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Recruitment Rally

Hyderabad, April 17 Online registration for the Indian Air Force Agniveervayu (musician) rally will start at 1100 hrs on April 21 and will close at 2300 hrs on May 11 on web portal <https://agnipathwayu.cdac.in>. Only registered candidates issued with provisional Admit Card are allowed to appear in the recruitment rally. Notification of Recruitment Rally from June 10 to June 18 at 2 ASC C/O Race Course Camp, Air Force Station New Delhi (New Delhi) and 7 ASC, No. 1 Cubbon Road, Bengaluru (Karnataka) is released for unmarried Indian male and female candidates from all the districts of all States and all Union Territories of India to join the IAF as Agniveervayu (Musician). Candidates born between January 1, 2005 and July 1, 2008 (both dates inclusive) are eligible to apply. In case, a candidate clears all the stages of the selection procedure, then the upper age limit as on date of enrolment should be 21 years. Educational Qualification is Matriculation pass/ 10th or equivalent with minimum pass marks from any Govt. recognised School/ Board.

TelanganaRising delegation visits Sony headquarters in Tokyo

Tokyo, April 17 The TelanganaRising delegation led by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy visited the headquarters of Sony Corporation here on Thursday. Officers of the Sony Corporation showcased several new initiatives at Sony, and detailed their workings, including new products, to the delegation. The delegation also held detailed discussions on the animation subsidiary of the company, Crunchyroll. The delegation explained the strengths of Hyderabad in the animation, VFX and Gaming sectors. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy outlined his vision on the setting up of a modern film city, which would have the capability of end-to-end production.

India and International Big Cat Alliance sign headquarters agreement



GNS News Agency, April 17 New Delhi: India and the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) signed the Headquarters Agreement on Thursday in New Delhi, which provides for India to be the host for the IBCA Headquarters and Secretariat and entails necessary provisions to enable IBCA to meet its intended objectives. The agreement was signed by P Kumaran, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, and S.P. Yadav, Director General, IBCA.

IBCA Secretariat and personnel, premises, entry into force, supplementary agreements, and some general provisions. The Government of India shall provide budgetary support of Rs 150 crore to IBCA for creating a corpus, building infrastructure, and meeting recurring expenditure for five years from 2023-24 to 2028-29," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stated in a press release. The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in April 2023 during the 'Commemorating 50 years of Project Tiger' event at Mysuru. The Cabinet, in its meeting held in February 2024 approved the establishment of IBCA with its headquarters in India. The IBCA and its Secretariat became a full-fledged treaty based inter-governmental international organisation and international legal entity from January 2025. "The IBCA primarily aims for conservation of seven big cats namely Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar and Puma, with objectives like facilitation of collaboration and synergy amongst the concerned stakeholders, consolidation of successful conservation practices and expertise to achieve conservation of big cats around the globe," the MEA stated. "The initiative seeks to foster international collaboration for the sustain-

able future of big cats, as well as underscores India's leadership and commitment to global wildlife conservation," it mentioned. As of now, 27 countries, including India have consented to join IBCA, and several international/national organisations working in the field of wildlife conservation have also partnered with IBCA. IBCA is a multi-country, multi-agency coalition comprising 95 big cat range countries, non-range countries with an interest in big cat conservation, conservation partners, scientific organisations engaged in big cat research, as well as business groups and corporates committed to supporting big cat conservation efforts.

GNS News Agency, April 17 Hyderabad: More skeletons continue to tumble out of the cupboard in the Kancha Gachibowli land controversy. Questions are being raised over violation of numerous laws, in the wake of the Supreme Court-appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) raising serious concerns over the Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation's (TGIIC) alleged attempt to bypass mandatory environmental clearances by fragmenting the project. According to CEC observations during a recent site inspection, TGIIC applied for Consent for Establishment (CFE) from the Telangana Pollution Control Board for just 122.63 acres of the total 400-acre land parcel. The CEC suspected that it was a deliberate move, aimed at avoiding a full-scale Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). As per the guidelines of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, any project spread across 123 acres or more, or involving an investment of Rs 50 crore and above, qualifies as a Category A project—thus mandating a comprehensive EIA. By staying just below that threshold, the state agency appears to have sidestepped the requirement entirely. "This not only violates statutory requirements but also defeats the purpose of environmental due diligence, especially in such an ecologically sensitive zone," the CEC remarked. It termed the act of fragmenting or underreporting the project area, commonly referred to as piecemealing, as a practice consistently disapproved by the Supreme Court. The committee has called for an immediate investigation and legal action. Amid these circumstances, the committee questioned why TGIIC sought approvals for only a portion of the land, when the entire 400 acres had been mortgaged and designated for an IT park project. "If the project was over the full parcel, why seek CFE for only 122 acres on January 30?" it asked.

Telangana Congress leaders stage dharna at ED office



Hyderabad, April 17 Congress leaders in Telangana held a protest at the Enforcement Directorate's regional office in Hyderabad on Thursday. They were demonstrating against the inclusion of prominent All India Congress Committee (AICC) figures Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in the charge sheet related to the National Herald case.

numbers took part in the protest. Meenakshi Natarajan, the AICC representative, remarked that Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, informed Prime Minister Narendra Modi that the Congress party intends to conquer the BJP in the upcoming Gujarat Assembly elections. "Since then, the Modi administration has resorted to vindictive political tactics by issuing notices. As a result, the country is currently experiencing unrest," she stated. Natarajan went on to claim that during the recent Kumbh Mela, there was evidence of caste-based discrimination. She described how impoverished individuals residing in makeshift homes are treated poorly, often situated near garbage disposal sites in BJP-ruled states. BJP leaders do not even recognise these individuals as Hindus, she said. "Those who bring to light the BJP government's irregularities at the national level face harassment through Enforcement Directorate investigations and other inquiries," Meenakshi Natarajan said. "National Herald operates as a non-profit entity. If there are no financial exchanges, how could money laundering take place? Transactions should not occur outside the organisation's regulations," she stated.

Marubeni Corp proposes to establish next-generation Industrial Park in Future City

Tokyo, April 17 On the first day of the official visit to Japan, the TelanganaRising delegation led by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy met senior leadership of Marubeni Corporation, a leading Japanese industrial conglomerate with interests in energy, transport, real estate, industrial infra, metals, medical services, trading etc., in Tokyo. Following discussions, Marubeni Corp has conveyed their interest to establish a state-of-the-art next generation industrial park in the Future City and both sides signed and exchanged a Letter of Intent (LoI). Marubeni submitted a proposal in this regard, as per which a letter of intent was signed and exchanged with the Telangana government.



With a proposed initial investment of Rs. 1,000 crore, a world-class, next-generation industrial park will be developed in 600 acres in a phase-wise manner in the Future City. The industrial park will be dedicated for Japanese companies and other multinational companies to set up their manufacturing plants in Hyderabad and will attract major investments of over Rs 5,000 crore. The Marubeni Industrial Park will focus on Electronics, Green Pharma, Precision Engineering, Aerospace and Defence sectors, which are largely aligned with Telangana's objective of attracting foreign investments in advanced manufacturing and create skilled employment opportunities. Telangana has emerged as a preferred investment destination due to its progressive policies, robust infrastructure, and focus on fostering innovation. The State attracts global leaders, reinforcing its reputation as a leading hub for manufacturing. Speaking on the occasion and welcoming Marubeni to the Future City being developed in Hyderabad, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said, "The Marubeni industrial park will be among the first of its kind to be developed in the proposed 'Future City'. It is expected to create 30,000 direct and indirect jobs, enriching livelihoods and enhancing the skill ecosystem in Telangana." Promising personal support to ensure Marubeni has a world-class experience in doing business in Telangana, the Chief Minister said, "We are delighted to have Marubeni as a marquee investor for the Future City, India's first city being designed to be a Net Zero city. We welcome Marubeni to Hyderabad and given the friendship of India and Japan for centuries, I am sure you will find yourself at home when you come to Telangana." Welcoming the Chief Minister and his delegation to Japan, Dai Sakakura, Executive Officer and COO, Next Generation Business, Marubeni, said, "We are delighted after listening to CM Revanth Reddy's vision for Telangana and Hyderabad, and wish to be amongst the earliest to explore possibilities there." Marubeni operates globally in 65 countries through over 410 group companies and is a leader in lifestyle, food and agriculture business, metals and mines, energy and chemicals, power and infra, finance leasing and real estate, aerospace and mobility, among others. It employees over 50,000 employees globally.

Waqf amendment to benefit poor Muslims: Kishan Reddy



Hyderabad, April 17 Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy today said the BJP had earlier promised to amend the Waqf Act and took steps to benefit the poor Muslims. He said the Waqf Amendment Bill was recently introduced in Parliament session and was made into a law.

Further changes were made to it in 1995. However, in 2013, the UPA government made changes to the Waqf Act by misleading the people for vote bank politics. The powers of the Waqf Board were expanded indefinitely and allowed the possibility of unilateral acquisition of the lands. After the Railways and Defense Departments, the largest amount of land bank in the country is under the jurisdiction of the Waqf Board. But the income from those lands did not benefit poor Muslims," he said. He alleged that the Waqf Board benefited only the Majlis party leaders, religious leaders, land grabbers, and real estate companies. In 2006, the size of the Waqf properties was 4.9 lakh acres, but the income was only Rs 160 crore. In 2013, it reached only Rs 166 crore. Even though the value of the lands has increased, why the income of the Waqf Board has not increased should be answered. According to the Central government's estimate, if the Waqf properties are used properly, an income of Rs 12,000 crore can be generated every year. It has promised to use this income for poor Muslims," he added. Reddy said in the past, some political and religious leaders used to control the Waqf lands and added that they used them for profits in a greedy way. He said from now on, all government properties claimed as Waqf would have to be inspected and surveyed under the supervision of the District Collector and their rights would have to be confirmed.

Telangana falling under CM's rule: Harish Rao

Hyderabad, April 17 Former minister and BRS leader Harish Rao has alleged that Telangana was not rising in CM Revanth's rule but it was actually falling. Reacting to the decline in Telangana state's revenue, he made sensational criticism of the ruling Congress government. On this occasion, Harish Rao said that the state's economic growth was falling significantly in the Congress government's rule. "According to the recently released CAG Report, the state's own tax revenue (SOTR), which was Rs. 1,24,146.19 crore in 2023-24, decreased to Rs. 1,24,054.38 crore by 2024-25. He said the decline had resulted in a decrease of Rs. 91.81 crore in the government revenue. He also said that such a decrease had never been seen in the state except during the Corona pandemic period. He noted that Telangana achieved a CAGR of 12 percent in its own tax revenue from 2014-15 to 2022-23 under the BRS party governance. The BRS MLA commented that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's ill-considered decisions and lack of understanding in governance had led to the decline in the state's growth

Prajavani session put off to April 22

Hyderabad, April 17 (NSS): The Prajavani session originally scheduled for April 18 has been postponed to April 22 due to Good Friday. All petitioners are requested to take note of the change and attend Prajavani Program on April 22 instead of April 18

Outsourcing jobs for families of two Telangana youth killed in Dubai

Hyderabad, April 17 Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has directed officials to arrange outsourcing employment for the family members of two young men from Telangana, who were recently murdered in Dubai. In a statement here on Thursday, Anil Kumar Eravathi, Chairman of the Telangana Mineral Development Corporation (TGMDC) and former MLA, announced that the Chief Minister addressed the matter from Japan and instructed officials to take prompt action to repatriate the deceased's bodies. The victims, identified as Ashtapu Prem Sagor from Soan mandal, Nirmal district, and Swargam Srinivas from Dammannapet village in Dharmapuri mandal, Jagtial district, were killed in Dubai. The Chief Minister emphasized the importance of quickly facilitating the return of the bodies. As part of the state government's efforts, the Chief Secretary has sent letters to both the Indian Embassy in Dubai and the Ministry of External Affairs in Delhi. NRI Advisory Committee Chairman Dr. BM Vinod Kumar, Dharmapuri MLA Adhuri Laxman Kumar, and former MLC T. Jeevan Reddy consoled the families of the deceased.

