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Crackdown on drunk driving: Cyberabad police nab 247 persons driving under influence of alcohol on Friday

Hyderabad: The Cyberabad police in continuation of its crackdown against persons driving vehicles under the influence of alcohol caught 247 persons during a special drive conducted on Friday. The police booked cases against all the violators and asked them to appear before the court. The vehicles of the violators were also detained by the traffic police. The drive was conducted at different places by the traffic police teams late in the night. The highest numbers of the persons caught were two wheeler riders – 189, followed by 44 four wheeler drivers, 13 auto drivers and a heavy vehicle driver.

Depressed over personal problems, male nurse ends life in Hyd

Hyderabad: A male nurse, who was reportedly depressed over personal problems, died by suicide allegedly by administering himself a lethal injection at his workplace in Bachupally on Friday night. The victim identified as Mehraj Alam (25) from West Bengal came to the city four years ago and had been working as a male nurse in a private hospital in Bachupally for the last one year. As per available information, Mehraj Alam who was upset over issues in his personal life had administered an overdose of lethal injection at the hospital ward. He was found lying unconscious by his co-nurses, who rushed him to the emergency ward, where the doctors declared him dead.

Hyderabad marks Hanuman Jayanthi with huge processions

GNS News Agency, April 12

Hyderabad: The Veer Hanuman Jayanthi procession that commenced from the Ram Mandir Gowliguda on Saturday morning traversed through different areas of the city to head for Hanuman temple at Tadban Secunderabad. City Police Commissioner, C V Anand along with the officials of the Hyderabad City Police visited Ram Mandir at Gowliguda and other places on the procession route and inspected the security arrangements.

Thousands of people carrying saffron flags are participating in the procession. The main procession passed through Koti, Sultan Bazaar, Ram Kote cross roads, Kachiguda, YMCA Narayanguda, Chikkadpally and Musheerabad. The process will further traverse through Gandhinagar, Tank Bund, Bansilalpet, Paradise Hotel Secunderabad, Bowenpally and reach Tadban Hanuman temple in evening. Several small processions from different



parts of the city are joining the main procession at different places. A big procession from Karmanghat joined the main procession at Koti. The police are monitoring the procession using drone cameras and through the surveillance camera network from the Command and Control Centre, Banjara Hills.

CM Revanth Reddy mourns death of Vanajeevi Ramaiah, extend condolences to kin

GNS News Agency, April 12

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has expressed deep shock and sorrow over the passing of Padma Shri Vanajeevi Ramaiah, describing his death as a significant loss to society. The Chief Minister extended his heartfelt condolences to Ramaiah's family and acknowledged the late environmentalist's belief that human survival is intrinsically linked to nature and the environment. He noted that the paths Ramaiah advocated serve as a vital guide for today's youth and offered prayers for his soul to find eternal peace. Likewise, Andhra Pradesh Minister Nara Lokesh also conveyed his condolences, highlighting the sadness surrounding Ramaiah's demise.

He praised Ramaiah's life message of "Vriksho Rakshati Rakshitah," which encapsulates the essence of preserving trees as a heritage for future generations. Lokesh



referred to Ramaiah as a true environmental warrior and emphasised that honouring his legacy means following the principles he championed. He too expressed deep sympathy for Ramaiah's family during this difficult time.

Governor urges students to adopt characteristics of a genuine leader



Hyderabad, April 12 Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma urged students to adopt key traits of effective leadership, including the pursuit of knowledge, ethical integrity, adaptability, determination, empathy, and a sense of responsibility. The Ashoka School of Business (ASB), a leading institution within the Ashoka Group of Institutions, hosted its convocation ceremony with great elegance and respect at its campus on Saturday. The Governor attended the event and delivered a speech focusing on the importance of ethical leadership, lifelong learning, and accountable entrepreneurship.

He mentioned renowned Indian figures such as Sundar Pichai, Indra Nooyi, and Narayana Murthy as inspiring examples. During the event, Jishnu Dev Varma presented Gold medals and certificates to A Haindhavi (2022), S Shivani (2023), P Hymavathi (2024) from the PGDM program and Ritika Nitin Kulkarni (2024) from the PGDM (AI & DS) program. Chairman of the Ashoka Group,

Ashok Nomula, welcomed the esteemed guests and addressed the graduating students, praising ASB's impressive growth in the field of business education in India. In his address as the guest of honour, Mahdi Shahrokhi, the Consul General of Iran, discussed the potential for collaboration between India and Iran. He urged students to pursue cross-border entrepreneurial and educational opportunities, highlighting the importance of effective youth leadership in today's globalized environment.

Dr. Sandeep Sharma, the Managing Director of Deloitte Consulting, provided guidance to the graduating class about key practices for the corporate world. He stressed the importance of integrity, adaptability, and strong communication as fundamental elements for achieving enduring success in their careers. Dr. Y Lakshman Kumar, the Director, delivered the Academic Report, which highlighted the distinctive programs at ASB, such as the Global Immersion Program in Dubai, the use of innovative teaching methods through business simulations, and a notable research output exceeding 100 publications. A total of ninety-seven students received their PG Diplomas, including 45 women among them. Additionally, gold medalists from various specialisations were recognised for their achievements. Notable recruits this year included Tech Mahindra, HDFC, IBM, EY, Genpact, Magic Bricks, and Bajaj Finance, with the highest package touching Rs.14.5 LPA and an average of Rs.6.5 LPA. Earlier, Governor Jishnu Dev Varma unveiled the new campus master plan and the ceremony concluded with the national anthem and the academic procession.

Kancha Gachibowli land scam: BRS Whip

Vivekananda slams Telangana Congress government



GNS News Agency, April 12

Hyderabad: Launching a scathing attack on the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) and Congress government over the 400-acre Kancha Gachibowli land row, BRS leader and whip KP Vivekananda on Saturday accused the government of being embroiled in a massive Rs 10,000-crore land scam. He alleged that the Congress government was resorting to intimidation tactics against BRS working president KT Rama Rao for exposing their alleged corruption. Addressing a news conference at Telangana Bhavan, Vivekananda alleged that the Congress government had sold off valuable land in the Kancha Gachibowli area and now Revanth Reddy and his administration were attempting to cover up the financial irregularities through contradictory statements. He said Rama Rao had presented irrefutable evidence that left Congress leaders speechless.

"The government is now neck-deep in this mess," Vivekananda said, adding that TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud was holding out threats to imprison Rama Rao. He dismissed Goud as a "dummy PCC president" who lacked proper understanding of facts. The BRS leader threw down the gauntlet challenging Goud to an open debate on the issue and demanded that Revanth Reddy be present to answer questions.

Vivekananda accused the government of mortgaging land worth Rs 10,000 crore and diverting the funds to contractors, leaving farmers in the lurch as they awaited their promised Rythu Bharosa payments. Vivekananda hinted at

a broader political conspiracy, alleging a "Congress-BJP coalition" at play in Telangana. He vowed to soon reveal the name of a BJP MP allegedly linked to the land scam.

Taking aim at Congress leader Meenakshi Natarajan, whom he referred to as a "super CM," Vivekananda questioned whether she was justifying or correcting Revanth Reddy's ill-advised decisions. Drawing a sharp contrast between the current administration and that of former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, Vivekananda highlighted the BRS chief's efforts to protect the State's assets, such as securing 17,000 acres for Pharma City. He accused Revanth Reddy of misusing these lands for real estate deals, undermining the State's development. Reaffirming BRS' commitment to pursuing the matter legally, Vivekananda stated: "We will not let this go. We will approach the courts and demand a white paper on the issue." He revealed that KT Rama Rao had already written to several agencies seeking an investigation and urged TPCC president Goud to do the same.

Tigress kills boy in Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh

GNS News Agency, April 12

Umaria (MP): A 12-year-old boy collecting Mahua flowers in a forest area was attacked and killed by a tigress in Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR) of Madhya Pradesh's Umaria district on Saturday, an official said.

The incident took place when the boy went to the forest area along with his grandfather to collect Mahua flowers, he said.

The tigress hiding in the shrubs attacked the boy in Dhamokhar range of the tiger reserve," Forest Range Officer Vijay Shankar Shrivastava said. The tigress dragged the boy to some distance, but left the body in a stream and escaped after villagers raised an alarm, he said. However, the boy died by that time the villagers reached the place, he said. A financial assistance of Rs eight lakh will be provided to the family of the boy as per the rules, he said.

Waqf Act will not be implemented in Bengal says CM Mamata Banerjee



GNS News Agency, April 12

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday said the Waqf (Amendment) Act will not be implemented in the state. "We have made our position clear on this matter – we do not support this law. This law will not be implemented in our state. So what is the riot about?" she said in a post on social media platform X. Her post comes at a time when several pockets in the state, especially at the minority-dominated Murshidabad district, have been on the boil for the last few days over the protests against the Waqf Act.

Although previously on a number of occasions the Chief Minister had given "subtle" messages to the Union government that Waqf Act implementation in West Bengal would not be that easy, never before had she been so di-

rect in her proclamation that the new act will not be implemented in the state. In her post, the Chief Minister also claimed that the administration will take legal action against those inciting riots and cautioned that some political parties are trying to "misuse" religion for political gains.

"We do not condone any violent activity. Some political parties are trying to misuse religion for political gain. Do not give in to their persuasion," her statement read. In her appeal to the protesters, she argued that since neither the state government nor her party is responsible for the promulgation of the Act, the violence and the protests against the Act were unnecessary. She also subtly said that the actual movement against the Act should be directed against the Union government since the latter was responsible for promulgating the Act. "Remember, we did not make the law that many are agitating against. The law was made by the central government. So the answer you want should be sought from the central government," the Chief Minister added. Meanwhile, speaking to the media persons, Director General of Police Rajeev Kumar cautioned the agitators that the state police will not tolerate any attempts to disrupt law and order in the name of the protests. "Those who are creating violence or are trying to instigate violence will not be spared. Hooliganism will not be tolerated at any cost. Our duty is to save human lives, and to do that, we will not hesitate to adopt stringent measures. Additional Director General (Law and Order) Javed Shamim said attempts are being made to instigate violence by spreading rumours. Till now, 118 persons have been arrested," he said.

BRS leaders obstructing development of Telangana: Sridhar Babu

Hyderabad, April 12 Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu has lambasted the BRS leaders, accusing them of plotting to obstruct development and misleading the people with false information regarding the Kancha Gachibowli land issue. During a media briefing at Gandhi Bhavan on Saturday, Sridhar Babu emphasised that there were no disputes concerning the Kancha Gachibowli lands, and that the bond issuance process was conducted in compliance with SEBI regulations.

The government has not taken any loans from ICICI. We are raising funds for the benefit of the people, and the government is securing these funds at very low interest rates. Approximately 37 companies are investing through bond purchases," he remarked. Sridhar Babu remarked that the previous BRS administration acquired loans for the Kaleshwaram project at approximately an 11 percent interest rate. In contrast, he noted that the current Congress government is securing loans at a more favorable interest rate. He mentioned that the government has waived loans for farmers, with the necessary funds for this waiver being sourced through the TGIIC. He accused the BRS party of



hindering the land acquisition process necessary for the development of Telangana, asserting that the current government has not amended the regulations surrounding land acquisition. The Minister further claimed that BRS leaders are attempting to impede the Musi rejuvenation project under the guise of environmental protection, and are employing similar tactics to obstruct development by causing disturbances related to the Kancha Gachibowli land issue.

Harish Rao demands input subsidy for crop loss

Siddipet, April 12: BRS party MLA Harish Rao has demanded that input subsidy be provided to farmers, who have lost their crops and to the farmers, who have lost their crops due to hailstorms. He said the crops had been damaged in 10,000 acres in Siddipet district alone and added that the crops were damaged in 1,350 acres in the district due to hailstorms in the last summer and the State government had not paid compensation so far. The crop fields damaged due to the recent untimely rains in Rajgopalpet village of Nangunur mandal in Siddipet constituency were inspected by the former minister and interacted with the farmers.

Speaking later, he said the farmers were in serious distress due to the hailstorms. A farmer named Ragula Balayya and his wife Balamma said they had a three-acre farm and had taken out loans to pay off the loan of over ₹ 2 lakh. They expressed their grief that the loan had not been waived off yet. Reacting to this, he said it was disappointing that the loan waiver had not been done and the Rythu Bandhu scheme had not been implemented so far.

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Indian Chronicle

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Go all out to expose Pakistan

The extradition of Pakistan-born Canadian citizen Tahawwur Rana, an accused in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, is a major milestone in India's persistent efforts to bring perpetrators to justice. On a broader note, it is a big diplomatic win for India's counter-terrorism strategies. Now that a key cog in the terror machinery is in India's custody, it is time to go all out and fire on all cylinders to expose Pakistan's role in scripting and directing the most horrific terrorist operation. During the upcoming trial, Rana is expected to spill the beans, not only about his involvement in planning and executing the 2008 attacks but also about the devious deeds of both state and non-state actors in Pakistan. Rana, who had worked as a doctor in the Pakistani army before migrating to Canada, should know precisely which Pakistani army officers were involved in the plot and how Lashkar-e-Taiba executed the plot. The chargesheet against Ajmal Kasab, the lone surviving 26/11 terrorist, clearly mentioned that the Mumbai strikes were plotted in Pakistan by the LeT. In the days ahead, Rana will be questioned by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on his connections with the LeT. After years of painstaking efforts by intelligence, legal and diplomatic teams and a decisive push by the political leadership, New Delhi has succeeded in convincing the American authorities to extradite Rana to India to face trial. While the extradition of one of the key conspirators is certainly a defining moment for Indian diplomacy, the war against cross-border terrorism is far from over. Rana's interrogation should help India build a water-tight case to expose the involvement of Pakistan's deep state at multiple levels. Only then, the families of 166 people killed in the Mumbai terror attacks can get a sense of closure.

Orientation Session on UPSC Preparation Held at CBIT, Gandipet



An orientation session titled "How to Crack Civil Services in the First Attempt - UPSC Masterclass" was conducted at Chaitanya Bharathi Institute of Technology (CBIT), Gandipet, in collaboration with 21st Century IAS Academy, Hyderabad. Addressing the students, Mr. P. Krishna Pradeep, Chairman of 21st Century IAS Academy, shared

valuable insights on the UPSC two-year preparation strategy. He emphasized the importance of effective time management and consistent effort throughout the preparation journey.

To provoke ethical and critical thinking among students, Mr. Pradeep introduced the "Trolley Dilemma" - a thought experiment where a runaway trolley is heading toward five people tied on a track, but can be diverted to another track where it would hit only one person. Engaging students with this dilemma, he highlighted the importance of making morally sound decisions, encouraging them to base their justifications on ethical principles and deeper reflection. He also shared the "Tri Ratnas of UPSC", a unique mantra for aspirants which are Samanya - General Studies (GS), Samakalina - Current Affairs (CAs), Sadhana - Consistent practice and dedication.

Adding to the session, Dr. Bhavani Shankar, Chief Mentor of the academy, highlighted the institution's two-decade legacy in civil services coaching. He spoke about the academy's ambitious goal of achieving 20 UPSC ranks this year and advised students to use digital and social media platforms effectively as part of their preparation. A special highlight of the event was the launch of exclusive study materials, authored by experts from 21st Century IAS Academy. The session commenced with a warm welcome by Dr. GNR Prasad, Public Relations Officer, CBIT. He encouraged students to make the most of such learning opportunities and emphasized the importance of absorbing key insights shared by experienced mentors.

The Congress government does not fulfill the guarantees given to the people..

*** BJP state general secretary Gujjula Premander Reddy***Parakala,



April 12 Indian Chronicle: "BJP state general secretary Gujjula Premander Reddy held a press conference at the BJP party office in the Parkal town on Saturday. Gujjula Premander Reddy was the chief guest of the 'gaam chelo' programme held in the presence of town president Gajula Niranjan. Prime Minister of India is providing many welfare fruits to the BJP party in power in most states in the country and to provide welfare fruits in the development of the Bharatiya Janata Party in all the states of the country and in the villages of the country. He said that.. the party's activists should be explained by the party's activists and members of the party to the people of the various social groups and the caste groups to explain the party's duty. Similarly, the Constitutional Producer Dr BR Ambedkar Jayanti celebrates the festivities from 13th to 26th of the month. Prime Minister Modi is implementing public programs across the country.. He said that the Congress party had failed to come to power with false propaganda and failed to provide welfare fruits. Like the previous government, the Congress government is selling public lands and weakening the fruits of welfare. He said that.. Congress government was corrupt. The Congress and the TRS have said that both parties are the same. He said that the Kaeshwaram project should be taken care of by the MLC in Liquor scam. He said the BJP would win more seats in the upcoming local elections in the state. BJP leaders Dr Khali Prasad, RP Jayanti Lal, Raja Bhadrachari, Erram Ramanna, Bejjamki Purna Chari, Sangeeta Sunita, Vijay and Rambabu were also present.

In Jyotula Nehru Tirumala tour Tirumala TDP senior leader Pawan Kumar shines.



"April 11, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) Governing Council member and TDP senior leader Jyotula Nehru on Saturday went to the Kalyanakatta queue like an ordinary devotee, offered his talaneelas and had darshan of the Lord. After that, Jyotula Nehru visited the P. A.C-1 accommodation complex in Tirumala and conducted a review on the facilities being provided to the devotees. He made suggestions to the staff on issues like cleanliness, water supply and security. In this context, Pawan Kumar alias Pandu, a prominent TDP leader who is recognized as a key figure in Tirumala, has become a hot topic in Tirupati politics as he personally took care of everything during Jyotula Nehru's tour.

MAGNIFICENT CELEBRATIONS OF HANUMAN JAYANTI IN ANJANEYA TEMPLES

P. S. ASHOKAN "INDIAN CHRONICLE" MANTHANI "13-4-2025. "On the sacred occasion of Shri Hanuman Jayanti, grand and spiritually charged festivities were conducted with great reverence across numerous Hanuman temples on Saturday. Devotees thronged to the temples in Manthani town, including those situated near Thammi Cheruvu Katta, Pencheru Katta, Ravula Cheruvu Katta, Vaagu Gadda, and along the banks of the River Godavari. The Sri Balaveera Hanuman Temple in Boyinapet and countless Anjaneya Swamy temples in surrounding villages were also centers of devotion, where the faithful offered prayers and performed circumambulatory rituals in deep veneration. "Anjaneya Swamy, revered for his unparalleled devotion and strength, is famously known for his deep affinity toward sindoor (vermillion). According to sacred lore, when Lord Hanuman once observed Goddess Sita applying sindoor in the parting of her hair, he inquired about its significance. She revealed that the act symbolized a wish for Lord Rama's longevity. Moved by this sentiment, Hanuman, ever the epitome of devotion, began to anoint his entire body with sindoor to express his boundless love and ensure the eternal well-being of Lord Rama. Pleased by this profound gesture, Lord Rama bestowed a boon stating that any devotee who adorns Hanuman's idol with sindoor, especially on Tuesdays or Saturdays, would have their wishes fulfilled. "There exists a long-standing debate among devotees regarding the precise timing of Hanuman Jayanti—whether it should be observed in the month of Chaitra or Vaishakha. As per the authoritative Parashara Samhita, Lord Hanuman was born on Vaishakha Bahula Dashami, which coincided with a Saturday. Thus, certain traditions regard this date as the definitive occasion for commemorating Hanuman's birth. "Conversely, some legends narrate that Hanuman achieved a significant triumph over the demons Nikumbha and Tadira on Chaitra Purnima. Owing to this historic victory, the day is celebrated as Hanumat Vijayotsava in various regions. According to scholars, this day is observed as Hanuman Jayanti in north-



ern parts of India. However, in southern India—particularly in the Telangana region—Chaitra Purnima is marked by elaborate and jubilant celebrations. "The festivities feature grand processions, with towering effigies of Anjaneya Swamy paraded through the streets. From Chaitra Purnima onwards, devotees also undertake a 41-day spiritual observance (Diksha) dedicated to Lord Hanuman, engaging in rituals and austerities with utmost devotion and discipline.

