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Thunder showers to bring relief from heat wave in Telangana between March 20 and 24

Hyderabad: Hyderabad and parts of Telangana can expect a reprieve from the ongoing heat wave like conditions between March 20 and 24. Given the hot summer conditions for the coming one week, temperatures will rise steadily and are expected to touch 40 degree Celsius to 44 degree Celsius. However, weather forecaster from Hyderabad, T Balaji, said that people in Hyderabad and elsewhere in the State, who have been suffering from heat wave, can look forward to some relief in the form of summer thundershowers. "The suffering from heat wave will continue till March 19. However, between March 20 and 25, a super respite from the ongoing heat wave due to strong unseasonal thunderstorms, which are ahead in Telangana State," Balaji on Friday posted on X (formerly Twitter).

'Pallaki Utsavam', 'Maha Abhishekam' mark Sri Gaura Purnima at Hare Krishna Golden Temple

Hyderabad: Sri Gaura Purnima festival marking the transcendental appearance of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was celebrated at the Hare Krishna Golden Temple on Friday. A special 'alankara' of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu adorned the altar followed by darshan for all visitors. Devotees offered 56 varieties of delicious items to the Lord as 'Chappan Bhog' including sweets, fruit juices among others.

'Pallaki Utsavam' of Sri Sri Gaura Nitai was celebrated followed by 'Sri Sri Nitai Gauranga Ashtottarasata (108) Kalasha Maha Abhishekam' in the midst of vedic hymns and mantra chantings followed by a special 'pravachan'.

CM Revanth Reddy's Delhi trips draw flak amid water crisis in Telangana



GNS News Agency, March 14

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao lambasted Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for neglecting Telangana's pressing issues of irrigation and agriculture, while making frequent but fruitless trips to Delhi. "Crops are withering, farmers are suffering, and irrigation remains

unreviewed, yet the Chief Minister indulges is busy with unofficial media interactions in Delhi," he remarked. He mocked Revanth Reddy's visits, stating that despite visiting Delhi for 39 times, the latter gained no tangible benefits for Telangana, except for self-promotion in front of the media. Questioning the relevance of the Chief Minister's relations with Con-

gress leadership, he asked what did Telangana gain from Revanth Reddy's relationship with Rahul Gandhi. "People are feeling betrayed, but instead of addressing their concerns, you are busy in Delhi," he rebuked. Unable to fulfill electoral promises, he said Revanth Reddy was indulging in political rhetoric in an attempt to cover up incompetence.

Governor celebrates Holi festival



Hyderabad, March 14 (NSS): Governor Jishnu Dev Varma celebrated the vibrant festival of colour, Holi, with children of Raj Bhavan employees, along

with officials and staff members on the premises of Raj Bhavan here on Friday.

On the joyous occasion, the Governor extended warm Holi greetings and conveyed his best wishes to the people of Telangana for a season filled with happiness, harmony, and the spirit of togetherness. (NSS)

Holi celebrations engulf Hyd



Hyderabad, March 14 (NSS): Holi festival was celebrated with much fervour and gaiety across the State today, including the State capital Hyderabad. This time, each area celebrated the Holi in its own style. People danced to the songs and had a great time. Without any distinction between young and old, everyone gathered in one place to celebrate the festival of colours. They joyfully splashed colours on each other.

On one side, colours were flying as they danced to the music, the youth danced and were lost in the joy. They enjoyed the Holi celebrations in various places, including Begumpet Country Club and People's Plaza on Necklace Road.

The youth created a buzz at People's Plaza on Necklace Road. The entire area turned lively as family members and friends splashed colours on each other. The music added more energy to their enthusiasm. The upbeat DJ songs got everyone moving. In Begum Bazaar, the youth danced and celebrated the Holi by splashing colours and cheering each other. In every lane, young people were seen dancing to DJ songs and rain dances. In Kukatpally, the Holi festival was celebrated in a grand manner. Both girls and boys had a great time. At Nampally Exhibition Grounds, the Holi celebrations were on another level. The youth

danced to the DJ songs and created a lively atmosphere. Amidst the joy, the Holi celebrations took place at Osmania University. The OU students participated and danced in the festival of colours. Thousands of students participated in the events organized near the Arts College, joyfully splashing colours. They created a lively atmosphere with their dances to the DJ songs. This time, the police were very alert during the Holi celebrations.

The reason for this is that the second Friday of the ongoing holy month of Ramadan also came on the same day. Such a day occurred 35 years ago. During the holy month of Ramadan, the Muslims pray with great reverence. However, the Muslim elders say that if colours are splashed on mosques, it tarnishes their sanctity. With the Holi festival coinciding with such an occasion, the police were on high alert. They have taken strict measures to prevent any untoward incidents, as even a small incident could have repercussions not only in Hyderabad but also in other areas. (NSS)

Mercury levels rise in Telugu States



Hyderabad, March 14 (NSS): The State is experiencing intense heat wave conditions since the past few days. Across the State, maximum temperatures are being recorded above 40 degrees in March alone, which is 3.3 degrees higher than normal. The Hyderabad Meteorological Centre officials stated that the severity of the heat was particularly high in the northern districts of Telangana and added that there was a possibility that the maximum temperatures could exceed 42 degrees in the next two days. The impact of the heat along with hot winds will be significant in the districts of Adilabad, Kumuram Bheem, Mancherial, and Jagtial. Yellow warnings have already been issued in these districts. Due to the likelihood of the maximum temperatures reaching 42 degrees on Saturday, yellow warnings will also come into effect in seven more districts starting Saturday. The Meteorological Department official mentioned that the temperatures were being recorded up to 39 degrees in the State capital and surrounding areas. On the other hand, the Heatwave conditions are likely to prevail in Coastal Andhra Pradesh Yanam and Rayalaseema regions of neighbouring AP during the next 48 hours. The Meteorological Centre said on Friday that the maximum temperatures would gradually rise by 2 to 3 degrees celsius in Coastal Andhra Pradesh Yanam and Rayalaseema during the next five days.

PM Modi likely to re-launch Amaravati capital works next month

GNS News Agency, March 14

Amaravati: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit Amaravati next month to re-launch the capital city works. The Telugu Desam Party-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in the state has already decided to invite the Prime Minister for the resumption of works for the construction of the greenfield capital city. The ceremony is likely to be held between April 15 and 20. Officials said the state government will finalise the date after consultation with the Prime Minister's Office. The works are likely to resume from Uddandarayunipalem, the place where the foundation



stone was laid by Prime Minister Modi on October 22, 2015, when the TDP was in power in the state.

Few development works were undertaken by the state government. However, the works came to a halt after the TDP lost power in 2019 as the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) gov-

ernment headed by Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy decided to develop three state capitals. The YSRCP government announced that Visakhapatnam will be developed as the administrative capital, Kurnool as the judicial capital, and Amaravati as legislative capital.

BRS leaders urge police to initiate action against CM Revanth for his filthy words against KCR

Hyderabad, March 14 (NSS): Medchal district BRS party president & MLC Shambipur Raju Qutbullapur MLA Vivekanand Goud and Malkajgiri MLA Marri Rajashekhar Reddy today lodged a complaint to Petbasheerabad police station Station House officer requesting him to initiate action as per law against Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for making violent and provocative comments against the first chief minister of Telangana State and BRS party supremo Kalvakuntla Chandrasekhar Rao at a programme held in Ravindra Bharathi on Thursday during distribution of appointment orders on March 12. They said while addressing the masses during the event, CM Revanth Reddy made a disturbing remark about the KCR stating: "From stretcher to stretcher and then from stretcher to Mortuary tomorrow morning he will go." The statement is derogatory, crossing the line of political discourse. Such inflicting speeches promote violence and hatred between political parties, specifically affecting the workers and supporters of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi party. Such a vulgar comments from a Chief Minister are alarming and affect the sentiment, comments such as these have the potential to inflame tensions within the State. This inflammatory language could incite both political and communal unrest, leading to an escalation of conflict between party supporters and disturbing the peace, harmony and stability of Telangana.

"The language used by Revanth Reddy is disrespectful and also dangerously divisive. It fuels hatred and violence, stirring up anger among party workers and creating an atmosphere of unrest, fear and instability. Comments and remarks of this nature cannot be tolerated in a democratic society, where respect and constructive dialogue should guide political discussions. We urge you to take swift action against these statements as they not only undermine the sanctity of political discourse, but also risk the safety and well-being of Telangana's citizens. It is essential to take measures to prevent such rhetoric from becoming normalized in public debate, as it only serves to deepen division and enmity within the State. The peace and democratic values of Telangana must be preserved by ensuring such reckless comments are not allowed to go unchecked. We request immediate intervention and necessary actions to address these provocative remarks to ensure the safety and harmony of the people of Telangana", they added. (NSS)

Illegal trafficking of Bangladeshi girls into City, six get jail for life

Hyderabad, March 14 (NSS): Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Hyderabad Zonal Office, has provisionally attached assets worth Rs 1.90 lakh under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 in connection with two cases of immoral trafficking rackets operated by Bangladeshi nationals in and around Hyderabad.

ED initiated investigation on the basis of two FIRs registered by the Telangana Police and subsequently re-registered by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), Hyderabad. Telangana police had conducted raids at two brothels on the outskirts of Hyderabad and busted an organized syndicate of prostitution and immoral trafficking, operated by Bangladeshi nationals, leading to registration of FIRs at Chatrinaka and Pahadishareef PS. Investigation by the NIA, Hyderabad revealed that most of the arrested accused were Bangladeshi nationals, who had illegally entered India without valid travel documents. They had obtained fake/forged Indian identity documents and despite arrests in other FIRs, continued to engage in prostitution and illegal trafficking of Bangladeshi girls. The victim girls were trafficked into India with the help of various agents active on the Indo-Bangladesh border, through illegal border crossings in West Bengal, on the false pretext of better paying jobs in beauty parlours, tailor shops, steel factories, housemaids and so on and later forced into flesh trade. The NIA Special Court awarded life imprisonment to all six accused in one of the FIRs.

ED investigation revealed that the accused were running brothels at various places in and around Hyderabad and were also sending the victim girls to other brothels and agents on commission basis. Using fake/forged Indian identity documents, the accused opened several bank accounts and online wallets for their illegal activities. For trafficking the Bangladeshi girls and others, the accused were paying around Rs 4 to 5 thousand per person to agents/middlemen abutting the Indo-Bangladesh border in West Bengal, which was shared between various parties involved in the trafficking on either side of the border. ED investigation revealed that payments for the trafficking of the Bangladeshi girls were made through banking channels and also in cash to the agents. To conceal the money trail, the accused used money transfer services of various financial intermediaries, sharing only their mobile numbers for the remittance. To evade detection, the transactions were systematically



structured into small payments below regulatory threshold limits. Substantial part of the Proceeds of Crime (POC) were found to be remitted to multiple persons abutting the Bangladesh border in West Bengal, who withdrew the money in cash and handed it to other hawala agents who ensured the remittance of the money to the families of the accused and the victim girls in Bangladesh, at times also using bKash (the mobile financial service of Bangladesh Bank). The assets attached by ED are in the form of balance amounts in Paytm wallets and bank accounts as well as immovable property of one of the accused Ruhul Amin Dhali, who was revealed to be one of the most prominent agents involved in the illegal trafficking of Bangladeshi girls into India. (NSS)

TGPSC releases Group-3 results

Hyderabad, March 14 (NSS): The results for Group-3 have been announced in Telangana. The Telangana Public Service Commission (TGPSC) announced these results on Friday, which include the general ranks and marks of the candidates who took the exams in November of last year. The final answer key, master question papers, and OMR sheets for the Group-3 examination are now available for download on the official website. A total of 5,36,400 candidates applied for 1,365 Group-3 positions in the Telangana State.

KTR slams Revanth Reddy over secret meetings with BJP leaders

Hyderabad, March 14 (NSS): BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao has strongly criticized Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy for allegedly holding secret meetings with BJP leaders to safeguard his position. In a scathing attack on social media platform X, KTR accused Revanth Reddy of indulging in "backdoor politics" while publicly pretending to oppose the BJP.

KTR labelled Revanth Reddy as a "Cheap Minister" instead of a Chief Minister and challenged Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to take action. "Rahul Gandhi keeps talking about BJP infiltrators in Congress. Does he have the courage to act against his own CM, who is striking secret deals with the BJP?" KTR questioned. He also accused the Congress party of engaging in a "dirty political culture" where leaders prioritize their power over public welfare. He claimed these secret meetings were part of a larger conspiracy to destabilize Telangana's progress.

"It is shameful that a Congress CM is holding secret meetings with BJP leaders. Telangana has never seen such treacherous politics," KTR remarked. "Congress has a history of creating divisions among people for its political survival, and this is yet another example." Expressing his outrage, KTR criticized the Chief Minister for ignoring pressing State issues, including the agrarian crisis and student suicides in residential schools.

"Farmers are struggling, students are suffering, and yet the CM does not have time to hold review meetings. But he has enough time for these secret discussions with BJP leaders. This is an unpardonable betrayal," KTR stated.

KTR also pointed out that BJP MLA Raja Singh's recent statements had exposed Revanth Reddy's alleged backdoor dealings with the BJP. "The CM pretends to fight BJP in public while secretly colluding with them. This is exactly what Congress politics is all about," he added.

KTR warned that the people of Telangana would not tolerate such "ugly politics" and would reject both BJP and Congress, which he described as "two Delhi-based parties that do not understand Telangana's interests. This State has come too far to be dragged into the dirty tricks of Congress and BJP. Telangana society will fight back and ensure that these conspiracies fail," KTR asserted. (NSS)

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Pak in grip of terror

Notorious for sponsoring cross-border terrorism over the decades, Pakistan is now itself struggling to rein in terrorist groups. There has been an alarming surge in terrorist attacks on Pakistani soil in recent months, with the Jaffe Express hijacking in Balochistan being among the most audacious. The security forces killed all the hijackers, who belonged to the proscribed Balochistan Liberation Army, and rescued the majority of the train passengers, but the multi-agency operation is unlikely to deter separatists who are seeking independence for their mineral-rich province. The brazen targeting of Army, police and intelligence personnel by militants is clearly aimed at undermining the authority of the Shehbaz Sharif-led government and the military establishment.

Raising the bogie of the 'foreign hand', President Asif Ali Zardari has said that the authorities are aware of the external support and funding being received by terrorists to inflict human and financial losses on Pakistan. The allusions to India and Afghanistan, two neighbours with which Islamabad's relations are either in deep freeze or going from bad to worse. At stake are Pakistan's ties with its all-weather ally, China. Balochistan, bordering Iran and Afghanistan, figures prominently in the Chinese scheme of things. It accounts for a significant part of Beijing's \$65-billion investment in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which falls under President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road initiative. Prioritising Chinese interests, Pakistan has failed to allay Baloch concerns about rampant exploitation of the province's resources. This has emboldened insurgents to target Chinese citizens and projects as well. Pakistan's Kashmir fixation has blinded it to its own problems. If the beleaguered nation wants to be seen as a victim rather than a perpetrator of terrorism, it must reach out to aggrieved groups and stop blaming foreign players.

Former MLA Challa is a couple in the Arunachala field

Parakala, March 13, Indian Chronicle: "Former MLA Challa Dharmareddy - Jyoti couple visited the Swami on Thursday and then visited the Swami. Former MLA Challa Dharmareddy said that he was happy to visit the Lord Parameswara, who was in the form of Arunachalam in the form of Arunachalam fire



Gangadhar bhai helping hand geaved to the poor people

"Indian chronicle, March 11. Medak. "In the Medak district narsapur constituency one of the famous Congress leader Gangadhar helping hand geaved to the poor people. Gangadhar helping to pelli kuturlaku kalyana sutraas almost 500, and also his helps to free education providing valantires in villages Gangadhar makes many social voluntary schemes sponsoring in the Medak district, Gangadhar down to worth person in the Medak district, he is one of the most popular bahujana leader in the entire narsapur constituency and also Gangadhar helps to so many temples, devotional places narsapur constituency.



MLC Kavita Birthday Celebrations..



Parakala March 13, Indian Chronicle: "Telangana Jagruthi Foundations, Nizamabad MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha birth day Celebrations were distributed to patients at the government hospital in the town under the aegis of



Telangana Jagruthi Secretary Amma Ashok on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, they said that such birthday celebrations should be celebrated and that the poor should be constantly serving the poor and to climb in the coming days. TRS Urban Women Presidents Mani Kalawati, BRSV Mandal Presidents Ajay, Leaders Mohammed Pasha, Doctors Balakrishna, Staff and others participated in the event.

Mallu Ravi demands cancellation of Jagadish Reddy's MLA membership

Hyderabad, March 14 (NSS): Mallu Ravi, the MP from Nagarkurnool, has called for the removal of Jagadish Reddy from his MLA position due to his disrespectful remarks directed at Speaker Prasad Kumar during the Legislative Assembly session. In a statement released on Friday, Ravi criticised the BRS party for its longstanding disregard for Dalits. He accused former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao of betraying his promise to appoint a Dalit Chief Minister, instead asserting that Dalits were unsuitable for leadership and assuming the role himself. The Congress MP recounted previous incidents of humiliation faced by Dalit leaders, including the dismissal of Dalit Deputy Chief Minister Rajaiah and the cancellation of Dalit MLA Sampath Kumar's membership in 2017. He also noted the lack of respect shown to Meira Kumar, a Dalit leader and former Lok Sabha Speaker, during her visit to Telangana, where she was not granted an appointment. Mallu Ravi emphasised that the BRS party has repeatedly disrespected Dalit leaders, citing Jagadish Reddy's derogatory comments towards Speaker Prasad Kumar, who is also a Dalit. He demanded that Jagadish Reddy's MLA post be canceled immediately for his inappropriate behavior towards the Speaker. (NSS)

BIRED to conduct free vocational training for youths



Hyderabad, March 14 (NSS): The Bankers Institute of Rural and Entrepreneurship Development (BIRED) will conduct a 38-day free vocational training programme for rural and urban unemployed youths of both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana from April 7 to May 14. Candidates between 19 and 30 years are eligible for the training which will be offered on the institute premises at Rajendra Nagar, Hyderabad. The BIRED Director D. Nagaraja Kumar has said the BIRED will impart training in MS-Office (Inter Pass and above), Refrigerator & AC Repair (SSC pass and above), PC hardware and Laptop Servicing (Inter pass and above), he said, adding, "those candidates who are continuing studies, who attended similar training, those who completed B.Ed., Engineering, MBA and MCA and the persons suffering from health issues are not eligible." During the training, all facilities, including boarding and laboratory will be offered free of cost. The last date for receiving applications is April 5. For more details, visit <https://www.bired.org>. (NSS)

C classification should be legalized at the assembly. "MRPS State Secretary AK Shankar.

Parakala, March 13, Indian Chronicle: "MRPS Secretary of State AK Shankar said that 11 per cent of the SC classification should be allocated to the SC classification. Speaking at a function held in front of the local old municipality office in the town center on Thursday, the government has made a special initiative to allocate 11 per cent reservation to the people at the assembly session on Thursday Demanded to show. He also said that the state government will be legalized for SC reservations. MRPS leaders Mahender, Ravinder, Ramesh, Uday, Ravikumar, Chiranjeevi, activists and others participated in the event.



Anganwadi schools to operate half-day from today

Hyderabad, March 14 (NSS): With rising daytime temperatures in Telangana, Anganwadi school students can expect some relief. On Friday, the Women and Child Welfare Minister, Seethakka, announced that Anganwadi schools will operate on a half-day schedule starting March 15 due to the scorching heat. In accordance with Minister Seethakka's directive, Anganwadi schools will implement this half-day timetable from Saturday, operating from 8 AM to 12:30 PM throughout Telangana State. Meanwhile, all primary, upper primary, and high schools, regardless of management type—whether government, government-aided, or private—will have a half-day schedule from 8 AM to 12:30 PM on Saturday, March 15. The School Education department has already circulated a notice about the half-day schedule and has directed all private school managements to adhere to these instructions. (NSS)

Officials deploy Hydraulic powered robot to expedite rescue operations at SLBC



Hyderabad, March 14 (NSS): Arvind Kumar, the Special Chief Secretary for Disaster and Management, has announced that an autonomous robot powered by hydraulics is being utilised for the digging operations, rather than relying on manual labor. This advanced technology aims to expedite the ongoing rescue efforts at the SLBC tunnel near Domalapenta in the Nagarkurnool district, where seven workers are still trapped.

Arvind Kumar elaborated that this approach was implemented to efficiently remove the soil accumulated during the digging process. He also mentioned that the vacuum tank can transport up to 620 cubic meters of muddy soil per hour via a conveyor belt. He said the State government is utilising the best global technology to overcome the challenges in the final stretch of the 14-kilometer-long tunnel. Special Chief Secretary Arvind Kumar, along with Nagarkurnool District Collector Badawat Santosh, District SP Vaibhav Gaikwad Raghunath, and other senior officials of the relief teams, held a review meeting on the relief operations at the SLBC Tunnel office on Friday. He reviewed the progress of relief operations in the tunnel. On the occasion, Arvind Kumar stated the rescue teams are working round the clock, using the most advanced technology and equipment to safely extract the trapped workers. We are using a specialised machinery connected to an autonomous hydraulically powered robot to speed up rescue operations inside the tunnel," he said. Arvind Kumar revealed that a machine with a 30 HP capacity liquid ring vacuum pump and a vacuum tank has been sent for effective relief operations. He said these machines will be useful for quickly removing soil and speeding up work inside the tunnel. "The use of advanced technological machinery will help in completing relief operations more efficiently and quickly," Arvind Kumar stated. He further informed that the Army, Singareni Mines Rescue Team, NDRF (National Disaster Response Force), SDRF (State Disaster Response Force), RAT Miners, Geological Survey of India, Hydra, Anvi Robotics and South Central Railway teams are participating in the rescue operations. (NSS)

Inquiry by sitting judge should be held in lockup death case: John Wesley

Hyderabad, March 14 (NSS): The left party CPI(M) state secretary John Wesley today demanded the state government to respond and conduct a thorough and impartial inquiry by a sitting judge into the death of a man named Sampath in police custody. In a statement, he said that a man named Sampath was taken into custody by the Nizamabad Cyber Crime Police on charges of cheating unemployed people by promising them jobs abroad and added that he died suddenly while the investigation was in progress. "His family members alleged that he died due to torture by the police in their custody. They also said that Sampath had serious injuries on his body and that they were not even allowed to see him," Wesley said.

He said that the government's complicity in torture by the police in the name of investigation was sending out a wrong signal to the society. He said that the Chief Minister of the state should immediately respond to the incident and order an inquiry by a sitting judge. If the police are found to be responsible for this, the CPI(M) demands strict action against the concerned officials, he said.



BRS ranks organize protests across State over suspension of Jagdish Reddy



Targeting CM Revanth Reddy, KTR alleged that the CM had corrupted the Assembly, which is the epitome of democratic values, with his dictatorial tendencies.

Hyderabad, March 14 (NSS): BRS party's ranks across the State have organised protest programs over the suspension of the party MLA Jagadish Reddy from the Legislative Assembly by the Congress government.

On call of the party's Working President KTR, the BRS

activists burnt the effigies of the Congress government across Telangana from Adilabad to Alampur areas today. They made it clear that the suspension of Jagadish Reddy was undemocratic and alleged that CM Revanth Reddy had turned the suspension of the members from the assembly as a weapon to silence the BRS party, which was protesting against the government on public issues. BRS party leader KTR expressed his heartfelt thanks to the party activists and leaders of Telangana for organising the agitation programs against the State government as per the call of the party. In the same spirit, he called upon the party cadres to continue their fighting spirit and expose the undemocratic actions of the State government and the frauds committing by it over the implementation of the promises from time to time.

Targeting CM Revanth Reddy, KTR alleged that the CM had corrupted the Assembly, which is the epitome of democratic values, with his dictatorial tendencies. He said Revanth Reddy, who has not done a single good deed even after 15 months of coming into power, was conspiring against the BRS party leaders to hide his own incompetence in ruling the State and prevent the BRS party leaders from raising their voices in the assembly. (NSS)

FTCCI to organize summit on "Role of executive & judiciary in shaping GST

Hyderabad, March 14 (NSS): The Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FTCCI) to organise a full-day 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 and V. Sridharan, Co-founder, Lakshmikumaran & 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. The 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)

Anurag University celebrates annual day

Hyderabad, March 14 (NSS): Anurag University, Telangana's first private University celebrated its annual day 'Synergy 2K25' on Thursday night at its campus in Venkatapur in the city. Film star, youth icon Vijay Devarakonda was the chief guest. Students in a large number assembled to feel the Vibrance with Vijay Devarakonda.