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Trump's tariff retreat

United States President Donald Trump's climb down on a draconian tariff regime, in the face of severe backlash from all over the world, reveals a fundamental flaw at the core of his presidency. Positioning himself as an ace negotiator who can end wars with his persuasive skills and bring prosperity, Trump has turned out to be an impulsive, whimsical and chaotic leader surrounded by Yes Men whose only qualification is unflinching loyalty. His policies have scared both the allies and adversaries alike. The maverick Republican President's so-called "liberation day" unveiling of tariffs on April 2 was supposed to be a symbolic gateway to his promised "golden age of American greatness", but it triggered a cascade of global market crashes that prompted warnings of a recession and a throwback to an era of great depression. An average American, too, started feeling the pinch. After initially deifying the trade carnage and dismissing it as a temporary disruption, he went for a fire-fighting option by pausing the tariffs for ninety days. Time alone will tell how much damage has been inflicted on the credibility of Trump's economic policy by destroying the American economic and free trading architecture built over decades. Even his ardent supporters cannot afford to hinge their bets on the magical efficacy of tariffs because such a policy doesn't make any sense in an interconnected world. Trump's pointless showdown with China reminds one of the high-risk, high-stakes game played by America vis-à-vis the Soviet Union in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962.

The President's sudden retreat from a much-publicised policy has added a new layer of uncertainty to an already rattled global market. Though there is a palpable relief across the markets over the suspended enforcement of reciprocal tariffs, the governments across the world are worried over the whimsical nature of American trade policies.

Illegal cases against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi should be dropped



"April 17, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema co-ordinator" "Congress leaders have warned that BJP should stop its politics of degradation and if BJP government wants to undermine Congress party with its claim that they will be in power at the Centre from now on, resistance is inevitable. Congress party national leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and other Congress party leaders protested against the filing of charge sheets against them and organized a protest program in front of Tirupati District Collector's office under the joint auspices of District Congress Party and Tirupati City Congress Party on Thursday. On this occasion, they raised slogans against BJP.

"Speaking on the occasion, Tirupati City President Gowdaperu Chittibabu said that the BJP is using its power to trample on the Constitution and laws and act according to its own will. He said that it is turning national investigation agencies like ED, CBI and NIA under its control into agencies that serve its interests. He said that the Modi government is acting with the evil idea of making the Congress party disappear for questioning the national and anti-people policies being followed by the BJP in Parliament. He said that this is undemocratic. He said that he will fight against this to expose the true nature of the BJP across the country. He warned that he will oust the BJP with public awareness. He said that a conspiracy was being hatched to throw Rahul Gandhi out of Parliament by framing false cases for questioning him in Parliament.

He said that the recent confiscation of the National Herald properties and the evil idea of putting party leaders in jail are also being hatched. He said that the BJP's true colors are being revealed behind the demand to cancel the party's identity by linking it with the National Herald. "Congress Party Tirupati District President Balaguruvam Babu said that the BJP should stop threatening the Congress party, whose leaders have sacrificed their lives for the independence of India, with illegal cases. Otherwise, the Congress will prepare for another freedom struggle at the national level.

He criticized that communal trends are creating unrest and dishonesty in the country and creating conditions where people cannot live peacefully. "PCC Vice President Dodda Reddy Rabhupal Reddy said that since coming to power, the Modi government has been misleading the people and committing communal acts in the name of patriotism. He accused the BJP of surpassing the British in dividing and ruling the people. He warned that the entire Indian people are already uniting against the BJP and that the party will soon be taught a proper lesson.

He said that the BJP is preparing to bring new laws and crack down on democracy by adopting anti-worker, anti-farmer and anti-student policies. He said that cases are being framed against Congress national leaders as part of this. "PCC General Secretary Tamatam Venkata Narasihulu said that the BJP is moving towards dictatorial trends in India as if it wants to continue alone. He said that there is no room for dictatorship in a democratic country.

He alleged that only the BJP is able to threaten the opposition parties who are questioning with false cases, tempt the leaders of the opposition parties to take refuge in their party, and subjugate regional parties in the name of alliance. "Chandragiri constituency Congress Party in-charge Lokeshwar Reddy, Srikalahasti constituency in-charge Talapa Damodar Reddy, NSUI state secretary Mallikarjuna, Tirupati district president Shiva Balaji, Tirupati city Congress party general secretaries Chengalarayalu and Talari Gopi, city secretary Mahesh, Youth Congress leader Thavan Kumar, senior leaders Venkataramaiah and others participated in the program

OPPO F29 series sets a new benchmark in network connectivity with Jio



Hyderabad: The OPPO F29 Series—the 'Durable Champion'—has set a new benchmark in network connectivity, in partnership with Jio, to showcase one of the best 5G performances. As per the latest report released by Ookla, Jio has earned the title of the fastest mobile network with 5G in India, emerging as the top operator in mobile speed.

Built for India and tested in India, the F29 Series combines superior connectivity, world-class engineering, military-grade toughness, and powerful battery performance, all packed into a slim and elegant design that's ready for every challenge — from bustling city streets to rugged terrains. Through a rigorous testing process focused on upload and download speeds, the F29 Series demonstrated significantly better performances when compared with de-

vices in its price segment. These tests were performed using the OPPO F29 Series in cities like Bengaluru and Mumbai to validate its exceptional 5G performance and customer experience. New Hunter Antenna Architecture

At the core of this network performance is the F29 Series' Hunter Antenna Architecture, which features a vertically centred, horizontally symmetrical low-frequency antenna layout designed for optimum network performance.

The series also boasts the largest antenna spread in the industry, with a 200mm fully wrapped antenna layout covering 84.5% of the phone's borders. This unique design minimises signal attenuation, guaranteeing stable connectivity regardless of how the phone is held—vertically or horizontally—during gaming and streaming sessions. OPPO's proprietary AI Linkboost 2.0 provides smooth and stable connections and TÜV Rheinland certification bears witness to validate the same.

4x4 MIMO supported frequency bands Further enhancing network performance, the F29 Series is the first in its segment to extend 4X4 MIMO support to B40, B3, and B39 frequency bands that significantly improve download speeds and overall signal reception. With these advancements, the device surpasses its competitors and outperforms higher-priced smartphones.

AI LinkBoost

Beyond raw signal strength, OPPO has integrated AI LinkBoost, a next-generation technology that dynamically adjusts network performance in real-time. The system's elevator perception algorithm instantly detects signal drops and optimises connectivity. The Game-Exclusive WiFi Antenna ensures an uninterrupted connection—even when both hands grip the phone—to deliver an uplink power boost of 2-4dB, translating to 151% faster, smoother gameplay with zero signal drop-offs. Dedicated Gaming Antenna Designed for horizontal dual-hand grip, the dedicated gaming WiFi antenna ensures a stable network connection during your gameplay.

DIET STUDENT RATHOD ASMITHA CONDUCTS VERIFICATION VISIT AT ZPHS ARENDA COMPLEX ON 17.04.2025



"P.S. ASHOKAN" INDIAN CHRONICLE "MANTHANI APRIL 18" "As part of her teacher training program, DIET student Rathod Asmitha conducted a school verification visit on Thursday, 17th April 2025, at the ZPHS Arenda Complex. The visit covered the following institutions: PS Arenda, PS Venkatapur, and ZPHS Arenda. "During the visit, she thoroughly verified various aspects of the schools including: "Student enrollment numbers" "Teaching staff details" "Infrastructure and overall functioning of the



institutions" "This on-ground verification provided valuable insights into the real-time academic and administrative operations of the schools. "The verification process was conducted in the presence of the following staff members: "In-charge Headmistress: Bejjala Srilatha" "Primary School Headmasters: Sujatha, Dhanushree, Suvarta, Giyashodini, Srivani, Srilatha, and Padmaja" "Cluster Resource Person (CRP): Mallanna" "Their cooperation and guidance contributed significantly to the successful completion of the visit.

FARMERS' WELFARE IS THE TOP PRIORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT: SINGLE WINDOW CHAIRMAN KOTHA SRINIVAS INAUGURATES PADDY PROCUREMENT CENTERS



"P.S. ASHOKAN" Indian Chronicle "Manthani, April 18" "Reaffirming the Congress government's commitment to agriculture, Manthani Single Window Chairman Kotha Srinivas emphasized that farmers' welfare remains the government's foremost priority. On Thursday, under the supervision of the Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society, Manthani, several paddy procurement centers were inaugurated across the mandal. "Chairman Srinivas inaugurated the centers at Eklapur and Gangapur, while Director Ravikanti Satish Kumar launched the center at Khanapur, Director Dasari Lakshmi at Sripada Colony, and Director Lekkala Kishan Reddy at Anguluru. "Addressing the gatherings, Srinivas noted that the centers were swiftly established following the instructions of Minister for IT, Industries, and Legislative Affairs, Duddilla Sridhar Babu, to ensure timely procurement from farmers. He highlighted key initiatives introduced by the Congress government to uplift small and marginal farmers, including: "Rs. 2 Lakh Crop Loan Waiver" "Rythu Bharosa Financial Assistance" "Rs. 500 Bonus per Quintal for fine variety paddy" "He further announced that 6 kg of fine rice per person would be distributed to all ration card holders, reinforcing the government's goal of ensuring food security for underprivileged communities. "Srinivas directed officials to ensure transparent operations at the procurement centers — from proper weighing to prompt digital updates via TAB devices and direct transfer of payments to farmers' bank accounts. He assured that, similar to the previous season, bonuses would be disbursed without delay this year. "Criticizing past practices, he said, "Previous governments deducted 2 to 4 kg per quintal. Under the Congress government, not a single grain will be cut." He credited this transparency to the clear instructions issued by Minister

Sridhar Babu, the District Collector, and relevant authorities. "Cautioning against the possibility of unseasonal rains, he urged farmers to remain vigilant and take precautionary steps to protect their crops. "Dignitaries and attendees included: "Society Vice-Chairman Bellankonda Prakash Reddy; leaders Akula Raj Babu, Devalla Vijay Kumar; Kisan Cell District President Musukula Surender Reddy; former Municipal Chairperson Pendli Rama-Suresh Reddy; and community representatives including Peravena Lingayya, Moola Purushottam Reddy, Azeem Khan, Kududula Venkanna, Gunda Papa Rao, Akula Srinivas, Boodidi Shankar, Uutla Anil, Pendli Prabhakar Reddy, Boddu Srinivas, Arla Narayana, Boodidi Ranjith, Radharapu Nithish, Janjarla Shailender, Artham Sadanandam, Nampelli Satish, Nalla Rajashekar, Doragorla Srinivas, Semantula Odelu, Bhas Ashok, Putta Shankarayya, Pentari Raju, Erukala Ramesh, Namami Suguna, Laisetti Raju, Erukala Praveen, Sadula Srikanth, and Kotte Ramesh.

Whirlpool Redefines Refrigeration with India's Fastest Convertible Refrigerator; now convert in just over 10 minutes!

Experience Versatile Storage Flexibility with Freezer-to-Fridge Conversion in Just 10 Minutes

Hyderabad: Whirlpool of India, a subsidiary of Whirlpool Corporation and a pioneer in home appliances, is pleased to announce a significant technology upgrade & the best innovation in refrigeration technology - India's fastest convertible refrigerator. Whirlpool's IntelliFresh Pro range of top mount (frost-free) refrigerators offer a smarter way to store extra food; it converts its freezer to a fridge* in just over 10 minutes!

Today's consumers seek smart, time-saving solutions, and in the world of refrigerators, convertibility has become the latest must-have feature. But in real-world use, speed is what truly matters. Whether you're stocking up on groceries, preparing for a festive celebration, or accommodating last-minute guests, waiting for hours for a freezer-to-fridge* conversion is no longer an option. Inspired by this consumer insight, Whirlpool has enhanced the IntelliFresh Pro Range of top-mount frost-free refrigerators so that the freezer converts into a fridge in just over 10 min —providing extra storage space, instantly!

India's fastest convertible refrigerator range from Whirlpool is designed to deliver holistic food preservation, with 2X longer Vitamin retention and Microblock technology that prevents up to 99% bacterial growth—helping keep food fresher and safer for longer.

Powered by Whirlpool's proprietary 6th Sense Technology, the convertible range is engineered to provide unparalleled adaptability. With 10 unique and relevant cooling modes, consumers can customize their refrigerator settings to suit their lifestyle – from storing fresh groceries to hosting a party or preserving seasonal delicacies.

Unmatched Features for Modern Homes:

India's Fastest Conversion: Converts from freezer to fridge* in just 10 minutes

10-in-1 Convertible Modes: Personalized cooling solutions for every need

6th Sense Technology: Unique 6th Sense technology intuitively senses and manages the temperature, humidity & air circulation to give you perfect comfort at pressing a single button.