VASANTHOTSAVAM CONCLUDES



"April 12, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema coordinator "The annual three-day Vasanthotsavam-spring festival concluded on a grand celestial note at Vasanta Mandapam in Tirumala on Saturday evening. "The cele-



tial Snapapna Tirumanjanam was rendered to the Utsava deities of Sri Malayappa-Sridevi-Bhudevi, Sri Kodandarama-Sita Devi-Lakshmana Swamy-Anjaneya, Sri Rukmini-Sri Krishna Swamy in a befitting manner amidst recitation of rhythmic vedic hymns by the priests. "According to the temple Legend, the Vasanthotsavam Festival was started during the period of King Achyutaraya in 1460's. The Annual Vasanthotsavam is performed in Tirumala on the auspicious days of Trayodasi, Chaturdasi and Pournami in the month of Chaitra (March/April) every year. "This annual fete was believed to have been introduced by the King to mark the arrival of Spring Season. Sri Malayappa and His Consorts are given aromatic bath on these three days which is believed to give a soothing relief to the deities from the scorching Sun. "Tirumala Pedda Jeeyar Swamy, Tirumala Chinna Jeeyar Swamy, DyEO Lokanatham, Peishkar Rama Krishna and other officials, devotees participated in this festival.

Provide drinking water in all hospitals: Raja Narasimha directs officials



Hyderabad, April 12 Minister for Health, Medical and Family Welfare Damodar Rajanarasimha has instructed that all government healthcare facilities ensure the availability of safe and adequate drinking water for out-patients, in-patients, their attendants, and hospital staff. On Saturday, the Minister held a video conference with senior officials from the Health department to assess the preparations for summer in government hospitals across Telangana. He emphasised that major hospitals should provide drinking water on every floor and in each block, and he directed officials to set up Chailvendras at suitable locations within the hospital grounds.

In view of the rising temperatures and increasing risk of heat-related illnesses, the Minister emphasised that necessary steps must be taken to prevent inconvenience to patients, doctors, and hospital staff. Installation and repair of fans and coolers should be expedited wherever required. Air conditioning systems, especially in ICUs and other critical care wards, must be kept fully functional. Donor support may be utilised wherever additional resources are required, Raja Narasimha said. The Minister alerted officials to the heightened risk of fire accidents during summer and instructed that all government hospitals undertake immediate fire safety inspections. Electrical cables must be thoroughly checked to prevent short circuits, and old or damaged wiring should be replaced wherever necessary. Moreover, smoking, consumption of alcohol and chewing tobacco in and around hospital premises must be strictly prohibited," he said. Hospitals must verify the availability and functional status of fire alarms, smoke detectors, and fire extinguishers. Expiry dates of fire extinguishers must be checked. Hospital personnel, including security staff, should be trained in operating fire safety equipment. Clear signages regarding fire safety protocols must be displayed prominently. Coordination should be established with local fire station officials, and regular fire safety mock drills must be conducted," Raja Narasimha suggested.

With regard to heatstroke prevention, the Minister reviewed the action plan being implemented and directed officials to launch widespread public awareness campaigns. Educational programs should be conducted at hospitals, bus stands, and other high-footfall areas. Social media platforms should be leveraged for information dissemination," he said. The Minister further stated that all government hospitals must be equipped with adequate stock of essential medicines, ORS sachets, and other materials required to manage heatstroke cases. Immediate treatment arrangements must be made available. If necessary, dedicated helplines may be established to respond to heat-related emergencies, Raja Narasimha said. The Minister also highlighted the possibility of disruptions in electricity supply during summer due to thunderstorms or unseasonal rains. He directed that hospital generators must be kept in ready-to-use condition, and any required maintenance or repairs be taken up immediately.

Vivekanand blasts PCC chief & govt for selling off Rs 10,000 cr valuable land & bullying KTR

Hyderabad, April 12 Bharat Rashtira Samithi Assembly Whip K.P. Vivekananda lambasted the PCC and the Congress-led State government for allegedly selling off valuable lands in a Rs 10,000 crore scam and resorting to threats against BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao and the party for exposing their corruption. Speaking to mediapersons at Telangana Bhavan, Vivekananda accused the State government of attempting to silence BRS' revelations with intimidation tactics. He claimed that KTR had presented undeniable evidence exposing financial irregularities in the Kanchegachhi Bowli land issue, leaving Congress leaders speechless. "The government is neck-deep in this mess," he declared, alleging that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and his administration were trying to cover up the scam with contradictory statements. He singled out PCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud for issuing baseless threats to imprison KTR, branding him a "dummy PCC president" who lacked grasp of the facts. The BRS leader challenged Goud to an open debate, demanding that the CM be present to face questions. He accused the government of mortgaging lands worth Rs 10,000 crore and diverting funds to contractors, while farmers still awaited their promised Rythu Bharosa payments. Vivekananda also hinted at a broader political nexus, claiming a "Congress-BJP coalition" was at play in Telangana and vowed to soon name a BJP MP linked to the issue. Taking aim at Congress leader Meenakshi Natarajan, whom he called a "super CM," Vivekananda questioned whether she was justifying or correcting Revanth's missteps.

Extension of Agniveer Registration Deadline - Indian Army Recruitment 2025-26

Hyderabad, April 12 (NSS): The Indian Army has officially extended the deadline for Agniveer online registration under the Agnipath Scheme for the recruitment year 2025-26. Candidates can now apply on the official website www.joinindianarmy.nic.in till April 25. The registration window, which was originally open from March 12 to April 10, 2025, has been extended to provide more aspiring candidates the opportunity to serve the nation

'Junior colleges yielding remarkable results on par with private institutions'

Amaravati, April 12 The commitment of Education & IT Minister Nara Lokesh to transform government junior colleges on par with private institutions is yielding remarkable results. Since he assumed office as Education Minister, the performance of government junior colleges witnessed a significant transformation.

The results achieved by students in the Intermediate examinations are a testament to this change. This year, the pass percentage of Intermediate students has increased to a record level - a feat not seen in the last ten years. This remarkable improvement is a direct result of the quality-enhancing measures taken by Minister Nara Lokesh. Government junior colleges have seen an exceptional rise in student pass percentages - the highest in the last decade. In the Intermediate second year, a record-breaking



69% of students passed, which is the highest in ten years. In the Intermediate first-year examinations, 47% of students passed, the second-highest percentage in the decade

Govt to establish exclusive industrial parks for women: Sridhar Babu



Hyderabad, April 12 Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu announced that exclusive industrial parks for women will be established in every legislative constituency, with a special emphasis on empowering rural women. On Saturday, the Minister formally launched the brochure for the second edition of "Food A Fair," scheduled to be held from June 12 to 14 at HITEX.

Addressing the gathering, he stated that the exhibition is being organised jointly by the State Government, HITEX Exhibitions, and the Telangana Food Processing Society.

Grand rathotsavam marks held

Vontimitta, April 12 : Grandeur marked Rathotsavam on the seventh day of the ongoing annual Brahmotsavams at Sri Kodandarama temple in Vontimitta of Kadapa district on Saturday. The traditional wooden chariot procession commenced at 10:30am and glided along the streets of the temple till evening before reaching the Ratha Mandapam. Besides the local devotees, denizens from surrounding villages also pulled the mammoth wooden chariot with religious gaiety and enthusiasm. The Additional EO of TTD Ch Venkaiah Chowdary, JEO Veerabrahmam, engineering officers, Deputy EO Natesh Babu and others participated.

He noted that food producers, processing experts, packaging industry professionals, and chefs will participate in the event, engaging in intellectual discussions across various domains. Just as Telangana has emerged as a national leader in the IT and pharmaceutical sectors, the government now aims to position the state at the forefront of agriculture and agro-based industries as well, Sridhar Babu said. The Minister highlighted that Telangana provides favorable conditions for the establishment of food processing industries. Investments worth over Rs.16,000 crore have already been committed in this sector, and projects are progressing at various stages of development. The state currently houses 14 special food processing zones spread across 7,150 acres. Going forward, priority will be given to setting up such facilities in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities and towns, he said.

Sridhar Babu further mentioned that more than 6,800 micro food processing units are already operational in Telangana and the government will continue to provide financial support to new and aspiring entrepreneurs in this space. The event was also attended by State Industries Commissioner Malsur, Telangana Food Processing Director Akhil, "Food A Fair" organisers Srikant, TG Srikant and Vishala Reddy, among others.



Tearful Tributes to a Statesman Beyond Rivalry — Today Marks the Death Anniversary of Former Speaker Sripada Rao.

"P. S. ASHOKAN" INDIAN CHRONICLE "MANTHANI" 13-4-2025. "On the solemn occasion of the death anniversary of the late Sri Duddilla Sripada Rao — the distinguished former Speaker of the erstwhile united Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly — admirers and followers have made heartfelt arrangements to pay homage to a man revered across political lines as an "Ajatashatru" (one without enemies). "Sri Sripada Rao, who achieved a remarkable hat-trick of consecutive electoral victories from the Manthani Assembly constituency, dedicated his life to the relentless pursuit of his people's aspirations. In an era when the Telugu Desam Party held a formidable sway over the political landscape, Sripada Rao emerged as a beacon of resilience and integrity, winning successive terms as a Congress candidate from the undivided Karimnagar district. "His tenure as Speaker earned him admiration from leaders across the political spectrum, a testament to his statesmanship, impartiality, and dignified conduct in public life. Known for his conciliatory nature and inclusive leadership, Sripada Rao stood as a unifying force in a politically volatile era. "His absence continues to leave a palpable void in the hearts of the people he served with such dedication. His legacy remains indelibly etched in the collective memory of the region. "Carrying forward this esteemed legacy, his son — the current Minister for IT and Industries, Sri Duddilla Sridhar Babu — has emerged as a dynamic force in contemporary politics, striving earnestly to fulfill his father's unfulfilled dreams and developmental vision. Likewise, Sripada Rao's younger son, Sri



Srinubabu, continues to play a steadfast role beside his brother, earning deep respect and affection from the local populace. "Together, they ensure that the ideals and values championed by the late Sripada Rao continue to illuminate the path of public service in the region.

Robotic-assisted surgery in gynaecology offers numerous advantages: Dr Manjula Anagani



Hyderabad, April 12 Revolutionary robotic technology in gynaecological procedures has set a new benchmark for precision, safety, and efficiency in women's healthcare. In a landmark achievement for Indian healthcare, Dr Manjula Anagani, Padma Shri Awardee, Clinical Director, Robotic Gynecologist & HOD, Care Vatsalya, Women and Child Institute, CARE Hospitals, Banjara Hills, has completed 20 successful robotic-assisted surgeries using the Hugo™ RAS system, advancing women's healthcare and transforming surgical outcomes. This breakthrough signals a transformative shift in gynaecological surgery. Traditionally, reliant on conventional surgical methods, robotic technology is now revolutionizing how surgeries are performed. Robotic-assisted surgery plays a crucial role in complex gynaecological procedures, particularly in cases involving severe endometriosis, fibroids, and oncological surgeries. The Hugo™ RAS system provides enhanced dexterity, better visualization, and reduced blood loss, allowing surgeons to operate with flexibility, precision, greater accuracy, minimizing complications, and improving overall patient safety.

Speaking on the impact of this technology, Dr Manjula Anagani said, "The future of gynaecological surgery lies in technological advancements that enhance precision, safety, and patient comfort. Medtronic's Hugo™ RAS system is a game-changer, allowing us to perform complex procedures with unparalleled accuracy. It significantly improves patient outcomes, making surgeries less invasive and recovery times much shorter. This is the direction in which modern medicine is heading, and I am proud to be part of this evolution. "Robotic-assisted surgery in gynaecology offers

numerous advantages, significantly enhancing patient outcomes and surgical efficiency. As a minimally invasive technique, it involves smaller incisions, leading to reduced pain, minimal scarring, and faster recovery times. The robotic arms provide enhanced precision, offering better control and stability, crucial for intricate surgical procedures. This advanced technology also contributes to shorter hospital stays and lowers the risk of infection by enabling precise movements that reduce trauma to surrounding tissues. Overall, this innovation results in improved healing and superior surgical outcomes, making it a game-changer in gynaecological procedures

GITAM to launch Minor Programs alongside core B.Tech degrees

Hyderabad, April 12 GITAM Deemed to be University is set to launch Minor Programs alongside core B.Tech degrees from the academic year 2025–26, a move poised to transform the educational landscape by empowering students with interdisciplinary expertise and enhanced career prospects.

Believing in the transformative power of technical education, GITAM aims to drive innovation, address global challenges, and nurture creativity through this initiative. These Minor Programs are designed to complement core engineering disciplines, providing students with additional skills that can broaden their academic and professional horizons.

Addressing first-year B.Tech students, Prof. V.R. Sastry, Director of GITAM School of Technology and Dean, Core Engineering, highlighted the objectives and structure of the new offering. He emphasized that students opting for a Minor Program must complete an additional 20 credits on top of the standard 160-credit curriculum. This entails pursuing five extra subjects (each carrying 4 credits) between the third and seventh semesters, requiring students to dedicate approximately one extra hour per day.

BJP engaged in divisive politics: Kunamneni



Hyderabad, April 12 CPI State secretary and the party MLA Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao today criticized the BJP government at the Centre for abandoning the administration and engaging in divisive politics on the basis of religion and creating discord between States. He alleged that the BJP had become a danger to the country itself and added that it was high time that all the people unite and politically teach the saffron party a lesson.

Speaking to media persons organized at the CPI State Office Maqdoom Bhavan in the city along with CPI National Executive Member Pashya Padma and CPI MLC Nellikanti Sathyam, Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao said the country has had different communities and cultures for thousands of years and alleged that the BJP was stirring up trouble between them by inciting religion and gaining power through votes. He said it was not right to amend the Waqf Board Act by interfering with its authority. He also said it was not right for the government to interfere in those religious institutions that they have. He said if there were irregularities in the Waqf Board and in its lands, they can be corrected according to the existing law. He suspected that there was some conspiracy behind the inclusion of members from other social groups in the Waqf Board in the name of amending the law.

In the wake of the Supreme Court's objections regarding the increase in reservations, he demanded that the Constitution be amended and a special law be brought to provide legality to the BC reservations. "Thus, steps should be taken to provide justice to the BC oppressed communities who have been backward for generations. In this regard, the Chief Minister Revanth said a bill providing 42% reser-

vation to BCs was brought in the Legislative Assembly, and it is the Centre that should provide legality to this," he said. Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao expressed his displeasure that the Central government was acting as if it was not ready for peace talks with Maoists even though the Maoists announced that they were ready for the peace talks. He said the constitutionally elected governments do not have the authority to kill people, whoever commits a mistake, and they should be punished only according to the law while noting that it is not right to hunt down and kill the Maoists through the Central forces. Sambasiva Rao demanded that the Central government immediately create a suitable environment for talks with the Maoists.

Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao demanded that equal justice be done to all the States in the redistribution of parliamentary constituencies. He said the southern States were at the top of the population control list and added that if the redistribution was done based on the population proposal, the southern States would suffer severely. He criticized the Central government for creating conflicts and provoking them with the three-language theory and conspiring to remain in power forever. Sambasiva Rao questioned whether the southern States were not part of India. He said the BJP did not love the Hindi language and was only doing such things for power and was creating discord between the States. Rao made it clear that the CPI has no intention of working with the BRS party. He suggested that BRS party MLC Kavitha should wage war against the BJP on the BC reservations. He said it was not right for the Congress government to sell government lands. He said he welcomed the government's talks on the Central University lands. Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao demanded that former minister K. Taraka Rama Rao reveal the name of the BJP MP involved in the Central University land sale issue. He said under the rule of the previous CM K. Chandrasekhar Rao, efforts were made to eliminate unions in organizations like RTC and Singareni company. He demanded that the ban on demonstrations in Osmania University be lifted. Kunamneni made it clear that he would continue to fight on public issues while maintaining his friendship with the Congress party. He urged the Central and State trade unions to make the national general strike on May 20 a success by saying that the rights of workers are being trampled under the name of the Labour Code and to protest the anti-labour policies of the Central government.

Hanuman Janma Utsav celebrated with piety

Hyderabad, April 12: Viswa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has celebrated Hanuman Janma Utsav with piety and devotion on Saturday at Bhuvanagiri town. Bharatiya Janata Party state senior leader Gudur Narayana Reddy has attended the program as guest of honor.

A Sobha Yatra has been organized in the town with the participation of thousands of BJP, Bajrangdal, Viswa Hindu Parishad workers and supporters. Earlier special pujas have been offered to the Lord on the occasion invoking his blessings to the mankind. The participants chanted Jai Vira Hanuman slogan throughout the rally. The streets of the town were decorated with saffron flags and with the flex banners of Lord Hanuman. The participants danced to the beats of the drums with ecstasy replete with devotion. Yadadri district DCP Akanksh Yadav, additional DCP Rahul Reddy have graced the occasion. VHP Yadadri district unit



president Raghavendra, leaders Srinivas Dasarath, Bhuvanagiri municipal chairperson, deputy chairperson, councilors have participated in the program.

"SRIPADA TRUST CHAIRMAN SRINU BABU ATTENDS GRAND WEDDING CEREMONY IN MANTHANI"

"P. S. ASHOKAN" INDIAN CHRONICLE "MANTHANI" 13-4-2025. "Sripada Trust Chairman Duddilla Srinu Babu marked his gracious presence at a grand wedding celebration held in one of the villages under the Manthani constituency. Demonstrating his continued commitment to community bonds, he attended the wedding of Ramyashree and Sampath Yadav — the daughter of senior journalist Kodari Rajamani Mallesh Yadav — held in Manthani on Saturday. "On this joyous occasion, Srinu Babu conveyed his heartfelt blessings to the newlyweds and extended his warm wishes to the families. His presence added grace and significance to the celebrations, drawing appreciation from the attendees.



A great mischief in Tirumala..



"April 12, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema coordinator" "Not forgetting the recent incident of youths making a ruckus on the Ghat Road, another mischief has taken place in Tirumala. Some devotees tried to go for darshan wearing sandals. The staff at the Maha Dwaram noticed this and stopped them at the Maha Dwaram and removed their foot protection and later allowed them to have darshan. But devotees are questioning how they came from the Vaikuntam Queue Complex to the Maha Dwaram wearing shoes after crossing three security points. Devotees are criticizing the behavior of the vigilance staff. They are demanding that such actions should not be repeated.

