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India's first Lacrosse training academy inaugurated in Hyd

Hyderabad., Chairman of the Spors Authority of Telangana State (SATS) Chairman Shiv Sena Reddy has inaugurated Garuda Lacrosse Academy on RCI Road in Badangpet. The academy is one of its kind in the country, it is said. Speaking after inauguration, Shiv Sena Reddy said the government would accord top priority to the development of sports. A new kind of sports will be brought to light as soon as possible to encourage the players. I am very happy that the Olympic Games Lacrosse Academy is in Hyderabad for the Telangana players,

CM Revanth directs officials to expedite rescue operations at SLBC



Hyderabad, March 24 (NSS): Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has instructed officials to accelerate the ongoing rescue efforts at the SLBC tunnel near Domalapenta in the Nagarkurnool district, where seven workers are currently trapped. He has requested Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari to designate senior IAS officer Shiva Sankar Loteti to closely oversee the rescue operations and to take immediate action in this regard. On Monday, Revanth Reddy conducted a review of the rescue efforts at the SLBC tunnel, during which officials updated him on the progress made so far. To ensure a swift completion of the operations, he urged the top authorities to promptly seek the necessary permissions and assistance from the central government. The Chief Minister also advised officials to consult the Expert Committee and expedite the rescue operations. (NSS)

BRS seeks Assembly debate on crop loan waiver



GNS News Agency, March 24

Hyderabad: BRS MLAs, led by KT Rama Rao and T Harish Rao, submitted an adjournment motion in the Telangana Assembly on Monday, demanding a discussion on the Congress government's failure to implement a complete crop loan waiver up to Rs.2 lakh, as promised in the Warangal Farmers Declaration.

Soon after the session began, the BRS MLAs led by Harish Rao raised slogans demanding for discussion on crop loan waiver. They sought implementation of complete loan waiver upto Rs 2 lakh immediately, even as the Ministers moved the demands for grants for discussion on the annual State budget. The BRS MLAs wore black badges as a mark of protest and demanded that the government come to the rescue of farmers. Separately, CPI MLA Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao moved an adjournment motion seeking job security, housing, healthcare, and pension benefits for journalists. However, the Speaker rejected both the adjournment motions.

Five years to the hour when COVID-19 lockdown hit home

GNS News Agency, March 24

"From 12 midnight today the entire country, please listen carefully, the entire country shall go under complete lockdown. In order to protect the country, and each of its citizens, from midnight tonight, a complete ban is being imposed on people from stepping out of their homes," these were the words of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 24, 2020 at 8 p.m.

With this one speech, the socio-economic impact of the raging COVID-19 hit homes in India as citizens tried to stock up on groceries and prepare for a life where they could not step out of their homes. This was more harsh than the one-day 'Janata Curfew'. But beyond the lockdown was the grim reality of want and deaths that stalked the streets of India. Now, the memory of the deaths, economic distress and the mass migration appears like a stranger's dream for most Indians. Others have not forgotten the horror of a pandemic that killed lakhs of people in the country.

"It's weird thinking of it now, to think that something of that scale happened and we've mostly moved past it. The way it happened it never really gave people the opportunity to grieve properly either. Like there are times when I am looking for a contact number on my phone and a keyword just brings up a host of numbers say for example with blood groups of people because many people needed blood at that time," says Rikit, currently working at a law firm based in Delhi NCR. He was among the young men who volunteered to help people who were immobile due to lockdown.

It was a period when the words — food, social distancing, oxygen, plasma, PPE (personal protective equipment), N95 mask, contact tracing and Remdesivir — were part of every conversation. It was also a time, when citizens became more aware of reality as the pace of life slowed down to baking bread or preparing dalgona coffee.

GNS News Agency, March 24

New Delhi: The Centre on Monday notified a 24 per cent hike in the salaries of members of Parliament with effect from April 1, 2023, on the basis of the Cost Inflation Index.

The notification, issued by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, also increased the daily allowances for sitting members and pension and additional pension for every year of service in excess of five years for former members. A member of Parliament will now get Rs 1.24 lakh per month as salary as against Rs 1 lakh per month they received earlier. The daily allowance too has been increased from Rs 2,000 to Rs 2,500, the notification said. The pension for former members of Parliament has been increased from Rs 25,000 per month to Rs 31,000 per month. The additional pension for every year of service in excess of five years has been increased from Rs 2,000 per month to Rs 2,500 per month. The increase in the salary has been notified in exercise of the powers granted under the Salary, Allowances and Pension of Members of Parliament Act on the basis of the Cost Inflation Index specified in the Income Tax Act of 1961.

Prez Murmu calls to end Maoism, praises exemplary traditions of Chhattisgarh Assembly

GNS News Agency, March 24

Bhopal: The silver jubilee of the Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly marked a historic moment with a strong call for eradicating Maoism, as leaders and dignitaries celebrated the state's democratic journey. President Draupadi Murmu, while addressing the occasion on Monday in Raipur, highlighted unity, empowerment, and development as pivotal for shaping Chhattisgarh's future. She began with "Jai Johar!" and congratulated the Assembly on its 25th anniversary. Reflecting on the state's establishment under former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's leadership, she paid tribute to his visionary guidance.

President Murmu praised the Assembly for its exemplary democratic traditions, embodying the spirit of "Chhattisgarhiya Sabse Badiya" (Chhattisgarhis are the best). Over its 25-year history, the Assembly has upheld the highest standards of parliamentary conduct, including the extraordinary rule of automatic suspension for members disrupting proceedings by entering the well of the House. Remarkably, the marshal has never been required to enforce order during this period. This commitment to decorum and discipline has positioned the Chhattisgarh Vidhan Sabha as a model of legislative excellence, not just for India but for democratic systems worldwide, she said. She emphasised Chhattisgarh's rich cultural heritage and "mother power", urging 19 women MLAs to promote women's empowerment, champion inclusive development, and align with the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam (Act)'. She applauded "Mini Mata", the first woman Member of Parliament from Chhattisgarh, as an inspiration for women leaders. Acknowledging Chhattisgarh's rural character, the President commended the state's healthy sex ratio and contributions of women in diverse fields, advocating collective efforts to empower them further. She highlighted the Assembly's passage of 565 bills over 25 years, many addressing social welfare and inclusive progress, including a landmark Act against harassment rooted in stereotypes. President Murmu drew attention to Chhattisgarh's immense development potential in sectors like cement, steel, minerals, power generation, and

BRS raises concern over women's safety after Hyderabad MMTS incident

GNS News Agency, March 24

Hyderabad: The shocking case of a young woman forced to jump off a moving MMTS train in Hyderabad to escape being raped has triggered public outrage, with BRS leaders holding the Congress government responsible for the deteriorating law and order situation in the State capital.

BRS working president KT Rama Rao condemned the incident, terming it "shocking and unsettling." He urged union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav to ensure a speedy investigation to nab the culprit. He also called on the Telangana police and the Women and Child Welfare department to provide full support to the victim. Stating that though the incident was under the purview of the Railways, he said the incident should serve as a wake up call to the State government as well. Criticising the Congress government for the pathetic law and order situation, he questioned why criminals felt emboldened to commit heinous crimes in broad daylight. Senior BRS MLA T Harish Rao termed the incident "shocking and heartbreaking," questioning the failure of the State government, the police and the Railways. He lashed out at the State government over a 29 per cent rise in rape cases in the State.

"If women aren't safe even in the State capital, what is the government doing? This Congress government should be ashamed of its failure in ensuring security for women," he said, demanding answers from Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, who was also the Home Minister, asking him to

Sri Rama Navami annual Brahmotsavam at Vontimitta from April 5

Tirumala, March 24 (NSS): The TTD Chairman BR Naidu along with EO Syamala Rao released the booklet of Sri Rama Navami annual Brahmotsavam at Vontimitta in YSR Kadapa district at Tirumala on Monday. The event took place during the board meeting at Annamaiah Bhavan.

Speaking on the occasion, the TTD Chairman said the annual fete will be observed with grandeur from April 5 to 15 while the State festival of the celestial Sri Sita Rama Kalyanam will be observed on April 11. Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdary, JEO Veerabrahmam were also present apart from the TTD Trust board members. (NSS)



CM Revanth Reddy to visit Japan in April for investment talks

GNS News Agency, March 24

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy is set to visit Japan in April for a week-long tour aimed at attracting investments to the state. During his visit, he will participate in the Industrial Expo in Osaka, a key event showcasing global business opportunities.

As part of his itinerary, Revanth Reddy will meet with industrialists and business leaders to discuss potential investment opportunities in Telangana. The visit is expected to strengthen economic ties between Telangana and Japan, fostering collaborations in various sectors. Accompanying the Chief Minister on this visit will be Minister Sridhar Babu and senior government officials. The delegation aims to highlight Telangana's business-friendly policies and infrastructure to global investors.

Sridhar Babu urges U.S-Indiana State representatives to invest in Telangana



Hyderabad, March 24 (NSS): Minister for IT and Industries Sridhar Babu has urged representatives of the U.S. State of Indiana to promote investments from industrialists in their region by highlighting the business-friendly environment in Telangana. A delegation led by Indiana Secretary of State Diego Morales met Minister Sridhar Babu at the Assembly Committee Hall on Monday. During the meeting, the Minister elaborated on the initiatives taken by the Telangana government to boost industrial development and the various incentives being offered to investors. He emphasised that under the leadership



traditional crafts, which are lauded globally. She celebrated its natural beauty, enriched by rivers like Mahanadi, Hasdeo, Indravati, and Shinnath, emphasising the need for ecological preservation alongside modern progress. A resounding call to end Maoism became the celebration's central theme, with communities in affected areas expressing a desire to embrace development, she said. The efforts to integrate individuals impacted by Left-wing extremism into the mainstream of society have now reached a critical and conclusive phase. The residents of Maoist-affected regions in Chhattisgarh are eager to embrace progress and embark on the journey of development. Emphasising her stress on ending Maoism, the President said, "I firmly believe that your unwavering dedication will soon lead to the complete eradication of extremism from Chhattisgarh, paving the way for a remarkable and transformative chapter in the state's history." Efforts to integrate all sections of society into mainstream growth have reached a critical stage, giving hope for complete freedom from extremism. The President expressed confidence in adding a transformative chapter to the state's history. Guided by Guru Ghasidas' ideals of equality and harmony, Chhattisgarh aspires to embody fairness and unity, the President said. The Legislative Assembly remains a driving force for comprehensive development, setting an example of governance excellence. With faith in its future, Chhattisgarh is poised to emerge as a model state, blending tradition, progress, and inclusivity in its journey ahead, she concluded.



ensure safety of women. MLC K Kavitha expressed deep concern and spoke to Railway Superintendent of Police Chandana Deepthi about the victim's condition. She urged the government to act immediately, stating that repeated failures to protect women had emboldened criminals. She demanded that the government to make women safety a priority. Former Ministers P Sabitha Indra Reddy and V Srinivas Goud visited the victim at Gandhi Hospital and enquired about her health condition. Citing the alarming rise in crimes against women, Sabitha Indra Reddy criticised the inaction of SHE Teams and the misuse of the Command Control Centre for government review meetings and political purposes, demanding that it be restored to the police for better surveillance.

INDIAN CHRONICLE

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Cash at judge's house

The alleged recovery of a stash of unaccounted cash from a storeroom in the official residence of Justice Yashwant Varma, a judge of the Delhi High Court, has prompted the Supreme Court to set up a probe committee of three HC judges. In a bid to ensure transparency and dispel misinformation, the apex court has also released the inquiry report submitted by the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court; this report has concluded that the "entire matter warrants a deeper probe". It is unheard of for the SC to issue detailed press releases on controversial issues; the very fact that this was done in Justice Varma's case shows that the matter is being treated with the seriousness it deserves. After all, at stake is the integrity and credibility of the higher judiciary.

Even as the judge has claimed that no cash was ever placed in the storeroom by him or his family members, the incident has given rise to several questions: Was the money kept there without the judge's knowledge? If yes, was it the handiwork of his residential staff or outsiders or both? And if it's a conspiracy to frame and defame the judge, who all are involved? An inordinate delay in finding definitive answers will only worsen the situation.

The landmark 'Restatement of Values of Judicial Life', adopted by the Supreme Court in 1997, specifies that there should be no act or omission by a judge "which is unbecoming of the high office he occupies and the public esteem in which that office is held". Any controversy that undermines public trust in the judiciary should be probed thoroughly, even as it's imperative to set a time frame for completing the investigation. It is unfortunate that a nearly 17-year-old bribery case allegedly involving a former judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court is yet to reach its conclusion. The onus is on courts and probe agencies to fast-track the proceedings in such cases in the interests of truth, justice and judicial accountability.

CM Revanth condemns criticism against Miss World Competition

Hyderabad, March 20 (NSS): Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has condemned the criticism against the Miss Universe competition, which is scheduled to be held from May 7 to 31 in Hyderabad, and said that some are also talking about the Miss Universe pageant by crossing their limits. The Chief Minister said the event is a wonderful opportunity to grow the tourism sector in Telangana and representatives from various countries will visit Hyderabad, resulting in that Telangana will emerge as a famous tourist destination. He stated that the entire world is looking at Telangana since the state is hosting the 72nd Miss Universe pageant and the event will generate hundreds of crores of rupees revenue in the future. The opposition leaders swindled government money under the guise of Formula E race. There is no comparison between me and the



opposition leaders, the Chief Minister said. Revanth Reddy participated in 'Kolvula Panduga' and launched 'Build Now' portal at Ravindra Bharathi here on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister handed over the appointment letters to the selected candidates for various posts in Panchayat Raj and Municipal Administration departments. Later, addressing the gathering, he said the previous government neglected the recruitment on compassionate grounds for 10 years, but the current Congress government was completing these appointments so that such negligence should not exist in the People's Government. "Your dream to get a government job for the last 10 years is fulfilled today. Congratulations to the newly recruited 922 candidates and their family members who received appointment letters today," Revanth Reddy said. He said that no other State in the country filled 57,924 government jobs in just 10 months of coming to power and the State government was ready to give appointment letters for more than 2,000 jobs in Group 1, 2, and 3 in a few days. Since the BRS has not done anything, the opposition party was also thinking that my government should also fall in line. It is the reason the opposition is creating hurdles," Revanth Reddy added. (NSS)

KTR SIR PLEASE IDENTIFY TELANGANA FREEDOM FIGHTERS BRS HONEST WORKERS



In the Medak district centre of veldurthy town brs ex town president vennevaram hanumanth reddy spoke to the media point we are honestly work to the brs party since 25 years, but the party feaver to another party leaders came to self profitable in the brs party, ktr sir plz ignore janue and hardcore fans of brs that is helps to we will sure back bounes in the next election other wise no more workers in the brs party, we are freedom fighters and flag lifets of brs party life time workers sir please ignore

Let's Stand as a Support for Girls' Future Inauguration of 'Save the Girl Child' Office



GNS News Agency, March 24
Hyderabad:Renowned music director R.P. Patnaik emphasized the importance of safeguarding the future of girls and instilling confidence in them. On Sunday, the 'Save the Girl Child' office was inaugurated at Erramanzil by Chanchalguda Jail Superintendent Shivakumar Goud, former MLA Bakkani Narasimhulu, and Youth for Anti-Corruption founder Rajendra Palnati.

Speaking at the event, they mentioned that atrocities and harassment against girls and women are increasing day by day. They stressed that in today's society, every parent should raise their daughters with courage and confidence. Boys should also be raised with a sense of responsibility and taught to respect girls. 'Save the Girl Child' aims to raise awareness about the protection of girls and work towards their safety. They highlighted that since ancient times, we have worshipped the earth as a mother and that women play a vital role in every aspect of human existence. They added that since women give birth to mankind, society owes them a great debt and should constantly honor and strive for their progress. The event was attended by Kalinga Krishna, Dr. Sravanthi, Dr. Chakrapani, Soujanya, Geeta, Swapna, Aparna, Sharanya, Sunita, Himabindu, Padmaja, Komati Ramesh Babu, B. Rajesh, Gangadhar, Hari Prakash, Konne Devender, Jangayya, Kakkula Prashant, Naresh, and others.

Land prices in Telangana are set to rise in near future: Ponguleti



Hyderabad, March 24 (NSS): Minister for Revenue Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy has announced that land prices in Telangana State are set to rise in the near future. During a conversation with reporters on Monday, the Minister noted that a surveyor and a deputy surveyor will be appointed for each mandal to conduct land surveys, and licensed surveyors will be provided with opportunities. He explained that a total of 6,000 licensed surveyors will be engaged, followed

by training sessions that will take place throughout Telangana State. The Minister also pointed out that the LRS scheme has a deadline of March 31, and individuals who register before that date will receive a 25 percent discount. He further clarified that when individuals seek permission to construct a house, they will be required to pay the full 100 percent LRS fee. "The Center has approved 1,13,000 housing units in urban regions under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. The Urban government is contributing merely Rs 1.5 lakh for houses in urban areas, while the remaining costs will be covered by the State government. Moreover, there is still no clarification regarding the situation in rural areas," stated Ponguleti. He further explained that new applications will be accepted for straightforward title cases. The Minister accused the previous administration of rejecting 1.3 million old applications. However, he indicated that those whose applications were denied can appeal to the Appellate Authority. "There are no issues between myself and MLA Anirudh Reddy. I have no conflicts with any MLA. As for the individual named Abhimanyu Reddy that MLA Anirudh mentioned, I am unfamiliar with him," Ponguleti clarified. (NSS)

TTD approves budget for Rs 5,258.68 crore for 2025-26



Tirumala, March 24 (NSS): The TTD Board of Trustees has approved budget for Rs 5,258.68 crore for the financial year 2024-25, said TTD Chairman BR Naidu. After the TTD Board meeting, speaking to media persons at Annamaiah Bhavan along with the TTD EO J Syamala Rao, board members and other officials on Monday evening, he said the board has taken some important resolutions. The excerpts are as follows: To look into the feasibility on hiking the salary along with better medical care for Potu workers. Approval to provide financial assistance for reconstruction of temples at Kodangal, Karimnagar, Upamaka, Anakapalle,

Kurnool, Dharmavaram, Talakona, Tirupati (Gangamma). Decision to cancel the donation pass books of donors who have supplied organic products to TTD in the past; to take up reconstruction of some of the VIP and non-VIP guest houses in Tirumala; Resolves to cancel the 20 acres of land previously allotted towards the establishment of Science City and Museum at Alipiri; to identify unauthorised and unlicensed shops in Tirumala and take appropriate action against them; decision to explore the possibilities of offering darshan of Srivaru in offline to the elderly and specially abled citizens; Decision to verify the feasibility and consider changing the timing of Srivari VIP break darshan at 5.30 am as per the request of devotees as was in the past; It has been decided to grant six tickets to the family members of TTD employees through Supatham once in every three months; It was decided to form a committee to solve the problems of 151 contract lecturers working in TTD College for the last 25 years; Approval towards the formation of New Agama Salaha Mandal; Sanction of Rs one crore towards the development of Srinivasa Sports Complex in Tirupati. Before the commencement of TTD Board meeting, the Chairman and others observed two minutes silence to mourn the demise of renowned singer and TTD Asthana Vidwan Dr Garimella Balakrishna Prasad. Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdary, other board members, JEO Veerabrahmam were also present. (NSS)

Abhishek Mohanty, IPS, gets relief in HC

Hyderabad, March 24 (NSS): Telangana State IPS officer Abhishek Mohanty has got relief in the High Court. The Court on Monday issued orders that Abhishek Mohanty should continue to perform his duties in Telangana until the CAT hearing is over in his case. Abhishek Mohanty got relief with the High Court verdict. The DoPT has issued orders transferring three IPS officers from Telangana to AP. Abhishek Mohanty is one of them. However, he objected to being sent to Andhra Pradesh and approached the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT). The hearing on Abhishek Mohanty's petition is currently ongoing in CAT. In this context, the High Court has said his transfer should be stopped until the CAT hearing is over on the orders issued by the DoPT in the past and added that he can perform his duties in Telangana until then. The Centre had issued orders last month and asked him to join his duties in AP, which was allotted to Mohanty during the bifurcation of the State. Abhishek Mohanty approached the CAT challenging the



order. The CAT, which took up the matter, refused to stay the Central order. Challenging the CAT decision, he approached the Telangana High Court. A bench of Justice Abhinandan Kumar Chavili and Justice Tirumaladevi took up the matter. As Mohanty was to be admitted to AP on Thursday, the Centre stayed the order till Monday. (NSS)

Extension of Special Train Services

Hyderabad, March 24 (NSS): In order to clear extra rush of passengers during summer season, South Central Railway (SCR) has extended to run the following special trains between various destinations. Train No 07191 (Kacheguda - Madurai) on Mondays from April 7 to May 5; Train No. 07192 (Madurai - Kacheguda) on Wednesdays from April 9 to May 7; Train No. 07189 (Nanded-Erode) on Fridays from April 4 to May 2; Train No 07190 (Erode - Nanded) on Sundays from April 6 to May 4; Train No. 07435 (Kacheguda - Nagercoil) on Fridays from April 4 to May 2; Train No. 07436 (Nagercoil - Kacheguda) on Sundays from April 6 to May 4; Train No 07601 (Secunderabad - Villupuram) on Thursday from April 3 to May 1; Train No. 07602 (Villupuram -

Secunderabad) on Fridays from April 4 to May 2. (NSS)



APEDA organizes Niryat Bandhu Program on Mango Exports



Hyderabad, March 20 (NSS): The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Regional Office Hyderabad, in collaboration with the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), organized a Niryat Bandhu Program on Mango Exports at the Auditorium, CGO Towers, Kavadiaguda, Hyderabad. Some 65 participants attended the program, including officials from Joint DGFT, the Department of Horticulture, ECGC (Export Credit Guarantee Corporation), NABARD, ICRISAT, Indian Institute of Packaging, Plant Quarantine Station Hyderabad, GMR Air Cargo, along with mango farmers and exporters.