"I am impressed with your University, its performance and achievements so much so that I have decided to represent you," Vijay Devarakonda announced. "I will represent you as your brand ambassador to the outside world. Anurag University is the pride of Telangana as it is the State's first private university, the actor declared.

Ktr Slams Suspension Of Mla Jagadish Reddy, Calls Statewide Protests



Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao strongly condemned the suspension of BRS MLA Jagadishwar Reddy from the Telangana Legislative Assembly, terming it an outrageous act that undermines democratic values with baseless allegations. KTR accused the Congress government of suspending Jagadishwar Reddy on fabricated grounds, claiming words he never uttered were attributed to him. He alleged that the Congress is attempting to stifle the BRS voice out of fear that the party's presence in the budget sessions would bring to light issues of contracts, commissions, and the transfer of funds to Delhi. Protesting against the suspension, KTR, along with BRS MLAs and MLCs, held a demonstration in front of the Ambedkar statue and announced Statewide protest programs across all constituencies on March 14, 2025.

KTR stated that Jagadishwar Reddy was deliberately targeted and suspended as part of a conspiracy while he was exposing the falsehoods and half-truths in the Governor's address to both Houses. Despite interruptions from Congress ministers and MLAs through running commentary, Jagadishwar Reddy maintained composure, KTR noted. He highlighted that Reddy was raising critical issues such as wilting crops, the decline of agriculture, farmers' hardships, stalled loan waivers, delayed Rythu Bandhu pay-

ments, unimplemented six guarantees, and the betrayal of 420 promises. Unable to counter these criticisms, the government resorted to unethical and shameless tactics by suspending him, KTR charged. He clarified that Reddy did not use a single unparliamentary word during his speech. KTR further pointed out that Reddy expressed anguish as a plea to the Speaker to protect the rights of Opposition leaders, treating him as a fatherly figure, and did not disrespect him in any way. Yet, the Congress government, following its habitual authoritarian tendencies, adjourned the House for five hours and acted on the orders of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, who is currently in Delhi, KTR alleged. KTR revealed that on the advice of BRS chief KCR, they had urged the Speaker and the Legislative Affairs Minister to assess the mood of the House by consulting all parties, expressing regret if the Speaker felt hurt. However, he lamented that the government ignored this suggestion. He criticized the Congress for suspending Jagadishwar Reddy without even seeking an explanation or specifying his alleged fault, calling it a glaring example of the government's arrogance. KTR also slammed the Congress government for chaining the 125-foot Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar statue—the world's tallest, installed by the KCR government—describing it as a despicable act. He reiterated that the Congress fears the BRS raising issues of contracts, commissions, and funds being sent to Delhi during the budget sessions, which is why they are trying to suppress the party's voice. He asserted that while the government focuses on sending funds to Delhi, it has no concern for the welfare of the poor, a fact the public has clearly understood. KTR warned that the Congress would undoubtedly face punishment in the people's court in the future. Dismissing the Congress's illusion that silencing one voice achieves anything significant, KTR called for Statewide protests on March 14, 2025, against the party's undemocratic attitude and Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's arrogant and dictatorial tendencies. He urged people to join the burning of effigies of the government in all constituency centers across Telangana. (NSS)

Uttam Kumar Reddy Must Clarify His Contradictory Stances: Harish Rao

Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): Former minister and MLA Harish Rao strongly criticized TPCC leader Uttam Kumar Reddy for his contradictory statements and shifting political stance on critical matters involving parliamentary ethics and member expulsions.

Uttam Kumar Reddy claimed that Mahua Moitra's expulsion from the Lok Sabha took place during his tenure as a member of the Parliamentary Ethics Committee. Harish Rao pointed out that Uttam Reddy had previously opposed Moitra's expulsion, labelling it unjust, unconstitutional, and motivated by personal vendetta and political revenge. He further recalled the incident involving the expulsion of MLAs Sampath Kumar and Komati Reddy Venkat Reddy for allegedly attacking the Governor. At that time, Uttam Kumar Reddy strongly condemned the expulsion, even going to the extent of lodging a complaint with the President of India. Back then, Reddy accused the State government of political vendetta and openly criticized the Speaker and the Chief Minister for undermining democratic norms. Today, Harish Rao emphasized, Uttam Reddy has conveniently hidden these statements and has shifted his stance entirely. Harish



Rao criticized Uttam Kumar Reddy's contradictory and opportunistic politics, questioning, "How is it possible, Uttam garu, that something you fiercely opposed yesterday has become acceptable to you today? Principles cannot change overnight based on political convenience." Rao demanded that Uttam Kumar Reddy clarify his shifting positions, asserting that such double standards erode public trust and the sanctity of democratic processes. (NSS)

Severe water crisis stares at Telangana as water levels in irrigation projects deplete

GNS News Agency, March 14

Hyderabad: A severe water crisis is staring at Telangana. The dwindling water levels in major irrigation projects such as the Sripada Yellampalli, Sriram Sagar and Nagarjuna Sagar are not just affecting crops, but could also lead to drinking water shortages by May. The situation is critical. Political parties have been raising concern over the prospect of rabi crops getting impacted in over 10 lakh acres. The Rabi farmers in the Godavari basin projects in Telangana are grappling with a severe water crisis. The Sripada Yellampalli project, which has a gross storage capacity of 20.18 TMC, currently holds only 12 TMC of water. This is significantly below the minimum requirement of 15 TMC needed for drinking water supply to the command area towns and villages, including Hyderabad, which relies on this project for emergency drinking water supplies.

The Sriram Sagar Project (SRSP) is also in a dire state. It has only 26 TMC of water in current storage against its gross capacity of 90.31 TMC. Despite maximum inflows this year, the crops under the SRSP Stage II, mainly in Nalgonda, Suryapet and Mahabubabad, have dried up significantly, adding to the farm sector crisis. The crops under the SRSP Stage I are also impacted, with around 2,000 irrigation tanks on the verge of drying up, affecting drinking water supply in the villages and habitations relying on them. This situation is expected to impact groundwater levels as well. The irrigation support planned for 4.42 lakh acres during the Yasangi season in Nizamabad, Jagtial, Karimnagar and Peddapalli districts is now uncertain. Water supply to the Kakatiya canal zones, which began in December, is set to stop by April 10. Delayed crop transplantation and extended harvest periods due to the lack of water supply have put farmers at a risk of huge losses. Already, over one lakh acres of crops in the tail-end areas of the SRSP project are badly affected by partial water supply.

The Devadula Project, aimed at providing irrigation water to the farmers in the ayacut area, is facing severe challenges. The lack of proper water supply has left Rabi crops dry, causing distress among farmers. The Congress government's negligence in maintaining the canal system has aggravated the situation. Farmers in Hanamkonda and Jangaon districts are struggling to save their crops due to the lack of a proper water supply plan for the Rabi season. The government's failure to pay the bills for the pipeline maintenance has led to a halt in water pumping. The damage suffered by crops is extensive. Nearly 60 per cent of the crops in Devarupalla mandal are drying up. The lack of water in various reservoirs and failure to release water from the Devadula project have left farmers in a desperate situation.

As for the Krishna basin projects, the water level in the NSP, which is crucial for drinking water supply for Hyderabad city, Nalgonda, Suryapet and Khammam towns is fast depleting. The KRMB had already directed Andhra Pradesh to restrict its use to only meet the drinking water needs, but it continued to draw water to the right canal for irrigation purposes. Sensing the threat of a mid-May crisis,



the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB) has been making arrangements in advance to start emergency pumping from the Nagarjuna Sagar project. The present storage in the NSP is 150 TMC against the gross storage of 312 TMC. The minimum draw-down level being 510 feet, the water level has already dipped to 520 feet in the project. In the Srisailem project, the present storage is only 69 TMC, with the net drawability by both States being close to 50 per cent of it.

Jana Sena to celebrate party formation Day today, Pawan to address in meeting

GNS News Agency, March 14

The Jana Sena party is gearing up for its 12th formation meeting today, marking a significant occasion as it is the first since entering into a power-sharing agreement. The atmosphere is expected to be festive, with legislators, MPs, and prominent party leaders all actively engaged in ensuring the success of the event.

This year's celebration holds particular importance, as the Jana Sena party, founded ahead of the 2014 elections, is transitioning from opposition to governance. As part of this historic meeting, leaders are determined to make it an unprecedented occasion. The programming, invitation, and decoration committees have mobilised party members to ensure comprehensive participation, with a multitude of Jana Sainiks travelling from both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to join the festivities. The gathering will take place over an expansive 50 acres in Chitrada, within the Pithapuram constituency that elected party leader Pawan Kalyan. To facilitate his arrival, a helipad has been constructed just half a kilometre from the assembly site. Logistical arrangements have reached completion, including the establishment of a command control room in Kakinada to oversee proceedings. Special platforms have been prepared for VVIPs and VIPs, and the assembly is expected to host around 250 attendees on stage.

Ponnam slams BRS for staging protests over suspension of Jagadish Reddy



GNS News Agency, March 14

Hyderabad, March 14 (NSS): Minister for Transport and BC Welfare Ponnam Prabhakar has rebuked BRS leaders for protesting the suspension of MLA Jagadish Reddy from the Assembly, describing their actions as absurd. He

pointed out that those who previously undermined democracy are now labeling the suspension as undemocratic. Ponnam Prabhakar stressed the need for the BRS party to possess a fundamental grasp of democratic principles. He noted that while they understand the appropriate conduct expected in the Assembly, their intentional misconduct indicates ill intentions, prompting the people to take notice. He also remarked that both Houses of the Legislature adhere to established traditions and protocols. The Minister accused the opposition of making reckless remarks about the Speaker solely because he is a Dalit leader. He recalled that during the BRS party's tenure in power, they had resorted to throwing papers at the Chairman of the Legislative Council and suspending opposition members, yet they did not raise concerns about democracy at that time. The Minister stated that while the Chief Minister is the leader of democracy in the Legislative Houses, the Speaker is the head of the Assembly. Ponnam Prabhakar condemned the remark "The Assembly does not belong to you alone" directed at the Speaker, calling it a violation of Parliamentary rights. "It is very unfortunate that the BRS leadership did not say that Jagadish Reddy's words were wrong," he added. (NSS)

Residents write to NGT, seek its intervention against waste plant

GNS News Agency, March 14

Mumbai first waste to energy plant "The WTE plant will be the first attempt towards starting scientific treatment of the existing untreated legacy waste that is lying in the dumpyard," a civic official said. (Express archive photo/Tashi Tobgyal) Seven months left for Mumbai's first ever waste-to-energy (WTE) plant to become operational, residents of Govandi, Shivaji Nagar, have written to the National Green Tribunal (NGT), seeking its immediate intervention against the facility.

The facility, spread across 73 acres of the 311-acre Deonar dumping ground, will share its boundary with Mankhurd Shivaji Nagar area, one of the densely populated areas in Mumbai, comprising residents from lower income groups. The plant, being built at a cost of Rs 504 crore by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), is set to become operational in October this year. It will generate 7 mega Watt (MW) electricity by processing 600-700 metric tonnes (MT) of solid waste that comes to the dumping ground daily. The residents have been protesting the setting up of this facility at the heart of Shivaji Nagar. Faiyaz Alam Shaikh — a local resident and founder, convener of Govandi Citizen's welfare Forum, alleged that no public consultation was carried out before initiating the project. WTE plants are globally known for emitting toxic particles in the air. This will adversely affect the local air quality. Mankhurd Shivaji Nagar is one of the polluted areas in Mumbai due to the presence of a dumping ground. People living here have the lowest life expectancy rate in the entire Mumbai. This



plant will only add up to the woes," Shaikh said. The residents have demanded immediate intervention of the NGT as well as scrapping of the project. He said that the reservation of the land was changed without any public consultation. "A comptroller and auditor general (CAG) report had flagged financial irregularities in the run up to this project," he added. However, civic officials maintained that the project is being implemented after taking environmental clearances from the state and national pollution control boards. "The WTE plant will be the first attempt towards starting scientific treatment of the existing untreated legacy waste that is lying in the dumpyard. These kinds of plants are needed to be set up inside the dumpyard so that the incoming waste materials can be treated immediately. The landfill has been there for nearly a century now, therefore it is feasible for us to set up the plant at Deonar only," the official added.

Mumbai gets respite from heat as temperature dips by 5 degrees

GNS News Agency, March 14

Mumbai summers This comes after the city recorded its warmest March day since 2023 on March 11 when the temperature rose to 39.2 degrees Celsius. (Express Photo by Sankhadeep Banerjee) Mumbai Friday experienced respite from the heat with the day time temperature touching 34.5 degrees Celsius, marking a significant dip of nearly five degrees in two days. This comes after the city recorded its warmest March day since 2023 on March 11 when the temperature rose to 39.2 degrees Celsius.

Abnormally high temperatures are likely to elude the city at least until March 20 with the forecasted temperature predicted to be in the range of 34 degrees Celsius. Data furnished by the weather bureau showed that while the Colaba coastal observatory recorded a maximum temperature 33 degrees on the mercury scales on Friday, the Santacruz observatory logged 34.5 degrees on the mercury scales. Over the past few days, the day temperature in the city had inched closer to 40 degrees-mark. According to meteorologists, Mumbai is prone to warm temperatures during March — which being a transition month — receives a combination of dry northerly winds alongside moist winds. The city's warmest March was recorded at 41.7 degrees in 1956. Meanwhile, weather experts have attributed the current drop in temperatures to the early influx of sea breeze.

Sunil Kamble, director of IMD Mumbai told The Indian Express, "Earlier, the westerlies (sea breeze) was getting



delayed due to the easterly winds. However, currently, the sea breeze is setting in by 11.30 am owing to which the maximum temperatures are dipped. Furthermore, the prevailing anti-cyclone system has also weakened." In its bulletin for the coming days, the IMD has forecast that the day time temperatures will hover between 33 — 34 degrees for the one week until March 20 at least.

The minimum temperatures are also slated to dip upto 20 degrees Celsius, during the same period. The air quality index also remained in the moderate category on Friday morning with the overall AQI touching 121. Of the city's 24 stations, at least four stations logged AQI in the 'satisfactory' category (between 50-100) with the best air quality observed in Borivali East. The worst AQI, meanwhile, was recorded in Chakala Easy at 197.

Parliamentary panel recommends hike in wage rates under MGNREGA

GNS News Agency, March 14

Parliamentary Panel on Rural Development headed by Congress MP Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka in its report reviewing the budgetary allocation of Department of Rural Development on Wednesday (March 12, 2025), strongly argued for revision of wages and uniform rates across the country under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in view of the rising cost of living. The per day wages currently vary from ₹234 in Nagaland and Arunachal to ₹374 in Haryana and Sikkim. The panel expressed disappointment that despite its multiple recommendations on this matter over the years, the government has not implemented any significant changes.

The wages currently are linked to the Consumer Price Index For Agricultural Labourers. This index, the panel said, "may not accurately reflect" the inflation trends. "The Committee believes that this index does not fully capture the real impact of inflation, and therefore, the method of wage calculation must be reviewed and updated on a priority basis to reflect actual economic conditions at the ground level," the panel report said. The panel has also urged the government to implement a "uniform wage rate" across all state and union territories, since the scheme is primarily funded by the central government. "This would help ensure fairness and consistency in wage payments under the Scheme," the panel said.

The panel also criticized the government for delay in disbursement of wages. As per the report, till February 15



The panel expressed disappointment that despite its multiple recommendations on this matter over the years, the government has not implemented any significant changes.

this year, the pending liabilities in wages stand at ₹12,219.18 crore and ₹11,227.09 crore in material components and total pending liabilities are ₹23,446.27 crore. The panel report pointed out that one fourth of the allocated funds (₹6,000 crore) will go in clearing the last financial year's due. "Consequently, the actual working budget for the current financial year is reduced to ₹62,553.73 crore, significantly limiting the scheme's capacity to function effectively and meet its primary objective of preventing rural distress and ensuring livelihood security," the report said.

Karnataka HC stays consumer forum order against PVR Cinemas for delaying film, points to jurisdiction issues

GNS News Agency, March 14

PVR cinemasThe court also observed that while an option existed for the multiplex association to approach the state consumer forum, that would not stop the high court jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution. The Karnataka High Court has stayed a Bengaluru consumer forum's order imposing costs of Rs 1.28 lakh against PVR Cinemas for delaying the screening of films by playing advertisements, noting that it appeared to have gone beyond its jurisdiction in some aspects of the order. The case was related to a Bengaluru Urban District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission order following a complaint by Abhishek M R in January 2024 regarding a screening of the film Sam Bahadur in December 2023. In his complaint, Abhishek said that the film that was slated to begin at 4.05 pm was only screened at 4.30 pm due to advertisements. This delay, he said, inconvenienced him as he could not return to work on time.

"In the new era, time is considered as money, each one's time is very precious, no one has right to gain benefit out of others time and money. 25-30 (minutes) is not less to sit idle in the theatre and watch whatever the theatre telecasts. It is very hard for busy people with tight schedule watching unnecessary advertisements..." the consumer court noted in February last year. In the current petition filed by the Multiplex Association of India before the high court, Senior Advocate Mukul Rohatgi argued, "When you go to a movie, for five minutes, public awareness programmes are mandated by the Ministry of I&B. It is a business model that you have some trailers and advertisements. Everyone has known for years that the movie starts in 15-20 minutes...finally the (consumer) court has mandated that you should print on the ticket that advertisements will start at 4 pm etc...With great respect, the council has no such power. They have taken it like a class action..." The high court ordered, "The consumer forum accepts the plea of the petitioner (Abhishek MR) and traverses the complaint, answering it as if it has jurisdiction akin to a public interest petition and indulges in discourse as to how a movie should be run, directs that theatres should not project advertisements...the directions on the face of it are without jurisdiction. There shall be an interim order of stay until the next date of hearing." The court also observed that while an option existed for the multiplex association to approach the state consumer forum, that would not stop the high court jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution, when a forum appeared to have acted in violation of its jurisdiction.



Will have to think of measures to prevent protests on Pune Metro premises: Maha Metro's Shравan Hardikar

Within 15 minutes, we had decided to start short loop operations rather than leaving everything stranded. The main three stations around the incident area were out of operation but we began short loop operations on either side. Our SOPs were followed well," said Hardikar.



GNS News Agency, March 14

Days after protesters from the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) blocked the Metro tracks in Pune, Shравan Hardikar, managing director of Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation Limited, said Monday they took measures to ensure commuters did not face any issues. "Within 15 minutes, we had decided to start short loop operations rather than leaving everything stranded. The main three stations around the incident area were out of operation but we began short loop operations on either side. Our SOPs were followed well," said Hardikar.

"We held a hackathon last year with MIT-WPU for Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning based video analytics solutions. This would alert us if anyone crosses the yellow line on the metro platform or jumps on the tracks. We will implement this in the next three to six months. However, this will not be enough and we have to find some better way of guarding ourselves from such incidents happening," he added.

On Sunday, NCP (SP) workers blocked the Aqua Line (Vanaz-Ramwadi) of the Pune Metro by climbing onto the tracks near PMC station to protest against 'lack' of employment and other issues. This affected Pune Metro operations for around two hours from 12.45 pm to 2.45 pm. Fire brigade teams arrived at the scene and nets were spread on the road below to prevent serious injury in case anyone fell. The police said the protesters behaved aggressively and splashed them with petrol. NCP(SP) city chief Prashant Jagtap distanced the party from the protest and said that it does not support any activity which affects the people of Pune. He also announced that the party expelled Narendra Pawtekar after the protest. The Pune police have booked 17 protesters, who blocked the Pune Metro on Sunday, under 17 sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), eight sections of the Metro Railways (Operation and Maintenance) Act, and two sections of the Maharashtra Police Act. As many as 17 people, including Pawtekar, have been arrested. The protesters have been booked under Sections 191 (rioting) and 189 (unlawful assembly) of BNS. Section 132 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) of BNS, which is non-bailable, has also been included in the FIR, apart from Section 74 (maliciously wrecking a train or causing sabotage) of the Metro Railways Act, which stipulates a minimum imprisonment of three years.

This is where you will find the cleanest air in the world; India 5th most polluted country



GNS News Agency, March 14

Only seven countries in the world met the World Health Organization's (WHO) guidelines for annual average PM2.5 levels, according to the 2024 World Air Quality Report. The countries that met the WHO guideline of 5 µg/m3, the annual average concentration of particulate matter PM 2.5, are Australia, the Bahamas, Barbados, Estonia, Grenada, Iceland, and New Zealand. The report, which looks at the data from over 40,000 air quality monitoring stations across 138 countries, territories, and regions, and was analysed

Pioneer in flexible workspaces, city-based company to double capacity by 2026

GNS News Agency, March 14

Pune-based UrbanWrk, one of the leading names in managed workspaces, is projected to double capacity from the present 15,000 seats in the next financial year. UrbanWrk, which is spread across Pune, Delhi, Gurugram,



several months, capital and effort. The rise in managed and other flexible workspaces has significantly shifted how businesses function post-Covid.

Investment bank Aventus has projected that the flexible workspace market in India is the fastest-growing globally and "expected to grow up to 126 million sqft at a 15 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR), addressing a \$9 billion market by 2028". UrbanWrk is one of the companies pushing this change. An UrbanWrk space, for instance, is fitted out with interior design, a front desk, visitor management, concierge and other services so that a

Delhi world's most polluted capital for 6th straight year; pollution cuts life expectancy in India by 5 years: Report

GNS News Agency, March 14

Delhi as World's Most polluted Capital: With an average PM 2.5 concentration of 91.8 µg/m3, Delhi continues to be the most polluted national capital in the world for the sixth consecutive year, according to the 2024 World Air Quality Report. According to the report, 13 of the 20 most polluted cities in the world are in India, with Byrnhat on the Assam-Meghalaya border being the most polluted. The other cities include Faridabad, Loni (Ghaziabad), Gurgaon, Greater Noida, Bhiwadi, Noida, Muzaffarnagar, New Delhi (Central Delhi) and Delhi (taking the average from the rest of the city). India is the fifth most polluted country in the world, with an average Air Quality Index (AQI) of 50.6 µg/m3 – 10 times higher than the World Health Organization's (WHO) annual PM2.5 guideline value of 5 µg/m3. In 2023, it was the third most polluted country. "Air pollution remains a significant health burden in India, reducing life expectancy by an estimated 5.2 years," it said. The report has relied on data from over 40,000 air quality monitoring stations at 8,954 locations in 138 countries, territories and regions. It was analysed by IQAir's air quality scientists. Only 17% of global cities met WHO air pollution guidelines. Out of the 138 countries and regions, 126 (91.3%) exceeded the WHO annual PM2.5 guideline value of 5 µg/m3. Byrnhat, India was the most polluted metropolitan area in 2024, with an annual average PM2.5 concentration of 128.2 µg/m3. Central and South Asia were home to the top seven most polluted cities in the world. India was home to six of the nine most polluted global cities. The most polluted major city in

by IQAir's air quality scientists, says Mayaguez in Puerto Rico was the cleanest metropolitan area of 2024, with an annual average PM2.5 concentration of 1.1 µg/m3. In terms of regional air quality, Oceania emerged as the cleanest area with 57 per cent of cities meeting the WHO guideline. The region comprises three countries – Australia, French Polynesia, and New Zealand. "Australia reported an unchanged national concentration of 4.5 µg/m3, New Zealand saw a marginal increase of 0.1 µg/m3, and French Polynesia recorded a decrease of 0.7 µg/m3. The capitals of all three countries also reported annual average concentrations within the WHO guideline. Wellington, the capital of New Zealand, however, experienced a year-over-year increase of 1.2 µg/m3, reaching 4.3 µg/m3. Although still within the guideline, continued increases at this rate could eventually breach the limit. Oceania maintained the highest percentage of cities meeting the WHO guidelines, with over 56% of monitored cities reporting annual average concentrations below 5.0 µg/m3," the report says. Global air pollution in terms of regional air quality, Oceania emerged as the cleanest area with 57 per cent of cities meeting the WHO guideline. Chad (91.8 µg/m3): The annual average concentration in the Central African country is more than 18 times the WHO PM2.5 annual guideline.

business can "basically plug in and play". A private, fully customisable and branded office space is ready within 45 days, with access to common areas, such as lounges and gyms, and community-building events, including seminars and industry talks. The advantage of such types of office spaces is the flexible lease terms. "If you come into our space, you would have three seconds to take a call on if you like or love us. We design with so much care that we ensure that the option for you to say no doesn't exist. We are also the first and only office space in India with an Indian Green Building Council Platinum certification, which is globally recognised for sustainable design practices. Another focal point is the service quality, and a combination of these three has enabled us to bring in global Grade A corporate organisations as clientele," says Anuj Munot, who founded UrbanWrk with Harsh Mehta. He adds that one of the most significant boosts for organisations such as UrbanWrk is the presence of Global Capability Centers (GCCs) in India that help multinational companies optimise costs, create innovations and have better operational efficiency. "They are looking for the ease and convenience an UrbanWrk office would provide. Their plan enables companies to scale up or down faster and easier. If you have taken 100 seats but, in a few years, want to expand by 25 more seats, we plug it in for you," says Munot. Pune will remain their strong base. "It is a great city to build out businesses on the IT side. Manufacturing is a strong base, as is automobiles. The banking and financial sectors are also large spaces in Pune," says Munot. Dipanita Nath is interested in the climate crisis and sustainability. She has written extensively on social trends, heritage, theatre and startups. She has worked with major news organizations such as Hindustan Times, The Times of India and Mint.



the United States was Los Angeles, California. Ontario, California was the most polluted city in the US. PM2.5 concentrations decreased in every country in Southeast Asia, though trans-boundary haze and lingering El Niño conditions remain major factors.