Premium Aesthetics: Seamless interiors and elegant exteriors for a stylish kitchen

Best-in-Class Convenience: Spacious design, toughened glass shelves, and smart storage solutions

Commenting on the technology upgrade to the IntelliFresh Pro Top Mount refrigerators - India's fastest convertible range, Mr. Nakul Tewari, Vice President-Marketing, Whirlpool of India said, "We are excited to enhance the IntelliFresh Pro range of convertible top mount (Frost-Free) Refrigerators to deliver instant conversion from freezer to fridge, now in just over 10 min! India's fastest convertible refrigerator now delivers even greater convenience and versatility. This upgrade reflects Whirlpool's ongoing commitment to innovation and providing consumer-centric solutions"

Lord Venkateswara will not forgive Bhumana: Bojjala Sudheer Reddy



April 17, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema co-ordinator" "It is a well-known fact that the TTD cowshed has become a hot topic between the ruling and opposition parties. In this context, Srikalahasti MLA Bojjala Sudheer Reddy demanded that Bhumana Karunakar Reddy uphold the challenge of coming to the cowshed as challenged by State President Palla Srinivas. "He advised Bhumana to stop spreading false propaganda or else even God will not forgive her. "When Bhumana Karunakar Reddy was called live and did not respond, "Bhumana, who is creating drama by saying that she is under house arrest, said that she will arrange an escort if she comes.

MANTHANI FIRE OFFICER CONDUCTS FIRE SAFETY AWARENESS PROGRAMS IN LOCAL HOSPITALS, URGES PUBLIC TO STAY ALERT AND REPORT EMERGENCIES IMMEDIATELY"

"P.S. ASHOKAN" INDIAN CHRONICLE "MANTHANI APRIL 18. "As part of the nationwide observance of Fire Safety Week, a comprehensive awareness initiative was undertaken in Manthani under the leadership of Fire Officer Mr. Shivashankar Varapasad. The campaign focused on sensitizing hospital staff and patients about fire prevention strategies and emergency response protocols at Mata Shishu Hospital, Government Hospital, and Rene Hospital. "In an effort to strengthen preparedness and minimize risks, informative pamphlets were distributed, and detailed guidance was provided on handling fire emergencies, mitigating hazards, and ensuring personal safety during critical situations. "Mr. Varapasad underscored the importance of vigilance and swift action during fire incidents. He appealed to the public to remain cautious and immediately report any fire emergencies by contacting the fire department at 87126 99204."



Padmavati Mahila University gets ISO certification ““The auditing team praised the university for its exemplary quality standards““



“April 17, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema coordinator”“Sri Padmavati Mahila University has been awarded the green zone certificate of excellence award along with ISO 21001:2018 educational organisation management system, ISO 50001: 2018, energy management system, ISO 14001:2015 Environment Management System for adhering to quality standards. The auditing team expressed satisfaction that all the academic and administrative departments of the university are adhering to the quality standards in an excellent manner in the audit held on April 16 and 17.”“On this occasion, HYM International Certifications Pvt. Ltd. Managing Director Alapati Shivayya

University, Vice Chancellor Professor Uma, Registrar Professor Rajani, and IQAC Director Professor Tripurasundari officially presented the ISO certificate. ““Speaking after the auditing process, he said, “All departments in the university are working with the highest quality standards, and there are excellent facilities in documentation, implementation of policies and administrative system, making it truly an ideal educational institution.”“Commemorating the occasion, Vice Chancellor Prof. Uma said, “This recognition is the result of the collective work of the teaching and non-teaching staff, which will serve as an incentive for further quality improvement in the future.”

Podem Veeraiah who had a meal of fine rice

April 17, Indian Chronicle, Bhadrachalam ““In the wake of the Telangana state government’s ambitious launch of the distribution of fine rice with the aim of ensuring that every poor person in the state eats rice with fine rice, Bhadradi Kothagudem District Congress Party President, Telangana State Forest Development Corporation Chair, and AICC member Podem Veeraiah, along with the family members, participated in a joint meal at the house of Konda Satish, a beneficiary of the MP Colony fine rice in Bhadrachalam town, along with the SC Youth Cell Congress Kisan Cell and senior Congress party leaders and activists. On this occasion, the district president inquired about the welfare of the beneficiary’s family. He asked the family members about the details of the fine rice. Satish’s family members, who said that they were not interested in taking the rice when the rice was distributed, expressed happiness that the family is now being provided with the rice. Podem Veeraiah inquired about welfare schemes such as free electricity of up to 200 units and Rs. 500 gas cylinders. Konda Satish’s fam-



ily members expressed happiness that the free bus facility is very useful for them.

Auto drivers should take special responsibility to visit the tribal museum. ““ITDA PO RAHUL IAS““



April 17, Indian Chronicle, Bhadrachalam : ““Itida Po Rahul said that auto drivers should take special responsibility to visit the tribal museum to inform the present generation about the customs, culture, traditions, and lifestyle of the old generation of tribals 150 years ago. On Thursday, a special meeting was held with the leaders and drivers of the autorickshaw union at the tribal building in the ITDA premises. Speaking at the meeting, the PO said that devotees and tourists coming for the darshan of Bhadradi Ramayya should definitely visit the tribal museum established with tribal traditions before going to see Parnasala and Papikondalu. The Tribal Museum will have old artifacts, ag-



ricultural methods, tribal cuisine, old houses, and paintings related to various cultures made of bamboo, and they should take the initiative to visit the Tribal Museum, which has been set up with all the basic facilities so that the tribal culture does not disappear and is known to the next generation. Auto drivers consider this a serious responsibility and should also show the Tribal Museum to devotees and tourists in a place of interest and promote tribal culture. Later, tribal museum wall posters and stickers were unveiled. ITDA APO David Raju, AO Sunnam Rambabu, Traffic SI Madhu, Manager Adinarayana, Museum Incharge Veeraswamy, ITDA unit officials, auto drivers, and union officials participated in this program.

July month quota release Darshan tickets and accommodation““

“April 17, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema coordinator”“TTD will release the July month quota of Suprabhatam, Tomala, Archana and Astadala Pada Padmaradhana Seva tickets on April 19 at 10 AM online.”“The Online registration for Seva tickets in Lucky Dip is open from 10 AM of April 19 till April 21.”“Devotees who got these tickets through Lucky Dip will be allotted the tickets, if they pay the amount before 12 noon of April 23.”“With respect to Kalyanotsavam, Unjal Seva, Arjitha Brahmotsavam and Sahasra Deepalankara Seva, the quota will be released on April 22 at 10 AM while the Virtual Sevass

and their darshan slots on April 22 at 3 PM.”“TTD will release the Angapradakshinam Tokens quota on April 23 at 10 AM and the SRIVANI Trust tickets on April 23 at 11 AM.”“While the Senior citizens / Physically handicapped darshan tokens at 3 PM on April 23.”“TTD will release Rs.300 special entry darshan tickets on April 24 at 10 AM.”“For Accommodation in Tirumala and Tirupati, the quota will be released on April 24 at 3 PM.”“Devotees are requested to book Srivari Arjitha Sevass, darshan tickets, and accommodation only through the official website of TTD.”“https://tdevasthanams.ap.gov.in

Monumental leap for defence infrastructure

Hyderabad, April 17 In a monumental leap for defence infrastructure and construction technology, Simpliforge Creations and IIT Hyderabad, in collaboration with Indian Army represented by Arun Krishnan (who is also a PhD student at IIT-Hyderabad), have successfully delivered India’s first on-site 3D printed protective military structure at a staggering altitude of 11,000 feet above sea level in Leh under Project PRABAL. This marks the world’s high-

est-ever in-situ 3D construction printing feat, accomplished under the extreme high altitude and low oxygen (HALO) conditions. Under the guidance of Prof. K.V.L. Subramaniam of IIT-Hyderabad, Simpliforge Creations and IIT-Hyderabad Teams developed specialized 3D printing technology capable of operating under extreme environmental conditions. This innovation enabled the construction of a form-optimized protective bunker using locally sourced materials.

Marubeni Corp proposes to establish next-generation Industrial Park in Future City

Tokyo, April 17 On the first day of the official visit to Japan, the Telangana Rising delegation led by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy met senior leadership of Marubeni Corporation, a leading Japanese industrial conglomerate with interests in energy, transport, real estate, industrial infra, metals, medical services, trading etc., in Tokyo. Following discussions, Marubeni Corp has conveyed their interest to establish a state-of-the-art next generation industrial park in the Future City and both sides signed and exchanged a Letter of Intent (LoI). Marubeni submitted a proposal in this regard, as per which a letter of intent was signed and exchanged with the Telangana government. With a proposed initial investment of Rs. 1,000 crore, a world-class, next-generation industrial park will be developed in 600 acres in a phase-wise manner in the Future City. The industrial park will be dedicated for Japanese companies and other multinational companies to set up their manufacturing plants in Hyderabad and will attract major investments of over Rs 5,000 crore.

The Marubeni Industrial Park will focus on Electronics, Green Pharma, Precision Engineering, Aerospace and Defence sectors, which are largely aligned with Telangana’s objective of attracting foreign investments in advanced manufacturing and create skilled employment opportunities. Telangana has emerged as a preferred investment destination due to its progressive policies, robust infrastructure, and focus on fostering innovation. The State attracts global

leaders, reinforcing its reputation as a leading hub for manufacturing. Speaking on the occasion and welcoming Marubeni to the Future City being developed in Hyderabad, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said, “The Marubeni industrial park will be among the first of its kind to be developed in the proposed ‘Future City’. It is expected to create 30,000 direct and indirect jobs, enriching livelihoods and enhancing the skill ecosystem in Telangana.”. Promising personal support to ensure Marubeni has a world-class experience in doing business in Telangana, the Chief Minister said, “We are delighted to have Marubeni as a marquee investor for the Future City, India’s first city being designed to be a Net Zero city. We welcome Marubeni to Hyderabad and given the friendship of India and Japan for centuries, I am sure you will find yourself at home when you come to Telangana.”.

Welcoming the Chief Minister and his delegation to Japan, Dai Sakakura, Executive Officer and COO, Next Generation Business, Marubeni, said, “We are delighted after listening to CM Revanth Reddy’s vision for Telangana and Hyderabad, and wish to be amongst the earliest to explore possibilities there.”.

Marubeni operates globally in 65 countries through over 410 group companies and is a leader in lifestyle, food and agriculture business, metals and mines, energy and chemicals, power and infra, finance leasing and real estate, aerospace and mobility, among others. It employs over 50,000 employees globally.

BIPARD organising training for elected representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions

Hyderabad, April 17 : Bihar Institute of Public Administration & Rural Development (BIPARD) is organising a 7-day Training for Elected Representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions, specifically for Mukhiyas, i.e. Gram Panchayat Presidents. As part of this program, National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad is organising three-day Exposure Visit for the first batch of 200 Mukhiyas from Bihar State. These panchayat representatives will be visiting a few best performing Gram Panchayats in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh during April 17 to 19 coordinated by NIRDPR. This event was inaugurated today at NIRDPR campus, Hyderabad, by JRK Rao, IAS (Retd), a Bihar Cadre Civil Servant presently heading the Artificial Intelligence Cell at NIRDPR. He appreciated the efforts of the Bihar Government for providing lifetime opportunity for the Mukhiyas to learn from other States.

In his introductory remarks, Dr G. Narendra Kumar, IAS, Director General, NIRDPR, highlighted the need for cross-learning for the Panchayats by giving a few examples from the best-performing gram panchayats from southern States, particularly the best practices from Andhra Pradesh

and Telangana. Dr Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Associate Professor & Head, Centre for Panchayati Raj delivered the welcome address and highlighted the role of NIRDPR in building the capacities of Panchayati Raj Institutions across the country. Officials from BIPARD Gaya joined the event online. Followed by the inaugural session, two ex-Sarpanches from Telangana, Katta Samarasingh Reddy and Narsimlu, shared their experiences related to good governance initiatives of their Gram Panchayats. Ajit Kumar Singh, former Principal, CTI Jharkhand and PR Expert discussed on the roles and responsibilities of Standing Committees of Gram Panchayats, followed by interaction with participants. In the afternoon, the delegates were taken to five selected Gram Panchayats in Telangana, namely- Annaram, Chegur, Raikul, Sardar Nagar and Pedda Tupra. This exposure visits were coordinated and facilitated by the Department of Panchayati Raj & Rural Development, Government of Telangana. Exposure visits to different gram panchayats are being coordinated by the NIRDPR faculty, Dr Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Dr R. Chinnadurai, Dr C. Kathiresan, Dr Pratyusna Patnaik and Dr R. Aruna Jayamani, with the support of the training managers.