The program commenced with a welcome address by BDM (DPS), followed by addresses from dignitaries. S.C. Akshay, ITS, Joint DGFT delivered the keynote address on mango exports and highlighted the export opportunities for mangoes from Telangana. The program featured insightful presentations on various aspects of mango exports. (NSS)

IEWG first meeting held



Hyderabad, March 20 (NSS): The Independent Expert Working Group (IEWG) set up by the Government of Telangana to study, analyse & interpret the Telangana Social Education Economic Political Caste Survey held its first meeting today at the Marri Chenna Reddy Human Resource Development Institute in Hyderabad. Chairman Justice (Retd.) Sudarshan Reddy, Vice Chairman Prof Kanchari Ilaiah and Convenor Praveen Chakravarty presided over the meeting in which all the other members participated physically or virtually. A detailed presentation of the survey methodology and preliminary findings were presented to the expert group by Anudeep Durishetty, District Collector Hyderabad and State Nodal Ofcer for SEEEPC Survey 2024. The expert group recorded its appreciation of the rigorous and scientific method in which the survey was undertaken. Various analytical and econometric frameworks were discussed and formulated for further analysis of the Survey data. Sub-groups will be created within the expert group for different domains for analysis and the group will reconvene on April 7 at 2PM to consolidate all inputs of the sub-groups. (NSS)

Abhishek Mohanty, IPS, gets relief in HC

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Govt extends accreditation cards' validity again

Hyderabad, March 24 (NSS): The validity of media accreditation cards of Telangana working journalists has been extended for another three months. State I&PR Commissioner Harish has issued orders in this regard. The validity of the accreditation cards, which was due to expire on March 30, has been extended till June 30. This is the fourth time that the validity of accreditation cards has been extended by the State government. (NSS)

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform to the general public at large that, Rathod Santosh S/o Rathod Seetharam R/o H.No. 62, Ch. Khanapur, Dist. Adilabad is the owner of plot no. 938, in sy. no. 72/17, measuring 36'x50' = 1800 sq ft, situated at Battisawargaon, Mdl & dist. Adilabad, within the limits of Adilabad Municipality. That, the original link document No. 9104/2021 is lost. If anyone has any claim, right, title or interest of any kind in the said property, they may contact the undersigned within 7 days of the publication of this Notice, with all documents of claim and title. If any one finds the above document kindly handover to undersigned. If no objection is received within 7 days, and if any claim and objection arise, it shall be deemed to have been waived. Dt: 24-03-2025
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Advocate,
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Cell: 9440005500

BHAGAVAD GITA VIJAYOTSAV CELEBRATIONS WITH 5,000 DEVOTEES



P. S. Ashokan "Indian Chronicle" Manthani "24-3-2025." "In a grand display of spiritual fervor, the Bhagavad Gita Vijayotsav Shobhayatra in Manthani was inaugurated on Sunday at 8:30 AM, with a magnificent procession from the Sri Lakshmi Narayana Swamy Temple. The procession, which began through the town's main streets, resonated with the chanting of "Hare Rama Hare Krishna." Devotees from various parts of Telangana joined the procession, filling the atmosphere with devotion. The procession reached Sri Nrisimha Shiva Kiran Gardens at 10:00 AM. The grand event Organized jointly by the Telangana State Sanatana Dharma Prachara Samiti and Sri Sitarama Seva Sadan, a massive collective parayana (chanting) of the Bhagavad Gita was held at Shiva Kiran Gardens. "The Telangana State IT and Legislative Affairs Minister, Duddilla Sridhar Babu, attended as the chief guest and addressed the gathering. He highlighted the uniqueness of the event, noting that Mantrapuram became a spiritual center, hosting a continuous 665-day Bhagavad Gita parayana in 665 homes. He expressed that the lives of all those involved in the parayana had been blessed. "During the event, the Minister presented mementos to the participants of the parayana and honored the visiting swamis and mothers with shawls. He emphasized the responsibility of each individual to protect values and dharma. The Minister also praised

the Bhagavad Gita as a sacred text of the Sanatana society and extended gratitude to those who were recognized in the International World Book of Records. He remarked that Lord Krishna, in the Bhagavad Gita, provides answers to all doubts. "The Minister also thanked the devotees who had gathered from various parts of Telangana and expressed his happiness at the prominence of spirituality in the Manthani region. The event was observed by the International World Book of Records, who acknowledged the achievement by recording it in their records. "Prominent speakers included Acharya Kasireddy Venkata Reddy, distinguished guest C.L. Vijay Raj, and several other guests. Eight swamis spoke to the devotees about the greatness of the Bhagavad Gita. The event featured a large-scale collective Gita parayana, with participants deeply immersed in devotion. An annadanam (free meal) was organized for all attendees, ensuring that no one went without. "The organizers expressed their gratitude to the unexpectedly large turnout, which contributed to the success of the event. Several local figures, including Parvati Teacher, Konjarlu Usharani, Ramadugu Sriramulu, Ramadugu Prabhakar, Avadhanulu Srinivas, Bobbili Sridhar, Duddilla Maruti, Loke Satidevi, Bandari Sunita, Mahavadi Jalaja, Konjarlu Vishnuadas, Odanala Srinivas, Kotta Srinivas, and Medagoni Rajamouli Goud, partook in the event.

Farmers should focus on Go-based agricultural cultivation.

" Retired Agriculture Department scientist Jalapatirao ..



Farmer Awareness Seminar under the JBD Agricultural Welfare Association ... "Damera, March 23 (Indian Chronicle): "Retired Agriculture Department scientist Jalapatirao said that farmers should adopt agricultural practices in the state of modern technology in the state. Awareness seminar was held with farmers under the auspices of Sirikonda Thirupathirao, President of the District Agricultural Welfare Association at the Gudappad NSR Garden on Sunday under the auspices of the Jayashankar, Bhupalapalli District (JBD) Agricultural Welfare Society. Retired agronomist Jalapathi Rao was the chief guest at this awareness conference, while former Joint District Judge Chairman Sambari Sammarao, Jordar Ramulu and District Leaders Nallamalla Venkateswara Rao (Khammam Baburao and several other members of the Society of Agriculture, from various districts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, were participated in the large number of leaders of the Agricultural Society, farmers and leading agriculture department. Earlier, the President of the Agricultural Welfare Association Sirikonda Thirupathirao felicitated the agriculture sector directly to the agriculture sector during the Ugadi Awards. Farmers with organic, go-based and vermi comfort fertilizers cultivated rice grain, rice, rice and a variety of flowers and a variety of medicine at the Farmers Awareness Con-

ference. Afterwards, the chief guest of the awareness conference chaired by district president Sirikonda Thirupathi Rao, Jalapatirao, who was the chief guest, said that the farmers would be able to reduce the land extract and the public with the use of chemical fertilizers for agricultural crops. Jalapatirao said that farmers should be accustomed to modern farming practices as well as Go-based agricultural crops, which will increase the return of farmers. Bhupalapalli District Welfare Association President Thirupathirao appreciates the contribution of the Sandriya and Go-Adarita cultivation in many ways. Many expressions have expressed their views that Thirupathi Rao, who is working to make the benefit of the farmers with the Go-Adarita farming practices, is working to make the people healthy. Many wanted to develop Go-based agricultural cultivation in the districts and the development of the Mulkanuri Farmers Society. District Welfare Association President Thirupathi Rao appreciates the welfare of the farmers, along with the farmer insurance schemes, the cultivation of soil cultivation crops and the seeds of the crops and the free members of the free members. District Presidents Sirikonda Thirupathirao urged agriculture experts to provide public representatives to the development of the society for the development of the society.

TDCA aims developing rural cricket: MP

Hyderabad, March 24 (NSS): Raja Sabha MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra has praised the efforts being made by the Telangana Districts Cricket Association (TDCA) towards developing rural cricket in the State. Ravichandra praised the efforts of TDCA founder chairman and former SAT chairman Allipuram Venkateswar Reddy, who has been working hard for the uplift of rural cricketers for many years.



Ravichandra inaugurated one-day tournament being organized by TDCA with the America Under-17 Youth Academy (AYCA) team at Thondupalli in Shamshabad on Monday. Along with the AYCA team, Telangana Rural Risers, Panthers and Warriors teams are participating in the

tournament. Ravichandra urged all cricket lovers in the State to come together and show their support for TDCA, which is moving forward with the aim of developing neglected rural cricket. He said there are many talented cricketers in rural ar-

reas and to bring them to the limelight, there is a need to organize as many such tournaments as possible. He said TDCA should shoulder this responsibility as a good development for rural cricketers. After that Venkateswar Reddy speak-

ing on the occasion, he said only TDCA can take forward the hopes and aspirations of rural cricketers. He said they are in talks with BCCI regarding the matter. AYCA President Kolipaka Arun and others participated in the program. (NSS)

UltraTech enables water security in Anantapur through responsible water stewardship

Hyderabad: This World Water Day, UltraTech reaffirms its commitment to responsible water stewardship, through focused water management practices and effective governance systems. UltraTech's water management efforts encompass areas within unit premises as well as beyond the fence, i.e. within the communities the Company operates in. UltraTech's integrated manufacturing unit in Anantapur district, Andhra Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh Cement Works, has a holistic approach towards water conservation. One of their water conservation initiatives focuses on Petnikota and Ayyavaripalli villages, in the Nandyal district and Anantapur district respectively — where low rainfall, land degradation, and poor crop productivity have long been impediments to rural livelihoods. As a result, the unit had undertaken a five-year programme in 2019-20 to implement comprehensive watershed management interventions in the region. To date, Andhra Pradesh Cement Works has constructed seven rainwater harvesting structures in these villages, significantly enhancing groundwater recharge. These structures have created a total water storage capacity of 35,000 cubic meters, harvesting over 7 lakh cubic meters of rainwater as of January 2025. This has led to a remarkable 2 to 4-meter rise in groundwater levels, supporting irrigation for nearly 346 hectares of cultivable land. 400 acres of previously barren land have also been brought under cultivation, boosting agricultural productivity and income security. Efforts to reduce excessive use of fertilisers through promoting balanced nutrient application practices have also helped reduce soil and groundwater pollution in



these villages. The project has benefited over 2,000 people across 500 households living in these two villages of Nandyal and Anantapur districts. UltraTech's holistic approach water conservation

In addition to the community water conservation initiatives, UltraTech also has taken a multi-pronged approach to water conservation within its manufacturing operations. This approach includes water harvesting interventions such turning exhausted mine pits into reservoirs and building roof-top rainwater harvesting structures in addition to increased use of recycled water and initiatives to increase water efficiency in manufacturing operations.

SC grants relief to TV channel MD in Phone tapping case

Hyderabad, March 24 (NSS): A Private channel MD Shraavan Kumar has been granted relief in the Supreme Court in the sensational phone tapping case. He approached the Supreme Court after the Telangana High Court denied him anticipatory bail in the phone tapping case. The Supreme Court, which took up the hearing on the petition, issued an interim order and asked police not to take strict action against Shraavan Kumar.



It ordered Shraavan to cooperate with the police in its investigation. The bench of Justice B.V. Nagaratna adjourned the further hearing on the petition to April 28. Shraavan Kumar is an accused in the phone tapping case that took place during the tenure of the BRS party State government. It is alleged that Shraavan played a key role in the case of the illegal tapping of the phones of IAS and IPS officers as well as the Telangana High Court judges. Senior advocate Dama Seshadri Naidu argued the case on behalf of Shraavan Kumar. He requested the court to provide him interim protection from the arrest. Seshadri Naidu stated that Shraavan Kumar would be available and will cooperate with the investigation. It was revealed that the police have not issued a single notice under Section 41A of the CrPC so far to Shraavan. However, the State government's lawyer urged the court not to provide any protection to the accused. The bench was informed that a red corner notice had been issued against Shraavan Kumar after he escaped

and went to America. The government's lawyer told the court that he had been absconding for a year. The bench asked whether Shraavan Kumar was being arrested today. Seshadri Naidu said the State government had not arrested him as he is currently in America. The bench said if Shraavan Kumar is not given interim protection, he would not come to India. "Let him come to the country first," it said. The bench ordered Shraavan Kumar to come to India and cooperate in the investigation if he received a notice to come for the investigation. His lawyer told the court that Shraavan Kumar would come to India within 48 hours if the interim protection is given. After hearing the arguments, the bench issued an interim order not to take any action against the accused. (NSS)

Trained IAS officers visit Kukatpally zonal office

Hyderabad, March 24 (NSS): Trainee IAS officers believe that various schemes being implemented by GHMC are helping to provide basic facilities to the people. The Trainee IAS officers, who were selected as IAS officers in 2023 and assigned to Telangana State, are working as trainee assistant Collectors in various districts and conducting training programs through Marri Chenna Reddy Human Resource Centre. They will be trained on topics related to the Municipal Administration & Urban Development Department. On Monday, Kukatpally Zonal Officer Apoorva Chauhan explained the services provided by GHMC to the people, the financial resources of the organization, and the basic facilities to the trainee officers who came to the GHMC through a PowerPoint presentation. On the occasion, the

Zonal Commissioner explained the details of sanitation, construction and demolition waste (C&D), health, veterinary, entomology, engineering maintenance, SNDP, SRDP, CRMP schemes, revenue, UBD, sports, double bedroom houses, Monsoon Emergency Team, and street lights. Along with the Zonal Commissioner, Uma Aarti, who worked as a trainee assistant Collector in Vikarabad district, Garima Narula, who works in Narayanpet, ESSSD Manoj (Sangareddy), Ajay Yadav (Karimnagar), Saket Kumar (Nizamabad), Abhigyan Malviya (Adilabad), Mrinal Shrestha (Khammam district) assistant collectors, Marri Chenna Reddy Human Resource Institute Course Director Dr Kandukuri Usha Rani, GHMC Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Abdul Vakeel and others participated in the program. (NSS)

BRS Govt deceived farmers in the name of loan waiver: Tummala



Hyderabad, March 24 (NSS): Minister for Agriculture Tummala Nageswara Rao has accused the previous BRS government of deceiving farmers under the guise of loan waivers, asserting that they took no substantive action for farmers throughout their decade-long rule. During a Budget session in the Assembly on Monday, the Minister condemned the previous BRS administration for disbursing the loan waiver in four separate installments, arguing that the amount provided was insufficient to even cover the interest owed. The BRS party initiated the loan waiver just three months prior to the elections, and many farmers were left without assistance. Only half of the farmers were not granted loan waiver, but the Congress government itself would have borne the burden," he noted. The Minister highlighted that the Congress government has committed to waiving crop loans up to Rs. 2 lakh per family, with Rs. 20,000 crores already allocated to this initiative. Moreover, he stated that the Rythu Bharosa funds would be transferred to farmers' accounts by March 31. Tummala Nageswara Rao also addressed the issue of crop damage resulting from the recent hailstorm in Telangana. He stated that compensation will be provided once the comprehensive report on the extent of the damage is completed. The Minister also emphasised the need for officials to carry out a survey on a per-farmer basis to identify those affected and compile a

final report. He mentioned that an initial assessment of the crop damage caused by hailstorms between March 21 and 23 has already been received. According to this preliminary report, approximately 11,298 acres of crops have sustained damage across 64 mandals in 13 districts of Telangana. Of the affected crops, 6,670 acres are paddy, 4,100 acres are maize, 309 acres are mangoes, while the remaining acreage consists of various other crops, Tummala said. (NSS)

Exercise 'Varuna' achieved its aim of enhanced jointmanship: Indian Navy

New Delhi, India-France naval exercise 'Varuna', held from March 19-22, achieved its aim of enhanced jointmanship and reinforced the shared commitment to upholding the principles of a rules-based maritime order, Indian Navy officials said on Monday. Also, the complex drills provided invaluable operational experience, strengthening the collective capacity to address contemporary maritime security challenges, a Navy spokesperson said. Harness data analytics to drive decisions with IIM Kozhikode DAM program. Join Now

The 23rd edition of the bilateral naval exercise, a testament to the enduring maritime partnership between India and France, featured complex manoeuvres by platforms across sub-surface, surface and air domains. This edition of the exercise achieved a higher degree of operational coordination between the two navies than the previous editions, he said. French Aircraft Carrier Charles de Gaulle and INS Vikrant took part in it.

"The exercise achieved its aim of enhanced jointmanship and reinforced the shared commitment to upholding the principles of a rules-based maritime order and promoting stability in the Indo-Pacific," the official said.

Harish Rao demands govt to fulfil Asha workers' demands



Hyderabad, March 24 (NSS): Former minister and Siddipet MLA Harish Rao today demanded that the State government immediate release the arrested Asha workers, who have been agitating for fulfilment of their demands. He said the BRS party was strongly condemning the arrests of the Asha workers across the State. "Is it a crime just to demand a salary hike as per the election manifesto of the

State government," he asked? He said it was a crime to deploy hundreds of policemen, force the Asha workers into vehicles and take them to police stations. "Why is this government so strict and so tyrannical towards the Asha workers? Is this the respect that women received in Indiramma's kingdom? People from all walks of life have recognized the fraud of the Congress party that came to power in the name of the fulfilment of the promises within 15 months. People are protesting everywhere against the deceit done by the Congress party. The Congress government is using strictness and avoiding it to escape the protest," he alleged. Harish Rao said the undemocratic rule was being continued by illegally arresting those who raised their voices. He said it had been 15 months since the Congress government came to power and had presented two full-fledged budgets. "CM Revanth Reddy will keep making excuses for not implementing the promises. As per the election promise, we demand an immediate increase in the salaries of the ASHA workers. We make it clear that the BRS party will support the struggles of the ASHA workers until the promise given is fulfilled," said Harish Rao. (NSS)

Ellanki Bikshapathi services in the teaching profession are memorable..



Teacher MLC Pingili Sripal Reddy.

Parakala, March 24; (Indian Chronicle): "Teacher MLC Pingili Sripal Reddy said that the services of the teaching profession are memorable. Teacher MLC Pingili Sripal Reddy was the chief guest of the Bikshapati Upadhyay Retirement Program at the local MN Rao Function Hall in the town on Monday. Speaking on the occasion, Jayashankar Bhupalapalli district Raygonda Mandalam of Ellaki Bikshapathi Teachers of Rapaka village has been working with the best education to the students since he took over the profession of the teaching profession. He said that this sacred teaching profession is not in any profession, and that it is a teaching profession that is recognized for future generations. Jayashankar Bhupalapalli district Raygonda Mandal Kanaparathi Mandalam Kanaparathi Government High School, who is working as a biology teachers and teaching the best education to the highest level, said that Ellanki Bikapathi is a great achievement. He said that he was dedicated to various public high school for a

long time and served as the President of the Teachers Association and served as the state associate president and worked to provide online education to teachers. The PRTI mission is to solve the problems of the teacher. Teachers' Association PRTU leaders Raguri Subhakar Reddy, Kusumapu Kiran, Mudhammalla Rajender, school teachers Gorantla, Bharatiya Janata Party constituency incharge Dr Khali Prasad, Aopa state leaders Naga Bandy Vidyasagar and Hanumakonda PRT district Bhupalapalli Agricultural Market Chairman Kishitayya, Ragonda, Gori Hosapalli Mandal Education Officers Prabhakar, Raju, Malahar Mandal Education Laxman Babu, Mogullapalli GAZETTED Principal, Lingamurthy, Rajender Babu, Bikshapathi, Samba Reddy, Srinivasa Reddy, Satyanarayana, Krishnamurthy, Ramanna, Sivakumar, Raj Kumar, Hariprasad, Aopa leaders Tammishetti Venkateswaras, Suryadevara Sadanandam, Vijay, Radhakrishna Participated.

BRS party MLAs urge Speaker to lift suspension on Jagadish Reddy

Hyderabad, March 24 (NSS): BRS party MLAs have jointly requested State assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar to lift the suspension of Suryapet MLA Jagadish Reddy. Among Those MLAs, who met the Speaker included Jagadish Reddy, Harish Rao, KTR, Gangula Kamalakar, Padi Kaushik Reddy, Kalvakuntla Sanjay, Palla Rajeshwar Reddy, Sudheer Reddy, KP Vivekananda, Anil Jadhav, Chintia Prabhakar and Manik Rao.



It is known that the assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar announced in the Assembly on March 13 that BRS MLA Jagadish Reddy was being suspended from the assembly until the completion of the entire budget session of the House. With his suspension, Jagadish Reddy is unlikely to attend the House until the end of this budget session. Jagadish Reddy questioned in the House that the entire State was watching what the State minister said from the ruling party and wondered whether the words spoken by the minister have any connection with the Governor's speech? He commented that this should be decided in the House and added that if he wanted to be in the House, he would be in the House go out whenever he wanted to go out.

Minister Sridhar Babu said Jagadish Reddy should respect the traditions of the House and added that it was not right to threaten the Speaker. In this context, the Speaker suggested that Jagadish Reddy should be patient and added that it was not right to mislead the House. Replying on this, Jagadish Reddy made it clear that the entire House did not belong to the Speaker alone sparking angry protest from the treasury benches. Angered at his remarks, Minister Sridhar Babu demanded that Jagadish Reddy withdraw his comments and apologize to the Speaker. BRS party MLA Harish Rao objected to the minister's comments. He questioned as to what Jagadish Reddy had said wrongly and added that the Members have equal opportunities in the House. "The Legislative Assembly is not about the Congress Party or the government. Jagadish Reddy said Opposition members have equal rights," Harish clarified. The ruling party members raised slogans. Even though Jagadish Reddy was given a chance, the ruling party members obstructed him. However, Jagadish Reddy, who did not back down, spoke saying, "The traditions of the House should be respected. The powers of the Speaker should be respected. The rights of the members should be respected," he said. Government Whip Adhuri Laxman Kumar intervened and demanded suspension of Jagadish Reddy. The members' slogans created chaos in the House. As a result, the Speaker adjourned the House for 15 minutes. Later, in the House that began, the Speaker announced the suspension of Jagadish Reddy was on the basis of the demands of the Congress party members. (NSS)

AICC holds discussion with Telangana Congress leaders on cabinet expansion

Hyderabad, March 24 (NSS): Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy met AICC General Secretary K.C. Venugopal in New Delhi to discuss cabinet expansion, the second phase of nominated posts and various internal matters concerning the Congress party in Telangana. On Monday evening, Telangana Congress leaders arrived in Delhi at the request of the party's high command. Accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy, TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud, and AICC Telangana In-charge Meenakshi Natarajan, the Chief Minister engaged in extensive discussions with K.C. Venugopal regarding several party-related issues. The primary focus of their discussions was the expansion of the cabinet, which currently has six vacant positions. Reports suggest that Congress leaders have urged the party leadership to fill these vacancies in the cabinet, taking into account caste considerations and other social factors, as was previously promise March 30 marks the Ugadi festival, and reports indicate that the party leadership is committed to finalising the cabinet formation by this date. There are discussions suggesting that leaders from the Telangana Congress party have been summoned to Delhi for this purpose. Meanwhile, there is currently no representation from the Rangareddy, Hyderabad, Adilabad, and Nizamabad districts in the cabinet, leading to increased competition among leaders from various social groups in those areas. In Nizamabad, Sudarshan Reddy and several other names are being mentioned. Similarly, in Adilabad, Prema Sagar Rao and MLA Vivek are also in consideration. The name Vakati Srihari Mudiraj is being suggested, along with Komatireddy



Reports suggest that Congress leaders have urged the party leadership to fill these vacancies in the cabinet, taking into account caste considerations and other social factors, as was previously promise March 30 marks the Ugadi festival, and reports indicate that the party leadership is committed to finalising the cabinet formation by this date.