In Africa, the scarcity of real-time, publicly accessible air quality monitoring data is so severe that there is only one monitoring station for every 3.7 million people. While Delhi has seen a slight improvement, the report said, the NCR region is still heavily polluted. "India saw a 7% decline in PM2.5 concentrations in 2024, averaging 50.6 µg/m3 compared to 54.4 µg/m3 in 2023. Yet six of the world's ten most polluted cities are in India. The capital, New Delhi, maintained consistently high pollution levels, with an annual average of 91.6 µg/m3, nearly unchanged from 92.7 µg/m3 in 2023," the report added.

Influencer arrested in Delhi for stealing bag containing Rs 3 lakh cash

GNS News Agency, March 14

Pawan revealed during questioning that he took to crime to earn easy money. He was previously arrested in a similar case involving the theft of a bag, the Delhi Police said in a statement. Pawan revealed during questioning that he took to crime to earn easy money. He was previously arrested in a similar case involving the theft of a bag, the Delhi Police said in a statement.

A social media influencer was arrested for allegedly snatching a bag containing Rs 3 lakh in cash from a businessman in North Delhi's Civil Lines area, the police said Tuesday. Officers said the accused, Pawan alias Calvin alias Network of Madangir in South Delhi, posted dance videos and funny reels and had over 16,000 followers on Instagram but committed thefts along with his associate in the evenings. Pawan revealed during questioning that he took to crime to earn easy money. He was previously arrested in a similar case involving the theft of a bag, the Delhi Police said in a statement. Raja Banthia, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), North Delhi, said the complainant R



Shrinivas Rao alleged that his bag containing Rs 3 lakh and documents was snatched outside St Stephen's Hospital on March 4. The accused fled on foot before speeding away on a scooter driven by another person. "A case was registered under section 304(2), 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita at Civil Lines police station and the scooter was spotted while examining CCTV footage," the officer said.

Housekeeper arrested for burglary at Delhi employer's house



GNS News Agency, March 14

The Delhi Police on Monday arrested a housekeeper who allegedly orchestrated a burglary at his employer's residence in South Delhi's New Friends Colony. They recovered stolen valuables worth approximately Rs 1 crore from the housekeeper, identified as Sumit, 33, who was taken into custody from Ambedkar Nagar in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday. The recovered items include luxury wristwatches, diamond and gold jewellery, and Rs 13,500 in cash, said the police. The incident came to light on March 4, when Ameer Gupta, a partner in a reputed private firm, reported a burglary at his residence. Gupta stated to the police that he and his family had been out of town between February 26 and March 3. Upon their return, they discovered that their valuable belongings had been stolen.

The police examined CCTV footage from the area and interrogated 22 domestic staff members employed at the residence. Technical analysis and crime scene inspection revealed that the accused had used a screwdriver to unlock a digital locker, the police said. "On sustained interrogation, it was revealed that Sumit had committed the crime in greed to own a huge bounty. He was well aware that his boss was out of town during that period. So he thought it to be the best time to break open the locker and steal valuables," said Ravi Kumar Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Police, South East.

Himachal takes help of woman mountaineer Baljeet Kaur to trace missing trekker on Churdhar peak

GNS News Agency, March 14

man missing Accompanied by two friends, Sahani, a blogger, had embarked on the Churdhar peak trek from Nohradhar to visit the temple of the local deity Sri Sirgul Maharaj on Mahashivratri. Authorities in Himachal Pradesh on Monday allowed renowned mountaineer Baljeet Kaur and her four-member team to resume the search for blogger Akshay Sahani, a Panchkula resident, who went missing while trekking on Churdhar peak on February 26. The Sirmour district administration suspended the search and rescue operation by the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and mountaineers from the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports (ABVIMAS) in Manali on Thursday due to adverse weather conditions.

"Kaur's team found a human body near the location where the missing Panchkula man was last seen, although it has not been identified. Efforts are underway to retrieve the body," said a source. The body is expected to be identified by Tuesday afternoon, the source added.

Baljeet Kaur, leading a four-member team and local residents, set out for Churdhar from the Sangrah subdivision on Sunday, renewing hopes of locating the missing trekker. Akshay Sahani, a resident of Sector 15, had embarked on the trek with his friend Vikram Singh to visit the temple of local deity Sri Sirgul Maharaj on Mahashivratri. While Singh reached the temple safely, Sahani lost his way amidst heavy snowfall and dense fog. According to Sunil Kaith, Sangrah Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), the location where the body was found is the same place where Akshay Sahani was last seen by his friend Vikram Singh. "As per initial reports, the rescue team spotted crows and vultures hovering over a body, which is now being retrieved. Mountaineer Baljeet Kaur was scheduled to do the Churdhar trek, and we engaged her team in the search and rescue operation," Kaith said. The suspension of the rescue mission had left Sahani's family, particularly his widowed mother, in despair. Baljeet Kaur, a 29-year-old seasoned mountaineer from Mamligh village in Solan district, scaled Mt Everest in May 2022.

Congress's Ludhiana 2 block president, 19 others booked for 'extortion'

GNS News Agency, March 14

Congress's Ludhiana 2 block president Tajparwinder Singh alias Sonu was released by police on Monday, officers said. Sonu was released by police on Monday, officers said. Police have booked Congress's Ludhiana 2 block president Tajparwinder Singh alias Sonu and 19 others for allegedly blackmailing the representatives of a company executing sand excavation from a government-approved website to extort money from them, officers said. Based on a complaint filed by Navyug Company manager Ramesh Kumar — who obtains tenders for sand excavating from Raur and other villages in Ludhiana district — an FIR has been registered against the accused under BNS sections 308(2), 315(2), 285, 190 and 61(2) at the Meharban police station. Mentioning that several villagers were blackmailing them in a bid to extort money, Kumar said in the FIR: "They have also been protesting in Gaunsgarh village since March 2. The accused have been demanding money for allowing passage to our vehicles, failing which they would cancel the contract." However, claiming that the roads were not built for the passage of heavy vehicles, the villagers said this was specifically mentioned in a Public Works Department (PWD) report, which is in their possession. Heavy vehicles also pose a threat to the residents, the villagers alleged. Late on Sunday, on the apprehension of Sonu and the situation in the village, Punjab Congress president Amrinder Singh Raja Warring said that "...our block president (Congress's Sonu) is just supporting the agitation of the villagers, while the state government is suppressing their voice... Police have booked Sonu in a false case. The AAP-led state government is resorting to such action to suppress the voice of Congress workers." He had also called for a massive protest regarding the issue.

Teenager stabbed to death, another critically hurt in Delhi's Indira Park

GNS News Agency, March 14: Surveillance footage showed a group of three to four young men beating the victims before stabbing them. Surveillance footage showed a group of three to four young men beating the victims before stabbing them. A 16-year-old boy was killed and another teenager critically injured in a stabbing attack in Delhi's Indira Park area on Tuesday, according to police. Authorities are now searching for the attackers, who were captured on CCTV fleeing the scene after the assault. The incident occurred in the Sagapur neighbourhood, with police receiving a distress call reporting that two boys had been attacked by a group of assailants in Kamal Park. Shortly after, another call was made from Bhagat Chandra Hospital in Janakpuri, where two victims — aged 15 and 17 — had been brought with severe stab wounds. One of the boys, a 16-year-old school dropout, was pronounced dead on arrival.

Surveillance footage showed a group of three to four young men beating the victims before stabbing them. The footage reveals one of the boys clutching his abdomen as blood poured from his wounds, collapsing near a white scooter as the attackers fled. Police officials said the deceased's father is a labourer, and the young victim had left school earlier this year. Authorities have identified the suspects and are actively investigating the case to bring them into custody.

'You are a suspect in Naresh Goyal money laundering case': Pune teacher loses Rs 32 lakh in cyber scam



GNS News Agency, March 14

The caller allegedly told the complainant that there were 17 offences registered against the SIM he was using and that a probe was being conducted into it by the Mumbai police. The caller allegedly told the complainant that there were 17 offences registered against the SIM he was using and that a probe was being conducted into it by the Mumbai police. A 52-year-old Pune school teacher recently lost Rs 32 lakh in a cyber scam to fraudsters who allegedly posed as Mumbai police officers and threatened him with arrest, saying that he was a suspect in the money laundering case involving Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal. The fraudsters allegedly made the teacher, a resident of Hadapsar, transfer the amount to fraudulent accounts in the name of financial audit, said the police. A First Information Report (FIR) in the case was registered at the Hadapsar police station Tuesday based on the victim's complaint. He told the police that some time ago, he received an interactive voice response (IVR) call in which he was asked to press a key. The call was then allegedly connected to a man who identified himself as 'Inspector Pradeep Sharma' from Andheri, thus misusing the name of a well-known former Mumbai police officer.

Setback for ex-Union Sports Minister: BFI rejects Anurag Thakur's nomination



GNS News Agency, March 14

NEW DELHI: In a major setback, former BCCI President and ex-Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur's name has been excluded from the Boxing Federation of India electoral college for the BFI elections to be held on March 28.

He was declared "ineligible" to represent Himachal Pradesh. Himachal Pradesh Boxing Association (HPBA) which had sent Thakur and President Rajesh Bhandari's names. The BFI issued a 60-member electoral college that was finalised after scrutiny. Thakur, a BJP Lok Sabha MP, was expected to contest for BFI president's post. "Anurag Singh Thakur (Himachal Pradesh Boxing Association) — The State Unit had sent the name, however, he is found ineligible for violation of Boxing Federation of India notice dated 07.03.2025 and National Sports Development Code of India, 2011," BFI said in a media release.

Kapil Sibal slams Congress government for arrest of two journalists in Telangana

Hyderabad: Former Union Minister and Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal has come down heavily on the Congress government in Telangana over the arrest of two women journalists on Wednesday. He dubbed the act as "intolerance." "Arrests of two journalists for criticizing CM for spreading falsehood inciting divisions to disturb law and order. Really? Arrest is not the solution. It is the result of a contagious disease called: Intolerance," Sibal said on X. Many X users also slammed the Congress government, especially Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, for the undemocratic attitude. Southpaw, an X user said "This is not the first time ever since Congress came to power in Telangana.

Blood-soaked bodies, a condom packet, an unusual visitor: How Delhi Police cracked the 2019 Vasant Vihar triple murder case



GNS News Agency, March 14

June 23, 2019. 8 am. Babli, a part-time domestic worker, arrived as usual at her workplace in the posh Vasant Vihar neighbourhood. Her employers were an elderly couple, the Mathurs, who lived in a flat in Vasant Apartments.

Vishnu Mathur (80) was a retired Central government official. His 75-year-old wife, Shashi Mathur, who once worked for the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), was now mostly confined to bed due to her failing health. There was another resident of this first-floor two-bedroom flat — Khushboo Nautiyal, a live-in help hired to attend to Shashi. Babli rang the bell. There was no response. She rang the bell again and waited for several minutes. When no one opened the door, she wasn't alarmed. Instead, she took out the spare keys that the Mathurs had given her for such occasions. She was about to use it to open the door, when she realised the door wasn't locked. She walked in. What she saw inside would haunt her for days to come. The blood-splattered bodies of the couple, their throats slit and their bodies stabbed innumerable times, lay in their bedroom. In another room, Khushboo was also lying motionless: her throat slit. All signs pointed at a friendly entry: the front door wasn't broken into, cups of tea sat quietly on the centre table. A few pieces of gold jewellery, though, were found missing even as the cash in the house remained largely untouched. The couple's mobile phones too were missing. Sifting through the house for more clues, the police stumbled upon a curious object in 20-year-old Khushboo's bedroom: a single condom packet. Investigators thought they had found their suspect.

Khushboo had been staying with the Mathurs for almost a year now. The couple's son had died in an accident a few years ago. With Shashi's deteriorating health and their only surviving child, a daughter, staying with her family in another South Delhi neighbourhood, the couple was completely dependent on Khushboo.

Neighbours told police that Khushboo had a boyfriend who would often visit the house. The discovery of the condom led police to believe the murder could have been the handiwork of Khushboo's partner, who may have accidentally dropped the packet while escaping from the spot. The man was tracked down and questioned, and so were a few other acquaintances of Khushboo. "We questioned them for

the next 72 hours. We didn't find anything suspicious," a police officer involved in the investigation said. "The probe had hit a wall. We knew our main suspect had nothing to do with the murders. We realised that our investigation had not been on track." Police again went to the slain couple's daughter and asked her to recall if she noticed anything unusual in the days leading to the murders.

The woman remembered a surprise visitor — Preeti Sehrawat. An old acquaintance, Preeti, had been visiting the Mathurs rather frequently in the recent past, the daughter told police. Preeti's mother and Shashi used to be colleagues at the NDMC but had fallen out of touch after retirement. Preeti, 42, was from Nangloi in Delhi. Why did she want to revive an old connection? And where was she now? The police wanted to know. Investigators were yet to collect information about Preeti when they found her in a hotel room in Gurgaon. Four days after the murder, on June 26, 2019, the police were alerted when Vishnu Mathur's missing phone was switched on briefly. That was an important clue, and a police team tracked the phone to a room in a hotel in Gurgaon. At the spot, the police were surprised to find Preeti and her live-in partner, Manoj Bhatt, 39. Manoj had switched on Vishnu Mathur's phone briefly before switching it off again. It was, however, enough for the police to pinpoint the location.

After questioning, the couple led the police to a plot in Sushant Lok, DLF Phase 1, in Gurgaon. Sifting through the garbage and debris on the premises, the officers found the alleged murder weapons — a knife and a screwdriver. And then, something else caught their eye: A strip of two condoms. Police matched it with the single condom found at the Mathurs' place — it looked like the three pieces came from the same box. The packets were sent for forensic examination. "Forensics revealed that the condoms were part of the same three-pack set. They were similar with respect to colour, shade, size... Further, when one end of exhibit-1 (pouch found at the crime scene) was juxtaposed with exhibit-2a (the packs recovered later), the symbol and text printed on both were found complementary to each other. The serrated part of exhibit-1 was physically fitted with the serrated part of exhibit-2a," a police officer who was part of the investigation said. The condom had been deliberately planted on Khushboo's bed to push the needle of suspicion towards her boyfriend, a police officer said. "It was a clever ploy to mislead the investigators," he said. "The criminals may try everything to mislead the police but they always leave clues behind. Once the investigation is done professionally, nothing stays hidden." Preeti had always wanted to have a business of her own. She grew up in the Chanchal Park area of Nangloi and joined the Food and Craft Institute in Lajpat Nagar in 1997 for a Hotel Management course. She then moved to Manali, where she worked as a front desk officer at a hotel. According to her statement to the police, she got married to Nicholas — a match arranged by her parents — in 2000. "His name sounds as if he is a foreigner. We also thought so initially. This Nicholas was from Nangloi," a police officer said.

PMC undertakes land survey for creating parking bays near Metro stations



GNS News Agency, March 14

The survey gatheted information on the existing operational parking lots, designated parking lots in the DP, and potential parking spaces within a 500-meter radius of both existing and proposed Metro stations. The survey gatheted information on the existing operational parking lots, designated parking lots in the DP, and potential parking spaces within a 500-meter radius of both existing and proposed Metro stations. The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) recently surveyed the areas surrounding Metro stations to identify suitable locations for vehicle parking. This initiative aims to enhance last-mile connectivity and encourage citizens to use the Metro service by providing convenient parking options.

"We have conducted a thorough survey of all parking reservations, Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Limited (PMPML) depots, and truck and bus terminals related to the transportation department in the PMC region according to the Development Plan (DP)," said a civic officer. The officer said the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) for surveys and data representation is an effective approach for planning parking solutions near Metro stations. The civic body will gather survey data and additional information about all parking lots owned by the PMC in the Pune area. It has designated approximately 100 hectares of land in the DP for parking purposes.

The survey gatheted information on the existing op-

erational parking lots, designated parking lots in the DP, and potential parking spaces within a 500-meter radius of both existing and proposed Metro stations. The civic officer added that amenity spaces data from the building permission department will also be identified for parking purposes. The draft report of the survey will include a prioritised list of parking options near stations. Pune Metro executive director Hemant Sonawane said, "The feeder service and parking for private vehicles plays a major role in providing last-mile connectivity to citizens travelling by metro rail and increasing response to the mode of transport. We have been demanding land from the PMC to develop parking bays near stations." The Metro Rail Policy developed by the Union government emphasises the need for infrastructure that integrates all forms of public transport, intermediate public transport, and private transportation with the Metro systems. This enhanced connectivity will improve access to Metro stations for private vehicles and other transport services, as per the policy. The policy says multimodal integration must support traffic dispersal in circulating areas that provide adequate parking space, essential for planning seamless transport facilities alongside Metro stations. Commuters can easily walk to the station for the catchment area within approximately 0.3 to 0.5 km from the station. Residents living within the next kilometre can access the station using bicycles, two-wheelers, or auto-rickshaws.

For areas beyond a 2 km catchment, regular feeder bus services will be required to reach the Metro station. Additionally, the policy states that people should have the flexibility to bring their own vehicles and have the option to park for the day or overnight. The Pune Metro has operationalised two lines: Vanaz to Ramwadi and Pimpri-Chinchwad to Swargate. While the foothold on the metro rail is steadily increasing, it has not yet reached the levels estimated during the planning phase. The third line, connecting Hinjewadi to Shivajinagar, is set to become operational this year. Additionally, work has begun to extend the lines from PCMC to Nigdi and Swargate to Katraj. Proposed routes from Vanaz to Chandni Chowk, Ramwadi to Wagholi, Nal Stop to Manikbaug, and Khadakwasla to Kharadi are currently awaiting approval from the Union government.

Telangana government forms Future City Development Authority

GNS News Agency, March 14

Hyderabad: The State government has constituted the Future City Development Authority (FCDA) to oversee the development of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's pet project Future City Area. The newly formed authority will cover 56 revenue villages across 765.28 sq.km in Rangareddy district, with a focus on integrated urban planning and economic growth. Simultaneously, the government has excluded 36 revenue villages from the Hyderabad Metropolitan Region (HMR) and expanded its jurisdiction to 1,355 villages across 11 districts, covering 10,472.72 sq.km. Thus, the HMR's jurisdiction will be upto the Regional Ring Road (RRR), covering a buffer area of upto 2 km outside the RRR which will be later designated as the RRR Growth Corridor.

The move aligns with the State government's plan to develop economic and industrial clusters in the Future City Area coming up near Mucherla. The Future City project will be developed into 12 zones, with comprehensive master



planning, multi-modal connectivity, modern urban amenities, other future-ready projects like radial road along with metro rail connectivity. The FCDA will be chaired by the Chief Minister, with the Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister as vice-chairman and officials from Finance, Municipal Administration and Industries and Information Technology as members, overseeing its planning and execution.

The next year, she gave birth to a boy and began working for private companies to provide for the family, even as Nicholas was unemployed. In 2004, the couple welcomed another child, this time a girl. "Beti ke hote hi vo chhod ke chala gaya (He left soon after the girl was born). He came back in 2006, and then again left us in 2007," Preeti told the police. Over the next nine years, Preeti worked multiple jobs, at hotels and call centres, across Delhi-NCR while her parents looked after her daughter in Nangloi. In 2015, she finally realised her long-cherished dream of becoming an entrepreneur by setting up her own hostel in Gurgaon's Sector 38. This is where she met Manoj, who had approached her posing as a property dealer. They soon grew close, and six months later, in a drunken state, 39-year-old Manoj told Preeti about his dark past — he had spent five years in jail for a murder. The victim: His wife. "We used to have a lot of fights. I was getting tired of it. In 2010, I, along with a friend, killed her (his wife)," Manoj told police. Manoj was sent to jail, from where he walked out in 2015, just a few weeks before he met Preeti.

By 2017, Manoj and Preeti had started living together in Gurgaon. They shut down the failing PG business and started a restaurant together. By 2018, they wound up this business as well due to mounting losses. Preeti was back to working at call centres while Manoj, more broke and bitter than ever before, began squabbling with her for money to buy liquor — much like her first husband.

In 2019, Preeti fell sick and had to leave her job and whatever earnings it brought. But that did little to deter Manoj from asking her for money. "I told her that either you give me money, ya ek bada hath marwa (or get me a chance to carry out a major robbery)," Manoj told police. This is when she remembered her 'Shashi auntie'; she told Manoj about her mother's old friend. On June 17, 2019, when Preeti was set to appear for a job interview, Manoj asked her to call on Shashi. What he wanted was a recce of the house.

The same evening, Preeti was at the Mathurs' home. "While inquiring about her well-being, I asked her everything: when is she alone, who else comes to meet her and uncle (Vishnu Mathur)... her whole routine," Preeti told the police. A few days later, on June 22, around 9 pm, Preeti and Manoj began executing their plan. "I asked her to wear black clothes (to avoid being noticed in the dark), but she didn't have any top like that. So, I got her to wear a dark blue T-shirt and black pants," Manoj told the police.

Around 10.30 pm, Preeti and Manoj left their Gurgaon home on his black Bajaj Pulsar and reached Vasant Apartments. To avoid being detected by the neighbours or CCTV cameras, Manoj parked his bike a little further away from the building, while Preeti covered her face with a dupatta. They walked up to the Mathurs' flat and knocked, taking the three inhabitants of the house by surprise. It was 11.15 pm, way past their bedtime. "Khushboo opened the door. Uncle and auntie were there as well, both awake. They asked about Manoj and me coming at this hour. I told them that we were just passing by and thought of visiting them," Preeti told the police.

Manu Bhaker receives PU Khel Ratna award: 'Proud moment for me and my whole family'



GNS News Agency, March 14

Double Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker receiving the PU Khel Ratna award from President Droupadi Murmu at Gymnasium Hall in Panjab University. Jasbir Malhi Double Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker receiving the PU Khel Ratna award from President Droupadi Murmu at Gymnasium Hall in Panjab University. As Paris Olympics double medallist shooter Manu Bhaker received the Panjab University Khel Ratna award from President Droupadi Murmu at the Panjab University Gymnasium Hall on Wednesday morning, the 23-year-old Haryana shooter became the fifth player to receive the Khel Ratna award. Hockey legend Balbir Singh Senior had become the first Khel Ratna recipient from the Panjab University in 2016, followed by athletics legend Milkha Singh in 2018, Indian women's hockey captain Rani Rampal in 2022 and the then Tokyo Olympics gold medallist Neeraj Chopra in 2023. Bhaker received the Ratna award along with other recipients and termed the award a recognition for not only her but every aspiring player in India. "It's a proud moment for me and my whole family apart from shooting fraternity. To be bestowed the Khel Ratna award is a special feeling and to be among the list which includes legends like Balbir Singh Senior and Milkha Singh sir apart from Rani Rampal and Neeraj Chopra is something to be cherished. Of course, every player aspires to achieve such Ratnas. Such honours only encourage us to achieve more for the country. I am sure more and more youngsters will be inspired by the Khel Ratna and will pursue shooting at the college and university level and then graduate to the national and international level," said Manu while speaking with PU had started the Ratna awards in 2010 with former UGC chairman Prof Yashpal and industrialist SP Oswal being the first recipients of the Ratna award. A total of 37 Ratna awards have been bestowed upon individuals excelling in various fields till 2024 and Manu is now among the 42 recipients of the Ratna award. Manu along with IT entrepreneur Gurtej Singh Sandhu, educationist Harmohinder Singh Bedi, entrepreneur Pushvinder Jit Singh and singer Jaspinder Narula were given the Ratna awards. The Haryana youngster was cheered by mother Sumedha Bhaker. Manu, who won the bronze medal in the women's 10m air pistol in the Paris Olympics apart from pairing up with Sarabjot Singh to win the 10m air pistol mixed team bronze medal in the same Olympics to create history for India, had completed her masters from DAV College, Chandigarh, early this year. "Sports has been integral part of my life since my childhood at the Universal School at Gorla in Haryana. My parents have supported me in studies as well as sports. To strike a balance between both is the dream of every sports person and to represent the school, college and university remains one of my proudest moments apart from representing and winning medals for India.