Newly constructed hostel inaugurated in NSU

"April 12, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema coordinator" "The National Sanskrit University, Tirupati, inaugurated its newly constructed hostel office today, with former Vice President of India, Shri Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu, and Vice-Chancellor Prof. G.S.R. Krishnamurthy presiding over the event. Shri Naidu inspected the facilities and appreciated the Sanskrit and Science exhibition.

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Krishnamurthy expressed gratitude for Shri Naidu's pivotal role in the university's elevation to a National Sanskrit University and lauded his dedication to Indian languages, particularly Telugu. In his address, Shri Naidu emphasized the timeless wisdom of Sanskrit texts and advocated their translation into regional languages to make them accessible to all, assuring support from central agencies for such initiatives.

The event concluded with Academic Dean Prof. Rajinikanth Shukla honoring Shri Naidu and other dignitar-

ies, with participation from university officials, faculty, and students, marking a significant step in promoting linguistic



heritage and academic excellence.

People living with HIV can't be denied promotion or appointment in central armed forces: Delhi HC



GNS News Agency, April 12

The Delhi High Court has held that people living with HIV cannot be denied promotion or appointment by the central armed forces and reiterated that "reasonable accommodation should be provided to such persons to comply with the full scope of the equality provisions under the Constitution of India." Justices Navin Chawla and Shalinder Kaur ruled in three petitions on Friday that denial of such opportunities solely on the ground of one being HIV-positive "would result in discrimination" and further added that armed forces "are under a legal obligation to provide reasonable accommodation" to persons living with HIV. In two of the petitions, a constable with the Border Security Force (BSF) and another with the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) challenged the declaration that they were "unfit for promotion".

The BSF constable was first declared unfit for promotion to the post of Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) in 2022, and the same was reiterated in 2023 on the grounds that he could not perform duties at difficult and solitary locations where facilities for anti-retroviral therapy (ART) are not available. Similarly, the CRPF constable was denied pro-

motion to the post of head constable owing to his medical 'P2' category condition after being on ART since 2017. Under 'P2' category, personnel are found to be "fit" for all duties anywhere except remote and solitary locations, and preferably where ART facilities are available.

The third petition was by a BSF constable who was appointed provisionally in 2022. He was first told to be "unfit" for basic training after his HIV diagnosis, and later in January 2023, he was declared "unfit" for retention. The BSF's decision came "in view of the requirement of antiretroviral medications on a lifelong basis." For the two petitioners who were challenging the denial of promotion, the bench held that the same were "wrongly denied" and directed that their cases be reconsidered by a review Departmental Promotion Committee within eight weeks. In case they are found fit for promotion, orders to that effect shall follow, and they shall also be entitled to notional seniority and other consequential benefits from the date that they were denied promotion, except for the differential in salary for the two posts, the bench added.

For the BSF constable who was provisionally appointed, the court held that keeping in view how discrimination is defined under the HIV Act, the medical standards of the armed forces should equally apply to a person who has been given an Offer of Appointment, and even if detected as HIV-positive during their probation period. "To terminate the service of such a personnel only on the ground of him being detected as HIV positive, would result in discrimination, which is prohibited under Section 3 of the HIV Act," the bench records. In this case, the court directed that his medical condition shall be re-assessed by the BSF and, keeping in view the medical guidelines applicable to HIV-positive personnel, a fresh determination shall be made regarding his retention or removal from service.

How did Chawri Bazar get its name? What does Ballimaran mean? On this heritage walk, nuggets of Delhi's history come to life



GNS News Agency, April 12

Chawri Bazar is an important address in New Delhi. From being the go-to address of wedding cards to wholesale trade of brass and copper products, from shops selling the best bedmi-poori and halwa-nagori to one of the oldest Metro stations of Delhi, the name is familiar to anyone living in the city. But where does the name come from? Is it a hackneyed version of Chaudi (brood)? But the streets are far from brood here. Breaking down the mystery, writer and filmmaker Sohail Hashmi says, "This name dates back to late 18th century or early 19th century. This was the time the Delhi emperor, fed up with multiple hierarchies, outsourced tax-collection to the Marathas who were far more efficient. So, every evening, with the day's work done, the tax collectors would come together for a gathering of sorts, like a chaupal in Hindi. The Marathi term for this is Chawri." This and many other fascinating nuggets of Old Delhi were shared by Hashmi as he held his penultimate heritage walk of the season, titled Exploring Hauz Qazi. On the name of the place, he shares, "Back in the day, there was one Qazi sahab here; I am not aware of the full name. He built a hauz (reservoir). Soon, a fountain was built around it. Now, that portion of land is part of the Delhi Metro project and houses a gazebo-like glass structure. What purpose it serves, though, is a mystery."

As the popular heritage walk leader talks about the history of the Metro and the names of various stations, the people gathered around hang on to each word and passers-by stop to grab a slice of history on the go. A few steps ahead, Hashmi points to the roof of a shop extension. "You see these steel bars? These are most likely from railway tracks. It was very common back then to steal these and sell them in the scrap market. With the Metro rolling in, the thieves have taken to stealing copper from overhead wires," he tells his patrons. Next, is a thin domed structure; its striking blue doors are closed. "This is a pyaao, a water drinking spot. Businessmen used to build these as they believed that quenching the thirst of a weary traveller guaranteed one a spot in heaven. Even I remember drinking water from this spot on my way back from school," says Hashmi.

Chawri Bazar Pyaao, a water drinking spot. Businessmen used to build these as they believed that quenching the thirst of a weary traveller guaranteed one a spot in heaven. The walk proceeds before it halts at a shop with

big, blue wooden doors. "This was from the time when shutters had not made inroads. People would deliberately not put boards outside their shops. This was their way of ensuring the thieves don't get any ideas about robbing them of their wares in the night," says Hashmi. He points at a shop board right across. "You see there, the name of the owner and son is in big bold font while the name of the business they are in is in very small font. Again, the same logic."

Walking through the bustling lanes overshadowed by tangled overhead power lines and flanked by either crumbling old buildings or tacky glass and concrete constructions, it's hard to imagine that this area was, not long ago, home to the city's most sought-after courtesans. "At that time, they were considered to be women highly skilled in dance, music, and the manner of talking. Affluent families used to send their young men here to learn manners. They were like finishing schools. It was due to the British crack-down that many of them had to take to prostitution. Many others joined Parsi theatres or what later came to be known as Bollywood," says Hashmi.

The walk party then made its way to the curiously titled Ballimaran. "In some books, it is mentioned that there was a time when there were so many cats (billi) that people deployed cat-killers. This is such a bunkum! Cat menace has never been so severe anywhere. Plus, this is a Muslim majority area and the community has huge respect for cats, which they consider a clean animal. There was no question of killing them," exclaims Hashmi. "This place was homes to balli maars. Balli means bamboo stick. At that time, the Yamuna was really wide and was used for transportation. It was not very deep, though. For this reason, the boatmen, didn't use oars lest they hit the river bed... So, they would use these balliyan with which they would hit the river bed and cruise through," he says. Ballimaran was once home to one of the most loved poets of India — Ghalib. The Haveli that he once lived in is situated in Gali Qasim Jaan. "There is little knowledge on who this particular gentleman was. In all likelihood, he was a doctor (hakim) since this street had many doctors as its residents. Even Hamdard, now a huge corporate empire, started out from this narrow street," he says.

The last destination is a quaint red mosque situated on a plinth housing many shops, with a small board announcing its name — "Masjid Mubarak Begum". "Mubarak Begum was a courtesan and the wife of David Ochterlony, the British resident of Delhi. She was a very sharp and influential woman who commissioned this mosque. With time, people gave it another name — "randi ki masjid" — alluding to her past as a courtesan," says Hashmi. Ratnendu Ray, an attendee who works in medical device marketing, tells The Indian Express that since he had not explored the Ballimaran area before, he wanted to attend this walk. "The dive into Ghalib's work and worldview in particular was new to me and interested me. Besides that, place names and how they came to be is something I find fascinating, which was a theme that came up often... for instance, Chawri Bazar, Ballimaran, the politics of naming of places etc... these piqued my interest the most."

seek police custody soon for further investigations of the murder," police sources said. Earlier, an investigation had indicated that Khedekar caused three slash injuries on the neck of his wife and three on her abdomen region with a knife before stuffing her body in the trolley bag. The police were waiting for a forensic report to ascertain if the cause of death was the bleeding from the slash wounds or asphyxiation after being stuffed in the trolley bag. Gauri Anil Sambrekar was found dead with knife slash injuries on her neck and abdomen following a suspected scuffle with her husband on the night of March 26. Her body was discovered stuffed into a trolley bag in the bathroom after the house owner, accompanied by a police team, opened the door to the rented property. The Bengaluru police investigations revealed CCTV footage showing Khedekar leaving his rented residence at around 12.45 am on March 27, after allegedly murdering his wife at approximately 9 pm on March 26. The police said Khedekar arrived in Shirwal, Maharashtra, on the evening of March 27.

husband arrested in Pune after discharge from hospital; deep knife injury to neck caused woman's death, probe suggests

GNS News Agency, April 12

A preliminary forensic examination in the Bengaluru suitcase murder has revealed that a deep knife injury on the neck caused the death of the 32-year-old woman, according to police sources. Meanwhile, the Bengaluru police Saturday arrested the 36-year-old husband of the woman for the murder after he was discharged from a hospital in Pune following an alleged suicide bid. The body of Gauri Anil Sambrekar, who hailed from Palghar near Mumbai, was discovered in a suitcase at her rented duplex house in the Doddakammanahalli village in southeast Bengaluru on March 27. Her husband Rakesh Rajendra Khedekar, a software professional from Mumbai who moved to Bengaluru in February, is accused of stabbing her to death the previous day and stuffing her body in the suitcase. Khedekar was under the watch of the Bengaluru police at a Pune hospital where he was admitted after allegedly attempting suicide in the Shirwal area of Maharashtra's Satara district. "He has been sent to judicial custody by a court. We are likely to

seek police custody soon for further investigations of the murder," police sources said. Earlier, an investigation had indicated that Khedekar caused three slash injuries on the neck of his wife and three on her abdomen region with a knife before stuffing her body in the trolley bag. The police were waiting for a forensic report to ascertain if the cause of death was the bleeding from the slash wounds or asphyxiation after being stuffed in the trolley bag. Gauri Anil Sambrekar was found dead with knife slash injuries on her neck and abdomen following a suspected scuffle with her husband on the night of March 26. Her body was discovered stuffed into a trolley bag in the bathroom after the house owner, accompanied by a police team, opened the door to the rented property. The Bengaluru police investigations revealed CCTV footage showing Khedekar leaving his rented residence at around 12.45 am on March 27, after allegedly murdering his wife at approximately 9 pm on March 26. The police said Khedekar arrived in Shirwal, Maharashtra, on the evening of March 27.

'No need to search for Modi's successor': Maharashtra CM Fadnavis responds to Sanjay Raut's 'PM to retire' claim



GNS News Agency, April 12

Fadnavis' statement came in response to Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut claim that the RSS is set to pick Modi's successor. Fadnavis' statement came in response to Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut claim that the RSS is set to pick Modi's successor. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis Monday said there is "no need to search" for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's successor as he will continue to hold the top post again in 2029. The statement came in response to Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut claim that the RSS is set to pick Modi's successor. Earlier in the day, Raut said Modi's visit to the RSS headquarters in Nagpur on Sunday was to convey the message to Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat that he is retiring. "There is no need to search for his successor. He (Modi) is our leader and will continue," Fadnavis said, speaking to reporters in

Nagpur. Dismissing speculation that the successor will likely be from Maharashtra, Fadnavis added: "In our culture, when the father is alive, it is inappropriate to talk about succession. That is Mughal culture. The time has not come to discuss it." Meanwhile, senior RSS leader Suresh 'Bhaiyaji' Joshi, who was also in Nagpur, said he is not aware of any talk of (PM's) replacement. In his statement, Raut said it is clear that the PM will be made to retire at the age of 75, alluding to some leaders in the ruling dispensation retiring at that age. Modi turns 75 in September this year. Raut added that Modi never visited the RSS headquarters in the last 11 years but he went there on Sunday to inform the outfit that he was quitting. The PM's first visit to headquarters since 2014 is being seen as marking a shift in the BJP's stance towards its ideological parent following "frosty relations" last year.

6 teams selected for incubation at SPPU Startup Olympiad

GNS News Agency, April 12

The Startup Olympiad served as a platform for students, researchers, and early-stage startups to pitch their innovative business ideas to a jury. The Startup Olympiad served as a platform for students, researchers, and early-stage startups to pitch their innovative business ideas to a jury. (SPPU/YouTube) Six winning teams were selected for incubation at the conclusion of the (SPPU) Startup Olympiad on Saturday. Over 400 teams from various colleges participated, presenting ideas spanning Agriculture, technology, healthcare, sustainability, and artificial intelligence. Out of these, 30 teams made it to the final round and six final teams won a cash prize of Rs 25,000 and were selected for incubation.

These winning teams were — O Rings: Agro startup onion storage solution, Etholfuel X: Alternative ways of making ethanol, Boosty Bites: Food sector, Smart Scaffold and Prop: Health Monitoring System, Accessible Railway Ticket for Visually Impaired Travellers, My Abhyasika: Study Room Management System. The Savitribai Phule Pune University Startup Olympiad was hosted by SPPU's Center for Innovation, Incubation, and Linkages (CILL). The event



at the Savitribai Phule Pune University witnessed an enthusiastic turnout of budding entrepreneurs, investors, industry experts, and academicians from across three districts of Maharashtra, Pune, Ahilyanagar & Nashik. The Startup Olympiad served as a platform for students, researchers, and early-stage startups to pitch their innovative business ideas to a jury. The competition featured multiple rounds, including ideation, prototype demonstration, and business model evaluation.

How a dispute over land in UP led to murder of construction site supervisor in city



GNS News Agency, April 12

The investigation was led by Senior Inspector Santosh Sonavane, Inspector Mansingh Patil, Assistant Inspector Lekhaji Shinde and Sub-Inspector Balaji Dingle. The investigation was led by Senior Inspector Santosh Sonavane, Inspector Mansingh Patil, Assistant Inspector Lekhaji Shinde and Sub-Inspector Balaji Dingle. Around 8 pm on April 16 last year, Meena Kumari made a video call to her husband Pankaj Kumar, 34, who worked as a construction supervisor. Kumar said he was at the market and promised to be home in 10 minutes. However, the woman sensed something was amiss as she saw a dark background behind her husband and also heard someone speaking to him. She waited for him till 10 pm as they usually had dinner together, but he never returned. The next morning, she found out that Kumar was brutally murdered and his body was found in a duct in an under-construction building in the Mohammadwadi area of Pune. On the morning of April 17, the Kondhwa police arrived at the construction site after being alerted about the death of a man who "fell into" a duct in the building. On reaching the spot, however, it was clear to them that the death was not caused by a fall. The injuries were consistent with murder as the man's body had multiple slashes. The police investigation revealed that Pankaj Kumar was murdered with a sharp weapon on the fifth floor of the under-construction building. The body was then thrown into the duct. Attempts were also made to cover the bloodstains by spreading soil and dirt.

Soon, multiple teams from Kondhwa police station were roped in for the probe. Investigators scoured the crime scene and made enquiries at the construction site and the adjoining labour camp. They also looked into technical leads, including the call records of Kumar. The police probe revealed that some people from the construction crew had made calls to the deceased before his death. Among them, one Suresh Maniram Arya, 34, had fled to his native place in Uttar Pradesh. The police began to view him as a suspect. An

officer who was part of the probe said the investigation revealed that Suresh and Kumar were friends and had worked together at another construction site. "Together, the two had purchased land near their native place in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich. However, they later had a dispute over the title of the land. A team was sent to Uttar Pradesh to look for Suresh. Meanwhile, another team which examined the footage from CCTV cameras on approach routes to the building stumbled upon a crucial clue." They found that another worker, Bholanath Rajaram Arya, 26, was also involved in the crime. Bholanath was Suresh's brother-in-law and he had tried to mislead the investigators. When the police questioned him, Bholanath confessed to killing Kumar along with Suresh. Meanwhile, the team sent to Uttar Pradesh managed to arrest Suresh before he could reach his home in his native village. Both arrests were made in less than two days after the murder came to light. The probe revealed that they had called Pankaj Kumar to the building and murdered him over the land dispute. Officials said the case against Suresh and Bholanath is currently pending before the court. The investigation was led by Senior Inspector Santosh Sonavane, Inspector Mansingh Patil, Assistant Inspector Lekhaji Shinde and Sub-Inspector Balaji Dingle.

Elderly woman found burnt to death in Kothrud apartment; Pune police launch probe

GNS News Agency, April 12

Pune, elderly woman, burnt, pune police Pune police investigate the death of an elderly woman found burnt in her Kothrud apartment. The Pune police launched an investigation after the burnt body of an elderly woman was found at an apartment in the city's Kothrud area Monday. Officers suspect she may have set herself on fire, but various angles are being probed. The woman was identified as Kamal Sampatrao Ghuge, 76. Her body was found after a fire brigade team rushed to the apartment in Guru Ganesh Nagar on being alerted of a blaze around 8.30 am. Fire officer Prakash Ghuge said, "When we reached the spot, we found a woman lying in a badly burnt condition on the first floor of the building." "The apartment's door was open. We entered the house and checked it, but there was no fire elsewhere. So we did not carry out any firefighting. We later came to know that the woman lived alone at the rented apartment," added Ghuge.

Who is eligible for the Ayushman Bharat scheme in Delhi? Check out the criteria



GNS News Agency, April 12

Domestic workers to construction labourers, street vendors to security guards: These are among the people who will be eligible to avail the Centre's flagship insurance scheme, Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), that's been implemented in the Capital. Coming Thursday, the Delhi government will begin distributing Ayushman Bharat cards to beneficiaries. In the first phase of card distribution, 2.34 lakh families will be covered. Eventually, 6.54 lakh of the poorest families in Delhi can avail of annual health coverage of up to Rs 10 lakh — Rs 5 lakh from the Centre and a top-up of the same amount from the Delhi government. There is no restriction on family size, age or gender and all pre-existing conditions are covered from day one. There are two categories: urban and rural beneficiaries. In urban areas, 11 occupational categories of workers are eligible for the scheme: These include ragpickers, beggars, domestic workers, street vendors, construction workers, sanitation workers, and security guards, among others.

Rural beneficiaries, on the other hand, have to meet

one of seven deprivation criteria. These include households with no adult male member between ages 16 to 59 as well as SC/ST households. They should be living in one room with kucha walls and kucha roof. Families with no able-bodied adult members are also eligible. The list automatically includes destitutes living on alms and manual scavenger households. Once they sign up, families can avail free and cashless treatment for 1,961 medical procedures across 27 specialities, covering the costs of medicines, diagnostic services, hospitalisation, ICU care, and surgeries, among other related expenses. The scheme will also cover three days of pre-hospitalisation and 15 days of post-hospitalisation expenses, such as diagnostics and medicines. Services can be availed across the Capital — at 46 private, 34 Delhi government, and 11 central government hospitals.