Rajgopal Reddy from Nalgonda district. Moreover, it has been reported that discussions took place about offering a cabinet position to Komatireddy Rajgopal

Reddy if Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy secures a victory in the MP elections from Bhuvanagiri, a rumor that gained significant attention previously. It has also been

revealed that Vijayashanti's name, who was elected as an MLC through the MLA quota, is expected to be mentioned in the current discussions regarding the formation of the cabinet. (NSS)

Hyderabad Local Authorities MLC poll on April 23

Hyderabad, March 24 (NSS): The Election Commission of India has announced the biennial election for one seat in the Telangana Legislative Council from the Hyderabad Local Authorities' Constituency. The election has become necessary due to the expiration of BRS MLC MS Prabhakar's term on May 1 of this year. Consequently,

the notification for the election will be released on March 28, which will initiate the process for submitting nominations. The deadline for submitting nominations is set for April 4, with the scrutiny of the nominations taking place on April 7, and candidates having the opportunity to withdraw their nominations until April 9. Voting will occur from 8 am to 4 pm

on April 23, and the vote counting will take place on April 25. The Model Code of Conduct has come into immediate effect in the concerned constituency. All stakeholders must adhere to the Commission's guidelines throughout the election process. For further details, visit the Election Commission of India's official website: www.eci.gov.in. (NSS)

SCR Presents 'Employee of the Month' Safety Awards to 14 Employees



Hyderabad, March 24 (NSS): South Central Railway, General Manager Arun Kumar Jain presented "Employee of the Month" safety awards for the month of February, 2025 to 14 employees during safety review meeting held on Monday at Rail Nilayam, Secunderabad. The Employee of the month awards are given to the staff, who have shown extraordinary alertness and dedication to the duty preventing unsafe conditions. Neeraj Agrawal, Additional General Manager, SCR participated in the meeting along with all the Principal Heads of Departments. Divisional Railway Manager's (DRMs) of all six Divisions i.e. Secunderabad, Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Guntakal, Guntur and Nanded joined the review meeting through video conference. General

Manager presented the "Employee of the month" safety awards to the staff pertaining to Secunderabad Division - 03; Hyderabad Division - 02; Vijayawada Division - 03; Guntakal Division - 04 and Nanded Division - 02 for taking swift action to prevent unsafe conditions. The employees belong to various categories like loco pilots, assistant loco pilots, Station Master, Station Superintendent, Points Man, track maintainers, technicians and gate man. The General Manager congratulated the awardees and appreciated them for the commitment in discharging their duties with utmost dedication. Later, the General Manager held a detailed review on safety of train operations. He assessed the progress of various on-going safety drives on the zone pertaining to different departments such as Signal & Telecommunications, Engineering, Mechanical etc.

He instructed the officials to continue counseling sessions to field level staff for enhanced safety in train operations. The General Manager also held a detailed discussion on security of passengers in the MMTS and Suburban trains. He advised Principal Chief Security Commissioner to co-ordinate with the Government Railway Police for ensuring enhanced security to women passengers. He also reviewed the trespassing of cattle on tracks in vulnerable sections. He took stock of the precautionary measures implemented by the divisions and advised to further carry out more safety drives and counseling sessions for cattle farmers. (NSS)

Traffic advisory

Hyderabad, March 24 (NSS): In view of the Iftar dinner hosted by the Chief Minister at LB Stadium on March 25, 2025, the following traffic restrictions are likely to be implemented from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. The traffic will be either stopped or diverted at the following places/routes on need basis: Traffic coming from AR Petrol Pump Jn towards BJR Statue will not be allowed and will be diverted at A.R. Petrol Pump towards Nampally. Traffic coming from Basheerbagh towards A.R. Petrol Pump via BJR Statue will not be allowed and will be diverted at BJR Statue towards, SBH, Abids- Nampally station road. Traffic coming from Sujatha School lane towards Khan Lateef Khan building will not be allowed and will be diverted at Sujatha School junction towards Nampally. Junctions to be avoided between 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. on March 25, 2025: Punjagutta, VV Statue, Rajiv Gandhi Statue (Monappa), Niranankari, Old PS Saifabad,

Lakdikapool, Iqbal Minar, Ravindra Bharathi, Hyderabad Traffic Police Junction, Basheerbagh, BJR Statue Circle, SBI Gunfoundry, Abids Circle, A.R. Petrol Pump, Nampally, KLK Building, Liberty, Himayath Nagar, Assembly, MJ Market and Hyderguda. RTC Buses: The RTC Buses plying from Ravindra Bharathi towards BJR Statue should avoid L.B. Stadium main Gate i.e. in front of Khan Lateef Khan Building and take diversion at A.R. Petrol bunk towards Nampally. Commuters are appealed to follow traffic updates on our social media platform @ facebook.com/HYDTP and @ HYDTP (X handle). In case of any emergency in travel, call our Hyderabad Traffic Police Helpline 9010203626 for travel assistance. All citizens are requested to make note of the above diversions and take alternate routes to reach your destinations and cooperate with the Hyderabad Traffic Police. (NSS)

L&T Metro Rail launches Hyderabad Metro Art Fest 2025

Hyderabad: Celebrating artistic excellence and bringing together ten renowned artists from across India to showcase their masterpieces, L&T Metro Rail (Hyderabad) Limited (L&TMRHL) is organising Hyderabad Metro Art Fest 2025, in collaboration with IGA Galleria from March 27 to 29 at Premia Mall, Irrum Manzil.

The event will feature the artistic brilliance of Sweta Chandra (Hyderabad), Manish Chavda (Ahmedabad), Ramu Das (Santiniketan), Basuki Dasgupta (Bengaluru), Monica Ghule (Badlapur), Dinkar Jadhav (Pune), Narsimlu Kandi (Hyderabad), Bandana Kumari (Bhopal), Vasanthula Ramakrishna (Hyderabad), and Bhaskara Rao Botcha (Hyderabad). IGA Galleria will host live painting sessions, allowing visitors to witness the creative process in real-time, making art more accessible and interactive. NVS Reddy, MD, HMRL, said, "Hyderabad has a rich artistic heritage. The Hyderabad Metro Art Fest is a step toward integrating art into daily life, inspiring commuters, and visitors beyond conventional spaces."



KVB Reddy, MD & CEO, L&TMRHL, said Hyderabad Metro Rail is more than just a mode of transport—it is a symbol of the city's progress and innovation. "Through initiatives like Hyderabad Metro Art Fest, we aim to bring art beyond galleries, fostering creativity in the urban landscape," he added.

Gynae felicitated for performing most robot-aided surgeries in the country



GNS News Agency, March 24

Globally renowned robotic surgeon, Dr Peter C Lim, Medical Director of Gynecologic Oncology and Robotic Surgery at Center of Hope, US, who has conducted the highest number of robotic surgeries in the world at more than 4,000, on Thursday felicitated leading gynae robotic sur-

geon, Dr Swapna Misra, Director, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Fortis Hospital Mohali, acknowledging her eminent contribution in the field. Misra, who is also a robotic laparoscopic and cancer Surgeon, has treated several women suffering from complex gynae ailments through the world's most advanced 4th Generation Robot – Da Vinci Xi.

She has undergone the most advanced training under Lim at San Diego in the US, and has performed the most robot-aided surgeries in India. The surgeon has also received the highest TR 500 training in the US and is the only TR 500 trained robotic surgeon in the country. "Robot-aided surgery has been established as the gold standard procedure for almost all gynecological surgeries — fibroids, endometriosis, vesico-vaginal fistula, ovarian cyst, salpingo-oophorectomy, myomectomy, hysterectomy, and all cancers of the uterus, ovary and cervix. This surgery has revolutionised the treatment of various gynecological diseases," Misra said.

Blockade removed, traffic resumes at Shambhu, Khanauri set to open

GNS News Agency, March 24

With Punjab Police detaining protesting farmers and demolishing their temporary structures, traffic resumed Thursday between Punjab and Haryana via Shambhu-Ambala Highway after more than a year. The Haryana Police, on the other hand, started removing roadblocks on their side of the road at Khanauri border point, ensuring that traffic resumes there. The clean-up and eviction of farmers from the protest venues at Shambhu and Khanauri, launched Thursday night, continued on Friday even as farmers launched protests at Moga, Tarn Taran, Amritsar, Muktsar and Faridkot against the Punjab government. The police in Patiala Thursday booked 100 farmers and senior union leaders, including Sarwan Singh Pandher of Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM), SKM (Non-Political)'s Abhimanyu Kohar, and Krantikari Kisan Union's Sukhwinder Kaur among others under sections of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita.

Kaka Singh Kotra, general secretary of BKU Sidhupur, Dilbagh Singh Harihar, Manjit Singh Rai, Doaba Kisan Union, Kerala union leader P T John, Tamil Nadu-based P R Pandyan, and Anand Kumar and several others were among the senior leaders, including 11 women, who were also named in the First Information

The FIR has been lodged at Bahadurgarh police station in Patiala under sections 126 (keeping peace and preventing wrongful acts and the offence of wrongful restraint, and 170 under which the police can arrest people without a warrant or judicial order if they have reason to believe that a cognizable offence is about to be committed. While both are bailable offences, BNSS Section 126 amounts to a maximum imprisonment of 1 month or a Rs 5000 fine or both. The arrested farmers were yet to be produced in court. Farmers, meanwhile, claimed that those detained have started a hunger strike in protest against the police action. A group of farmers, including women, entered into a scuffle with police personnel in Moga while on their way to hold a protest outside the deputy commissioner's office. The farmers lashed out at the AAP government for detaining their leaders and removing protesters from the Shambhu and Khanauri border points, where they had been camping since February 13 last year after their march to Delhi was thwarted by security personnel. Security personnel from Haryana removed the cement barricades on their side of Shambhu-Ambala Highway, opening the road for traffic, while barricading on the road at the Khanauri border point is still being removed. Earlier in the day, Punjab Police resumed its operation to dismantle the remaining part of the temporary structures on the Punjab side of the Shambhu and the Khanauri points to clear the roads. Police took trolleys to an open ground so farmers could later take them by showing their identity proofs.

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha — the two organisations spearheading the protests — have announced to hold dharnas outside the offices of deputy commissioners in protest against the Punjab Police crackdown. Both the bodies slammed the AAP government in Punjab for evicting the protesters and

Consumer panel orders ICICI to increase compensation to elderly for not fully paying insurance claim



GNS News Agency, March 24

The state commission ruled that the insurance company had wrongfully withheld the claim amount, "causing unnecessary financial burden and mental agony" to Sharma. The state commission ruled that the insurance company had wrongfully withheld the claim amount, "causing unnecessary financial burden and mental agony" to Sharma. The State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Chandigarh, has ordered ICICI Lombard General Insurance to increase compensation to an elderly policyholder after the company failed to fully pay his medical insurance claim. The decision came in response to an appeal filed by Saroj Kumar Sharma, 84, a resident of Sector 37-D, Chandigarh, who had sought an enhancement of the relief granted by the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission. Sharma, through her counsel Devinder Kumar, mentioned in her complaint that she had purchased a medical insurance policy from ICICI Lombard by paying a premium of Rs 12,308, covering himself and his family members, including his daughter-in-law, Richa Sharma. Richa was admitted to Max Hospital, Mohali, due to health issues and was discharged on November 5, 2022. The total cost of her treatment amounted to Rs 79,625. Despite the hospital providing all necessary documents to the insurance company, ICICI Lombard approved only Rs 25,000, leaving the complainant to pay the remaining Rs 53,079 from his own pocket. Feeling aggrieved, Sharma

approached the District Consumer Commission, which ruled in his favour and directed the insurance company to reimburse him Rs 53,079 with 6 per cent annual interest from the date of discharge. However, Sharma appealed the order, arguing that the compensation was inadequate and that the insurer should also be penalised for the mental distress caused due to its negligence. After reviewing the case, the State Consumer Commission, comprising Justice Raj Shekhar Attri (President) and Preetinder Singh (Member), found that the initial compensation was insufficient. The state commission ruled that the insurance company had wrongfully withheld the claim amount, "causing unnecessary financial burden and mental agony" to Sharma. Observing that higher courts generally award a 9 per cent annual interest rate in similar cases, the commission revised the earlier decision and increased the interest rate from 6 per cent to 9 per cent per annum, applicable from November 5, 2022. Additionally, the commission held that Sharma had suffered mental harassment and financial stress due to the taking this into account, the state commission awarded him Rs 20,000 as compensation for facing "mental agony and harassment". Furthermore, considering the legal costs incurred during the proceedings, it directed the insurance company to pay Rs 15,000 as litigation expenses.

Soaring gold prices spell doom for goldsmiths in Telangana

Adilabad: With gold prices continuing to soar, goldsmiths across Telangana are apparently bearing the brunt of the unprecedented rise in the price of the yellow metal.

"We are unable to find jobs such as moulding various ornaments of gold due to the steep increase in gold prices. People are now buying less quantity of the gold than earlier for marriages and other social functions, affecting our livelihood," Ramesh Mutthoju, president of the Mancherla District Goldsmiths Welfare Association told 'Telangana Today.'

AAP says always stood by farmers, but 'reopening roads crucial for economy'



GNS News Agency, March 24

The Ruling Aam Aadmi Party in Punjab Friday justified the eviction of farmers from the protest sites at Shambhu and Khanauri border points with Haryana stating that it was needed to reopen the key roads to protect the state's economy. While blaming the BJP-led central government for "failing to address farmers' demands, particularly the legal guarantee of Minimum Support Price (MSP)", the AAP reaffirmed its support to farmers with a Punjab minister saying that he was ready to accompany them and sit on a dharna in Delhi after quitting his post, "provided they are united and decide to press" the Centre to accept their demands. Punjab Police detained several farmer leaders and launched a crackdown at the Shambhu border, evicting the farmers and removing the temporary structures and trolleys that functioned as makeshift houses for the protesters for over a year. The eviction followed repeated calls to clear the blockade, which had severely impacted trade and daily life in Punjab.

The protesting farmers, led by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, had been camping at the Punjab-Haryana border since February 2024 after their march to Delhi was halted by security forces. In an official statement issued in Delhi, senior AAP leaders including Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh, former Delhi chief minister chief minister Atishi and party national general secretary Sandeep Pathak asserted that the party has always stood by farmers, recalling how it opposed the now-repealed farm laws. Recalling how he was suspended from Parliament for raising farmers' concerns, Sanjay Singh stressed that indefinite road blockades were not a viable solution.

"The central government alone has the power to guar-

Attack on Sukhbir Singh Badal: Arrest of key accused stayed

GNS News Agency, March 24

The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Thursday stayed the arrest of 75-year-old Dharam Singh, a key accused in the December 4 attack on Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal outside the Darbar Sahib. The court also directed the Punjab Police to submit a status report on the case. Dharam Singh, who went underground after the attack, was seen in CCTV footage accompanying Narain Singh Chaura. The footage was released by SAD leader Bikram Singh Majithia. "In response to the arguments addressed by learned State counsel, counsel for the petitioner contends that the State has not submitted the complete and accurate status of the CCTV footage. He argues that if the full footage is reviewed, it will be evident that on the day of the incident, the main accused, namely Narain Singh, had spoken to SP Harpal Singh as well as to one Harjinder Singh Dhani. Let a status report, in the form of an affidavit by a responsible officer, be filed on the next date of hearing after reviewing the complete CCTV footage and verifying the submissions addressed today by the counsel for the petitioner before this Court," reads the court order.

Chaura allegedly fired at Badal while serving his tankhaiya (religious punishment) at the shrine. Majithia has accused the police of colluding in the attack and failing to conduct a fair investigation, highlighting Dharam Singh's alleged past connections with Chaura. In the CCTV footage,

ante MSP. If it wants, it can resolve this issue within an hour," he said, urging farmers to take their demands directly to the Centre rather than disrupting normal life in Punjab. Atishi warned that Punjab's "economic downturn due to prolonged roadblocks" could push the state's youth toward drugs. "The AAP is waging a war against substance abuse, but for that, Punjab's economy must grow. Pathak said the Punjab government remains committed to farmers' welfare but urged them to protest at appropriate venues where the central government would be compelled to respond. "The Modi government must stop misleading the country and accept the farmers' demands. Farmers have fought for years, yet the Centre has only responded with force," he said. In Chandigarh, Punjab Transport Minister Laljit Singh Bhullar told the "farmers with folded hands" that "if we keep fighting in our own house, then our opponent will be happy and will clap that we are fighting amongst ourselves".

Bhullar further said that he was ready to accompany farmers to sit on a dharna in Delhi after quitting his post, "provided the farmers are united and decide to protest pressing the Centre to accept their demands". "I am ready to resign and accompany my farmer brothers to Delhi for a dharna in favour of their demands," he said, even as he justified the state action at the farmers' protest sites.

"Highways and roads were blocked in Punjab. If the farmers' demands are related to the state, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann is ready to talk to them. He always held meetings with them. But here, the demands, including the legal guarantee of MSP and others, are related to the Centre, so why should we block our roads? The blockade affects our state and its growth," the minister said. Bhullar reiterated that the chief minister, the people of Punjab, traders, the AAP and its leaders were all with farmers. "We are all on your side. I assure you that we are all. I am a farmer, too. I do farming." Bhullar said senior farmer leaders like Jagjit Singh Dalal were of his father's age. "Sarwan Singh Pandher and Inderjit Singh Kotra are like my elder brothers. I was in Kotra's organisation during the 2020 farmers' protests. You are all fighting for Punjab, Punjabiyat and its identity. All farmers should get together and go to Delhi. We should all get together on the same platform and fight like we did in 2020. The Centre had to withdraw its black laws. I will go with you. Just tell me the place in Delhi where you want to go and sit to protest. I will join you. For me farming is supreme. I assure you I will resign and quit all my posts," the minister added.



Chaura was seen with Dharam Singh before the attack.

The petition seeking relief for Dharam Singh argued that he was being unfairly targeted and that the police investigation was biased. His lawyer, Jaspal Singh Manjhpur, claimed that key evidence, including CCTV footage from the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), was being withheld to protect influential figures. Chaura told us that SGPC chief Harjinder Singh Dhani stopped and hugged him inside the Darbar Sahib premises on December 4. He provided an estimated time and location of their meeting," said Manjhpur. He added, "Chaura and Dhani know each other, and this is likely why the SGPC has been reluctant to share the CCTV footage with the police. We fear the SGPC might delete footage showing Dhani embracing Chaura."

"THE GLORIOUS GAYATRI MANTRA" "P. S. Ashokan



"Indian chronicle" Manthani "24/03/2025. "Gayatri Mantra is a highly" revered and powerful mantra in Hinduism, embodying profound spiritual significance. Various sages and scriptures have extolled its virtues: "Veda Vyasa Maharshi: Emphasizes that chanting the Gayatri Mantra is essential before reciting other mantras, likening neglecting it to forsaking a prepared meal. "Vishwamitra Rishi: Mentions that meditating on Gayatri Devi, visualized as a golden-hued Sun, leads to liberation from the cycles of birth and death. "Devi Bhagavata: Describes Gayatri as the embodiment of liberation, radiating a white brilliance that purifies the intellect. "Kurma Purana: Identifies Gayatri as the Veda Mata (Mother of the Vedas), asserting there's no mantra superior to hers. "Yajnavalkya Rishi: States that even a novice, by chanting the Gayatri Mantra, attains the status of a learned scholar. "Bhishmacharya: Advises that those who consistently chant the Gayatri Mantra remain untouched by sorrow. "Atri Maharshi: Highlights that chanting Gayatri 8,000 times near the Sun leads to freedom from all

sins. "Laghur Atri Samhita: Recommends that only those who chant Gayatri should be invited for ancestral rites. "Padma Purana: Mentions that devotees of Gayatri are freed from major and minor sins. "Agni Purana: Assures that a Brahmin who regularly performs Gayatri worship during the three daily Sandhyas remains faultless, regardless of the donations he accepts. "Shankha Smriti: Proclaims that there's no mantra beyond Gayatri for alleviating the torments of hell. "Suta Samhita, Yajna Vaibhava Khanda: Equates the merit of donating food and water to the merit of chanting Gayatri. "Narada Maharshi: Declares that where Gayatri resides, Lord Narayana is present, leaving no room for doubt. "Vashishta Maharshi:

Assures that even an ignorant person, by chanting Gayatri, attains a luminous status akin to the gods. "Mahatma Gandhi: Observes that daily recitation of Gayatri leads to spiritual elevation, healing, and protection from dangers. "Adi Shankaracharya: Proclaims that the glory of Gayatri transcends human expression, considering it the primordial mantra. "Given these profound endorsements, it is highly beneficial to engage in Gayatri Upasana (worship) regularly, especially during the auspicious times of dawn and dusk.

Two-year-old child injured in accident in Kukatpally, dies while undergoing treatment

Hyderabad: In a tragic case, Adritha (2), who was injured after being mowed down by a car in Kukatpally, succumbed to injuries in the hospital on Thursday night. The incident occurred on March 16, when Adritha was playing on the street at the Vaddepalli Enclave under Kukatpally PS limits. According to the police, Adritha was playing and sitting on the speed breaker in the middle of the road. At the same time, a driver took a car out and missed to notice her. While making a turn, the car suddenly ran over the child.

Honouring invaders an act of treason, not acceptable: Yogi Adityanath



GNS News Agency, March 24

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Thursday that honouring invaders amounted to strengthening the very foundation of treason, something which is not acceptable in independent India. His remark came in the wake of the ongoing controversy over the demands to remove Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's tomb in Maharashtra and the Uttar Pradesh government's denial to give permission for the Neja Mela in Sambhal held in the memory of Syed Salar Masud Ghazi, who allegedly played a role in looting the Somnath temple in the 11th century.

Speaking at an event during his visit to Bahraich, the Chief Minister said, "Today, as the world praises India's Sanatan culture and traditions, it becomes the duty of every citizen to show respect and reverence for the great men of India. In such times, no invader should be glorified. Doing so is laying the foundation of treason, which independent India cannot tolerate." India, he asserted, will not accept those who insult its great men, glorify invaders who trampled Sanatan culture, dishonored daughters and attacked people's faith. Underlining Bahraich's connection with

India's ancient rishi-muni tradition, Adityanath remarked, "It is believed that Maharishi Balark's famous ashram was located in Bahraich, and the district derives its name from Balark Rishi. This is the same historic land where Maharaja Suheldev hoisted victory flag by defeating a foreign invader." He added, "The courage and valour displayed by Maharaja Suheldev ensured that for 150 years, no foreign invader dared to attack India. But there were attempts to strip this sacred land of Bahraich of its identity."

When the Bharatiya Janata Party formed government in 2017, over 33 lakh revenue cases were pending in the state, he said. "We have provided justice to the poor by settling all 33 lakh cases. Additionally, through the Anti-Land Mafia Task Force, we freed 64,000 acres of illegally occupied land, paving the way for increased investment in the state," he claimed. Highlighting Bahraich's immense potential, he remarked, "Situating on the banks of the Ghaghra and Saryu rivers, this district boasts a wildlife sanctuary at Katerniaghat, a newly established medical college, and Vijay Smarak of Maharaja Suheldev. This was once a district plagued by disorder and anarchy, but today, no one can disturb peace in Bahraich." "Before 2017, the district's GDP was merely Rs 6,934 crore, but by 2023-24, it surged past Rs 25,000 crore — a multifold increase. Bahraich has witnessed significant investment proposals, which means more employment opportunities and a stronger economy," Adityanath said. He also referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent speech in Parliament, in which the PM praised UP for hosting the Maha Kumbh for which over "66 crore devotees" gathered at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and the mystical Saraswati. "Nowhere else in the world has such a massive event taken place, and no other country can organise something of this scale. The Maha Kumbh was a testament to India's eternal Sanatan culture, which will inspire generations to come," Adityanath said.