Polling & counting officers asked to discharge responsibilities effectively

Hyderabad, April 17 Hyderabad local body MLC election Returning Officer Anurag Jayanthi has advised the polling and counting officers to discharge their election management responsibilities effectively and not to allow any mistakes. As part of the Hyderabad Local Body MLC election process, the second phase of the election training program was organized for the polling presiding officers, assistant presiding officers, micro observers and OPOs at the Command Control Room in the GHMC headquarters on Thursday morning. The first phase of training program was organized for counting supervisors, counting assistants and micro observers in the afternoon.

Speaking on the occasion, Election Returning Officer Anurag Jayanthi advised that complete understanding should be provided about the rules and regulations related to the polling and counting process. He said that they should perform their duties responsibly so that the elections were held smoothly in a transparent and healthy environment. He noted that Although the polling and counting process is simple, they should not be careless and should perform their duties effectively without allowing any mistakes. He explained the process to be followed from the beginning of

the polling process to the end of the polling. He said that they should be fully trained on issues such as ballot paper account, paper seal, ballot box open, seal, and so on.

He said that the vote counting process should be carried out in the most transparent manner as per the rules and that the counting staff should work without any mistakes. He also said that everyone should be careful in performing their duties. He further said that all the matters in the vote counting process should be thoroughly understood. As part of the training, the master trainers explained to the polling officers the arrangements to be made at the polling station, polling materials, checking the serial number of the ballot paper, election rules and regulations, the sealing procedure of ballot boxes, filling in relevant forms, the powers and duties of the presiding officer, the duties of the polling officers, etc. Similarly, the duties and rules to be performed during the counting process were explained to the counting officers. Training Management Nodal Officer Dr. Sunanda Rani, Master Trainers Vijayalakshmi (PO UCD), Mamatha (EE Electrical), Polling POs, APOs, Micro Observers, OPOs, Counting Supervisors, Assistants, Micro Observers and others participated in this program.

BJP's vindictive politics are unacceptable: Sridhar Babu

Hyderabad, April 17 Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of engaging in vindictive politics merely to divert public attention from its own failures.

Speaking at a protest organised by the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) in front of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) office in Hyderabad on Thursday, the Minister condemned the inclusion of senior Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in the charge sheet related to the National Herald case.

He questioned the motive behind reviving a 12-year-old case, suggesting that it was a deliberate move to si-

lence the Congress party for raising its voice against pressing national issues such as rising inflation, the falling value of the rupee in global markets, and increasing unemployment. Sridhar Babu alleged that false cases were being filed against the Gandhi family—who had sacrificed their lives for the nation’s independence—out of sheer political malice. He asserted that the BJP is attempting to demoralise the Congress party through retaliatory actions. He urged the ruling party to abandon its vindictive politics and instead focus on addressing the real challenges faced by the people. No matter how many cases are filed, Sridhar Babu affirmed, the Congress party will continue to fight on behalf of the people with unwavering determination.

TGSRTC joins hands with NGOs to promote transgender inclusion

Hyderabad, April 17 : A significant stride toward transgender inclusion in public spaces was made today as Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) launched posters creating awareness campaign in collaboration with prominent NGOs. The initiative will feature educational posters across all bus depots and stations across Telangana. V.C. Sajjanar, IPS, Managing Director of TGSRTC, launched the posters campaign on Trans Visibility Day, demonstrating the corporation’s commitment to creating inclusive public transportation environments.

The initiative was spearheaded by Munkunda Mala, founder of the Queer Bandhu Parents Association and mother of a transgender person, and Rev. Fr. Anthony Madanu, executive director of the Hyderabad Archdiocese Social Service Society (HASSS), operating under the guidance of Cardinal Poola Anthony, chairman of HASSS. These organisations, dedicated to transgender rights ad-

vocacy and livelihood support, proposed the inclusivity program to TGSRTC, which embraced the opportunity to foster a more accepting atmosphere. Public spaces belong to everyone, regardless of gender identity,” said TGSRTC MD VC Sajjanar, IPS, during the inauguration. “Through these posters, we affirm our dedication to ensuring transgender individuals experience safety and respect while using our transportation services.” The informational materials, strategically placed throughout the TGSRTC network, aim to educate the public about transgender rights and encourage respectful interactions, creating more welcoming environments for transgender individuals. “This visibility campaign represents a crucial step toward public education and acceptance,” stated Fr. Anthony Madanu and Munkunda Mala jointly. “We appreciate TGSRTC’s proactive approach to making public transportation accessible and comfortable for everyone in our community.”

GMDA, MCG remove over 200 encroachments in Gurgaon; move to aid traffic flow



GNS News Agency, April 17

encroachment-in-Gurugram, GurgaonThe anti-encroachment drive team comprised 30 police personnel and officers of the enforcement wings of the GMDA and MCG. R S Bath, nodal officer for encroachment in Gurgaon, supervised the drive. The Municipal Corporation Gurugram (MCG) and the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) removed over 200 encroachments by shops on a 2.5 km stretch from Mata Mandir to Sector 5 in the city during a two-day drive ending Wednesday.The

demolition drive was carried out on both sides of the road. Illegal sheds and advertisement boards were also dismantled, while generator sets were directed to be shifted onto stable rooftops. Construction work being carried out within a 900-metre zone of an ammunition depot was halted. The anti-encroachment drive team comprised 30 police personnel and officers of the enforcement wings of the GMDA and MCG. R S Bath, nodal officer for encroachment in Gurgaon, supervised the drive. Neha Sharma, Spokesperson, GMDA, said the unauthorised structures were proving to be a hindrance to moving traffic. GMDA had earlier carried out similar two-day demolition drives on Sheela Mata Road. Till date, encroachments by over 350 shops have been removed on the stretch from Atul Kataria Chowk to Sector 5. "Prior warnings have been issued before conducting the drives, and strict directions have also been issued against encroachment of public land. There is a zero tolerance policy towards encroachment, and FIRs will be lodged against the violators," Bath said. "Nothing is done suddenly, our enforcement team first inspects the site and documents the constructions made without permissions. Then we intimate them and ask them to remove these, and only when they themselves do not, do we carry out the drives," the GMDA spokesperson added.

Jupally inaugurates tourism stakeholders workshop funded by European Union

Hyderabad, April 17 Minister for Tourism Jupally Krishna Rao inaugurated a European Funded Project SIPAS implemented by National Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management here on Thursday. He also launched the project's website www.sipas.in. On the occasion, the Minister felicitated the delegates from Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, Latvia, Prof. Agita, Prof. Durate Xara Brasil, Instituto Politecnico De Setubal, Portugal Prof. Sampada Kumar Swain of Pondicherry University and Dr. G. Mahender, Associate Professor & HoD, Central University of Karnataka and other Consortium Members.

The workshop commenced with a vibrant traditional dance performance by NITHM students, followed by the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by distinguished dignitaries, including N. Prakash Reddy, Managing Director of TGTDC, Zendage Hanumant Kondiba, Director of NITHM; and key representatives from the SIPAS project consortium across India, Latvia, and Portugal. On the occasion, Prof. Balakista Reddy, Chairman of Telangana Council of Higher Education shared the states vision reforming education syllabus. Dr. P. Thrayambakam provided an overview of the SIPAS initiative, highlighting its mission to create skill-driven, industry-relevant curricula. Dr. G. Mahender Reddy of Central University of Karnataka elaborated on the

project's extensive scope, which spans three countries and comprises seven focused work packages aimed at enhancing student employability and fostering international academic collaboration. Delivering the keynote address, Zendage Hanumant Kondiba emphasised the need for stronger synergy between academia and industry to enable practical, technology-oriented learning experiences. Prof. Sampada Swain, SIPAS Project Manager from Pondicherry University, along with other academic experts, reinforced the project's focus on sustainability, stakeholder engagement, and alignment with international educational standards. The Managing Director TGTDC N. Prakash Reddy briefed the meeting about the importance of skilled manpower and congratulated NITHM Director Zendage Hanumant Kondiba for taking initiative to implement to European Project. The project is expected to provide new curriculum which includes the use of AR/VR technology for making the students of hospitality and ready for challenging roles. The workshop was attended by the heads of departments and General Managers from leading hotels such as Taj Group, Green Park, Radisson Blu etc., and Travel Agencies & Tour Operators. The National President of Travel Agent Association of India Sunil and Telangana Chairman Nagesh Pampati were among the dignitaries present.

Tax revenue witnesses downturn

Hyderabad, April 17 Telangana's tax revenue has witnessed a significant downturn under the current Congress government led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, as highlighted by the latest monthly key indicators report from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG). The State's Own Tax Revenue (SOTR) saw an alarming drop, reducing from ₹1,24,146.19 crores in the fiscal year 2023-24 to ₹1,21,054.38 crores in the current fiscal year (up to February). This decline is unprecedented, matching only the severe economic conditions experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. It directly reflects the Congress government's ineffective governance and poorly designed economic policies. Under the previous BRS administration, Telangana achieved impressive growth with a steady 12% Compound

Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) from FY 2015-16 to FY 2022-23. Unfortunately, this positive growth trajectory has now been disrupted due to the ill-conceived and mismanaged economic policies of the present Congress government.

Former Minister Harish Rao strongly condemns the Congress government's mismanagement and demands that the Congress leadership provide a transparent explanation to the people of Telangana for this economic setback. The current administration's policies have severely affected the financial health and overall development prospects of the state. Telangana deserves efficient governance, responsible fiscal policies, and visionary leadership, which the current administration has failed to deliver.

Parents allege RTE students being 'deliberately detained', Ahmedabad DEO orders probe against two private schools

Probe into students admitted under RTE Act, being deliberately detained. DEO Ahmedabad city R M Chaudhary said, "A few parents had reached out to the office and complained that these (private) schools have deliberately detained their wards." A probe has been ordered against two private schools in Ahmedabad in connection with the children, admitted under the Right to Education (RTE) Act, being "deliberately detained", officials familiar with the matter said on Thursday. The Ahmedabad District Education Officer (DEO) Wednesday directed the Education Inspector (EI) concerned to probe Tripada English School, Ghatoliya, and Zyodus School, Vejajpur, after allegedly receiving complaints from a "couple of parents" whose wards have been admitted under RTE Act's 25 per cent reservation in private schools. DEO Ahmedabad city R M Chaudhary told The Indian Express: "A few parents had reached out to the office and complained that these (private) schools have deliberately detained their wards." As per the complaints received, students of Class 5 and 8 have been allegedly detained as they were unable to clear their final exams. According to the DEO's directive, the Education Inspector

has been asked to personally visit these two schools and investigate the answer sheets of the students admitted under the RTE. "Conduct a personal inquiry into how many students of Class 5 and 8 have been declared 'failed' and if the school has conducted a re-exam of these students or not. Also, in your presence... let the parents inspect the answer sheets and submit the report to this office," the DEO order said. Sources revealed that there could be more than three to four cases in each school as the "couple of parents who have complained about it have alleged that there are similar cases in these schools". According to the RTE Act, no student has to be detained till Class 8.

Though the central government abolished the no-detention policy for Class 5 and 8 in December 2024, the Gujarat government had already withdrawn it in 2023-24. Explained: The 'no-detention' policy for students of Classes 5 and 8, why it has been contentious | Also Read As per the new norms, students scoring below 35 marks in Class 5 and 8 can be held back. However, students who have failed get a second chance to undertake the examination again within two months.

FTCCI organises workshop "Navigating Business Conflicts with ADR - Cutting Costs, Not Ties"

Hyderabad, April 17 (NSS): The Corporate Laws, IBC & ADR Committee of The Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI) organised a workshop titled "Navigating Business Conflicts with ADR - Cutting Costs, Not Ties" at Federation House, Red Hills, on Thursday evening. The workshop shed light on the growing relevance of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms in the business world, focusing on how arbitration, mediation, and negotiation can resolve conflicts efficiently, economically, and without damaging professional relationships.

