National Disaster Relief Force, firemen from the Vasai Virar Municipal Corporation and personnel of the Indian Army's Pune-based 269 Engineer Regiment launched an operation to locate Rakesh. As the news reached his family in Azamgarh, on May 30, Rakesh's elderly parents, wife, three children, and other family members packed a few sets of clothes and boarded a train to Mumbai. The family of nine, including Rakesh's parents, his wife Sushila and their three children, besides other relatives, camped under a bridge, metres away from where the 35-year-old and the excavator lay buried under 60 feet of mud. "We stayed at the site under the bridge for two months, hoping to see him, even if for the last time," says Rakesh's wife Sushila. Rakesh's brother-in-law Santosh claims that the authorities forced them to leave Palghar. "While we were there, we could follow-up with the authorities. So the search operations went on, even when the conditions were difficult and when it started to rain. But our presence at the site was adding to the pressure on the authorities since various politicians would visit us. So the authorities booked our tickets and asked us to leave by the end of July. They promised us that they would start the process of retrieving the body once the monsoon got over. But then they stopped looking for the body," he says. "Then chief minister Eknath Shinde and other politicians and authorities had promised us that Rakesh's body, in whatever form, would be recovered and handed over to us," says Rakesh's father Balchandra, a farmer and small-time grocery shop owner. "But now nobody is answering our calls."

Collector Bodke said, "We did everything in our capacity. We conducted the rescue operation for over four months before calling it off. It was difficult to recover his body because the creek near the site caused instability in the soil. One of the pillar walls (weighing over 900 tonnes) collapsed, and the remaining three pillars were shaking heavily. The agencies reviewed the situation, and there was a fear that the rescuers could also get trapped, so we had to call off the rescue operation." He said that a compensation of Rs 50 lakh was given to the family, and the company had facilitated a job for one of the family members. According to the MMRDA website, the Rs 1,977.29 crore water project aims to supply water to residents of the Mira-Bhayander and Vasai-Virar City municipal corporations, as well as 27 other nearby villages. The contract was awarded to Larsen & Toubro Ltd. on May 26, 2017, at a cost of Rs 1,329.01 crore.

At the time of the incident, the work was taking place on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad highway, next to the Vasai creek, with the pipeline intended to pass underneath. Rakesh and the other workers had excavated up to 60 feet and had about 10 more feet to go when the incident occurred at 9.30 pm. Surya water site, indian express Excavator operator



Rakesh Kumar Yadav's family members meeting Congress MLA Nana Patole. Following the accident, construction work was halted near the creek for several months. However, after conducting a survey, in January this year, the authorities resumed work, but at a location that's around a kilometer away from the previous site. A worker at the site says, "We have now started work on the Mira-Bhayander side of the creek (earlier, the digging work was being carried out on the Palghar side of the creek). The condition here is more favorable, and we have already dug about six feet. While a case has been registered at the Naigaon police station, an official said no action has been taken against anyone for the May 2024 accident. "We are still waiting for reports from the Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute that will help us determine the cause of the incident and those responsible." Back in Azamgarh, Rakesh's wife says she will have to live with regrets. "We spoke to him an hour before the incident and were planning to speak again later that night... If I had known that my husband's work involved so much risk, I would have never allowed him to leave home," she says.

Indian Railways: Women staff crosses 1.1 lakh-mark



GNS News Agency, March 11

New Delhi: The number of women employees in Indian Railways has been steadily rising over the last 10 years, with the total crossing 1.13 lakh, which constitutes 8.2 per cent of the total workforce, up from 6.6 per cent in 2014, according to official figures. Women are playing a bigger role in key operational jobs in the railway network. According to an official statement, 2,162 women are currently working as loco pilots, while 794 women have taken up the role of train managers (guards). Additionally, 1,699 female station masters are stationed across India. The number of women loco pilots and station masters in Indian Railways has jumped fivefold over the past 10 years, a senior official said. Apart from operational roles, women are making a significant impact in the administrative and maintenance sectors as well. Indian Railways has 12,362 women office staff and 2,360 women supervisors. In track maintenance, a traditionally male-dominated field, 7,756 women are now working to ensure the safe running of trains. Women are also actively involved in passenger services, with 4,446 serving as ticket checkers and 4,430 working as 'pointsmen' at railway stations across the country. Besides, Indian Railways has operationalised several railway stations with all-women teams to enhance confidence in gender inclusivity. These stations include Matunga, New Amravati, Ajni and Gandhinagar railway stations. Indian Railways, which is one of the world's largest employers, with over 12.3 lakh employees working on its vast network, is also playing a key role in empowering women, a senior official said. "Irrespective of gender, all the candidates fulfilling the prescribed eligibility criteria are eligible for recruitment," Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said in an answer to a question in Parliament recently. The government has prioritised transforming Indian Railways into a world-class entity, which ferries on an average 2.3 crore Indians every day from one part of the country to the other at an affordable cost, and women are playing an increasing role in this endeavour, a senior official added.

Hyderabad Zoo gears up to welcome wolf pups

GNS News Agency, March 11: Hyderabad: The Nehru Zoological Park here is gearing up to welcome new members, wolf pups, into the zoo family.

For the first time, a wolf in the zoo's care is set to conceive, and authorities are expecting the birth of three to four whelps in the next one or two weeks. The zoo is home to three grey wolves — two male and one female. "We are really excited to welcome wolf pups. For the first time it will happen in the zoo's care," said a senior official.

Following the birth of pups, they will be put under quarantine and they are expected to be released for the public view after a one-year period. "The gestation period of wolves is 60-75 days. We are anticipating the birth of wolf pups in the next 10-15 days. We are taking adequate medical care of the animal," another official said. Spread across sprawling 380 acres of land in Bahadurpura, the zoo is home to 194 different species, comprising 49 mammals, 106 birds, 37 reptiles and two amphibians. Currently, the zoo has a collection of 2,229 different animals with 519 mammals, 1,372 birds, 330 reptiles and eight amphibians.

Sindhu flies in private jet for All England championship

GNS News Agency, March 11

HYDERABAD: Double Olympics medallist and India's champion shuttler PV Sindhu flew in a private jet to UK to take part in the All England Championship. The former World champion and 2016 Rio Olympics silver medallist is seeking her first All England title. The tournament is scheduled from March 11 to 16 in Birmingham, England.

Sindhu shared her enthusiasm with her fans on social media. "Let's go. Smile a little, Coach," Sindhu wrote on her Instagram handle. Unseeded Sindhu will be playing her first match against South Korea's world No 22 ranked player Ga Eun Kim. Apart from Sindhu, Malvika Bansod will feature in the women's singles draw. Both are unseeded and will face higher-ranked opponents early on in the tournament. Early this year, Sindhu got Indonesian coach Irwansyah Adi Pratama on board his coaching staff. Pratama is known for working with top singles players like Jonatan Christie and Anthony Ginting.

What to know ahead of talks between U.S., Ukraine in Saudi Arabia



GNS News Agency, March 11

Saudi Arabia is set to host talks on Tuesday (March 11, 2025) between the United States and Ukraine after an argument erupted during President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's February 28 visit to the White House. Riyadh, the capital of the oil-rich kingdom, may seem like an unusual venue for talks aimed at smoothing over relations after the blow-up. But Saudi Arabia under its assertive Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has been positioning itself as an ideal location for possible peace negotiations between Kyiv and Moscow and even the first face-to-face talks between Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump. Here's what to know about why this meeting is taking place and Saudi Arabia's role:

Why are these talks happening?

U.S. and Ukrainian officials will meet after the Oval Office meeting between Mr. Zelenskyy, Mr. Trump and U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance descended into an extraordinary 10-minute argument before journalists. Trump-Zelenskyy open spat in the Oval Office. Mr. Trump at one point admonished Mr. Zelenskyy by angrily saying, "You're gambling with World War III, and what you're doing is very disrespectful to the country." Mr. Zelenskyy ended up leaving the White House without signing a deal that included granting the U.S. access to Ukraine's rare earth minerals. Kyiv hoped that deal would ensure the continued flow of U.S. military support that Ukraine urgently needs as it battles Russia in the war that began after Moscow's full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Where will these talks take place?

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry in a statement on Friday (March 7) identified the location for the talks as Jeddah, a port city on the Red Sea. It's not clear why the kingdom picked Jeddah as opposed to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia's capital city where the initial Russia-U.S. talks took place on February 18. However, Jeddah has hosted other diplomatic engagements in the past and is home to royal palaces.

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry said the kingdom would continue to pursue "a lasting peace to end the Ukrainian crisis." "The kingdom has continued these efforts over the

past three years by hosting many meetings on this matter," the Foreign Ministry said.

US-Ukraine talks turn tense: what led to the fallout?

A tense exchange between US President Donald Trump, Vice President JD Vance, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has intensified divisions in the transatlantic alliance. While the heated discussion made headlines, tensions had been brewing for months. Trump has long questioned US aid to Ukraine, and his recent call with Russian President Vladimir Putin—excluding Ukraine—only deepened the rift. At the Munich Security Forum, Zelenskyy and Vance delivered starkly different messages, signaling growing discord. The situation escalated further when Trump demanded greater access to Ukraine's rare earth minerals while refusing security guarantees, nearly prompting Zelenskyy to cancel his Washington visit. When Vice President Vance entered the conversation, the discussion turned into a confrontation, leading to Zelenskyy walking out of the White House and Trump threatening to reconsider US engagement with Ukraine. The fallout extends beyond Washington and Kyiv. A fractured NATO could shift global power balances, affecting US-China-Russia dynamics. For India, while the immediate impact is limited, the crisis risks diverting US attention from key agreements and Indo-Pacific priorities. However, closer US-Russia ties could ease pressure on India's relationship with Moscow, and a ceasefire could help stabilize food, fuel, and defense supplies.

Who will attend the talks?

Mr. Zelenskyy plans to visit Saudi Arabia on Monday (March 10) ahead of the talks. He earlier delayed a trip to the kingdom after travelling to the neighbouring United Arab Emirates, which also has been considered as a possible venue for peace talks between Kyiv and Moscow.

"We continue working on the relevant steps with our partners who want peace, who want it just as much as we do," Mr. Zelenskyy said "There will be a lot of work here in Europe, with America in Saudi Arabia — we are preparing a meeting to accelerate peace and strengthen the foundations of security." Mr. Zelenskyy wrote online that a team including his Chief of Staff Andriy Yermak, Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiba and Defence Minister Rustem Umerov travelling with him to Saudi Arabia will take part in the talks.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio will lead the American team for the Ukrainian talks and meet with Prince Mohammed. Mr. Sybiba also spoke Friday (March 7) with Mr. Rubio ahead of the talks. Mr. Sybiba described it as a "constructive call". A two-sentence readout from the State Department said Mr. Rubio "underscored President Trump is determined to end the war as soon as possible and emphasised that all sides must take steps to secure a sustainable peace". Trump accuses Zelenskyy of "overplaying his hand," demands immediate Ukraine ceasefire

The high-stakes meeting between President Trump and President Zelenskyy was expected to focus on U.S. aid and Ukraine's strategy in the war against Russia. But tensions flared as Trump reportedly told Zelenskyy to 'make a deal' with Russia or risk losing U.S. support. Vice President J.D. Vance also criticized Zelenskyy, calling his stance 'unreasonable'. After the meeting, U.S. President Donald Trump said visiting Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy "overplayed his hand" Friday during their extraordinary Oval Office clash and insisted, "I want a ceasefire now." Mr. Trump, who spoke to reporters while departing the White House for his Florida estate, also said he wanted fighting in Ukraine to end "immediately" and accused Mr. Zelenskyy of opposing a truce. | Video Credit: The Hindu

Why are these talks in Saudi Arabia?

Since assuming power in Saudi Arabia, Prince Mohammed took an aggressive posture both at home and abroad. His public image reached its nadir with the 2018 slaying of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul, believed by the United States and others to be at the Prince's orders. In the last two years, however, Prince Mohammed instead has reached a détente with Iran, hosted Mr. Zelenskyy for an Arab League summit and been involved in negotiations over the wars in Sudan and the Gaza Strip.

Riyadh also maintained ties to Russia through the OPEC+ oil cartel while Western nations levied sanctions against it. That's reasserted the role the kingdom long has perceived itself as having — being the leader of the Sunni Muslim world and a dominant force in the Middle East. Hosting Russia-U.S. talks, possibly drawing Mr. Trump to the kingdom for his first foreign trip in this term through investments and other possible meetings only raise Saudi Arabia's profile further as a neutral territory for high-stakes negotiations. Saudi Arabia's autocratic government, compliant media and distance from the war also allows for talks to take place in a tightly controlled country with relative privacy.

What does this mean for the war and the wider world?

Mr. Trump remains focused on reaching some kind of peace deal to stop the war. His approach toward Ukraine so far has relied far more on stick than carrot — limiting their access to intelligence and weaponry. While conciliatory toward Mr. Putin, Mr. Trump recently also threatened new sanctions against Russia over its ceaseless attacks on Ukrainian cities. If Ukraine and the U.S. reach some sort of understanding acceptable to Mr. Trump, that could accelerate his administration's push to talks. However, the rest of Europe remains sceptical as they've been sidelined from the talks. The European Union last week agreed to boost the continent's defences and to free up hundreds of billions of euros for security.

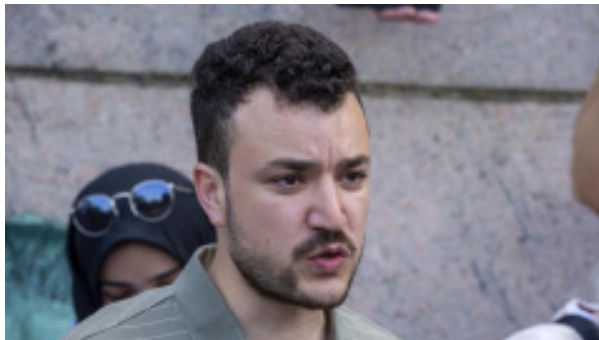
Mahmoud Khalil arrest: U.S. immigration agents arrest Palestinian activist who helped lead Columbia University protests

GNS News Agency, March 11

Federal immigration authorities arrested a Palestinian activist on Saturday (March 9, 2025) who played a prominent role in Columbia University's protests against Israel, a significant escalation in the Trump administration's pledge to detain and deport student activists. Mahmoud Khalil, a graduate student at Columbia until this past December, was inside his university-owned apartment Saturday night when several Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents entered and took him into custody, his attorney, Amy Greer, told The Associated Press. Greer said she spoke by phone with one of the ICE agents during the arrest, who said they were acting on State Department orders to revoke Khalil's student visa. Informed by the attorney that Khalil was in the United States as a permanent resident with a green card, the agent said they were revoking that instead, according to the lawyer. Students at Columbia University painted a response during their protest last year to a message written by Palestinians in Rafah thanking students for their support.

Students at Columbia University painted a response during their protest last year to a message written by Palestinians in Rafah thanking students for their support. A spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security, Tricia McLaughlin, confirmed Khalil's arrest in a statement Sunday, describing it as being "in support of President Trump's executive orders prohibiting anti-Semitism."