Retired DU professor, wife robbed at gunpoint: 2 men arrested, got 'intel' from couple's domestic worker

GNS News Agency, March 24

Retired DU professor robbed at gunpoint, wife robbed at gunpoint, robbed at gunpoint, Delhi Police, delhi news, India news, Indian express, current affairs An FIR has been registered against the arrested duo under Section 31(1) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita. A search is on to nab the other two. The Interstate Cell of the Delhi Police Crime Branch Thursday arrested two persons in connection with the armed robbery at Northwest Delhi's Ashok Vihar earlier this week. Police said the arrested accused, Suraj and Sachin, along with their two associates allegedly hatched a plan to rob a couple — a retired Delhi University professor and his wife — with the help of the latter's domestic help, a cousin of one of the accused. On Monday, the four accused allegedly booked a cab from Pari Chowk to Ashok Vihar, and then an autorickshaw to the couple's residence, police said. They held the couple hostage at gunpoint, and assaulted and robbed them of cash, gold and silver jewellery, and cellphones among other valuables — worth lakhs. They escaped in the retired professor's car, which was later found abandoned near Wazirabad JJ Colony.

The domestic help had allegedly shared details about where the valuables are kept in the house with her cousin. "During questioning, the help confessed to her involvement in the crime," DCP (Northwest) Bisham Singh said Wednesday. A team led by ACP Ramesh Chander Lamba launched an investigation — they analysed CCTV footage, and circulated photos of the accused to trace them.

"It was found that the accused had booked a cab after abandoning the retired professor's car... The cab driver was



traced to Greater Noida, who said he had dropped the accused near Pari Chowk on Monday. Thereafter, the Crime Branch team zeroed in on the Gautam Buddha Nagar area and raided all possible hideouts of the suspects. Finally, Suraj was identified and apprehended near Ghaziabad's Crossing Republik Mall. Based on Suraj's inputs, Sachin was apprehended," said DCP Aditya Gautam. Suraj and Sachin — who have a history of serious criminal offences including robbery, dacoity, attempted murder, and violations of the Excise and Arms Acts — admitted to the crime during questioning. Suraj faces 17 FIRs and Sachin 14, police said. An FIR has been registered against the arrested duo under Section 31(1) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita. A search is on to nab the other two. Police further said a substantial portion of the stolen valuables — a gold chain, a gold coin, 37 silver coins, multiple religious silver coins, silver bowls and spoons, silver utensils, a small silver brick, and Rs 8,200 cash — has been recovered from the arrested duo.

To check waterlogging this monsoon, PWD to install sensors at subways & underpasses in Delhi

GNS News Agency, March 24

waterlogging, delhi waterlogging, delhi monsoon, PWD, delhi Public Works Department, delhi rains, delhi news, India news, Indian express, current affairs Further, engineers will receive mobile alerts about water level near pumps installed at the subways, with the engineering staff also checking pumps and motors, controlling panels, and testing the automatic control panel and the SCADA system regularly. Ahead of the monsoon season, the Public Works Department (PWD) plans to set up rain sensors at all subways and underpasses across the city to prevent waterlogging and rain-related deaths, officers said.

On precautionary measures against drowning and electrocution deaths due to waterlogging, the PWD said that the rain sensors will generate alerts or buzz when water level reaches the set threshold, after which the pumps will switch on automatically and excess water will be pumped out. "In places without the automatic signaling device, sensor-based alarms will send signals to the operator... who will then switch on the pumps to pump out excess water," said an official, requesting anonymity. The PWD has also prepared a standard operating procedure (SOP), applicable to all the subways of Delhi equipped with automatic water pumps. A team of engineers will be responsible for operational monitoring, maintenance, and troubleshooting of water pumps. Operators from control rooms will be responsible for monitoring rain data and operating automatic water pumps. There will also be a maintenance team for regular maintenance and upkeep of water pumps, officials said. "The



rain sensors will be installed at all subways to detect the intensity of rainfall. There will be an automatic control panel, which will control the starting and stopping of water pumps based on rain data. Further, the PWD has a SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) system for real-time monitoring of water pumps," said another official. Further, engineers will receive mobile alerts about water levels near pumps installed at the subways, with the engineering staff also checking pumps and motors, control panels, and testing the automatic control panel and the SCADA system regularly. "On rain sensors detecting heavy showers, the control panel will automatically switch on water pumps, with the SCADA system sending real-time data to the control room. Engineers will monitor pump performance remotely, while control room operators will ensure proper functioning. In case of an issue, the maintenance team will be alerted," said an official.

Bhutan's role in global happiness recognition praised by Padma Shri SK Thorat

Thimphu: Former Chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Padma Shri SK Thorat, who was the chief guest at the International Happiness Day Conference in Thimphu on Thursday, commended Bhutan for convincing the United Nations to celebrate March 20 as International Happiness Day. Commending Bhutan for its efforts, Thorat highlighted how Bhutan's Happiness Index offers a unique perspective on human development, distinct from Western economic models. Speaking at the International Happiness Day Conference organized by the Association of Buddhist Tourist Operators (ABTO) and the Buddhist Society of India (BSI), he emphasized that while most countries measure development through income and economic growth, Bhutan's approach focuses on holistic well-being.

Addressing the gathering, the International President of ABTO, Mallepalli Laxmaiah, praised Bhutan, a small nation with a population of 800,000, for setting an example for the 8 billion people of the world on how to live happily.

He stressed the importance of collaborating with Buddhist countries and organizations to promote Buddhism and Buddhist tourism. Laxmaiah also encouraged regional conferences on Happiness Day to spread awareness about holistic well-being. Former Chairman of the Telangana State Higher Education Council, Professor Rikka Limbadri, emphasized that true happiness lies in leading a life based on Buddhist principles, where personal well-being aligns with social responsibility. President of NRC Educational Institutions in Paro, Bhutan, Khunjab Drukpa.

'Unable to reach on time... forced to walk': Fed up with traffic snarls outside Delhi's Tis Hazari court, lawyer files petition



GNS News Agency, March 24

North Delhi's Tis Hazari court complex is confronting its usual grind: vehicles lined up, honking incessantly as they attempt to beat each other beyond the red light signal. A daily struggle for the average commuter, crossing just a few 100 metres here can take as long as half an hour. Fed up by this quotidian conundrum, a lawyer who sits in chamber number 363 decided that enough was enough — and took the matter to Civil Judge Rinku Jain.

After his request to remove illegal encroachments on public roads and footpaths around the Tis Hazari complex, the court, on Tuesday, issued notice to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), and the Traffic Police while hearing the suit filed by advocate Devender Dhiryani. "Let a detailed status report be filed on behalf of all defendants on the NDOH (next date of hearing). The reply to be filed on behalf of defendants No. 1, 2, and 3 (MCD, SHO Police Station Kashmir Gate, and SHO Police Station Subzi Mandi) shall also mention complete details of vendors operating around Tis Hazari Courts, specifically mentioning how many vendors have been granted teh bazari licenses and what action has been taken against vendors operating illegally," the court said. "Defendant No. 2 to 4 (DCP Traffic) shall also file a status report regarding commercial vehicles/heavy vehicles running during the restricted entry time," it added. In his petition submitted before the court, Dhiryani alleged that "illegal encroachments, traffic congestion and unregulated activities" had proliferated in a 1-km radius of Tis Hazari Courts and surrounding areas.

"That the street vendors unlawfully occupy the roads

and footpaths in the above-mentioned area/roads, hawkers, and shopkeepers who have encroached upon the public space to sell their products. This severely inconveniences pedestrians, who are forced to walk on roads, increasing the likelihood of accidents and obstructing free movement of vehicles. The public roads are further obstructed by illegal parking of vehicles... causing frequent traffic jams and contributing to air pollution," he said in his petition. "Many times we have to walk... lawyers are unable to reach the courts on time due to the traffic in the morning. Many adjournments take place due to this," advocate Dhiryani told The Indian Express.

There are close to 180 courtrooms in Tis Hazari — the oldest lower court in Delhi inaugurated in 1958 — and, according to a PWD engineer, its daily footfall is close to 40,000. Close to 94,000 cases are pending in Tis Hazari (West) and 2 lakh are pending in Tis Hazari (Central). In Tis Hazari (West District) 24,642 (close to 27% of the total) cases are pending due to the unavailability of a counsel, according to the National Judicial Data Grid.

Outside the court, hundreds of vehicles are parked — most with stickers of advocates. "There is separate parking for advocates but buses take up that space. We are left with no option but to park our vehicles on the main road," said an advocate on condition of anonymity. A parking ticket collector also spoke to The Indian Express. "Around 20-22 persons like me are employed. We earn close to Rs 2,000 a day selling tickets. We don't ask for money from advocates, only from private vehicles," he said. The Indian Express has learnt that private vehicles (not belonging to advocates) are charged a maximum of Rs 100 irrespective of the duration of parking. In court, Dhiryani was assisted by advocates Amit Srivastav and Karan Talwar. A large number of advocates not connected to the case joined in solidarity and asked the judge to expedite the hearing. Showing interest in the matter himself, the judge gave a short date of March 26. "There are so many encroachments on the footpath that I couldn't even give a proper photo to the judge," Dhiryani said. The advocate is hopeful as he has been granted relief in a similar petition that he moved in Tronica City, Ghaziabad. "Everyone is involved in this parking mafia. Legal jagah pe illegal kaam ho raha hai (illegal work is happening in legal premises — Courts)," said another advocate.

Budget Session concludes with BJP seeking Speaker's resignation

GNS News Agency, March 24

The Budget session of the West Bengal Assembly concluded on Thursday with BJP MLAs demanding the resignation of Speaker Biman Banerjee and calling him biased. BJP legislators were protesting over the alleged attack on Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari's convoy in Baruipur in South 24 Parganas. As the House assembled on Thursday, the BJP demanded a statement on the alleged attack on Adhikari's convoy at the Speaker's constituency of Baruipur on Wednesday. When Speaker Banerjee dismissed the alleged attack as an issue outside the Assembly's purview, BJP MLAs stormed into the well of the House waving black flags and chanting slogans against the Speaker.

The situation further escalated when BJP Chief Whip Shankar Ghosh said his microphone was muted while he tried to address the House. Amid the din, the discussion on the Appropriation Bill was taken up. The BJP MLAs also tore documents before walking out of the Assembly. Outside the Assembly, the BJP legislators also burnt an effigy of the Speaker. The BJP MLAs accused the Speaker and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of "orchestrating" the attack on Adhikari's convoy, and demanded the immediate suspension of the Baruipur Superintendent of Police. Speaking to mediapersons, Ghosh questioned the Speaker's impartiality, claiming he consistently denied BJP MLAs the opportunity to voice their concerns in the Assembly. He further asserted that adjournment motions on matters of public interest were routinely rejected, effectively silencing the Opposition. Reacting to the BJP's protests in the



House, Speaker Banerjee said this was not the way to seek his resignation. "The Constitution provides how the Speaker will leave his chair, but running down towards the Speaker and shouting (seeking his resignation) — this has never happened," Banerjee told reporters in his chamber. State Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya also condemned the BJP's actions, characterizing the disruption and alleged insult to the Speaker as an affront to the Assembly itself. "I do not want to run the House by ousting Opposition members like in the Lok Sabha," Bhattacharya said. Regarding the effigy burning, the Speaker said, "I do not know whether by doing this they were wishing for my long life or something else." He reiterated his desire for the Opposition to participate in Assembly discussions, emphasizing the clarity of the House rules. He further stated that the BJP's absence from the house shows they are invisible, and their only motive is to create ruckus to get publicity.

Three Indian nationals face death penalty for smuggling drugs into Indonesia

GNS News Agency, March 24

Three Indian nationals were arrested for allegedly smuggling 106 kg of crystal meth aboard the Legend Aquarius cargo vessel. Three Indian nationals accused of drug trafficking aboard a Singapore-flagged vessel who have been detained in Indonesia since July 2024, face the death penalty, a media report said on Friday (March 21, 2025). Raju Muthukumar, 38, Selvadurai Dinakaran, 34, and Govindhasamy Vimalkandhan, 45, who have been working in the shipping industry in Singapore, were arrested for allegedly smuggling 106 kg of crystal meth aboard the Legend Aquarius cargo vessel. Acting on a tip-off, Indonesian authorities intercepted the vessel in the Pongkar waters of Karimun district, about an hour from Singapore by ferry.

The trio faced a major setback on March 14 when the vessel captain, who was ordered to testify in person, failed to appear in court, reported Singapore's Friday weekly Tabla! In response to the testimony, the court summoned the captain to testify in person on March 14. However, he only appeared briefly via Zoom, preventing cross-examination by the defence. The defence team insists that the captain's testimony is crucial to establishing their clients' innocence.

Prosecutors have demanded the death penalty, the maximum sentence under Indonesian law. The trio are represented by Indian lawyer John Paul, managing partner of Indian law firm South Asia Lex Legal Services (SAL). According to a LinkedIn post, Paul is from Tamil Nadu. The defence team, also led by an Indonesian firm Bambang Supriadi & Partners, argues that the charges are false. Mr. Paul added: "We are focused on presenting a robust defence and highlighting the inconsistencies in the prosecution's case." To strengthen their argument, the defence presented retired Indonesian Navy officer and international maritime law expert Soleman B. Ponto as a mitigating witness, according to the Tabla!.

On February 25, Soleman testified that under Indonesian law the ship's captain holds sole responsibility for all cargo on board. The defence contends that it is highly un-



At a press conference in Batam on July 17, 2024, Indonesian National Narcotic Agency chief Marthinus Hukom alleged that the three were the drug owners and had commissioned the trip

likely for such a large quantity of drugs to be smuggled without the captain's knowledge. "We firmly believe that the actual perpetrators have been set free," said defence lawyer Yan Ardho. "The case is under trial and crucial defence evidence, along with expert witness testimonies, is being presented to establish the innocence of the three detained Indian nationals," said Yan. "The absence of the captain's evidence has raised questions about the prosecution's case." The trial is ongoing, and a verdict is expected on April 15. At a press conference in Batam on July 17, 2024, Indonesian National Narcotic Agency chief Marthinus Hukom alleged that the three were the drug owners and had commissioned the trip.

UK Heathrow Airport to close Friday after fire causes power outage in London; flights disrupted



GNS News Agency, March 24

Britain's Heathrow Airport closed for the full day Friday (March 21, 2025) after an electrical substation fire knocked out its power, disrupting flights for hundreds of thousands of passengers at one of Europe's biggest travel hubs. Flights were diverted to Gatwick Airport, Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris and Ireland's Shannon Airport, tracking services showed.

At least 1,350 flights to and from Heathrow were affected already, including several from U.S. cities that were canceled, flight tracking service FlightRadar 24 said. "To maintain the safety of our passengers and colleagues, we have no choice but to close Heathrow" for the full day Friday, the airport's statement said. "We expect significant disruption over the coming days, and passengers should not travel to the airport under any circumstances until the airport reopens." Heathrow is one of the world's busiest airports for international travel. It had its busiest January on record earlier this year, with more than 6.3 million passengers, up more than 5% for the same period last year. January also was the 11th month in a row it averaged over 200,000 passengers a day, with the airport citing transatlantic travel as a key contributor. Heathrow said it will provide an update on its operations when it has more information on restoring power available.

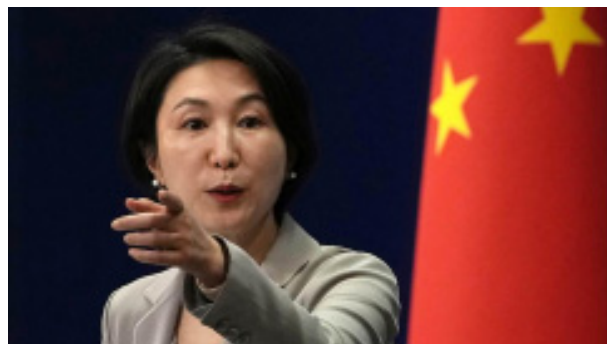
National Rail canceled all trains to and from the airport. London Fire Brigade said 10 fire engines and around 70 firefighters were on the scene after a transformer within an electrical substation caught fire in west London late Thursday night. Thousands of homes also lost power and about 150 people were evacuated. Footage posted to social media showed huge flames and large plumes of smoke coming from the facility. "The fire has caused a power outage affecting a large number of homes and local businesses, and we are working closely with our partners to minimize disruption," Assistant Commissioner Pat Goulbourne said. Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks said in a post on X the power outage affected more than 16,300 homes. Goulbourne urged people to take safety precautions and avoid the area as crews worked to extinguish the blaze. The website FlightAware showed cancellations of several flights to Heathrow, including two from John F. Kennedy International in New York, a Delta Airlines flight and an American Airlines flight. A United Airlines flight from Washington Dulles International also was cancelled. The U.K. government earlier this year approved building a third runway at the airport to boost the economy and connectivity to the world.

China said on Thursday (March 20, 2025) it acted "in accordance with the law" despite condemnation from Canada over the execution of four Canadian citizens in recent weeks. Canada's Foreign Minister Melanie Joly told reporters in Ottawa on Wednesday (March 19) that China had executed four Canadian citizens in recent weeks, defying pleas from Ottawa for leniency. "We strongly condemn the executions that did happen against Canadians in China," Ms. Joly said. She said she was unable to discuss details of the case due to privacy requests from the affected families. However, Beijing suggested on Thursday (March 20) the Canadians had been convicted over narcotics offences, saying "... combating drug crimes is the common responsibility of all countries." "China is a country under the rule of law," Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Mao Ning said. Beijing, she said, "treats defendants of different nationalities equally without discrimination" and "handles cases fairly in strict accordance with the law." China "protects the legitimate rights of the parties concerned as well as the consular rights of the Canadian side, in accordance with the law", Ms. Mao said. Beijing also defended the executions in a statement sent to Canada's Globe and Mail newspaper. "Drug-related crime is a severe crime recognised worldwide as extremely harmful to the society," the embassy statement said. "China always imposes severe penalties on drug-related crimes and maintains a 'zero tolerance' attitude towards the drug problem." Ms. Joly said she and former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who left office last week, had asked China for leniency. China classi-

China says acted 'in accordance with the law' after 4 Canadians executed

GNS News Agency, March 24

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fies death penalty statistics as a state secret, although rights groups including Amnesty International believe thousands of people are executed in the country every year. Beijing said this week a former Chinese engineer had recently been sentenced to death for leaking state secrets to a foreign power. The arrest of a senior Chinese telecom executive on a U.S. warrant in Vancouver in December 2018 and Beijing's retaliatory detention of two Canadians on espionage charges plunged relations into a deep freeze.

Ties were strained further over allegations of Chinese interference in Canadian elections in 2019 and 2021, charges Beijing has denied. Ms. Joly expelled a Chinese diplomat in 2023 accused of targeting a Canadian opposition lawmaker who has been a vocal critic of the ruling Communist Party in Beijing, as well as his family. Ottawa has also criticised a security crackdown in Hong Kong and China's treatment of its Uyghur Muslim minority.

Proposed master plan gives glimpse of expansion works at Coimbatore airport

GNS News Agency, March 24

A proposed master plan for the expansion of the Coimbatore International Airport includes new facilities, including an integrated passenger terminal building on the south side of the existing one, an air traffic control-cum-technical building, a cargo terminal and a new approach road. The master plan, which was attached in a document of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) inviting tenders for the construction of a precast boundary wall for the newly acquired land, indicates that the new passenger terminal and other facilities are to be constructed in a phased manner.

As per the plan, the terminal area marked for construction in the first phase has 10 Multiple Apron Ramp Systems (MARS) with aerobridges. One MARS can accommodate a wide body-aircraft or two narrow-body aircraft. The document shows that the existing terminal has 11 old aprons and seven new aprons, commissioning of which is in progress. The document shows that the existing runway of the airport (05/23) measuring 2,990 metres will be extended to 3,810 metres. The extension would be carried out on the eastern end (23). A multi-level parking area with food court, bus stand, mid-scale and upscale hotels, taxiway and other passenger amenities are among other facilities.

J. Sathish, Director of Kongu Global Forum, said the airport is expected to get more aprons when in the second phase of the terminal works. The direction of the proposed new 60-metre wide approach road to the new terminal is



shown towards the L&T Bypass of Salem - Kochi Highway. The layout in the plan appears promising, he said. He said that the AAI has invited tenders for construction of a precast boundary wall for a total distance of about 16.67 km, at an estimated cost of ₹29.19 crore. This comprises 9,063 metres of boundary wall for the operational area and a 7,600-metre wall for non-operational area. "The AAI recently called for tenders for engagement of land consultant. Now it has called for tenders for the construction of a boundary wall. Based on these two developments, we believe that the final master plan for the expansion of the Coimbatore International Airport will be given administrative sanction soon so that expansion works can begin. We also expect that tenders will be called for environmental impact assessment shortly," said Shyam Mohan Prabhu, an aviation analyst.

Israel government dismisses Shin Bet intelligence chief Ronen Bar

GNS News Agency, March 24

The head of Shin Bet, Israel's domestic intelligence agency, was dismissed on Friday (March 21, 2025), according to a statement from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office. Mr. Netanyahu last week cited an "on-going lack of trust" as the reason for moving to sack Ronen Bar, who was appointed in October 2021 for a five-year term.

"The Government unanimously approved Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's proposal to end ISA Director Ronen Bar's term of office," a statement said. Mr. Bar, meant to end his tenure only next year, was appointed by the previous Israeli government that briefly forced Mr. Netanyahu from power between June 2021 and December 2022. His relations with Mr. Netanyahu were strained even before the unprecedented Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, which



sparked the war in Gaza, notably over proposed judicial reforms that had split the country. Relations worsened after the March 4 release of the internal Shin Bet report on the Hamas attack.

Judge criticises Trump administration's latest deportation flight response as "woefully insufficient"



GNS News Agency, March 24

Washington: A federal judge instructed the Trump administration to explain why its failure to turn around flights carrying deportees to El Salvador did not violate his court order in a growing showdown between the judicial and executive branches. US District Judge Job Boasberg demanded answers after flights carrying Venezuelan immigrants alleged by the Trump administration to be gang members landed in El Salvador after the judge temporarily blocked deportations under an 18th century wartime law. Boasberg had directed the administration to return to the US planes that were already in the air when he ordered the halt.