A.J. Jawad, Registrar of the International Arbitration and Mediation Centre (IAMC), Hyderabad, was the chief facilitator. A seasoned advocate, senior mediator, and trainer, Jawad noted. "Business and marriage are alike—both rarely anticipate conflict. Yet, when disputes arise, the burden on the judicial system is staggering. With over 5 crore pending cases, it would take 324 years to clear them all, assuming no new cases are filed. Moreover, 1.5% to 2% of GDP is lost annually due to delayed resolutions. The only sustainable way forward is through mediation and ar-

bitration. Don't wait for judicial reforms—mediate the deal before you seal the deal." A.J. Jawad also addressed the critical role of institutional support in the efficient conduct of mediations and arbitrations. He stressed the significant advantages of institutional dispute resolution, such as access to expert panels of trained and accredited mediators and arbitrators, procedural transparency, and institutional scrutiny of arbitral awards. Dr. Suresh Kumar Singhal, President of FTCCI, in his welcome address, stressed the importance of understanding ADR in today's business environment.



Punish all involved in corrupt liquidation of Assam paper mills: Body of unions



GNS News Agency, April 17

An umbrella organisation of workers' unions has sought action against all those involved in the corrupt liquidation of two paper mills in Assam, paving the way for one of India's two major indigenous semiconductor plants. Demanding an independent probe under judicial monitoring to uncover further instances of corruption linked to the liquidation, the organisation also called for the seizure of all movable and immovable assets connected to the case to ensure accountability. The demands followed the decision of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) to suspend the registration of Kuldeep Verma for serious misconduct during the liquidation process of the plants of eight companies. The plants included the Nagaon and Cachar Paper Mills of the Hindustan Paper Corporation Limited (HPCL), which were acquired by the Assam government in March 2022 for ₹375 crore. More than 550 acres of the erstwhile Nagaon Paper Mill at Jagiroad, about 55 km east of Guwahati, were handed over to a subsidiary of Tata Electronics for ₹1 per bigha (0.62 acre) to set up a semiconductor plant. Multiple violations

On April 7, the Disciplinary Committee of the IBBI suspended Mr Verma's registration for two years after finding him guilty of violating the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code and associated regulations. The suspension will take effect

30 days from the IBBI's order. The violations included failure to preserve and protect the assets of the corporate debtors during the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process period in the cases of KS Oils Limited and Jalan Intercontinental Hotels Pvt Ltd, non-determination of avoidance transactions, diversion of funds in HPCL, improper adjudication of claims, and overcharging of fees in the matter of Jaypee Infratech Ltd.

A professional member of the Indian Institute of Insolvency Professionals of ICAI (Institute of Chartered Accountants of India), Mr Verma was appointed by the IBBI's adjudicating authority on different dates to handle the assignments of eight corporate debtors, including the HPCL.

The Joint Action Committee of Recognized Unions (JACRU) of Nagaon and Cachar Paper Mills hailed the IBBI's decision as a step toward justice. It accused Mr Verma of disregarding the directive of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal on May 29, 2019, to maintain the HPC as a going concern.

"Instead, his liquidation process saw assets of the HPCL worth ₹5,000 crore being sold off at throwaway prices, dealing Assam's industrial future a massive blow," JACRU general secretary Ananda Bordoloi said. JACRU president Manobendra Chakraborty said the liquidation left unresolved liabilities of only ₹98 lakh while rendering thousands of workers jobless. "The planned death of the paper mills severely impacted more than 2 lakh families and snatched employment opportunities for Assam's youth," he said. According to Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the semiconductor plant coming up on the land where HPCL's Nagaon Paper Mill once stood would be a game-changer for industry in India. "Our vision is to ensure Assam emerges as a global semiconductor hub," he said. Worth ₹27,000 crore and projected to generate 30,000 jobs, the semiconductor plant at Jagiroad is one of two chip and testing units being set up by Tata Electronics. The other one is at Dholera in Gujarat.

UoH-led team awarded ANRF-PAIR Grant for Research & Innovation

Hyderabad, April 17 The University of Hyderabad (UoH) has achieved a milestone for being selected as one of the seven nationwide ANRF-PAIR (Hub-n-Spoke model) (Anusandhan National Research Foundation - Partnerships for Accelerated Innovation and Research) projects. This achievement reflects UoH's leadership in fostering cutting-edge and collaborative research with deeper societal impact. This prestigious recognition from the ANRF underscores UoH's unwavering commitment and testament to excellence in multidisciplinary research, innovation and leadership roles. The ANRF-PAIR initiative aims to create robust, collaborative ecosystems across Indian academia and research institutions by fostering partnerships between leading institutions (referred to as "Hub") and other associated institutions ("Spokes"). Its key objective is to facilitate high-impact, interdisciplinary research aligned with national priorities and global scientific advancements. This ambitious initiative brings together UoH along with six spoke institutions forming an impressive network of 173 Co-Principal Investigators from diverse academic and research back-

grounds. The SPOKE institutions are Osmania University, Central University of Karnataka, Sri Venkateswara University, Yogi Vemana University, Mahatma Gandhi University and Kannur University.

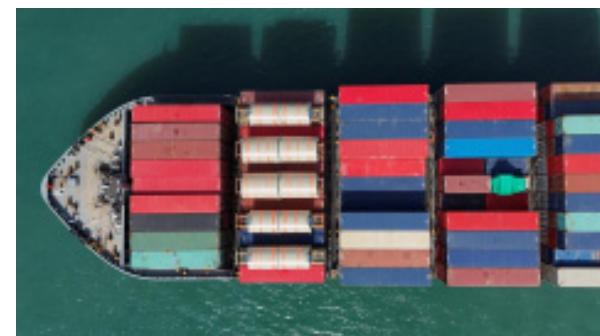
As the central hub, the University of Hyderabad will coordinate with these partner Universities to accelerate innovation, foster cross-disciplinary collaboration, and deliver real-world healthcare solutions for Metabolic diseases, Infectious diseases, and Cancers (MICs) — specifically targeted at Diabetes, Fatty Liver Disease, Dengue, Malaria, Breast Cancer, and Blood Cancer. The success of the award was based on the SYNERGY the whole CLUSTER manifested in its proposal where the SPOKE institutes brought in their unique strengths. Prof. Bramanandam Manavathi, Project Director, Prof. Siba Kumar Udgata, Co-Project Director and Prof. Samrat L. Sabat, Director-R&D Cell, of University of Hyderabad will coordinate with the spoke institutes for the successful implementation of the project.

How China is fighting U.S. tariffs

In the three months since U.S. President Donald Trump launched his "America First" trade policy, weaponising trade to extract concessions from his partner countries, there are indications that it could bring the global economy to its knees. "Reciprocal tariffs" were proposed as a key component for eliminating what Mr. Trump perceived as "unfair trade practices" of partner countries. But on April 9, the day this instrument was to take effect, President Trump did a turnaround and the implementation of "reciprocal tariffs" was postponed by 90 days for all 57 target countries, except China.

The objective of the U.S. administration is to compel its trade partners to negotiate bilateral agreements within the stipulated period, through which they offer concessions to American stakeholders. The Trump administration's expectation is that trade partners would then be forced to reduce their trade deficits vis-à-vis the U.S., an overarching trade policy objective of the new President. A trade war China had declared right from the beginning, even as the U.S. President was laying down the contours of this aggressive trade policy, that it would challenge the decision to impose "reciprocal tariffs". And as anticipated, China announced its decision to impose retaliatory tariffs equivalent to the 34% "reciprocal tariff" that it faced, in response to which Mr. Trump imposed an additional tariff of 50%, raising the overall tariff burden to 104%. China then escalated the trade war by imposing 125% tariffs on all its imports from the U.S., which led to the White House increasing tariffs again to 145%. However, in the midst of this escalation, Washington tacitly admitted to the potential impact these tariffs would bring by exempting a number of critical electronic goods, including computers, laptops, smartphones, and semiconductor devices, from such tariffs, reflecting the overwhelming dependence of the U.S. on import of these products. There is still confusion about the same in the Trump administration, which was evident when Commerce Secretary, Howard Lutnick, informed that tariffs on electronics products would be included within semiconductor tariffs in a "month or two", only to be contradicted by the President, who declared that these tariffs would be imposed sooner. The "America First" trade policy is causing much chaos, with its adverse implications impossible to gauge at this juncture. Two sets of issues arise as Donald Trump's trade war continues to hold the global economy to ransom. First, can the 90-day pause in the implementation of "reciprocal tariffs" provide the Trump team opportunities to stitch together at least a few agreements that would allow the "dealmaker" President to wax eloquent about his accomplishments? Secondly, what explains Xi Jinping's extraordinary defiance against Donald Trump's all-out attempt to corner Beijing? And more importantly, does Mr. Xi have a strong trump card with which he can effectively counter Donald Trump and his "America First" trade policy?

The U.S.'s negotiating agenda Though Donald Trump's decision to pause the implementation of "reciprocal tariffs" to push his trade partners to conclude bilateral deals made immediate headlines, the move was part of a strategy that the President's advisers had worked out well before he took office. Stephen Marin, chair of the U.S. council of economic advisers, had argued in a paper published immediately after Donald Trump's election as President that "tariffs create negotiating leverage for incentivising better terms from the rest of the world on both trade and security terms. America



would encourage other nations to move to lower tariff tiers, improving burden sharing". Peter Navarro, senior counselor for trade and manufacturing, explained that the 90-day pause was "part of a calculated negotiating tactic", and "a demonstration of Trump's signature dealmaking style".

These explanations would no doubt be immensely satisfying for the President, but the question is whether trade deals can actually be re-negotiated with at least a few targeted countries. This seems improbable for at least two reasons. Under the Trump administration, the U.S.' negotiating approach has undergone a major change, as the de jure trade negotiator, the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) is no longer in charge of negotiations. Peter Navarro revealed that Trump, "the boss, is going to be chief negotiator. Nothing is done without him looking very carefully at it." When the head of the government of the world's largest economy decides to micro-manage trade deals, it is possibly safe to conclude that negotiations would be a non-starter.

A second problem for the U.S. is that it has a gargantuan negotiating agenda, a peek into which was provided in a recent USTR report — the National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers. This report highlights "significant foreign barriers to U.S. exports, U.S. foreign direct investment and U.S. electronic commerce" in India and 56 other countries. It identifies "unfair trade practices [undermining] U.S. exporters' competitiveness and, in some cases, [preventing] U.S./ goods from entering the foreign market entirely". It can, therefore, be argued that unless these "unfair trade practices" identified by the USTR are removed, the U.S. President's aspiration of "Making America Great Again" cannot be realised.

If Trump has to secure this grand bargain, India, for instance, would have to open its agricultural markets for U.S. agri-business, lower its agricultural subsidies, discontinue its public distribution system, and amend its Patents Act risking the future of India's generic pharmaceutical companies providing affordable medicines. India would also have to discontinue policies that the U.S. has repeatedly red-flagged, including data localisation, and regulations on genetically modified crops and dairy products. Would India and other targeted countries allow Donald Trump to coerce them into amending their laws and policies to "clinch" a trade deal? The most unexpected development following the launch of Trump's trade war has been China's retaliation. In his first term as President, Mr. Trump had forced China to ink an enforceable Economic and Trade Agreement in 2020, according to several of his demands. But over the past five years, the nature of the U.S.-China trade relationship has changed drastically, which could explain the push back from the world's second largest economy.

Murshidabad Waqf protests: Senior BSF officer to reassess deployment of forces, Governor directs relief efforts



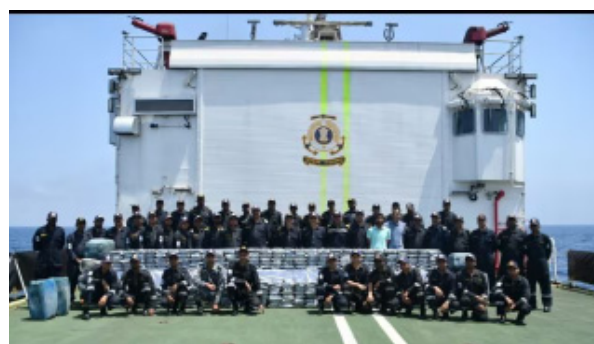
GNS News Agency, April 17

Amidst a tense but reportedly controlled situation in Murshidabad and parts of Malda in West Bengal following violent protests against the Waqf (Amendment) Act, Ravi Gandhi, Additional Director General (ADG) of the Border Security Force (BSF) Eastern Command, is scheduled to visit the affected areas. According to senior BSF officials, Gandhi will inspect all the troubled spots to comprehensively understand the ground reality. The visit is expected to lead to a reassessment of the current deployment of BSF personnel. "There could be changes in deployment after his visit. BSF personnel will be mobilised accordingly," a senior BSF official stated, indicating a potential strategic reshuffle based on the ADG's observations. Currently, nine BSF companies are deployed in the affected regions.

The Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, which was passed by both Houses of Parliament and given the assent by the

President, came into force from April 8. In the violent protest against the amended Waqf law in Murshidabad, three people were killed and at least 15 policemen were injured Friday. The Calcutta High Court later ordered the deployment of Central armed forces in the affected areas and the West Bengal government said 150 people were arrested. Nilotpal Kumar Pandey, Deputy Inspector General, BSF, acknowledged the prevailing tension but assured that the situation remains "under control". Meanwhile, Governor Dr C V Ananda Bose directed the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) to extend immediate assistance to the affected people and families, particularly in the riot-stricken areas of Murshidabad and Malda districts, as well as other disturbed locations. In a post on X Monday, Bose announced the appointment of IRCS chairman Dr S K Pattanayak, a retired IAS officer, and Sandeep Rajput, chief nodal officer of the Rapid Action Cell at Raj Bhavan, as nodal officers to oversee the relief efforts. He also shared emergency contact numbers for the IRCS: 9732524377 and 8013344318. On Sunday, Governor Bose stated that he is in regular communication with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee regarding the situation. The Centre is also reportedly closely monitoring the developments in the violence-hit Murshidabad district. The violence that erupted following protests against the Waqf (Amendment) Act in the Suti and Samsarganj blocks of Murshidabad led to injuries for several people and resulted in the burning of numerous shops, in addition to the three deaths. As a result, many residents from the affected areas have fled their homes.

Gujarat ATS, Coast Guard seize 300 kg drugs worth Rs 1,800 crore after smugglers abandon consignment in sea



GNS News Agency, April 17

In a joint operation, the Gujarat Anti Terrorist Squad (ATS) and the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) seized 300 kg of narcotics worth Rs 1,800 crore dumped into the sea from a boat near the Indian Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) on the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday. However, officials said the boat and its crew avoided capture by crossing the IMBL. Vikas Sahay, Director General of Police, in a post on X, stated that ATS had received credible informa-

tion about attempted smuggling by Pakistan-based narcotics smugglers and that a huge consignment of drugs would be arriving. The ATS immediately contacted the Indian Coast Guards for the joint operation, he said. "On seeing the ICG ship, smugglers fled across the IMBL after dumping the consignment. The drugs were recovered at sea. An offence is being registered by ATS for further investigation," he said. A statement from the ICG Monday morning said, "Based on corroborated input from the Gujarat ATS, an ICG ship, which was on multi-mission deployment off the coast of South Gujarat/North Maharashtra, was diverted and intercepted an attempted transshipment (of narcotics) off the IMBL."

It further said, "Based on the credible input of the ATS, the ICG ship identified the suspect boat in the pitch dark. On realising the approach of the ICG ship, the boat dumped its narcotics consignment into the sea before heading back towards the IMBL." The proximity of the IMBL and the initial separation between the ship and the boat helped the perpetrator evade interception, the ICG said, adding that The chase was called off after the boat crossed the IMBL.

Bloody clash inside Punjab's Dera Bassi hospital: 17 booked, 6 in police remand

GNS News Agency, April 17

In a shocking turn of events that unfolded at the Dera Bassi Civil Hospital, the police have registered a case against 17 individuals in connection with a violent clash that broke out within hospital premises. The critically injured were admitted to Mohali Civil Hospital and PGIMER, Chandigarh. Six accused were produced before the Dera Bassi court which sent them to three-day police custody. According to officials, the case was filed on the complaint of Ranjit Singh, alias Minta, under multiple sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including Sections 109, 115(2), 118(1), 117(2), 126(2), 351(3), 191(3), 190, and 61(2).

Those named in the FIR include Anil Kumar alias Honey Pandit, Angrez Singh, Mahipal, Naresh Kumar, Manish Kumar alias Mangu, Karampal, Ashok Kumar, Rajesh Kumar, Raj Kumar, Amar Singh, Mohit, Gurpreet Singh, Gurjant, Gurmeet Singh, Naib Singh, Miank, and Sanjeev Kumar. As investigations continue, the incident has taken on political overtones. Congress Halka Incharge Deepinder Singh Dhillon visited the injured victims at Dera Bassi Hospital on Sunday. He alleged, "Law and order in Punjab is deteriorating rapidly, especially in Dera Bassi, since Kuljit Singh Randhawa of the Aam Aadmi Party became MLA. The situation here now resembles that of Bihar or UP." He accused Ranjit Singh, alias Minta, of being a known gangster with over 14 criminal cases to his name, including charges as serious as attempt to murder and extortion. "The Punjab government claims to be cracking down on gangster culture, yet the MLA of Dera Bassi is promoting a criminal by inducting him into the party just 10 days before the panchayat elections and helping him win by force," said Dhillon.

He alleged that Minta was illegally appointed as sarpanch and subsequently interfered in a kabaddi tournament organised for the past 10 years by the Congress-backed youth of the village despite the High Court guidelines. Dhillon also highlighted illegal mining activities allegedly flourishing in the region. "Honey Pandit had submitted a complaint to the Mohali DC regarding the ongoing illegal mining at Mukandpur. When no action was taken, my son Udaiveer Singh Dhillon was called to the spot and a video was sent to the DC," he explained. According to



Dhillon, shortly after this, Minta and his associates allegedly attacked Honey Pandit and his family at their home, leading to their hospitalisation. Shockingly, the accused reportedly stormed the hospital and assaulted the injured victims again inside the emergency ward. "I stand firmly with my party workers. We will not allow any form of goondaism to prevail," Dhillon said. Mianpur accuses Cong leader of fuelling intra-community clash.

After the recent hospital violence, Kuldeep Singh Mianpur, president of the Market Committee Derabassi, has accused Congress leader Deepinder Dhillon and his son Udaiveer Dhillon of inciting conflict within their own community for political gains. "Last night, Deepinder Dhillon's son Udaiveer deliberately created a rift among our community members at Dera Bassi Civil Hospital. Both father and son have fractured the unity of our brotherhood just to further their political ambitions," said Mianpur. He added that several young men from their community are now critically injured and admitted to Mohali Civil Hospital and PGIMER, Chandigarh. "Our boys are lying half-dead in hospitals. This is not just violence, it is a political conspiracy against our people," he said. Mianpur announced that their families would stage a protest outside the Dera Bassi police station at 10 am on Monday. He called upon community members and local residents to support their demand for justice. "We urge all residents of Dera Bassi to rise above party lines and stand with our community. We need unity now more than ever to ensure justice is served," he said.

SAD 'true inheritor' of Punjab, time to save state from Cong, AAP: Sukhbir



Asserting that all this was initiated once the SAD left the National Democratic Alliance in 2020, Badal said a conspiracy was hatched to woo Jathedars of Takhts by giving them security and other benefits.

GNS News Agency, April 17

Calling Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) the true inheritor of Punjab, party president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Sunday said time has come to save the state from the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party which always "looted" it. Addressing a gathering on Baisakhi a day after he was re-elected as SAD president, Badal said people are determined to bring the party back to power in 2027. Once this is done, no gangster or drug smuggler would remain in the state and government jobs will go only to Punjabis, Badal said. Calling SAD the "true inheritor" of Punjab, Badal said the party was responsible for speedy development in the state by establishing thermal plants, roads and airports; augmenting irrigation facilities; bringing in Minimum Support Price (MSP) for wheat and paddy, and introducing social welfare schemes.

"I am committed to making Punjab the number one state. I am also committed to augmenting social welfare schemes and giving relief to weaker sections. I will safeguard the interest of Punjabis. SAD will reintroduce the 'aata daal' scheme, besides doubling the old age pension and Shagun schemes, and bringing in a law banning outsiders from purchasing agricultural land in Punjab," said Badal. The SAD chief also made a fervent appeal for unity in the 'Panth'. All Akalis should come back to the party fold, he said and added, "Time has come to save Punjab from the Congress and the AAP which has always looted it, and repose faith in SAD which has always delivered on its promises." "Conspiracies" were being hatched to damage the party and

erode credibility of Sikh institutions, the SAD chief said, alleging that management boards of both Sri Hazur Sahib and Patna Sahib had been expanded to bring them under government control. Asserting that all this was initiated once the SAD left the National Democratic Alliance in 2020, Badal said a conspiracy was hatched to woo Jathedars of Takhts by giving them security and other benefits.

He alleged that former Takht Dardama Sahib Jathedar Giani Harpreet Singh and others tried to "destroy" the Panth's prestige instead of strengthening it. "I thank Shiromani Committee for successfully taking back control of the Takht from the central government, which had forced the Jathedars to take a stand against the Sikh community," he alleged. He condemned the AAP government for "betraying" Punjabis. "Where is the Rs 1,100 per month for women, Rs 2,500 pension scheme, and promises to lift all 22 crops on MSP and to make Punjab drug-free?" he asked. Instead of fulfilling these promises the AAP was "looting" Punjab, with Arvind Kejriwal having taken over as the "de-facto chief minister", he alleged. "Chief minister Bhagwant Mann has abdicated his responsibilities, due to which gangsters have taken over the state. Grenade attacks have become common," Badal said. Former SAD working president Balwinder Singh Bhundar appealed to the people to support the party in rebuilding the state. Bathinda MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal asked Akali workers to bury their differences and support the party. Meanwhile, on the same day, SAD (Amritsar) and Akali Dal Warris Punjab De also held separate rallies at Talwandi Sabo.

Hitting out at the Akali Dal (WPD), Badal said, "It takes decades to create a leader. Just one person wearing Chola (religious) attire and come from nowhere can't become leader of the community. A traitor can never lead the community," he said without mentioning its chief Amritpal Singh. With its chief Amritpal in jail, Akali Dal (WPD) stressed on the issues that Punjab has been facing. Faridkot MP Sarabjit Singh Khalsa and Amritpal Singh's father Tarsem Singh lead the rally. Akali Dal (WPD) speakers also appealed to Punjabi Hindus to not go by the perception and give the party a chance. "They say we will sabotage the harmony in Punjab. Why would we do that. It is our Punjab. We have to live here. Punjabi Hindus shouldn't believe such propaganda against us and must give us a chance," a party leader said. Akali Dal (WPD) focused its agenda on the future strategy for the Sikh Panth, the need for reliable governance in Punjab, and the rightful struggles of farmers, labourers, traders, Dalits, and youth. During the event, party leaders highlighted issues such as state repression, anti-Punjab and anti-Sikh decisions, and unemployment among the youth," reads statement of party after rally.

Will file appeal against Mehul Choksi's arrest in Belgium, says lawyer; bail plea to cite his cancer treatment

GNS News Agency, April 17

The legal representative of fugitive diamond trader Mehul Choksi, booked in the Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud case, has said that they are in the process of filing an appeal against his arrest in Belgium. Choksi was arrested in the European nation on Saturday after India made an extradition request. "Our appeal seeking his release on bail will mainly be on the ground that (due to) his medical condition, he is undergoing treatment for cancer. We will also be arguing that he is not a flight risk," Choksi's lawyer Vijay Aggarwal told The Indian Express on Monday morning.

He added that the case can come up for hearing only after five days, which is when they will be filing the appeal for bail. In 2018, Choksi was named an accused in the Rs 13,000-crore PNB case in which allegedly fraudulent Letters of Undertaking were obtained from the bank, causing losses to it and undue benefit to the accused, who is said to have connived with some bank officials. As he remained absconding, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) filed a plea in 2018 under the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act. Choksi has filed various applications challenging the final proceedings to declare him a fugitive economic offender. The special court in Mumbai is yet to decide on the applications. If



Choksi is declared a fugitive economic offender and does not return, his properties can be confiscated even before the trial begins. During a previous hearing, Choksi's lawyers had said that he was in Belgium to undergo cancer treatment. It was submitted that Choksi, who resided in the east Caribbean Republic of Antigua and Barbuda, travelled to Brussels in Belgium earlier this year to get "immediate and necessary medical treatment". His lawyers told the court that he was unable to travel to India as he was advised against travelling due to his health condition.