Jadavpur University student arrested in connection with March 1 vandalism on campus



GNS News Agency, March 14

Police arrested a Jadavpur University (JU) student in connection with the March 1 unrest and vandalism on the campus, taking the total number of arrests in the case to two. A leader of the JU SFI unit told PTI on Wednesday that Soumyadip Mahata, a student of philosophy, was called to Jadavpur police station to record his statement in connection with the violence during TMC's West Bengal College and University Professors' Union AGM where West Bengal Education Minister Bratya Basu was also present.

A group of students formed human chains around Basu's car and tried to prevent him from leaving, demanding immediate discussions on the pending student union elections. Two students were injured when the minister's car went past the human chain and left the campus. In the protests that followed, the education wing office of TMC non-teaching staff was set aflame and several hoardings and festoons were put up on the campus.

The Students Federation of India (SFI) leader claimed Mahata was a left student activist but not associated with the federation. The organisation along with other student protesters will hold a general body meeting on Thursday to discuss about their future course of movement in the wake of the arrest, he added.

"While the university authorities are giving assurances of withdrawing cases against student protestors who only demanded holding of long overdue student union polls after five years, our students are getting arrested. This cannot continue," he said. A spokesperson of Jadavpur University Teachers Association confirmed Soumyadip's arrest on Wednesday. On March 2, a former JU student was arrested from his rented flat in South Kolkata on charges of being present on the campus during the protest and arson and taking part in the vandalism. The ex-student hails from Birbhum and currently works in an IT firm in Salt Lake.

Gang that stole over 100 cars in 10 months busted, used walkie-talkie, took 5-7 mins per vehicle: Police



GNS News Agency, March 14

Delhi Police, Delhi Police bust car thieves, Delhi Police bust car robbers, delhi news, India news, Indian express, current affairs Even as raids were carried out in Ludhiana, Rajpura, and Sirsa to arrest the receivers of the cars, only one Fortuner and a Creta were recovered, said police. From avoiding the use of cellphones to evade surveillance and relying on walkie-talkies instead, using advanced tools to make copies of car keys, preferring morning hours and specific car models while committing thefts, to ensuring that the vehicles are stolen within five to seven minutes — the Delhi Police on Tuesday busted a gang with an elaborate modus operandi that allegedly stole around 100 cars in the last 10 months, said officers.

Police have arrested three men who have been identified as Ravi, 42, Monu, 45, and Vishal, 40. Ravi, who had been allegedly stealing cars since 2002 and had worked as a car mechanic like Vishal, has 48 cases filed against him. The gang sold the vehicles stolen from Delhi primarily in Punjab and Haryana, said police, adding that other members are being traced. The gang members usually went 'car-hunting' in the morning hours, said officials. CCTV clips accessed to trace them showed them using sophisticated tools

"They were targeting predominantly three types of vehicles — Hyundai Creta, Fortuner, and Maruti Brezza, which were parked near parks or gyms. It was also observed that the accused hardly took a few seconds to break into the locked car and stole it within five to seven minutes," DCP (Dwarka) Ankit Singh said. On March 6, an informer told the police that Ravi was going to come in the Kakrola area of Suraj Vihar of South West Delhi. A trap was laid, and the car he was driving, with a fake number plate, was tracked, the police said. The three accused were in the vehicle. As the gang was busted, all their tools were recovered from the car, apart from several number plates. "Walkie-talkie sets, drill machine, two screw drivers, hammers, iron rod, wire cutter, master keys were also recovered from the vehicle," DCP Singh said. Ravi, the key accused, is an expert in using X-tool, which allegedly eased their operation, said police. "All modern cars have an onboard diagnostic port that authorises bonafide technicians to access the vehicle's mainframe and check for errors in the engine and other systems. However, Ravi and Vishal, being car mechanics themselves, used this port to download the car's original digital keys onto a blank key and thereby stole these cars through these Chinese scanners such as X-tool," DCP Singh said. Ravi allegedly started stealing cars after his business as a property dealer landed him in losses. He then got in touch with an alleged Punjab-based auto-lifter and began supplying stolen cars. He gradually expanded his gang and roped in even his family members, the police said. "Ravi was assisted by Monu in stealing cars, while Vishal was in charge of driving the cars away," DCP Singh said. "They sold these cars to receivers based in Haryana and Punjab. This gang is estimated to have stolen approximately 90-100 cars in the last 10 months," DCP Singh said.

"Cops said go and search for the agent yourself": US deportees from Punjab rue police apathy, many reach "compromise" with agents

GNS News Agency, March 14

Deported from the US for crossing the border illegally via "Dunki Route", and now under huge debts, the deportees from Punjab are facing a fresh trouble- the apathy of Punjab Police. Of 131 Punjabis who were deported from the US last month, just 23 have come forward until now to get the FIRs registered against their travel agents whom they had paid lakhs to reach the American shores via illegal Dunki Route.

However, most of these 23 deportees who got police cases registered, told The Indian Express that after initial "sympathy" and "photo ops" by the ministers of the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government, "no concrete action was being taken by the police" and the "booked agents were not being arrested." Only four arrests have been made so far in 23 FIRs, according to the data from Punjab Police's SIT constituted to probe US deportees cases. On the other hand, some of these deportees who got the cases registered initially, have now also entered "compromise" with their agents after their money have been refunded, hence leaving Punjab Police in an embarrassing situation.

The return of 131 deportees and 23 FIRs against travel agents have literally opened a Pandora's Box for Punjab Police, as deportees revealed how they travelled from one country to the other, leaving financial trails in multiple countries, to reach the US-Mexico border illegally. The 23 FIRs registered by Punjab Police find mention of at least 34 countries which the deportees traversed to reach the US. Adding to the complexity are several overseas agents and their middlemen (donkers) who made these deportees hop from one country to the other. After reaching South America via Europe, Middle East or Africa, most deportees undertook the strenuous path via the Darien Gap- the only land route that connects South and North America- and crossed rainforests, mountains and several rivers by rickety boats, on foot and further by taxis/buses. From Brazil, they crossed several other countries illegally including Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama (jungles), Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala before finally reaching the Mexico to cross the border. Each deportee paid their agent anywhere from Rs 40 to 60 lakh to fulfil their American dream, only to be deported after the journeys that spanned three months to even over a year. Punjab deportees paid at least Rs 44.70 crore to the agents as per the initial data. "Police said that go and search for the agent on your own"

Speaking to The Indian Express, the deportees who got the FIRs registered against their agent, said that while initially the ruling AAP government showed "all kind of sympathy", now "nothing was being done by the police on the ground." "The minister (NRI affairs minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal) came at the airport to receive us and made all kinds of promises that once FIR is registered, police will retrieve our money from the agent. But after those photo ops, nothing has been done. Now, the police or other officials are not even answering our calls," said a woman deportee from Ludhiana district, who paid Rs 45 lakh to the agent against whom the FIR has been registered by Khanna Police. Mandep Singh, a deportee from Tam Taran district, said: "My agent is not only roaming freely in the area but is even threatening openly that no one can harm him, not even police. He has clearly refused to return my Rs 35 lakh but he is not being arrested."

"Police told us that we should go and search for the agent on our own. If we had to find him on our own, what is the police for?," said Baby Rani, wife of Sukhpal Singh, a

What is International Criminal Court?

GNS News Agency, March 14

The Hague: The International Criminal Court where detained former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte is being taken after his arrest in the Philippines is a court of last resort for the most serious international offenses, such as genocide and crimes against humanity. The 79-year-old former president has become the first former Asian leader to be arrested by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Duterte was taken to the Netherlands on March 12 after his arrest on an ICC warrant accusing him of crimes against humanity over deadly anti-drug crackdowns he oversaw while in office.

The ICC handles allegations of war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and aggression, and takes on cases when nations are unable or unwilling to prosecute crimes on their territory. The court's newest member, Ukraine, formally joined in January, bringing the number of member States to 125. Major powers — the United States, Russia and China — are among nations that are not members. The ICC, which has a budget this year of more than US\$ 213 million, does not have a police force and has to rely on the cooperation of States to arrest suspects. Judges at the court have issued 60 arrest warrants and convicted 11 people.

Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga was the first, sentenced in 2012 to 14 years in prison for conscripting child soldiers. In 2021, the court convicted Ugandan commander Dominic Ongwen of dozens of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including multiple killings and forced marriages in Uganda. Ongwen was a one-time child soldier, who morphed into a brutal commander of a notorious rebel group known as the Lord's Resistance Army. Three verdicts are pending at present. Former Central African Republic soccer federation president Patrice-Edouard Ngaissona and Alfred Yekatom, alleged leaders of a predominantly Christian rebel group in the Central African Republic, are accused of multiple counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The trial of Ali Mohammed Ali Abdul Rahman Ali, who is accused of committing atrocities as the leader of the Janjaweed militia in Sudan, wrapped up last year.

The court's detention centre is housed behind the high brick walls of a Dutch prison complex in The Hague seaside suburb of Scheveningen, about a 1.5 km from the court's headquarters. Detainees have access to books, television and news, as well as a gym and sports facilities. They also can use a computer to work on their defence case and get computer training, if they need it. The court also arranges for family members to visit people in its custody. Photos on the ICC website show a communal area with a foosball table, kitchen facilities, a table and chairs. The centre also has a small medical facility. Each cell contains a bed, desk, cupboard, toilet, hand basin, television and an intercom system to contact guards when the door is locked. If Duterte goes to trial and is convicted, he would not serve his sentence in The Hague but be transferred to a prison in another country. The detention centre currently houses five other suspects — Mahamat Said Abdel Kani, Yekatom, and Ngaissona from the Central African Republic, Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mohamed Ag Mahmoud



deportee from Hoshiarpur district. "Since the day, the FIR has been registered, I am only running from pillar to post and begging the police to arrest the agent but nothing is being done. Why this entire FIR drama was done if we had to do everything on our own," said Jugraj Singh, a deportee from Batala. "My agent is roaming free locally but policemen say they can't find him," said Harpreet Singh, a deportee from Batala. Harjot Singh from Gurdaspur district, who along with his cousin paid Rs 80 lakh to the agent, and both were deported, said: "Two FIRs are registered against the agent but he is not being arrested. He doesn't take our calls when we asked for our money back." Hardeep Kaur, whose husband Gurwinder Singh from Ludhiana district was arrested immediately after deportation from the US, said: "My husband was arrested for snatching case pending against him but the agent who duped us of Rs 69 lakh is not being arrested. Police said he is absconding." "I had assumed that once FIR was done, police will arrest my agent immediately but it has backfired on me. Now neither he has been arrested, nor he is returning my money. He is now threatening me that since I have got the FIR registered, he won't return a penny," said another deportee.

"Took Rs 42 lakh, now offering Rs 3 lakh for compromise" Some deportees have also entered "compromise" with the agents and do not want to proceed with the FIRs. Daler Singh, a deportee from Amritsar said: "The agent has returned half the amount (of Rs 60 lakh). Once the full amount is returned, we will get the FIR cancelled." Harwinder Singh from Hoshiarpur district said: "We have entered compromise with our agent via the NRI affairs committee of our village. We will get the FIR cancelled. Half of our money has been returned." Taranveer Singh from Mohali district said: "I paid Rs 42 lakh to the agent but he is offering me merely Rs 3 lakh for compromise. I will continue with the FIR till he doesn't offer an agreeable amount." "My agent was arrested but he has returned Rs 30 lakh of the 50 lakh I had paid. We have agreed for the compromise via our village panchayat and the court will be informed the same," said Davinder Singh, a deportee from Sangrur. Jaswinder Singh, a Moga deportee, on whose complaint his agent cum BKU (Totewal) farm leader Sukh Gill was booked for fraud, said he too has reached "compromise" with him. "We will get FIR quashed as our money has been returned," he said. Punjab Police ADGP (NRI affairs) PK Sinha, who heads Punjab Police's Special Investigation Team (SIT) on US deportees probe, said that SSPs/CPs across the state have been directed to accelerate probes and make arrests in US deportees' cases. "Raids are being conducted regularly to arrest the accused who are based in Punjab. We will gradually try to reach the agents based abroad as probe will progress," said the senior officer. On some deportees entering "compromise" with the agents, he said: "Only the court can quash the FIR once registered. Police will continue with the probe in the FIRs."



from Mali and Abdul Rahman from Sudan.

The ICC has issued arrest warrants for dozens of suspects since it was established in 2002. Among them are Russian President Vladimir Putin and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The court issued a warrant for Putin two years ago, accusing him of personal responsibility for the abductions of children from Ukraine. Putin has rejected the accusations. In November, the court's judges issued warrants for Netanyahu, his former defence minister and Hamas' military chief, accusing them of crimes against humanity in connection with the war in Gaza. Netanyahu condemned the warrant against him, saying Israel "rejects with disgust the absurd and false actions" by the court. The case against the Hamas military leader has been terminated because he is believed to have been killed. Other suspects wanted by the ICC include former Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and Joseph Kony, leader of the shadowy Ugandan militia Lord's Resistance Army.

Chandigarh Police constable found dead in car, husband booked for murder

GNS News Agency, March 14

A day after the body of Chandigarh Police constable Sapna was found in her car near Mansa Devi, her brother Gaurav filed a murder case against her husband at Mansa Devi police station under Section 103(1) of the Indian Penal Code. In his complaint, Gaurav stated that their family consists of three siblings, with Sapna being the eldest. She married Parvinder, an army soldier from Jhajjar district, in 2014. The couple had a six-year-old daughter, but their relationship was strained. Gaurav alleged that Parvinder harassed Sapna, was addicted to drugs, and frequently demanded money from her. He had even attempted suicide in June 2024. On March 11, 2025, Parvinder informed Gaurav that Sapna was neither answering her phone nor reporting for duty. Sapna's friend Urmila mentioned that she had gone to Mansa Devi temple due to distress. While searching the area, her car was found parked near Saketri Road, with her body inside.

Spelling mistake in Panjab University's new logo angers students

GNS News Agency, March 14

A controversy has erupted over Panjab University's new logo, with students alleging that an incorrect spelling on the convocation dress has damaged the university's reputation. According to students, when the convocation dress was redesigned in 2019 following UGC guidelines, the university incorporated traditional embroidery like Phulkari to promote cultural identity. However, they argue that if the university seeks to honour its heritage, it must also ensure the accuracy of its name and logo. In the new logo, the university's name has been misspelt as 'Panjab'. Students expressed surprise that this error occurred despite oversight by the Fashion Technology Department's committee. They criticised the committee for failing in its duty and accused the administration of not taking the issue seriously, leading to growing frustration. The students are demanding an immediate correction and action against those responsible. It remains to be seen what steps the university will take.

Car smuggling alcohol overturns, two local residents who pocketed IMFL from scene, arrested in Vadodara



GNS News Agency, March 14

Car smuggling, Car smuggling alcohol overturns, Vadodara, Vadodara IMFL, IMFL, Indian Made Foreign Liquor, Ahmedabad news, Gujarat news, Indian express, current affairs Even as the police rushed the injured passenger to the SSG hospital, bystanders informed the police that locals residing in settlements around the highway had grabbed several boxes of the liquor that had been saved from damage inside the car.

Vehicles transporting illegal stash of liquor, overturning while speeding on highways in Gujarat and local residents rushing to the scene to grab the same is a common occurrence. But in a rare case of crackdown on Wednesday, the Vadodara city police arrested two people in an alleged case of Prohibition for allegedly stealing several 180ml bottles of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) that got scattered on the road after a hatchback car transporting the illegal stash overturned near Kapurai on National Highway 48. The incident occurred when the Kapurai police station received a call of an accident on the NH-48, involving a hatchback car that had overturned and spilled over alcohol on the road. When Kapurai police officials reached the spot, they found several broken glass bottles of liquor scattered around the overturned vehicle and an injured passenger in the car. The car driver, police said, had escaped. Even as the police rushed the injured passenger to the SSG hospital, bystanders informed the police that locals residing in settlements around the highway had grabbed several boxes of the liquor that had been saved from damage inside the car.

Kapurai Police Inspector DC Raol told The Indian Express, "We received an instruction from the Commissioner of Police to comb the area and nab those persons, who had pilfered the illegal liquor cartons. Accordingly, we formed teams and went into the settlements and nabbed two people, including a woman, who had managed to take away a total of around 190 bottles between them." The accused, Ishwar Jadav and Kamla Raju Patel — both residents of settlements around the highway, were booked under the Prohibition Act and arrested. The police also recovered the liquor bottles from the duo. While Jadav had managed to grab 45 bottles of 180 ml of alcohol, amounting to Rs 8,190, Patel had taken away 134 bottles worth Rs 22,780, police said. "We found the bottles stashed away in big plastic bags from their homes in their settlements... They had rushed to the spot immediately after the accident and pilfered as much as they could." Raol added that while the passenger of the car involved in the accident is undergoing treatment for injuries and "unable to record a statement yet", a hunt has been launched for the driver of the car, who had managed to escape from the spot. The police have booked both the occupants of the car, who are yet to be identified, under the Prohibition Act, in a separate FIR. Apart from the stash recovered from Jadav and Patel, liquor worth Rs 18,000 was destroyed in the accident and another 182 bottles worth Rs 30,960 were confiscated by the police.

ISRO achieves de-docking of SpaDeX satellites

GNS News Agency, March 14

New Delhi: ISRO on Thursday said it has accomplished de-docking of the SpaDeX satellites, clearing the way for future missions such as exploring the moon, human spaceflight, and building its own space station.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh announced the successful de-docking of satellites in a post on X. "SpaDeX satellites accomplished the unbelievable de-docking. This paves the way for smooth conduct of ambitious future missions including the Bharatiya Antriksha Station, Chandrayaan 4 & Gaganyaan," Singh said. "Congrats team ISRO. And heartening for every Indian," he said. Singh said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's continuous patronage keeps the spirits soaring.

The SpaDeX mission was launched on December 30 last year when the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) placed in orbit two satellites — SDX01 and SDX02 — to demonstrate the docking experiment in space. After several attempts, the space agency successfully docked the two satellites on January 16. PTI

Russia lays out demands for talks with US on Ukraine, sources say

dent Donald Trump is awaiting word from Putin on whether he will agree to a 30-day truce that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Tuesday he would accept as a first step toward peace talks. Putin's commitment to a potential ceasefire agreement is still uncertain, with details yet to be finalized. Some U.S. officials, lawmakers and experts fear that Putin, a former KGB officer, would use a truce to intensify what they say is an effort to divide the U.S., Ukraine and Europe and undermine any talks.

The Russian embassy in Washington and the White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In Kyiv, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hailed this week's meeting in Saudi Arabia between U.S. and Ukrainian officials as constructive, and said a potential 30-day ceasefire with Russia could be used to draft a broader peace deal. Moscow has raised many of these same demands over the last two decades, some making their way into formal negotiations with the U.S. and Europe. Most recently, Moscow discussed them with the Biden administration in a series of meetings in late 2021 and early 2022 as tens of thousands of Russian troops sat on Ukraine's border, awaiting the order to invade. They included demands that would constrain U.S. and NATO military operations from Eastern Europe to Central Asia. While rejecting some of the terms, the Biden administration sought to forestall the invasion by engaging with Russia on several of them, according to U.S. government documents reviewed by Reuters and multiple former U.S. officials. The effort failed and Russia attacked on February 24, 2022.

U.S. and Russian officials in recent weeks have said that a draft agreement discussed by Washington, Kyiv and Moscow in Istanbul in 2022 could be a starting point for peace talks. The agreement never went through. In those talks, Russia demanded that Ukraine give up its NATO ambitions and accept a permanent nuclear-free status. It also demanded a veto over actions by countries that wanted to assist Ukraine in the event of war. The Trump administration has not explained how it is approaching its negotiations with Moscow. The two sides are engaged in two separate conversations: one on resetting U.S.-Russia relations and the other on a Ukraine peace agreement. The administration appears to be divided on how to proceed.

U.S. Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, who is helping lead the discussion with Moscow, last month on CNN described the Istanbul talks as "cogent and substantive negotiations" and said that they could be "a guidepost to get a peace deal done." But Trump's top Ukraine and Russia envoy, retired Gen. Keith Kellogg, told a Council on Foreign Relations audience last week that he did not see the Istanbul agreement as a starting point. "I think we have to develop something entirely new," he said.

Experts say Russia's demands likely are not only intended to shape an eventual agreement with Ukraine, but also to be the basis of accords with its Western supporters. Russia has made similar demands of the U.S. over the last two decades — demands that would limit the West's ability to build a stronger military presence in Europe and potentially allow Putin to expand his influence in the continent. "There's no sign that the Russians are willing to make any concessions," said Angela Stent, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution who was the top U.S. intelligence analyst for Russia and Eurasia. "The demands haven't changed at all. I think they are not really interested in peace or a meaningful ceasefire." In their effort to forestall what U.S. intelligence officials concluded was an imminent Russian invasion, senior Biden administration officials engaged with Russian counterparts on three of the Kremlin's demands, according to the U.S. government documents reviewed by Reuters. They were a ban on military exercises by U.S. and other NATO forces on the territories of new alliance members and a ban on U.S. intermediate-range missile deployments in Europe or elsewhere within range of Russian territory, according to the documents. The Russians also sought to bar military exercises by the U.S. or NATO from Eastern Europe to the Caucasus and Central Asia, the documents showed. "These are the same Russian demands that have been made since 1945," said Kori Schake, a former Pentagon official who directs foreign and defense policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute. "With the behavior of the Trump administration in recent weeks, Europeans aren't just scared we're abandoning them, they're afraid we've joined the enemy."

For families of Philippines drug war victims, Duterte's arrest revives hopes for justice



GNS News Agency, March 14

The moment Jerica Ann Pico, the widow of a man who was killed during the war on drugs in the Philippines, heard the news of former President Rodrigo Duterte's arrest, she said it felt like a fresh breath of life had rushed back into her. She said she never thought she would live to see the day when justice no longer seemed out of reach for her husband, one of the thousands killed during Duterte's brutal anti-narcotics campaign.

"I was surprised and felt as if I had been brought back to life because what we have been fighting for is finally coming to fruition - we are finally getting justice for our loved ones who were taken from us," said Pico after attending a Mass in the Quezon City region of Manila with families of other victims.

At the church, stark reminders of the drugs war lined the steps of the altar - photos of those who lost their lives under Duterte's six-year campaign. Many of their families, like Pico, now hope to see the former president behind bars. In a dramatic turn of events, Duterte was arrested in Manila on Tuesday at the request of the International Criminal Court and flown to The Hague hours later, marking the biggest step yet in the court of last resort's probe into his bloody "war on drugs." The 79-year old Duterte could become the first Asian former head of state to go on trial at the ICC. "For families of extra-judicial killing victims, this is our only wish that those responsible be held accountable," said Pico, the 30-year-old mother of one.

Although Duterte withdrew the Philippines from the ICC's founding treaty in 2019 to block its drugs war probe, the court says it has jurisdiction to investigate alleged crimes that took place while a country was a member. Victims and human rights groups said that Duterte should not be the only one held accountable. They also demand justice against others involved, including his former police chief, now Senator Ronald dela Rosa, who oversaw the bloody crackdown and is under ICC investigation. "They should be with Duterte and not just Duterte being the only one held accountable," Emily Soriano, whose son was killed in the anti-drugs campaign, said at a press conference attended by families of other victims. Dela Rosa's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment. But he and Duterte petitioned the Supreme Court on Tuesday to compel the government to stop cooperating with the ICC.