Boasberg had given the administration until noon Thursday to either provide more details about the flights or make a claim that it must be withheld because it would harm "state secrets." The administration resisted the judge's re-

quest, calling it an "unnecessary judicial fishing" expedition. In a written order, Boasberg called Trump officials' latest response "woefully insufficient." The judge said the administration "again evaded its obligations" by merely repeating "the same general information about the flights." And he ordered the administration to "show cause," as to why it didn't violate his court order to turn around the planes, increasing the prospect that he may consider holding administration officials in contempt of court.

The Justice Department has said the judge's verbal directions did not count, that only his written order needed to be followed and that it couldn't apply to flights that had already left the US. A Justice Department spokesperson said on Thursday that it "continues to believe that the court's superfluous questioning of sensitive national security information is inappropriate judicial overreach." A US Immigration and Customs Enforcement official told the judge on Thursday the administration needed more time to decide whether it would invoke the state secrets privilege in an effort to block the information's release. Boasberg ordered Trump officials by Friday to submit a sworn declaration by a person "with direct involvement in the Cabinet-level discussions" about the state secrets privilege and to tell the court by next Tuesday whether the administration will invoke it. In a deepening conflict between the judicial and executive branch, Trump and many of his allies have called for impeaching Boasberg, who was nominated to the federal bench by Democratic President Barack Obama. In a rare statement earlier this week, Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts rejected such calls, saying "impeachment is not an appropriate response to disagreement concerning a judicial decision."

US judge blocks deportation of Indian scholar Badar Khan Suri at Georgetown detained over alleged Hamas ties

GNS News Agency, March 24

A U.S. judge ordered Thursday (March 20, 2025) that an Indian researcher at a top American university not be removed from the country, following his arrest and threat of expulsion for alleged Hamas ties. The detention of Badar Khan Suri, a postdoctoral fellow at Georgetown University in the U.S. capital, came as fears mount in the academic world that freedom of research and speech is being challenged two months into U.S. President Donald Trump's new term. Mr. Suri's lawyer demanded his release and denounced the arrest as a "targeted, retaliatory detention" that was intended "to silence, or at the very least restrict and chill, his speech" as well as that of others who "express support for Palestinian rights."

Early Thursday evening Judge Patricia Tolliver Giles of the Eastern District of Virginia Court ordered that Mr. Suri "shall not be removed from the United States unless and until the court issues a contrary order." The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which has also filed an emergency motion to stop the deportation, said Mr. Suri was being held at an immigration detention center in Louisiana. "Ripping someone from their home and family, stripping them of their immigration status, and detaining them solely based on political viewpoint is a clear attempt by President Trump to silence dissent," said ACLU immigrant rights attorney Sophia Gregg. On Wednesday, the French government condemned the expulsion of a French space scientist meant to attend a conference in Houston, after officials searched his smartphone and found what they called "hateful" messages against U.S. policy. "Dr. Khan Suri is an Indian national who was duly granted a visa to enter the United States to continue his doctoral research on peacebuilding in Iraq and Afghanistan," Georgetown University said in a statement. "We are not aware of him engaging in any illegal activity, and we have not received a reason for his detention."

Neither Secretary of State Marco Rubio "nor any other government official has alleged that Mr Suri has committed any crime or, indeed, broke any law whatsoever," his law-



yer said in the court filing. The filing accused the U.S. government of having detained Mr. Suri "based on his family connection and constitutionally protected free speech." Mr. Suri - a fellow at Georgetown's Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, according to the university website - was arrested Monday at his home in Arlington, Virginia, according to Politico, which first reported on the story. Tricia McLaughlin, a spokeswoman for the Department of Homeland Security, said on X that Mr. Suri was "a foreign exchange student at Georgetown University actively spreading Hamas propaganda and promoting anti-Semitism on social media." Ms. McLaughlin accused him of having "close connections to a known or suspected terrorist, who is a senior advisor to Hamas." The State Department decided the researcher was subject to deportation under a provision of immigration law that allows for expulsion if the visa holder's presence in the United States is determined to threaten US foreign policy, she added. Georgetown University said it backs its "community members' rights to free and open inquiry, deliberation and debate, even if the underlying ideas may be difficult, controversial or objectionable." Citing a petition filed by Suri's lawyer, Politico reported that Mr. Suri's wife is a U.S. citizen of Palestinian descent, and that the couple believes they are being targeted because the government suspects they oppose U.S. policy on Israel.

Silent shutdown of rural futures in Telangana

GNS News Agency, March 24

Aged 45 now, Zubeda had already battled a lifetime of challenges. A childhood medical mishap had left her unable to walk. "I was down with high fever and my family took me to the local medical practitioner, who gave me an injection. Soon, I lost sensation in my lower limbs and could not walk. I was forced to use crutches," she shares. But that handicap did nothing to break her spirit. Growing up in an orthodox Muslim family in Kandi village of Telangana's Sangareddy district near Hyderabad, she faced restrictions at home and discrimination outside. Yet, she pushed forward, completing her education against all odds and rallying the differently-abled to fight for their rights.

Determined to uplift those often neglected by society, she formed 'Vikalanga Chaitanya Sangham' (Forum for the Disabled), a self-help group (SHG) that fought for medical assistance, government benefits and social acceptance. Their biggest success came when they established 'Chaitanya Colony,' an exclusive settlement for 300 differently-abled families in Sangareddy town, with the help of the district collector. Zubeda's breakthrough came when then district collector Ronald Rose introduced her SHG to an unexpected opportunity — manufacturing solar lamps at Cherlapally in Hyderabad. "We were surprised as none of us had any experience in the field, but in less than a week, the Collector sent 14 of us to NIRD&PR for training," she recalls. That leap of faith would go on to redefine their future. Tucked away in Rajendranagar, a rapidly expanding residential neighborhood of Hyderabad, the NIRD&PR is an autonomous body under the Union Ministry of Rural Development, and the country's only premier national centre of excellence in its field.

Zubeda Begum, a physically challenged woman who established 'Divyang Solar Society' in 2016 that assembles portable solar lights. Zubeda Begum, a physically challenged woman who established 'Divyang Solar Society' in 2016 that assembles portable solar lights. | Photo Credit: Mohd. Arif For Zubeda, it was the turning point. The Rural Technology Park (RTP) training at NIRD&PR not only transformed her career but set her on the path to entrepreneurship. In 2016, she and her team established 'Divyang Solar Society', assembling portable solar lights.

"There was no looking back. Under RTP's guidance, we began to diversify our activities and in 2018, started a garment-making unit with state-of-the-art stitching machinery, financed by a ₹25 lakh bank loan," she says.

Today, the firm supplies uniforms to government and

private schools, empowering 10 differently-abled entrepreneurs in the process. Zubeda is just one among hundreds whose lives were reshaped by NIRD&PR's training programmes. But ironically, the very institution that helped so many now faces an uncertain future.

In a stunning budgetary blow, the Centre has slashed NIRD&PR's allocation for 2025-26 to a mere 1 lakh, down from 3.68 crore in the revised estimates for 2024-25 and 75.69 crore in 2023-24. Established in 1958, NIRD&PR has been instrumental in shaping rural development policies, strengthening Panchayat Raj institutions, and training rural development professionals. It collaborates with 29 State Institutes of Rural Development (SIRDs) and 90 extension centres across the country. Now, the decision to practically disband it has come as a shock, leaving 221 regular employees, 410 contractual staff, and 300 pensioners staring at uncertainty.

The seeds of this crisis were sown in 2016 when then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced a task force for rationalising human resources across ministries. The fate of NIRD&PR was sealed long before the recent Budget cut. In 2017, NITI Aayog constituted a panel under former bureaucrat Ratan P. Watal to review 231 autonomous bodies across 23 Central ministries. By 2018, the panel had submitted its recommendations.

A year later, the committee proposed retention of 83 institutions, merging 117 into 29, disengaging 20, and shutting down seven. NIRD&PR landed in the 'disengaged' category, not for underperformance, but despite being deemed "satisfactory". The panel suggested converting it into a Centre of Excellence or a Deemed University engaged in training and research with "gradual budget reduction of 25% per year in three years."

The Ministry of Rural Development agreed to the disengagement, charting a 10-year transition plan with a one-time lump sum grant to make NIRD&PR fully autonomous, say official sources.

Rajesh Kumar Sinha, general secretary of the Academic Association and assistant professor at the Centre for Social Audit, says there was no consultation with the faculty and only administrative staff were involved. "Even the Administrative Staff College of India, engaged to look into the possibility of self-reliance, had prepared a report without consulting the faculty or staff," he claims. In response, the association took matters into its own hands, preparing an independent report and submitting it to the ministry.

When genes wield a sickle



Kumar was travelling for work in 2016 when he received a call from his daughter's school. An urgent voice on the other end informed him that the six-year-old had felled unconscious. Far away from his home in Araku Valley, he frantically called his wife and asked her to rush to the school. It took him a few hours to reach the school, with worry gnawing through his heart. He found that his daughter's legs had swelled and lumps had formed on several parts of her body. With no major medical facilities available in the tribal area, a frightened Kumar decided to take his daughter to King George Hospital (KGH) in Visakhapatnam, about 120 km away. It was at the hospital that he first came to know about the malady afflicting his child, a name that has not left his mind since: Sickle Cell Anaemia.

"We were unaware of the disorder then, but I have since enquired about it and learnt that there are some more cases in Ananthagiri, Pedabayalu and Paderu. In some cases, children have even died," says Mr. Kumar, stress and fatigue weighing him down. He later took his daughter to a retired paediatric doctor in Visakhapatnam, who, he says, had a vast experience treating such children. The child underwent treatment for over two weeks, and Kumar, his wife and the rest of the family were told to get tested. The results showed that Kumar and his wife were 'traits', which means they are in safe zone and asymptomatic. "Jaundice is the most common health issue she suffers. If she gets stressed owing to studies, games or any other reason, she develops swelling on her body, joint ache and fever among other issues. Sometimes, there is a drop in platelets, and we need to monitor blood levels regularly," Kumar explains.

"Jaundice is the most common health issue she suffers. If she gets stressed owing to studies, games or any other reason, she develops swelling on her body, joint ache and fever among other issues. Sometimes, there is a drop in platelets." Kumar Parent of a child with the condition Even a change in temperature triggers health complications in a person with Sickle Cell Anaemia, he says. During November-February, when temperature drops to single digits in the Agency areas, his now 15-year-old daughter battles with breathing difficulties in the mornings.

"Every month, we go to Visakhapatnam from Araku Valley for health check-up. We had even tried taking her for advanced treatment in Hyderabad. Once one develops this disorder, the patient needs lifelong treatment," says Kumar, who is a pastor. According to sources, a number of children in the Agency areas of Alluri Sitharama Raju district suffer from Sickle Cell Anaemia, a genetic blood disorder in individuals who inherit mutated haemoglobin genes from their parents. It causes the red blood cells to take the form of a crescent or a sickle. These misshapen cells have a shorter survival rate and can clog small blood vessels, leading to anaemia, severe pain and other major health complications.

Kumar says he and his wife are constantly worried about their daughter. "We are tense till she returns home from school. We had even submitted a representation to the school, requesting the management to call us even if it's a small health issue," he says. K. Praveen, another resident of Araku Valley mandal, recalls how he and his sister were diagnosed with Sickle Cell Anaemia in 2010 when they were around 15 years old. He becomes emotional when he talks about how she suffered for 15 years before passing away in September last. "It cost us about ₹25,000 a month for her treatment and diet. She often suffered joint pains, high fever and jaundice; PMS added to her health problems every month," he recalls. The disorder has become a challenge faced by several tribal communities in the district, and each year, a significant number of new cases are diagnosed.

District Medical and Health Officer Jamal Basha says consanguineous marriages are the primary reason why the

condition is prevalent among tribespeople. Individuals in the communities continue to marry their blood relatives as part of their tradition. This leads to persistence of the disorder in the next generation. Nutritional deficiencies, especially a lack of essential vitamins, minerals and iron in their diets, exacerbate the condition, making it harder for the affected children to fight the symptoms, he adds. Jamal Basha says tests are being taken up throughout the year to find the prevalence of Sickle Cell Anaemia among schoolchildren and pregnant women. A massive drive was organised a year ago to find adolescents with the condition. "Over the past two years, we screened about 4.01 lakh cases, of which 12,595 cases came out as 'traits'. As of now, there are about 1,372 positive cases [individuals with Sickle Cell Anaemia]," the DMHO says.

For mild and moderate cases of anaemia, the department provide the patients with iron-and-folic acid tablets, and their condition is monitored time to time through tests. Severe cases should be treated more carefully. They are given iron sucrose and monitored regularly. Some times, the patients require blood transfusion, he says. "Earlier, severe cases used to be handled by the KGH in Visakhapatnam. Now, however, the government has made diagnosis available at Government Paderu Hospital. We have physicians and testing equipment such as HPLC at the hospital. However, we shift critical patients who require blood transfusion to the KGH," he adds. About two years ago, the State government introduced a scheme to provide a financial assistance of ₹10,000 to the families of patients, which, according to many parents, is insufficient.

Anil, a poultry farmer from Pedabayalu, says it costs him around ₹20,000 a month to take care of his 12-year-old daughter, who suffers from the condition. The money goes into buying nutritious food, medication and travel. Anil, who gets his daughter treated at a private hospital in Visakhapatnam, says he spends two days every month for her treatment. "We include a lot of vegetables, mutton and dry fruits in her diet. Daily medicine should never be missed," Anil explains, adding that his income from the farm is insufficient to meet the expenses and that he often borrows money. Many parents also turn to various doctors in Telangana and Maharashtra, seeking advanced care, the costs of which are making them poorer by the day.

Satish Kumar, a resident of Hukumpeta who has a son suffering from the disease, throws light on the devastating effect the disorder has on childhood. "Children are under a lot pressure from a young age... My son wants to play and have fun with his friends but is unable to do any of that. He is not fully aware of his condition but knows he has some health issue," he says. "Sickle Cell Anaemia has been ravaging tribal communities for decades. Though the government has conducted tests and provided medication, no proper research has been taken up. There has to be a permanent solution, now that ASR district has a medical college," says Killo Surendra, a member of A.P. Girijana Sangham and a resident of Araku Valley.

"Though the government has conducted tests and provided medication, no proper research has been taken up. There has to be a permanent solution, now that ASR district has a medical college" Killo Surendra A member of A.P. Girijana Sangham Surendra also opines that more awareness should be spread among the tribespeople about the disease. It is vital that the communities that bear the brunt of the disorder receive more support so that they can fight it and ensure a better future for their children. Jamal Basha says the department has been spreading awareness about the disorder through posters and pictures on RTC buses, at weekly shandies and through ANMs and ASHA workers. This apart, awareness programmes are held at students hostels as well. A Senior Health Assistant from Alluri Sitharama Raju district, who did not want to be quoted, claims that many tribal families in the interior areas of the district are unaware of the condition and lack access to proper healthcare. Owing to a delayed diagnosis and treatment, the consequences are often devastating. "In some cases, early deaths happen, but this does not come to light," he adds. Rama Rao Dora, a tribal activist from Paderu, says Sickle Cell Anaemia deals a crushing blow to many tribal families who already live in poverty. "There have been cases wherein people ignored it, leading to fatalities. The government should regard those with the condition as special cases and come up with more measures to help them. Testing centres and doctors who can treat the condition should be made available in the interior areas as well," he adds.

home.

Manipur was placed under President's Rule following an impending political crisis. The Congress party, in Opposition, was to move a no-confidence motion in the Assembly, which was set to be supported by the sitting Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislators. On February 9, Chief Minister N. Biren Singh was summoned to Delhi in a chartered flight. Following a meeting with the Union Home Minister Amit Shah, he resigned. The valley, with 10% of Manipur's landmass, is dominated by the non-tribal Meitei ethnic group, mostly Hindus, who account for over 64% of the State's population. The hills comprise 90% of Manipur's area but send only 20 MLAs to the Assembly, mostly Kuki-Zo and Naga members. As per the 2011 Census, the population in the State stood at 27.21 lakh and the decadal population growth from 2001 to 2011 was 18.65%. Other than the Manipur police and the Army, 288 companies of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) are deployed in the State. The strength of each company may vary from 80-120 personnel. Kuki-Zo women protest at Kangpokpi against the free movement of vehicles

The point where Bishnupur and Churachandpur districts converge has been one of the most volatile areas with armed men or 'village volunteers' aiming at each other frequently. To keep the warring communities away, 'buffer zones' were created. These buffer zones, where the Meitei areas in the valley and the Kuki-Zo areas in the hills converge, are secured by the CAPF and the Army, but not the State police. When The Hindu visited the Bishnupur-Churachandpur buffer zone, there were at least six checkpoints on a 2-km stretch. The Army and the CAPF personnel take photos of all the visitors and note down personal details such as phone and Aadhar number.

After Central rule was imposed in the State, bunkers — sandbags and tin sheds — built by village volunteers in buffer zones to protect their communities have been removed. Some have been occupied by Central security forces. "We had a meeting with civil society groups. Some bunkers were voluntarily dismantled, and some were destroyed by the security forces," says a police officer in Churachandpur.

According to a senior government official, around 450-500 bunkers have been destroyed in the past 22 months. "Sometimes they are rebuilt. Since President's Rule, it is being ensured that none of the bunkers exist in the buffer zones to prevent confrontation between the two communities," says the officer.

Theyyam in Kerala's north | Dancing with fire and spirits



It's still dark at 4.20 a.m. and the crowds are slowly building. The atmosphere is akin to a carnival, underpinned by stalls selling plastic toys and hard-boiled eggs. Friends are greeting each other; one of our set is busy trying to buy a baby's friendship with biscuits, but Biscuit Baby firmly keeps her distance. The regulation quota Kerala has of grey-heads is on full display here. As the chenda beats start to gather steam, the air slowly turns electric. We are at the Thee (fire) Chamundi or Ottakolam theyyam, and the meleri (sacred pyre) is slowly being prepped to become a mass of glowing embers into which the koladhari (practitioner) will repeatedly fling himself. As with all theyyams, this too has a back-story, of Agni the fire god aggressively challenging all the gods. Vishnu takes up the challenge, throws himself into the fire 108 times and of course, emerges unscathed each time, thoroughly extinguishing Agni's boastful pride.

Our 'storyteller', the splendid performing artist Sangeeth Bhaskar, has managed to steer us to a vantage point. But here's the thing: wherever we stand, people shuffle along to give us a better view, sometimes giving up their own spots quite happily. We meet with this Malabar brand of graciousness all through the trip, and realise that old cliché is actually true: the north Keralaite is really the nicest in all of the tiny strip that makes up God's Own Country. We are on a 'Theyyam Lite' trip, trying to take in as many performances as we can in a packed schedule in Kasaragod, in northernmost Kerala. The north is the birthplace of the ritualistic art form that typically runs from the tenth day of the Malayalam month of Thulam (in mid-October) till the middle of Edavam (in late May/early June). The ceremony — where the performers represent deities, local heroes and ancestral spirits through elaborate costumes, make-up, and dance — takes place in temples and sacred groves.

We have been hearing reports of huge crowds (more enthusiasts than devotees) massing at theyyams in the Kannur area, mobile cameras out, loud chatter filling the air. Suma, the owner of the Ayurvedic spa next to our resort, congratulates me on having come to Kasaragod to watch it. The divinity attached to the ritual diminishes as one goes south, she informs me sagely. The 2,000-year-old ritual of theyyam has its roots firmly planted in religion. The moment the intricate and fascinating face-writing of the

koladhari is finished and the mudi (headgear) is put on, the transformation is complete; it is the deity — Shiva, mother goddess Chamundi, Bhadrakali, Gulikan (a fierce form of Shiva), forest deity, tiger, monkey, snake — who is now controlling the theyyam. There is complete faith evident in the locals, but they carry it lightly, watching the ritual with characteristic impassivity, chatting, casually going up to get blessings from the koladhari afterwards. I watch slack-jawed as quite a few women make a monetary offering to the koladhari, then have his assistant give them change for the large notes they proffer!

The thee theyyam is hard to watch. The koladhari has a protective skirt of ola (palm fronds) around him, but I notice the edges of the skirt are glowing, tiny embers sticking to them. His two assistants, who have mastered the angle at which they must enable him to fall on the fire mound, are glowing with the sweat of their efforts. Sangeeth tells us of an even more dramatic theyyam, that of Kandanan Kelan, a legendary warrior who survived a forest fire with help from the divine, where the koladhari enters a roaring fire and at times, stands in the middle of it, too. We decide we do not have the stomach for that; as it is, I am gasping every time this koladhari flings himself on the live coals. And he does it 14 times. At the famous Parassini Madappura Sree Muthappan Temple, which is 20 km from Kannur town, we watch the Muthappan (a personification of Vishnu and Shiva) koladhari interact with devotees. Since he is a canine-friendly deity whose familiar is a dog, he blesses a pug too, incongruously dressed in a crimson skirt and blouse. The casual almost festive air is in direct counterpoint to the intensity of the theyyams being performed. At the Adot Moothedath Kuthire Pazhayasthanam Sree Padarakulangara Bhagavathi Devasthanam in Kanhangad — just 12 km from the medieval Bekal Fort, the largest fort in the state — we are given ringside seats by Raghavan, a temple committee member, and repeatedly urged to eat the food prepared at the temple. It's a community effort, with everyone pitching in to produce a wholesome sadya, topped by a simply divine paruppu payasam. We are seated on a separate platform, heaped plates of food are brought to us by a genial Raju, and we are introduced to a whole host of local dignitaries on their way into the pandal for lunch.

Do immigrants have the same right to protest as citizens?

Ranjani Srinivasan, an Indian doctoral student at Columbia University, left the U.S. on March 11, 2025, following the revocation of her student visa by the U.S. State Department. Her departure followed a raid on her campus residence by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, who have accused her of being a "pro-Hamas sympathiser". Earlier, on March 8, immigration authorities arrested Mahmood Khalil, a Palestinian student activist and green card holder, for allegedly violating his terms of residency by supporting a U.S.-designated terrorist organisation. Should immigrants have the same right to protest as citizens? Prabhash Ranjan and Happymon Jacob discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Aaratrika Bhaumik. Edited excerpts:

Do immigrants have the same right to protest as citizens under international human rights law?

Prabhash Ranjan: Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) enshrines freedom of expression as a fundamental human right, extending to both citizens and immigrants. Article 19(2) specifically guarantees the right to seek, receive, and disseminate information across borders through various media. However, Article 19(3) qualifies this right by imposing special duties and permitting states to impose restrictions when necessary to safeguard national security or public order. Additionally, other provisions of the ICCPR explicitly prohibit war propaganda and the advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that incites violence. While international law affords immigrants the same right to protest as citizens, the extent of this right depends on the host country's domestic legal framework. Some states enforce stricter regulations, whereas liberal democracies may adopt a more permissive stance.

To what extent do foreign policy and national security considerations constrain immigrants' right to peaceful protest?