Khalil's arrest is the first publicly known deportation effort under Trump's promised crackdown on students who joined protests against the war in Gaza that swept college campuses last spring. The administration has claimed participants forfeited their rights to remain



in the country by supporting Hamas. McLaughlin signaled the arrest was directly connected to Khalil's role in the protests, alleging he "led activities aligned to Hamas, a designated terrorist organization." As ICE agents arrived at Khalil's Manhattan residence Saturday night, they also threatened to arrest Khalil's wife, an American citizen who is eight months pregnant, Greer said. Khalil's attorney said they were initially informed that he was being held at an immigration detention facility in Elizabeth, New Jersey. But when his wife tried to visit Sunday, she learned he was not there. Greer said she still did not know Khalil's whereabouts as of Sunday night. "We have not been able to get any more details about why he is being detained," Greer told the AP. "This is a clear escalation. The administration is following through on its threats." Columbia University protest on Gaza war

A Columbia University spokesperson said law enforcement agents must produce a warrant before entering university property, but declined to say if the school had received one ahead of Khalil's arrest. The spokesperson declined to comment on Khalil's detention.

In a message shared on X Sunday evening, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the administration "will be revoking the visas and/or green cards of Hamas supporters in America so they can be deported." The Department of Homeland Security can initiate deportation proceedings against green card holders for a

against him. Khalil was also among those under investigation by a new Columbia University office that has brought disciplinary charges against dozens of students for their pro-Palestinian activism, according to records shared with the AP.

Columbia university fund cut The investigations come as the Trump administration has followed through on its threat to cut hundreds of millions of dollars in funding to Columbia because of what the government describes as the Ivy League school's failure to quell antisemitism on campus. The university's allegations against Khalil focused on his involvement in the Columbia University Apartheid Divest group. He faced sanctions for potentially helping to organize an "unauthorized marching event" in which participants glorified Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack and playing a "substantial role" in the circulation of social media posts criticizing Zionism, among other acts of alleged discrimination.

"I have around 13 allegations against me, most of them are social media posts that I had nothing to do with," Khalil told the AP last week. "They just want to show Congress and right-wing politicians that they're doing something, regardless of the stakes for students," he added. "It's mainly an office to chill pro-Palestine speech."

Paritosh Pankaj assumes charge as SP Sangareddy

Sangareddy: Paritosh Pankaj, a 2020 batch IPS officer, assumed charge as Superintendent of Police, Sangareddy on Monday. He was greeted by the outgoing SP Chennuri Rupesh, who has been appointed as Telangana Anti-Narcotics Bureau chief. Paritosh Pankaj, who worked as OSD Kothagudem, has been transferred and posted as SP Sangareddy during the recent reshuffle of IPS officers in the State. It was his first posting as a SP of a district in his young career as an IPS officer. T

Kashmir fashion show outrage: Gulmarg fashion event during Ramazan triggers controversy, Omar Abdullah seeks report



GNS News Agency, March 11

A fashion show during Islamic holy month of Ramzan at tourist hotspot of Gulmarg in north Kashmir on Sunday (March 9, 2025) sparked a controversy, with J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah seeking a report for "an appropriate action". Officials said the fashion show, participated by male and female models, was organised to mark the 15th anniversary of the designer label, Shivan & Narresh, in the backdrop of snow-laden slopes of Gulmarg on Friday. The label's skiwear collection was also put on display by models. In the past two days, the videos of the show went viral online with many netizens in Kashmir expressing objections.

Kashmir's chief cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq termed the fashion show during Ramzan as "outrageous". "In the holy month of Ramzan an obscene fashion show is organised in Gulmarg, pictures and videos from which have gone viral sparking shock and anger among people. How could it be tolerated in the valley known for its sufi, culture of saints, and the deeply religious outlook of its people? Those involved should be immediately held accountable. Such obscenity in the name of tourism promotion will not be tolerated in Kashmir," the Mirwaiz said. J&K CM Abdullah, replying to Mirwaiz's statement, said the shock and anger were totally understandable. "The images I have seen show a complete disregard for local sensitivities and that too during this holy month. My office has been in touch with the local authorities and I've asked for a report to be submitted within the next 24 hours. Further action, as appropriate, will follow from this report," CM Abdullah said. Ruling National Conference (NC) Member of Parliament Syed Aga Ruhullah Mehdi too expressed shock. "This is what cultural invasion in the disguise of tourism looks like. They show an utter disregard for Kashmiri sentiments. The Tourism department officials involved should be immediately taken to task, as well as the organisers," MP Mehdi said. J&K Peoples Conference chief Sajad Lone said the fashion show in Gulmarg was "an eminently avoidable event in the holy month of Ramadan". "I consider myself to be a person of liberal orientation, and believe in dignified and mutually respectful coexistence. But this was not the best time to host such an event," Mr. Lone said.

India, Mauritius and a visit to deepen long-standing ties

GNS News Agency, March 11

In our current era of geopolitical churn and uncertainty, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Mauritius (March 11-12, 2025), will be a celebration of the deep and long-standing ties between the two countries. Mr. Modi had last visited the island country in 2015, but on this occasion, he will be the guest of honour at its Independence Day celebrations on March 12. India-Mauritius relations have enjoyed political consensus, irrespective of the party in power in either country. Mauritius has a new government in power led by Navinchandra Ramgoolam of the Labour Party, whose coalition won a landslide victory in the elections held in November last year. While India-Mauritius relations will continue to be positive and stable, the visit provides an opportunity for Mr. Modi to establish a personal connect with Mr. Ramgoolam and reassure him of India's continuing support to the island's security and prosperity. It was during the latter half of my tenure as India's High Commissioner to Mauritius (1992-97) that Mr. Ramgoolam was Prime Minister. India-Mauritius relations saw significant growth under his leadership and he was particularly sensitive to India's security concerns. I have no doubt that he will prove to be a trusted partner for India and will open new vistas for our cooperation.

Mr. Ramgoolam's father, Sir Seewosagur Ramgoolam, had led the struggle for his country's independence and was its first Prime Minister. Not many people know that Sir Seewosagur worked closely with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose during Bose's stay in Britain between 1919-21. They were part of the Indian students' movement in London working for Indian independence. Ramgoolam did the proof-reading for Bose's famous work, 'The Indian Struggle', and received an autographed copy in appreciation. There are strong people-to-people ties between the two countries. Nearly 70% of the population of Mauritius is of Indian origin, being the descendants of Indian indentured labour who were brought by the colonial rulers to work on sugar plantations. About 50% trace their ancestry to Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and still speak the Bhojpuri dialect. There are smaller communities of Tamil-, Telugu-, and Marathi-speaking communities who have preserved their languages and traditional culture. Mauritius appears like a microcosm of India. However, the country is home to other ethnic groups including African and mixed populations, which create its proud rainbow culture. Though only 2% of the population, the island's French population is wealthy and influential, still owning its large sugar plantations, dominating its banking and financial sector and other commercial business. The challenge for India's diplomats lies in maintaining links with all segments of the Mauritian population, even while celebrating the kinship and cultural ties that exist with its India-origin population. India has done much to nourish the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Indian-origin population. In 1976, it inaugurated the Mahatma Gandhi Institute as a premier institution for promoting Indian languages and culture. The Indian Cultural Centre in Mauritius is the largest of anywhere in the world and is one of the most active. The island hosts the World Hindi Secretariat that is supported by India. India-Mauritius bilateral trade has expanded rapidly over the past few years, reaching \$554 million in 2022-23. Mauritius is a part of the African Union and has preferential trade agreements with African countries. It is bilingual, with most of its citizens being fluent in English and French. With its well-developed finance and banking sector and reliable laws and regulations, Mauritius has become a preferred platform for doing business with Africa particularly Francophone Africa. Thanks to a favourable Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with Indi.

Netherlands starts bird flu vaccination program at hen farm



GNS News Agency, March 11

The Netherlands, one of the world's largest egg exporters, has launched a pilot program on a laying-hen farm to vaccinate poultry against bird flu with the aim of achieving large-scale vaccination, the government said on Monday. The highly pathogenic avian influenza, commonly called bird flu, has killed or led to the culling of hundreds of millions of poultry globally in recent years, most of them laying hens, which sent egg prices rocketing. It can also spread to humans and other animals, raising fears of a new pandemic.

The Dutch pilot follows field tests that demonstrated the effectiveness of two vaccines last year. It will be conducted at one farm initially, and then potentially expanded to others, the government said in a statement. "The aim is to investigate how the market responds to the sale of products (from vaccinated poultry) and to gain experience with the implementation of the surveillance program," it said.

The Netherlands opted for a gradual introduction because large-scale vaccination requires adjustments in veterinary infrastructure and can have trade consequences, the government said, without naming them. Bird flu vaccination programs can sometimes trigger export bans, on concern that vaccinated birds not showing signs of infection could pose risks to healthy birds in the export countries. France's country-wide vaccination program in 2023 of ducks prompted several countries to ban French poultry on such concerns. Chicks will be vaccinated at Dutch hatcheries before being moved to laying farms, with eggs sold only within the Netherlands. The program will run until early 2027. "I am pleased that the poultry sector wants to take this step with me. Vaccination offers a huge opportunity to better control bird flu," said Agriculture Minister Femke Wiersma. Keep up with the latest medical breakthroughs and healthcare trends with the Reuters Health Rounds newsletter. Sign up here.

Congo ex-president Kabila's allies to be questioned by military prosecutor



GNS News Agency, March 11 Officials from the party of Democratic Republic of Congo's former President Joseph Kabila have been invited to appear before a military prosecutor on Monday in a sign of political tensions over Rwanda-backed rebels' advances in the east.

The exact reason for the invitations was not clear, said Jean Mbuyu, a lawyer for the officials and former security advisor to Kabila. But President Felix Tshisekedi, who once formed an awkward power-sharing deal with Kabila, has recently accused him of sponsoring the M23 rebels who have seized east Congo's two biggest cities since January. Kabila has also reached out to opposition politicians and civil society members to discuss the country's political future, amid criticism of Tshisekedi's response to M23's military campaign. The military prosecutor's office sent about 10 invitation letters to members of Kabila's People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy, though only three people were expected to appear for questioning in the capital Kinshasa on Monday, Mbuyu said. They included Aubin Minaku, vice president of the party and former president of the National Assembly, and Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, a former interior minister and presidential candidate, Mbuyu said. "We're going to listen because the invitation contains no reason," he said. Minaku said the officials would respond to the invitations "to avoid any suspicion" and denied links to M23 or any other armed groups. "We are taking a purely Republican approach, not one of rebellion," he told Reuters, using "Republican" to indicate loyalty to the country. "We clearly denounced any illicit presence of foreign forces," he said. The latest M23 advance is the gravest escalation of a long-running conflict rooted in the spillover into Congo of Rwanda's 1994 genocide and the struggle for control of Congo's vast mineral resources. Rwanda denies providing arms and troops to M23, and says its forces are acting in self-defence against the Congolese army and militias hostile to Kigali.

Melting glaciers changing New Zealand's landscapes, lives

Hyderabad: Globally, New Zealand ranks third in the proportion of ice lost from glaciers. Almost 30 per cent of ice volume has melted during the past 24 years and what remains is disappearing at an accelerating pace.

Almost 300 glaciers have now vanished completely from New Zealand's mountains. As warming temperatures melt glaciers, the ice loss has repercussions for climate and water cycles. This in turn has significant impact on landscapes, rivers, ecosystems, people and economies. New Zealand is tracking glacial ice loss closely since 1977. Each year, scientists carry out aerial surveys of the snowline to determine how much of the previous winter snowpack has survived the summer melt season.

Zelenskiy heads to Saudi Arabia ahead of crunch US talks

KYIV, GNS News Agency, March 11, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy travels to Saudi Arabia to meet Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Monday, ahead of talks between Ukrainian and U.S. officials on ending the war with Russia at an increasingly precarious moment for Kyiv. The United States, once Ukraine's main ally, has upended its wartime policies in its stated pursuit of a rapid end to the fighting, engaging directly with Moscow while cutting off military assistance and intelligence sharing for Kyiv.

Zelenskiy is expected to meet the Saudi crown prince, whose country has played various mediating roles since Russia's 2022 invasion, including brokering prisoner exchanges and hosting talks between Russia and the United States last month. Tuesday's talks between U.S. and Ukrainian officials - the first official meeting since a disastrous Oval Office encounter between Zelenskiy and U.S. President Donald Trump - are expected to focus on a bilateral minerals deal and how to end the war. Under huge pressure from Trump, who wants the war ended at lightning speed, Zelenskiy has been at pains to show they are on the same page, despite failing to win U.S. security guarantees that Kyiv sees as vital for any peace deal. Zelenskiy has said he will not attend Tuesday's talks with U.S. officials and that the Ukrainian delegation will include his chief of staff, his foreign and defence ministers and a top military official in the presidential administration. "On our side, we are fully committed to constructive dialogue, and we hope to discuss and agree on the necessary decisions and steps," Zelenskiy said in a post on X. "Realistic proposals are on the table. The key is to move quickly and effectively."

U.S. officials said they were planning to use the meeting with the Ukrainians in part to determine whether Kyiv is willing to make material concessions to Russia to end the war. "You can't say 'I want peace,' and 'I refuse to compromise on anything'," one of the officials said of the upcoming talks. A second U.S. official said: "We want to see if the Ukrainians are interested not just in peace, but in a realistic peace." Trump said on Sunday that he expected good results out of the upcoming talks, adding that the United States had "just about" ended a suspension of intelligence sharing with Kyiv. Trump special envoy Steve Witkoff, who has been



arranging the talks, has said the idea is to "get down a framework for a peace agreement and an initial ceasefire as well". Zelenskiy has called for a truce in the air and at sea, as well as a prisoner exchange, in what he says could be a test of Russia's commitment to ending the war. Moscow has rejected the idea of a temporary truce, which has also been proposed by Britain and France, saying it was a bid to buy time for Kyiv and prevent its military collapse.

Zelenskiy has also said Kyiv is ready to sign the minerals deal with the U.S., which would create a joint fund from the sale of Ukrainian minerals. Washington says it is crucial to secure continued U.S. backing. With U.S. support in question, Zelenskiy has been urging his European allies to ramp up their support as Kyiv's battlefield position deteriorates and it faces mounting pressure to retreat from Russia's Kursk region. Ukrainian troops that stormed into the Kursk region last summer are nearly surrounded by Russian forces, open source maps show. Russia holds around a fifth of Ukraine's territory, including Crimea which it annexed in 2014, and its troops are also pressing in the eastern Donetsk region, having ramped up drone and missile strikes on cities and towns far from the front. Russia has launched 1,200 aerial guided bombs, nearly 870 attack drones and more than 80 missiles at Ukraine in the past week alone, Zelenskiy has said.

Canada's Carney faces Trump, tariffs and looming election



TORONTO, GNS News Agency, March 11 Former central banker Mark Carney claimed a landslide victory on Sunday to lead Canada's Liberal Party and to become the country's next prime minister. Now comes the hard part: taking on U.S. President Donald Trump who has threatened annexation, tackling a trade war and punishing tariffs, and leading the party through what promises to be a bruising general election that is likely imminent.

Carney won with 86% of the votes cast by party members. In the coming days Canada's Governor-General, the representative of Britain's King Charles in Canada, will invite him to form a government and will position Carney to replace Justin Trudeau as prime minister. But this reconstituted Liberal government is likely to be short-lived. Two Liberal Party sources said Carney will call an election in coming weeks, banking on new momentum for the party in polls. If Carney does not call an election himself, his political opponents have said they would defeat the government at their first opportunity when Parliament reconvenes. For months the opposition Conservatives led in the polls, often by double-digits ahead of the governing Liberals.