During Duterte's six-year presidency, 6,200 suspects were killed during anti-drug operations, by police count. But activists say the real toll was far higher, with thousands of urban and poor drug users, many placed on official "watch lists", killed in mysterious circumstances. Pico said her husband, Mark Anthony Ruvivivir, was added to such a list in 2018. The following year, she said, he was dead, shot and killed by police outside his home in Quezon City. At the time, police said he had fired at officers first. "At least Duterte will only be imprisoned. His family will still get to see him, visit him," Pico said, holding back tears. "Unlike us who lost our loved ones, we will never see them again."

Mark Carney to be sworn in as Canada's prime minister

GNS News Agency, March 14

OTTAWA, Mark Carney will be sworn in as Canada's next prime minister on Friday morning, marking the final day of Justin Trudeau's more than nine years in power. Governor General Mary Simon will preside over the swearing-in of Carney and his cabinet ministers Friday at 11 a.m., her office said in a statement. Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. Carney, a former central banker who led the Bank of Canada and Bank of England, was elected leader of the Liberal Party of Canada on Sunday. He will become Canada's 24th prime minister. Carney will take over at a tumultuous time in Canada, which is in the midst of a trade war with longtime ally the United States under President Donald Trump and must hold a general election soon. Carney's new cabinet may be about half the size of Trudeau's executive, Bloomberg reported on Wednesday.

The cabinet is expected to have between 15 and 20 ministers, down from 37 currently including the prime minister, the report added, citing a source. Reporting by Ryan Patrick Jones in Toronto and David Ljunggren in Ottawa; Additional reporting by Kanishka Singh in Washington; Editing by Chris Reese. Our Standards: The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles., opens new tab

NASA's newest space telescope blasts off to map entire sky

Vandenberg Space Force Base: NASA's newest space telescope rocketed into orbit Tuesday to map the entire sky like never before — a sweeping look at hundreds of millions of galaxies and their shared cosmic glow since the beginning of time.

SpaceX launched the Spherex observatory from California, putting it on course to fly over Earth's poles. Tagging along were four suitcase-size satellites to study the sun. Spherex popped off the rocket's upper stage first, drifting into the blackness of space with a blue Earth in the background. The \$488 million Spherex mission aims to explain how galaxies formed and evolved over billions of years, and how the universe expanded so fast in its first moments. Closer to home in our own Milky Way galaxy, Spherex will hunt for water and other ingredients of life in the icy clouds between stars where new solar systems emerge.

The cone-shaped Spherex — at 1,110 pounds (500 kilograms) or the heft of a grand piano — will take six months to map the entire sky with its infrared eyes and wide field of view. Four full-sky surveys are planned over two years, as the telescope circles the globe from pole to pole 400 miles (650 kilometers) up. Spherex won't see galaxies in exquisite detail like NASA's larger and more elaborate Hubble and Webb space telescopes, with their narrow fields of view.

G7 foreign ministers meet in Canada amid tensions with Trump

GNS News Agency, March 14

LA MALBAIE, Canada, March 13 (Reuters) - Foreign ministers of leading Western democracies meet in Canada on Thursday after seven weeks of rising tensions between U.S. allies and President Donald Trump over his upending of foreign policy on Ukraine and imposing of tariffs. The Group of Seven ministers from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States, along with the EU, meet in the remote tourist town of La Malbaie, nestled in the Quebec hills for two days of meetings that in the past have broadly been consensual on the issues they face. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.

Top of the agenda for Washington's partners will be getting a debriefing on U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio's talks on Tuesday with Kyiv in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where Ukraine said it was ready to support a 30-day ceasefire deal. But in the run-up to the first G7 meeting of Canada's presidency, the crafting of an agreed all-encompassing final statement has been tough.

A U.S. decision to impose 25% tariffs on all steel and aluminium imports immediately drew reciprocal measures from Canada and the EU, underscoring the tensions. Washington has sought to impose red lines on language around Ukraine and opposed a separate declaration on curbing Russia's so-called shadow fleet, a murky shipping network that eludes sanctions, while demanding more robust language on China. On Monday, Rubio cautioned that Washington did not want language that could harm efforts to bring Russia and Ukraine to the table. Speaking to reporters on Wednesday he said a good G7 statement would recognise that the United States has moved the process to end the war forward. G7 diplomats said the positive outcome from Jeddah may at least ease talks on Ukraine. The United States, since Trump's return to office on January 20, has taken a less-friendly stance on Ukraine, pushing for a quick deal to end the war, demanded European partners take on more of the burden without openly endorsing their role in future talks, and warned Washington's ties with Moscow. TARIFFS TO 51ST STATE

Even Japan, so reliant on American security guaran-

Will Musk be expelled from the Royal Society? | Explained

GNS News Agency, March 14

The story so far: The 365-year-old Royal Society in Britain, one of the most reputed scientific institutions in the world, is experiencing a crisis that raises fundamental concerns about the role of a top scientific institution. The Royal Society's former members include notable figures like Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, and Stephen Hawking, among others. Becoming a member of the Royal Society is frequently regarded as the culmination of an extensive research career, and fellows are chosen after a rigorous process. The Royal Society also imposes a code of conduct on its fellows once they are elected. Of late, there has been a growing demand to rescind Elon Musk's fellowship for violating the code.

Who is making the demand?

In 1775, the German scientist and writer Rudolf Erich Raspe was expelled from the Royal Society after being accused of "divers frauds and gross breaches of trust". Today, the actions of the world's richest man has been deemed a "threat to science" by numerous scientists. The first fellow of the Royal Society to resign over this matter was Dorothy Bishop, emeritus professor of developmental neuropsychology at the University of Oxford. In 2024, she lodged two complaints with the Royal Society. "On both occasions they consulted lawyers, and it may well be the case that the lawyers are concerned about the prospect of legal action," she told the BBC. Another fellow, Andrew Millar of the University of Edinburgh, did the same in February this year. An open letter to the president of the Royal Society, currently British statistician Adrian Smith, has been signed by almost 3,500 members of the wider scientific community. Stephen Curry, an emeritus professor of structural biology at Imperial College London, penned it and ex-



pressed similar dismay. Fellow of the Royal Society, AI pioneer, and 2024 physics Nobel Prize winner Geoffrey Hinton also wrote on X that he was in favour of Mr. Musk's removal. "I think Elon Musk should be expelled from the British Royal Society. Not because he peddles conspiracy theories and makes Nazi salutes, but because of the huge damage he is doing to scientific institutions in the US," Mr. Hinton wrote. Mr. Musk replied: "Only craven, insecure fools care about awards and memberships". What have been the charges? Many fellows believe the billionaire's inflammatory remarks on British politicians have breached the Royal Society's code of conduct. Scientists have also expressed concerns regarding Mr. Musk's conduct within the current Donald Trump administration. In his leading position at the U.S. Department of Government Efficiency (or DOGE), Mr. Musk has overseen unprecedented cuts to funding meant for scientific research. He has also been spreading false material and engaging in political propaganda on his social media platform, X. His company Neuralink recently reported developing a novel brain-computer interface. Although this is a worthwhile objective, the research methodology is distinguished by Mr. Musk's resistance to allowing others to influence his methods. This has resulted in allegations of non-compliance with 'Good Laboratory Practice' regulations. Additionally, Mr. Musk's slanderous charges against public scientists like Anthony Fauci and other public personae have also drawn criticism from a number of scientists. Mr. Musk is also accused of encouraging vaccine hesitancy and baselessly doubting the foundations of climate change science. Why has he not been expelled? The Royal Society counts more than 1,700 fellows, and at least 60 of them have signed Mr. Curry's letter to have Mr. Musk expelled. But not everyone in the scientific community agrees with it.

Donald Trump says Ireland cheats the US as Irish PM Micheál Martin joins him to celebrate St. Patrick's Day



GNS News Agency, March 14

U.S. President Donald Trump welcomed Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin on Wednesday (March 12, 2025) for the annual St. Patrick's Day celebration at the White House, where he added Ireland to the list of countries he says are taking advantage of the United States. Mr. Martin countered by noting Ireland's contributions to the U.S.

It was Mr. Trump's first Oval Office meeting with a foreign leader since his recent sit-down with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, which morphed into a shouting match as they jostled over ending Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The session ended with Mr. Zelenskyy being asked to leave the White House. Mr. Martin, who offered only gentle pushback to some of Mr. Trump's comments, returned to the White House in the evening and presented Mr. Trump with a bowl of shamrocks at an early St. Patrick's Day celebration. The duo also attended an annual luncheon at the Capitol.

The President's banter during the Oval Office meeting also touched on Vice President J. D. Vance's shamrock-themed socks and Mr. Trump nemesis Rosie O'Donnell's recent move to Ireland. The Republican President has been sparring with U.S. allies and adversaries alike over trade, slapping double-digit tariffs on imports from countries from Canada to China and in between. During the appearance with Mr. Martin, Mr. Trump repeated his claim that the European Union was created just to stick it to the U.S. Asked if Ireland, a member of the EU, was taking advantage, too, Mr. Trump said, "of course they are. I have great respect for Ireland and what they did and they should have done just what they did, but the United States shouldn't have let it happen." He was referring to the concentration of U.S. pharmaceutical companies in Ireland, due to the country's tax policies. "We had stupid leaders. We had leaders that didn't have a clue or let's say they weren't businesspeople, but they didn't have a clue what was happening and all of a sudden Ireland has our pharmaceutical companies," Mr. Trump said. Mr. Martin countered that the trade relationship is "a two-way street," adding that Ireland's two largest airlines buy more aircrafts from Boeing Co. than anyone else outside of America. More than 700 Irish companies are also based in America, creating thousands of jobs, Mr. Martin said. "That's a little known fact that doesn't turn up in the statistics," he added. "I understand where you're coming from, fully," Mr. Martin told Mr. Trump, "but I think it's a relationship that we can develop and that will endure into the future." At one point, Mr. Trump became distracted as he talked about inflation in the U.S. "By the way, I love these socks. What's with these socks? I'm trying to stay focused, but I'm very impressed with the VP's socks," Mr. Trump said, drawing chuckles from others in the room. Mr. Vance had worn socks patterned with small green shamrocks as a nod to Mr. Martin's visit. When a reporter asked Mr. Martin why his country would let O'Donnell move there, Mr. Trump jumped at the opening. "I like that question," the president said, adding that Mr. Martin was "better off not knowing" about O'Donnell. O'Donnell, a comedian and former talk-show host, and Mr. Trump have feuded for years. O'Donnell, who is gay, recently announced that she moved to Ireland in January, citing a lack of equal rights in America. Mr. Trump found a way to sneak his penchant for professional fighting into the discourse. As the meeting wrapped, Mr. Trump was asked to name his favorite person in Ireland. Mr. Trump referred to Irish mixed martial arts fighter Conor McGregor, partly because "he's got the best tattoos I've ever seen."

Strings of legacy: the lone veena-maker of Nuzvid



Nestled in the narrow lane opposite the now-defunct Apsara Theatre in Nuzvid, a town famed for its luscious mangoes, the third house from the entrance looks markedly different from its neighbours. Unlike the well-maintained, urbane-looking houses, this house lays bare its brickwork, giving off an incomplete, rickety appearance. Yet, within this modest-looking abode thrives a legacy of cultural richness.

This is the house of Sheikh Mabu Saheb, 50, where more than 70 or 80 Veenas — India's national instrument — reside alongside the dying craft of making them. "Just like playing a veena, making it is a skill which only a few can master," says Sheikh Mabu, seated on the floor surrounded by his tools and materials, carefully sandpapering a veena. Brushes, paint bottles, wooden logs, chisellers and hammers of all shapes and sizes lie scattered around him, each playing a role in the designing and making of the instrument. "This is a Madhura Veena. It is distinguishable by its pear-shaped body. This particular one is bound for overseas," he says, while meticulously brushing the sandpaper over the veena's wooden surface. Nearby hang rows of finished and unfinished veenas, ready to be dispatched upon receipt of an order.

For over seven decades, this dilapidated structure has served both as a residence and a workshop for Sheikh Mabu's family. The family does not own any land, and neither does Sheikh Mabu have a storefront. He relies on word of mouth to sell his instruments. "It is not a business, you see. Those who know my work come here to buy," he says. He crafts all kinds of veenas, including the famed Saraswati veena, Madhura veena, Mayur veena, Sankhu veena, Rudra veena, Vipanchi veena, and the Gotu or Chitra veena. He also makes the folding veena, which can be dismantled, and a 21-inch veena. The 21-inch veena was recognised as the smallest playable veena in the world. While the normal size of a veena is 53 inches, Sheikh Mabu used his skill in crafting the smallest one, which retained all the 'sapta swaralu' (seven strings), which took over a month to craft. "It is difficult to put a number on the orders we get," he says, adding that, on an average, 20 to 30 veenas get sold in a year. But, orders or no orders, Sheikh Mabu sits down to make veenas every single day since his family has been dependent on this for decades. "It takes 12 days for one person to finish making a Veena. It requires a lot of patience, perseverance and attention. There should not be any scope for errors," Sheikh Mabu says, adding that making the 21-inch veena took him more than a month. Having more craftsmen could have helped him finish work in less time. Earlier, there used to be 10 skilled persons to help him with designing or chiselling. "Some of them left for better work, while some died. Nuzvid had around 20 craftsmen earlier who made musical instruments. Their number, too, has shrunk over the years due to lack of support from the government," he says, his voice tinged with sorrow. Sheikh Mabu, whose family has been making veenas for more than 50 years, is the last man standing in Nuzvid, once known for the veena industry, striving to preserve the art despite the challenges.

Laborious process The entire instrument is made from a single piece of wood procured from the jackfruit tree. Three to four instruments can be made from a single tree, depending on its size. Sheikh Mabu says the tree has to be 70 to 80 years old for its wood to be useful. "We usually go to Devarapalle in West Godavari for the tree. We have to cut down there itself and transport it to our place by truck, after paying for the tree, for cutting and transporting," he says, adding that these days the Forest Department's permission has to be sought. Once the logs reach home, they are put aside for a month to dry. Once they are dried and hardened, he begins carving, shaping, and smoothing the body using sandpaper. To make the resonators, one called Tumba and the other Kunda, a circular shape on the wood is carved at first. The log is then hollowed and plated. After the initial carvings, the artisans use sandpaper to smoothen the wooden surface. The whole process takes 10-12 days for a single person. The entire process is meticulous and labour-intensive. Purchasing the wood alone and other raw materials, none of which are available in Nuzvid, cost him around ₹40,000. The starting price of the veena is ₹50,000.

Forging leadership with India's youth power

Every year, January 12 is celebrated across the length and breadth of India as 'National Youth Festival', a day which is also the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. The Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue is an innovative one, launched with the vision of engaging India's youth in the developmental journey of the nation. The programme seeks to harness the collective energy, creativity and leadership potential of young minds to contribute towards realising a Viksit Bharat, i.e., a Developed India. In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's belief that the youth of the country are central to India's growth, the dialogue provides a platform for young leaders to engage in discussions, exchange ideas, and collaborate on solutions to the nation's challenges. The competition and its stages are designed to inspire the youth to think critically and contribute in a proactive way towards India's progress. A dialogue, its competitive nature

The dialogue is a dynamic, multi-stage initiative, designed to engage and empower India's youth in the country's developmental journey. The competition has four stages, the first being a Viksit Bharat quiz held digitally on the My Bharat platform. This stage tested a participant's knowledge about India's achievements, challenges, and vision for a developed future, covering areas such as sustainable development, technology, and national policies. The top scorers moved on to the second stage, i.e., essay and blog writing, where they had to write on themes such as tech for Viksit Bharat and empowering youth for Viksit Bharat, reflecting on their vision for India's future. These submissions were evaluated for originality. In the third stage, the Viksit Bharat Vision Pitch Deck, participants at the State level presented innovative ideas for India's development through a compelling pitch deck. The best teams from each State advanced to the fourth and last stage of the Viksit Bharat National Championship, which will be held at the Bharat

The folding veena is the costliest at ₹1.50 lakh, but the expenses are also much more. "In any case, the profit margin is hardly ₹10,000 or less, which is hardly enough for sustenance these days," Sheikh Mabu says, wondering how a family can live on such a low income.

Despite low returns and hardships, he wants to ensure that the art lives on. While his son and nephew know the process, he fears that the art, which was propelled to fame by his father, would die out if there are few to take it forward. Nuzvid's veena connection Nuzvid has been associated with veena-making for centuries. Tracing its history, Sangeet Natak Akademi awardee Ayyagari Syamasundaram, who was also the principal of Ghantasala Venkateswara Rao Government Music College in Vijayawada for 15 years, says classical music flourished under the patronage of kings and zamindars. "The art received great patronage from them. The flourishing of music led to a boom in musical instrument makers," says Mr. Syamasundaram, who is himself an eminent veena player. Sheikh Mabu's grandfather, Sheikh Kasim Saheb, began the family's association with veena-making, followed by his father, Sheikh Meera Saheb, who gained a reputation for his lightweight, finely tuned instruments.

"My father was particularly fascinated by the veena as in those days it was common to see yesteryear actresses such as Anjali Devi, Jamuna and Savitri playing the instrument," Sheikh Mabu says. Then, his father left for Vijayawada, where he learnt its manufacturing from one Ratna Varma, whose son Lakshmana Rao used to run the lone veena manufacturing shop in the city. After learning the ropes, Sheikh Meera Saheb went back to Nuzvid and began making veenas on his own. After he became adept at the skill, he presented the instrument as a gesture of gratitude to all three actresses. He also presented veenas to former President late A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, a keen aficionado of the instrument, and spiritual guru Ganapathy Sachchidananda Swami. Later, as he grew famous, legends of Carnatic music such as Mangalampalli Balamurali Krishna, M.S. Subbulakshmi and veena maestro Chitti Babu procured their veenas from this humble household, recalls Sheikh Mabu. "Sheikh Meera Saheb's veena was known for its lightweight, slender body. The sound from the resonators was of great quality and the veena would last for years. All the maestros of the day would source their instruments from him," recalls Mr. Syamasundaram, who recommends his students to purchase veenas from Sheikh Mabu.

"In Sheikh Mabu's case, the apple did not fall far from the tree," smiles Mr. Syamasundaram, noting how Sheikh Mabu has carried forward his family legacy with unstinting devotion to his craft. He wonders where the next generation of veena enthusiasts would have procured the instrument from had Sheikh Meera Saheb's sons chosen to pursue a different path. Both Sheikh Mabu and his brother, who from a tender age saw their father making veenas and playing on them, naturally gravitated towards the art. While his brother died at a young age, Sheikh Mabu carried the legacy forward. "It is the grace of Ammavaru (Goddess) that we, being Muslims, were able to learn this art. The veena is highly revered in Hinduism. How else can one explain it?" he says. Today, his name is taken in the same breath as the veena, and has come to be known as Veena Sheikh or Mabu Veena. He not only exports the instrument to different cities but also to other countries. Sheikh Mabu fondly recalls being approached by temple authorities to repair the golden Veena at the Durga Malleswara Swamyvarla Devasthanam in Vijayawada. He has also presented a veena to the Saraswati temple in Nuzvid, the Meenakshi Amman temple in Madurai and Durga temple at Patamata in Vijayawada. Sheikh Mabu has been a recipient of many awards and certificates, including from the A.P. Handicrafts Development Corporation Limited in 2014, 'Aasthana Vidwan' from Avadhoota Datta Peetham, and Wonder Book of Records for the smallest veena, among others. "While I am thankful to all those who recognised my work, my humble request to the State government is to grant me two acres, which I can use to set up an institute to teach others," Sheikh Mabu says, adding that the jackfruit tree, too, should be available to them free of charge. The Central government, recognising the art as an endangered form, is organising training sessions in veena making under the mentorship of Sheikh Mabu through the Lepakshi Handicrafts Development Corporation Limited. At a workshop near Nuzvid, 30 trainees, including 20 women from farming backgrounds, are learning the basics. The five-month classes will go on till March. "All 30 people are being given a stipend. Once the sessions are over, they will be taken into work by Sheikh Mabu," says Lakshmi Kanth Inapala, Managing Director, Lepakshi. He said the training sessions are part of their efforts to preserve the ancient art of veena making, found only in Bobbili and Nuzvid in Andhra Pradesh. For Sheikh Mabu, the veena is more than an instrument — it is a lifeline to a rich cultural heritage he refuses to let fade into obscurity.

Mandapam in New Delhi on January 11-12, 2025. In the finale, the selected teams will pitch their visionary solutions to the Prime Minister. This in itself is a unique opportunity to influence national policy and contribute to India's vision of a Viksit Bharat. The competition is structured to test not only a participant's knowledge and creativity but also their leadership and communication skills. The features this year: The National Youth Festival is an annual celebration of India's youth, fostering a spirit of national integration and promoting the ideals of youth empowerment and creativity. However, this year's festival stands out in several ways. The focus this year is on Youth for Sustainable Development, a theme that resonates with growing recognition of young people as the drivers of global change. In line with India's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the festival has incorporated workshops, seminars and cultural activities that align with the vision of a greener, more inclusive, future. Additionally, there is a greater emphasis on the role of technology and innovation in achieving national goals, with specific sessions dedicated to Tech for Good and Innovation for India's Development. Another unique feature this year is expanded virtual participation. With digital platforms having been integrated into the festival, young people from remote corners of the country can participate in discussions, workshops, and showcase their talents and ideas online. This inclusivity broadens the festival's reach and ensures that youth, regardless of location, has the chance to contribute. The 2025 National Youth Festival will feature: workshops and panels on leadership and innovation. With a focus on topics such as youth leadership, digital entrepreneurship, and sustainable living, these sessions will equip participants with the skills necessary to drive change in their communities. Second, cultural programmes.

Is it time for an Indian Banksy? The list of issues in need of public scrutiny is growing by the day but Indian street art continues to play it safe



Some years ago, in the U.S., I remember attending a charity auction organised by the Philadelphia Arts League. Local artists were invited to display and sell their works by placing them on a conveyor belt that moved slowly towards a shredder. If a piece was picked by a buyer, the proceeds went to the children's hospital; if not, it was shredded into the garbage bin. The artist merely watched helplessly. London-based street artist Banksy similarly sold a painting at a Sotheby's auction for £1 million. As soon as the bid was accepted and the hammer came down, the artwork slipped out of its frame and shredded onto the floor. The self-destruction ironically increased the artistic value of the painting which was renamed Love is in the Bin.

Whether the shredding was an artistic act done to add theatrical value to the painting, it is hard to say, but in all likelihood it was part of Banksy's plan to ensure that art is not taken too seriously. His bigger works are altogether different. In 2017, in West Bank, Banksy established the Walled Off Hotel, a temporary art exhibit on the tragedy of Palestine. A play on New York's Waldorf chain, the hotel looks right into Israel's West Bank and proudly boasts the worst view in the world. Part art, part politics, part satire, the artwork has to date attracted over 140,000 visitors. A 2017 Banksy mural shows cherubs prying open the separation barrier in Bethlehem, West Bank, opposite the Walled Off Hotel. Without a doubt, Banksy is today one of the most important and prolific street artists of our time. In August 2024, nine animal-related artworks appeared in quick succession on London walls. A gorilla at the entrance to the local zoo, two elephants stretching trunks out of building windows, pigeons on an imaginary wire — the graphic simplicity of much of the work is often undercut by scathing satire. Two surveillance cameras strut about like pigeons on the sidewalk; on a wall in Ukraine, a young boy wrestles a bully to the ground; another is seen painting a sign 'Graffiti is a Crime'.

Medical education in India is at a crossroads; here's a road map

The Indian government replaced a system — the Medical Council of India, which was regulating medical education and practice for over eight decades — due to allegations of inefficiency and corruption. NITI Aayog was a strong proponent of this change, and even the judiciary advocated the need to improve medical education. The Medical Council of India was superseded by the National Medical Commission in 2020, through an Act of Parliament, which now sets new standards and regulations to reform the system. This has compelled even private medical schools to comply with certain norms. The medical community, particularly academicians and educators, closely observe the NMC's operations.