Happymon Jacob: The application of international human rights law is deeply influenced by domestic politics. The critical question is what happens when international legal norms and expectations collide with national political realities. For instance, in the U.S., a long-standing tradition of free speech has created a global expectation that Americans will consistently uphold this right. However, instances where American actions diverge from these expectations expose a disconnect between historical tradition and contemporary reality. This phenomenon is not unique to the U.S. — across Africa, Asia, and parts of Europe, non-citizens often do not enjoy the same degree of free speech as citizens. Moreover, the ability to exercise free speech or participate in peaceful protests frequently depends on an individual's legal status — whether they are a natural-born citizen, a permanent resident, or an undocumented immigrant. The social contract that binds a government to its citizens does not necessarily extend to non-citizens in the same way, further entangling the legal and political framework governing these rights.

Does the crackdown on protesting foreign students in the U.S. violate First Amendment rights?

Prabhash Ranjan: The Immigration and Nationality Act, 1952 authorises the denial of entry and deportation of non-citizens who endorse or support terrorist activities or organisations. President Trump's executive order, issued in January directing federal agencies to combat antisemitism on campuses, is rooted in this law. Thus, its issuance does not exceed constitutional authority. However, the critical question is whether the order itself is constitutional. U.S. law extends First Amendment protections to non-citizens, regardless of their immigration status, particularly in matters concerning criminal penalties and law enforcement investigations. However, it remains unclear whether non-citizens enjoy the same level of First Amendment protection as citizens when facing deportation proceedings. This is where Happymon's argument becomes relevant — each case must be evaluated based on the individual's legal status. For instance, a green card holder would have stronger legal protections than someone on a student visa. Historically, during the Cold War, legal aliens in the U.S. were deported for their affiliation with the Communist Party. While the U.S. legal system has since become more robust, past precedents highlight the enduring legal complexities surrounding such deportations. Happymon Jacob: I don't believe measures such as these will significantly influence the decisions of international students, including those from India, to study in the U.S. Only a small fraction of Indian students are likely to engage in such protests, making it an unlikely deterrent. However, a more pressing concern is whether reductions in university funding could ultimately discourage international talent from enrolling in American institutions. If that happens, it could pose a serious challenge for a nation that relies on immigration-driven innovation and expertise.

U.S. immigration judges operate within the Department of Justice, where the Attorney General has the authority to remove them. Could executive influence compromise the fairness of deportation proceedings?

Prabhash Ranjan: Yes, executive control over immigration judges is deeply problematic. Law and politics are not as divorced as we might wish to believe. While judges are ideally expected to operate in depoliticised courtrooms, the reality is that legal interpretations often unfold within a broader political context. That said, my confidence lies less in individual immigration judges and more in the U.S. judicial system as a whole. At the appellate level, independent review and judicial scrutiny of executive actions can help ensure fairer outcomes. However, for immigrants caught in this system, the process itself can feel like a punishment — perhaps by design.

The Trump administration has reportedly invoked Section 212(a)(3)(C) of the 1952 Act to justify the arrest of Mr. Khalil. It empowers the Secretary of State to deport a foreign national if their "presence or activities in the United States would have potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences". I

Which flu shot should you take and when? Here's why timing matters for it to be effective



able in the market. A flu vaccine that incorporates strains currently in circulation is likely to be more effective," he said.

Who should get the shot?

While everyone may take the vaccine every year, it is recommended for people in the extremes of ages — adults above 65 years and children below the age of five years — who are more prone to severe disease. It is also recommended for people living with chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease or respiratory conditions such as asthma and bronchitis. People who have undergone a transplant, are on immunosuppressants and suffering from conditions that weaken their immune systems should take these shots too.

Can you get the flu even after taking the vaccine?

Yes. "It may not stop the infection, but it may prevent severe disease and hospitalisation," says Dr Chatterjee. There is considerable variation in the effectiveness of flu shots in different seasons and different populations. The efficacy of the vaccines using three flu strains was found to be around 59% in pooled results from randomised control trials, according to the WHO.

Why is the flu shot changed every year?

With the influenza virus constantly mutating, the WHO recommends the strains that should be included in the shots every year based on surveillance data from laboratories across the world. The trivalent vaccines utilise two influenza A strains and one influenza B strain. The recommendation for which strain should be used is different for countries in the northern and southern hemisphere. A tropical country like India has to follow the recommendations for the southern hemisphere. A mismatch in the circulating strain and the strains recommended for the vaccine may lower the vaccine's effectiveness.

It takes about two weeks to build immunity after taking the flu shot, so people need to take their yearly jab just before the beginning of the flu season. It takes about two weeks to build immunity after taking the flu shot, so people need to take their yearly jab just before the beginning of the flu season. With changing seasons, doctors have been reporting an increase in cases of seasonal influenza, with the symptoms being more intense and lasting longer. A yearly flu shot can be an effective tool to prevent severe disease such as pneumonia or respiratory disease. But, for it to be effective, it has to be timed right.

When should you get your flu shots?

It takes about two weeks to build immunity after taking the flu shot, so people need to take their yearly jab just before the beginning of the flu season. Every year, India witnesses two peaks of seasonal influenza — one between January and March and the second just after the monsoon. Dr Suranjit Chatterjee, senior consultant, internal medicine at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, New Delhi, suggests taking the shot in October just before winter sets in. "October is when the updated flu vaccine becomes avail-

She smiled after 20 odd years: How free jaw surgery at Gujarat public hospital holds out hope for child trauma survivors



Dr Anchlia. She and her team performed an intricate procedure, separating two bone fragments to lengthen and reshape her lower jaw with a special device. This created space, allowing new bone tissue to grow.

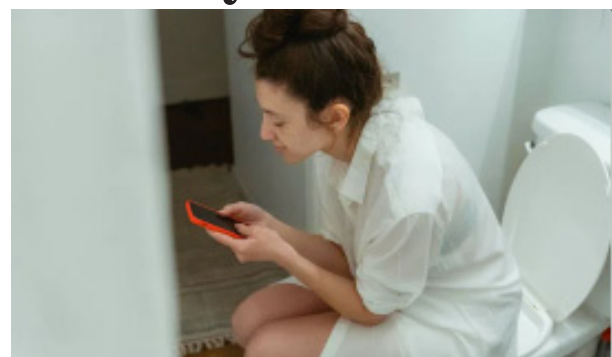
"We use elastic bands in the mouth to direct the growth of the bone. The most irregular bone structure can be corrected using this method. Her teeth had also grown in a very haphazard manner due to the stunted growth of her face. So we had to correct that as well," said Dr Anchlia. Part of the reason that public hospitals stay away from facial surgeries is because of the long preparatory time and a series of procedures they entail. Priyanka has just been out of her first surgery. "Planning takes about 25 days. Then we conduct the first surgery to implant the device in the jaw. A week later, we begin turning the screws to lengthen the lower jaw and allow the soft tissue to fill up. At 1 mm per day, we go up to 25-30 mm in total. This can take about 1.5 months of stay in the ward," said Dr Anchlia. With her facial scars just healing after her implants, Priyanka says she no longer feels ashamed of going outdoors. "My family never ate in front of me so that wouldn't feel left out. I can look at myself in the mirror without negativity and am finally excited about my future," she said. Priyanka is the eldest of three siblings and hopes to support her family who never left her side. Before she returns to Ahmedabad for the second phase of her treatment, she will be applying for job interviews in Guwahati.

"The soft bone takes six to eight months to grow and consolidate. After this, we will do a mouth and chin surgery. We will replace the jaw joint with a 3D-printed titanium prosthetic which will be fitted there to mimic the natural joint," said Dr Anchlia. Priyanka will then be completely out of her childhood trauma.

Priyanka Chetty, a 22-year-old political science graduate from Dhemaji in Assam, has finally learnt to smile and savour the food cooked by her mother. Having suffered a facial injury in childhood that froze her jaws and deformed her face, she had been on a liquid diet for as long as she can remember. Now, doctors at the Government Dental College in Ahmedabad have given her a new lease of life by performing a complex and restorative surgery free. This state government hospital holds out hope for many like her who cannot afford such surgeries in a private hospital. Most state public hospitals, too, do not have specialists or resources to conduct them because of the high costs concerned. Priyanka's jaw condition, called TM Joint Ankylosis, demands a highly sophisticated surgery, the instruments and prosthetics for which can cost upwards of Rs 3 lakh alone. The Ayushman Bharat scheme is of no help in such reconstructive surgeries, offering only Rs 15,000 for a procedure on one side of the face and Rs 30,000 for paired organs. Having braved stigma for most of her early years, Priyanka did not want to miss her only shot at a normal life, travelling five days to reach Ahmedabad by both bus and train.

Doctors use donor funds for corrective surgeries and are proactive in raising resources, reaching out to potential sponsors. "Such surgeries are usually done at big public hospitals. But at the dental college, we can do so as donors help us a lot with surgical instruments and apparatus," said Dr Sonal Anchlia, the head of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, who met Priyanka during a medical conference in Guwahati. "Since no government hospital in Assam does such surgeries, I asked her to come to us. Now we get almost two patients every month from across India," she added. Over the last year, the dental college has done 14 such facial reconstructive surgeries, and nine more are lined up next year. Dr Anchlia is now planning to approach the Gujarat CSR authority for funds. "A majority of our patients come from Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat. There have been more girls than boys," she said. Although Priyanka had TM Joint Ankylosis after a facial injury and trauma, this condition can also develop after an infection, rheumatoid arthritis or be present from birth. It can affect one or both sides of the face. "We deal with several kinds of malformed jaws or jaw joint fractures that need replacement. Some of these children have not just had distorted faces but have had difficulty breathing due to constriction of the windpipe, slurred speech and difficulty eating or swallowing," said Dr Anchlia. Priyanka had asymmetrical stunted growth on both sides of her lower jaw. "Her mouth did not open at all. So her airways got constricted leading to breathing issues and Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA)," said

Hidden danger of using your phone on toilet – What doctors want you to know



tional surgical methods," said Ranjan. However, despite being introduced in India about three to four years ago, awareness about radiofrequency treatments remains low among surgeons, he noted. In high-volume institutions such as ESIC and AIIMS, where patient backlogs extend for months due to limited operation theatres, radiofrequency ablation can prove to be revolutionary, the doctors said. Since the procedure can be performed in minor operation theatres or outpatient department settings under local anaesthesia, they suggested it could help treat 40-50 patients a day in both government and private hospitals. Doctors are urging greater awareness and adoption of advanced treatments such as Rafaelo to improve patient care while alleviating pressure on India's healthcare system. Gleneagles Hospital's Gandhi said, "With wider adoption of radiofrequency procedures, we can ensure faster and more effective relief for patients while easing the load on hospitals."

New Delhi: Prolonged mobile phone use while sitting on the toilet is contributing to a surge in haemorrhoids and anal fistulas, doctors have said. The habit, coupled with a sedentary lifestyle and poor diet, is putting increased strain on the rectal area, leading to painful conditions that often require medical intervention, they added. Dr Jignesh Gandhi — a senior robotic and laparoscopic surgeon at Gleneagles Hospital in Mumbai — highlighted the concern, linking it to a sedentary lifestyle and excessive phone use in toilets. He was speaking at the 74th foundation day of ESIC Hospital in Okhla on Saturday. Dr Ravi Ranjan, a surgery specialist at the hospital, said it recorded more than 500 cases of haemorrhoids and fistulas in a year. He pointed to poor lifestyle habits such as low water intake, excessive consumption of junk food and extended time on the toilet as key contributors.

Marengo Asia Hospital surgeon Dr Birbal said, "Chronic constipation from poor diet and prolonged time spent sitting on the toilet create a vicious cycle." "This puts undue stress on the rectal area, leading to painful inflammation, which can result in haemorrhoids and, in severe cases, anal fistulas," he added. The experts said the rising number of such cases was straining government hospitals. They also highlighted the potential of minimally invasive procedures such as radiofrequency ablation of haemorrhoids under local anaesthesia (Rafaelo) to ease the burden. "The Rafaelo procedure, approved by the US Food and Drug Administration and widely used in the UK's National Health Service, offers quicker recovery, same-day discharge, and reduced waiting times compared to tradi-

Eli Lilly's weight loss drug launches in India: Here are 4 things to know about Mounjaro



The new class of weight-loss medicines that has taken the world by a storm will now become available in India, with the pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly on Thursday announcing the launch of tirzepatide to be marketed as Mounjaro. The medicine will be available in a single-dose vial, meant to be taken as a shot under the skin every week. The 2.5 mg vial is priced at Rs 3,500 (MRP) and the 5 mg vial is priced at Rs 4,375 (MRP). This India-specific pricing is part of Eli Lilly's effort to expand access. The drug — along with Novo Nordisk's semaglutide marketed as Wegovy — has been much anticipated in India after its significant weight-loss effect was witnessed by many around the world. "Our mission of making life better for people living with obesity and diabetes in India is reflected in our efforts to accelerate the introduction of innovative medicines. The launch of Mounjaro demonstrates our ongoing support to this mission and our shared vision of a healthier nation," said Winslow Tucker, president and general manager of Lilly India, in a release.

What is tirzepatide?

Tirzepatide belongs to a new class of diabetes medicines that were approved for the treatment of chronic obesity after they were found to be almost as effective as bariatric surgery for weight-loss. Called incretin mimetics, these drugs mimic the action of certain gut hormones to improve secretion of insulin, inhibit secretion of glucagon that stimulates glucose production in the liver, and also reduce appetite by slowing down digestion. Tirzepatide acts on two targets — GLP-1 (glucagon-like peptide-1) hormone receptor and GIP (glucose-dependent insulinotropic polypeptide). The medicine can help people lose just over 20% of their body weight on average, with nearly one in three persons dropping a quarter of their body weight. The drug is not a magic bullet, however. It has to be taken alongside a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity.

Who is the drug meant for?

The drug is meant to be prescribed to those who are obese with a BMI (body mass index) of over 30 or those who are overweight with a BMI between 25 and 29 with other weight-related co-morbid conditions such as diabe-

tes and heart disease among others.

The drug should not be prescribed to people who have a family history of a particular type of thyroid cancer called medullary thyroid carcinoma (MTC) or a rare condition called Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia syndrome type 2 (MEN 2). It should be avoided in people who may have an allergic reaction to the medicine or its components. With this class of medicines linked to side effects such as stomach paralysis, doctors also suggest avoiding the medication in patients with long-standing diabetes and sluggish peristalsis (contraction and relaxation of the digestive tract to push the food through) and gastric obstructions. They say it should also be avoided in patients prone to nausea as the medicine is known to lead to nausea and vomiting during the initial period.

What is the evidence available so far?

Several global clinical trials, which included participants from India, have been carried out to establish the safety and efficacy of the medicine. SURMOUNT-1 — a study of 2,539 adults with obesity, or overweight with weight-related medical problems — found that the participants on 5 mg weekly dose lost on average 15% of their body weight in 72 weeks, those on 10 mg dose lost 19.5%, and those on the highest 15 mg dose lost 20.9%. To compare, those who were given a placebo lost only 3.1% of their body weight. The study found that nearly one in three persons put on the higher doses of the medicine lost nearly 25% of their body weight. To compare, only 1.5% of the people on placebo lost as much weight. Another SURMOUNT-5 trial with 18,386 participants found tirzepatide to be more effective than its competitor semaglutide for weight loss. The study showed that participants on tirzepatide lost 20.2% of their body weight at 72 weeks as compared to 13.7% with semaglutide. Importantly, SURMOUNT-4 trial with 670 participants showed that people regained the lost weight when they stopped taking the medicine. After taking the treatment for 36 weeks, those who stopped the once-a-week infusion gained back 14% of their body weight at 88 weeks. And, those who continued the treatment lost another 5.5% weight. The participants had lost around 20.9% of their total body weight during the 36 week treatment.

What did the regulator say?

The subject expert committee on endocrinology and metabolism, under the apex drug regulator Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), recommended that permission be granted to Eli Lilly for importing and marketing the medicine in a single dose pre-filled pen and in a single-dose vial in June last year. The company was also given permission to import and market multi-dose pen by December. The expert committee recommended a phase IV trial — or post-marketing surveillance — be carried out by the company, which helps in understanding long term safety of the drug, its effects on a diverse population, and rare side-effects, if any.

Viral flu and recovery later, 35-year-old had stubborn cough: How antibiotic use at the behest of a pharmacist led to an acute complication

The first risk is antibiotic resistance, which often develops due to the misuse or overuse of antibiotics. The first risk is antibiotic resistance, which often develops due to the misuse or overuse of antibiotics. A 35-year-old woman came to our clinic with persistent coughing bouts, saying she had a flu-like illness a month before but had recovered after her pharmacy guy suggested an antibiotic course. She had inhalers and nebulisers at home and she used them on her own. She felt better but her cough was stubborn. What she didn't know was that she had developed a long-term flu complication because of self-medicating herself, something that 50 per cent of flu patients do.

Why was the patient's cough persistent although she had recovered from flu?

My patient was certain she had a chest issue as a spillover effect from the flu. She said she had visited a neighbourhood pulmonologist, who had suggested a routine X-ray. When that came out clean, he prescribed her an expectorant to clear the mucus from her airways. I ran a CT scan of her chest which showed she had bronchitis, an inflammation of the airways in the lungs that can cause a cough, chest pain, and shortness of breath. Bronchitis doesn't always show up on a chest X-ray because it primarily affects the airways, not the lung tissue itself. But a CT scan can map the clogging in the airways. Her bronchitis was caused by a post-nasal drip from her blocked sinuses, when excess mucus gathers and drips down the back of your throat, often causing a feeling of a tickle or a need to clear it. This is a complication arising out of a viral flu which only an antiviral, not an antibiotic, can address. So although her fever had subsided, her sinuses remained inflamed, causing her much discomfort. Her condition improved only



after we put her on a saline nasal rinse and a nasal corticosteroid spray. We asked her to hydrate herself well for the next couple of days. But this is something which she could have completely avoided if she had consulted a doctor and not her pharmacist. Or if she had taken her flu shot once a year. A viral flu needs antiviral treatment, that too only when prescribed by the doctor on a case-specific basis and depending on the severity. Otherwise for self-care, one should not use any medication beyond what's required for fever and pain. The first risk is antibiotic resistance, which often develops due to the misuse or overuse of antibiotics. A mice study from the Francis Crick Institute in London, UK, found that antibiotics could "prime" the lungs for viral infections. That is because they suppress gut bacteria, which drive a type of protein signalling that tells the cells lining the lungs to keep the flu virus from spreading. Which means antibiotics can wipe out early flu resistance. In other words, antibiotics are the worst enemy of your flu. Trust your doctor.

Netflix's Adolescence shows why teens need digital detox for mental health: A doctor shares how you can do so

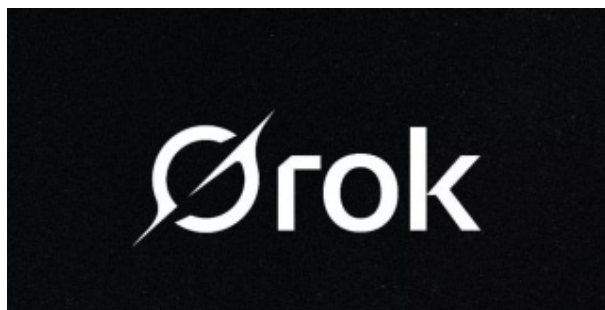
On the face of it, both S, 15, and J, 17, had everything going for them — a good school, doting parents and a life cushioned by privileges. But it was their addiction to social media and their midnight chatroom sessions that shaped their minds and sent them into a negative spiral, unnoticed by parents. To the extent that S had anxiety attacks of maniacal proportions. And J even turned violent, breaking a TV set in a fit of rage. That pubescent rage, driven by bullying and shaming on social media, can result in teens adopting violent and hitback behaviour to prove a point has been amply depicted in the Netflix show "Adolescence." But Dr Shaunak Ajinkya, consultant psychiatrist, Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital (KDAH), Mumbai is seeing many teen patients who are on the edge. "Social media provides a platform for cyberbullying in the form of mean comments, rumours, or exclusion which can cause anxiety, depression, and even suicidal thoughts. Algorithms that push content which evokes strong emotions or showing harmful content related to self-harm, eating disorders, or toxic behaviours can influence negative thought patterns and unhealthy coping mechanisms. The number of likes, shares, and followers can become a measure of self-worth. When it is low, young people may feel rejected, unimportant, insecure or unloved," he says. Then they tend to do something uncharacteristic to get noticed.

S was raised by her mother as her father had passed away following sudden cardiac arrest. She was just five but that vacuum of a father figure only grew bigger. "She was a

bright student but saw social media as a means to express herself, stay connected with friends, follow influencers and keep up with trends. However, scrolling through reels, she felt the pressure to meet unrealistic beauty standards and began to experience body image disturbances," says Dr Ajinkya. The videos made her feel inadequate about her own appearance. She started rigorous exercise and frequent fasting. Moreover, S started measuring her self-worth based on the number of likes and comments she received for her videos. "If a post didn't get as much engagement as she had hoped, she would delete it and feel anxious. As anonymous users criticized her appearance and lifestyle choices, S became more insecure. Instead of reporting or blocking users, she had internalized the negativity," says Dr Ajinkya. Her academic performance dipped, she gave up badminton and chess which she loved and reported rapid mood swings, calm one moment, rebellious the next.

J used social media to stay updated on gaming communities and engage with influencers. But then he found being bullied about his lifestyle, achievements, and physical appearance. "Some pinched him for not having updated gadgets or exotic vacations. Others reminded him that he would not get noticed without an athletic physique. This made him feel inadequate, leading to self-doubt and frustration. His growing obsession with social validation created anxiety and a fear of being perceived as unpopular. And just to be cool, he tried to mimic others in his group," says Dr Ajinkya.

Grok, unhinged! Who is responsible for its sensational responses on X?



GNS News Agency, March 24

With the Indian government in touch with Elon Musk's X over stirring responses generated by its artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot Grok, the question that many in the government are grappling with is: who is actually responsible for the retorts that the AI has been producing on the social media platform? Laden with profanities, sweeping takes, colouring some conservative users, including founder Musk, as the biggest spreaders of misinformation — Grok's responses to questions posed by Indian users have so far turned out to be an amalgamation of the attitudes and demeanour familiar to those who frequently use the social network.

Here are some facts: Grok is not a person, at best, it is computer code running on high-end compute at the backend, and at its worst, that code periodically churns out the underbelly of the data that has been fed to it. Grok is artificial, its intelligence debatable. So, when Grok uses a misogynist Hindi expletive when responding to a user about their most prominent mutuals, or calls Musk one of the biggest sources of misinformation on the social media platform — it led to people asking Grok a flurry of questions, directly through their posts, or as comments to other posts. This piece aims to demystify three main concerns around what's happening with Grok: who is responsible for its responses, are the people asking it questions somehow liable, and if Grok is a source of truth.

Who is liable, can people be penalised?