However, the political landscape shifted with the emergence of Trump, the prospect of tariffs and the threat of annexation. This coincided with a surge of support for the

Liberals, who have ridden a wave of renewed national unity to come neck-and-neck with the opposition party, according to the latest polls. Now the challenge will be to maintain that momentum and convince Canadians to give a party that spent a decade in power under Trudeau another go - while fighting a trade war on multiple fronts that seems to shapeshift by the hour. "Without overstating it, the challenges are almost unique in Canadian history, if not unique in the post-war period," said Cameron Anderson, a politics professor at Western University. "We have big challenges domestically in terms of cost of living and housing and health care and managing immigration. ... And then I think when we look at Canada as a country in the world, we're probably threatened and have the sense of being threatened in a way we haven't in many generations." Carney will be the first person to become Canada's Prime Minister with no prior experience in electoral politics. The former governor of the Bank of Canada and Bank of England shot to the front of the Liberal leadership race, ahead of two women who held seats in Trudeau's Cabinet. Carney promised on Sunday evening to scrap the consumer price on carbon and stop a planned increase in the capital gains tax. He says he supports dollar-for-dollar retaliatory tariffs in response to Trump's tariffs.

Like others, Carney pledged to remove barriers to trade within Canada. He vowed to double the pace of new housing construction over 10 years and cap immigration, a shift in policy Trudeau had started. Liberals sought to compare Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre to Trump in a recent advertisement. Poilievre in turn ramped up attacks on Carney on Sunday. Carney "will emphasize the policy departures that were kind of necessary conditions for countering Poilievre," said University of British Columbia politics professor Richard Johnston. "Whether these reversals are good policy is a whole other matter." But a major emphasis, Johnston said, will be "keeping his cool in the face of Donald Trump." The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.

A new framework to bridge the skills gap in higher education

GNS News Agency, March 11

Challenges in higher education are becoming increasingly nuanced and complex. Technological innovations, shifting human-machine frontiers, and advances in AI, Healthcare, and Medicine are emerging as key focus areas. The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2023 highlights that 44% of workers' skills will be disrupted by 2027. Analytical and creative thinking will be crucial skills in the next five years, closely followed by leadership, social influence, resilience, flexibility, and agility.

Possible approaches The future of higher education lies in the fine integration of these skill sets. The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) emphasises a principles-based and outcomes-focused approach and underscores the need for experiential learning, social impact, career readiness, and partnerships. Similarly, the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology emphasises skill competency while ensuring that academic programmes meet high-quality standards aligned with industry needs. The National Board of Accreditation in India focuses on achieving desirable outcomes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviour, based on an 'Input-Process-Output' model. Additionally, the National Educational Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasises knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development, and global well-being. The question now is whether Indian higher education institutions (HEIs) are equipping students with these skills, or still fixated on teaching them to remember and understand subjects through a taxonomical design, such as Bloom's Taxonomy? The answer, unfortunately, is a resounding "Yes", with some exceptions. How can we prepare students to be future ready? Competency-based education (CBE) and outcome-based education (OBE) are two dominant approaches to assess student learning. OBE emphasises mastery of specific skills and competencies that reflect real-world experiences, while CBE aligns educational outcomes with the labour market needs, increases employability, and fosters industry connections. Unfortun-

nately, both often focus on discipline-centric skills and overlook discipline-neutral ones. Consequently, HEIs assess educational relevance by emphasising multidisciplinary and transdisciplinarity as educational outcomes. While CBE advocates for a transformative approach, there remains a transactional focus. The skill gaps in higher education are particularly pronounced in the technology sector. A high rate of graduate unemployment due to a mismatch between the skills taught in colleges/universities and those needed by industry has led to poor job performance and employer dissatisfaction, particularly in areas such as writing, editing, research, and data analysis. These challenges can be addressed by a new framework that effectively integrates knowledge, cognition, and social inquiry into the educational curriculum, focusing on skill development and social orientation. It positions students as key stakeholders alongside parents, industry representatives, and faculty and emphasises social orientation and skills competency by integrating OBE and CBE, promoting a multidimensional approach to learning. It enables students to develop higher-order skills, enhance their capacity for social inquiry, and refine and sharpen their competencies throughout their academic journey. Not only does it formally integrate social inquiry into educational design but also strengthens skills and competency courses while establishing a robust, communicative, and engaging framework. This allows for mapping students' skills and social orientation through a well-defined mentoring process, including corporate mentoring in subsequent stages. The framework involves a three-stage assessment: Stage I: Initial assessment of student skills during the orientation programme and/or at the start of classes. Students participate in the Learners Value Proposition (LVP), which, while not mandatory, facilitates skills mapping. Once the results are analysed, they are aligned with the programme's mission and objectives, creating a case file for each student. Stage II: Assigned mentors conduct continuous assessment at the end of each semester and implement the necessary intervention for skill development through electives and participation in activities or field projects.

Malaysia warns against travel to southern Thailand after attacks

GNS News Agency, March 11

BANGKOK, Malaysia has warned its citizens against travelling to southern Thailand after bombings and shootings by suspected insurgents killed five people and injured 13 others at the weekend. The attacks occurred in the mainly ethnic Malay Muslim southernmost provinces of predominantly Buddhist Thailand, where more than 7,300 people have been killed since a decades-old separatist rebellion reignited in 2004.

Gunmen fired into a district office and detonated a car bomb in the Sungai Kolok border town of Narathiwat province, popular with Malaysian tourists, killing two Thai security volunteers, authorities said. In neighbouring Pattani province, a roadside bomb killed a volunteer ranger and two government officials. "Malaysians are strongly encouraged to postpone non-essential travel to these areas for the time being," the Malaysian foreign ministry said in a statement issued on Sunday. About 4.9 million of the 35.5 million visitors to Thailand last year were from Malaysia, making it the second biggest source market for tourism after China. Security has been tightened in the area, Narathiwat governor, Trakul Thotham,

"This kind of incident has not occurred in the last four to five years," he said, adding that there were still Malaysians in the area and there would be some impact in the initial stages. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. Reporting Panarat Thepgumpanat and Chayut Setboonsarng in Bangkok and Ashley Tang in Kuala Lumpur; Editing by Martin Petty. Our Standards: The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles. opens new tab

South Korea prosecutors to pursue Yoon's conviction despite jail release



GNS News Agency, March 11

SEOUL, March 10 (Reuters) - South Korean prosecutors will pursue President Yoon Suk Yeol's conviction for insurrection despite a court decision ordering the release of the impeached leader from prison, the head of the prosecutors' office said. Prosecutor General Shim Woo-jung said he respected the weekend court ruling but did not agree with its assessment that the indictment filing was past the legally allowed expiry time, which the court said made Yoon's detention while on trial illegal. "I've directed that the prosecution makes arguments on various disputes during trial, and we'll do everything we can to pursue this indictment," he told reporters when asked whether the court ruling meant it was likely to drop the case.

Yoon has been on criminal trial since February 20 over allegations he led an insurrection by declaring martial law on December 3. He lifted the martial law decree after about six hours. His lawyers had filed a motion to cancel his detention and said Friday's ruling showed the case against Yoon was politically motivated and had no legal justification. The embattled leader walked out of a detention centre on Saturday, about a week short of two months after being arrested. He was impeached by parliament and remains suspended from power. The Constitutional Court is expected to decide in coming days whether to overturn the impeachment and reinstate him or remove him from office permanently. If Yoon is removed, a new presidential election will be held within 60 days. Yoon said his martial law declaration was needed to root out "anti-state" elements; parliament rejected it within hours. The decision by the Seoul Central District Court on Friday to cancel Yoon's arrest warrant rather than allowing the automatic extension of his detention during his trial drew mixed reactions from the public and political parties. The prosecution decided not to appeal the ruling based on a conservative reading of Constitutional Court decisions in previous cases rejecting prosecutors' appeals, Shim said. Yoon was met by enthusiastic crowds of supporters as he walked out of the detention centre and as he returned to his official residence, where he was arrested on January 15, becoming the first sitting president to be detained and indicted. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.

North Korea fires missiles after slamming US-South Korea drills

SEOUL, GNS News Agency, March 11 North Korea fired multiple ballistic missiles on Monday, hours after condemning the South Korean and U.S. militaries for launching drills that Pyongyang called a "dangerous provocative act" that risked accidentally sparking a confrontation. South Korea's military said the missiles were fired from North Korea's western region toward the Yellow Sea. The launch was the first reported ballistic missile test since U.S. President Donald Trump took office in January.

The missiles were believed to be close range ballistic missiles, a South Korean defence ministry official said, referring to a type of weapon with a range of under 300 km (186 miles). The allies' annual Freedom Shield drills are scheduled to run until March 20, although live-fire exercises remain suspended after South Korean jets mistakenly dropped bombs on a civilian town near the border last week, injuring 29. North Korea has typically demanded U.S.-South Korea joint exercises to be halted, branding them a prelude to an invasion.

The South Korean military has said the joint drills aim to strengthen the readiness of the alliance to face threats such as North Korea.

"This is a dangerous provocative act of leading the acute situation on the Korean peninsula, which may spark off a physical conflict between the two sides by means of an accidental single shot, to the extreme point," North Korea's foreign ministry said, according to state media outlet KCNA. The drills would harm U.S. security, the ministry added.

A city held hostage by pigeons

In a bustling lane on Ranade Road, Dadar, an elderly woman tossed a handful of grains onto the pavement, watching with satisfaction as dozens of pigeons swooped in, flapping their wings and jostling for space. Meanwhile, a shopkeeper on the opposite side grumbled as he scrubbed at the stubborn crust of droppings coating his storefront. Across Mumbai, from high-rise apartments to crowded markets, the city's love-hate relationship with pigeons is on full display. Once symbols of peace and endurance, these birds have multiplied beyond control, becoming an urban menace affecting public health and damaging infrastructure. Pigeons, also known as rock doves, have become an inseparable part of Mumbai's cityscape, fluttering around railway stations, perching on balconies, and congregating in designated feeding areas known as Kabutarakhana. While many residents see them as harmless birds and even enjoy feeding them, their rampant population growth has triggered serious concerns that usually go unnoticed.

The unchecked rise in Mumbai's pigeon population, fuelled by rapid urbanisation and human intervention, is posing a growing challenge to the city's biodiversity. Experts warn that while pigeons have seamlessly adapted to urban life, their increasing numbers are disrupting the ecological balance and outcompeting native bird species. "Urban environments create a highly conducive habitat for pigeons due to a confluence of factors," says Bharat Bhushan, honorary secretary of the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS). "Beyond deliberate feeding, cities offer a consistent, readily accessible food supply from discarded human food scraps, spilled grains, and other refuse. Buildings provide ample shelter in various structural elements, including ledges, crevices, ducts, and abandoned spaces, offering protection from predators."

Unlike wild birds that face natural threats, Mumbai's pigeons have no significant predators to regulate their numbers. Their year-round breeding cycle, combined with a safe urban environment, allows them to multiply rapidly. This overpopulation is pushing native species like bulbuls, sparrows, and mynas out of their habitats. "The substantial increase in pigeon populations within urban environments can result in competitive exclusion, where pigeons aggressively outcompete native bird species for essential resources like food, nesting sites, and even territory," Bhushan said. The dominance of pigeons affects not just food availability but also breeding patterns of other birds. "The sheer number of pigeons can overwhelm available food sources, leaving less

for other birds, and their dominance can prevent other species from successfully breeding in preferred locations," Bhushan added. Even natural predators like kites and falcons are too few to control the overwhelming pigeon population. While several factors contribute to this rise, one of the most overlooked is the widespread practice of mercy feeding. Mercy feeding, the practice of feeding pigeons in public spaces, has become a deeply rooted tradition in Mumbai. Many citizens consider it an act of kindness, often influenced by religious beliefs and cultural sentiments. However, experts argue that uncontrolled mercy feeding does more harm than good to the birds. "Urban pigeon feeding, though seemingly kind, fuels overpopulation, creating unsanitary conditions. Artificially inflated populations disrupt local ecosystems and strain city resources," said Praveen Singh Pardeshi, president, BNHS. Pigeons in cities survive largely on food provided by people rather than natural sources. Large gatherings of pigeons at feeding spots lead to overpopulation, dependency, and unnatural changes in their behaviour. Unlike wild birds that forage for food, pigeons in Mumbai are thriving on easy food availability. Public spaces such as Girgaum Chowpatty, Marine Drive, and various railway stations have turned into feeding hotspots. While feeding pigeons might seem like a harmless act, it encourages them to flock in large numbers. This continues even as the authorities and conservationists advise to limit mercy feeding in a bid to maintain a balanced urban ecosystem.

A PETA study on pigeon behaviour found that pigeons breed in direct proportion to the availability of food. Simply put, the more they are fed, the more they reproduce. To address this, awareness campaigns are gaining traction. BNHS, in collaboration with the JSW Foundation, recently launched a documentary titled Mercy Feeding: Pigeon Menace in Urban Areas, highlighting the consequences of excessive feeding. "Feeding pigeons in our cities may seem kind, but it creates serious issues for all of us. Overcrowding disrupts the balance of nature. True care means protecting both people and wildlife," said Sangita Jindal, chairperson of the JSW Foundation.

Pigeon droppings, feathers, and nesting material carry harmful pathogens, including bacteria, viruses and fungi that can cause severe respiratory and systemic illnesses. In densely populated areas where humans and pigeons co-exist, the health risks are amplified. One of the most concerning conditions linked to pigeons is Hypersensitivity Pneumonitis (HP), a severe lung disease triggered by pro-

longed exposure to airborne fungal spores found in dried pigeon droppings. "Both pigeon droppings and feathers affect human health, affecting the lungs the most, resulting in acute, sub-acute, or chronic illness called Hypersensitivity Pneumonitis (HP)," said Dr Sundeep Mestri, Pulmonologist, MGM New Bombay Hospital. The disease starts with a dry cough and lung irritation, eventually leading to permanent lung damage if exposure continues. "In our own experience, Mumbai is witnessing a rise in HP patients, and there are many direct cases where patients share their exposure with pigeons resulting in the cause," said Dr Lancelot Pinto, Consultant Pulmonologist and Epidemiologist, Hinduja Hospital. HP has now become the leading interstitial lung disease (ILD) in India, with ongoing studies by Hinduja Hospital confirming a direct link to pigeon exposure. "The blood tests are positive for pigeon antigens, indicating that patients are generating antibody responses to them," Pinto added. Beyond HP, pigeons also spread Cryptococcosis, a fungal infection that can cause neurological issues in immunocompromised individuals, Histoplasmosis, which leads to lung infections, and Psittacosis, a bacterial infection that mimics pneumonia.

Beyond health hazards, pigeons are notorious for the destruction they leave in their wake. Their highly acidic droppings corrode concrete, metal, and stone, causing long-term damage to historical landmarks, residential buildings, and public infrastructure. Mumbai's humid climate exacerbates the problem, as damp conditions help pigeon droppings stick to surfaces, accelerating decay. Mumbai's heritage sites, including Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus and old colonial-era buildings, suffer from the continuous charge of pigeon droppings. The acidic excreta eat away at stone facades, leading to significant maintenance costs. Even residential buildings face a similar fate, with balconies, air conditioning units, and window sills covered in layers of droppings that harden over time, making cleaning an arduous and expensive task.

To combat the issue, property owners install bird-proofing measures like spikes and nets, but these require constant upkeep, adding to the financial burden. Public spaces and markets face an additional challenge—pigeon feeding sites attract rats and other pests, worsening sanitation and increasing the risk of other disease outbreaks. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation has the authority to fine individuals ₹500 for feeding birds or animals in non-designated areas under the 2006 civic cleanliness and sanitation bylaws, framed under Section 461(ee) of the Mumbai



Municipal Corporation Act, 1888. Similarly, the Thane Municipal Corporation introduced fines for pigeon feeding last year. According to a BMC official, BMC does not have any separate bylaws specific to pigeons; they take action based on the SWM bylaws, which empower them to impose a fine for feeding any animals or birds. However, there is a need for implementation of stricter laws to free the city from the persistent crisis.