These have been empanelled under the state health authority to provide the medical insurance coverage. Beneficiaries, said officials, will be identified based on the Socio-Economic and Caste Census data of 2011. "Beneficiaries will also be ascertained through ration cards made under the National Food Security Act," said an official. The beneficiary family count as per data of Food Security Act in Delhi includes three categories: 66,281 families under Antyodaya Anna Yojana with a total of 2.72 lakh beneficiaries; 1.68 lakh families under priority households with a total of 7.63 lakh beneficiaries who get sugar, wheat and rice; 15.05 lakh families with a total of 62.33 lakh beneficiaries who get only wheat and rice. The state health authority has also identified 28,294 families of ASHA and anganwadi workers and helpers. The scheme's implementation was a major promise of the BJP leading up to the Delhi Assembly elections in February. The previous AAP government had refused to adopt AB-PMJAY and had proposed its own scheme.

With eye on rising fiscal deficit, Maharashtra govt tightens rules on foreign funding



GNS News Agency, April 12

fiscal deficit In the 2025-26 budget, the state managed to keep the fiscal deficit at 2.7 per cent, slightly lower than the 2.9 per cent in the previous fiscal. In a bid to keep state fiscal deficit under control, Maharashtra's Finance department has issued guidelines on availing external assistance loans from international funding agencies warning that "care should be taken to ensure these loans keep the fiscal deficit within the limits of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003". The guidelines issued by the state's Finance department on Tuesday said, "External assistance loans are part of the Net Borrowing Ceiling approved by the Central Government. Therefore, while raising external assistance loans, care should be taken to ensure that fiscal deficit will remain within the limits of the FRBM Act and also within the limits of the Net Borrowing Ceiling approved by the Central Government."

As per the FRBM Act, the Government is required to limit the fiscal deficit to 3 per cent of the gross state domestic product (GSDP). In the 2025-26 budget, the state managed to keep the fiscal deficit at 2.7 per cent, slightly lower than the 2.9 per cent in the previous fiscal. The guidelines have specified that the these loans should not be treated as a source to fulfill financial needs. The guidelines have also mandated that the administrative department seeking loans must create a Preliminary Project Report (PPR) with the help of the Maharashtra Institution for Transformation (MITRA). MITRA was established in November 2022 for the state to achieve rapid and comprehensive development

on the lines of NITI Aayog's policy through the participation of the private sector and non-government organisations, taking into account the needs of the state. Once a request for a loan receives the Chief Minister's approval, it will be uploaded on the Centre's Department of Economic Affairs (DEA). After the request get an "approved" remark from the Planning department, it will be presented before ministries concerned at the Centre and NITI Aayog. Once approved by the screening committee of the DEA, a detailed project report (DPR) will be presented at the earliest. "The Detailed Project Report should adequately reflect the Strategic elements of techno-economic (economic viability, social cost benefit, value addition etc.), ecological (land use, ecological sustainability etc.), socio-cultural (target population and gender matters, participation, social impact, etc.), and institutional (institutional and organizational analysis, capacity building, training etc.) dimensions in the project design in measurable terms. An objective oriented project design in a matrix format along with work plan, cost and time schedule indicating target/output, cash flow statement etc. should also be a part of DPR," said the guidelines. In the past, Maharashtra has received financial assistance from various international financial agencies for various infrastructure and socially-relevant projects. In July 2024, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) increased its funding from Rs 13,235 crore to Rs 21,280.45 crore for the underground Metro Line 3 that will connect Colaba to Bandra SEEPZ. JICA has also been supporting financial assistance to the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail project since 2017 with cumulative commitment worth around Rs 59,396 crore. It has extended Official Development Assistance worth Rs 13,715 crore for Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (Atal Setu). It has also shown interest in a proposed Vadhavan port in the State. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) has extended \$188.28 million to Maharashtra to boost growth in backward districts. The International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) is working with Maharashtra government on a project which aims at empowering women. KfW, a German State owned bank has entered into agreement with Maharashtra government for solar power projects of 390 MW capacity at a cost of around Rs 1,494 crore out of which 70 per cent of the amount will be from loans.

5 UPSC aspirants among 6 injured after speeding car rams into them in Delhi's Old Rajinder Nagar

GNS News Agency, April 12

As many as five students preparing for the UPSC examinations and another person were injured when a rashly driven car struck them in Old Rajinder Nagar in Central Delhi Tuesday evening. According to the Delhi Police, those injured have been identified as Lokesh, Baby, Shivam, Harshita, Stephen, and Vipul, who are in the age group of 24 to 30 years. The UPSC aspirants and the sixth person, a visitor to the area, a coaching hub for civil services exams, were immediately taken to a nearby hospital for treatment. "Condition of the injured is stable. Five out of the six injured are likely to be discharged soon, while one of the injured may require further treatment," said Harsha Vardhan, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central).



filing this report, and his blood sample was collected for further testing. The investigation is ongoing. Authorities said they are recording statements from witnesses, and reviewing CCTV footage from the area. The police have stated that appropriate legal action will be taken based on the results of the medical tests and further inquiry. While police were managing the crowd and clearing students from the area, a BMW car sped through the same road. As the police chased the luxury car and stopped it, they found an illegal silencer and beer bottles inside. Meanwhile, students surrounded the car, following which police seized the vehicle and took the driver into custody.

The students present at the spot told the police that the Hyundai i10 first hit a scooter before accelerating and ramming into the pedestrians walking on the roadside. Eyewitnesses also reported that the car was moving at a very high speed, and the driver appeared to be under the influence of alcohol. Bystanders caught the driver on the spot, and handed him over to the police. He was identified as Prem Kumar, 45, and was driving the i10 belonging to his employer at the time of the accident, said the police. A medical examination of the driver was in process at the time of

Punjab and Haryana reel under intense heatwave, temperature soars above 40°C

GNS News Agency, April 12

Punjab and Haryana are reeling under an intense heatwave, with the maximum temperature soaring beyond 40°C in several parts of the region. The Indian Meteorological Department, Chandigarh, has issued an orange alert for both states, forecasting a heat wave to severe heat wave at a few places on April 9 and 10. On Tuesday, Bathinda in Punjab recorded the highest temperature at 43.1°C and Sirsa in Haryana followed closely at 42.8°C — both significantly above normal. Even on Monday, Bathinda recorded the highest temperature in Punjab at 41.9°C, and Rohtak recorded the highest temperature at 42.1°C in Haryana. The Met predicts warm nights in the region while, at the same time, thunderstorm with lightning and gusty winds up to 30-40 kmph at isolated places in the coming three days will bring some respite.



of both states will continue to bear the brunt of extreme heat, with temperatures persisting in the range of 40-42°C over the next two days. Although no major drop in temperature is expected immediately, the Met predicts a decline of 2-4°C later in the week. However, some respite is expected as light to moderate rainfall is predicted at isolated places in Punjab on April 9, 10 and 11, while in Haryana and Chandigarh on April 10 and 11. Weathermen have also predicted thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds (30-40 kmph) in this region on April 9, 10 and 11, accompanying the rain, offering some relief from the relentless heat. Authorities have urged people to remain indoors during peak hours, stay hydrated, and take necessary precautions.

The south-western parts of Punjab and the southern and western parts of Haryana remained the worst-affected areas, where temperature ranged from 40-42°C. The Met predicts dry weather across Punjab for the next 24 hours, while Haryana and Chandigarh will see similar conditions for the next 48 hours. During this period, temperatures across Punjab and Haryana, except for northern parts, are expected to remain above 40°C. The southern and western regions

Woman riding sports bike killed in Gurgaon: Car driver arrested

GNS News Agency, April 12

Days after a 28-year-old woman died after her bike collided with a Hyundai Verna car on the Leopard Trail Road in Gurgaon, the Badshahpur police on Tuesday arrested a 34-year-old man who was allegedly driving the car. The police identified the man as Jay Yadav, a resident of Global Tower in Ashok Vihar Phase 3.



The deceased, Shomita Singh, a bike enthusiast, was travelling from Noida's Sector 135 to Leopard Trail Cafe with a group of eight other women bikers when she met with the accident on Sunday. Yadav, who is unemployed, has been booked under two bailable sections of the Bharatiya

Nyaya Sanhita — Section 106 (death due to negligence) and Section 281 (rash driving). Investigating Officer Naveen Kumar said, "We are preparing documents in connection with the production of the accused before the court." Police said Singh, who was working with Caggenini, was riding a red G310-BMW sports bike. Singh's parents, meanwhile, had filed a complaint with the Badshahpur police on Monday, seeking that action be taken against the company Lets Ryde, under

which she was receiving training on becoming a professional biker. When contacted, Kuldeep Sharma, the co-founder of Lets Ryde training academy, said, "The parents' natural reaction is to first blame us. Perhaps they did not know that she knew how to ride a bike well."

Mohalla buses to hit Delhi roads soon, BJP govt gives green signal

GNS News Agency, April 12

Mohalla buses The concept was proposed by the previous AAP government to provide last-mile connectivity for residents staying in densely populated areas. As many as 280 mohalla buses — 9-m-long mini electric buses — parked at bus depots for the last eight months for want of indigenous compliance certificates are set to hit the road soon with the BJP government deciding to launch the service, officials in the Transport Department said Tuesday. The concept was proposed by the previous AAP government to provide last-mile connectivity for residents staying in densely populated areas with narrow roads, where DTC and cluster buses could not enter or the frequency of service was low.

A senior department official said, "As per guidelines, manufacturers have to submit an indigenous compliance certificate, ensuring that domestic or Make in India products are used while manufacturing these buses. The companies that provided these buses did not submit this, due to which the government did not give permission for operating these buses." "Now, some of the companies have submitted certificates for some buses. They have also submitted an affidavit promising to submit the certificates for the remaining buses within six months," the official added.

The trial run for mohalla buses first began in East Delhi



— from Pradhan Enclave to Majlis Park Metro station and from Akshardham Metro station to Mayur Vihar Phase III paper market. Last August, the then AAP government launched two mohalla buses on trial in South Delhi — from Kailash Colony Metro station to PNB Geetanjali and from Lok Kalyan Marg Metro station to Vasant Vihar. The Transport department had floated tenders to procure 1,900 12-m-long e-buses and 1,040 9-m-long mini e-buses to provide last-mile connectivity to residents of Delhi. Of the 1,900 buses, several have arrived and 400 are yet to join the fleet of regular e-buses. Among the mini e-buses, 280 have arrived so far and will soon operate as mohalla buses, said officials.

Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh released again, this time on 21-day furlough

GNS News Agency, April 12

Ram Rahim News: Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, currently serving a 20-year jail term for raping two of his disciples, was granted a 21-day furlough by the Haryana Government and released from the Sunaria prison of Rohtak Wednesday morning. Shingh left the Sunaria prison early morning, and will stay at his Dera's headquarters in Sirsa during the period of his release.

In January, he was released on a 30-day parole a week before the Delhi Assembly elections, and stayed at the Dera's headquarters in Sirsa. In earlier instances, when he was out of jail, he stayed at the Dera's ashram in Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat. His paroles and furloughs have often coincided with the elections in Haryana, Punjab, Delhi or Rajasthan. Several constituencies of these states, especially Haryana, are said to have a sizeable number of the Dera's followers. A court in Panchkula found Singh guilty on



two counts of rape, and sentenced to 20 years in prison in August 2017. The judge also ordered him to pay a fine of Rs. 15 lakh to each victim.

Mahua Moitra, BJP trade charges over 'threats' to fish market near CR Park temple in Delhi

GNS News Agency, April 12

mahua moitra Moitra shared a purported video of the incident, where a man can be heard telling those present at Market number 1 in CR Park that "a fish market sharing a wall with a temple was hurting sentiments of Sanatanis" Lok Sabha MP Mahua Moitra alleged Tuesday those linked to the BJP had threatened shopowners in the fish market located adjacent to a temple in South Delhi's Chittaranjan Park. The BJP, however, condemned the incident and asked the police to take strict action against the culprits. Moitra shared a purported video of the incident, where a man can be heard telling those present at Market number 1 in CR Park that "a fish market sharing a wall with a temple was hurting sentiments of Sanatanis".

"Sabhi bhaiyon se yehi aadesh hai ki mandir ke saath ye bazaar hona nahi chahiye (To all my brothers, this is my order: This market should not be there next to the temple)," the man is heard saying in the video. He also says that as per Sanatan Dharma, any type of killing is prohibited. A shopowner in Market 1 can then be heard saying that the area for the market has been allotted by the Delhi Development Authority. The first man responds, "DDA has made many mistakes. We will tighten the screws on them as well." In her post on X, Moitra said, "Please watch saffron



brigade BJP goons threaten fish-eating Bengalis of Chittaranjan Park, Delhi. Never in 60 years has this happened, residents say." Responding to her post, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said everyone should "respect the sanctity of temples and here at CR Park, fish markets traders have always respected temples." "Fish markets have been legally allotted and are needed in the area. The fish traders maintain a high level of cleanliness in the area and take regular part in socio-religious activities of CR Park. The video posted on social media by Mahua Moitra seems to have been tailored by people with vested political interests to disturb community harmony in CR Park."

After retrial, Hong Kong court jails social worker to nearly 4 years for rioting



HONG KONG, GNS News Agency, April 12 - A Hong Kong court sentenced a prominent social worker on Wednesday to 3 years and 9 months imprisonment for rioting during the city's 2019 pro-democracy protests, following a retrial. Jackie Chen was convicted by Deputy District Judge May Chung in March. She had pleaded not guilty and declined to testify during her retrial, which was ordered after she was found innocent of the charges in 2020. The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here. Chung said in her judgment that as Hong Kong is a society with rule of law, the sentencing imposed by the court must have a deterrent effect. Chen was initially cleared of rioting in the Wan

Chai and Causeway Bay districts on August 31, 2019, after District Court Judge Sham Siu-man that the prosecutors had failed to establish a prima facie case against her. Three other defendants Lai Pui Ki, Chung Ka Nang, Jason Gung were sentenced to 2 years and 5 months after pleading guilty at retrial. They were also initially acquitted by Judge Sham. Months of sometimes violent pro-democracy protests rocked the global financial hub in 2019 and sparked a Beijing-imposed security crackdown.

Chen, a member of the Battlefield Social Worker group during the 2019 protests, was frequently seen by witnesses with a loudhailer, liaising between protesters and police officers, monitoring police action and offering emotional support to people. Judge Chung noted Chen's use of a loud hailer, saying she encouraged the riot through shouting. Chung also said she had taken into account the fact that Chen was under mental stress from the retrial, would have her social worker's licence revoked and that she had been a social worker for years. Rioting is capped at a maximum of seven-year sentence at the District Court. Separately, Chow Kim-ho, a former member of the pro-democracy group League of Social Democrats, was jailed on Tuesday for one year for posting seditious comments on three social media platforms under the city's homegrown national security law. He had pleaded guilty. Jessie Pang joined Reuters in 2019 after an internship. She covers Hong Kong with a focus on politics and general news.

South Sudan cholera patients died walking to clinic after US cut aid, charity says



NAIROBI, GNS News Agency, April 12, Eight people in South Sudan, including five children, died on a three-hour walk to seek medical treatment for cholera after U.S. aid cuts forced local health services to close, the UK-based charity Save the Children said. The deaths last month are among the first to be directly attributed to cuts imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump after entering office on January 20, which he said were to ensure grants were aligned with his "America First" agenda.

Keep up with the latest medical breakthroughs and healthcare trends with the Reuters Health Rounds newsletter. Sign up here. "There should be global moral outrage that the decisions made by powerful people in other countries have led to child deaths in just a matter of weeks," said Christopher Nyamandi, Save the Children's country director in South Sudan. Experts have warned that the cuts - including the cancellation of more than 90% of USAID's contracts - could cost millions of lives in the coming years due to malnutrition, AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other diseases. The U.S. State Department said it did not have information about the deaths reported by Save the Children.

A spokesperson said many U.S. government programmes providing lifesaving aid in South Sudan remained active but that support for medical services had also been used to enrich the country's leaders. "While emergency lifesaving programmes continue, we will not, in good conscience, ask the American taxpayer to provide assistance that effectively subsidises the irresponsible and corrupt behaviour of South Sudan's political leaders," the spokesperson said. South Sudan's government has in the past acknowledged a significant amount of public corruption but denied specific accusations of graft, including against President Salva Kiir's family. Humanitarian aid to the country is often channelled through non-governmental organisations, largely because of corruption concerns. Save the Children supported 27 health facilities in eastern South Sudan's Jonglei State until earlier this year when the U.S. cuts forced seven to shut completely and 20 to close partially, the organisation said in a statement.

U.S. funded transport services to take people to hospital in the main local town also stopped for lack of funds, which meant the eight cholera patients had to walk in nearly 40°C (104°F) heat to seek treatment at the nearest health facility, it said.

Three of the children were under the age of 5, Nyamandi said. Besides the U.S. cuts, more gradual reductions by other donors have strained the humanitarian response in South Sudan. Save the Children expects to spend \$30 million in the country in 2025, down from \$50 million last year, Nyamandi said. Over a third of South Sudan's roughly 12 million people have been displaced by either conflict or natural disaster, and the United Nations says the country could be on the brink of a new civil war after fighting broke out in February in the northeast. A cholera outbreak was declared last October. More than 22,000 cases had been recorded as of last month, causing hundreds of deaths, the World Health Organization has said.

South Korea opposition leader Lee signals presidential run as race starts

SEOUL, GNS News Agency, April 12, South Korea's main opposition party head Lee Jae-myung said on Wednesday he was stepping down as party leader, amid expectations that the current populist front-runner for the presidency in opinion polls would soon declare his run. South Korea's labour minister, Kim Moon-soo, who has been among ruling People Power Party members indicating an intention to run, also declared his candidacy. The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here. South Korea will hold a snap presidential election on June 3, after former president Yoon Suk Yeol's impeachment stemming from a December martial law declaration was upheld. "I will be now starting new work," Lee, the Democratic Party leader, told a party leadership meeting carried live on his YouTube channel. He did not elaborate nor confirm he would be standing for the presidency.



with the United States but also seek a path for the country to potentially pursue nuclear armament by securing the right to reprocess nuclear fuel, which is considered a step toward building atomic weapons.

"In response to North Korea's nuclear threat, I will become a global leader in protecting freedom and human rights by securing nuclear fuel processing capabilities and developing nuclear-powered submarines," he said. The head of the National Election Commission said voting was monitored by more than 300,000 independent observers and workers and there were no grounds for doubts about the integrity of the 2024 election or any other votes. Yoon is under a separate criminal trial on charges of leading insurrection by declaring martial law with no constitutional grounds. Lee, who survived a knife attack in 2024 that severely injured him but has since recovered fully, faces legal uncertainties himself. In March a court threw out his guilty verdict on charges of violating the election law, but prosecutors have appealed to the Supreme Court, and Lee is also on other trials on charges ranging from bribery to corruption. It was unclear if any of the ongoing court cases would present a roadblock to Lee in the election process.

US to 'take back' Panama Canal from Chinese influence, visiting Pentagon chief says

PANAMA CITY, GNS News Agency, April 12, The United States will "take back" the Panama Canal from Chinese influence, U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said on Tuesday during a visit to the Central American nation. After talks with Panama's government, Hegseth vowed to deepen security cooperation with Panamanian security forces and said China would not be allowed to "weaponize" the canal by using Chinese firms' commercial relationships for espionage.