Pune police parade gangster Tipu Pathan, aides in Hadapsar after arrest in land-grab case

GNS News Agency, April 17

The Pune City police paraded gangster Rizwan alias Tipu Sattar Pathan and three of his aides in the Hadapsar area Saturday evening following their arrest in a land-grab case. Officers had earlier booked Pathan, his brother Ejaz, both residents of Sayyad Nagar, and others in an extortion case lodged by a woman from Hadapsar who alleged that they tried to grab her land on March 2. On April 3, the police took Pathan into preventive custody after a viral video showed him throwing money while dancing with a group of men during a qawwali programme in the city. He was held under section 129 (criminal force) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, and sent to Yerwada Central Jail. After recording Pathan's arrest in the land-grab case, the police took him and his aides to Sayyad Nagar in Hadapsar where a team led by Harjot Patil, Senior Police Inspector, Kalepatal station, paraded them in an area where the gangster allegedly created terror among residents with his criminal



activities. The police also encouraged the residents to file complaints against him in case they faced any problems from Pathan or his gang members. Officers said Pathan has previously been booked in about 28 serious offences, including murder, attempt to murder, and extortion.

Punjab minister Harjot Bains should support resolution of Sikhs' issues, not interfere in internal matters: Jathedar



GNS News Agency, April 17

Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargaj, the Akal Takht's officiating jathedar, on Sunday asked Punjab minister Harjot Singh Bains to support the resolution of issues of Sikhs and not interfere in their internal affairs. Gargaj's statement came days after Bains had raised the issue of the removal of three jathedars (head of clergy) by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) in the Punjab Assembly. In a statement, Gargaj said he was pleased that Bains considered himself a part of the 'panth' (community).

However, the statement he made in the assembly pertained to an internal Sikh matter that will be decided by the 'Khalsa Panth' itself and not the House, he added. The SGPC president has already sought suggestions from the Sikh community and organisations on the rules pertaining to jathedars, Gargaj said. "If Harjot Singh Bains considers himself a part of the 'panth', he should understand the appropriate forum for raising 'panthic' issues and share any suggestions through the proper channels," he said. He said he requested Bains to ensure the construction of the road connecting the two takhts from Garhshankar to Sri Anandpur Sahib. He noted that Sikh organisation Kar Sewa Qila

Anandgarh Sahib, with support of the Sangat, was constructing about 10 kilometres of the road by itself and said it was the responsibility of the government as it collected taxes from the people. The jathedar asked Bains to raise issues such as the release of Bandi Singhs (Sikh prisoners) in the assembly. On March 28, Bains raised in the assembly the issue of the removal of three jathedars. The SGPC had removed Giani Raghbir Singh as the Akal Takht jathedar and Giani Sultan Singh as the Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib jathedar earlier that month. In February, Giani Harpreet Singh was relieved of his duties as jathedar of the Takht Sri Dardama Sahib. These takhts are among the five seats of power in Sikhism, with the Akal Takht being the highest temporal seat of Sikhs.

BRS NRIs gear up for silver jubilee celebrations meeting at Warangal

Hyderabad: BRS NRIs are gearing up to participate in a large scale in the party's silver jubilee celebrations and public meeting scheduled to be held at Elkathurthy near Warangal on April 27. Marking the 25th anniversary of the party formation, BRS NRIs will descend in Telangana from 50 countries across the world. BRS NRI global coordinator Mahesh Bigala convened a video conference with NRI representatives from over 50 countries, urging them to join the landmark event in Warangal. He said the public meeting marking the silver jubilee celebrations, to be addressed by party chief K Chandrashekhara Rao, will be historic and reflect the spirit of the Telangana statehood movement.

Funds or no funds?: Punjab's forensic labs mired in conflicting allegations after series of director's flip-flops



GNS News Agency, April 17

Confusion continues to shroud the funding of forensic science laboratories (FSLs) in Punjab, with contradictory statements from state officials, a courtroom flip-flop, and now conflicting replies under the Right to Information Act (RTI). It all began in January, when Dr Ashwani Kalia, Director of Punjab's Forensic Science Laboratory, told the Punjab and Haryana High Court that there were no funds available to purchase equipment for three Regional Forensic Science Laboratories (RFSLS). The court was hearing a bail plea in a drug-related case, and Dr Kalia's claim led the bench to question the state's spending priorities.

On January 21, the court asked the Chief Secretary to provide details of government spending on advertisements and police vehicles between April 1, 2024, and January 20, 2025. The government quickly responded, and on January 31, then Home Secretary Gurkirat Kirpal Singh told the court that Dr Kalia's statement appeared to be made "out of sheer inadvertence or lack of knowledge." Dr Kalia was issued a show cause notice for misleading the court. Now, a fresh twist: less than three months later, in response to an RTI query by The Indian Express, Dr Kalia stated on April 3, 2025, that no separate funds were allocated to regional labs for the financial years 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25. As a result, no money was released or spent on salaries, infrastructure or upgradation of these labs, the RTI reply said.

However, in another reply sent online on April 9, his office said that although funds are received only for the main FSL in Mohali, procurement for the regional labs is done from that central pool. The same reply listed detailed allocations for 2024-25, including Rs 28.15 crore for machinery and Rs 7.45 crore for salaries, among other heads. Punjab has a main Forensic Science Laboratory in Mohali and a Chemical Examiner Laboratory in Kharar. Three regional labs have also been made functional in Bathinda, Ludhiana, and Amritsar, but their testing capabilities

remain limited. When contacted by The Indian Express, Dr Kalia reversed his earlier stand. He said the labs do receive funds—centrally allocated—for all operations, including regional labs. "I thought your RTI was asking whether there were separate funds for regional labs. We receive central funds, and Rs 57 crore has already been allocated this fiscal," he said. He claimed Rs 28 crore had been spent so far, including Rs 12.15 crore on cyber forensics and Rs 14 crore on NDPS-related equipment.

But these figures don't align with the state's official affidavit submitted in court, which listed Rs 62 lakh for legal science material, and Rs 36 crore for strengthening DNA and cyber forensic facilities. That document, too, was signed by Dr Kalia. The availability of funds for forensics has assumed greater importance with the implementation of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNS), under which forensic evidence is mandatory in serious crimes to ensure better investigations and higher conviction rates. When asked why he told the High Court that funds weren't available, Dr Kalia said he may have misunderstood the judges' question. He confirmed receiving a show cause notice and said he had responded to it. Sources said no action was taken against him after his reply.

Interestingly, in a request to recall the court's order on government spending, Gurkirat Kirpal Singh had stated that Dr Kalia was not competent to comment on budget availability. As FSL Director, he was only a departmental head and not involved in budget allocation, which is decided by the state government. "There is no shortage of funds for the FSLs," the government stated in its affidavit. "In fact, the budget allocation has consistently exceeded the actual expenditure each year." The affidavit also accused Dr Kalia of failing to utilise funds meant for upgrading forensic equipment over the last three years and asked him to explain why. The case that triggered it all the confusion over FSL funding came up during a High Court hearing in a bail petition filed by Vinay Kumar, arrested in a Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) case at Sarhali police station in Tarn Taran district. Kumar's lawyer alleged that he was picked up on September 14, 2023, but shown as arrested two days later. The defence submitted CCTV footage to support this. The court asked the state to verify the footage, but the police told the court that the CD had been sent to the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL), Chandigarh, for analysis, as Punjab's own labs lacked the capability to examine it. "This court was at a dismay to know that in Punjab, the facility to examine the CD or any other video clip is not available," the bench noted, referring to the main FSL in Mohali and the three RFSLS in Amritsar, Bathinda, and Ludhiana.

Delhi CM announces 15-day Ambedkar Jayanti celebration at schools, special assemblies on his life & teachings



GNS News Agency, April 17

The BJP government is going to organise special assembly sessions in Delhi schools on Dr. B R Ambedkar's life and teachings, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta announced on Sunday. The CM also announced a 15-day celebration of Ambedkar Jayanti in the government schools. "Special assembly sessions will now be held in all Delhi schools to educate students about Babasaheb Ambedkar's life, struggles, and contributions. The Delhi government is fully committed to implementing equality, education, and health rights on the ground," she asserted as the government marked the occasion of the 134th Ambedkar Jayanti at the Delhi Legislative Assembly. She also thanked Prime Narendra Modi "for declaring Ambedkar Jayanti a national holiday".

"Delhi will celebrate Ambedkar Jayanti as a 15-day event and not just a single-day celebration. Schools will host special assemblies on Babasaheb Ambedkar's life and ideals. There will be programmes to educate and inspire students, and awareness drives in academic institutions to promote social inclusion, justice, and equality," she said. Gupta also flagged off a "Walkathon" organised by the government. The event was attended by Social Welfare Minister Ravinder Raj Singh and Education Minister Ashish Sood, among others. Addressing the gathering, the CM said, "The 'Walkathon' is not just a symbolic march but a powerful medium to spread Babasaheb's message of justice, equality, and rights to every citizen." Asking the people to rise above political boundaries, Gupta urged everyone to adopt Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision as a guiding light to build a harmonious and progressive India. "His Jayanti is not just celebrated in India, but globally, as a festival of equality and justice. He can rightly be called the 'Architect of Modern India'. Babasaheb Ambedkar's foresight gave India a Constitution that is unmatched in its inclusiveness and strength. Thanks to Babasaheb, 1.4 billion Indians today live under the same Constitution, enjoying equal rights and duties," she said. Slamming the Opposition, the CM said, "Babasaheb clearly defined not just citizens' rights, but also their responsibilities. Unfortunately, some political groups today seek to use his name only for their benefit. We must remember – Babasaheb stood for all Indians, not just one community," she said.

School jobs & Murshidabad violence: BJP holds mega rally demanding CM Mamata Banerjee's resignation

GNS News Agency, April 17

Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders in the state on Sunday took part in a rally in Kolkata protesting the violence and unrest in Murshidabad district and the recent Supreme Court ruling that annulled over 25,000 school staff appointments, leaving over 25,000 teachers and non-teaching staff jobless. Scores of BJP supporters participated in the rally along with the party leaders, marching from College Square to Rani Rashmoni, carrying flags, placards and demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. The rally was led by Leader of Opposition in state Assembly Suwendu Adhikari, state BJP president Sukanta Majumdar, former state party president Dilip Ghosh and judge-turned-MP Abhijit Gangopadhyay, BJP MLA Agnimitra Paul, and party leader Rahul Singh.

While speaking with mediapersons during the rally, Adhikari said, "Our mega protest rally is for those teachers who lost their jobs because of the fault of our Chief Minister. The courts — be it High Court or Supreme Court — had given this government several opportunities to publish the list of genuine candidates, but just to save the tainted candidates they sacrificed the genuine candidates also. We are always there with the genuine candidates." He further said, "If Hindus want to live then all Hindus have to come together. We are seeing that in various parts of our state the way Hindus are being targeted, houses and shops looted, temples demolished... When we protested in the Assembly we were thrown out. In Murshidabad the father-son duo who were murdered, what was their fault... We will fight for the Hindus." State president and MP Sukanta Majumdar said, "Who is Sidiqulla to stop Kolkata, we Bengalis are enough to fight such people. We can take a thousand of buses and go to Murshidabad. If required Bengalis can give blood and also take blood." Pointing out that "law is for ev-



eryone", BJP MP Locket Chatterjee told mediapersons that "Wakf Bill is not to harm any Muslims." "This fight is for the deprived. What is happening in this state? Those who are genuine candidates, they lost their jobs due to corruption, and the tainted candidates are sitting with the genuine candidates and holding meetings. Where is the list of the tainted candidates, where is the OMR sheet. We demand the list be published. See the violence being spread due to Wakf Bill," she said. Former state BJP MP Dilip Ghosh said, "Such bad times had never hit Bengal ever. On one side there are those who have lost their jobs and on the other hand there are those who are losing their homes in Murshidabad and coming to Malda. We the Bharatiya Janata Party are standing by the teachers who are genuine and we are standing by the Hindus... The state head has allowed some anti-nationals to come inside our country and spread violence and havoc in Murshidabad, temples, houses and everything burnt down. There is loot going on, BSF has been deployed. If the BSF and CRPF have to control the situation every time then we do not require this government in this state."

Ambedkar university suspends 5 students after protest takes 'confrontational' turn



GNS News Agency, April 17

Ambedkar University Speaking to The Indian Express, Registrar Navlendra Kumar Singh said protesters surrounded and physically blocked his vehicle, agitating to meet Vice-Chancellor Anu Singh Lather Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) has suspended five students after a protest on campus allegedly turned confrontational, with the administration alleging demonstrators vandalised official vehicles and obstructed university functioning. The decision, which comes following weeks of student-led protests against earlier disciplinary actions, has deepened tensions at the institution.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Registrar Navlendra Kumar Singh said protesters surrounded and physically blocked his vehicle, agitating to meet Vice-Chancellor Anu Singh Lather on Friday. He alleged his car was damaged and that police had to intervene to restore order. "We have filed a police complaint and the FIR is yet to be registered. They want to meet the V-C but the V-C is not ready as their approach is aggressive. We are ready to address the issues of students but there needs to be a proper way to have a conversation," Singh said.