Mumbai's attempts to control its surging pigeon population have largely failed, as conventional methods proved ineffective. Trapping and relocation do not work, as pigeons instinctively return to their nesting sites. Poisoning is inhumane and often illegal, while deterrents like spikes and nets require constant upkeep. Before any large-scale intervention, experts emphasize the need to stop feeding pigeons. Nature conservationist Stalin D states, "This is a manmade problem and not natural. At least to start with, there has to be a strict ban on the feeding of pigeons at non-designated spots. Their food issue is taken care of, and the only task they have on hand is to reproduce."

Globally, cities like London and Barcelona have experimented with pigeon contraceptives—special grains that prevent egg fertilization. Such solutions could help Mumbai, but success depends on public cooperation. Uncontrolled feeding continues to fuel pigeon breeding, rendering control measures ineffective. "Birth control pills can also be given under scientific supervision," Stalin added. Experts suggest a multi-pronged approach—public awareness campaigns to educate citizens on the risks posed by pigeons, regulated feeding zones to prevent overpopulation, and architectural changes like sloped surfaces to deter nesting. Additionally, introducing pigeon contraceptive programs and improving waste management can limit their food supply.

How climate change affects India's wheat production

India recorded its warmest February in 124 years this year. The India Meteorological Department has already raised an alarm for March, saying that the month will experience above normal temperatures and more than the usual number of days with heat waves. The period coincides with the beginning of India's wheat harvest season, and extreme heat poses a grave threat for the country's second-most consumed crop, after rice.

Wheat in India, primarily grown in the northwestern parts of the Indo-Gangetic plains. Primary producers include the States of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, and Madhya Pradesh. Wheat needs a cooler season to grow, and the crop is usually sown between October and December. It is harvested between February and April in the rabi crop season.

The Indian government set a wheat procurement target of 30 million tonnes for the 2025-2026 rabi marketing season, news agency PTI reported in January. The lower procurement target comes despite the agriculture ministry aiming for a record wheat production of 115 million tonnes in the 2024-2025 crop year (July-June), the report added. In 2024-2025, government wheat procurement was recorded at 26.6 million tonnes. While this exceeded the 26.2 million tonnes procured in 2023-2024, it fell short of the 34.15 million tonne target for the year. In May 2022, India had prohibited wheat exports. This was shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine, a major wheat-producing country, which disrupted international availability of the food grain and triggered a global price hike. Heat and wheat

Climate variability itself is not a new phenomenon, but it catches our attention when the crop growth season overlaps with heat wave conditions, Sandeep Mahato of the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), Chennai, a 2022 study in the International Journal of Molecular Sciences noted that increasing global warming is causing heat stress that "triggers significant changes in the biological and developmental process of wheat, leading to a reduction in grain production and grain quality." According to the paper's authors, heat stress is known to affect the growth and development of wheat by altering "physio-bio-chemical processes such as photosynthesis, respiration, oxidative damage, activity of stress-induced hormones, proteins and anti-oxidative enzymes, water and nutrient relations, and yield-forming attributes (biomass, tiller count, grain number and size) upon exposure to temperatures above the optimum range".

Stages of wheat growth According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, stages of wheat growth are defined based on how different organs of the plant develop. This can be broadly grouped into four stages: (i) Germination to emergence: This includes the growth of the seed until the seedling breaks through the soil surface and the first leaf emerges.

(ii) Growth stage 1: Steps from emergence to double ridge. Shoots appear, and the plant growth shifts focus from producing primordial leaves to flowering structures called spikelets. (iii) Growth stage 2: This stage lasts from double ridge to anthesis. This is where the focus of the plant shifts from vegetative to reproductive stage. This is also one of the stages where the plant is comparatively more susceptible to heat stress.

(iv) Growth stage 3: This stage includes the grain-filling period, from anthesis to maturity. Optimal temperature required for different stages of growing wheat.

According to experts, the real problem starts with the oceans. The Indian Ocean is warming at an accelerated rate. A 2024 study conducted by scientists at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, noted that the Indian Ocean will likely be in a "near-permanent heat wave state" mainly as a result of global warming by the end of the century. The frequency of marine heat waves is expected to increase tenfold, from the current average of 20 days per year to 220-250 days per year, the study added. A warming Indian Ocean will in turn alter India's monsoon, on which most of the country's agriculture depends. For example, the kharif or summer crop season is starting and ending late, which inevitably delays the beginning of the rabi season. Wheat is a rabi crop. If its sowing starts late, the later stages of plant growth will coincide with early heat waves in India. February 2025 was warmer than usual, and



Farmers rely on older varieties of the crop because accessibility is a challenge, with problems related to the supply chain, costs, etc. Climate-resilient varieties are important, but they are not a silver bullet solution to the challenge, Goveas added:

similar trends have been predicted for March. This is also the peak season for wheat harvest, and ideal temperature in later stages of the plant's growth should not cross 30°C.

"High temperatures cause early flowering and faster ripening, shortening the grain-filling period. This results in lighter grains with lower starch accumulation, reducing the total wheat output," Prakash Jha, assistant professor of agricultural climatology at the Mississippi State University, "Extreme heat causes wheat to develop higher protein content but lower starch, making the grain harder and affecting milling quality. Farmers may face lower market prices due to reduced grain weight and quality issues," he added.

Low crop yield also tends to make farmers desperate and result in overuse of fertilisers, fungicides, etc., Nikhil Goveas, lead climate advisor with the Environmental Defense Fund, told. "Higher but inefficient use of resources is another cascading effect of heat-stress challenges in crops." Food security is central to the adaptation and mitigation strategies officials use to lower the heat stress on wheat crops. "Wheat is ... important for farmers because it can be consumed immediately, so part of the produce is always saved for household consumption," Goveas said.

Farmers rely on older varieties of the crop because accessibility is a challenge, with problems related to the supply chain, costs, etc. Climate-resilient varieties are important, but they are not a silver bullet solution to the challenge, Goveas added. "The problem is a deeper challenge of the climate crisis on our food systems. The earth is getting warmer. We need to think about not just one crop but all crops: get timings right, have our information and weather systems updated with the knowledge of what to expect, and undertake mitigation efforts against the challenges."

"The larger question here is to be able to guarantee food security," Mahato of MSSRF Chennai said. "We have to focus on addressing yield gaps. This ties in the issue of efficient management of resources like fertilisers, pest control, etc." According to Mahato, immediate policy support to farmers to deal with heat stress effects on wheat can be in the form of compensation, but there are more long term solutions that need to be incorporated into our agricultural practices.

"Changes in agricultural management strategies to support early sowing of crops in areas that are likely to see early heat waves, or introducing improved yield varieties with shorter growth duration are some policy changes that can alleviate heat stress on wheat," he added. "There is no compromise that can be done on improving production and that should be the central goal to the adaptation question." Policymakers must take a multi-pronged approach, combining scientific research, financial support, technological solutions, and farmer education to protect wheat crops from rising heat stress," according to Jha. "This includes promoting heat-resistant wheat varieties, adjusting sowing dates, financial support and crop insurance, and weather monitoring and advisories."

The empowerment of India's women with bold policies

In the context of International Women's Day on March 8, it is pertinent to note that India is making notable strides in empowering women, with government policies playing a crucial role in transforming women's access to sanitation, clean water, financial inclusion, and entrepreneurship. These initiatives, paired with broader social and economic changes, are reshaping women's roles in governance, in the workforce, and community leadership across the country.

The journey towards women's empowerment in India took a significant step forward with the launch of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission), an initiative that was aimed not just at building toilets but also at improving the dignity, the safety and the well-being of women across the country. The mission focused on ending open defecation, especially in rural areas, where women faced heightened risks and challenges. According to government data, over 116 million households have benefited from the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), leading to safer, healthier environments and giving women greater freedom and security in their daily lives.

In Rourkela, the Maa Tarini Self-Help Group (SHG) took the initiative to address the sanitation needs of leprosy patients, a marginalised group often excluded from such efforts. By constructing community toilets with enhanced water supply, they provided a safer space for women, improved menstrual hygiene, and promoted dignity. The initiative also incorporated composting activities, generating income for the community while supporting sustainable waste management practices. Building on the SBM's success, the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) was introduced to ensure that every household had access to safe and reliable drinking water. Prior to the mission, only 17% of India's rural households had tap water connections, leading to long hours spent by women fetching water — time that could have been used for education, work, or other pursuits. With the JJM, over 150 million households now have tap water, helping to lighten the daily burdens that women face. The benefits extend far beyond convenience. Studies show that access to water has led to a 7.4% increase in women's participation in agriculture and allied work, particularly in States such as Bihar and Jharkhand, where female labour force participation was historically low. Between 2017 and 2023, rural female participation in the workforce jumped from 24.6% to 41.5%, with the JJM cited as a key driver of this positive change. By freeing women from the daily chore of water collection, this initiative is unlocking new opportunities for economic independence and helping local economies thrive. India's efforts in empowering women through targeted policies and initiatives are not just improving daily life. They are also creating a foundation for future progress. With continued focus on accessible resources, financial inclusion, and breaking down social barriers, India is paving the way for a generation of women to lead and succeed in every area of life. Women-led businesses, financial inclusion India's economic transformation is increasingly being shaped by women entrepreneurs and financial inclusion initiatives, reflecting broader shifts in digital access, policy support, and economic empowerment.

Over 73,000 startups with at least one female director have been recognised under the Startup India Initiative, highlighting a growing presence of women in business leadership. Government-backed financing programmes, such as the Stand-Up India Scheme and Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, have played a key role in this expansion. The Stand-Up India Scheme has sanctioned over ₹53,609 crore in loans for 236,000 entrepreneurs, while Mudra Yojana has sanctioned ₹32.36 lakh crore for 51.41 crore loans, with 68% of the loans going to women. The rapid expansion of digital connectivity is also enabling greater financial inclusion. Initiatives such as BharatNet and the Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) have brought high-speed Internet to 199,000 villages and 2,14,000 gram panchayats, with over 2,47,000 Wi-Fi hotspots established. These digital advancements are giving women greater access to banking services, e-commerce platforms, and business opportunities. Under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, more than 300 million bank accounts have been opened for women, fostering financial independence and economic participation. Women-led enterprises are also



In Rourkela, the Maa Tarini Self-Help Group (SHG) took the initiative to address the sanitation needs of leprosy patients, a marginalised group often excluded from such efforts

making inroads into e-commerce and government procurement. On the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal, women entrepreneurs now make up 8% of the total seller base, with over 1,00,000 Udyam-verified micro and small enterprises (MSEs) securing contracts worth ₹46,615 crore. Digital platforms are proving to be game changers for small-scale women entrepreneurs. Reena Kiran, an entrepreneur from Madhya Pradesh, runs the Girja Devi Jan Kalyan Samiti, a self-help group producing clothing, food products, and household goods. By leveraging the GeM portal, her business expanded beyond local markets, illustrating how technology is bridging the gap between small enterprises and national opportunities.

As India's economy continues to grow, women-led businesses are playing an increasingly significant role, not just in entrepreneurship but also in reshaping the country's economic landscape. Women's representation in governance The representation of women in political decision-making has significantly increased over the years. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has witnessed significant reform, i.e., the implementation of a 33% reservation for women in legislative bodies, which will redefine the corridors of power. Today, women are not merely participants. They are key decision-makers, steering the nation toward a more inclusive future.

At the grassroots level, women have become catalysts for growth, constituting approximately 46% of elected representatives in panchayati raj institutions (PRIs), with over 1.4 million women serving in rural governance roles. The impact of this shift transcends mere numbers. With more women in leadership positions, policies have become more attuned to the priorities of families and communities. Areas such as health care, education, and public safety have seen significant improvements, driven by the unique perspectives and solutions that women leaders bring to the table. This evolution in leadership highlights a broader discourse: when women lead, societies thrive. India's commitment to empowering women in governance not only strengthens democracy but also paves the way for sustainable development and social equity. India has seen significant progress in women's participation across various sectors, from science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and sports to governance and entrepreneurship. Today, women make up nearly 43% of STEM graduates, contributing to the country's growing technical workforce. In 2023, Mr. Modi aptly stated at the G-20 Ministerial Conference on Women Empowerment, "When women prosper, the world prospers." By empowering women through entrepreneurship, education, and financial inclusion, we unlock new opportunities for growth, innovation, and societal progress, driving global transformation. Policies supporting women-led businesses, political representation, and skill development continue to shape economic and social progress. The focus now is on sustaining this momentum, ensuring that progress translates into lasting change for future generations. Natasha Jha Bhaskar is Executive Director at Newland Global Group, Australia's leading corporate advisory firm focused on strengthening India-Australia trade and investment ties. She is also the UN Women Australia and Chief Executive Women Scholar

Towards a joyous smile: advancements in cleft lip and palate treatments



has off-late improved the way we perform NAM. The cleft team can now acquire an instant photo-scan of the babies' oral cavity, prepare a 3-D printed replica and fabricate an NAM device without traumatising the baby by contact. The palate, also called the roof of the mouth plays a crucial role in swallowing and speech. Most often, children begin to utter words around the 10th month of their life and it is during this phase that their palates need to be corrected. Once their cleft palate is anatomically corrected, they have a better chance of learning to pronounce words the right way, often with the help of speech therapy. Innovative assessment tools, such as nasopharyngoscopy and electromyography, enable speech therapists to accurately diagnose and treat velopharyngeal dysfunction (VPD). Newer techniques, including electropalatography and ultrasound bio-feedback, facilitate more effective and targeted treatment of speech disorders associated with cleft palate. The canine teeth are considered the cornerstones of the smile, and need to be in proper alignment in the upper jaw. Unfortunately, due to clefting, they often fail to erupt in a desirable time and position. Alveolar bone grafting involves filling up the bony voids caused by clefting of the upper jaw and this is performed around 8 to 10 years prior to the eruption of the canine teeth, to restore continuity of the jaw bone as well as to facilitate the eruption of the teeth. Although the commonly-used donor site for grafting happens to be the hip bone (Iliac crest), research advances have facilitated the use of bioactive scaffolds, mesenchymal stem cells and growth factors like bone morphogenic proteins (BMP), vascular endothelial growth factors (VEGF) and platelet derived growth factors (PDGF) to enhance outcomes in alveolar bone grafting.

Virtual Surgical Planning (VSP) and Virtual Reality (VR) have revolutionized cleft and craniofacial surgery more than many other sub-specialties at the moment. In general, VSP improves accuracy, reduces operating time, enhances patient safety by identifying potential risks and offers better outcomes. From simulating the cleft lip and rehearsing operations at the skills lab prior to the main surgical theatre, to planning the defect size and bone requirement in alveolar bone grafting, VSP/VR are potentially useful tools for a surgical team. Even the orthognathic surgery, meant to be performed during early adulthood of a cleft patient, could be planned using VSP, and the outcomes discussed with the patient prior to surgery. This provides them with a chance to look at their future faces and decide on alternative approaches rather than accepting whatever is offered. We are of the strong opinion that cleft care involving the integration of AI in VSP along with augmented reality will positively influence the dynamics in a medically strong country like India. These advances will enhance the standard of care in aesthetically and functionally challenging anomalies involving the face.