The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here. "Together, we will take back the Panama Canal from China's influence," Hegseth said, speaking at a pier renovated with U.S. assistance in Panama City. "China did not build this canal. China does not operate this canal and China will not weaponize this canal. Together with Panama in the lead, we will keep the canal secure and available for all nations." More than 40% of U.S. container traffic, valued at roughly \$270 billion a year, goes through the Panama Canal, accounting for more than two-thirds of vessels passing each day through the world's second-busiest interoceanic waterway. Hegseth, the first U.S. defense secretary in decades to visit Panama, flew over the canal in a Black Hawk helicopter after meeting U.S. troops and Panamanian security forces. He also toured the Miraflores lock, waving to sailors passing through on a container ship. His language appeared fine-tuned, talking tough but offering some assurances to Panamanians still unsettled by Trump's threats to reclaim the canal. While Hegseth spoke about removing Chinese influence, Trump has spoken in broader terms and not ruled out using military force. Hegseth's trip follows reports that the Trump administration has requested options from the U.S. military to ensure access to the canal, which the United States built more than a century ago and handed over to Panama in 1999. "On the whole, this hasn't been a winning issue for the United States in terms of public diplomacy in Panama," said Ryan Berg, director of the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.



critical for the passage of U.S. warships during any future conflict in Asia, since Navy vessels would transit from the Atlantic to the Pacific to support the war effort. Even without blocking the canal, China could keep tabs on vessels passing through it.

Still, John Feeley, who was U.S. ambassador to Panama from 2015 to 2018, disputed the Trump administration's assertion that China's presence in Panama was a violation of the U.S.-Panama treaty. "What's not legitimate about the way Trump has gone about this is the bullying tactic that he's used, which is to claim that there has been a violation of the neutrality treaty. There hasn't been," Feeley said. Mulino has defended Panama's administration of the canal, saying it has been handled responsibly for world trade, including that of the United States, and that it "is, and will continue to be, Panamanian." Reporting by Phil Stewart; additional reporting by Idrees Ali; Editing by Clarence Fernandez, Rod Nickel, Alistair Bell and Gerry Doyle. Phil Stewart has reported from more than 60 countries, including Afghanistan, Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, China and South Sudan. An award-winning Washington-based national security reporter, Phil has appeared on NPR, PBS NewsHour, Fox News and other programs and moderated national security events, including at the Reagan National Defense Forum and the German Marshall Fund. He is a recipient of the Edwin M. Hood Award for Diplomatic Correspondence and the Joe Galloway Award.

UK bill aims to speed debt restructuring for poor countries

LONDON, GNS News Agency, April 12, A British lawmaker has introduced a private member's bill that would set new rules around debt restructurings in a push to speed up negotiations for poor countries struggling with unsustainable debt. Bamboos Charalambous, who introduced the bill late last year, said support from other members of parliament had grown since the UK and the United States slashed aid spending. He represents the ruling Labour party in parliament, but neither it nor the opposition conservatives have thrown their support behind the bill. The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here.



Charalambous said his party may be persuaded to back it and it was being studied by some in government. His effort follows similar proposals in New York state, which supporters say would enable poor nations to emerge faster and stronger from debt distress, while opponents warn they could make future borrowing more expensive. Lawyers and investors following the debate on both sides of the Atlantic expect debt campaigners to keep pushing until some iteration of the proposals becomes law. Trillions of dollars in bonds - accounting for nearly all tradeable sovereign debt issued by developing governments and companies on international capital markets - are issued under the laws of either New York state or England. English law governs a disproportionate share - estimated at up to 90% - of those bonds issued by the poorest nations, such as Ethiopia and Ghana. "It would, number one, compel private creditors to negotiate in good faith, and quickly, with the debt-distressed countries," Charalambous told Reuters regarding the bill.

cluded, aiming to prevent holdout creditors from blocking or slowing debt deals. Currently, if a country defaults on its bonds, creditors can go to court in the jurisdiction governing the contract to force repayment; some of Ethiopia's bondholders have said they could undertake legal proceedings. Such court cases typically spark lengthy legal proceedings that can delay or complicate a broader restructuring.

A wave of developing countries, from Ghana to Sri Lanka, have defaulted since 2020, weakened by the COVID-19 pandemic and a global interest rate hiking cycle. The G20 created an initiative called the Common Framework to try to bring together diverse lenders - from China to New York investors - to speed up poor countries' debt reworks. But it took Zambia more than three years to restructure its primary debts, and critics say the debt relief it and other nations have secured leaves them vulnerable to future crises. No iteration of the New York bill has made it to the governor's desk, but emerging market bond investors have begun to include clauses in bond deals that would allow them to switch jurisdictions to avoid potential curbs. Libby George is a London-based journalist on the Reuters emerging markets team. She was part of a team named as Pulitzer finalists in 2023, and who won the Selden Ring Award for International Investigative Reporting, for a series of stories revealing abuses by Nigeria's military. After launching her career as a political journalist in Washington, D.C., she joined Reuters in 2015 covering oil, and from 2019-2023, she was senior correspondent and acting bureau chief based in Lagos, Nigeria.

19-year-old allegedly gang-raped by 23 people over six days, six arrested

GNS News Agency, April 12 A 19-year-old woman was allegedly gang-raped by 23 people over six days, with the accused drugging her and taking her to several hotels as they passed her on for abuse, police said here. Six of the accused have been arrested. Additional Commissioner of Police, Cantonment, Vidush Saxena said the woman had gone out with some youths on March 29. Her family filed a missing report on April 4 when she did not return home. When the police rescued her, she did not mention about the rape, he said.

However, the survivor's family on April 6 lodged a complaint alleging that she had been gang raped. "The woman told the police that between March 29 and April 4, the accused allegedly took her to many hotels and hookah bars and gang-raped her," the officer said. The police said 11 unnamed persons have also been booked. Out of 12 named accused, six were arrested on Sunday (April 6, 2025), and efforts are being made to nab the rest of the accused.

The woman's mother said in her complaint that her daughter had gone to her friend's house on March 29. "On the way back home, she met a boy named Raj Vishwakarma, who took her to his cafe in Lanka, where Raj and his other friend did 'bad acts' with her." The next day my daughter met a boy named Sameer, who was on a bike with one of his friends. Sameer took her on the bike to a highway and did a 'bad act' with her on the bike itself and left the girl at Nadesar," she alleged.

"The next day, on March 31, a boy named Ayush along with his five other friends named Sohail, Danish, Anmol, Sajid and Zahir took her to Continental Cafe in Sigra and made her drink intoxicants and raped her one by one. On April 1, a boy named Sajid along with his friend took her to a hotel, where two-three other people were present.

Trump's sweeping tariffs, including 104% on China, to take effect today



GNS News Agency, April 12

The United States and China hurtled towards an all-out trade war on Wednesday (April 9, 2025), locked in a high stakes game of brinkmanship as President Donald Trump prepared to unleash a wave of tariffs against dozens of partners. The global economy has been rocked since sweeping 10% U.S. tariffs took effect over the weekend, triggering a dramatic market sell-off worldwide and sparking recession fears.

Rates on imports to the United States from dozens of economies are set to rise further come 12.01 am (0401 GMT) on Wednesday, with Chinese products facing a staggering 104% additional levy. The new tariffs come following Beijing's pushback against Mr. Trump, who remained defiant despite major U.S. indexes slumping again on Tuesday.

The U.S. President believes his policy will revive America's lost manufacturing base by forcing companies to relocate to the United States. But many business experts and economists question how quickly this can take place, warning of higher inflation as the tariffs raise prices. Mr. Trump originally unveiled a 34% additional tariff on Chinese goods. But after China unveiled its own 34% counter tariff on American products, he vowed to pile on another 50% duty -- bringing the additional rate on Chinese products to 104%, the White House confirmed. Beijing earlier blasted what it called U.S. blackmail and vowed to "fight it to the end." Mr. Trump insisted that the ball was in China's court because Beijing "wants to make a deal, badly, but they don't know how to get it started." Separately, Canada said that its tariffs on U.S. auto imports will come into force on Wednesday as well.

China 'confident' In the war of words between the world's two biggest economies, China also condemned remarks by U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance in which he said the United States had for too long borrowed money from "Chinese peasants." The European Union sought to cool tensions, with the bloc's chief Ursula von der Leyen warning against worsening the trade conflict in a call with Chinese Premier Li Qiang. She stressed stability for the world's economy, alongside "the need to avoid further escalation," said an EU readout. The Chinese premier told von der Leyen that his country could weather the storm, saying it "is fully confident of maintaining sustained and healthy economic development." China's offshore yuan fell to an all-time low against the U.S. dollar on Tuesday, while oil prices slumped too with the West Texas Intermediate closing below \$60 for the first time since April 2021. The EU -- which Mr. Trump has criticised bitterly over its tariff regime -- may unveil its response next week to 20% levies it faces.

French President Emmanuel Macron called on the defiant U.S. President to reconsider, adding if the EU was forced to respond "so be it." In retaliation against U.S. steel and aluminum levies taking effect mid-March, the EU plans tariffs of up to 25% on American goods ranging from soybeans to motorcycles and make-up, according to a document seen by AFP. Underlining Mr. Trump's willingness to negotiate, White House advisor Kevin Hassett told Fox News that the administration would prioritize allies like Japan and South Korea among the dozens of nations wanting to cut deals. The broad-based S&P 500 Index tumbled 1.6% and the tech-focused Nasdaq slid 2.3%. Europe's main indices finished with gains of more than two percent, while Asia's leading indices also rose after heavy falls Monday. In a public sign of friction, key Trump ally Elon Musk described senior White House trade advisor Peter Navarro as "dumber than a sack of bricks." Mr. Musk, who has signaled his opposition to the tariffs, hit out after Mr. Navarro described his Tesla company as "a car assembler" that wants cheap foreign parts. Mr. Trump has ruled out any pause in his aggressive stance, despite China's retaliation and criticism from within his Republican Party. "Nearly 50 countries have approached me personally to discuss the president's new policy and explore how to achieve reciprocity," Trump's top trade official told the Senate. Countries including Argentina, Vietnam and Israel had offered to reduce their tariffs, Jamieson Greer said.

At least 79 dead, 160 injured in roof collapse at Dominican Republic nightclub



The roof of an iconic nightclub in the Dominican capital collapsed early Tuesday (April 8, 2025) during a merengue concert attended by politicians, athletes and others, leaving at least 79 people dead and 160 injured, authorities said. Crews were searching for potential survivors in the rubble at the one-story Jet Set nightclub in Santo Domingo, said Juan Manuel Méndez, director of the Center of Emergency Operations.

"We continue clearing debris and searching for people," he said on Tuesday (April 8, 2025) night. "We're going to search tirelessly for people." Nearly 12 hours after the top of the nightclub collapsed onto patrons, rescue crews were still pulling out survivors from under the debris. Firefighters removed blocks of broken concrete and used sawed pieces of wood as planks to lift heavy debris as the noise of drills breaking through concrete filled the air. Mr. Méndez said rescue crews were prioritizing three areas in the club: "We're hearing some sounds." Nelsy Cruz, the governor of the northwestern province of Montecristi and sister of seven-time Major League Baseball All-Star Nelson Cruz, was among the victims. She had called President Luis Abinader at 12:49 a.m., saying she was trapped and that the roof had collapsed, first lady Raquel Abrajé told reporters. Officials said Cruz died later at the hospital. "This is too great a tragedy," Ms. Abrajé said, her voice breaking. The Professional Baseball League of the Dominican Republic posted on X that former MLB pitcher Octavio Dotel, 51, also died. Officials had pulled Dotel from the debris earlier and brought him to a hospital. Also killed was Dominican baseball player Tony Enrique Blanco Cabrera, said league spokesman Satosky Terrero.

Officials said at least 160 people were injured, among them national lawmaker Bray Vargas. Relatives of merengue singer Rubby Pérez, who was performing when the roof collapsed, initially said that he had been rescued, but Mr. Méndez said later Tuesday (April 8, 2025) that wasn't

true. He said rescue crews were still looking for Mr. Pérez. Mr. Pérez's manager, Enrique Paulino, whose shirt was spattered with blood, told reporters at the scene that the concert began shortly before midnight, with the roof collapsing almost an hour later, killing the group's saxophonist. "It happened so quickly. I managed to throw myself into a corner," he said, adding that he initially thought it was an earthquake. It wasn't immediately clear what caused the roof to collapse or when the Jet Set building was last inspected. The club issued a statement saying it was cooperating with authorities and noted that the owner, Antonio Espallat, was out of the country and returned late Tuesday. "There are no words to express the pain this event has caused. What happened has been devastating for everyone," he said.

A spokeswoman for the Ministry of Public Works referred questions to the mayor's office. A spokesperson for the mayor's office did not respond to a message for comment. Prosecutor Rosalba Ramos told TV station CDN that while "everyone wants to know" what happened, authorities were still focused on finding survivors. They set up a makeshift morgue near the club while more than 120 people lined up to donate blood at two different centers. Manuel Olivio Ortiz, whose son attended the concert but did not return home, was among those anxiously waiting outside the club known for its traditional Monday parties where renowned national and international artists performed. "I'm waiting for her. She's in there, I know she's in there," Ms. Cuevas said, firm in her belief that Batista would be pulled out alive. President Abinader wrote on X that all rescue agencies are "working tirelessly" to help those affected. "We deeply regret the tragedy that occurred at the Jet Set nightclub. We have been following the incident minute by minute since it occurred," he wrote. Mr. Abinader arrived at the scene and hugged those looking for friends and family, some with tears streaming down their faces. "We have faith in God that we will rescue even more people alive," he told reporters. An official with a megaphone stood outside the club imploring the large crowd that had gathered to search for friends and relatives to give ambulances space. "You have to cooperate with authorities, please," he said. "We are removing people." At one hospital where the injured were taken, an official stood outside reading aloud the names of survivors as a crowd gathered around her and yelled out the names of their loved ones. Meanwhile, dozens of people gathered at the National Institute of Forensic Pathology, which shared pictures of the victims so their loved ones could identify them.

The gradual transformation of the Home Ministry



GNS News Agency, April 12

Governments are often judged by how well they react, but true leadership is about how well they reform. Ministries tend to excel in responding to crises such as managing disasters, controlling conflicts, and restoring law and order. When necessary, this approach only addresses immediate threats without securing long-term solutions. Reforms, on the other hand, shape governance for the future. When Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks of 'Reform, Perform, and Transform', he highlights the need for structural reforms rather than temporary fixes. This shift is very much visible in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which was traditionally seen as a 'Crisis Ministry', stepping in when riots erupted, insurgencies escalated, or States faced governance failures. Its interventions were often reactive, tackling unrest rather than preventing it through institutional reforms. In recent years, the MHA has fundamentally transformed itself, moving from crisis response to building a structured security architecture. It now focuses on strengthening counter-terror laws, modernising agencies, adopting technology and improving intelligence coordination. From legislative overhauls to institutional restructuring, the Ministry is pre-empting threats, ensuring that India's internal security is future ready.

The MHA is the backbone of India's internal security and federal governance. Unlike many countries that divide security and governance, the MHA integrates them, making it a critical pillar of national stability. The Indian Constitution empowers the MHA through Articles 355, 256, and 356, ensuring Centre-State coordination on security matters.

The MHA's growth has largely been shaped by security challenges of the day. The rise of terrorism and insurgency since the 1980s led to increased security spending. Punjab's militancy, Kashmir's terrorism, and Maoist violence required direct intervention, as State police struggled to contain these threats. Many States were slow to modernise their police forces, increasing their reliance on the Central Armed Police Forces or the CAPFs (Assam Rifles; Border Security Force; Central Industrial Security Force, or CISF; Central Reserve Police Force; Indo-Tibetan Border Police; National Security Guard and Sashastra Seema Bal). Reliance on the Rapid Action Force (RAF) of the CRPF for riot control is one example. Industrial unrest in the 1970s-80s had some role in the creation of the CISF — to manage strikes, particularly in West Bengal and Kerala. Meanwhile, administrative restructuring saw north-east affairs and the Department of Justice separated from the MHA, while Disaster Management and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) were added.

For nearly four decades, India's three major security hotspots, i.e., Kashmir, the North-East, and Central India (Naxal areas) dominated the MHA's priorities, costing thousands of lives. The lives of nearly 36,000 personnel and an equal number of civilians have been lost, with security forces largely turning their focus on these conflict zones. This focus on insurgency, terrorism and border security has meant that other critical areas such as police modernisation, agency coordination, narcotics control, technology adoption, disaster management and federal governance have received less attention.

Frequent leadership changes have historically affected the Home Ministry's policymaking. Indira Gandhi's third term and Rajiv Gandhi's tenure saw four Home Ministers, leading to instability in internal security reforms. It is only Prime Ministers P.V. Narasimha Rao and Atal Bihari Vajpayee who had a single Home Minister throughout their full ten-

ure. Mr. Modi has maintained stability at the MHA, in a reinforcement of a long-term vision for internal security and governance. On the legislative front, the MHA's earlier responses were largely event-driven. The Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, or TADA, was enacted after the Punjab insurgency, the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) after the 2001 Parliament attack, and the National Investigation Agency (NIA) was formed after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. These laws, though critical, were reactive/reactions rather than being a part of a structured security framework. But since 2019, over 27 legislative reforms have established a strong security jurisprudence, shaping law enforcement and national stability. These include transformative changes in terror jurisprudence, Kashmir integration and the criminal justice system. The idea of whole-of-government now drives a multi-agency approach, where legislative provisions are backed by operational strengthening, budgetary support and outcome-oriented reviews.

India has long faced terror threats, but past responses have often been short-sighted and temporary. The current Home Ministry has strengthened terror jurisprudence — amending the NIA Act and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, or UAPA, by defining terrorism in Indian criminal law, and aiming to financially choke terror groups. But at the same time, this has been complemented by strengthening and expanding the NIA, creating technology databases, revamping the Multi-Agency Centre (MAC), and promoting a 'duty to share' intelligence culture. A similar approach is visible in criminal justice system reforms. Three new criminal laws (the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam) have been enacted but their foundation was laid much earlier. There has also been the establishment of the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) and full implementation of the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) which integrates 17,130 police stations, courts, jails and forensic laboratories. States are now encouraged to separate investigation from forensics, further strengthening the justice system. In 2019, for the first time, the MHA budget crossed ₹1 lakh crore. The 2025 Budget allocation has surged to ₹2.33 lakh crore, reflecting the government's focus on internal security and modernisation. The expenditure on the Central Paramilitary Forces has also risen, from ₹38,000 crore in 2013-14 to ₹97,000 crore in 2024-25, highlighting the enhanced investment in national security and force modernisation. Impact on the ground

The new approach has led to a significant reduction in violence across Kashmir, the North-East, and Naxal-affected areas. The dilution of Article 370, peace deals in the North-East, and a dual strategy of a filling up of security and development vacuums in Naxal-affected regions have collectively transformed India's internal security landscape. These measures have attempted full integration, political stability, and economic growth in conflict-prone areas.

IMF reaches preliminary deal with Argentina on \$20 billion bailout

The International Monetary Fund on Tuesday (April 9, 2025) said it has reached a preliminary, staff-level agreement with cash-strapped Argentina on a \$20 billion bailout, providing a welcome reprieve to libertarian President Javier Milei as he seeks to overturn the country's old economic order. As a staff-level agreement, the rescue package still requires final approval from the IMF's executive board, which was expected to meet in the coming days. The fund's announcement offers a lifeline to President Milei, who has cut inflation and stabilized Argentina's economy with a free-market austerity agenda that has reversed the reckless borrowing of his left-wing populist predecessors.