Although it may be premature to evaluate its performance within just four years, the regulators' eagerness to implement significant changes to the curriculum has led to considerable disarray and confusion. Adhering to Western medical policies without considering India's unique circumstances has contributed to this turmoil. The implementation of the new curriculum has been counterproductive in many medical schools. Competency-based medical education (CBME) was introduced to emphasise practical skills over theoretical knowledge. However, the opposite occurs, with more time allocated to lectures (symposiums, group discussions, seminars, etc.). Reforms have made medical education shrivelled and truncated. Previously, medical students would begin clinical rotations from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. after completing one and a half years (Basic Science) of the MBBS course. They would spend time in wards, procedure rooms, and operating theatres, with theory classes scheduled for the evening (2 p.m. to 4 p.m.). This schedule has been inverted, with students attending clinics after 10 a.m. and theory classes in the morning. Consequently, students are no longer seen with teachers during the morning rounds, a departure from the past when unit chiefs, associates, assistants, residents, and students were all present. Bedside teaching is a crucial component of medical training, yet it has nearly vanished from medical schools. Students are now often seen merely following faculty to get their logbooks signed, where high scores are prevalent. Teachers are deeply concerned, but collective action to address this issue with policymakers is lacking. Medical professional bodies and other stakeholders must seriously address this concern.

More medical schools The graph depicting the growth of medical colleges from 1974 to 2024 illustrates a sharp increase in both government and private institutions. In 1970, India had fewer than 100 medical colleges for a population of 54 crore but today, there are 766 medical colleges across both government and private sectors for a population of 144 crore. The past decade alone has seen a rapid increase in new medical colleges leading to increased MBBS seats from 64,464 to 1,15,812 seats and PG seats from 31,185 to 73,111 seats. The number of medical colleges in India almost doubled to 595 from 335 between 2011 and 2021. This year, the government sanctioned 60 new medical colleges. According to Western standards, we would still need 300 more medical schools based on our population size. Since 2014, there has been a rapid rise in the number of seats for undergraduate and postgraduate students. Last year, on the 78th Independence Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a plan to create 75,000 new medical seats across India over the next five years. The government's policy changes aim to transform general and district hospitals into medical colleges and ease the criteria for establishing new ones. While these changes may appear beneficial, a deeper analysis suggests they could lead to academic decline. The well-known lack of adequate infrastructure and faculty, even in established institutions, is concerning. Many new institutions are missing basic amenities and have a shortage of faculty, threatening the quality of medical education.

Adopting the Western model without the necessary infrastructure and faculty could have catastrophic conse-

quences for our educational system. Unlike Western countries, where the faculty-student ratio fosters a conducive academic environment, the situation is reversed here. Additionally, examination results from medical colleges indicate a troubling trend: four decades ago, with more government and fewer private medical colleges, the failure rate was about 20-30% among meritorious students. Now the failure rate is 1-2% only, that too with mediocre students. Some people reason that the decline in failure rates could indicate lowered educational standards, affecting the overall competence of future doctors. The dramatic shift in the quality of medical education, inspection standards, and regulatory inconsistency certainly pose a major concern. Producing well-qualified doctors is essential for societal welfare. Academic institutions and regulatory bodies should indeed prioritise these issues. Regular and thorough inspections are crucial to ensure the quality of education. Examinations and testing

While the National Exit Test (NEXT) is a step in the right direction, the delays and inconsistencies are disheartening. A clear, consistent plan needs to be established for such crucial examinations. Reforming this system requires collaboration between academicians, professional bodies, and regulators. Are there some practical steps that can be taken right now to improve the situation? The main issue, however, is the lack of adequate infrastructure and faculty. An independent study by a professional body would reveal startling findings. The government should not relax norms and regulations merely to start new institutions due to political compulsion. In the long term, this approach is detrimental to the quality of doctors in India. Immediate action from academicians, professional bodies, and policymakers is required to address these issues. The government's focus on expanding medical education should be balanced with ensuring adequate infrastructure and sufficient qualified faculty. An in-depth independent study is crucial to uncover the extent of these problems.

Banksy's work, by contrast is remarkably spare — relying on the directness of its evocative message. It is unusual in content, display and execution as much as it is a product of its surprising location. As always, the artist remains hidden in plain sight. Everyone knows him, but publicly, he remains invisible, going about his nightly production without frill or fuss. A pandemic poster, 'Do not wash your hands' — is it social comment or satire?; Girl with Balloon — graphic art or cultural artefact?; surveillance cameras posing as street pigeons — public protest or political comment? The calculated absurdity of the artist's position is baffling, clever, disturbing, always surprising, but rarely self-conscious. When will it appear next, where, and in what medium...? As the Indian art season reopens, our own ill-tempered cities — desolate, bereft of landscape, and falling apart — cry out for such expression. Religion, separatism, censorship, communal rage, growing illiteracy, bureaucratic apathy, political arrogance, business bluster, media manipulation, the list of Indian issues in need of public scrutiny grows day by day. But an Indian Banksy refuses to step out of the shadows.



While the National Exit Test (NEXT) is a step in the right direction, the delays and inconsistencies are disheartening. A clear, consistent plan needs to be established for such crucial examinations. Reforming this system requires collaboration between academicians, professional bodies, and regulators. Are there some practical steps that can be taken right now to improve the situation? The main issue, however, is the lack of adequate infrastructure and faculty. An independent study by a professional body would reveal startling findings. The government should not relax norms and regulations merely to start new institutions due to political compulsion. In the long term, this approach is detrimental to the quality of doctors in India. Immediate action from academicians, professional bodies, and policymakers is required to address these issues. The government's focus on expanding medical education should be balanced with ensuring adequate infrastructure and sufficient qualified faculty. An in-depth independent study is crucial to uncover the extent of these problems.

Despite farmers' appeal, Congress govt continues with land acquisitions in Rangareddy

HYDERABAD: Turning a blind eye to farmers' appeals and protests against acquisition of their lands, the State government is continuing land surveys in different mandals of Rangareddy. For the last many days, farmers in Kandukur, Yacharam, Gajulaburj Thanda, Agarmiyaguda and neighbouring villages in Rangareddy district have been protesting against the land acquisition for laying roads to the proposed Fourth City. A video of a tribal woman farmer crying inconsolably and pleading with the officials not to acquire lands is going viral. In the video, a group of officials and police personnel are seen passing through agricultural lands and the woman farmer from Marlakunta village is appealing to the officials to spare her lands.

Man's palm amputated after rare infection caused by fish bite at Thalassery



A 38-year-old man from Thalassery had his right palm amputated following a severe bacterial infection reportedly caused by fish bite while cleaning a pit. Rajeeesh, a dairy farmer from Madapeedikka, said he was bitten by a fish, locally known 'Kadu', in early February. What initially seemed like a minor cut on his fingertip escalated into a life-threatening condition, he added.

"I sought treatment at the Kodyeri primary health centre, where I was administered a tetanus injection. However, as the wound worsened, I got admitted to a hospital in Mahe and later to a private hospital in Kozhikode," he said. Rajeeesh was reportedly diagnosed with gas gangrene, also known as clostridial myonecrosis, a severe and life-threatening bacterial infection that destroys tissue and produces gas within it. The infection had spread to his palm, leaving amputation as the only option to prevent further complications, including possible brain damage. Meanwhile, the Health authorities advised caution as the bacteria responsible for gas gangrene thrive in muddy water.

Attention moms-to-be! We are here to help you recreate Athiya Shetty's looks from her maternity photoshoot with KL Rahul

GNS News Agency, March 14

Athiya Shetty and KL Rahul are gearing up to welcome their first child, and the couple recently delighted fans with a stunning pregnancy photoshoot. The intimate portraits shared on Instagram on March 12, captured their joy and love, with the caption, "Oh, baby!" The post instantly went viral, drawing admiration for both the couple's chemistry and Athiya's impeccable maternity style. Fans joked in comments how KL Rahul is singing 'sari duniya se jeet ke mai aya hu idhar' in baby bump photoshoot with Athiya, after Champions Trophy win. The actor and model has always been known for her understated yet elegant fashion choices, and her pregnancy wardrobe is no different. Each look from the photoshoot is a lesson in sophisticated maternity dressing—offering style inspiration for moms-to-be everywhere.

For one of the photos, Athiya donned a beige ribbed dress from Sandro Paris, costing 147,500 i.e. INR 13,931. The crew-neck, figure-hugging silhouette perfectly accentuated her growing baby bump while keeping the look effortless. She kept accessories minimal, styling the dress with dainty earrings and soft, centre-parted waves. Her fresh, dewy makeup with flushed cheeks and feathered brows complemented the earthy aesthetic.

Look 2: The timeless white shirt and denim. Nothing says laid-back elegance like a crisp white shirt and denim. Athiya wore a linen shirt by Iuvana, which costs INR 24,000, styled with acid-washed, wide-legged jeans costing 22,000 from Michael Kors. She left a few buttons undone and flipped the waistband of her jeans, confidently embracing her baby bump. The barefoot styling added to the relaxed, intimate vibe of the shoot.

A brown knit sweater-and-skirt set from Ura made up Athiya's third look, costing 32,300, worn with Anya skirt that costs 31,509. The relaxed-fit blouse, drop-shoulder design, and cinched cuffs added a touch of structure to the cozy ensemble. She accessorised with a statement gold cuff from Misho, retailing for 18,169, and earrings, while her glowing makeup and loose tresses exuded warmth. In another earth-toned ensemble, Athiya wore a light beige Zegna co-ord set, costing \$1850 i.e. INR 1,61,051, featuring a crew-neck cashmere sweater and flared pants. Gold hoop earrings and a barely-there makeup look kept the outfit polished yet effortless. For a striking finale, Athiya opted for an all-black, off-the-shoulder gown from Deme, costing 36,217.07. The floor-length dress featured sheer billowy sleeves, a fitted bodice, and a flowy skirt, blending drama with elegance. The look was a departure from the neutral tones seen earlier, proving that maternity fashion can be cozy and glamorous. As Athiya Shetty and KL Rahul prepare for this new chapter, fans can't wait to see more glimpses of her maternity style. Whether in ribbed dresses, oversized shirts, or glamorous gowns, Athiya is redefining pregnancy fashion with elegance and ease.

Warning signs of kidney fungus you shouldn't ignore (especially if you're diabetic)

Kidney fungal infections, though uncommon in healthy individuals, can pose significant health risks when immunity is compromised. These infections are particularly prevalent among individuals with underlying conditions like diabetes or those recovering from severe illnesses. Recognising the signs early and understanding how to prevent them can improve health outcomes. Dr Vijay Kumar Sarma Madduri, Consultant Urologist at the Asian Institute of Nephrology and Urology, Hyderabad, explains that these infections usually affect individuals with compromised immunity, such as those with diabetes, AIDS, or cancer.

What causes kidney fungus?

Fungi thrive in conditions where the immune system is weakened. "Diabetes is the most common underlying cause of kidney fungal infections," notes Dr Madduri. High blood sugar levels and impaired immunity in diabetics create a conducive environment for fungi to grow. A surge in kidney fungal infections was observed post-COVID. Dr Madduri said, as severe viral illnesses like COVID-19 can significantly weaken the immune system. This trend paralleled the rise in black fungus infections of the nose during the pandemic. Skipping breakfast can set off a cascade of physiological and psychological effects, complicating blood sugar management and increasing the risk of long-term complications.

WHO starts slimming down in response to U.S. cuts, document shows

The World Health Organization (WHO) has started reassessing its priorities and introduced a one-year cap on staff contracts, as revealed in an internal memo. This move aims to secure the organisation's survival following the United States' withdrawal in January. The memo, dated March 10 and signed by WHO assistant director-general Raul Thomas, laid out further cost-cutting measures, the latest in a series of such steps since U.S. President Donald Trump's withdrawal announcement.

Washington, which was instrumental in helping set up the agency after World War II and has been one of its most active members, is by far the U.N. health agency's biggest financial backer, contributing around 18% of its overall funding. According to the document, senior WHO officials have begun "prioritisation" work over the past three weeks to make the global health agency sustainable. "While operating in an extremely fluid environment, WHO's senior management are working to navigate these shifting tides by undertaking a prioritization process," the memo said.

"Their work will ensure that every resource is directed toward the most pressing priorities while preserving WHO's ability to make a lasting impact," the document said. Additionally, staff are working to secure additional funding from countries, private donors and philanthropists, without saying if these efforts had been successful. It stopped short of announcing immediate staff cuts but said that "given



the magnitude of the challenges we face, some difficult decisions are unavoidable." Margaret Harris, WHO spokesperson told a press briefing that, even before U.S. funding cuts, the agency was undergoing a transformation to shift resources away from its Geneva headquarters and into recipient countries. "So what's really been happening is a big transfer of funding and staffing and commitment at country level away from headquarters. It has been a slow process and for sure, the cold winds of economic rationalisation are speeding that up," she said. The documents show that the U.N. agency has over a quarter of its 9,473 staff based in its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland which is one of the most expensive cities in the world.

Osteoarthritis cases, related disability up by over 130% globally, finds study

According to a study published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ) Global Health, globally, cases of osteoarthritis and the resulting disability among menopausal women have increased by over 130 percent in the last three decades. The findings show that an excess weight or body mass index accounted for about a fifth of the duration lived with disability resulting from the condition that steadily deteriorates joints.

Researchers, including those from Hangzhou Medical College, China, said declining oestrogen levels in menopause affect skeletal health and are directly related to functioning and stability of joints. Osteoarthritis affecting knee joints were found to be the most common type, associated with the highest loss of healthy living, followed by that affecting hands. According to the study, countries in East Asia and high-income Asia Pacific experienced the fastest increase in burden of this chronic condition. While the most rapid rise in new cases of knee osteoarthritis was seen in Southeast Asia, the most rapid rise in prevalence was seen in East Asia. The trends noted in East Asia "may be linked to rapid population aging, increased workforce participation and a surge in obesity rates due to urbanisation and changing lifestyles," the authors wrote.

However, "the high burden observed in high-income Asia Pacific could be attributed to advanced healthcare systems with better diagnostic capabilities, facilitating comprehensive identification and reporting of cases", they wrote.

Classify Cancer as a notifiable disease to succeed in fighting it: Dr. Dattatreya Nori

The cancer incidence is growing in India primarily for two reasons. The first factor is that the older population is increasing even though there is a significant number of middle-aged groups. Secondly, there is an increased awareness about cancer. On the diagnostic side, there are more facilities. Everyone feels cancer numbers are going up. It is true to some extent but the awareness has also improved among the public.

Except for the M.N.J. Institute of Oncology and Regional Cancer Centre, there is no other government-dedicated hospital to treat cancer in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states. What is your suggestion?

MNJ Hospital is a Regional Cancer Centre started with the approval and funds given by the Union government. Serving not only A.P. and Telangana but the entire southern region because care is free. The government is strengthening it. Such Regional Cancer Centres help a group of patients who cannot afford to go to private hospitals. What I suggest to the governments is that they should strengthen their government hospitals with the latest technologies and treatments. Everything that a corporate hospital can deliver should be available for deliverance in government hospitals. The first order of duty is to identify deficiencies in government hospitals and strengthen them. That way you will serve more people, who cannot afford cancer treatment. The governments should see that treatment is accessible by free transport from anywhere to anywhere within the State; providing accommodation to the patient's family. All these are crucial if you want to provide optimal care for underprivileged people.

Do you feel that there is a need for sub-regional cancer centres?

I will tour all the hospitals in Andhra Pradesh. I am from A.P., and I studied in Kurnool, I know in and out of every hospital. I will study and report to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on what can be done immediately, short-term, intermediate and long-range plans. That is the first order of my responsibility to present the information to the Chief Minister. The report should be ready in three months probably but for data available with the government.

Do you advocate the PPP model as the governments are not in a position to invest more in cancer hospitals?

First, we find deficiencies and find funding. I have to know what the deficiencies are. Then funding can be accommodated automatically. Either requesting the Central government or institutions like Tata Trusts which has hospitals in places like Visakhapatnam and Tirupati. The A.P. government already has a tie-up with Tata Trusts. We will ask them to establish centres where there is a deficiency. Government hospitals are not fully equipped yet. Corporate hospitals have taken over cancer care. The problem is that middle and low-income classes cannot afford cancer treatment despite Aayogyasri and other schemes. There are about 1.4 to 1.5 million cancer cases every year. We need more cancer centres but not at the corporate level because cancer treatments are very expensive.

You are meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. What do you have to suggest to him to address cancer-related issues?

The government has to classify Cancer as a notifiable disease. India should adopt a strategy akin to fighting COVID-19. District and State-level data for the entire country has to be prepared, and thus prepare a Cancer Atlas.



The findings also show an escalating burden of osteoarthritis among menopausal women and calls for proactive measures, especially those promoting lifestyle adjustments for controlling BMI, the authors said. Additionally, a 2023 study published in The Lancet Rheumatology journal estimates that osteoarthritis affected approximately 600 million people worldwide in 2020, accounting for nearly 8% of the global population.

Projections suggest that this number may swell to nearly 1 billion by 2050. The study's findings are based on data from the Global Burden of Disease 2021 study, which analysed the prevalence, severity, and mortality rates of 371 diseases across 204 countries and territories between 1990 and 2021.



The establishment of a cancer command and control (CCC) centre in India is necessary. The cancer department has to be a single entity not a sub-division of the health department. The government should adopt a five-point solution, which we call Pancharmit, to address the cancer crisis in India. There is a need to declare cancer a notifiable disease, subsidise cancer screening and establish a command-and-control centre. We should get accurate cancer incidence and prevalence data. This will help in identifying high-density areas and how to allot resources. In the backdrop of a lot of opposition and conspiracy theories to the HPV vaccine in India, what's your take on the vaccination? What is the scenario in other countries regarding the vaccine?

Western countries have proved that the HPV vaccine is successful. The Government of India is also encouraging. Remember that 200 women die every day due to cervical cancer. Social media writes all kinds of nonsense. You should write the truth about cervical cancer and spread awareness about the HPV vaccine.

What is your suggestion to governments to fight cancer?

To address the crisis in India and A.P., it has to be a two-pronged strategy. Apart from treating the existing patients, it is also important to focus on creating awareness, health education, prevention screening and early detection. If you want to succeed in the cancer fight you have to give a balanced approach to both.

How do you look at traditional medicine and various kinds of treatments for cancer?

All medicines are available. Immunotherapy medicines are available and the government and pharma companies are subscribing to them. Some traditional medicines may work, but they don't have time to do research. I am not against traditional medicines, but it has to be proven with data.

It is said that cancer is a genetic disease. How far is it true?

90% of cancer cases are due to somatic mutations, and the remaining 10% are genetic. If one changes their lifestyle by quitting smoking and alcohol, and eating nutritious food, cancer can be prevented.

What about the research centre at Basava Tarakam Hospital?

A research centre is coming up with 70 crore in Hyderabad. The building has been identified. We are buying new equipment. Research teams are ready. Actually, this is not new, we are moving from the old building to the new one.

Snake-bitten patients get a new lease of life at Kozhikode MCH

The Government Medical College Hospital (MCH), Kozhikode, has been successful in treating snakebite cases in recent times, with a majority of patients receiving a new lease of life. Sources in the General Medicine department said on Wednesday (March 12, 2025) that 102 of the 108 people admitted there in 2024 had survived the ordeal. Seven patients each recovered in both January and February this year. A woman from Perambra died on March 3



after being bitten by a Cobra in a field. However, she had already died by the time she was brought to the casualty, the sources added.

Doctors said that the six patients who died last year had been taken to multiple places before being admitted to the hospital. They were in critical condition when they arrived at the casualty. Though many of the survivors were also in serious condition, they could be saved as they were admitted on time. P. Jayesh Kumar, Head of the Department, General Medicine, said that most patients had been bitten by Cobras, Common Kraits, Saw-scaled Vipers, and Russell's Vipers. "Antidotes are available for all these. Recently, there has been a rise in Pit Viper bite cases, especially from the Hump-nosed Pit Viper, for which no antivenom is available. However, complications and the risk of death are rare from its bite," he added.

Dr. Jayesh said that the highest number of snakebite cases were reported in October, November, December, and January, during the breeding season of snakes. "Most patients are bitten by snakes from their surroundings or fields often at night when proper lighting is unavailable. A majority of those admitted to the hospital are from Kozhikode, with some cases from Malappuram and Wayanad as well. The hospital has a special intensive care unit for treating such cases, and research studies are also being carried out," he added. The doctors pointed out that snakebite victims should be taken to a hospital as soon as possible. Polyvalent antivenom is generally administered to the patient. "The snake species can usually be identified through a blood test or by inspecting the symptoms. There is no need to catch the snake, as it can be dangerous. However, if possible, a photo of the snake can be taken, which will help the treatment," they added.

Ice baths popular for exercise recovery, general wellness. But what does science say?

Ice baths have become increasingly popular over the past few years. Fitness enthusiasts and casual exercisers around the world are embracing this trend that was once reserved for elite athletes. Ice baths (also known as "cold water immersion") are exactly what they sound like. They involve immersing your body in cold water for a set amount of time.

Ice bath temperatures typically range from 10–15°C, though many people opt for water that's literally icy. Social media is filled with videos of people plunging into freezing water, claiming this helps with everything from recovery after exercise to mental health. But do ice baths live up to the hype? Here's what the evidence says. One of the main reasons people use ice baths is to reduce muscle soreness and improve recovery after exercise. Athletes, including endurance runners, weightlifters and football players, commonly use ice baths. And there's plenty of evidence to suggest ice baths can improve recovery after exercise. Research shows having an ice bath immediately after a bout of intense exercise can reduce muscle soreness in the following hours and days. Ice baths have also been shown to help with recovery in areas including muscle strength, power and flexibility.

Ice baths do this by reducing post-exercise inflammation, muscle swelling, and muscle damage, while improving the clearance of metabolites, such as lactate. So, if you are someone who needs to perform bouts of intense exercise on back-to-back days, ice baths could be a good option. But they shouldn't be used all the time, even if you are an athlete. As mentioned above, one of the ways ice baths work is by reducing inflammation in the muscle tissue that occurs after exercise. While this helps muscle recovery, this inflammation also acts as a signal that tells the body to adapt and become stronger. For this reason, using ice baths too often (that is, after most training sessions) may blunt training-related increases in strength, endurance and power, as well as muscle growth. Notably, ice baths don't seem to harm aerobic fitness. This means you might be OK to use them as often as you want after aerobic training sessions. Ice baths and general health

More recently, ice baths have gained traction in the broader fitness and wellness communities. Proponents suggest they can enhance mental health, immune function, and overall wellbeing. But the research in this space is sparse. We recently did a systematic review examining all the published research looking at ice baths and health outcomes in the general population (rather than athletes). We found only 11 studies, some of which used cold showers instead of ice baths. The evidence suggested regular cold water immersion might lead to small reductions in stress, small improvements in sleep quality and self-reported quality of life, and might reduce how often people get sick (such as with a cold or the flu). However, many of these findings came from single studies, so they should be interpreted with caution until more research is conducted. Also, we didn't explore how ice baths (and cold showers) may have caused these effects, so we don't know exactly how they work. Ice bath Ice baths are great for muscle repair and recovery

Are there any risks?

While there isn't any research examining the dangers of ice baths at a population level, there are some possible risks. In rare instances cold water immersion has been shown to lead to cold shock. This condition is caused by a rapid fall in skin temperature and can lead to gasping, hyperventilation, high blood pressure, and, infrequently, cardiac arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat), which can be fatal if not treated quickly.

Starlink partnerships open new era of seamless global connectivity: Sunil Bharti Mittal



New Delhi: As Airtel announced a partnership with Elon Musk's SpaceX to bring its affordable satellite internet service to India, Sunil Bharti Mittal, Founder and Chairman, Bharti Enterprises, said on Wednesday that a new era of seamless global connectivity beckons for customers.

Mittal said that soon, customers will be able to carry their mobiles to the remotest part of the world, with them in the skies and blue oceans. In his opening remark at the recently concluded "Mobile World Congress 2025" in Barcelona, Mittal made a call to both the telecom and satellite players to work together, combine their strengths, and complete the mission of connecting the unconnected, covering the oceans and the skies as well as difficult-to-reach areas. "I am glad that this is being followed through with active announcements of partnerships between satellite com-

panies and telecom operators," he said in a statement. Airtel has signed an agreement with Musk's SpaceX to bring Starlink's high-speed internet services to its customers in India. This is the first agreement to be signed in India, which is subject to SpaceX receiving its own authorisations to sell Starlink in the country. According to Mittal, he had made a similar appeal in my keynote address at the Mobile World Congress in 2017 for operators to slash roaming charges, which were preventing customers from carrying their home networks and seeking local SIMs or Wi-Fi hotspots.