Managing a cleft baby is an extended commitment for the healthcare industry because the treatment is growth and time-bound, starting from prenatal counselling all the way up to orthognathic surgery and rhinoplasty during adulthood. File photograph Cleft lip and palate, a congenital disorder affecting 1 in 700 live births, is a significant healthcare burden in India. The condition leads to mental agony for the patients and their families. Maternal iron deficiency, alcoholism/smoking, and consanguineous marriages are the most common causes for cleft lip/palate. It shouldn't be surprising to note that all of these fall very much in the realm of preventable factors.

Managing a cleft baby is an extended commitment for the healthcare industry because the treatment is growth and time-bound, starting from prenatal counselling all the way up to orthognathic surgery and rhinoplasty during adulthood. The family is often distressed and confused on seeing the newborn with cleft lip/palate. The onus is on the cleft care team to transform this feeling to hope and clarity as early as possible. Feeding cleft babies requires modified techniques to prevent aspiration, and the parents should be trained appropriately. As soon as the baby attains adequate weight and fitness to tolerate general anesthesia, their lip is surgically corrected, offering the first psychosocial breakthrough. We often find the parents and the family gaining confidence and trust after this phase, and they understand the need to wait for timely interventions in a phased manner.

One must accept that although the anomaly has common presentations to a large extent, every case is different in terms of severity and complexity. Complex clefts are often difficult to repair in a precise manner requiring additional interventions. Nasoalveolar moulding (NAM) is one such innovation to reduce the width of the cleft and enhance the shape of the nose, rendering surgical lip corrections more aesthetic. It involves fabrication of a custom appliance that could be fit on newborns with challenging clefts and distorted noses. Although originally described using conventional techniques employed in dentistry, digital technology

100-day TB elimination campaign far from achieving main objective

The 100-day intensified TB elimination campaign was launched on December 7, 2024 across 455 intervention districts in 33 States and Union Territories to screen and test for TB among people belonging to the vulnerable or high-risk group — diabetics, smokers, alcoholics, people living with HIV, those with TB in the past, geriatric population, house-hold contacts of TB patients. Besides screening people who have TB symptoms, the main intent of the intensified campaign is to use a chest X-ray to screen people for subclinical or asymptomatic TB disease followed by bacteriological confirmation using a molecular test.

"This isn't just about diagnosing patients who show symptoms; it's about finding those hidden cases who would otherwise remain undetected by using Chest X-rays, enhanced with AI, an effective method for screening individuals who may have TB but may not have the classical symptoms of TB," Dr. Vinod Paul, Member of Niti Aayog wrote in an Opinion article in Business Line on March 5, 2025.

As per a February 22, 2025 PIB press release, over 5.1 lakh (0.51 million) TB notifications have been recorded across India. Of the 5.1 lakh total notifications across India, over 3.5 lakh TB notifications are from the 455 intervention districts after more than 10 crore (100 million) vulnerable individuals were screened between December 7, 2024 and February 22, 2025. The detection of over 3.5 lakh TB cases in the intervention districts have been as a "result of accelerated case detection efforts and reduced diagnostic delays", the press release says.

According to data available on the Ni-kshay website, the number of TB cases notified across India from December 7, 2024 to March 6, 2025 is 6,35,035. During the corresponding period last year — December 7, 2023 to March 6, 2024 — 6,34,815 cases were notified across India. Between December 7, 2024 and February 22, 2025, there have been 5,77,676 TB notifications across India, which are more than the 5,10,000 notifications mentioned in the February 22 press release. The increase in the TB notifications on the Ni-kshay website is not unusual as there is generally a 15-day lag for the exact data to get reflected on the website. The number of TB notifications during the corresponding period last year — December 7, 2023 to February 22, 2024 — was 5,33,091. So compared with the corresponding period last year, the total TB notifications even across India has increased by only 44,585 between December 7, 2024 and February 22, 2025. Therefore, it is certainly wrong to attribute all the 3.5 lakh TB cases detected in the intervention districts to accelerated case detection during the 100-day intensified TB elimination campaign. In other words, the government's claim would mean that all 3.5 lakh cases would have been missed in the absence of the accelerated case detection, which does not get reflected in the TB notifications on the Ni-kshay website. The total number of TB notifications across India between December 7, 2024 and March 6, 2025 has been almost the same as the corresponding period last year. While the campaign would have surely picked up more cases, even the increase of 44,585 cases during the period December 7, 2024 to February 22, 2025 compared with the corresponding period last year cannot be ascribed to intensified case detection alone. The reason: aside from the fact that the 44,585 more TB cases notified are across India (788 districts) and not from the 455 intervention districts alone, the number of TB cases notified has been increasing each year in the last few years. From 21,35,830 TB cases notified in 2021, it increased to 24,22,121 notifications in 2022, and then to 25,37,235 notifications in 2023, and 26,18,499 notifications in 2024. As per the National TB Prevalence Survey 2019-2021, 42.6% of TB cases would have been "missed" if a chest X-ray was not used for screening, thus revealing the magnitude of subclinical/asymptomatic TB cases in India. To detect such cases, the campaign claimed that a "new strategy was designed" for early identification of TB by using X-ray for screening people without TB symptoms. Yet, only 38 lakh



of the over 10 crore (100 million) individuals have been screened using X-rays as of February 22, which is just 3.8%. Worse, despite the fact that asymptomatic TB disease cases can be detected only with a chest X-ray, all the 38 lakh people screened using a chest X-ray did not belong to this category. As per the press release, only a "substantial population" of people without TB symptoms were screened with a chest X-ray. Though it claims "several asymptomatic TB patients" are detected, there is no mention of the actual numbers. It is not surprising that only a small fraction of the high-risk population was screened using a chest X-ray. As per the press release, there are just 836 vans equipped with portable X-ray machines to screen the high-risk population in the 455 intervention districts.

Science communication as a catalyst for change

Many of us have heard the story of Sir Isaac Newton discovering the laws of gravity and motion, which are almost a part of global folklore. Because we know that a falling apple helped him unpack the theory of gravitation, we have a reasonable understanding of and trust in the concept of gravity. This has been fundamental to humanity's development in physics and science.

Our understanding and trust in science is key to our progress. Across multiple thematic areas, from drug discovery and vaccine development, space exploration and Artificial Intelligence, genomics and bio-engineering, and medical research and food security, our collective progress is a function of how well we can leverage and enhance our scientific knowledge to create better solutions. As the adage goes: 'to boldly go where no man (or woman) has gone before!' A pivotal role

Science communication serves as a vital bridge, linking scientific knowledge with the wider public audience and building our trust in science. By disseminating scientific knowledge and new breakthroughs in an accessible and engaging manner, science communicators can empower citizens, inspire innovation, and expand possibilities for the future. Take a few use cases. First, effective science communication is paramount to promoting public health. By educating the public about health risks, preventive measures, and available treatments, science communicators can help reduce the incidence of diseases and improve

All you need to know about: Hantavirus



According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), hantaviruses are a family of viruses that can cause severe, potentially fatal illnesses. These viruses lead to life-threatening diseases, including hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS), a severe respiratory illness, and hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome (HFRS), a condition characterised by internal bleeding and kidney failure. The recent passing of Betsy Hackman, wife of renowned American actor Gene Hackman, has drawn attention to this deadly virus. Although cases are rare, the severity of the illness makes understanding its spread, symptoms, and treatment options crucial.

How does hantavirus occur?

Hantaviruses are a family of viruses carried by certain rodents, such as deer mice, white-footed mice, rice rats, and cotton rats. According to the CDC, humans typically contract hantavirus through contact with infected rodent urine, droppings, and saliva. The most common way the virus spreads is through aerosolisation, when fresh rodent waste is disturbed, the virus particles become airborne and can be inhaled. This often happens during activities like sweeping infested areas, cleaning long-closed spaces such as sheds, or handling contaminated materials. Additionally, hantavirus can enter the body if a person touches their eyes, nose, or mouth after handling contaminated materials or if the virus enters an open wound. Though extremely rare, the virus can also spread through rodent bites. They do not typically transmit from person to person, although rare cases of human-to-human transmission have been reported with certain strains, such as the Andes virus.

What are the signs and symptoms?

According to the World Health Organisation's manual,

hantaviruses are a family of viruses with several strains exhibiting varying degrees of severity. The infection typically progresses in two stages. The first phase, known as the "prodromal phase," appears one to eight weeks after exposure. It begins with flu-like symptoms such as fever, chills, muscle aches (often in the thighs, hips, and back), fatigue, headaches, and abdominal pain. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea may also occur. The second phase, which signals the onset of HPS, brings more severe symptoms. These include a sudden shortness of breath, coughing, and chest tightness as the lungs fill with fluid. This stage can escalate quickly, causing acute respiratory distress and, in some cases, heart failure. Without prompt medical intervention, the condition can be fatal.

Who is at risk?

Those at higher risk of contracting hantavirus include people who live or work in areas where rodent populations are more prominent. This includes farmers, construction workers, and those involved in cleaning old or unused spaces. Campers and hikers who come into contact with rodent nests or droppings are also vulnerable. Even homeowners dealing with rodent infestations need to be cautious, as everyday cleaning tasks can unknowingly stir up contaminated particles. The CDC also emphasizes that children under five, pregnant women, and individuals with weakened immune systems should avoid handling pet rodents, as they have a higher risk of serious illness.

What are the treatment options?

Currently, even though there is no specific antiviral treatment or cure for hantavirus, medical care focuses on managing symptoms and supporting the patient through the most dangerous phases of the illness. In cases of HPS, patients are often given oxygen therapy to ease breathing difficulties. Severe cases may require intensive care, including mechanical ventilation to assist lung function. Since no direct medication exists, early detection is vital. Those who experience flu-like symptoms after potential rodent exposure should seek medical attention immediately, as quick intervention, such as oxygen support, can prevent the progression of severe respiratory distress. Prevention remains the most effective way to combat hantavirus. Keeping homes and workplaces rodent-free by sealing entry points, safely disposing of food and garbage, and wearing protective gear when cleaning areas with rodent activity can significantly reduce the risk.

Government focused on providing preventive, curative, palliative, rehabilitative healthcare: Nadda

The Centre is focused on providing healthcare that is preventive, curative, palliative and rehabilitative, Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda said Inaugurating the third "International Symposium on Health Technology Assessment (ISHTA 2025)" at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, Mr. Nadda emphasised the vision and commitment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in strengthening India's healthcare system and ensuring accessible and affordable healthcare for all.

He highlighted the critical role of Health Technology Assessment (HTA) in advancing evidence-based policymaking to build an efficient, equitable and high-quality health system, aligned with the goals of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). Mr. Nadda highlighted that the "government is focused on providing healthcare, which is preventive, curative, palliative and rehabilitative". He informed that the Centre has laid an emphasis on primary, secondary as well as tertiary healthcare. He noted that 22 state-of-the-art AIIMS have been established till now and there has been a substantial increase in the number MBBS and MD seats, along with a rise in the training of paramedic and nursing staff. Mr. Nadda said the



Union government will add 75,000 seats in the medical sector, with 30,000 seats already created last year. The Health Minister noted that HTA India resource centres are spread over 19 states and these serve as an important mechanism for priority setting and have helped immensely in achieving various health goals, such as for tuberculosis (TB) detection, optimising healthcare costs and incorporating evidence-based data in national health programmes.

On the occasion, Mr. Nadda released several key resources, including the Open Real-Time PCR Kit for Diagnosis of Pulmonary Tuberculosis (Quantiplus @ MTB FAST Detection Kit developed by Huwel

Lifesciences), the HTA Technologies Compendium, the HTA Costing Database as well as the Patent Mitra initiative. "With the launch of these flagship initiatives, our country is taking a significant leap towards supporting our innovators. This platform is designed to provide crucial support to scientists, researchers and institutions, ensuring that their groundbreaking works are protected through patents and made available to the public through seamless technology transfer," he said.

Mr. Nadda also highlighted that the "Medical Education Patent Mitra" initiative of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) aligns with the Med Tech Mitra initiative, a testament of the ICMR's com-

mitment to advancing medical innovation. He concluded his address by saying that HTA helps in reinforcing the Centre's commitment to providing inclusive, affordable, equitable and accessible healthcare for all. "HTA will play an important role in the realisation of Viksit Bharat by 2047, as envisaged by our prime minister," he said. The event was organised by the Department of Health Research (DHR), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) India Country Office and the Centre for Global Development (CGD). This year, the theme of the symposium was "Bridging Evidence to Policy: Health Technology Assessment for Affordable Healthcare".

overall health outcomes. In a country such as India, where communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, and dengue fever tend to spread fast, and there is an increasing burden of non-communicable diseases (such as cancer and diabetes), clear and accurate health communication can enable citizens to focus on preventive health and wellness to make us more efficient and productive. Second, communicating clearly about dynamic new developments (such as in biotechnology or Artificial Intelligence) can open new avenues for entrepreneurs, start-ups, and new businesses. When people understand these emerging new opportunities, they are more than willing to experiment with them to set up new ventures. This has the potential to further open new lines of businesses, sometimes even setting up entirely new industry sectors. Third, science communication can help foster a culture of scientific literacy and innovation, inspiring students and youth to learn and research more in these streams of knowledge. An institutionalised culture of curiosity can further inspire new streams of education and learning and open new vistas for humanity's progress.

One example of science communication driving economic progress is the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). Through effective public communication, ISRO has garnered widespread support and international recognition for its space missions, such as Mangalyaan (Mars mission) and Chandrayaan (moon mission). These achievements have not only boosted national pride but have also

attracted investments in the space sector and allied industries. Global examples also highlight the impact of science communication on development. The 'Science for Africa' initiative has successfully engaged communities on sustainable agriculture, health, and technology, leading to improved livelihoods and development outcomes. In the United States, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration has effectively communicated its scientific endeavours, leading to increased funding, public support, and economic benefits from space exploration technologies. In Germany, 'Science Year' campaigns have promoted public engagement with science and technology, driving innovation and economic growth. Underprioritised in India's education system unfortunately, however, science education in India does not prioritise science communication. So, scientific advancements might not always translate into progress opportunities, since they are not adequately and relayed on time to the wider public. Among other challenges, this has the potential to lead to: a lack of knowledge, understanding and trust in new and emerging science-based innovations and solutions; the spread of incorrect perceptions and beliefs, which lack robust evidence, and can potentially lead to incorrect or even harmful behaviour by individuals and communities; the promotion of policies and decision making that are not supported by accepted science which can have negative consequences for the broader society, and also acceptance of false claims, assumptions and misinformation as facts and truth.

India-EU FTA talks set to resume today amid Trump's tariff threats



GNS News Agency, March 11

India and the European Union (EU) will start the 10th round of negotiations for a bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on Monday, with a clear deadline for its top leadership to finalise the pact by this year-end. While the issues that were holding up the progress remain, the global tariff war set off by the US, change in approach of India to import duties reinforced in the latest budget and flexibility shown by EU on matters of carbon tax and related matters could push negotiations much further in this round, according to experts.

The 10th round of talks in Brussels from March 10 to March 14 comes immediately on the heels of top-level engagement between the two sides with the European Commission's President Ursula von der Leyen and a full college of commissioners visiting India late last month for detailed talks on the entire spectrum of the relationship. For India, the EU is as big a market as the US with bilateral goods trade of \$190 billion. While there is a lot of uncertainty on what a Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) with the US would entail, talks with the EU have been going on since 2022 in the current phase. From the Indian side, the concerns centre around agriculture, duties on wines and automobiles, and flexibility on movement of professionals for services delivery. "While both sides seek to expand trade, differences persist over scope of tariff reductions, regulatory barriers, and market access across agriculture, labour-

intensive goods, and wines and the automobile sector. While the EU seeks tariff elimination on over 95 per cent of its exports, India may be willing to open not more than 90 per cent of its market," founder of Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) Ajay Srivastava said. In agriculture, the EU is pushing for India to cut tariffs on cheese and skimmed milk powder while it imposes high duties and very tough standards. Even if tariffs are reduced, the EU's regulatory framework will remain a major hurdle for Indian farmers and food producers.