The IMF has praised Mr. Milei's success in slashing Argentina's fiscal deficit but had held off on a new loan to the country that is its biggest debtor, with 22 IMF loans already handed out since 1958.

The Trump effect and a possible exodus of expertise

GNS News Agency, April 12

A LinkedIn post by a former student of the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata, currently employed as a postdoc in a university of repute in the United States, caught me off guard a few days ago. He is actively seeking new positions where he may be able to leverage his experience in the biotech, pharma, or health-care analytics domains. He is a student who completed his doctorate in the U.S. and has a stellar publication record. Is his case an example of an immediate consequence of the fund cutting and the curbing of academic freedom by the Trump administration? The U.S. has for long been the world leader in almost every area of research. The National Science Foundation (NSF), which was established in 1950, marked the beginning of the modern American research university. The National Institutes of Health (NIH), which go back to the late-19th century, saw significant expansion in the post-war years. Together, these two organisations transformed previously underperforming American scientific institutions into becoming the world's pre-eminent research universities.

However, America's higher education is almost in a mess ever since Donald Trump returned to the White House. The U.S. academic community is moving away from fundamental ideas of democracy and freedom as a result of Mr. Trump's war on science. For example, Columbia University has agreed to enact a number of policy changes in response to threats from the Trump administration. One research centre after another is being slashed or shut down by Mr. Trump and Elon Musk, whether it is at the NIH or the Environmental Protection Agency. Mr. Trump has made a move to completely dismantle the U.S. Department of Education. He has ordered widespread layoffs within federal science agencies, including senior positions at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). He has also terminated grants in specific research areas, taken unprecedented control over university affairs, and, in effect, threatened academic freedom. Scientists who retain their jobs wonder whether they still have a place in American agencies and research institutes. There could be a fear of more hiring and funding freezes, data transfer limitations, and censorship related to gender studies, vaccine hesitancy, and climate change. The resultant rift in American society may continue and transform American culture for a generation even if the current university financing issue is resolved. Early-career researchers are undoubtedly concerned about Mr. Trump's disruptions because job cuts in federal research agencies and universities may increase competition and uncertainty. It may also be confusing for lakhs of international students aspiring to pursue doctoral studies in the U.S.

There could be a 'research brain drain' An editorial in the science journal, Nature, has described Mr. Trump's actions as an "assault on science". Science and its intrinsic economics, however, can still constitute the endless frontier. Mr. Trump's policies are expected to reshape global academic flows — a worldwide vacancy is opening up as a large-scale academic exodus from the U.S. seems inevitable. The possibility of a U.S. research brain drain is undoubtedly an opening for Europe and the rest of the world to promote themselves as a safe haven for unrestricted, free scientific research. "We can suddenly recruit talent that we would not have been able to attract under normal circumstances," said Patrick Cramer, President of the Max Planck Society in Germany. Michiel Scheffer of the European Innovation Council (EIC) announced on social media that "a concept" to invite scientists from the U.S. would be addressed in an April board meeting. The University of Aix-Marseille in France already announced "Safe Place for Science". It has been in contact with other universities and the French government about expanding "scientific asylum" on a national and a European level. Also, countries such as China and South Korea have vowed to increase their efforts to recruit researchers impacted by Mr. Trump's funding cuts. Some Ivy League professors, such as Yale University's Jason Stanley, are now moving to Canadian



universities. Professor Stanley, incidentally, is the author of the book, How Fascism Works (2018). The repercussions

What are the potential long-term effects? "Of a low dishonest decade/Waves of anger and fear/ Circulate over the bright/And darkened lands of the earth./Obsessing our private lives." These lines from the 1930s European setting described by British-American poet W.H. Auden in his poem, "September 1, 1939", appear eerily applicable to America in the 2020s. Jews were denied the opportunity to work in universities in 1935 when the Nazis in Germany established the Nuremberg laws. As a result, approximately 2,600 Jewish scientists left Germany for Britain and America. While the science world was dominated by Germany up until 1935, the U.S. gained the leadership thereafter. Similar circumstances, but a reverse direction, of the academic exodus may ensue now.

Thus, Mr. Trump's "assault on science" might have global repercussions. However, the flip side is that it will put a great deal of pressure on universities and research institutions around the world, including India, where it will affect the job market. Europe might not be able to accommodate all U.S. researchers wishing to relocate at a time when many European universities are dealing with budget deficits in a post-COVID-19 pandemic era under the looming threat of recession. Further, given that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is in danger of disintegrating, European nations in particular may need to raise their defence budgets. As a result, the Indian academic environment may also experience an inward rush — many scholars may want to return from the U.S. The shades of uncertainty remain in the U.S., in Europe, and in India too.

Author of explosive Meta memoir to star at US Senate hearing

The former Facebook employee behind a scathing book about parent company Meta will testify Wednesday before US senators keen to establish whether the social networking giant ever collaborated with the Chinese government.

Former global policy director Sarah Wynn-Williams has alleged the company explored the possibility of breaking into the lucrative Chinese market by appeasing Beijing's government censors. Meta communications director Andy Stone told AFP the company "ultimately decided not to go through with the ideas we'd explored." The company's family of apps is currently blocked in China. Wynn-Williams's testimony at a Senate Judiciary subcommittee hearing will focus on Meta's foreign relations moves and on what its executives have previously told Congress.

Of particular interest at Wednesday's hearing, headed by Republican Senator Josh Hawley of Missouri, is whether Wynn-Williams contradicts what Meta co-founder and chief executive Mark Zuckerberg has stated under oath during past congressional hearings.

Wynn-Williams's book, "Careless People: A Cautionary Tale of Power, Greed and Lost Idealism," was released on March 11 and became a hot seller despite Meta winning an arbitration court order barring the author from promoting the work or making derogatory statements about the company.

Strengthening enforcement of judicial orders



The decision led to widespread circumvention, including the reclassification of highways as urban roads and the relocation of liquor outlets just beyond 500 meters of highways. This revealed a lack of foresight in anticipating implementation hurdles and delays in execution procedures which can even render judgments ineffective. There may be certain exceptions where it may be prudent for the court to consider certain aspects for effective enforcement. Section 38 of the Code of Civil Procedure (CPC) in India gives the power to execute a decree to both the court that passed it and the court to which it is sent for execution. Order 21 of the CPC addresses the formal process of executing decrees issued by courts at all levels, from the grassroots level to the highest authority. Despite these provisions, the actual execution of judgments often falls short as there are concerns regarding the validity of a decree and judicial misconduct. India has witnessed several instances where judicial enforcement has been effective. In *Common Cause v. Union of India* (2018), the Supreme Court legalised passive euthanasia and the success of this judgment stemmed from its clarity: specific guidelines for healthcare institutions, stringent monitoring mechanisms, and systematic oversight ensured that the decision translated into action. The Taj Trapezium Zone directives highlighted the significance of inter-agency collaboration. Based on the Varadarajan Committee's recommendation, a green belt was established around the Mathura oil refinery, and regular air quality monitoring was mandated. These examples show that effective enforcement requires actionable directives and concurrent monitoring frameworks.

To achieve the aim of effective enforcement, there is a pressing need to establish a system where an officer could be appointed in every government department and agency to review and remedy the situation. The officer would be responsible for executing orders, ensuring compliance through regular audits and reporting, and would face the threat of consequences for failing to execute such orders. It is essential to leverage technologies to identify government departments and agencies whose jurisdictions align with specific judicial directives enabling the entities to report back to the court within designated time frames. Enforcement mechanisms play a critical role in encouraging compliance, particularly through the use of positive measures. Transparency, as a key mechanism, fosters compliance by ensuring robust policy formation and the effective dissemination of information. In conclusion, the effectiveness of judicial reform in India is undermined by weak enforcement mechanisms. To bridge these systemic gaps, it is imperative to establish a structured system with officers accountable to the judiciary while maintaining transparency. Tech-driven monitoring, clear accountability frameworks, and fostering public engagement can significantly improve compliance. Furthermore, inter-agency coordination is essential to translate judicial rulings into tangible real-world outcomes.

Residents of central Jaipur face persistent disturbances from air horn usage by buses and trucks even during late hours. Despite existing noise pollution regulations, enforcement has been inadequate. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) issued an order limiting air horn usage on major roads between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. However, enforcement agencies, including the traffic police, transport department, and pollution control board, have still not implemented the order. What the NGT should have done is to evaluate the possibility of its order being implemented or taken action which would be implementable. This would mean complete ban of air horns, which it did not consider. Consequently, the issue remains unresolved after more than two years.

Judicial orders that incorporate strategies to overcome enforcement challenges have the potential to optimise resource utilisation and foster public satisfaction. By focusing on practical and actionable enforcement strategies, meaningful and lasting outcomes can be achieved. Inspiration can also be drawn from Kathmandu in Nepal, where strict enforcement of noise control measures, combined with public awareness campaigns, has led to remarkable change. It demonstrates how proactive enforcement, supported by public education and cooperation, can drive change. Enforcement is not merely a procedural task — it is integral to justice itself. The consequences of weak enforcement of judicial decisions are profound, undermining both governance and public trust in the judiciary. Anticipating hurdles

The challenges in enforcing judicial decisions are emblematic of systemic issues. Enforcement agencies are often reluctant to act on violations they deem "minor", creating a significant disconnect between judicial intent and ground reality. This gap highlights the need for judicial foresight during decision-making to anticipate enforcement hurdles and ensure the implementation framework is robust and realistic.

Consider the State of Tamil Nadu v. K. Balu (2017) case, popularly known as the liquor ban case. The Supreme Court aimed to curb road accidents caused by drink driving and prohibited liquor sales within 500 metres of the highways. However, enforcement challenges soon emerged.

What George Grierson's First Linguistic Survey of India tells us about multilingual South Asia

GNS News Agency, April 12

At school, 7-year-old Vivaan Gupta studies English as his first language and Hindi as his second. At home, most of his conversations are in Bangla with his home help, whose dialect is influenced by her origins in Bangladesh. Still, he often wonders why the Bangla he speaks is different from what his Bengali friends speak at school. But those are not the only languages he is well versed in — his mother is a Gujarati, and his father is a Bihari. Vivaan speaks, with varying degrees of accuracy, five languages or dialects of a language. This multilingualism, as explained in a 2019 UNICEF report *Early Literacy And Multilingual Education in South Asia*, is typical for children in many South Asian households.

South Asia, home to 25% of the global population, is characterised by the widespread use of five major language families: Indo-European, Iranian, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman, and Austro-Asiatic/Munda. According to linguists, including Javed Majeed, a professor at King's College London, distinguishing languages from dialects in South Asia is an intense and often impossible task, further complicating the process of determining the number of languages spoken in the region. This challenge captivated Irish-born Indian Civil Services officer George Abraham Grierson (1851–1941) to embark on the monumental task of producing the *Linguistic Survey of India* (LSI), a project that spanned over three decades. Published in 21 volumes between 1901 and 1928, the survey aimed to document the linguistic diversity of India. Amid ongoing debates on multilingualism, Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India* remains a foundational work, offering insight into the region's diverse linguistic landscape. Grierson was born in Ireland in 1851 and later studied mathematics at Trinity College, Dublin. In 1871, he passed the Indian Civil Service exams and was posted to the Bengal Presidency. During his time in India, Grierson took up the study of Sanskrit and Hindustani (as it was called then). He also authored works on a wide range of subjects, including Bihari language and literature, and compiled a dictionary of the 'Kashmiri Language'.

In an article for *The Daily Star*, Bangladesh's English-language daily, Majeed suggests that the idea for the LSI may have been proposed to Grierson by his tutor, Robert Atkinson, professor of Oriental Languages at Trinity College. Grierson later presented the idea at the Vienna Congress of Orientalists in 1886. There, he referenced two of his works — *Bihar Peasant Life* (1885) and *Seven Grammars of the Dialects and Subdialects of the Bihari Language* (1883-1887) — to reveal the contrast between the 'polite' or government language, Hindi/Hindustani, and the 'mother tongue' spoken by the people of Bihar.

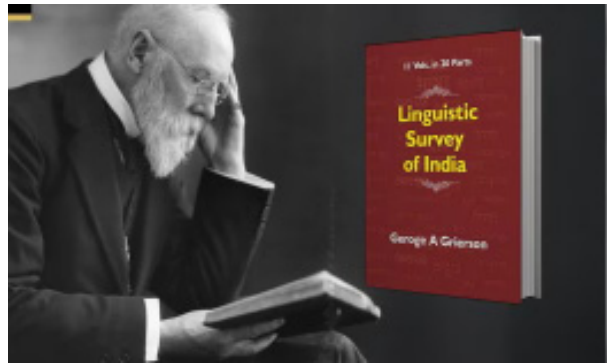
In his 2019 work, *Colonialism & Knowledge in Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India*, Majeed argues that Grierson had a "fluctuating sense" of the aims of the LSI. In an interview with *indianexpress.com*, Majeed said: "Generally, the LSI aimed to institutionalise knowledge of India as a linguistic region globally among linguists and academics while also increasing the colonial district officials' understanding of dialects and languages in their own provinces and districts." Grierson emphasised the practical benefits of the Survey for magistrates, who needed to converse with witnesses in their local dialects rather than the court language, which was often alien to many villagers. He suggested that questioning witnesses in their languages could make it easier to get at the truth, unlike using Urdu or Hindi.

The LSI had three stages. In the first, Grierson compiled "a list of all the varieties of speech then known to exist in the area under survey," sending forms to district officers and agents to gather information on languages and their estimated speakers. In the second stage, officers collected specimens of each listed dialect and language. Specimens included the parable of the Prodigal Son (a biblical refer-

ence), folklore, and common words in India, which district administrators had to translate into "every known dialect and sub-dialect." Majeed notes that specimens began arriving in 1897, with most received by 1900, and editing began in 1898. In the third stage, dialects and languages were grouped into families and subfamilies, requiring the adoption of theories about their relationships.

A colonial project?

The 21 volumes of Grierson's LSI are, as Majeed describes in his other work *Nation And Region in Grierson's Linguistic Survey Of India* (2019), "One of the most complete sources on South Asian languages." It documents more than 700 linguistic varieties across South Asia, offering detailed lexical and grammatical data for 268 varieties within the four major South Asian language families. The survey remains a foundational reference for any discussion and nearly all subsequent studies on India's linguistic landscape. The complexities of conducting such an extensive survey, however, are difficult to grasp fully. In addition to managing large-scale data collection, collation, and analysis, Grierson had to navigate a difficult bureaucracy. While Majeed acknowledges that the LSI was not solely a product of the colonial state, Grierson could not have undertaken such a project without its backing. Yet, the LSI's departmental affiliation was often unclear, as various departments evolved throughout the survey. At different points, Grierson reported to the Home Department, the Education Department, or the Department of Education, Health, and Lands. Some officials viewed the data collection process as an unnecessary burden, leading Grierson to rely on personal contacts to obtain information from district commissioners while also negotiating with the princely states. For example, he was able to obtain a specimen of the Prodigal Son parable in Sarada script (widely used in Kashmir and surrounding areas at the time) only by appealing to the Maharajah of Jammu and Kashmir. The Survey's finances were also uncertain. In 1890, Grierson estimated the cost at Rs 3.5 lakh, based on provincial governments' projections. By 1895, the Indian government allocated only Rs 2,000 annually for three years. In the end, no special funds were provided, apart from printing costs and one clerk. Thus, the LSI was not heavily reliant on colonial state finances, serving mainly to support the Census and provide a reference to the British government for identifying languages and dialects. "LSI was thus what Grierson continually called demi-official because he didn't really get enough support from the state," Majeed commented. A significant challenge faced by Grierson was the multiplicity of languages. In *Nation & Region*, Majeed notes that for the 1901 census, Grierson highlighted that "the same language may be called by many names in different localities, and there is always the risk of a variety of nomenclature leading to wrong classification." Grierson expanded on this issue in his writings, explaining that the people of Rajputana spoke a variety of dialects, such as Marwari, Mewari, and Jaipuri. While he grouped them under the single label 'Rajasthani,' the inhabitants neither identified with the term nor accepted it, as it obscured the native connections of each group.



The breast cancer crisis in India and the need for AI integration in early detection



Cancer remains the leading cause of death worldwide, claiming approximately 9.6 million lives annually—one in every six deaths—according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Among various types, breast cancer is uniquely linked to gender, primarily affecting women. According to the WHO, nearly half of diagnosed women have no major risk factors beyond being female and over 40, while others face risks such as obesity, alcohol consumption, genetics, and reproductive history. Breast cancer is the most prevalent cause of cancer-related death among women on a global scale as per the World Cancer Research Fund International (WCRFI). The WHO estimates that 2.3 million cases were diagnosed in 2022, leading to approximately 6,70,000 deaths. The Global Breast Cancer Initiative launched by the WHO in March 2021, aims to reduce global mortality by 2.5% annually, targeting a reduction of 25% in global breast cancer death rates by 2030 and 40% by 2040. Achieving these goals requires a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach that prioritises early detection, timely diagnosis, and effective disease management. Increased awareness, improved access to healthcare, and advancements in screening and treatment are crucial in the fight against breast cancer.

Breast cancer accounts for 23.76% of all cancer diagnoses globally. India is witnessing a worrying surge in breast cancer cases, ranking third globally after China and the United States in absolute numbers. As per the Global Cancer Observatory, India had the highest number of breast cancer-related deaths, with 98,337 fatalities in 2022. Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal were the top three states in India with the highest estimated incidence of breast cancer cases and associated mortality. The major metropolitan cities in India bear the brunt of the disease, with Mumbai (8,237 cases), Delhi (8,080), Chennai (5,461), Bangalore (4,416), and Thiruvananthapuram (4,083) collectively contributing to over half (52.42%) of the nation's reported cases. A study by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) projects a 170% increase in the number of new breast cancer cases and a 200% rise in breast cancer related deaths in India by 2050, underscoring the urgent need for early screening and diagnosis.

With breast cancer cases rising, urgent action is needed to improve healthcare infrastructure. The Indian government, through the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), plans to set up 200 daycare cancer centres in district hospitals by 2025-26. However, accessibility remains a concern, especially for rural and less-privileged

women. Strengthening Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and Sub-Centres (SCs) for early detection, along with government-led awareness campaigns and screening programmes, could significantly improve outcomes. Deploying radiologists to selected PHCs for fixed hours each week could enhance accessibility, ensure timely diagnoses and help curb the rising death toll. Despite medical advancements in care, India struggles with high breast cancer mortality due to late detection and low awareness. Early screening is crucial, and AI is transforming diagnostics by improving accuracy and efficiency. AI-powered screening tools such as AI integrated mammography machines can aid radiologists in recognising patterns and spotting malignancies that might be missed by human observation, facilitating well-informed decisions and faster interventions. For this, the AI models have to be trained with huge datasets generated through mammography images. The need for faster, better diagnoses in India is urgent: the number of radiologists as a ratio to the population is low, meaning AI tools could potentially enhance diagnosis speed and enable quicker intervention and timely medical treatment.