Internet platforms like X, Meta, and YouTube have legal protection from the content that their users post. This, in law, is called safe harbour — the argument being platforms have no control over what users are posting. They are mere conduits, so they can not be held liable for hosting third-party content. While that convention itself is currently being debated given virality and the potential of speech on such platforms to cause real world harms, the million dollar ques-

tion is if Grok, an artificial output generator, can have safe harbour protections. That is a complex question to deal with for lawmakers. X has told the Indian government that it has been trained on the open-Internet, which presumably also includes content users post on X. So, in a way, everything that Grok generates is based on what people spending years on the Internet have produced. But can then they be held responsible? That is like asking if the ocean can be sued for being wet. Besides, speech is a highly protected category in India, with the Indian Constitution affording the freedom of expression as a fundamental right, with some reasonable restrictions. But, those rights are available to human beings. Humans' speech should be censored only under select circumstances when they obviously violate restrictions laid down in the Constitution. Does Grok have the right to unfettered free speech? And what is Grok's free speech even — its code essentially determines what the next word in a sentence should be, which is a factor of the underlying dataset it has been trained on, which in turn is generated by actual humans. Both the code, and the content in the language model. So, many would argue that the liability of Grok's responses primarily lies with xAI, its creators, and X for allowing Grok to produce responses without any filters. But that too raises some pertinent questions. How does one hold creators of an algorithm responsible? Is it the highly-paid people who have written the code, or the low-wage data annotators? These are questions that regulators around the world are unlikely to have a quick, and accurate answer to. "Grok is certainly not a real person, it's an artificial entity. But some of its responses are definitely problematic. It's an interesting, and difficult problem, that us in government will have to figure out," a senior government official said.

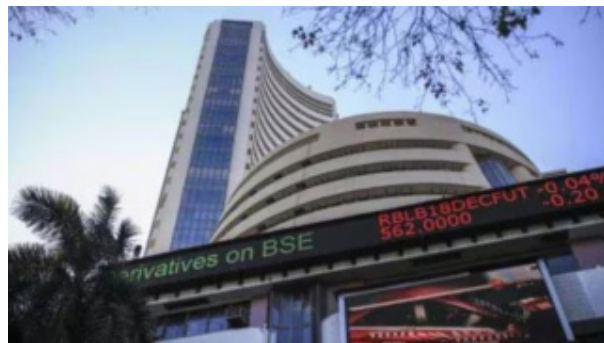
Should one trust Grok?

The short answer to that question is, AI responses should not be treated as accurate pieces of information, no matter how much they satiate one's socio-political beliefs. Already, platforms are applying filters on their AI models to restrict their political speech in order to stay safe from government scrutiny. As India headed to Lok Sabha elections last year, Google said it will restrict the types of election-related questions users can ask its artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot Gemini in the country. Earlier, Krutrim, the chatbot developed by an Indian AI startup founded by Bhavish Aggarwal of Ola, had been found to self-censor on certain keywords. AI platforms are built to predict the next word in a phrase, and to try and satisfy the query a user has asked — and models like Grok have so far shown they will do anything to achieve that, beg, borrow or steal.

Markets bounce back after falling in opening trade on fresh foreign fund inflows

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex declined 252.8 points to 76,095.26 in early trade. The NSE Nifty dropped 57.85 points to 23,132.80. (File Image) The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex declined 252.8 points to 76,095.26 in early trade. The NSE Nifty dropped 57.85 points to 23,132.80. Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty opened on a negative note on Friday but soon recovered the lost ground and were trading with gains as fresh foreign fund inflows supported investors' sentiments.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex declined 252.8 points to 76,095.26 in early trade. The NSE Nifty dropped 57.85 points to 23,132.80. However, later both the benchmark indices recovered all the early lost ground and were trading higher. The BSE benchmark gauge traded 205.09 points higher at 76,550.97, and the Nifty quoted 70.05 points up at 23,262.55. From the Sensex pack, Bajaj Finance, Nestle, Kotak Mahindra Bank, NTPC, Maruti, Power Grid, Adani Ports, Tata Motors, Reliance Industries and Bajaj Finserv were among the gainers. However, Infosys, Titan, HCL Tech, Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank, IndusInd Bank, Tech Mahindra, Asian Paints and Zomato were among the laggards. In Asian markets, Seoul and Tokyo were quoting in the positive territory while Shanghai and Hong Kong traded lower. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 3,239.14 crore on Thurs-



day, according to exchange data. "The rally in the market this week which saw the Nifty rise by 3.5 per cent has come at a time when trade tensions are escalating and more is expected when the reciprocal tariffs kick in on April 2. The main driver of the rally is the buying by FIIs in the cash market in two days," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.43 per cent to USD 72.31 a barrel. On Thursday, the BSE benchmark jumped 899.01 points or 1.19 per cent to settle at 76,348.06, regaining the 76,000 level. The Nifty surged 283.05 points or 1.24 per cent to reclaim the 23,000-mark to settle at 23,190.65.

India's oil import dependency on course to hit fresh full-year high in FY25 amid growing demand, stagnant domestic production

Growing demand for fuel and other petroleum products amid stagnant domestic crude oil output led India's reliance on imported crude oil to increase to over 88 per cent in the first 11 months of the current financial year ending March (FY25), indicating that the import dependency for the full financial year could breach the all-time-high level of the last financial year. The latest data released by the oil ministry's Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell (PPAC) shows that India's oil import dependency was 88.2 per cent in April-February, up from 87.7 per cent in the corresponding period of the last financial year (FY24). For the full FY24, reliance on imported oil was 87.8 per cent. Industry watchers believe that the import dependency level for the entire FY25 could be a tad higher than the April-February level, as was the case in the previous financial year.

India's energy needs are consistently growing, leading to higher oil imports. This is fuelled by factors like growing energy-intensive industries, increased vehicle sales, a rapidly expanding aviation sector, growing consumption of petrochemicals, and a rising population. India's reliance on imported oil has generally increased over the years, with the exception of FY21 when demand was suppressed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. India's oil import dependency was 87.8 per cent in FY24, 87.4 per cent in FY23, 85.5 per cent in FY22, 84.4 per cent in FY21, 85 per cent in FY20, and 83.8 per cent in FY19.

India's heavy reliance on imported crude oil makes its economy vulnerable to global oil price fluctuations. This also impacts the country's trade deficit, foreign exchange reserves, the rupee's exchange rate, and inflation rate, among others. The Indian government aims to reduce the country's reliance on imported crude oil but faces challenges due to sluggish domestic oil output amidst rising demand. In 2015, the government aimed to reduce reliance on oil imports to 67 per cent by 2022. However, import dependency has only increased. The government has implemented several policy reforms to encourage investments in India's oil and gas exploration and production sector, the latest being the Oilfield (Regulatory and Development) Amendment Bill, which was recently passed by the Parliament. The government is also



promoting electric mobility, biofuels, and other alternative fuels to reduce oil imports. While there has been an increase in electric mobility adoption and the blending of biofuels with conventional fuels, it is not sufficient to offset petroleum demand growth. India's crude oil imports rose to 219.9 million tonnes in the 11 months to February from 213.4 million tonnes in the year-ago period. Meanwhile, domestic oil production declined slightly to 26.2 million tonnes from 26.9 million tonnes. Total domestic consumption of petroleum products in April-February rose 2.6 per cent year-on-year to 218.3 million tonnes, of which only 25.8 million tonnes of products estimated to have been produced from domestic crude oil, resulting in a self-sufficiency level of just 11.8 per cent, per the PPAC data. The calculation of the extent of import reliance is based on the domestic consumption of petroleum products and excludes petroleum product exports as those volumes do not represent India's demand. India — the world's third-largest consumer of crude oil and also one of its top importers — is a net exporter of petroleum products. The country's gross oil import bill for April-February was \$124.7 billion, an increase of almost 3 per cent year-on-year. Crude oil imports top the list of India's merchandise imports. India's crude oil consumption and imports are projected to rise further due to growing domestic demand. Consumption of petroleum products is projected to increase by 4.7 per cent in FY26, reaching 252.93 million tonnes, per PPAC projections.

India-EU FTA Talks: Progress on dispute settlement, stalemate on rules of origin



In the first round of trade deal negotiations between India and the European Union after the EU College of Commissioners' visit to India last month, both countries made considerable progress in agreeing on the norms that will guide dispute settlement under the pact but failed to make a significant breakthrough on rules of origin, which help determine the national source of a product.

Amid rising protectionism globally, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, had announced that both sides would aim to conclude the free trade agreement by the end of 2025. The two parties have been negotiating the agreement since July 2022 and have held ten rounds of talks. The next round is set to start on May 5 in New Delhi. "Negotiators made good progress, particularly on mediation. The main sections of the dispute settlement text are now substantially agreed upon. Intense discussions took place on rules of origin but did not lead to major breakthroughs," a report released by the European Union on progress made in the tenth round of talks stated. "A particular focus was given to chapters related to market access. For the first time, sectoral sessions took place, examining specific industries such as automobiles and medical devices from a holistic perspective, addressing all obstacles impeding market access, including tariffs, rules of origin, and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)," the report said. Specific discussions on cars and medical devices follow an EU official's statement last month that the 27-member bloc would not sign a trade deal without "substantive"

market access from India for the sale of European-made cars. The emphasis on automobile exports likely stems from the ongoing automobile crisis in the region. In October 2024, Germany-based Volkswagen announced plans to close at least three of its German factories. The EU report noted that "intense discussions took place on rules of origin" but did not lead to any major breakthrough. Both sides discussed the product-specific rules for several sectors, including "processed agricultural products, fisheries, pharmaceutical products, chemical products, fertilisers, textiles and clothing, car parts, wood pulp, and paper."

"The report also stated that limited progress was made on technical regulations, market surveillance, and technical discussions, adding that important divergences remain on a number of issues, including the incorporation of WTO provisions and the annexes on pharmaceutical products and motor vehicles. "The EU raised the issue of India's Quality Control Orders (QCOs)," the report said. The QCOs block the import and sale of items that do not bear a Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) mark, and a number of countries have cited them as a barrier to trade.

Last month, Ursula von der Leyen stated that the free trade agreement between the EU and India would be the largest deal of its kind anywhere in the world. Without naming China, she suggested that India and the EU could help each other achieve the "common goal" of de-risking their economies in sensitive sectors such as batteries, pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, clean hydrogen, and defence.

UK's Prudential to float venture with HCL group for health insurance

Prudential plc, Prudential plc joint venture with Vama Sundari Investments, Vama Sundari Investments (Delhi) Private Ltd, HCL Group, Indian express business, business news, current affairs Apart from 27 non-life insurance companies, seven standalone health insurance firms are already operating in India. UK-based insurance giant Prudential plc has announced its plan to establish a joint venture with Vama Sundari Investments (Delhi) Private Ltd, an HCL Group's promoter company founded by Shiv Nadar, to operate a standalone health insurance business in India.

Subject to obtaining regulatory approvals, Prudential Group Holdings, a UK subsidiary of Prudential plc, will hold a 70% stake in the joint venture, while Vama will hold the remaining 30% stake. Prudential plc is a member of the UK FTSE100 Index. Prudential's announcement comes three days after the exit of German insurance giant Allianz from joint ventures with the Bajaj group. In India, Prudential's business primarily consists of a 21.97 per cent holding in the Indian Stock Exchange listed life insurance business, ICICI Prudential Life, and 49 per cent of the asset manager, ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company Limited, through its asset management business Eastspring Investments.

Anil Wadhvani, CEO, Prudential plc, said: "India is a key strategic market for Prudential and we have a deep connection with the country having opened our first branch in Kolkata in 1923. Today, we have a significant presence with life insurance and asset management businesses providing a comprehensive offering of insurance and wealth products. Prudential plc (UK) provides life and health insurance and asset management in 24 markets across Asia and Africa. Apart from 27 non-life insurance companies, seven standalone health insurance firms are already operating in India. "India's growing economy, population and middle class create significant opportunities for growth in its insurance market, especially in the health, savings, protection, and retirement sectors," he said. "Transforming access to healthcare and increasing insurance penetration are strategic priorities for Prudential and through our comprehensive health solutions we aim to offer help to millions of Indian consumers when they need it most," Wadhvani



said. "Through this collaboration, we aim to advance our common mission to enhance access to quality health insurance and drive greater penetration across the country. It reflects our commitment to improving the well-being of millions of Indians and contributing to a stronger, more inclusive healthcare ecosystem," said Shikhar Malhotra, Executive Director, Vama Sundari Investments.

The joint venture health insurance company will be led by industry veteran Amar Joshi (CEO designate), subject to regulatory approval. "The joint venture aims to address the growing healthcare needs of the Indian consumer and contribute to the Indian Government's vision — 'Insurance for All by 2047'," Prudential said, adding that Prudential has over 100 years of history in Asia. HCL Group, founded in 1976 as one of India's pioneering IT garage start-ups, has been at the forefront of modern computing, achieving several industry firsts, including the introduction of the 8-bit microprocessor-based computer in 1978, ahead of its global peers. Over the decades, the group has expanded its presence across diverse sectors, including technology, healthcare, and talent management solutions and comprises various companies including HCL Tech and HCL Healthcare. The HCL group generates annual revenues of over US\$ 13.8 billion with 220,000 employees operating across 60 countries. HCL Healthcare is one of India's largest corporate health solutions firms and delivers full circle wellness through a tech-driven 'phygital' model of care.

Govt looks for integration of unconventional datasets in census, other surveys

census, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, MoSPI, unconventional datasets in census, Indian express business, business news, current affairs The linking statistical data to geospatial locations and making it easily accessible to various data users was discussed in the session.

The government is looking to tap unconventional datasets and share alternative, administrative datasets with various stakeholders to enable integration with census and other surveys. In a brainstorming session on "Leveraging Non-Conventional Data Sources for Official Statistics" held by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) on Thursday, discussions were held that there should be efforts to create an enabling environment to use all possible data sources — conventional and non-conventional — to use for decision making. "It was discussed that the ministries / departments may use the alternative datasets for the real time monitoring and tracking the decision variables. In addition, it also emerged that the ministries / departments may make available alternative / administrative datasets to various stakeholders so that their integration with census / survey data may become possible," an official statement said. MoSPI Secretary Saurabh

Garg urged representatives of the central ministries and departments including statistical advisors to explore the possibility of reusing datasets generated by the other agencies. "The culture of data sharing, however, maintaining the sanctity of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) must be fostered in the working of all the stakeholders," the statement quoted him as saying. The session was attended by Kris Gopalakrishnan, Chairman, Axilor Ventures and co-founder of Infosys; Rana Hasan, Regional Lead Economist, South Asia, Asian Development Bank (ADB); and Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC) among others. In total, 150 delegates attended the session. Gopalakrishnan stressed on the importance of non-conventional data by citing use of Aadhaar. He said there is a need for standardisation of various datasets, strengthening data processing capabilities, and developing data governance framework, adding that there should be a system to allow access to private data, legally backed and for rightful usages. The linking statistical data to geospatial locations and making it easily accessible to various data users was discussed in the session. Ayago Wambile, Senior Economist, World Bank, spoke about different non-traditional data sources such as scanner data, mobile phone data etc. tags:

The rise of football manager style strong coaches



GNS News Agency, March 24

A support staff standing beside the boundary ropes having an animated discussion; head coach hurrying out to the middle as soon as the umpire points to a time-out; cryptic messages struck outside the dressing room or a paddle being raised to communicate a strategy to the captain or batsmen in the middle; bowling coaches jumping off their seat and hurrying to a bowler for a chat just after being taken for plenty. These are no longer rare visuals, but most frequent in the Indian Premier League. "The pool of captains' is small. The pool of coaches is bigger," Mike Hesson who coached Punjab Kings and Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the past tells The Indian Express.

In a league that was once the battlefield of shrewd captains, it's now beginning to incline towards a combat zone headed by master tacticians and strategists enlisting help from support staff to assist with data. With the franchises moving on from MS Dhoni, Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Faf du Plessis as captains, the upcoming IPL will have just two captains (Hardik Pandya and Shreyas Iyer) who have had the experience of captaining a championship winning team. And incidentally both are now part of a different franchise, where they are out there to prove it again.

"I think a coach knows his life as well," says Hesson. "If the team does well, it's the players, and if the team doesn't go well, it's the coach. I mean, that's the general philosophy and every coach enters knowing that. Every franchise has high expectations, and rightfully so, and you get a period of

time to show whether you can turn a team around — whether that means turning them from last into play-off contention, or sustaining a winning culture and winning trophies. Every team is different in the IPL. But I think every franchise has a very high expectation of what the coach can bring," Hesson says. And so, IPL is fast moving from being captain-run to being coach-led. While the likes of Stephen Fleming and Mahela Jayawardene mostly restrict themselves to the background, Ashish Nehra, Chandrakant Pandit, Andy Flower, Ricky Ponting, Justin Langer with their animated gestures and signals from the dug-out or near the boundary ropes can easily remind you of Pep Guardiola, Carlo Ancelotti or Mikel Arteta. While Hesson agrees that the influence of coaches has increased, he prefers striking a balance. "I think that the one beauty you have from the dugout is you can see a completely different perspective. So, I think as long as the coach doesn't think that he knows best, it's fine. A big part of the coach's job is to work with the players outside of the game so that they're confident and prepared in their decision making. I think the last thing you want to do is being trying to captain by remote control. I think that really undermines the captain. So, I think there really is a balance," Hesson says.

In that regard the IPL seems far different to a national team culture where in recent years players have turned their back on coaches who have come across as the command centre. Dan Weston, who offers strategic services to T20 teams and is currently associated with Birmingham Phoenix in The Hundred, believes coaches need to take more decision making power. "I think that they've sometimes been reluctant to do that. There's definitely a culture sometimes where players want to do it their own way and coaches can be kind of laid back about that. But I do think that there's a balance to be had between letting the players run the show and actually having, having a coach who's very strong tactically. You got to have a strong tactical coach, definitely," Weston tells this newspaper. It is this need for a strong tactical coach that made Royal Challengers Bengaluru turn to Andy Flower who until 2020 had not coached beyond England. But since then, he is amongst the most successful, having coached teams in the IPL, CPL, PSL, ILT20 and The Hundred, winning three titles. In 15 seasons across

these tournaments, his teams have made the knockouts on 13 occasions and with RCB being the perennial under-achievers, they turned to Flower in 2023 so that he got an opportunity to get familiarised with the franchise and the home conditions in 2024 before building a team of his liking in 2025. It meant, going into the big auction, RCB retained just three players.

And having an inexperienced captain also makes it relatively easier for someone like Flower to put his message across. "If you have an inexperienced captain, they're going to lean more on the coach to give them strategy. It can be a good thing as a coach because you don't want to have to be pushing against someone who's done the captaincy for like 10 years and has really rigid ideas. So actually, it could be a tool for a coach to push their own ideas through," Weston says. And it isn't just RCB and Flower. At Delhi, Axar Patel will be banking on Hemang Badani, Rishabh Pant will rely on Justin Langer, Shreyas Iyer gets to reunite with Ricky Ponting at Punjab Kings and similarly, Rituraj Gaikwad and Hardik Pandya will have familiar faces to help them in the middle at Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians. The downside of it is there have also been instances where at the end of a successful season the coach has run away with the accolades. Last week, Shreyas believed he didn't get as much credit as he would have deserved for winning the IPL last year with Gautam Gambhir hogging the limelight as mentor. Hesson also says it is important for the coaches to not overly indulge in coaching from the sidelines. "You can offer an objective view, and I think you should, but certainly not send out messages all the time. I think part of your role as a coach is to create a leadership group that can be problem solvers out on the field. I think as a coach, if you're sending out too many messages, I just think that undermines that whole process. So, in all honesty, I think if it happens too much, it means you haven't done the work beforehand, in my view," Hesson says. All said and done, in a league where you are judged only on results, more than the captains it is the coaches who often face the axe. Given the responsibilities handed out it isn't surprising that these coaches can no longer be just confined to the dressing room comforts and have to orchestrate the play from the sidelines.

Rajasthan Royals aim for second IPL title under Sanju Samson's leadership

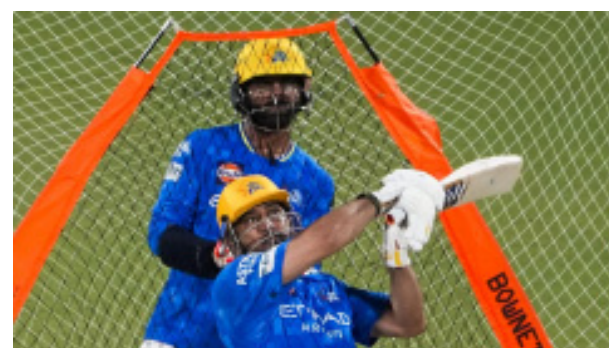


GNS News Agency, March 24

Hyderabad: Champions in the inaugural edition, Rajasthan Royals are still in search of the second title in the IPL and should hope the flamboyant opener and captain Sanju Samson lead from the front in this season. Royals, which reached the 2022 edition final and lost to Gujarat Titans before failing to qualify for the play-offs in the next season, has been one of the teams which has always caught the imagination of the fans. With former India coach Rahul Dravid being the head coach and one who has seen Sanju Samson from his early days, the chemistry between them should be a huge plus. In the last season, Royals knocked out Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the qualifier before being eliminated by Sunrisers Hyderabad.

The batting line-up is pretty impressive with Samson and Yashasvi Jaiswal at the top, the free-stroking and dangerous Riyan Parag, Dhruv Jurel, Nitish Rana, West Indian Shimron Hetmyer all capable of taking on the best of the bowling attacks on their day. So, effectively, Royals should look to at least three of these big guns in batting to come good on any given day. Clearly, Hetmyer needs to fire on all cylinders even as his form and fitness may be a bit of a concern for the management. For sure, all eyes will be on whether the 14-year-old batting sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi, who happens to be the youngest player ever to clinch an IPL deal, will get a chance to showcase his talent. Interestingly, Royals preferred not to retain or buy back the likes of Trent Boult, Yuzvendra Chahal and R. Ashwin instead secured the services of fast bowlers Englishman Jofra Archer, Tushar Deshpande, Akash Madhwal and Sri Lankan spin duo of Wanindu Hasaranga and Maheesh Theekshana which is expected to take control of the crucial middle-overs if the team were to be in a with a chance to stun the opposition. It was not that Royals was outplayed in the last season as it won eight games and lost five and should be looking for the desired consistency right through the championship.

Consistency key to CSK's pursuit of sixth title



GNS News Agency, March 24

Since the start of the IPL, Chennai Super Kings (CSK) has been the epitome of consistency, reaching the Play-offs on every occasion it played from 2008 to 2019. However, since 2020, the team has blown hot and cold every alternate season. CSK did not qualify for the knockouts thrice (2020, 2022 & 2024) while clinching the title in 2021 and 2023. Last year, Super Kings failed to progress narrowly, losing out to Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Net Run Rate (NRR). After posting four wins in the first six games, CSK's campaign stuttered towards the business-end of the league stage, adding just three more victories. The lack of firepower in the middle-order and the inability of the Indian pacers to step up proved costly.