The EU wants India to cut duties on wines to 30-40 per cent from 150 per cent. India has offered 50 per cent duties in its trade deal with Australia and this might be repeated for the EU. The duty cuts in labour intensive sectors can come very early on in the deal. Currently, India's textile exports to the EU face tariffs between 12-16 per cent, making Indian products less competitive compared to exports from countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam, which enjoy preferential market access under EU trade agreements. In auto, EU manufacturers want India to cut import duties on completely built-up (CBU) vehicles to 10-20 per cent, down from the current 100-125 per cent. The EU already exports over \$2 billion worth of automobiles and auto parts to India annually, with most arriving in completely knocked-down (CKD) form, which face a 15 per cent tariff when assembled locally. India has previously refused to lower auto tariffs for Japan and South Korea under its existing FTAs. "A potential middle ground may involve allowing a limited number of European cars to enter India at lower tariffs," Srivastava said. The EU imposes restrictions on remote online service delivery and does not recognise India as a data secure country, thereby restricting data flows. In services, European firms are seeking greater access to India's banking, legal, accountancy, auditing, and financial services sectors. To these old issues new ones have been added through the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) or carbon tax. India has asked for exemption for small and medium enterprises from the obligations of CBAM. At the 2nd Trade and Technology Council (TTC) meeting, both sides agreed to address the challenges that the small and medium businesses will face due to CBAM.

How continuing fall in the secondary market is impacting IPO activity

The domestic stock market has been reeling under heavy selling pressure for the past few months. Benchmark indices, Sensex and Nifty, have lost nearly 13 per cent from their peaks touched in September last year, eroding nearly Rs 79 lakh crore of investors' wealth. A sharp correction in the secondary market has impacted the initial public offering (IPO) fundraising plans of companies. Over two dozen companies that received IPO approval from the market regulator, SEBI, have yet to launch their offerings. These companies are waiting for the market to stabilise before they proceed with their IPO fundraising plans. A slump in the secondary market also lowers retail investors' interest in the primary market.

According to data obtained from Prime Database, 26 domestic companies received approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) between April-December 2024 and are yet to hit the primary market. These companies have plans to raise Rs 42,390 crore through IPOs. A company has a 12-month period to launch its IPO after receiving approval from the market regulator. The prolonged delay by companies in launching their IPOs can be attributed to the current market volatility, characterised by weakening investor confidence due to concerns over tariff wars and lacklustre corporate earnings with incessant selling by foreign investors adding to the market woes.

"Companies that received approval from October 2024 onwards, which is when the selloff started, till December 2024 are perhaps hoping that market conditions will improve for them to launch their IPO," said Pranav Haldea, Managing Director, PRIME Database Group. Some of the big IPOs that have received SEBI's nod between October and December 2024 and are yet to launch the offer are Schloss Bangalore Ltd (Rs 5,000 crore), Ather Energy Ltd (Rs 4,500 crore), Avanse Financial Services Ltd (Rs 3,500 crore), Manjushree Technopack Ltd (Rs 3,000 crore) and Ecom Express Ltd (Rs 2,600 crore). Besides, there are a few companies that have received regulatory approval between April-September 2024 and still have valid approvals include National Securities Depository Ltd (Rs 3,000 crore), S K Finance (Rs 2,200 crore), Kalpataru Ltd (Rs 1,590 crore), Asirvad Micro Finance Ltd (Rs 1,500 crore) and Belstar Microfinance Ltd (Rs 1,300 crore). These companies seem to have missed the window to launch their IPO, Haldea said.

The sluggish IPO activity follows a robust IPO fundraising by companies in 2024. In the last calendar year, 91 companies raised Rs 1.6 lakh crore through IPOs. The number of small and medium enterprises (SME) IPO touched a high of 240 compared to 182 in 2023, as per Prime Database. Secondary market correction

Ola stocks tumble on reports of raids, regulatory issues

New Delhi: Shares of EV company Ola Electric on Monday fell by nearly 4 per cent, following reports of raids, vehicle seizures, and showroom closures linked to the company. Reports suggested that the electric two-wheeler manufacturer is facing regulatory issues and has received warning letters from the government for allegedly violating rules under India's Motor Vehicles Act. Due to customer complaints, transport authorities in multiple States have reportedly conducted raids, shut down showrooms, and seized vehicles.

The company has also received show-cause notices regarding these alleged violations, the report added. However, an Ola spokesperson dismissed these claims, calling the reports "prejudiced" and "misplaced." The company stated that its distribution centres and warehouses across India follow the guidelines of the Motor Vehicles Act and that it maintains unregistered vehicles at these locations in compliance with the law. Following these reports, Bhavish Aggarwal-led company's stock faced fresh selling pressure, dropping over 4 per cent to touch an intra-day low of Rs 54.11 per share on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). The stock was close to its 52-week low of Rs 53.71, which it reached last week on March 3 amid speculation that the company is planning to lay off over 1,000 employees to reduce losses.

Since the beginning of 2025, Ola Electric's stock has declined by 36 per cent and currently trades over 60 per



Reports suggested that the electric two-wheeler manufacturer is facing regulatory issues and has received warning letters from the government for allegedly violating rules under India's Motor Vehicles Act.

cent below its peak since its listing in August. As per available data, only about 100 out of 3,400 showrooms had the trade certificates required under India's Motor Vehicles Act. This indicates that over 95 per cent of the reviewed showrooms lacked the necessary certification to display, sell, or offer test rides for unregistered vehicles. At least six transport officials are reportedly investigating Ola Electric for potential violations.

Nitin Gadkari blames faulty DPRs, poor civil engineering for increasing road accidents



Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said the Indian Road Congress, the premier body for road & highway standards in India, has become a "pleasure trip organisation". (Express File Photo by Rohit Jain Paras) Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said the Indian Road Congress, the premier body for road & highway standards in India, has become a "pleasure trip organisation". Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said that road accidents and fatalities in India are increasing and "the most important culprits are civil engineers", substandard detailed project reports (DPRs), consultants, and concessionaires.

In his address at the two-day Global Road Infratech Summit & Expo (GRIS), Gadkari said: "The most important culprits are civil engineers. I do not blame everybody, but after 10 years of my experience, I have come to this conclusion. Culprit are those who are making DPRs. Because of small civil engineering mistakes, there are hundreds of deaths." He further said that even though there are mistakes, no one is held accountable. "Even small things

like the road signages and marking system are very poor in the country. These can be copied from countries like Spain, Austria and Switzerland and implemented here," Gadkari said. He also said that the Indian Road Congress (IRC), the premier body for road & highway standards in India, has become a "pleasure trip organisation". "Our people are taking advantage of IRC. It is just a part-time organisation, pleasure trip organisation. You need continuous research and find out what is best available in the world and on the basis of that you have to recommend us. Now my target is how many person I am going to suspend, how many contractors to blacklist... Nobody is ready to rectify the mistakes," said Gadkari. He said that the industry and the government should collaborate to find solutions for building safer infrastructure in place of just holding seminars and discussions.

KK Kapila, president-emeritus, International Road Federation (IRF), said that the theme of the summit- "Vision Zero: Sustainable Infratech and Policy for Safer Roads"- represents a holistic approach to road safety, combining the latest technological advancements with innovative practices to create safer roads for everyone. "By prioritising safety in every aspect of road design, construction, and management, this theme seeks to move towards a future where road accidents become a rarity, ultimately aiming for zero fatalities," said Kapila. Dheeraj Mishra is a Principal correspondent with The Indian Express, Business Bureau. He covers India's two key ministries- Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Road Transport & Highways. He frequently uses the Right to Information (RTI) Act for his stories, which have resulted in many impactful reports. ... Read More

For capex, CPSEs rely more on budgetary support, less on own resources & private capital

Concerns have been raised within sections of the government about the shift in investment pattern of central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) away from their own resources and private capital to higher budgetary support for undertaking capital expenditure. It is learnt that two departments of the government have flagged concerns about the substitution of Internal and Extra Budgetary Resources (IEBR) of CPSEs, which fund their capex, with an increasing reliance on higher budgetary outlay in the form of equity and loans from the government in key infrastructure sectors, especially telecom, railways, and road and transport sector. While the greater reliance on taxpayers' money through the Budget for fixed asset creation in the key infrastructure sectors is being seen as a positive sign in some quarters, this trend is also being viewed as restricting space for the CPSEs to carry out their own capex plans. It is also at variance with what was envisaged through the National Infrastructure Pipeline, sources said. For instance, for the road sector, 38 per cent share was planned via private capital for CPSEs such as National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). However, the IEBRs mobilised by such entities have come down progressively in the last five years. "One of the reasons for reduction in IEBRs could be the increasing indebtedness of certain public entities like NHAI," a source said.

The reduction in resource mobilisation by the CPSEs on their own and through the private sector is being seen as a reason of concern for the infrastructure sectors, especially the roads sector, sources said. They pointed out that the IEBR in NHAI has been brought down to nil in financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24 and there seems to be no reversal in stance of the resource mobilisation from higher budgetary outlay. The budgetary outlay support from the government had come after a sharp rise in NHAI's debt liabilities. NHAI's debt had risen from Rs 23,797 crore in March 2014 to Rs 3.48 lakh crore in March 2022. Its debt servicing as a share of total allocation was 25 per cent in FY22.

The Standing Committee on Transport (FY22) had at that time noted that high budgetary support alone may not be sufficient to meet the investment requirements of NHAI. The Committee had recommended that the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways may work towards resolving the apprehensions of the private sector which are limiting their participation in the road transport sector in the last few years, by working in close coordination with concessionaires and financial institutions. Queries sent by The Indian Express to the Ministry of Finance on this issue went unanswered. The IEBRs mobilised by CPSEs came down progressively from Rs 6.42 lakh crore during FY20 to Rs 3.63 lakh crore in FY23 to be met by budgetary support. While it was estimated to come down further to Rs 3.26 lakh crore in FY24 as per the revised estimates, IEBRs then picked up to Rs 3.89 lakh crore as per actual figures. In FY25, it is estimated to have slipped to

Investment in CPSEs through budgetary support in the form of equity and loans has meanwhile more than doubled in the five years beginning from FY20. Budgetary support through equity and loans for CPSEs has risen by over 150 per cent from Rs 2.10 lakh crore in FY20 to Rs 5.48 lakh crore in FY25 (revised estimate) and Rs 5.35 lakh crore in FY26 (budget estimate). Experts and market players have been raising concerns about the change in the

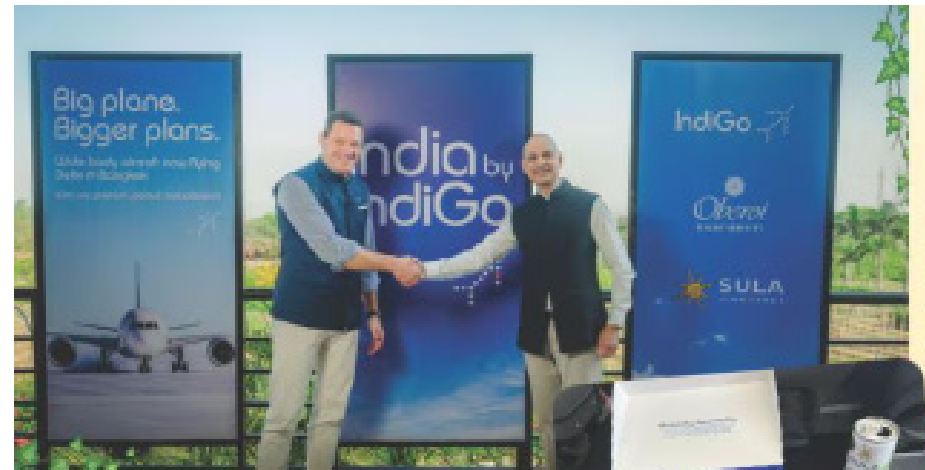


capital investment strategies of public sector entities, especially in the context of higher dividend payouts to the government. In a note in October 2024, brokerage Motilal Oswal Wealth Management had said the approach of CPSEs towards capital allocation has raised concerns among investors. "The high dividends suggest a lack of focus on reinvesting for future growth. The government pressures PSUs to prioritise dividend payments over capital expenditures, which hinders their long-term development potential," it said. In a separate note outlining the reasons for the decline in PSU shares last year, Bajaj Broking said the backing by the government for PSEs has helped them in several ways but also results in limited autonomy. "The limited control also prevents the companies from making prompt decisions, which negatively impacts their performance and efficiency. However, on the other side, private enterprises enjoy full autonomy and are more flexible. Further, government policies and regulations, like pressuring the PSUs to offer and enhance dividend earnings, also limit a company's capacity for long-term growth, capital expenditure, and more," it said. Mergers and acquisitions among PSEs, as was seen earlier in the case of ONGC-HPCL deal, also adversely impact the cash reserves of PSEs, which then leaves less amount with such entities for incurring fresh capex. Capital expenditure includes two components — spending by line departments and ministries along with gross budgetary support (GBS) to CPSEs. The investment by CPSEs is financed through budgetary support provided by the Central government, which is part of gross budgetary support. IEBR are raised by CPSEs on their own. Internal resources include retained profits net of dividend to government, depreciation provision and carry forward of reserves and surpluses. The EBR consists of receipts from issuance of bonds, debentures, external commercial borrowings, and term loans from financial institutions. IEBR is below-the-line expenditure which is not included in the fiscal deficit calculation of the government since it is an expenditure in the books of the CPSEs and not the Budget. Aanchal Magazine is Senior Assistant Editor with The Indian Express and reports on the macro economy and fiscal policy, with a special focus on economic science, labour trends, taxation and revenue metrics. With over 13 years of newsroom experience, she has also reported in detail on macroeconomic data such as trends and policy actions related to inflation, GDP growth and fiscal arithmetic. Interested in the history of her homeland, Kashmir, she likes to read about its culture and tradition in her spare time, along with trying to map the journeys of displacement from there.

Now, Sula Vineyards brings Indian wines for passengers aboard IndiGo's wide-body aircraft

This collaboration is a part of IndiGo's ongoing efforts to showcase the best of Indian brands and offer an elevated travel experience to its international passengers. This collaboration is a part of IndiGo's ongoing efforts to showcase the best of Indian brands and offer an elevated travel experience to its international passengers. Passengers flying on the Delhi-Bangkok-Delhi route aboard IndiGo's newly-launched wide-body aircraft can now enjoy Sula's wines, as Sula Vineyards has joined hands with low-cost Indian carrier as the official beverage partner.

Starting March 1, this collaboration is a part of IndiGo's commitment to bringing Indian flavours to



the global platform, said the airlines. According to as release by IndiGo, the initiative offers an elevated travel experience to its international passengers with its specially curated beverage selection that features Sula's signa-

ture Chenin Blanc and Red Zinfandel wines, both served in eco-friendly cans.

Expressing his enthusiasm for the partnership, Rajeev Samant, CEO of Sula Vineyards, said: "This

collaboration marks a significant milestone in bringing India's finest wines to a wider audience. We are proud to partner with IndiGo to introduce Sula in Cans aboard its widebody flights.