"The industry responded favourably; roaming rates went south, and the international home network switch-on rates shot up. Today, roaming tariffs across the globe are affordable," he noted, adding that "I have no doubt the satellite and the telecom industry globally will respond to my call to combine their strengths." For the telecom industry, the addition of satellite technology should be no different from bringing new technologies to its customers. "Just like 4G, 5G, and 6G in the future, we will now have one more technology in our mix, i.e. SAT-G," said Mittal. Airtel and SpaceX will explore offering Starlink equipment in Airtel's retail stores, Starlink services via Airtel to business customers, opportunities to connect communities, schools, and health centres, among many others, in even the most rural parts of India. Airtel and SpaceX will also explore how Starlink could help expand and enhance the Airtel network, as well as SpaceX's ability to utilise and benefit from Airtel's ground network infrastructure and other capabilities in India, said the company.

India needs to grow 8% for progress, core sector must invest: SBI chairman

State Bank of India, Challa Sreenivasulu Setty, SBI chief, private capital expenditure, capital expenditure, capex, Indian express news, current affairs Challa Sreenivasulu Setty, Chairman, State Bank of India. (Photo: Ganesh Shirshakar) INDIA definitely needs to grow at 8 per cent to progress, and this needs consumption and private capital expenditure, said Challa Sreenivasulu Setty, Chairman, State Bank of India, the largest bank in the country with a deposit base of Rs 52.29 lakh crore. "India definitely requires a growth rate of 8 per cent to progress, but this (current) growth rate (of around 6 per cent) is not to be really worried about... We must realise that the slowdown which we are talking about could be a blip. The long-term story of India is intact," Setty told The Indian Express in an interview.

According to him, while private capital expenditure is happening in certain sectors, the core sectors, such as steel and cement, must start to invest. "They all have reached the capacity utilisation of 75-76 per cent," he said. Setty, who took charge as SBI Chairman in August 2024, is of the view 8 per cent growth needs consumption to pick pace. "Rural consumption is alright, but we may have to see the trend post rabi harvesting. But broadly some of the indicators are better. In terms of urban consumption, the expectations of consumption have been created. Now, the Budget proposed there will be no tax on annual income up to Rs 12 lakh," he said.

The Indian economy grew 6.2 per cent during the quarter-ended December 2024 and is estimated to grow 6.5 per cent for the full year 2024-25. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has projected a GDP growth rate of 6.7 per cent for the next financial year 2025-26. Setty said the economic data indicates private consumption in the current quarter has picked up. The Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) has reached 7.6 per cent, which means that the consumption is coming back. "There are certain sectors which are slightly slower than others, such as the auto seg-



ment. The auto sector witnessed very good growth in October-November, but December onwards it has slowed down. But overall, private consumption seems to be moving in a positive direction," he said. Referring to private sector investment, the SBI Chairman said companies seem to be worried about external factors. "...how tariffs are going to work out or if a particular country is not able to export, then whether the dumping will happen here. But I think these are all concerns which we feel that can be overcome," Setty said. Once consumption picks up, private capital expenditure will happen in the sector which is not witnessing (private capex). "Otherwise, if you see our (SBI's) pipeline of corporate lending is about Rs 4 lakh crore... half of it is sanctioned but yet to be disbursed and half of it is under discussion. This is a significant pipeline and the sectors also are diversified other than the core sector," the SBI Chairman said. On tariff wars, Setty said the broader assessment is that the export basket of India is diversified, both in terms of products and also in terms of geographies. "While every export matters, and even if you are exporting \$10 billion or \$20 billion to the US, the impact will be there, but it will not be as significant in our view. What is the most important in the whole tariff talk is about the narrative," he said.

Market sell-off wipes out Rs 2.33 lakh crore from mutual fund retail assets in February



The sell-off in the stock market has dealt a heavy blow to the mutual fund industry with assets of retail investors in various funds plummeting by Rs 2.33 lakh crore and inflows into small-cap and mid-cap schemes plunging by up to 34.9 per cent in the month of February. Highlighting the vulnerability of mutual fund investments to market volatility, retail assets under management (AUM), including equity, hybrid and solution-oriented schemes, plummeted to Rs 36,44,112 crore in February from Rs 38,77,595 crore in January this year, according to figures released by the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI).

This decline occurred during a period of significant market correction due to multiple external factors primarily global trade tensions created by uncertainty on US tariffs. "This resulted in the benchmark BSE Sensex TRI experiencing a month-on-month decline of over 5.5 per cent," said Jatinder Pal Singh, CEO, ITI Mutual Fund. Significantly, mutual fund industry's overall AUM declined by Rs 2.71 lakh crore to Rs 64,53,493 crore in February 2025 as against Rs 67,25,449 crore in January. While net investments in the small-cap fund category decreased by 34.9 per cent to Rs 3,722.46 crore, and inflows into mid-cap funds fell by 33.8 per cent to Rs 3,406.95 crore, large-cap funds experienced a more modest decline of just 6.4 per cent, reaching Rs 2,866 crore.

Gross equity inflows also saw a reduction of 18 per cent, falling from Rs 66,630 crore in January 2025 to Rs 54,428 crore in February. This asset price reduction comes on the backdrop of global uncertainties and macroeconomic factors which has caused the benchmark indices Nifty 50 and BSE Sensex to decline by approximately 6 per cent. "However, investors continue to repose faith in the industry despite these turbulent times, net equity inflows have remained positive for the last 48 months, witnessing Rs 0.29 lakh crore net inflows in February 2025 with all equity categories registering net inflows for the month. Further, the net inflows declined by 26 per cent as compared to January 2025," said Sanjay Agarwal, Senior Director, CareEdge Ratings. In January also, the net AUM of equity mutual funds

plummeted by Rs 1.1 lakh crore, or 3.26 per cent, on a month-on-month basis, to Rs 29.46 lakh crore as of end-January 2025. According to AMFI, SIP assets were at Rs 12,37,783 crore for the month of February. SIP contribution for the month stood at Rs 25,999 crore. It seems the downfall in the AUM of large-cap funds is over. The market share of large cap AUM kept falling from 17 per cent in October 2021 to 11.7 per cent in December 2024, and now finally rose to 12.2 per cent in February 2025.

"We had anticipated this rise and now it is playing out. This is led by inflows of Rs 2,866 crore in month of February. When times are volatile, it is large cap category that is the preferred investment destination," said Viraj Gandhi, CEO, SAMCO Mutual Fund. The party in small-cap schemes which started post Covid has now taken a halt and its market share in the total AUM fell from 10.8 per cent in December 2024 to 10 per cent in February 2025. This indicates a sharp cut of 9 per cent in two months due to fall of almost 10 per cent in small-cap index during this time. Meanwhile, Gold ETF category recorded net inflows of Rs 1,979 crore in February 2025, significantly lower than the Rs 3,751 crore inflows in January. "The decline in inflows can be attributed to profit booking, as gold surged to an all-time high last month, prompting investors to lock in gains. Additionally, equity market corrections presented attractive buying opportunities, leading some investors to shift focus from gold ETFs to equities," said Nehal Meshram, senior analyst—manager research, Morningstar Investment Research India.

Gas leaks at ONGC's station in Andhra Pradesh, affects nine persons including 4-year-old child

Kesanapalli (Andhra Pradesh): Lack of maintenance at ONGC's gas collection station here in Konaseema district resulted in a Hydrogen Sulphide gas leak, said an official on Thursday. District Collector R Mahesh Kumar said the gas leaked around 2:30 pm on Wednesday had affected about nine persons, including workers and a four-year-old child who vomited. "Because of anaerobic respiration of micro-organisms, there was some accumulation of H₂S gas (Hydrogen Sulphide). This is a result of lack of maintenance of those wells," Kumar told. According to the Collector, the gas collection station has six units and H₂S leaked when Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) workers were trying to wash a well located near the panchayats of Gollapalem and Turpupalem.

Singapore's Temasek buys 10 per cent stake in Haldiram Snacks Food



New Delhi: Temasek, Singapore's sovereign investment firm, is acquiring a minority 10 per cent stake in Haldiram Snacks Food — India's largest packed snack and sweets company and restaurant operator — at a valuation of USD 10 billion, according to industry sources. It signed a definitive term sheet agreement earlier this week at a valuation of USD 10 billion (around Rs 85,000 crore), which is considered to be the largest for the Indian packed food industry, they said. The Agarwal family, promoters of Haldiram Snacks Food, may rope in another investor for selling some more stake in the company which had a revenue of over

Rs 12,500 crore in FY24. The agreement with Temasek came after months of negotiations as several PE firms, including Blackstone, Alpha Wave Global and Bain Capital-led consortiums, were in the race to pick up a stake in Haldiram Snacks Food.

The Agarwal family may also opt for the IPO (initial public offering) route next year to capitalise on India's buoyant stock market. Earlier, the promoters were intending to divest a larger portion. However, they have decided to offload a minority stake only. This cash infusion will help Haldiram Snacks Food to fund its expansion plans and expedite its journey in the domestic as well as some of the foreign markets, where it has a presence. Haldiram Snacks Food is the combined business of the two fractions of the Haldiram family — Delhi and Nagpur. The National Company Law Tribunal has already approved the process of merger of the two fractions, while other regulatory approvals are awaited. Established in 1937 as a retail sweets and namkeen shop in Bikaner, Rajasthan, by Ganga Bhisheh Agarwal, Haldiram products are now sold in over 80 countries. In 2022, it was announced that the packaged snacks businesses of Delhi-based Haldiram Snacks and Nagpur-based Haldiram Foods International would be first demerged and then merged into an entity named Haldiram Snacks Food.

'Retail credit growth continues to moderate across most products': TransUnion CIBIL CEO

Bhavesh Jain, MD & CEO, TransUnion CIBIL, a leading credit information company, says the slowdown in consumer credit demand, coupled with a decline in loan originations by lenders, has resulted in a cooling of overall retail credit growth. In an interview with The Indian Express, Jain said, "non-performing assets (NPAs) in the microfinance sector have increased to Rs 51,000 crore. The marked increase in credit card spending indicates its expanding acceptance among consumers as a tool to access credit." Edited excerpts:

What's your assessment of the credit market in India? Has the slowdown in the economy affected it?

Retail credit growth continued to moderate across most products. Several factors including challenging global economic conditions, slowing urban consumption and regulatory measures designed to stabilise the credit-deposit ratio, may have affected the credit market in India. The slowdown in consumer credit demand, coupled with a decline in loan originations by lenders, has resulted in a cooling of overall retail credit growth. Identifying eligible and lower-risk consumers who can afford to service their credit obligations will be critical for the sustained growth of credit and the economy.

There are reports that microfinance NPAs have risen to Rs 50,000 crore. Is there a concern in the MFI segment?

Yes, the non-performing assets (NPAs) in the microfinance sector have increased to Rs 51,000 crore. At present, microfinance institutions (MFIs) function as high-engagement businesses, where the loan disbursements may be based on subjective underwriting and collection strategies, based on individual lenders' processes and policies. By utilising advanced data analytics, lenders can evaluate MFIs' creditworthiness more precisely, thereby reducing the potential risk of defaults. Furthermore, it facilitates enhanced monitoring of loan performance and improved customer behaviour.

Additionally, financial literacy initiatives can inform borrowers about financial management, enabling them to make well-informed decisions and decreasing the likelihood of over-indebtedness.

Credit card use and outstanding have shot up in the last one year. What are the reasons for this surge?

Although still significant, portfolio balances grew at a slower rate y-o-y (year-on-year) in December 2024 for all retail credit products, except credit cards which grew at 24 per cent y-o-y. There has been a cooling off in new loan originations for personal loans and consumer durables loans since the quarter ending March 24. This may have led to consumers increasing their spending on their existing credit cards to finance their consumption needs. The marked increase in credit card spending indicates its expanding acceptance among consumers, not only for transactions but also as a tool to access credit. This may be an opportunity for lenders to identify consumers who require additional credit for their consumption and aspirational goals, and service them with customised solutions that are better suited and affordable for them. These customised credit offers should focus on helping the consumer fulfil their needs effectively while also supporting them in building a stronger credit profile. By using more comprehensive data insights to understand the changing dynamics of consumer spending and credit usage, lenders can devise dynamic strategies better suited to evolving market conditions while enhancing customer loyalty.

Have NPAs in the credit card segment risen in the last ten months?

Credit performance showed a mixed picture with balance-level delinquencies improving for secured loans but deteriorating y-o-y for credit cards. Balance-level delinquencies (measured as 90 days or more past due) on credit cards stood at 2 per cent in the December 2024 quarter — a year-on-year change of 31 basis points which is still range bound.

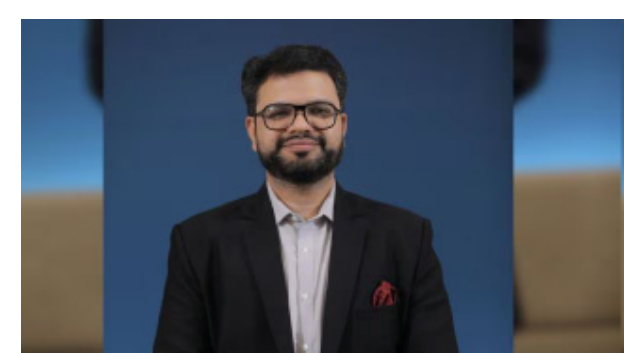
Unsecured lending has moderated in the last couple of months. Is the moderation continuing? What led to the fall in growth?

Faced with current market dynamics, lenders seem to be taking a measured approach to risk management with a general cooling of origination volumes. In addition, it is likely that where they are granting non-consumption loans, these are typically for higher amounts. Loan origination (a measure of credit supply and in part a measure of credit demand) volumes are positive across all key retail loan products, except home loans and credit cards. However, the origination volume growth is lower on a year-on-year basis, indicating a cautious approach by lenders.

Have delinquency levels in unsecured lending risen in the last 10 months? Can you give us the quantum of increase in absolute numbers as well as in percentage terms?

Achieving the dual objectives of sustained credit growth while simultaneously, maintaining asset quality requires issued loans to be repaid on time to help minimise default risks and preserve financial stability. Balance-level serious delinquency (measured as 90 days or more past due) is around 1.89 per cent of overall retail outstanding as of December 2024. Overall, there has been an improvement of 22 bps from 2.12 per cent in Dec-23, indicating stabilising of delinquencies.

Which loan type shows the maximum delinquencies?



Credit performance for consumption loans has improved sequentially in Dec 2024 as compared to September 2024, even for high-risk consumers. Credit performance showed a mixed picture with balance-level delinquencies improving for secured loans but deteriorating y-o-y for credit cards. This could be because when faced with financial constraints, borrowers generally tend to prioritise payments on life-essential utilities such as home loans and vehicle loans.

What are your observations on the new entrants to the credit market? What are their priorities?

Story continues below this ad

With our country's steady growth trajectory, a large emerging young consumer base and progressive policies towards the vision of becoming the third largest economy in the world, the scope for increasing credit penetration across the length and breadth of India's geography is massive. India's credit industry has a pivotal role to play in helping achieve these growth objectives and all the players including the new entrants can capitalise on this massive market potential. India has the largest young population in the world, and insights show that approximately 99 million consumers opened their first credit product and became NTC in 2023-24. Of the total credit-eligible population, ie. 18 years and above, Gen Z (born in 1995 and later) has the biggest share at 34 per cent. Hence, this segment is likely to drive credit growth going ahead. This demographic shift underscores the importance of tailoring financial products and services to meet the unique needs and preferences of younger consumers, ensuring sustainable credit growth in the future. In our view, sustainable credit growth can be achieved by identifying and providing access to credit for these New-to-Credit consumers using information analytics and technology-based solutions. Emerging pockets of deserving consumers exist across India's socio-economic categories and geographies and will be the channels of profitable growth and financial inclusion.

Do you think MSMEs have adequately tapped the credit market for their fund requirements? What are the problems faced by MSMEs in getting credit?

In our view, MSMEs definitely are the next retail in India, MSMEs represent a significant opportunity for lenders. According to the Ministry of MSME, there are more than 6 crore registered MSMEs on Udyam (portal) and among them, approximately 94 lakh are active borrowers. This segment is critical for economic growth and employment generation. At TransUnion Cibil, we maintain credit information on 3.2 crore MSMEs, largely partnership and proprietorship firms. One of the reasons for varying borrowing patterns among MSMEs is the nature of their business. Many are trading outfits that buy and sell products, managing repayment cycles to meet their credit needs. These firms often seek credit during festival seasons when demand spikes. Bridging the demand-supply gap is a priority call-to-action for lenders. With rising demand, improved credit performance and promising economic growth prospects, the time is conducive for lenders to expand their MSME credit portfolios. Lenders can tap into the vast segment by identifying deserving new-to-credit (NTC) MSMEs, connecting with them and customizing credit products for their requirements. The wide spectrum of occupations covered by MSMEs has the potential to catalyse social development through economic empowerment.

What about consumer dispute resolution issues reference updating of credit information of borrowers. Are credit institutions updating data faster? Have you sorted out the issues in the updation process?

Our solutions help create economic opportunity for millions of people in India, and we take our responsibility to drive consumer awareness about credit management very seriously. The RBI recently mandated improving the frequency of reporting of credit information by credit institutions to CICs (credit information companies) from monthly intervals to a fortnightly basis or shorter intervals. This is a very progressive move which will significantly strengthen the credit information ecosystem. With more frequent data reporting by banks and credit institutions, CICs are able to update credit information faster and this translates into more updated data being available to both consumers and lenders. This also helps in resolving consumer disputes faster based on updated data in credit records.

No one is ready to sit out the IPL...Conditions will shift from the North Pole to the South Pole: Navjot Singh Sidhu on India's upcoming tour of England



GNS News Agency, March 14

India will face England in June later this year for the five-match Test series. However, before going into the marquee series most of the Indian players have to endure about 10 weeks of T20 cricket in the form of the Indian Premier League. The conditions the Indian players will experience for the IPL in India and the for the England tour will be polar opposites said former Indian cricketer Navjot Singh Sidhu. "The thing to be worried about is that the IPL is now coming up next. No one is ready to sit out the IPL. They will play the league and then all of a sudden comes the England

tour. Conditions will shift from the North Pole to the South Pole. Completely different," said Sidhu

"Moreover, India's last Test series in England had started on August 4. This time, it is ending on August 2. The matches are in June and July. There will be grass and moisture and the air will be so heavy that the ball will gain ample movement. And then it will move more off the seam," Sidhu added.

The last time India toured England in 2021/2022 the series ended up 2-2.

Won't expose Varun ChakarvarthyThe wrist-spinner Varun Chakarvarthy has been going through a purple patch in his career. However, Sidhu predicts that there are issues in the Indian side especially when it comes to playing all-rounders in overseas conditions. Though he feels Chakarvarthy might add value he expected India not to expose him. "India's biggest problem is that in the middle order there are no all-rounders the way you see in white ball cricket. Is there a Ravindra Jadeja, or Hardik Pandya or Axar Patel? There is only Jadeja among these three and even he will be limited there. Will he take 4-5 wickets in an innings there? No. You will have to bring a mystery spinner with all of them, that is England's weakness. But India won't expose Varun Chakarvarthy."

Mitchell Marsh cleared for batting return; Pat Cummins, Starc, Josh Hazlewood set to be fit for full season

GNS News Agency, March 14

IPL 2025: Mitchell Marsh and Mitchell Starc will be among the Australian stars returning to action through the IPL season. (AP)IPL 2025: Mitchell Marsh and Mitchell Starc will be among the Australian stars returning to action through the IPL season. (AP)Australia T20I captain Mitchell Marsh is expected to make his return to competitive action through the IPL 2025 season with the Lucknow Super Giants as a 'batter-only' option as he continues to aim for full fitness from a back injury that kept him out of action in early January. After a poor Border-Gavaskar Trophy 2024-25 campaign, Marsh played a solitary Big Bash League game on January 7.

According to an ESPNcricinfo report, Marsh is expected to link up with the LSG squad on March 18 after missing Australia's Champions Trophy tournament. Marsh was one among four players that Australia lost to injuries before the campaign. The Aussie all-rounder was snapped up by LSG during the IPL 2025 Mega Auction last November for Rs 3.4 crores. While he will not bowl in the forthcoming event, Marsh has had a few run-ins with injuries during previous IPL seasons too. Having featured for the Delhi Capitals in the previous three seasons, Marsh suffered a hamstring injury early on in the 2024 season before making a return during the T20 World Cup. The 33-year-old has played for Sunrisers Hyderabad, Rising Pune Supergiants,



Pune Warriors and Deccan Chargers in the past.

Meanwhile, Marsh's compatriots, Test skipper Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood are also expected to return to action through the IPL. The pace trio missed the recent Champions Trophy due to varying injuries. While Cummins is expected to lead SunRisers Hyderabad from their opening fixture itself, Starc will be in action with a new franchise in the Capitals after winning the title with Kolkata Knight Riders the previous season. The 34-year-old Hazlewood, who suffered multiple injuries over the last few months, will ALSO make a return to Royal Challengers Bengaluru after having previously represented the team in 2022-23.

Upcoming IPL 2025 season 'biggest opportunity' for Ishan Kishan predicts Aakash Chopra



GNS News Agency, March 14

Indian star batter Ishan Kishan, after some good performances in the Indian colour in all the formats, has slowly disappeared from the scene. The star batter was also released from the Mumbai Indians ahead of the Mega Auction and was brought by the Sunrisers Hyderabad for the upcoming Indian Premier League season 2025. Former Indian cricketer Aakash Chopra predicts it is the "biggest opportunity" for Kishan.

"The biggest opportunity is for Ishan Kishan. For whatever reason, he has just completely disappeared from the

radar. It seems like no one is talking about him or understanding his importance. He even went and played the Ranji Trophy, and scored runs there, he is doing everything, but no one is even talking about him," Chopra said on his YouTube channel. Kishan was dropped in the following game after scoring a double in the ODI format against Bangladesh. "He has got an ODI double-century. How many people have scored a double century in ODIs, and this guy has done that? This guy can hit sixes and change gears and bat," Chopra would recall.

SRH though has established openers in Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head who performed well last season and went on to buy Ishan Kishan in an auction for 11.25 crores who has been successful for his previous franchise Mumbai Indians at the top of the order. Though Kishan has batted in the middle order it will be interesting to see how the Hyderabad-based franchise in the upcoming season. Sunrisers Hyderabad IPL 2025 squad: Pat Cummins (c), Travis Head, Abhishek Sharma, Heinrich Klassen, Nitish Reddy, Ishan Kishan, Mohammad Shami, Harshal Patel, Rahul Chahar, Adam Zampa, Atharva Taide, Abhinav Manohar, Simarjeet Singh, Zeeshan Ansari, Jaydev Unadkat, Kamindu Mendis, Aniket Verma, Eshan Malinga, Sachin Baby, Pat Cummins; Wiaan Mulder for Brydon Carse.

Telangana sailors to take part in Singapore Youth Sailing Championships



GNS News Agency, March 14

HYDERABAD: Telangana squad to take part in for the Singapore Youth Sailing Championships starting from March 14 was named here on Thursday. The team comprising Rizwan Mohammad of Pattigada studying at Udbhav School, Lahiri Komaravelly of Rasoolpura studying at Udbhav School and Vinod Dandu of Govt School Nallagutta has been selected by the Sports Authority of India and the Yachting Association of India as part of the Indian contingent for this international event.

The Singapore Youth Championships already have 200 entries spread across two fleets Gold and Silver from 25 countries and Rizwan and Lahiri have been selected for the Gold Fleet. They will be sailing the sub-junior under 15 Op-

timist Class of Boats. The team will be led by the experienced team manager Dharani Laveti also of Hyderabad who last led them to the Cadet World Championships at Plymouth, UK. Dharani has been a National Champion herself in the Junior 420 Class and is now pursuing her undergraduate studies at St Francis College, Begumpet.