The Yellow Brigade has always looked to maximise its home conditions, which aid the tweekers, and has doubled down on its tried-and-tested 'spin to win' formula. The franchise spent big bucks at the mega auction to secure Afghanistan left-arm wrist spinner Noor Ahmad and local hero R. Ashwin, the squad's two most expensive picks. Apart from the spin duo, CSK has focused on building a strong India core, including batter Rahul Tripathi and pacers Khaleel Ahmed and Anshul Kamboj. Crucially, it managed to buy back Devon Conway and Rachin Ravindra at the auction. Conway's absence last year hurt the team, as it struggled to get good starts despite skipper Rituraj Gaikwad's fine form. Their opening association was a key element of success two years ago, and the two will look to rekindle it. However, there are areas of concern for Super Kings. The outfit lacks a big-hitting overseas professional and will hope Sam Curran can fill that role. Similarly, apart from Matheesha Pathirana, none of the other quicks possess the X-factor. As has been the case during the last few seasons, all eyes will be on M.S. Dhoni and his future. Last year, the five-time trophy-winning skipper turned the clock back with vital cameos. The fans and the management will pray that the 43-year-old icon remains in the six-hitting zone. Finally, it will be a massive test for Rituraj in his second year in the hot seat even as the IPL giant prepares for a post-Dhoni era.

Lucknow Super Giants rely on power-hitters as bowling concerns loom

Hyderabad: Rishabh Pant, Nicholas Pooran, David Miller, Aiden Markram and Mitchell Marsh. Names which can spell disaster for any bowling attack when they are on a song.

Well, if Lucknow Super Giants were to make a serious impact in the coming edition of IPL starting on March 22, this line-up has to explode. There is no doubting their ability to combine class, power and precision in any given conditions. With Pant, the costliest player in the IPL this season bought at a whopping Rs 27 crores, leading the challenge, LSG's fortunes hinge around the brilliance of these batters.

How Kirsty Coventry emerged the runaway winner of the IOC polls, beating Seb Coe and Co

GNS News Agency, March 24

Former Olympic champion swimmer from Zimbabwe, Kirsty Coventry, was elected as the president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Greece on Thursday, after she received 49 out of the 97 possible votes to win with an overwhelming margin. In the organisation's 130-year history, this is the first time a woman — and an African — has been elected to the all-important post. While her victory can't be termed as a surprise — Coventry was seen as the outgoing president Thomas Bach's preferred choice to take over — that the process did not go beyond one round would have shocked her six opponents, prominent of them being former Olympic champion Sebastian Coe of Britain.

Coe, the World Athletics president who stirred the pot by announcing prize money for Olympic medalists in track and field, got just eight votes to finish third behind Coventry and Spain's Juan Antonio Samaranch Junior, who received 28 votes. Coventry, 41, will take charge of the organisation that governs world sport and conducts the Olympic Games, in June when the official handover will take place. That the first woman president of the IOC is from Zimbabwe is not a coincidence, given that all of the African country's Olympic gold medalists are women — the first in 1980, when the hockey team finished on the top of the podium and then in 2004 and 2008, when Coventry swam to Olympic golds. "The young girl who first started swimming in Zimbabwe all those years ago could never have dreamt of this moment," Coventry told the elite group of 100-plus IOC members who voted, comprising royalty, heads of state, Hollywood A-listers and billionaires. "I am particularly proud to be the first female IOC President, and also the first from Africa. I hope that this vote will be an inspiration to many people. Glass ceilings have been shattered today, and I am fully aware of my responsibilities as a role model."

From an Indian point of view, Coventry will preside over the decision to select the host of the 2036 Olympics. India has mounted an aggressive bid for the Games and is in competition with Qatar and Saudi Arabia, among at least 10 more nations, to host the 2036 edition. In an interview with The Indian Express earlier this month, Coventry had welcomed India's bid, saying it was "it's really very awesome to see the number of newer regions so interested in hosting the Games."

At the same time, she had warned that the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), which has been in an administrative flux for more than a year, must first get its house in order. "At the end of the day, we need strong NOCs that



have good governance and transparency and are working well for the development of their sports and for the Olympic movement within the country," Coventry had told this daily. The future hosts of the Summer and Winter Olympics is one of the many decisions Coventry will be faced with. She takes over the IOC at a time when world sport keeps getting drawn into geopolitical battles, its business model remains under scanner, the concept of 'enhanced Games' ups the ante at a time when doping remains rife in the Olympics and climate change disrupts the Winter Olympics scheduling and the training programmes of Summer Olympians. Coventry will also have to navigate the challenges posed by the Trump presidency in the build-up to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, the latest being a visa ban on nearly a dozen countries. Among the top issues in the lead up to the LA Games will be the participation of transgender and athletes with high testosterone levels in the women's category. In her interview with The Indian Express, Coventry had said "it is time to protect women's sport". "Everyone should have access to sport, but when it comes to high-level competition and competing at the Olympic Games, for right now there should only be two categories, the male and female categories, and I believe the IOC should take a leading role based on the conversations with the International Federations," she had said. Coventry also flew down to Dubai to meet International Cricket Council chairman Jay Shah on the sidelines of India's Champions Trophy semifinal against Australia earlier this month, where the plight of Afghanistan women's cricketers was discussed. Shah was also present at the IOC Session on Thursday in his capacity as the ICC chairman. Former Olympic gold medalist Abhinav Bindra, too, was a special invitee. Both of them did not have voting rights. India's only voting member at the election was Reliance Foundation chairperson Nita Ambani, the country's only IOC member.

Mohammed Siraj on Champions Trophy snub: 'I only have a cricket ball in my hands'



GNS News Agency, March 24

Mohammed Siraj has opened up about the recent Champions Trophy snub where he was left out of the Indian team. India, who were also missing pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah due to injury, had gone on to win the title, defeating New Zealand in the final. Ahead of the start of the Indian Premier League, Siraj, who will play for the Gujarat Titans, was asked about being left out of the Indian team for the Champions Trophy. "Look, selection is not in my hands. I have only a cricket ball in my hands and I wanted to do as much as I can with that. I don't want to put pressure on myself thinking about selection, as I want to focus on my performance," Siraj told PTI. Siraj also added that tournaments like the Asia Cup and the upcoming series against England are at the back of his mind even though he tries to focus on the present. "Yeah a? a player, it remains in the back of your mind that there is a tour of England and the Asia Cup but I don't really seriously think about it, as my

focus is on IPL and doing well for Gujarat Titans and helping them win another IPL title," he said. Siraj was released by the Royal Challengers Bengaluru ahead of the IPL mega auction. In the auction, Siraj found a new home at the Titans, who were seeking a replacement for Mohammed Shami. "I have been playing for some years now, and usually, we don't get that much rest. But now that I have got some time off, I have worked on my fitness and bowling skills. I have worked really hard with how to bowl with new and old balls, and I wanted to work on my slower balls and yorkers. This time I really used to work on those areas, and let's how things pan out for me in this IPL," he added.

Nitish Kumar Reddy recalls special gift from Virat Kohli and his unforgettable century

Bengaluru: Sunrisers Hyderabad all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy, a huge fan of Virat Kohli, recalls the moment when he couldn't resist after the cricket legend offered up a prized pair of his shoes. "Back in the locker room, he (Kohli) once asked Sarfaraz (Khan), 'Sarf, tera size kya hai?' (Sarfaraz, what's your shoe size?), and he said, 'Nine.' Then he turned to me, and I thought, 'Oh my god, I have to guess this correctly,' because even if they weren't my size, I really wanted his shoes," Nitish explained in a chat with Puma at a promotional event here.

Jake Fraser-McGurk slams 39-ball 110* in Delhi Capitals intra-squad match



GNS News Agency, March 24

Jake IPL DC Delhi Capitals batter Jake Fraser-McGurk was a shot during the Indian Premier League (IPL) T20 cricket match between Delhi Capitals and Mumbai Indians, at Arun Jaitley Cricket Stadium in New Delhi, Destructive opener Jake Fraser-McGurk has sent out warning bells for the bowlers in the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 after he smoked a 39-ball 110 in Delhi Capitals intra-squad match at the Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium in Visakhapatnam.

In a video posted on X by Delhi Capitals, the right-handed batter can be seen in action. He remained unbeaten and his knock was studded with nine fours and ten maximums. Jake Fraser-McGurk has the set IPL on fire last season, slamming 330 runs in nine innings at an average of 36.66 and a strike rate of 234.04. He is set to open for the Delhi Capitals, when they will lock horns against Lucknow Super Giants on Monday. Not too long ago, the youngster almost quit cricket to pursue golf, another sport he is very good at. Jake's childhood coach Shanon Young attributed his ward's high backlift to his love for golf. "He is a very good golfer. At one stage, he wanted to take up golf as a professional. Believe it or not, even I once told him to switch to golf," Shanon told The Indian Express from Victoria. "I first started working with him when he was 12 years old. I reckon his high backlift developed when he was 15 or 16. He started to put his hands up because he almost had too much power, and too much impact in terms of getting that bat back. It was just natural. What helped him is that his head stays still. He picks up line and length quicker than anyone I have ever seen. He has done things from a young age that I have never seen anyone doing with such ease," he said.

Djokovic disagrees with parts of players' association lawsuit against governing bodies

GNS News Agency, March 24

Novak Djokovic said on Thursday (March 20, 2025) that he disagreed with some aspects of a class-action lawsuit filed by the Professional Tennis Players' Association's (PTPA) against the sport's governing bodies. The PTPA filed the suit in a New York court on Tuesday accusing the ATP, WTA, the International Tennis Federation and the International Tennis Integrity Agency of anti-competitive practices.

The 24-times Grand Slam champion, who co-founded the lobby group with Canada's Vasek Pospisil in 2020, is not among the 12 current and former players listed as plaintiffs alongside the PTPA in the U.S. lawsuit in New York. "In general, I felt I didn't need to sign the letter because I want other players to step up. I've been very active in tennis politics," Djokovic told a reporters at the Miami Open.

"This is a classic lawsuit, so lawyers to lawyers, type of situation. So to be quite frank with you, there are things that I agree with in the lawsuit, and then there are also things that I don't agree with."

The 37-year-old Serbian added that he found some of the wording in it quite strong. "I think the legal team knows what they're doing and what kind of terminology they need to use to get the right effect." The action targets the ATP and WTA Tour's prize money formula, ranking systems and an "unsustainable" 11-month calendar that disregards player welfare. The men's governing body, the ATP, rejected the PTPA's claims, saying the lobby group was guilty of "division and distraction", while the women's WTA called the lawsuit "unfortunate and misguided".

Khakee The Bengal Chapter review: Prosenjit, Saswata Chatterjee's show flattened by banality



acing bad guy is not that new even for those who don't follow Bengali cinema: remember him as the creepy Bob Biswas in the Vidya Balan starrer Kahaani? Parambrata Chattopadhyay made his Bollywood debut as a smart cop in Sujoy Ghosh's 2012 delicious thriller: here he is again, playing a policeman. Chitrangada Singh, as an ambitious politician, reminds you of her lovely idealistic young woman in Sudhir Mishra's 2003 'Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi', in her crumpled cotton saris. And Prosenjit Chatterjee's star turn as the powerful legacy studio owner in Vikramaditya Motwane's 2023 'Jubilee' is still top-of-mind-recall: here he plays a dodgy neta. The action flashes back to the early 50s when Shankar Barua Bagha (Saswata Chatterjee) comes to the city as a boy with his mother, and carves his way to the top of the crime heap, displaying the kind of savagery required to run a hard gang. His faithful acolytes Sagar Talukdar and Ranjit Thakur (Ritwik Bhowmik and Aadil Zafar Khan) keep everything humming, keeping an eye on their own lower rungs, as well as the 'netas' who use their services. As crafty politician Barun Roy who uses every trick in the book to keep ahead of the game, Prosenjit has his moments. Sadly, Parambrata is confined to a guest appearance: more of him would have done this Bengal chapter good. Jeet, as upright cop Arjun Maitra whose mission is to clean up his city—'not the city of joy but bhoy (fear)'—is effective too, but too many close-ups as reaction shots slow things down.

Every time there's a combing operation, the goons mysteriously manage to get the upper hand. Ooh there's a mole amongst us, says a cop, with deep surprise: it's like no one's heard of bad eggs in the police department before. The banal bits weigh heavily on some of the interesting twists, and you are left wondering where so much of the cultural specificity of Bengal, which should have really made this thing really sing, has vanished. Does it have to do with the imperatives of streaming in India, to make everything palatable to everyone, even if that leads to flattened narratives? Whatever happened to taking creative risks, in order to create the excitement which a show like this needs? Examples are not far: Netflix's own latest show, 'Adolescence', which has blown us all away, is set in a small British town, with its characters speaking in accents-and-cadences completely their own, without fearing if the audience will be alienated. Can we please have a show like that for Indian audiences? Or is that too tall an ask?

With the catchy title song going, 'ek aur rang bhi dekhniye Bengal ka', we are hopeful that this new Neeraj Pandey series, Khakee The Bengal Chapter, set in Calcutta/Kolkata, will actually be different. The eight-part show starts with a kidnapping gone wrong, and then the story begins unpacking its wares in right earnest: sloppy goons, sharp cops, a posse of politicians with murky underground connections, nefarious activities involving dead bodies and organ harvesting. A promising start quickly descends into predictability. The beats are familiar, the character types are even more so. Apart from the fact that the faces are mostly Bengali actors—some familiar, some not so—Khakee The Bengal Chapter comes off as same old. And that's too bad, because the ensemble comprises some of the most popular actors working in Bengali, starting with top stars Prosenjit Chatterjee, Parambrata Chattopadhyay, and Jeet, amongst others.

As in the Bihar chapter (2022), also created by Pandey, which was lifted by a clutch of stirring acts, especially from Avinash Tiwary, Ashutosh Rana and Jatin Sarna, we are given a tussle between mobsters-with-history and good-and-bad-cops. Which is fine, because cops-and-robbers will never go out of vogue: all you need is a slap-up plot with enough edge. But that's not what we get here: even the Bengali dialogue is leavened with enough Hindi and English for us to feel comfortable, the patina of newness kept carefully in check.

Some of the casting choices have been made keeping familiarity in mind. Saswata Chatterjee playing a men-

Vicky Kaushal knows when Katrina Kaif wants him to stay out of the house for the whole day, she calls him a 'fantastic talker and listener'

One of Bollywood's most beloved power couples, Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal, never fail to melt the hearts of their fans whenever they open up about each other and their adorable relationship. Not only are they each other's biggest cheerleaders, but they also never miss a chance to celebrate and motivate one another. Now, a new interview has caught people's attention as Katrina spoke about how Vicky supports her dreams and endeavours, proving yet again why he is an exceptional husband. Mentioning that most of the major meetings concerning Kay Beauty, her makeup brand, take place at their home, Katrina shared that Vicky is well-versed in how things unfold during such occasions. "Every time there's a Kay meeting... the big discussions happen at my house... Every time it's scheduled, my husband asks me 'What do you have (planned for) today?' If I say 'I have a Kay meeting', he goes, 'Okay, so basically, you want me out of the house the whole day.' We (at Kay Beauty) spend a lot of time together as a team," she shared during a session at FILA 2025.

Reflecting on personal growth, Katrina admitted that her involvement with Kay Beauty has helped her become a better listener over the years, fulfilling her husband's wish. "The biggest lesson I've learned does echo something my husband used to say, especially in the first few months of our marriage, which is: 'Let me talk'. It's really important, no matter how passionate you are, to give everyone at the table a place and space to be heard. Learning to be a good listener to all the team members has been important for me. However, he (Vicky) has learnt to let me talk," she quipped, adding that her husband is a "fantastic talker and listener." Vicky Kaushal and Katrina Kaif tied the knot in 2021 in a



picturesque wedding in Rajasthan. On the work front, Vicky is currently riding high on the blockbuster success of the historical action drama Chhaava, where he portrayed Sambhaji Maharaj, the second ruler of the Maratha Empire. The film has already become the highest-grossing Hindi release of the year, earning over Rs 760 crore worldwide. Meanwhile, Katrina was last seen in director Sriram Raghavan's mystery thriller Merry Christmas (2024), where she starred alongside Tamil actor Vijay Sethupathi.



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Amaal Malik deletes post about riff with parents, writes another: 'Nothing changes between me and Armaan'



Musician Amaal Malik cooked up quite a storm with his social media post about being diagnosed with clinical depression, and blaming his parents for creating a distance between him and his brother, musician Armaan Malik. He also said in the post that for the time being, he is breaking off his ties with his parents. However, he has since deleted the post, after it created quite the furor. Nevertheless, he followed it up with another post addressing his previous post, and reiterated his love and respect for his brother. Amaal wrote, "Thank you for the love and support. It truly means a

lot, but I would request the media portals to not harass my family. Please don't sensationalise and give negative headlines to my vulnerability. It's a request." In an earlier post, he wrote that the musical journey of the brothers ensured the narrative of them being 'XYZ's nephew or son' has changed. "The journey has been terrific for the both of us but the actions of my parents have been the reason we as brothers have gone too far from one another and all of this has made me step in for myself as it has left a very deep scar left across my heart."

Amaal and Armaan are the sons of actor-composer Daboo Malik, who is the brother of noted composer Anu Malik. In the new post, Amaal expressed his reservations about the hate that is being targeted towards his family. He said, "It's taken a lot for me to open up and it is a very tough time for me. I will always love my family but for now, from afar. Nothing changes between us brothers. Armaan and I are one and nothing can be between us. Love and Peace."

In fact, right after the first, and now-deleted post, got viral, Amaal's mother Jyoti Malik, spoke to Hindustan Times, and said, "I don't think you need to be involved in all this. Whatever he has put is his choice. I am sorry. Thank you." In the earlier statement, Amaal said that his parents were robbing his peace, and he was going to maintain a 'strictly professional' relationship with them. "I have been robbed of my peace, drained emotionally and maybe financially too but that's the least of my concerns. What really matters is that I am clinically depressed because of these happenings. Yes I have only myself to blame for my actions but my self worth has been diminished countless times by actions of near and dear ones that stole pieces of my soul."

Tumko Meri Kasam Movie Review: A meandering and overly long courtroom drama



Tumko Meri Kasam Movie Review: Somewhere lost in the meandering and overly long courtroom drama-cum-love story is the tale of a doctor's vision. With a desperate attempt to ramp up the drama, the film tries to incorporate too many elements, plot-twists and frequent flashbacks. The result is a messy, verbose and over-wrought drama.

This film, written and directed by Vikram Bhatt, fictionalises the story of Ajay Murdia, the founder of the nationwide chain of fertility clinics, Indira IVF, while incorporating some real facts of his life and career into the narrative. With the support of his wife Indira (played by Adah Sharma), Ajay (his younger character is played by Ishwak Singh and older by Anupam Kher) after quitting his secure government job opens a clinic in Udaipur that offers treatment for infertility. Subsequently, they scale up their operations and offer IVF facility to those seeking to bear children. Though originally a pathologist, Ajay is considered to be a pioneer in providing low-cost fertility treatment and eventually opening a chain of Indira IVF across the country.

The film, produced by Indira Entertainment (Ajay Murdia's sons Nitiz and Kshitiz are credited as producers), perhaps set out to celebrate Ajay, who inspite of his modest beginning is full of ideas and has big dreams. At some point, the film also became a tool to portray a grand picture of a doctor, who apart from achieving immense success in his field of work also amassed a huge amount of wealth. The audience is informed about he making land deals, a

board member of his company getting an astronomical amount as monthly paycheck and more such things. The narrative was also keen to incorporate how his heart beats for women, who face harassment because they can't get pregnant. It briefly focusses on how he believes that a woman should not be blamed for their inability to bear a child as the male partner might have a medical problem. But these are fleeting conversations in the course of this lengthy convoluted narrative that chooses to focus on an insipid court-room drama. It banks heavily on flashbacks, loud background score and tacky CGI to keep the audience engaged. The film casts Esha Deol as Meenakshi, a lawyer who is fighting Ajay's case. He is charged in a hit-and-run case. To the audience, however, it is evident that he is framed by Rajiv, who was brought up by the doctor but now wants his downfall. However, it is not made clear why Rajiv bears such feelings for Ajay. Even though Meenakshi is entrusted with the task of fighting the case, she is frequently shown not having enough faith in winning the case. Later on, she takes a backseat with older Ajay (Kher) cross-examining the witnesses himself. The narrative is often incoherent and full of contradictions. Though fictionalised, the narrative is fixated with Ajay and his achievements. Had it shifted focus and explored the stories of those who take the help of IVF; the burden of such an expensive treatment; and the effect it has them, it would have been more impactful.

Ashutosh Gowariker's decision to ignore 'logic' in Lagaan made Aamir Khan 'very upset' with him: 'I had big fights'

Every few years, a comment that Ben Affleck made about Armageddon's implausible premise begins doing the rounds online. On the DVD commentary track of the film, the Oscar-winning writer-actor-filmmaker said that he raised a few concerns about the film's plot with director Michael Bay, who wasn't having any of it. "I asked Michael why it was easier to train oil drillers to become astronauts than it was to train astronauts to become oil drillers, and he told me to shut the f**k up," Affleck said. "So that was the end of that talk. [Does Michael Bay voice] 'You know, Ben, just shut up, OK? You know, this is a real plan.' I was like, 'You mean it's a real plan at NASA to train oil drillers?' And he was like, 'Just shut your mouth!' It seems like Aamir Khan and director Ashutosh Gowariker had a similar disagreement while working together on their Oscar-nominated film Lagaan.

In a recent interview with Just Too Filmy, Aamir said that he could never wrap his head around the fact that his character in the film, Bhuvan, was clean-shaven during a drought. "Where was he getting the water to shave?" Aamir recalled asking his director, who told him to ignore logic and not worry about such things. Aamir said, "I had big fights with Ashutosh. I told him that the entire premise of the movie is that there is no water. How is it possible that he's shaving every day? His fellow villagers would have beaten him up."

Aamir said that he never understood the reason behind this decision, and recalled Gowariker's response to his concerns: "I want you to look good. I like how you're looking, and that's how you'll look in the film. I don't want to get into the logic of it." Aamir continued, "Finally, I gave in, but I was very upset. I found a way around it. I would



shave at night, and show up to set with a shadow. On the days when I forgot to shave at night, I'd get very annoyed with myself... But perhaps this was all in my mind, I don't know if the audience even noticed it." Released in the year 2000, Lagaan altered the trajectory of Aamir's career. He followed it up with the equally impactful Dil Chahta Hai, which was among the first Hindi films to tell a realistic story about contemporary characters. After the one-two punch of Lagaan and Dil Chahta Hai, Aamir said in the interview, the industry began to view him in a new light, and gave him the tag of being a 'perfectionist' because they couldn't think of another label for him.