Rohit Sharma confirms he's not going anywhere, proud of India being a 'bloody good team'



GNS News Agency, March 11

Rohit Sharma, Champions Trophy final India's captain Rohit Sharma kisses the winners trophy after defeating New Zealand in the final cricket match of the ICC Champions Trophy at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. At the end of a 20-minute press conference where Rohit Sharma addressed the questions with the trophy by his side, he paused and made a final statement: "One more thing... I'm not going to retire from the format, just to make sure that no rumours are spread moving forward. Thank you so much." India defeated New Zealand in a nervy Champions Trophy final, and Rohit's side made it back-to-back ICC titles.

The Champions Trophy came on the back of an international season that saw India lose the Test series to New Zealand at home and then in Australia, where Rohit dropped himself for the last Test. Speculations have been rife about his future since then. But through the course of this unbeaten Champions Trophy campaign, Rohit has gone about showing he still has enough gas in the tank. And in the final, he finished with a match-winning knock of 76 that wonderfully set up the chase for India. His future in the ODIs aside, as Rohit sat down for the press conference, he appeared every bit a proud captain. He attributed it to the collective ef-

fort of the side, where everyone has put their hand up and has ticked their roles to perfection. "If you want to win a tournament championship, it is very important for everyone to contribute. There are some matches where individuals win, but to win a tournament, everyone needs to perform together. In this tournament, we have seen that from the first match till now, all the boys have contributed. If you see from number 1 to 11, the boys who have got the chance to bat or bowl, they have contributed in their own way."

India's captain Rohit Sharma poses with the winners trophy after defeating New Zealand in the final cricket match of the ICC Champions Trophy at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Sunday, March 9, 2025. (AP Photo) India's captain Rohit Sharma poses with the winners trophy after defeating New Zealand in the final of the ICC Champions Trophy. Coming into the tournament, India took the big decision to demote KL Rahul from No 5 to 6 and the wicketkeeper responded by staying unbeaten in three of the tricky chases to guide them home including the final against New Zealand on Sunday. "When we discussed about KL's batting position, we discussed quite deeply how calm he is when he is batting. The pressure doesn't get to him. We wanted that calmness in the middle somewhere. Also, we wanted to use a left-hander in the middle. That actually worked out both ways for us. KL has been doing a lot of challenging work for the team for so many years now. I am very happy with how he managed to pull this tournament and bat it in the pressure situation, both in the semifinals and this game as well. The contribution may not be 70-80, but those 30-40s are very important," Rohit added.

On Sunday when Rahul walked in, India were once again in a spot of bother. But like he did against Australia, he took the calculative risks by attacking the spinners, which he again did here to keep the required run rate in

check. "When you are chasing, running the ball at the back end, it can get tough, it can get difficult. But with KL being there, we know that he has got that mind where he keeps himself calm and keeps the dressing room also very calm. So, I am very happy with how he managed in this tournament and really happy for the contributions that he made for the team," Rohit said. India's captain Rohit Sharma poses with the winners trophy after defeating New Zealand in the final cricket match of the ICC Champions Trophy at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. (AP) India's captain Rohit Sharma poses with the winners trophy after defeating New Zealand in the final cricket match of the ICC Champions Trophy at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. (AP)

Since their defeat to England in the semifinals of the T20 World Cup in 2022, India have gone about with a different approach in white-ball cricket. With Rohit leading the way at the top with his aggressive intent, India's high-risk approach has paid off in each of the last three ICC tournaments where they have made it to as many finals. "Someone was telling me in these ICC tournaments, we have lost only one game in the last three ICC tournaments that we have played. So, it is a great milestone to have, honestly speaking. And that speaks about the kind of team this is. So, I know we did not win the World Cup. We lost that final. But then we went to World 20 and not lost a single game and went on to win the trophy and here as well. So, it shows a lot of quality in the team, a lot of depth, a lot of understanding within the group, a lot of enjoyment, a lot of excitement. And that is how we want to play our cricket. And that is what we had spoken before the tournament began. We wanted to enjoy," he added. Another statement stood during the press conference too, as he spoke about the recent successes of his team: "India is a bloody good team."

Wasim Akram, Shoaib Akhtar share disappointment over absence of PCB official at CT 2025 final presentation



GNS News Agency, March 11

India's captain Rohit Sharma receives the white coat from BCCI President Roger Binny during the presentation ceremony of the ICC Champions Trophy after their win against New Zealand at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. (Photo: AP) India's captain Rohit Sharma receives the white coat from BCCI President Roger Binny during the presentation ceremony of the ICC Champions Trophy after their win against New Zealand at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Former Pakistan cricketers Wasim Akram and Shoaib Akhtar expressed their disappointment due to the absence of Pakistani representation in the presentation ceremony of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 final in Dubai. On Sunday, Rohit Sharma-led team India beat New Zealand by four wickets in the final to lift their first 50-over ICC title in 12 years at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

There was no one from PCB or Pakistan's cricket official presence in any form for the Champions Trophy final despite Pakistan being the host. "As far as I know, Chairman Saab (PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi) wasn't well but the people that came from there (PCB) were Sumair Ahmad Syed (Chief Operating Officer of PCB) and Usman Wahla (Director of International for PCB) but no one was there on the stage," said a fairly disappointed Akram on the Dressing Room show after the event. "We were the host, weren't we right? How come even the COO of PCB or whoever it may be who was representing Chairman Saab, why weren't they on stage? Were they not invited? I don't know what is the story. It definitely looked odd to me while sitting here. Pakistani, koi na koi stage par khada hona bahot jaruri tha. Chahe wo cup na de, chahe wo medal na de but somebody should've been there. (It was imperative that Pakistan should have had representation in any form)," added Akram. Akhtar, meanwhile took to X, formerly Twitter to show his dismay. He said, "India have won the ICC Champions Trophy. There was one odd thing: no one from the Pakistan Cricket Board during the presentation ceremony. Pakistan were the host of the Champions Trophy, but there was no representative of Pakistan who was standing. No one was there to present the trophy. It is beyond me. Think about it. The tournament was hosted by us, but there was nobody there. Feeling very down to see that."

Jay Shah, the chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC), gave the Champions Trophy to the victorious captain, Rohit. Roger Binny, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) chief, presented the champions' white blazers. Devajit Saikia, BCCI secretary, was among the other dignitaries on stage. India did not travel to the host country Pakistan, citing security reasons and played all its group games, the semi-final and the final, in Dubai.

ICC Champions Trophy – How Shreyas Iyer & KL Rahul, played their contrasting roles to perfection in landmark Indian triumph

GNS News Agency, March 11

KL Rahul and Shreyas Iyer are two cricketers, in absolute contrast to each other, who have been immensely vital to India's ICC Champions Trophy triumph. Both have their detractors, but without them this win wouldn't have been possible. Even in the final, their contrasting approaches stood out but entirely in character – Shreyas taking a couple of risks that would have got him out, and Rahul going the other way by eschewing risks altogether. But the truth is that both played their roles to perfection.

Shreyas, who doesn't take risks and doesn't counter-attack, is of no use to this Indian team; else he would be Rahul. Rahul who doesn't avoid risks is of no use to this Indian team; else he would be Shreyas. When Shreyas charged out and nearly holed out to deep midwicket – it just about crept over the rope for six with a desperate Will Young trying his best to haul it back – that exactly was his job description. Stun the opponents with chutzpah. When Rahul looked aghast at Axar Patel, who had thrown his wicket away, with such utter disappointment – almost betrayal – that suggested 'why?!', it was entirely in character.

Shreyas Iyer, Champions Trophy India's Shreyas Iyer plays a shot during the ICC Champions Trophy final cricket match between India and New Zealand at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. (AP) That's the best thing about both players – they stay in character and rarely stray from that. And to think Shreyas once nearly gave up cricket in his teenage days because he wasn't selected for a Mumbai under-age tournament. A few years back, we were at his parents' home in a Mumbai suburb where he grew up, and it was his mother Rohini who brought that moment up, dragging her husband Santosh in the conversation. "You remember Santosh, he came and sat on that same couch (pointing at the one we're sitting on). He was about to cry," Rohini said. The father couldn't help himself but carry on with the theme, and said he even suggested to Shreyas that he can stop playing cricket.

"But he got angry and said, 'Papa, how can you even say that?'" Santosh recalled. It was then that Santosh took matters into his own hands, opting to take him to a sports psychologist, Mugdha Bavare. The teenager stabilised, got back his love for the game and plunged himself back into cricket. Similarly, Rahul had his moment at a television show hosted by director Karan Johar, where he became the collateral damage along with Hardik Pandya. When Pandya's childhood coach Jitender Singh had reached Hardik's home at 7.30 am after he was sent back from Australia post the controversy, he found Hardik sitting on a sofa with his sunglasses on. India's KL Rahul poses with the winners trophy after defeating New Zealand in the final cricket match of the ICC Champions Trophy at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai.

'I just wish Rohit Sharma had won this in Lahore': Ajay Jadeja on India's Champions Trophy 2025 triumph

GNS News Agency, March 11

Former India cricketer Ajay Jadeja said had India won the Champions Trophy in Pakistan, it would have been an even more special win, beyond just the sports for the Men in Blue. India beat New Zealand in the final of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 at the Dubai International Ground on Sunday night and speaking on the Dressing Room show, the former India captain, Jadeja said, "I was just wishing that if India had won this in Lahore, it would've been even better. It would've been a victory beyond just the sport."

He also praised all the



fans around the world for turning up for the global tournament. "Shoutout to the fans as well because every player that I've talked to who's been there, they've enjoyed being there. The people of Pakistan have also come out in numbers. Their team didn't do as well as they would've liked, but they've still kept that thing, and it's been a happy mo-

ment and a great tournament," he added. Meanwhile, swing king Wasim Akram also heaped praises on the Indian team and said this 'team would have won anywhere in the world'.

"This Indian team would have won it anywhere in the world. Yes, there were a lot of talks, but once decided that India would play all of their matches in Dubai

Axar Patel: 'When we're all under pressure, Hardik Pandya is the most confident guy'



GNS News Agency, March 11

Axar Patel and Hardik Pandya India's Axar Patel and Hardik Pandya during a practice session ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 final cricket match between India and New Zealand, in Dubai.

Axar Patel has lauded Hardik Pandya's confidence after India's Champions Trophy triumph in Dubai on Sunday. India registered a four-wicket victory over New Zealand in the Champions Trophy final at the Dubai International Stadium. "Jab hum sabki fatt jati hain, tab Hardik Pandya sabse jyada confident hota hain (When we're all under pres-

sure, Hardik Pandya is the most confident guy)," Axar told Star Sports. Axar Patel also lauded the coach Gautam Gambhir and captain Rohit Sharma for their decision making throughout the tournament.

"I believe that the decision taken by the captain (Rohit Sharma) and the coach (Gautam Gambhir) was made after a lot of thought, and today, when the results are in, it is truly a cause for celebration," he said. "Aur kaptani ki baat kare to obviously unko pata hai ke kis player ko kahan pe use krna hai aur wo hi ek ache kaptan ki khaasiyat hoti hai. Haat me trophy hai usse zyada kaptani ki kya tareef kare. 2 baar ICC me lagatar champion bana diya hai (And when it comes to captaincy, he (Rohit) knows exactly where to use each player – that is the hallmark of a great captain. With the trophy in hand, what more can one say about his captaincy? He has led the team to become ICC champions consecutively)," he added. Axar has also explained the reason why India picked five spinners for the Champions Trophy. "When we were coming to the tournament, everyone felt that we had too many spinners, and there was even talk that we had 4-5 spinners, why do we need so many spinners. "But today, when you look at the results, and even after the first two matches, everyone must have realized how important that decision was."

Hardik Pandya on India not travelling to Pakistan: 'This is way above my pay grade'

GNS News Agency, March 11

"This team enjoys each other's company and success. It is not an individually driven team. It's Team India," he told reporters. "We all believe that everyone can finish the game or do something magical. We have all come together for one goal; if you score zero, it doesn't matter as long as the team is winning." The Indian all-rounder also thanked the fans in Pakistan and addressed the query about India not travelling to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy. He said, "I am sure Pakistani people living in Dubai must have enjoyed our performance. The question of why we didn't go is way above my pay grade." India's Hardik Pandya plays a shot during the ICC Champions Trophy cricket match between India and New Zealand at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Sunday, March 2, 2025. (AP Photo) India's Hardik Pandya plays a shot during the ICC Champions Trophy cricket match between India and New Zealand at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Sunday, March 2, 2025. (AP Photo) "I have always put the team above myself. It doesn't matter if Hardik Pandya does well or not, but the team must do well. This mindset has helped me face hardships and taught me not to run away from challenges." If

challenges are tough, throw punches. Keep fighting. Don't leave the battlefield. If you give up, you won't learn and grow. "It's like fielding; if you dive, you will be able to stop the ball. If you don't, you will never understand the outcome." India vs Pakistan Champions Trophy 2025 match saw Hardik Pandya dismiss Babar Azam, but what stole the spotlight was his ?6.9 crore Richard Mille watch. Find out more about his luxury watch collection and its unique features. India vs Pakistan Champions Trophy 2025 match saw Hardik Pandya dismiss Babar Azam, but what stole the spotlight was his ?6.9 crore Richard Mille watch. Find out more about his luxury watch collection and its unique features. (Source: BCCI/X) Hardik has played the role of India's second seam bowler in the tournament. On his bowling, Pandya said, "Lately, bowling has become very close to my heart. If Hardik Pandya is bowling, then I don't have to worry about my batting. My bowling takes care of my batting." When asked about his six-hitting prowess, he said, "I have liked hitting sixes since I was 14 years old. But back then, I didn't have the strength. Now I have the power. The years of hard work are paying off at the right time." Pandya also reflected on the 2017 Champions Trophy loss against arch-rivals Pakistan in the final. He said, "

Harry Brook pulls out of IPL again: 'Playing for my country remains my priority and focus'

GNS News Agency, March 11

R Ashwin on Harry Brook England's Harry Brook walks off the field after losing his wicket during the first T20 cricket match between India and England at Eden Gardens in Kolkata, India, Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2025.

Harry Brook has pulled out of the Indian Premier League (IPL) for the second season running, citing the need to prepare for his commitments with the national team. Harry Brook was bought by Delhi Capitals for Rs 6.25 Crore in the mega auction in November. "I have made the very difficult decision to pull out of the upcoming IPL," Brook said in a statement.

"I apologise unreservedly to the Delhi Capitals and their supporters. I love cricket. Ever since I was a young boy, I have dreamt of playing for my country, and I am extremely thankful to have the opportunity to play the game I love at this level. "With the guidance of people I trust, I have taken the time to seriously consider this decision. It is a really important time for England cricket, and I want to fully commit to preparing for the upcoming series. In order to do this, I need time to recharge after the busiest period in my career to date. "I know not everyone will understand, and I don't expect them to, but I have to do what I believe is right, and playing for my country remains my priority and focus. I remain hugely grateful for the opportunities I have been given and the support I receive." Brook's decision might not sit well with the Delhi Capitals, who had re-signed him after he pulled out last year, following the death of his grandmother.

Actor Govinda says James Cameron offered him Rs. 18 crores for Sam Worthington's 'Avatar' role



Govinda added that the body is the only instrument an actor has. "At times, some things appear very appealing professionally, but you also have to see their effects on your body. Sometimes, you have to keep apologizing to people for years for saying no to a film; even if they are close, they have very strong egos."