AI technologies such as Niramai, iBreastExam, and MammoAssist are already being tested to improve early detection, especially in resource-poor areas. Strengthening AI integration in cancer diagnostics could play a pivotal role in combating the country's growing breast cancer crisis. The integration of AI in diagnostics can also make the process more efficient and economically viable. AI-assisted tools reduce diagnostic expenses by automating routine tasks, enabling radiologists to focus on complex cases. Moreover, early detection through AI helps lower treatment costs by identifying cancer at a more treatable stage, improving survival rates while easing the burden on healthcare systems. Despite AI's immense potential in cancer detection, widespread adoption in India faces hurdles such as high costs, the need for specialised training, and data privacy concerns. Policymakers must address these challenges through regulations and incentives to promote AI integration in healthcare. Government initiatives including the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases & Stroke (NPCDCS) by the National Health Mission could incorporate AI-based screening to enhance early cancer detection at the grassroots level, improving accessibility and patient outcomes. To accelerate AI adoption in breast cancer diagnostics, investment in AI infrastructure is crucial for seamless integration into hospitals and diagnostic centres. Training healthcare professionals, including radiologists and technicians, ensures effective use of these technologies. Equally vital is establishing robust data security frameworks to protect patient information and build public trust. Collaborations between the government and private sector can drive research and innovation, while subsidising AI-assisted screenings can enhance accessibility for lower-income groups, promoting early detection and better health outcomes. Mobile AI-driven screening units can extend early detection services to remote areas, making it more accessible to underserved populations. Telemedicine consultations and digital health records can bridge the gap between rural patients and specialists in urban centres. Expanding AI-based diagnostics beyond district hospitals to Primary Health Centers (PHCs) could ensure timely intervention and reduce mortality rates. A holistic approach—strengthening grassroots healthcare, raising awareness, and integrating AI screening—can be transformative. Collaboration between the government, private sector, and healthcare institutions is essential to making life-saving diagnostics widely accessible. With the right policies and technology, India can significantly reduce its breast cancer burden, enhance the overall quality of cancer care and save countless lives.

Understanding the causes behind, and treatment for, abnormal uterine bleeding

Menstrual disorders are fairly common during a woman's reproductive years, and can cause significant physical and psychological distress. Normal menstruation starts at menarche, around age 12, and lasts till menopause around age 50. This bleeding is controlled by the hypothalamo-pituitary-ovarian axis, and consists of cyclical changes in the ovary as well as the endometrium (inner uterine lining). Normal menstruation consists of blood and uterine cellular debris. It usually lasts between 2 and 7 days and occurs every 21 to 35 days.

What is abnormal uterine bleeding?

Abnormal uterine bleeding may include the following conditions: prolongation of bleeding beyond seven days, heavy bleeding, clots are present, or bleeding that stains clothes or causes anaemia, bleeding that is more frequent than once in 21 days, delayed more than 35 days, when bleeding occurs intermenstrual, post-menopausal or where the cyclical pattern is lost. The term 'dysfunctional uterine bleeding' implies that there is no structural or pathological cause for this, but only an endocrine abnormality. The causes of abnormal uterine bleeding in teenage are anovulation (when the ovaries do not release an egg during a menstrual cycle), pelvic infection, use of hormonal pills, disorder of coagulation and hormone-producing tumours. In the reproductive years, the causes are pregnancy, polyps (abnormal growth of tissue), adenomyosis (a condition where the tissue lining the uterus grows into the muscular wall of the uterus), fibroids, anovulation, endometrial hyperplasia (a condition where the lining of the uterus becomes abnormally thick) and endometrial cancers. In the perimenopausal age group, anovulation, endometrial hyperplasia, endometrial cancer and endometrial atrophy (thinning of the uterine lining) are more likely. The goals of management are based on the age of the patient, desire for fertility, family history of cancers and functional disability. Investigations would include checking haemoglobin levels, renal and liver function, coagulation disorders, ultrasound scans, cervical cytology and an endometrial biopsy. The doctor would want to know about prior investigations and treatments and establish the cause of the bleeding problem. Patients would be advised on menstrual hygiene and how to keep a menstrual diary. The pattern of bleeding needs to be assessed over a few months. Severe bleeding may need to be controlled and anaemia corrected with iron supplements or blood transfusions. Pain may also be a problem that needs to be alleviated. In adolescents, heavy menstrual bleeding can lead to emotional distress, absenteeism from school, social withdrawal and anaemia. After a detailed history and physical examination, tests are done to rule out liver, renal and coagulation disorders. An ultrasound scan is done to rule out fibroids and ovarian cysts. Endometrial biopsy is only rarely done. Girls are taught to cope with heavy menses by keeping track of their menses, using high absorbency pads, menstrual hygiene, staying hydrated, consuming iron-rich foods and controlling body weight. Non-hormonal medications like Tranexamic acid and Mefenamic acid are first-line treatments. If menses are not controlled with these, then



Women should not ignore menstrual problems; regular gynaecological check-ups are essential, as is maintaining a healthy lifestyle

hormonal treatment such as progesterone or oral contraceptive pills are prescribed. Surgery is rarely indicated for large fibroids or ovarian tumours.

In the reproductive years, pregnancy has to always be ruled out. Treatment of the underlying cause should be done. Bleeding and pain can be controlled by Tranexamic acid, Mefenamic acid, oral and injectable Progestogens, combined pills, levonorgestrel intrauterine device, mifepristone, ormeloxifene and gonadotrophin analogues. Surgery can be done endoscopically: laparoscopic, robotic or hysteroscopic. In younger women, surgery is most often organ preserving. In the perimenopausal and post-menopausal group, malignancy and hyperplasia (increase in the number of cells in an organ or tissue) have to be ruled out. The risk of malignancy with post-menopausal bleeding is 10 to 20%. Endometrial biopsy is a must in this age group before hysterectomy. In these women, removal of the uterus is done more readily. All treatments, both medical and surgical have complications. So, the doctor should weigh the risks and benefits as well as take into consideration the wishes and desires of the patient before embarking on any treatment. It is a principle that the simplest, safest and most cost-effective option should be chosen.

Women should understand their body, and the changes in its physiology with time. They should not ignore menstrual problems. They should undergo regular gynaecological check-ups. Timely treatment can spare them from unnecessary psychological and physical distress. A healthy lifestyle, a preventive approach to health and good health seeking behaviours can go a long way in maintaining a good quality of life.

RBI plans comprehensive review of gold loan rules, norms likely to be tightened



since they can auction gold if the borrower defaults on the loan. Borrowers are now required to repay the full principal and interest on the loan if they want to repledge the gold and ask for an extension of the loan. RBI review flags irregularities in gold loan practices

The RBI, which conducted a review of gold loan practices, found several irregular practices in the gold loan activity. The major deficiencies include shortcomings in the use of third parties for sourcing and appraisal of loans, valuation of gold without the presence of the customer, inadequate due diligence and lack of end-use monitoring of gold loans, lack of transparency during auction of gold ornaments and jewellery on default by the customer, weaknesses in monitoring of LTV (loan to value) ratio and incorrect application of risk weights. The RBI then asked banks and NBFCs to comprehensively review their policies, processes and practices on gold loans to identify gaps and initiate appropriate remedial measures in a timebound manner. Further, the gold loan portfolio should be closely monitored, especially in light of significant growth in the portfolio. It should also be ensured that adequate controls are in place over outsourced activities and third-party service providers, the RBI said.

Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Wednesday said the central bank will soon come out with comprehensive guidelines on gold loans, a segment that has witnessed an explosive growth in the last one year. Gold loan rules are likely to be tightened by the regulator.

Banks and NBFCs reported a phenomenal growth in gold loan outstanding to Rs 1.78 lakh crore as of January 2025, a surge of 76.9 per cent on a year-on-year basis. With gold prices shooting up, gold loan business has grown rapidly. Banks and NBFCs found it an attractive business

'Year begun on anxious note for global economy': RBI Governor speaks on Trump tariffs, flags heightened uncertainty

Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Wednesday said the global economic outlook is fast changing and the recent trade tariff related measures have exacerbated uncertainty, including the economy across regions posing new headwinds to global growth and inflation. Unveiling the monetary policy, Malhotra said the uncertainty in itself dampens growth by affecting investment and spending decisions, both of businesses and households. "Second, the dent on global growth due to trade frictions will also impede domestic growth. Third, higher tariffs shall have a negative impact on net exports," he said, while announcing a 25 basis points cut in the Repo rate to 6 per cent.

"The year has begun on an anxious note for the global economy. Some of the concerns of the trade frictions are coming true, unsettling the global community," Malhotra said. "Overall, while global trade and policy uncertainty shall impede growth, its impact on domestic inflation while requiring us to be vigilant, is not expected to be of high con-



cern," Malhotra said. He said the risks to inflation on the other hand are two sided. On the upside, uncertainties may lead to currency pressures, and therefore imported inflation. On the downside, slowdown in global growth could entail further softening in commodity and crude oil prices, putting downward pressure on inflation, he said.

In the US-China tariff war, who is likely to blink first?



A full-scale trade war between the US and China is brewing, after American President Donald Trump threatened to impose tariffs of more than 100 per cent on Chinese goods imports from April 9. For the world, the impending slugfest between the world's two biggest economies is indeed bad news, especially when there is already widespread upheaval in the trade world and analysts are upping the odds of an American recession. Tariffs of over a 100 per cent on Chinese exports of goods by the US would essentially translate into a trade embargo, and could potentially set off an unmanaged decoupling of direct trade between the world's two biggest economies. The US is the single biggest importer in the world, while China is its biggest seller of goods. An escalatory spiral in the trade war between the two, inextricably interlinked economies would, in the short term, bring back market volatility after a short breather of sorts.

In the longer term, if this were to fester, this tariff war will lead to a more bifurcated world. Trump's economic vandalism could also be a huge opportunity for China to stamp its influence over a larger sphere of countries, given that most nations in the world have a strong reason now to distrust America. All of this, as analysts are saying, does make a post-American world a reality. While it is still unclear how tariffs imposed by the US on other countries will pan out, there is always the possibility of some goods from China getting into the United States through third countries, say Vietnam or Mexico. So while American consumers might still get to buy Chinese goods, what is clear is that, one way or the other, inflation in the US is set to go up. The big question, though, is whether this is going to end up hurting the Chinese more than it hurts the US, especially as Trump signalled his openness to talking to other countries for de-escalating his tariff threat? American tariffs and Sino-US trade

America's total goods trade with China was estimated at \$582.4 billion in 2024. US goods exports to China in 2024 were \$143.5 billion, down 2.9 per cent (\$4.2 billion) from 2023 while US goods imports from China in 2024 totaled \$438.9 billion, up 2.8 per cent (\$12.1 billion) from 2023. That left the US running a trade deficit with China – the difference between what it imports and exports – of around \$295bn last year, which is a considerable trade deficit amounting to nearly 1 per cent of the US economy, but far less than the \$1trillion figure that Trump has repeatedly claimed this week. So far, neither China nor the US are backing down on their respective tariff actions. China has said it will "fight to the end" rather than capitulate to what it sees as US coercion, and has hiked its own trade barriers against the US in response to American tariff increases. In the short term, there is a likelihood that these tariffs will go through because Washington DC is prioritising negotiations with Japan, South Korea and others in China's vicinity, before it may sit down with Beijing.

The tariffs on China have been progressively mounting, with Trump imposing a 10 per cent tariff on all Chinese goods in February, which was doubled to 20 per cent in March last week, and then he announced another 34 per cent to take effect on April 9. Trump then threatened an

additional 50 per cent levy if China did not pull back reciprocal tariffs of its own, bringing total US taxes on Chinese imports to a whopping 104 per cent from April 9. With a cumulative 104 per cent tariffs, two things could happen. One, these taxes could make a lot of things too expensive, and it will be prohibitive to import a lot of items from China into the US. Two, there are many things that the US only imports from China. These tariffs, if they stay, would mean Washington DC will either have to develop alternative sourcing options or make do without these items, which include critical drug ingredients, key rare earth elements used in military hardware and avionics, and high-end consumer items. For the US, in this problem of fair trade with China, tariffs have historically not been the biggest bugbear. The more serious issues have been the constant currency manipulations by Beijing, of pegging the renminbi lower than what its intrinsic value ought to be, to incentivise its exports. The other issue includes a raft of non tariff barriers – barriers to trade imposed by Beijing on foreign companies in sectors such as consumer banking and high-end manufacturing. All this triggers a question: who has greater leverage between the two and more staying power? That could hold the key to the question of who backs down first. Theoretically, the US has more economic power, because it imports more from China than the other way around. Also, with Chinese domestic consumption still in the doldrums, Beijing is excessively dependent on external demand for its goods.

But in some other aspects, it does seem that Beijing could have greater leverage and the staying power in managing an escalatory tariff spiral, at least in the short term. Unlike Trump, Chinese President Xi Jinping is not faced with elections anytime soon, there is very little internal opposition to his management of the economy at this point in time, and the country is already in the middle of a stimulus package roll out that includes a combination of fiscal and monetary measures. China has far more staying power when it comes to continuing its fiscal stimulus package well into the future. Beijing also has the option of stepping up its internal project of deepening the country's domestic consumption market, something that will take in some of its export surpluses if the tariff war were to be long drawn out. The US is at a disadvantage in all of this. Apart from strategic imports, Americans also buy a lot of everyday items from China – clothing, shoes, consumer goods. A lot of the cost of higher tariffs on these goods are already being passed through to American consumers with the first round of Trump tariffs, and people generally on lower incomes are hit harder than the well off. So, it is only a matter of time that pressure from domestic constituents would pile on the Trump administration. For Washington DC, there is little fire-power on the fiscal side, except the prospect of an extension of corporate tax concessions that Trump had promulgated in his last term. Worryingly, there is also an impending showdown that the Trump administration is likely to have with the US Federal Reserve on the issue of cutting interest rates, which Fed Chair Jerome Powell has indicated is unlikely to happen anytime soon. It might be tougher for the US to play the long game with China on this escalatory spiral. The Chinese evidently feel that this is a sort of bullying situation, and in terms of the perception of their domestic constituents, strongman Xi would not want to appear to be seen as yielding. Especially after Beijing has ratcheted up the rhetoric, it will be hard to back down until perhaps the US offers an olive branch. The unsaid advantage that goes without saying is that in all of this, Trump is extremely malleable and could pivot suddenly, especially if he gets a symbolic victory in his stated project of moving manufacturing back into the US. Once tariffs come, they're very difficult to remove. The tariffs on China imposed by Trump in his first term as president were kept in place and added to by his successor President Joe Biden.

Govt to progressively restrict exempt status for PF trusts



PF trusts, EPFO, provident fund, Employees Provident Fund Organisation, Labour and Employment Ministry, Indian express news, current affairs The EPFO has been undertaking a monthly ranking exercise for exempted establishments since July 2017, according to which companies are ranked out of a total score of 600 based on various compliance requirements. The Labour and Employment Ministry is considering slowly phasing out the system of exempted establishments or exempted provident fund trusts under the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), especially for non-compliance with the PF body's norms, government sources said. Though in its initial stage, the consideration has been prompted by a rise in applications for surrender of exempt status by such PF trusts.

This has prompted additional measures from the government for verification and audit of exempted establishments to ensure compliance by them. There have been instances when some trusts run by companies have not maintained their corpus properly or fallen short of the required compliance norms, and then surrendered their exempt status. "This creates liability then for the government to fulfill the payment obligations of these exempted establishments. That's why we are undertaking verification and audit of such trusts. Slowly we'll move away from this system," a government official said. In financial year 2024-

25, around 33 exempted establishments have surrendered their exempt status, over 73 per cent increase from 19 establishments that had surrendered in the previous financial year 2023-24. As of March 31, 2023, there were 1,002 exempted establishments managing a corpus of Rs 3.52 lakh crore of 31.20 lakh members.

Exempted establishments maintain their own provident funds from the EPF contribution from their employees and are required to comply with 31 terms and conditions as detailed in Section 27AA of the EPF Scheme, 1952. They are required to provide interest rate at the same level as announced by the EPFO and deposit only the Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS) component of the employees' contribution with the EPFO. The EPFO had mandated the exempted establishments to file mandatory monthly returns in 2014. The requirement for online filing of monthly returns was mandated in March 2017. The EPFO has been undertaking a monthly ranking exercise for exempted establishments since July 2017, according to which companies are ranked out of a total score of 600 based on various compliance requirements. 100 points each are allotted for transfer of fund before due date, investment, remittance to the trust, interest declared, claim settlement and audit of accounts, taking the total score to 600. Several exempted establishments have been approaching the EPFO for surrendering their exempt status. In August 2024, the EPFO had launched an online module for surrender of exemption by establishments to ensure ease of doing business and reduce the time and effort by providing facilities such as online submission of application, validation of applications and transfer of past accumulations of the members. Aanchal Magazine is Senior Assistant Editor with The Indian Express and reports on the macro economy and fiscal policy, with a special focus on economic science, labour trends, taxation and revenue metrics. With over 13 years of newsroom experience, she has also reported in detail on macroeconomic data such as trends and policy actions related to inflation, GDP growth and fiscal

Zomato senior management exit: Rinshul Chandra resigns as COO of food delivery

Food delivery platform operator Zomato announced the exit of its chief operating officer, Rinshul Chandra, in a company filing on April 5. In the announcement, Zomato shared that Chandra was resigning with effect from April 5, 2025, and his last working day will be the company also attached his resignation letter addressed to Zomato founder and CEO Deepinder Goyal. Addressing Goyal as Deepi, Chandra wrote "I am writing to resign as COO – Food Ordering & Delivery Business of Eternal Ltd." The outgoing COO of Zomato said he has decided to pursue "new opportunities and passions that align with my evolving personal and professional goals."

Chandra thanked Goyal for his trust and support during his 7-year tenure with the company. Chandra's is the latest instance of a high-level exit from Eternal, the holding company of Zomato, quick commerce platform Blinkit and booking app District. Zomato also let go of staffers from its customer support team last month. These exits have taken place against the backdrop of Zomato gradually turning profitable, undergoing a rebranding exercise and implementing AI-related solutions for its customer services. More recently, the company has witnessed some stress with respect to the scope for expansion of its food delivery business as well as high costs incurred in its quick commerce delivery arm.

Who is Rinshul Chandra?

Having completed his early schooling from Patna, Chandra moved to Delhi for higher secondary education. He graduated from IIT Kharagpur with a dual degree in chemical engineering in 2014. Prior to Zomato, now rebranded Eternal, Chandra has two brief stints — as a process engineer with energy giant Shell and then as founding Team member and head of product at Magicpin, according to his LinkedIn profile. He joined Zomato as assistant vice president, product in 2018 and gradually rose the ranks to become the head of business at Zomato Everyday in 2022. He became COO of food delivery at Zomato in 2023. In December 2024, Hemal Jain, former global head of finance and CFO at Zomato's wholesale food delivery Hyperpure division, tendered her resignation. She worked with company for 6 years. In her resignation letter to Zomato CFO Akshant Goyal, Jain wrote she had decided to move on from the company "to explore a different path." Gunjan Tilak Raj Soni stepped down from Zomato's board as an independent director citing increased work commitments. She is currently the CEO of fashion e-retailer Zalora SEA. In September 2024, Zomato announced another high profile exit as Akriti Chopra tendering her resignation with immediate effect. Chopra, was the co-founder and chief people of-



ficer at Zomato. Chopra has not announced a new role since her exit from Zomato. Her spouse Albinder Dhindsa remains with Eternal as founder and CEO of the group's quick commerce arm Blinkit.