The team was coached under Suheim Sheikh who will be accompanying them as National Coach to the prestigious Singapore Youth Sailing Championships. This team was trained at Suchitra Academy, Kompally under fitness coaches who train the finest Badminton athletes in India. Rizwan Mohammad was 35th out of 101 sailors at the Langkawi International and Lahiri 38 overall and 12th girl sailor. Both responded confidently when asked if they will perform better at Singapore. The team will join National Champion Shreya Krishna from Chennai and Samridhi Batham from Bhopal in Singapore amongst others to comprise the Indian representation of 8 sailors at the Singapore event. Rizwan is currently ranked India No.1 in boys under 15 and Lahiri ranked No.3 in the girls. Vinod is ranked No.4. "This is our third international and we have worked hard on our fitness and the Yoga at the Yacht Club and nutrition has made us a lot fitter and stronger", said a beaming Lahiri and Rizwan in unison. "We are looking forward to making India proud with a great performance", they added. "This year in the under 15, Telangana Sailing Association has 10 sailors in the top 18 and 4 in the top 7 ranking sailors, a performance we are very proud of", said Sheikh who is the president of the Telangana Sailing Association and Director High Performance at the Yacht Club of Hyderabad where the sailors train at Hussain Sagar

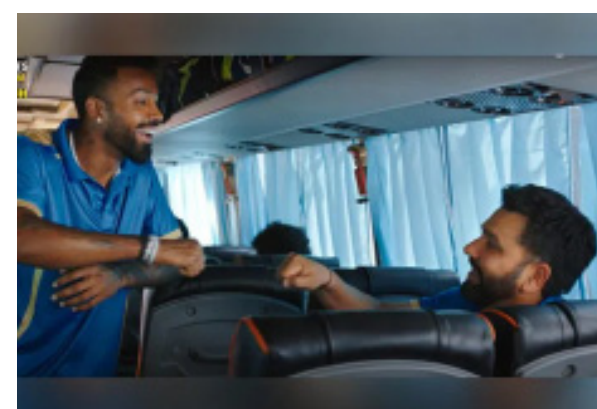
JioStar unveils 2025 IPL campaign featuring Cricket legends, filmmakers

GNS News Agency, March 14

Mumbai: JioStar has unveiled its 2025 IPL season packing multiple films, each one depicting epic possibilities arising out of the way that the TATA IPL transcends relationships, major life moments, cultures, ethnicities, and age, driving home the thought that anything is possible at the magnum opus. The films will feature will feature a slew of IPL champions and icons including Chennai Super Kings legend MS Dhoni, Mumbai Indians' most loved Rohit Sharma, Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya, the dynamic Suryakumar Yadav, Royal Challengers Bengaluru icon Virat Kohli, Rajasthan Royals' skipper Sanju Samson, Delhi Capitals' big-ticket buy KL Rahul, and Lucknow Super Giants' captain Rishabh Pant. Select films in the campaign have also been helmed by famed directors, such as Nitesh Tiwari, popular for directing Bollywood blockbuster Dangal.

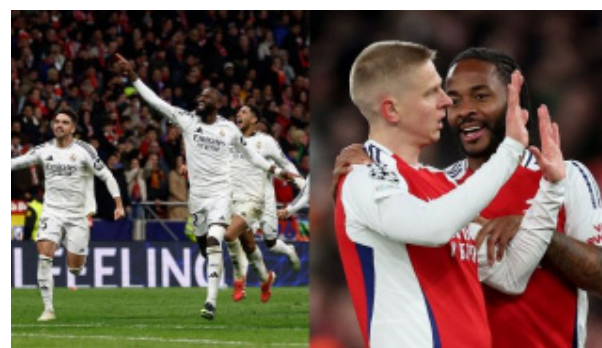
Vikram Passi, Head of Marketing, JioStar - Sports, said they believed in limitless possibilities, and the TATA IPL 2025 is the perfect stage to showcase them. "Yaahaan Sab Possible Hai" isn't just a campaign — it's a tribute to the passion, energy, and dreams that define this ornament," he said. For his part, legend MS Dhoni said the TATA IPL had consistently been a springboard for talent over the years where we have seen many emerge on the big scene by helping their respective teams to the title. "Winning this league is no mean feat but the fact that a teen like Vaibhav can also stake a claim to fame based on sheer talent is the harm of the TATA IPL. I thought the film beautifully captured this," he said.

Dhoni's counterpart in the film Sanju Samson said while winning the IPL was a dream, but what he truly cherished was how the league gave them a chance to show-



case their skills, shine and make a name for themselves. "The film encapsulates this truth about the league where a young and exciting talent can share the field, frame and fame with a legend like Mahi Bhai," he said. For his part Mumbai Indians star batter Rohit Sharma said being part of MI had always been an honour and this new campaign film was a take on the belief that exists between them in the team and it's that very spirit that's helped them become one of the most successful teams in the TATA IPL. All-rounder Hardik Pandya, who will be leading Mumbai Indians, said they wear the Mumbai Indians badge with immense pride, and their achievements reflect the essence of this incredible franchise. "The campaign film reflects this spirit, the respect and camaraderie among our team, highlighting our achievements and contributions that have enabled Mumbai Indians to become one of the most celebrated teams in the league," he said.

Champions Real Madrid leave it late to set up Arsenal clash, here is the confirmed quarterfinal line-up



GNS News Agency, March 14

It was yet another dramatic night of UEFA Champions League football as Real Madrid beat Atletico 4-2 on penalties to reach the quarter-finals. It was an enthralling last-16 tie which ended 2-2 after extra time in a raucous atmosphere at Metropolitano on Wednesday, before Real Madrid produced another thrilling win, keeping with their rich tradition of getting over the line in tight encounters and causing more European heartache for their city rivals. Earlier on Tuesday, it was Paris Saint Germain who prevailed in another thriller, ending Liverpool's hopes of a treble this sea-

son, as they won 1-0 at Anfield to level the tie and then prevailed in the shootout. For the first time since Thierry Henry scored a sensational solo goal at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in 2005/06 season (followed by a 0-0 draw at Highbury), Arsenal will meet Real Madrid in arguably the fixture of the quarterfinals. The English side's title challenge domestically has fizzled out and they will face a huge ask against the 15-time and defending Champions League winners from Spain. After a stuttering league phase last year, Luis Enrique's PSG have everyone's attention in the UCL knockouts now, putting in two elite performances to pack off Liverpool. For Unai Emery's Villa, a famous European night awaits.

Borussia Dortmund rallied to beat Lille on Wednesday and will reunite with former star forward Robert Lewandowski and Barcelona in the quarterfinals, starting in Spain. Barcelona's first-half showing against Benfica in the second leg will have sent a warning sign to other clubs, with Lamine Yamal scoring another worldie.

Bayern Munich and Inter Milan meet in the quarterfinals for a rematch of the 2010 final won by the Italian giants. For Bayern, with Munich staging the final on May 31, it will be a chance to get one step closer to play the title clash at the home stadium.

Julian Alvarez's two-touch penalty: How Atletico lost to Real Madrid in the UEFA Champions League

GNS News Agency, March 14

Atletico Madrid were left to rue a bitter loss to city rivals Real Madrid in the UEFA Champions League despite a superb performance that saw them win the second leg 1-0 to square the tie 2-2 on aggregate. Julian Alvarez's spot kick was controversially ruled out in Atletico's shoot-out defeat to Real Madrid. Alvarez was second on Atletico's list of penalty takers in their Champions League last-16 shoot-out. The Argentine stepped up from 12 yards and right before the kick, he slipped a bit but despite that, speared his penalty just beneath the crossbar past a helpless Real Madrid keeper Thibault Courtois. Atletico fans were celebrating, but seconds before Fede Valverde fired home Real's next penalty, Polish referee Szymon Marciniak indicated Alvarez's spot-kick had been ruled out as the video assistant referee (VAR) got involved.

A review of the incident showed the forward touched the ball twice in one movement as he slipped while shooting. Although Atletico keeper Oblak saved Lucas Vazquez's spot-kick gave Atletico hope, Marcos Llorente

hit the bar for the hosts and Antonio Rudiger sent Real through in a tense finale. Atletico coach Simeone cast doubt on the decision. "The referee said when Julian got to the penalty spot he touched the ball with his standing foot, but the ball did not move," he said. "I've never seen a penalty where they've called the VAR, but well, they would have seen that he touched it. I want to believe they saw he touched it. "Did you see him touching the ball twice? Please whoever was present in the stadium and saw him touching the ball twice, the ball moving, please come forward and raise your hand. I don't see anybody with their hand raised so that's all I have to say... next question." Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti, however, was satisfied with the decision. "They detected it. When we realised there was this doubt they had already detected it on VAR," he added. "I saw it, I think he touches it with his left foot, a second touch." Real Madrid goalkeeper Courtois said he felt there was something weird with the kick. He told Uefa.com: "I felt that there was something weird going on, so we said it straight to the referee and then it was confirmed that there was a double touch and it didn't count."



success. "They are so driven and maybe they have not had as much success as they would like and deserve. Just want to work towards and contribute to doing it." Hamilton said he was still getting to grips with the team and car. "I am still learning this new car, which is quite a lot different to what I have driven all through my career," Hamilton said. "Ferrari power, after all my career with Mercedes, is a different feel, different vibration."

Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton: Not here to prove anything to anybody

GNS News Agency, March 14

Lewis Hamilton said he was still getting to grips with Ferrari and car. (Reuters)Lewis Hamilton said he was still getting to grips with Ferrari and car. After 12 stellar seasons as a Mercedes Formula 1 driver, Britain's Lewis Hamilton is gearing up for his first race in red, having signed a multi-year contract with Italian giants Ferrari.

The build-up has been nothing short of electric — the anticipation, the hype, the dream-like narrative of Formula 1's most decorated driver joining the sport's most legendary team. But beneath the fairytale exterior lies an undeniable force: pressure. When asked about it during Thursday's press conference ahead of the Australian Grand Prix, Hamilton remained unfazed.

"I am under no assumptions it will be easy. I don't feel the pressure. The outside pressure is non-existent for me. The pressure is from within and what I want to achieve," he said. "I am not here to prove anything to anybody. I have done it time and time again. I know what it takes to do a good job and that's what I want to deliver, for myself, and my family, for this team that I really believe deserve

Rima Das on life after Village Rockstars: 'I didn't expect all my films to go for Oscars'



you realise to let go and prioritise. When the film comes out, the story is important. Maybe some shots are not beautiful. And some shots are not performed well. But finally, as a whole, the film should be there, the story should be there. You not only worked with an Australian cast and crew, but also collaborated with an Australian cinematographer. For someone who's used to filming her own stories, how liberating or challenging was it to let someone else crank the camera? I had a very good DoP, who is like-minded which is very important. I'm very intuitive and improvise a lot. So if my cinematographer doesn't align with me, it becomes very difficult. Sometimes, when I shoot my own films, I have some limitations. Because I'm not trained, I don't know certain things. I also feel tired sometimes. But when you have good equipment and a proper team, then you can just imagine and they can execute it for you. In My Melbourne, I explained what I wanted to my cinematographer and he got that. So it was enjoyable, in a different way.

You're a director, writer, producer, editor and cinematographer. Now that you have the goodwill and the resources, what are the roles you like to keep for yourself and what are the ones you'd like to outsource?

Mostly, I love to direct and write. I don't mind co-writing. If there are interesting ideas, we can develop them together. Editing, I don't know, because I feel filmmaking is all about editing later on. Time will tell that. Sometimes, when I'm doing everything alone, it does get lonely. There are advantages too. It's a lot of freedom because it's your vision at the end of the day. Seeing something through that you imagined, that's more magical and beautiful.

The four segments in My Melbourne touch upon sensitive issues like sexuality (Onir's Nandini), gender (Imtiaz Ali's Jules), and race (Kabir Khan's Sitara). You chose disability, and that too double disability. That's not something you've dabbled with in the past. Why did you zero in on it?

It's a sensitive issue, and also quite personal to Mitu Bhowmick (producer and director of Indian Film Festival of Melbourne). Her daughter is battling a similar issue. The double disability is exactly why I wanted to tell this story. When you watch the film, you already know she's deaf. But that she's going blind is the unseen part. As a filmmaker, that unseen part is more intriguing and exciting for me. How I can bring that unseen part to screen, that was my challenge. That's what I like to do actually. There are other films on disability and music, like Sound of Metal (2019) and CODA (2021). What is this inextricable link between deafness and a passion for music?

Normal people also have some kind of 'disabilities.' We also have dreams, we look for something, we search something. Music or any art form helps us get freedom, helps us survive, and helps us escape. To me, Emma felt like any person chasing her dream. She's curious, just like you are as a journalist, I am as a filmmaker. Just that our medium is different from hers. But we all do it primarily for ourselves, it's more internalized. Everything else – success, money, fame are external. In Emma, you use sound very ingeniously. The sound is drowned out not when she can't hear someone, but when she's not being listened to. Can you talk about that? It was more intuition, honestly. I generally don't think much. I just had an organic discussion with the sound designer back then. When I was making the film, I'd kept that bit open. I generally don't plan much. It just felt right in the moment.

Why did you decide to end the film when you did and where you did, Emma dancing to the voice within in the lap of nature?

When I was looking for location, the production person took me there. I saw the trees and felt, 'This is the one.' There's light, freedom, and nature, and that's what we want in life. Everything comes from that space. It just came from within. She has a hearing problem and is now losing her vision. So there's uncertainty. That space somehow told her there's still something to look forward to. It made her surrender.

Which story or stories are you chasing next?

I started Tora's Husband and Village Rockstars 2 just after the first lockdown, when a lot of people weren't working. But I didn't know I was going through an emotionally challenging phase because of whatever I lost during the time. It took me much longer to finish both the movies. Village Rockstars 2 took four years. I started feeling monotonous. At that time, I began developing different ideas. Because I'm really hungry to do different genres – folk horror, love stories, friendship stories, a couple of films in Mumbai. I want to make another children's film, but it's different from Village Rockstars. I'll probably explore a two-women story in Mumbai in June-July.

Your breakthrough film, Village Rockstars (2017), received a wide theatrical distribution, especially after it was announced as India's entry to the Oscars. Why do you feel your films after that haven't been treated similarly?

For that, I'm also responsible. Sometimes, I don't plan properly.

Shah Rukh Khan was in New York on 9/11 with son Aryan and wife Gauri, required special permission to leave country



The World Trade Centre attacks in 2001 changed the fabric of society. Those who were present in New York at the time were deeply affected by the tragedy as they witnessed the events closely. Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan was one of them. In an old interview, conducted in 2010, Shah Rukh revealed that he was in New York during the 9/11 attacks and recalled that his wife Gauri Khan, son Aryan Khan and Karan Johar's mother, Hiroo Johar, were with him as well.

In a chat with DW News, Shah Rukh was asked about 9/11 as he was promoting his film My Name Is Khan, which dealt with growing Islamophobia in the West after the terror attack. Shah Rukh recalled that he was in New York at the time and said, "My director's mother (Hiroo), my wife (Gauri) and my little son (Aryan) and we were to do an interview for the launch of a film called Asoka. And the rest of the crew was supposed to fly off to Toronto four hours before us."

Shah Rukh recalled that Hiroo woke him up in shock and showed him the visuals of the attack. At first, he thought that the plane carrying the film crew had crashed. He said, "I was woken up... Karan's mother, Mrs Hiroo, she showed me the television and I thought it's the plane that our crew is taking, that's why she is showing that there has been an accident. There was press on floor below my room, waiting to do the interviews and I was like, 'What has happened?'"

Shah Rukh said the he was stuck in New York for the next few days, as airlines were grounded. But, after a few days, he got special permission from the authorities and flew to Toronto with his family and Hiroo. "I was stuck there for 3-4 days with my family. Then, we kind of made our way out, went to Toronto and flew back because all the flights and everything was cancelled. So we asked for special permission and requested some people, and they kind of understood. Very kindly, they let the family go because the kids and mothers and everyone... so we got out of it. I think I was deeply affected by it, like everyone else was," he said. In the years after 9/11, Shah Rukh was detained thrice at different airports in the US. Once, when he was invited by Yale University to deliver an address, the actor reached three hours late because he was detained at the airport. "Whenever I start feeling too arrogant about myself, I always take a trip to America. The immigration guys kicked the star out of stardom," he said during his address at Yale, and hinted at the racial profiling being practiced at US airports.

After being rejected by Shark Tank India, Rajesh Kumar takes indirect dig at Anupam Mittal: 'You can get two people married, make money but...'

Rajesh Kumar anupam mittal Rajesh Kumar seemed to take a subtle dig at Anupam Mittal after being rejected at Shark Tank India. Rajesh Kumar, who is best known for playing Rosesh in the sitcom Sarabhai vs Sarabhai, took a break from acting a few years ago and became a farmer. Rajesh made his comeback as an actor a couple of years ago, but in a recent interview, he opened up about his farming experience where he lost around Rs 2.5-3 crore. Rajesh said that he also applied to appear on Shark Tank India and was disappointed that he did not get to sit down for a discussion with the 'sharks' on the show.

Talking to Hindi Rush, Rajesh said that he failed in his farming business, where he was growing and selling organic vegetables, because he "could not raise funds at the right time." He said during his interactions with investors, he could not understand their jargon when they asked him about being "bootstrapped" or his "burn."

"Wherever I went, I spoke with my heart and that was the failure because these are corporate people, they want to see the numbers. I had numbers. I had kind of hit breakeven point but it started failing because of tech," he said before revealed that he lost Rs 2.5-3 crore in his business. Rajesh said that he lost the money because an app developer duped him. "People are making mediocre apps everywhere and I got trapped in that. Time is money and I lost six months because that man, that app developer, took us for a ride," he said. Rajesh had previously shared that he applied to appear on Shark Tank, but was rejected after clearing two rounds. It appeared that he was hinting at Anupam Mittal, who is the CEO of Shaadi.com, and is one of the 'sharks' on the show. Rajesh said that he wanted to speak about the hard labour that goes behind farming on the show. "When I went on Shark Tank, this is what I wanted to communicate. You aren't from some other planet, you have made a lot of money, you have the resources, please market this. You should help me because there are things that I lack. At least sit with me," he said.

Rajesh then said, "You can get two people married, and make money by becoming a pandit but how much have you invested yourself in their wedding? You are making those two people meet, but do you even know them? You don't." He added that there are many corporate houses and business people "who are sitting with loads of money" and if they spend even one percent on farming, the agriculture sector would transform. He said that actors also need to play their part and bring their "glamour" to this sector as that could help in turning things around. In an earlier chat with Siddharth Kannan, Rajesh said he was rejected by Shark Tank India.

Alia Bhatt says there is 'no chill day' on Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Love And War set; Ranbir Kapoor calls it 'daunting', reveals Brahmastra 2 isn't dead

Before celebrating her birthday with family and loved ones on Saturday, Alia Bhatt marked the occasion in an interaction with members of the media, alongside her husband, actor Ranbir Kapoor. The couple cut a cake as photographers sang "Happy Birthday" for Alia. They also took a moment to chat with the media, sharing details about their upcoming film—Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Love and War.

During the interaction, Alia revealed that they are shooting for the film at night, which allows them to spend time with their daughter, Raha, during the day. "We work at night and are mom and dad in the day. It's an interesting combination. But because we shoot at night—and we mostly shot Gangubai Kathiawadi at night too—it really becomes like your own world. There is no distraction and no noise, it's just us."

Since both Alia and Ranbir have previously worked with Sanjay Leela Bhansali, they understand the level of dedication required for his films. Speaking about the experience, Alia said, "Every day we discuss the scene with Sanjay sir, and he makes you feel that 100 percent is just a beginning and that you have to give way more—and you want to because he gives so much. Every scene is important, so you don't go on set thinking any day is a chilling day. But we are having a blast." Ranbir echoed Alia's sentiments, admitting that being on a Bhansali set can be "daunting." He said, "Love and War is every actor's dream—to work with actors like Alia and Vicky and a master like Sanjay Leela Bhansali. Working with him after 17 years, I can say that no human being works as hard as he does. No one knows music, Indian culture, and our value system as much as him. To be on his set is tiring, long, and the process can be daunting, but as an artiste, it is satisfying because he really nurtures art."

While Alia previously worked with Bhansali in the hit film Gangubai Kathiawadi, Ranbir made his acting debut with the filmmaker's Saawariya (2007), which also starred Sonam Kapoor in the lead role. However, Love and War will mark Vicky Kaushal's first collaboration with

Rajesh Khanna wanted to do Bigg Boss because he thought it might make him a 'better person', was told he'd have to do dishes: 'Refugee hain kya?'



Rajesh Khanna was one of the biggest superstars of his era, but towards the end of his life, his stardom declined. Kaka, as he was fondly known by his fans, could not cope with his dwindling fame, and so, he contemplated participating in the reality show Bigg Boss. Rajesh was approached to be a contestant on the show and



Bhansali. During the conversation, Ranbir also shared an update about his highly anticipated film Brahmastra 2. He revealed, "Ayan is nurturing the dream of Brahmastra 2. He is currently working on War 2, and once he finishes that, he will start the pre-production of the film. There will be some interesting announcements coming from Brahmastra 2." Additionally, Ranbir spoke about his recent, much-talked-about advertisement featuring Aamir Khan and cricketers like Rishabh Pant, Hardik Pandya, and Jasprit Bumrah. Expressing his excitement, he said, "It was a big opportunity. He is my favourite actor. Aamir sir and I spent time before the shoot to understand the writing and the tone of the ad."

though he rejected the offer at first, he appeared to reconsider his decision later. In a recent chat, his alleged girlfriend Anita Advani recalled that period in his life, and said that she was in shock when Kaka expressed his willingness to be on the show. In a chat with Mid-day, she shared that she was there when he was offered Bigg Boss. "They were paying him a huge amount. They also went to Delhi to convince him and he was contemplating, whether he should or not. So, one night, he said, 'I think if I go to Bigg Boss, I will become a better person'. I said, 'What?' I got the shock of my life. He and Bigg Boss? I said, 'No Kakaji, not at all. You have such an aura and personality, I don't think you can fit there.' Anita recalled telling him how the show works, and that the contestants have to participate in household chores, which was perhaps not something that Rajesh had ever done in his life. "I told him 'Vahan bartan manjwate hai (They make you do the dishes). He said 'Mere se bhi manjwayenge? (They will ask me to do it?)' I said 'Nahi, aapse toh shayad nahi (No, not from you I guess.) I told him, 'Vahan khana bhi nahi milta theek se (They don't give you proper food)."

Kim Sae Ron's mother breaks silence on Kim Soo Hyun scandal, wants to restore daughter's honour: 'Don't want her to become somebody's gossip'



Kim Sae Ron's mother breaks silence on Kim Soo Hyun scandal, wants to restore daughter's honour: 'Don't want her to become somebody's gossip' Kim Sae Ron's mother breaks silence on Kim Soo Hyun scandal, wants to restore daughter's honour: 'Don't want her to become somebody's gossip'

The ongoing scandal involving South Korean star Kim Soo Hyun and the late actor Kim Sae Ron has not only sparked global attention, but has now involved Sae Ron's family, who are seeking justice for their late daughter. On March 13, her mother issued a statement explaining why the family was revealing the truth behind Sae Ron's past relationship with Soo Hyun. The update came through Gaerosaro Research Institute, the same outlet that first broke the news of their alleged romance. The statement comes on the heels of Sae Ron's aunt sharing multiple photographs of the two stars, claiming that Soo Hyun was romantically involved with Sae Ron when she was still a minor, just 15 years old. The family later released a love letter reportedly written by Soo Hyun to Sae Ron during his military service, along with postcards he allegedly sent her from Paris while drunk. Speaking to the YouTube channel, Sae Ron's mother explained the family's reason for coming forward now. "We are only trying to restore our lost daughter's image," she said. Sae Ron tragically passed away in February 2025 after years of struggling with harsh public backlash and career cancellation following her DUI incident in 2021. In a statement (via Koreaboo), her mother added, "The reason I am speaking about a child who has already left me is because I want to restore her honour, which was destroyed in a split second by articles full of lies. I am not trying to gain anything or sow discord. I only hope that her life will be remembered and treasured posthumously as an acknowledged actress. I don't want her to become someone's gossip, so please help me restore her name." Earlier, Dispatch's in-depth investigation revealed claims that Kim Soo Hyun's agency, Gold Medalist, pressured Sae Ron to pay for damages related to her DUI case. The outlet also confirmed that the Queen of Tears star had been romantically involved with Sae Ron for years, though the two chose to keep their relationship private and never spoke publicly about it. In another development, Kim Soo Hyun, once the highest-paid and most popular actor in the industry, is slowly seeing his projects put on hold.