Meanwhile, in the same interview, Govinda opened up about why he joined politics, stating that many people in Bollywood conspired against him. "I went through a defamation phase, and it was pre-planned. They wanted to remove me from the industry. I understood that these were all educated people and that I, an uneducated outsider, had entered their space. So they started playing games with me. I can't take their names; I am still surviving because of the work I did in the industry. When conspiracies against me began, there were even attempts on my life," the actor said. Govinda also claimed that many people wielding guns were caught outside his house and that plans to eliminate him were being schemed. "After these conspiracies, my nature changed. I thought, whether or not I engage in politics, this is how things are," he added. Further, the Bade Miyan Chote Miyan-star opened up on a major misstep in his career: refusing a ₹100 crore film. "I looked at myself in the mirror and even slapped myself for making that choice. I thought, 'You must be crazy; this money could have secured your future.' The role was similar to what works in films today." The star, however, emphasised that one needs to stay true to themselves. "Being honest with yourself and listening to your inner voice is crucial," he added.

Actor Govinda, in a recent interview, has revealed that filmmaker James Cameron offered him the lead role in his blockbuster film Avatar, a role which was eventually played by Sam Worthington. Further, the actor claimed that it was he who suggested the title of Avatar to the Titanic maker. In an interview with veteran actor Mukesh Khanna for the latter's YouTube channel, Govinda shared how he met Cameron through a businessman he met in the US. "He asked me to do a film with James, and so I invited them for dinner to discuss it. I gave him the film's title - Avatar. James told me that the hero in the film was handicapped, so I said I was not doing the film. He offered me Rs 18 crore for it and said I would be required to shoot for 410 days. I said that is okay, but if I paint my body, I will be in the hospital."

Vicky Kaushal film races past Gadar 2 record, heads to Rs 700 crore mark

Chhaava Box Office Collection Day 24: 2025's only blockbuster, Chhaava, has been successfully running at the box office even in its fourth week. The film's Telugu version was released on 7th March and has only helped the Vicky Kaushal and Rashmika Mandanna starrer to grow further at the box office. On its fourth Sunday, Chhaava saw a dip in its collection in India amid the Champion Trophy 2025 final match between India and New Zealand. Both the versions together earned Rs 11.5 crores, while the Hindi version collected Rs 9 crores, the Telugu version raked in Rs 2.5 crores. Chhaava's total nett collection in India now stands at Rs 520.55 crores.

The Hindi version has collected a total of Rs 512.3 crores, and on its opening weekend, the film's Telugu version earned a total of Rs 8.25 crores. Chhaava's gross India collection is Rs 607.6 crores. Worldwide, the Vicky Kaushal starrer has earned Rs 698 crores, with its global collection at Rs 85 crores. While Chhaava is Vicky Kaushal's highest grosser, it is Rashmika Mandanna's second highest grosser after Pushpa 2: The Rule. Rashmika's last three releases - Animal, Pushpa 2 and Chhaava have earned over Rs 3,000 crore combined. With Chhaava reaching Rs 698 crore mark, it has already eclipsed Sultan (Rs 614 crore) and Gadar 2's (Rs 691 crore) lifetime collections. Chhaava's overall occupancy in Hindi was 18.90 percent, while the overall occupancy for the Telugu version being 28.79 percent. Chennai leads with 38 percent occupancy for the Hindi version with 33 shows. Pune had an occupancy of 36.25 percent with 511 shows. The Hindi occupancy in Mumbai



was 26.75 percent with 965 shows, while in Delhi, the Vicky Kaushal starrer's occupancy was 12.50 percent with 1070 shows. As for the Telugu version, Mahbubnagar had the highest occupancy of 53.50 percent with just 4 shows running. The occupancy in Kakinada was 46 percent, with 14 shows. With 313 shows, Chhaava's occupancy in Hyderabad was 30.75 percent. Overall in Telugu, Chhaava has a total of 710 shows running in South India. The film originally had its theatrical release on 14th February. Directed by Laxman Utekar and produced by Maddock Films, Chhaava also stars Divya Dutta, Ashutosh Rana, and Akshaye Khanna in important roles.

'Took a photo of Mammooty's feet,' reveals actor Anumol recalling working with him in Manorathangal: 'Wanted to study how he uses his body'

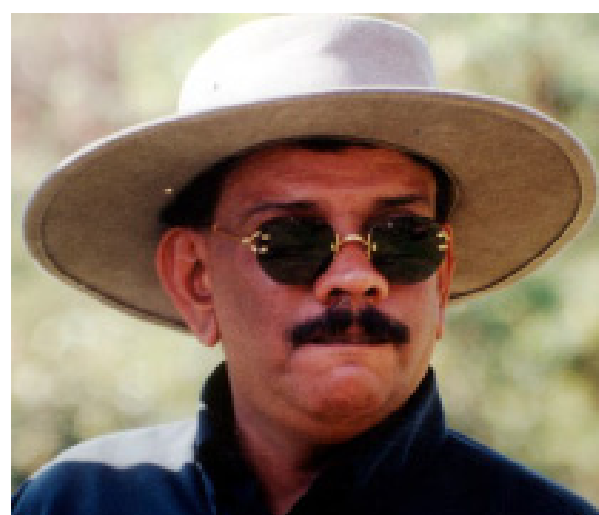


Actor Anumol also praised Mammooty's work ethic, noting that despite his immense experience and seniority, he approaches every shoot with enthusiasm and energy. Actor Anumol recently shared her experience working with Mammooty in the anthology streaming series Manorathangal. (Credit: Facebook/@AnumolOnline, @Mammooty)

Mammooty has not only ruled Malayalam cinema, alongside his contemporary Mohanlal, as an indomitable superstar for the past four decades but has also captivated audiences with numerous spectacular performances, cementing his status as one of the finest actors in the country. With an extensive repertoire filled with brilliant movies and remarkable performances, he has also inspired countless young talents over the years, many of whom eventually found their way into the world of cinema. Recently, actor Anumol shared her experience working with Mammooty, whom she has always admired and cherished, in the segment Kadugannawa: Oru Yathra Kurippu from the anthology streaming series Manorathangal (2024). "Before that, I had only seen Mammookka (Mammooty) on screen. Since the film used sync sound, whenever the

shoot started, everyone not involved in the scene would be asked to leave. But I remained glued to the monitor so that I could watch him perform. I wanted to understand how he used his body for the character," she shared during a chat with Can Channel Media. Cinema Anatomy | Sreenivasan: The star Malayalam actor-screenwriter whose movies propelled legends like Mohanlal and Priyadarshan to greater heights. She also praised the megastar's work ethic, noting that despite his immense experience and seniority, he approaches every shoot with enthusiasm and energy - unlike many younger actors, including herself, who, she admitted, might occasionally feel lazy. "These qualities have all contributed to his superstardom and enduring legacy," she added. Anumol further revealed that she even took a photograph of Mammooty's feet while working with him. "I wanted to study everything - his acting, his dressing and even the way he moves his hands and feet while performing. No one will believe this, but I once took a photo of his feet. I was constantly observing him from head to toe," she said. Manorathangal consists of nine segments, each based on short stories by veteran writer-filmmaker MT Vasudevan Nair, serving as a tribute to the Jnanpith awardee.

When Priyadarshan announced he is stepping away from comedy films: 'Ridiculed and not taken seriously'



One of the most accomplished and influential directors in Indian cinema, Priyadarshan has gifted the film industry with several timeless movies, besides playing a key role in shaping the careers of stars like Mohanlal and Akshay Kumar. Although he has explored various genres over the years, comedy has remained his forte, with several of his films - such as Mazha Peyyunnu Maddalam Kottunnu (1986), Thalavattam (1986), Vellanakalude Nadu (1988), Chithram (1988), Vandanam (1989), Kilukkam (1991), Hera Pheri (2000), Hungama (2003), Hulchul (2004), Garam Masala (2005) and Bhool Bhulaiyaa (2008) - widely regarded as some of the finest comedies in Indian cinema.

However, did you know that Priyadarshan once contemplated stepping away from comedy films entirely? Yes, you heard that right. In 1997, shortly after the release of his Mohanlal-starrer Chandralekha, he announced that it would be his final full-fledged comedy. While he acknowledged that his future projects might still feature humour, Priyadarshan declared that he had lost interest in making pure comedies. This decision came despite Chandralekha

being a box-office blockbuster. "Chandralekha will be my last comedy film. Hereafter, my films will have humour but no comedy. I am not interested in comedy any more. I just wanted to make one comedy and prove to people that I still can make one and make it successfully," he shared during a chat with Rediff in 1997. Cinema Anatomy | Sreenivasan: The star Malayalam actor-screenwriter whose movies propelled legends like Mohanlal and Priyadarshan to greater heights. This was also the period when Priyadarshan transitioned to making more serious films such as Kaalapani (1996), Virasat (1997), Saat Rang Ke Sapne (1998), Kabhi Na Kabhi (1998) and Doli Saja Ke Rakhna (1998). Reflecting on this shift, he said: "However good the comedies are, nobody will accept a good comedy director as a good director. That is the sad part of it. Nobody knows who directed the Laurel and Hardy movies. They know only Laurel and Hardy. Directors will never get a good name if they direct a comedy film."

"But it is the most difficult thing to do - to make people laugh. After laughing a lot, they (the critics) will brush aside the film as 'just another comedy'. I felt bad when I learnt I was not taken seriously and ridiculed, even after all those hits," he remarked, suggesting that film critics had largely been unfair to him. "Most of them hide their faces and laugh a lot but they criticise the films later on. They feel that if they appreciate a comedy, they may become intellectually inferior." ICYMI | When Srividya opened up about her romantic relationship with Kamal Haasan, revealed the reason behind their breakup: "I felt that my life was over." In fact, during the same conversation, Priyadarshan also expressed his desire to blend arthouse aesthetics with commercial filmmaking. "I'm trying to make films in my own formula. I am trying to build a bridge between an Adoor Gopalakrishnan movie and an Amitabh Bachchan action film. Yes, my canvas is commercial, but in a new, different format. It may look like an art film, at the same time the content is that of a commercial film. A shot of Shyam Benegal inspires me a lot. I wonder why a film of David Dhawan cannot have a shot like that."

Hailey Bieber breaks silence on 'liking' TikTok video mocking Selena Gomez and Benny Blanco

Hailey Bieber breaks silence on 'liking' TikTok video mocking Selena Gomez and Benny Blanco. Hailey Bieber is shutting down claims that she liked a viral TikTok allegedly shading pop star Selena Gomez and her fiancé, Benny Blanco. Hailey Bieber is shutting down claims that she liked a viral TikTok allegedly shading pop star Selena Gomez and her fiancé, Benny Blanco. A rep for the Rhode founder told Page Six the accusation is "completely false." Hailey and Selena have long been pitted against each other by fans, largely because of their history with Justin Bieber. But Hailey's making it clear there's no bad blood on her end toward the Emilia Pérez star. Hailey Bieber's rep clarifies Selena Gomez video controversy: "This never happened." Hailey's rep told the outlet in a statement Sunday. They also criticised the TikTok creator's claims, calling them "fabricated by a content creator looking to capitalise off of an old, tired narrative." Justin and Selena had an on-again, off-again relationship for nearly eight years before splitting in 2018. Shortly afterward, the Baby crooner proposed to Hailey, and they got married in September of that year. The couple also welcomed their first child, Jack Blues Bieber, in August 2024. Over the years, both women have tried to shut down the ongoing feud rumours. Back in March 2023, Selena publicly defended Hailey on social media after she received "death threats and such hateful negativity" online. In return, Hailey has also shown support for Selena through her online actions, whether it was liking her post with Benny Blanco or thanking the Love On singer for having her back.

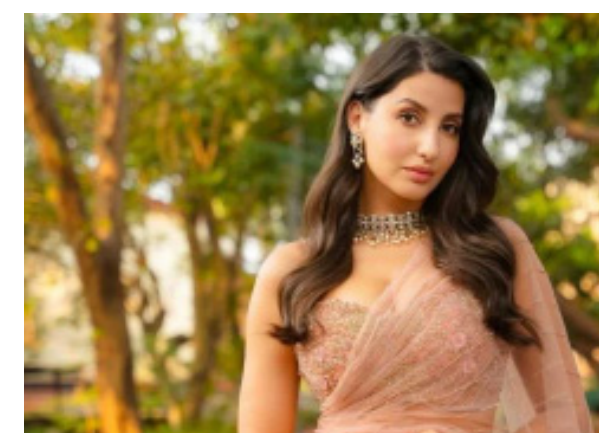
A TikTok creator named @courtneypresto recently posted a video on February 14, criticizing Selena Gomez and Benny Blanco's cover shoot for Interview Magazine. This person described their shoot as "the WORST" and admitted the video was "a little shady" towards Selena. "I



genuinely can't decide which is the worst" and "I had to look at these photos so you do too," the netizen remarked.

Shortly after, @courtneypresto claimed that Hailey Bieber had "liked" this video, suggesting that Hailey was secretly continuing a feud with Gomez. "Hailey Bieber herself liked my TikTok. Don't necessarily come for me in the comments, but I was being a little shady to Selena Gomez. It was about these pictures, which they knew everyone was gonna have some type of reaction to," Courtney said in a follow-up post. In December 2024, Selena got engaged to music producer Benny Blanco. Hailey appeared to show support by "liking" Selena's engagement announcement on Instagram. However, according to the TikToker, Hailey's alleged action was "definitive proof" that things weren't as friendly between them as Hailey had previously claimed. This claim was blatantly refuted by Hailey's rep.

Nora Fatehi says actors ran paid PR campaign to declare her 'done', recalls confronting one: 'Stay in your lane'



Nora Fatehi, known for her electrifying dance numbers in the Hindi film industry, recently opened up about how several actors have used her name to promote themselves. She revealed that some even paid their PR agencies to compare their performances with hers, implying they had replaced her. Nora recalled confronting an actor who had spoken behind her back. Speaking to BBC Asian Network, she said, "They would go and pay their PR agencies and ask them to put their and my picture together with the caption, 'Nora is done. I am the new Nora.' Don't do that. That's ridiculous. Just because I don't have anyone to call you and ask you not to do that, doesn't mean that you can ride over me. Stay in your lane and be respectful."

Nora also shared how she made a strong comeback after dealing with an injury. "So, when I was sitting with the ankle injury and reading that Nora is done, I was like okay wait till my ankle is healed, let me show you. And I swear I wasn't fully recovered from the injury when I performed 'Payal.' I thought we need to send a message before

2025 comes in." Nora starred in Honey Singh's music video, titled "Payal," last year. Acknowledging the competitive nature of the industry, Nora admitted that "everyone is trying to take everyone down." She pointed out that while people might be sweet to her face, they often work behind the scenes to replace her. When asked how she deals with such two-faced behaviour, she revealed, "I do confront them sometimes. I confronted a girl who was talking about me. I will not be a pushover or a doormat." Nora also spoke about being deceived by an agency that made her audition for a role while secretly pushing another actress for the same project. "They told me they hadn't heard back, but then they got another girl locked for that part. They made me sit for months wondering what was happening," she said. She eventually decided to drop the agency.

Akshay Kumar sells Mumbai apartment for Rs 4.35 crore

Bollywood star Akshay Kumar recently sold his apartment in Borivali East, Mumbai for Rs 4.35 crore. According to the website of the Inspector General of Registration (IGR), the transaction was registered in March 2025. The transaction incurred a stamp duty payment of Rs 26.1 lakh. Akshay's property located in Sky City is developed by Oberoi Realty. It is a ready-to-move-in residential project offering 3BHK, 3BHK+Studio, and Duplex apartments. According to IGR documents reviewed by Square Yards, Akshay Kumar purchased the apartment in November 2017 for Rs 2.37 crore. As per the documents, the actor's apartment has a carpet area of 1,073 sqft (99.71 sqm) and includes two car parking spaces.