Zomato laid off 500 staffers who were part of its Associate Accelerator Programme last month, Outlook Business reported, citing people with knowledge of the matter. The firings follow the launch of Zomato's Nugget platform for customer support which is powered by AI, according to the report. Nugget reportedly clears up to 80 per cent of customer queries across Zomato, Blinkit and Hyperpure verticals, according to the report. The layoffs may have been prompted by a slowdown in the company's food delivery arm and its quick commerce arm Blinkit racking up losses, according to the report. The company reportedly laid off 500 out of 1,500 ZAAP workers citing performance related issues.

The laid off workers were reportedly offered a month's salary as their services were terminated without any notice period, Moneycontrol reported. Zomato's share price rose 2.24 per cent on Tuesday to close at Rs 214.45 apiece. The company's revenues stood at Rs 2,226 crore in Q3FY25, compared to Rs 2,151 crore in the previous quarter. Zomato's net profit rose to Rs 494 crore in Q3FY25 from Rs 421 crore in Q2FY25. Zomato changed its name to Eternal on March 20 after receiving an approval from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, it said in a regulatory filing. Incorporated as Zomato Media Pvt Ltd, the company later rebranded to Zomato Ltd and now Eternal Ltd. The rebranding is part of the group's mission statement to "build an organisation that lasts as long as possible, said Zomato founder and CEO Deepinder Goyal in an interview. Goyal ruled out suggestions that a potential global economic slowdown will affect the company's business. Since Zomato's businesses are at a nascent stage, a slowdown is unlikely to affect them, he said in the interview with Business Today.

3 reasons cockroach infestation spikes in summer and what you can do to get rid of them

If you are a stickler for food safety and hygiene regulations, ensuring your kitchen is pest-free is a priority. But often, a simple wipe-down doesn't do much to knock out resilient pests, and for the centuries-old cockroach, you need a solid strategy. With summer (almost) at its peak, you might have noticed these insects multiplying and populating at what feels like the speed of light. But what spurs on this spike? We spoke to an expert and found out.

Deepak Sharma from the Indian Pest Control Company shared that pests change their behavior as the climate changes. For example, during the monsoon season, rats become more visible. One needs to look at their habitat and observe what changes are happening. "Similarly, cockroaches live in sewer lines or gutters where it is warm and humid. During summers with high water usage, they are forced to find other warm and humid places. Hence, they become more visible," he explained. He added that since they are cold-blooded creatures, their movements become faster in summer because of their higher metabolism and food availability. "Their reproductive cycles become shorter as well, hence a surge in the roach population that drives us up against the walls," he added.

Stating that cockroaches find places that are dark, damp, and warm and have easy access to food, Sharma said, "Check under the cylinders, beneath the sink and places behind the fridge, or nooks and crannies one hasn't checked in years. "With their resistance, cockroaches will outlive humanity. The only way forward is to minimise their growth environment and keep things clean. Sealing entry points, using natural repellents, and putting roach traps can

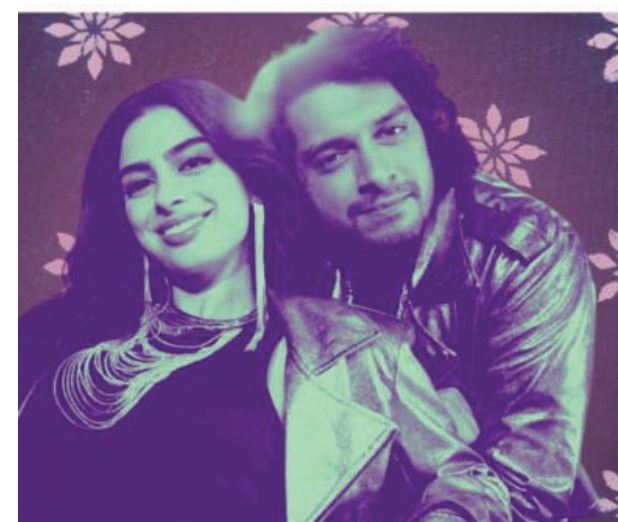


With their resistance, cockroaches will outlive humanity. The only way forward is to minimise their growth environment and keep things clean

also help keep the infestation in check," he said.

Concurring, celebrity chef Ananya Banerjee shared some natural DIY hacks to keep cockroaches at bay, such as placing dried bay leaves across your kitchen since their strong smell keeps roaches away. "Cloves, cinnamon, and neem leaves also do the trick. You can even mix a couple of drops of neem oil in water and spray it in the room. Dust a mix of boric acid and sugar on kitchen counter tops and corners, away from the food, to kill cockroaches," she added.

Junaid Khan plays the world's biggest red flag again, this time in Advait Chandan's outdated romantic comedy



If Bollywood were any more exploitative than it already is, it would've got the struggling Dibakar Banerjee to direct *Loveyapa* as a gun-for-hire. But then, it wouldn't have been the same garbage movie. Banerjee would've spotted the inherent toxicity of its protagonists — played by two-time offenders Khushi Kapoor and Junaid Khan — and attempted to unpack the patriarchal systems that made them this way. Had Banerjee directed this movie, Khan would've almost certainly become a mascot for toxic masculinity at just two films old. The only difference is that Maharaj, his debut film, had no idea that his character was a terrible person. *Loveyapa*, on the other hand, appears to at least recognise his 'flaws', but expects you to root for him regardless.

Directed by Advait Chandan and co-written by Sneha Desai — both have worked with Aamir Khan before — *Loveyapa* debuted on JioHotstar recently following a dismal theatrical run. It wouldn't take a genius to identify why audiences didn't connect with the movie, but one viewing is enough to make you wonder why it exists in the first place. Devoid of any personality whatsoever, mired in tired tropes, and tonally shrill to the point of being violent, *Loveyapa* is a particularly unbearable example of older folks trying (and failing spectacularly) to understand the younger generation. If the movie itself has such disdain for its characters, how can it expect the audience to be forgiving of them?

The primary problem with films like *Loveyapa* is that instead of empathising with the youth, they want to chastise them. An entire scene is dedicated to the protagonist Gucci's mother giving him a lecture about how smartphones are the root of all evil. It's like a judge delivering a sermon to Saif Ali Khan's stabber about the dangers posed by kitchen cutlery. They're missing the point! Infidelity, as an idea, isn't restricted to one generation. Don't we know this already? People have been cheating on their partners since before the concept of monogamy was conceived. But you'd imagine that domestic violence is something that, as a society, we're consciously trying to abolish. Gucci doesn't have a domineering dad in *Loveyapa*, and yet, he has the mentality of one. At one point in the film, after pounding an adversary to a pulp, he instinctively raises his fist to punch his girlfriend Baani in the face. For those keeping score at home, this is the second time (in a row) that Khan has played a

dude who has contemplated beating his partner. In Maharaj, the 'heroic' character he played shamed his fiancé for being coerced into having sex with a powerful godman. In *Loveyapa*, Gucci's outburst can be blamed on him being a Delhiite. That's the extent to which the movie attempts to investigate his issues. Needless to say, it doesn't matter that these characters didn't actually hit their partners, because, as we all should know by now, there is no difference between a man who hits women and a man who thinks about hitting them.

In *Loveyapa*, Baani accuses Gucci of being a 'psychopath, pervert, sex maniac'. She also (correctly) recognises that he was probably running a casting couch scam on the internet by promising women roles in his imaginary short film in exchange for certain favours. "This is sextortion," Baani tells him in one scene, indicating that *Loveyapa* at least has an idea of right and wrong. So, why does it behave like Gucci's bizarre obsession with Baani being 'pure' is normal? "I know you aren't that kind of girl," he tells her, after another creep makes a DeepFake video of her and releases it online. It doesn't matter to Gucci that his girlfriend has been made a victim of revenge porn; all he seems to care about is if she's still a virgin. Baani's dad, played by Ashutosh Rana, uses deeply unsettling language while discussing their relationship. He equates dating Baani with 'gaining entry' in her. *Ew*. A smarter movie — a movie with Banerjee hypothetically at the helm — would've tried to understand why Gucci is so influenced by patriarchal ideas. But this would only have been possible if it had the intelligence to even discern good behaviour from bad. The only reason he doesn't force himself on her, he admits in one scene, is because he satiates his urges by watching all sorts of porn. What a bonkers thing to admit! Repeat after me, there is no difference between a rapist and someone who contemplates being one. Baani would do well to stay away from someone like him, if she weren't such a red flag herself. During the course of the movie, it is revealed that she was going on secret dates with her exes after lying to Gucci about her whereabouts. Unlike Gucci, who raises his fist to punch her but doesn't follow through on his indefensible instincts, Baani actually slaps him across the face in one scene for being obnoxious. *Loveyapa* seems to be smugly taunting feminists, having taken the decidedly problematic position of a men's rights activist. Movies like this fail to understand that our problem isn't with men hitting women or women hitting men, our problem is with physical violence, period. By having Baani hit Gucci, *Loveyapa* seems to be raising its eyebrow in our direction and asking, "What do you have to say now?" All you can do is heave a sigh of disappointment. A lot of work remains to be done. Ironically for a movie that wants to project the anxieties of the youth, it has the brain of a dinosaur. Even though Baani is willing to accept Gucci for the flawed person that he is, he's relieved when her DeepFake is proven to be... well, fake. You wonder if he'd have dumped her had it been real. Typically, in romantic comedies such as this, you want the protagonists to get together because aww. Here, you want them to get together because that would get them off the market. We wouldn't want these people to be roaming in the wild. In a way, they're made for each other; they're Sid and Nancy, Bonny and Clyde, Preeti and Kabir Singh. *Loveyapa*, however, views them as Jack and Rose. It would be impossible to spend even two minutes with them in real life; watching them on screen for 130 minutes is plain torture.

Aamir Khan's Taare Zameen Par co-star didn't have Rs 10 for train ticket, butchered meat to survive despite being vegetarian



Actor Aamir Khan's *Taare Zameen Par* (2007) was an eye-opening film that shed light on many overlooked factors in the lives of our children, such as learning disabilities, academic pressure and even isolation. Directed in collaboration by Aamir Khan and Amole Gupte, the cast of the film included Aamir, Darshheel Safary, Tisca Chopra and Vipin Sharma, where the latter delivered a commendable performance as the insensitive father of Ishaan, played by Safary. In an appearance on Lallantop's YouTube channel, Sharma talked about his struggles before he landed big roles and shared many stories from the time he was living in the cracks of the industry. Sharma had even given up on acting at one point and left for Canada in the hopes of a more stable life but ended up going to an acting workshop which changed his life. "After attending the workshop in Canada, I realised that there is nothing else in my life except acting, and I can't do anything else. So I threw all my belongings on the street in Toronto and bought a one-way ticket back to India." The actor recalled his days as a young man and shared the reason behind leaving for Canada. "I was a highly dissatisfied person, and I used to argue a lot. I did not like

giving a bribe to reserve seats on a train, I did not like the overall surroundings, and I had a lot of anger within me because I used to wonder why our society was like this, and having grown up in a slum made it very difficult. I was a rebellious person, and I once pulled the emergency chain on a train, and I was made to get down at a random station at night. They said, 'If you can't afford 10 rupees for a sleeper be Sharma worked in many different restaurants as an assistant chef to make ends meet and shared an anecdote from one of his many jobs in the culinary sphere. "I even worked in an Irish restaurant where I had to cut and clean the raw meat and I am vegetarian. I had no other prospects, and I had no money, so I remember praying to God and asking whether this is his plan for me. The very next day I landed my first editing job at a big channel in Toronto." Since making the decision of coming back to acting, Vipin has proved his worth in front of the lens with roles in projects like *Monkey Man* (2024), *Gangs of Wasseypur* (2012), *Hotel Mumbai* (2018) and *Paatal Lok* (2020). He was last seen in the TV series *Crime Beat* alongside Saqib Saleem, Rajesh Tailang and Rahul Bhat.

'Vidhu Vinod Chopra asked if I want to marry him, I said no': Om Puri's first wife recalls their relationship, reveals why she rejected VVC's proposal



Seema Kapoor, the first wife of late actor Om Puri, reflected on their divorce and her subsequent relationship with director Vidhu Vinod Chopra. She refused to describe him as a 'rebound', and admitted that he lent her a shoulder of support when she was going through her separation. Vinod himself was nursing a heartbreak, and the two ended up together. But she turned down his proposal for marriage, she said in a new interview, revealing why she couldn't bring herself to take the plunge with him. Seema and Om Puri's marriage lasted only a few months, and ended because he cheated on her.

Vinod was her friend, as was his first wife, editor Renu

Saluja. "After I left Om, I met Vinod, who was working on the film *Khamosh*. We were friends first, both of us needed a shoulder to cry on, and it just evolved into something else from there. I thank god for the friendship we had, because we're still friends. Relationships end, but friendships don't." Seema said that she became an introvert after her marriage with Om Puri failed, and that Vinod probably became more possessive after experiencing his own heartbreak.

She continued, "This doesn't mean that he's still possessive. But he was for a while. But I always knew that I wouldn't be able to love him like I loved Puri sahab. Puri sahab even complimented us as a pair. Vinod was a beautiful man, I'm nothing in front of him. But I felt that I wouldn't be able to do justice to this relationship. Our families wanted us to get married; Vinod wanted to get married; but I said no." Asked why she said no, Seema explained what happened. She said, "I had hidden some details about my relationship with Puri sahab from him. I didn't have the courage. I felt that I couldn't lie to him all my life if I marry him. We were at the beach, and like little children, we were writing messages to each other. He wrote, 'Do you love me?' I wrote, 'Yes'. He wrote, 'Will you marry me?' I wrote, 'No'. He didn't know what to say to me; he just looked at me quietly. Seema revealed that Vinod found out the real reason why his proposal was rejected only now, when he read her autobiography. "He said, 'So, this was the reason?' And I said yes," she recalled. She said that they remain friends to this day.

Penniless Annu Kapoor had to borrow Rs 5,000 from Yash Chopra to fund sister's divorce case against Om Puri: 'To put him in further debt...'

After his sister Seema Kapoor separated from late actor Om Puri under strenuous circumstances, Annu Kapoor resolved to take the fight till the end. He was livid at how Om had treated Seema, cheating on her and refusing to accept that the child she was pregnant with was his. He had even accused her of adultery, making an already difficult situation worse. Seema said in an interview with Siddharth Kannan that her family supported her through it all, and promised that they were willing to sell their jewellery and property to pay for her defence. At one point, Annu Kapoor even borrowed Rs 5,000 from filmmaker Yash Chopra, because he had no money himself. Seema split from Om Puri after she discovered that he was cheating on her with journalist Nandita. In an interview with Siddharth Kannan, Seema recalled what happened. She said that things became ugly between her and Om Puri after she left him. He slapped her with a legal case, accusing her of adultery. He even refused to accept the child that she was pregnant with as his. Seema said that she was shocked that someone she loved so much could accuse her of such things. Even though her family was supportive, she eventually decided to settle with Om mutually.

She said, "My family told me that they would fight till the end. Annu bhai said he'd take him to the Supreme Court. My bhabhi said that she would sell her jewellery; my other brother was willing to sell off our property. These things aren't easy; they last 25 years sometimes. But after he made his accusations, I told my mother that I don't want to fight. All I'll get if I win is property, I wouldn't get him back. My family wasn't in favour of this decision; one lawyer promised me that he'd have Om sahab jailed, all I had to do was



accuse him of hitting me. But that man never raised a hand on me." She admitted that she accepted an alimony of Rs 6 lakh, and explained why. "My parents had taken out a lot of loans for our wedding. Puri sahab had bought some land, which hadn't been paid off entirely. I wasn't going to accept any alimony, but bhai reminded me that mom owed a lot of money. Secondly, I remember very well that Annu bhaiya had borrowed Rs 5,000 from Yash Chopra to pay my lawyer. He was broke. He returned that money, of course. But to put them in further debt at this time didn't sound right to me." Seema said that she put her self-respect aside and accepted the alimony. But she turned down a house that she could've taken as well. She also refused to accept the Rs 25,000 that he sent her via his secretary when she lost their child.

Babil Khan is a social media star willing to kill or die for his phone.

"Do you control your phone or does it control you?" That's the question at the heart of Babil Khan's latest flick, *Logout*. The makers unveiled the film's trailer on Wednesday. *Logout* also stars Rasika Dugal in a pivotal role. The trailer introduces Babil as a young social media influencer named Pratush Dua, who is on the verge of hitting 10 million followers. At one point, he argues, "We don't just watch stuff on our phone, we live in it." It's evident that he earns his living by being an influencer. However, his carefully curated life and livelihood spiral out of control when one of his jilted followers steals his phone in a desperate attempt to get noticed. What begins as a digital obsession soon turns into a violent showdown, as Babil's controlled world descends into chaos and his battle with the follower turns bloody.

Babil Khan admitted that the film *Logout* pushed him out of his comfort zone. He said, "This role truly pushed me out of my comfort zone, immersing me in the digital world — a space that's both fascinating and dangerously unpredictable. Playing a modern-day influencer and navigating the complexities of virtual success was a unique challenge, especially since my character is so different from who I am in real life. I'm incredibly proud to be part of a story that feels so relevant today, shedding light on the darker side of our online lives. *Logout* is an intense, fast-paced thriller, and I can't wait for viewers to join my character, Pratush, on



this gripping journey". *Logout* is directed by Amit Golani and written by Biswapati Sarkar. Apart from Babil and Rasika Dugal, the film also stars Nimisha Nair and Gandharv Dewan in pivotal roles. *Logout* will release on Zee5 on April 18, but the film has already been screened at various international film festivals, including the 21st Indian Film Festival Stuttgart 2024, Mar del Plata 2024, Indian Film Festival Melbourne 2024, and the River to River Florence Indian Film Festival 2024.

Sneha Ullal celebrates 20 years of 'being Lucky'

Mumbai: Actress Sneha Ullal took a trip down memory lane as she reminisced about her debut film, "Lucky: No Time for Love," starring Salman Khan, as it clocked 20 years since its release in Hindi cinema. Sneha took to Instagram, where she shared the poster of the film with the song 'Sun Zara' by Sonu Nigam playing in the background. She captioned the post: "20 years & Forever (sic)." The actress then re-shared a collage by T-Series Films on her Instagram stories, which had glimpses of Salman and her from the film. For the caption, she wrote: "20 years of 'Being Lucky'." Directed by Radhika Rao and Vinay Sapru, the film also stars Mithun Chakraborty. It followed a chain of unfortunate events, where a 17-year-

old schoolgirl narrowly escapes a possible rapist and is caught up in a terror attack. She drinks contaminated water that poisons her. The film turned 20 on April 8. The filmmakers had shared some anecdotes regarding the film and said, "They say your first is always special and Lucky truly was. To have Salman Khan as part of our very first film was nothing short of magical. He'll always be our forever favourite hero." "It's hard to believe it's already been two decades since we shared a love story that touched so many hearts. The songs, the memories, the love, they still live on, and always will." Talking about Sneha, who was last seen on screen in the film "Love You Lotkanta" in 2022, she made her debut in Telugu movies with Ullasanga Utsahanga.