Singh said the five students were suspended for actions that included obstructing official duties, threatening university staff, and compromising campus safety. Friday's incident came in response to AUD's earlier decision to suspend three students on March 5. Those suspensions stemmed from a press statement issued by student activists concerning a suicide attempt by a first-year student, which the administration said presented misleading information. "There was an incident of bullying at the

Karampura campus. It is a personal issue amongst students and is being politicised by a section of the students right now," Singh said. An official, on condition of anonymity, said, "The administration met with students earlier and explained that since the High Court is involved in the matter of the three suspended students, the university will have to wait for the court's directions. But on Friday, the situation grew uncontrollable..." "The Students' Federation of India (SFI), which is leading the protest, called the administration's actions "arbitrary and repressive". In a statement, the student body accused the university of "silencing dissent" and said "a group of students, including two elected student councillors, attempted to meet the Vice-Chancellor to seek accountability and open dialogue. Instead of dialogue, they were met with violence..."

Water in major reservoirs across Telangana dips to alarming levels

Hyderabad: The scorching heat of summer is taking its toll on major irrigation projects in both the Krishna and Godavari basins. The reservoir levels are dipping alarmingly. The Nagarjuna Sagar project, the waters of which are shared by both the Telugu States, is increasingly under pressure. It is nearing its minimum drawdown level. While current levels are slightly better compared to last year, the situation remains worrisome. If the water levels dip by another foot, the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board may have to depend on emergency pumping.

Despite substantial inflows into the reservoirs this year, poor planning has led to dwindling storage levels. Nagarjuna Sagar project had a cumulative inflow of 1,246 TMC this year, but it is currently holding only 141 TMC, showing a marginal improvement compared to last year's 133 TMC. Prioritising drinking water requirements during the summer, authorities have stopped releases to Nagarjuna Sagar canals. Water releases for the second crop began in December. With Rabi crops due for their harvest, releases were stopped on Thursday evening.

Security guard arrested for stealing NRI woman's bag from hospital in Delhi's Dwarka

GNS News Agency, April 17

According to the police, the woman lodged a complaint on April 5 at the Dwarka South Police Station, saying her bag disappeared while she was paying some bills at the Manipal Hospital. According to the police, the woman lodged a complaint on April 5 at the Dwarka South Police Station, saying her bag disappeared while she was paying some bills at the Manipal Hospital. A security guard, accused in 13 cases of theft, was arrested for allegedly stealing the bag of an NRI woman from Manipal Hospital in Dwarka, the Delhi Police said Sunday. According to the police, the woman lodged a complaint on April 5 at the Dwarka South Police Station, saying her bag disappeared while she was paying some bills at the Manipal Hospital.

"CCTV footages of the hospital and nearby areas were analysed. In the CCTV camera of the hospital, a man was seen stealing the bag when the NRI was paying the bills of her father at the bill counter. He was also seen fleeing from the spot," said Ankit Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Po-



lice, Dwarka. According to the police, they received a tip-off on April 6 about the suspect at 55 Foota Road, Mohan Garden. The accused, later identified as Ankit, 26, was arrested on the spot. "He said he needed some money to pay house rent and other expenditures. He went to Manipal Hospital and saw a lady paying the bills on the counter and that she had put her bag on the chair," said DCP Singh.

To beat the heat, principal of DU college plasters cow dung on classroom wall



GNS News Agency, April 17

In an unusual attempt to counter the summer heat, the principal of Delhi University's Lakshmbai College Pratyush Vatsala was seen applying cow dung on the walls of a classroom, calling it a "desi" solution to heat-related complaints. The effort, captured in a series of videos, was shared by the principal herself on the college's WhatsApp group for faculty. In the images and videos circulated on the group, Vatsala is seen standing on a chair, applying cow dung to the walls of a room in C Block, assisted by college staff. The principal wrote on the group, "Desi methods are being adopted to address complaints about the heat in C Block. Those who have classes here will soon receive these rooms in a new form. Efforts are underway to make your teaching experience more comfortable."

Speaking to The Indian Express, Vatsala said, "It is part of the research proposal by faculty called the 'Study of Heat Stress Control by Using Traditional Indian Knowledge' and did not elaborate further. She is Principal of a college of my University. Duly plastering cow-shit on classroom walls. I am concerned about many things – to begin with- If you are an employer and applicant studied from an institution which has such academic leader- what are odds of her getting hired? pic.twitter.com/OoZutRudSWhile cow dung has been traditionally used in rural Indian homes for its natural cooling properties, its application in an urban educational institution has raised curiosity amongst students. A final-year undergraduate student said, "Although basic facilities like fans are present in the classroom, a back-to-the-roots solution was given by the principal to beat the heat. It was surprising."

Another student, who is part of the college's student union, said they have been receiving several complaints over the past week about rising temperatures and malfunctioning fans. "This particular classroom is above the canteen and is part of one of the older buildings. We are not sure how the classroom will function after the cow dung has been applied. We plan to visit next week and speak to the students," the student said. Neelam, Academic Council (AC) member and Associate Professor at the college, told The Indian Express: "Basic infrastructure facilities must be addressed seriously. How can one start making changes to classrooms without passing it in the Council? Just because a classroom is old doesn't mean its infrastructure and maintenance can be ignored. The facilities in our college need urgent attention." "Washrooms are unhygienic for both students and teachers, classroom window panes are broken, and there are a lot of mosquitoes. We need practical solutions to these problems — not the application of cow dung on walls," she added. Prof Pankaj Garg, Chairman of the Indian National Teacher's Congress, said, "Such approaches are taking us back in time instead of moving us forward. Instead of addressing infrastructure issues on campus with practical solutions, we are resorting to activities that belong to the Stone Age. That is not right. We are about to enter the fourth year of the National Education Policy, yet there are still no concrete solutions on the table for how we're going to accommodate students in classrooms with such poor infrastructure." The initiative comes at a time when several colleges under Delhi University are grappling with ageing infrastructure and rising pressure from students to ensure better learning environments during the scorching summer months.

Secunderabad Club wins T20 tournament title

Hyderabad: Secunderabad Club scored an emphatic, eight-wicket win against Fateh Maidan Club in the final of the Inter-Club T-20 cricket tournament here.

Batting first, FMC scored 160 for eight in 20 overs with Rahul Buddhi (76 not out) being the top-scorer while Akshat Badruka (three for 22) was the main wicket-taker.

How a 19-year-old woman's lone battle led to conviction of a Jain monk – seven years after he raped her in Surat

GNS News Agency, April 17

She was just 19 when she first saw him in person. Her parents were devout followers of Acharya Shantisagarji Maharaj alias Sajjanlal Sharma, a Jain monk, who used to visit different cities as part of vihara (wandering, as part of the religion). This time, he was going to visit the Parshwanath Digambar Jain Temple in their city — Vadodara. The teenager had her doubts but gave in to her parents' wishes, who, by then, had become "blind followers" of the monk, according to police. Within months of their first meeting, on October 1, 2017, the monk allegedly raped the woman on the premises of another Jain temple in Surat. Earlier this month, a court in Surat held the monk, now 56, guilty of raping the woman, awarding him 10-year imprisonment and imposing a penalty of Rs 50,000.

The Additional Sessions Judge of the special court (Rape and POCSO cases) Ashwinkumar Keshavlal Shah, on April 5, convicted the accused on charges of rape (section 376 (1)) and section 376 2 (f) where the accused is a "relative, guardian or teacher, or a person in a position of trust or authority towards the woman, commits rape on such woman". However, considering the "27 years of monkhood" of the accused along with his "good behaviour", the court included the seven years he had passed in the jail as an undertrial as part of the sentence. "This is his first mistake. He does not have a criminal record," the court said.

The family of the victim belonged to another state and had moved to Vadodara for her father's job. Here, her parents came in contact with Sharma at the temple situated in the city's Mandvi area. Soon, the couple began to consider Sharma as their "dharmaguru (religious teacher)" and started meeting him personally. All this while, the victim was in another city studying design. On March 31, when she came home, her parents took her to the temple. Soon after, her parents started visiting Sharma on a daily basis. One day, the monk asks the parents to share their daughter's number with him. "I will bless her," he told them. On April 7, he "blessed" her over the phone, the woman wrote in her complaint. Two-three days later, Sharma called her with an odd request: "Tell me something you cannot share with others". He then proceeded to ask her "awkward questions about her private parts", according to the case papers. He also told her not to share the conversation with anyone "or her parents would die," she told the police in her complaint.

By this time, the woman had grown wary of Sharma. He would call her daily, and she wouldn't answer. He complained to her parents. "As per the stars, these are auspicious days. I will give her a mantra so that she does well in her exams," he told them, according to the complaint. Her mother told the woman to call Sharma. She continued to resist until one day, the monk rang her up and asked to speak when "no one was around". He said, "I have got a (divine) message...that something bad has happened to you. Send me your nude pictures on WhatsApp so that I can correct all the wrong. If you call me daily, no harm will come to you," Sharma told the woman. She gave in to his demands but stopped taking his calls on the pretext that her exams were on. A few days later, Sharma was at a temple near Bharuch Railway Station. The woman's parents took her there. He did not exchange one word with her at the time. Then, he began calling her "from different mobile numbers and also shared a WhatsApp number," the

victim told the police. On September 30, 2017, when the victim was home for Dussehra, her parents told her that the "maharaj" had asked them to bring her to see him in Surat. He had specified that they should come "for darshan in the night", as per the complaint.

The following day, the woman, her parents and her brother left for Surat. At the Mahavir Digambar Jain temple in Nanpura area, Sharma asked them to see him in his room on the top floor. As per the victim's account in the case papers, "He told them, 'We have to do a jaap (chant). So, come with me'. He took my parents to an adjoining room, made them sit on the floor and circled them with sandalwood shreds asking them to chant with their eyes closed. He instructed them not to step out of the circle 'no matter what happens', the woman noted in her complaint. Sharma then gestured to the woman's brother who followed him to a room downstairs. He then came back to the woman and asked, "Today is a good day. What do you want?" She told him that she only wanted to see her parents, and herself, happy. According to the complaint, Sharma then took the victim to the next room and raped her. Before that, he gave out a threat: "If you make any noise, something bad will happen to your parents." After raping her, he repeated the warning. "If you talk to anyone about this your parents will die," he told her, as per the court papers. The family returned to Vadodara the same night. The next morning, the woman confided in her mother. The day after, she went back to the city where she was studying. A few hours later, she fell ill. Her parents picked her from her college and took her straight to a psychologist in Vadodara. The psychologist suggested they file a police complaint and see a gynaecologist. The gynaecologist told them she would only examine her after a police complaint was lodged. "They (the parents) did not lodge a complaint out of fear since he was their dharmaguru. They also feared they would have a loss of face in the community," she told police. The woman decided to file the complaint on her own. "What happened to me should not happen to any other woman," she told the police.

Sources close to Sharma said he hailed from Guna district in Madhya Pradesh. At the age of 21, he took diksha (initiation) from the late Kalyansagarji Maharaj. Sharma soon left his family and all worldly attachments, devoting his life to the path of the Digambara Jain sect. For the last 27 years, he has spent his life as a Jain monk, rising to the rank of an Acharya. Surat Central Jail Superintendent J N Desai said, "His behaviour was good and he had no enmity with any of the prisoners or jail staffers. He has been given a prisoner number; his barracks have been changed and he has to wear a jail uniform now... While talking to him, he came across as a soft-spoken person. He used to preach to the prisoners regularly. When asked by the judge about the charges levelled at him, the accused told the court that the victim's father had "taken revenge". In his statements, Sharma said that in 2017, at a 'pichhi parivartan' — event to replace the feather fan used by monks to bless followers — the old pichhi was auctioned, as part of a practice. The amount thus generated is used for the welfare of the members of the community. The defence told court that a relative of the victim announced that he would contribute Rs 2.99 crore for the old pichhi. The victim's father asked Sharma to pay 40% of this, which he denied, the defence told the court. The victim's father died on November 11, 2020.

Xi Jinping warns protectionism 'leads nowhere' as he arrives in Vietnam

GNS News Agency, April 17

Chinese leader Xi Jinping warned that protectionism "leads nowhere" and that a trade war would have "no winners", state media said, as he arrived in Vietnam on Monday (April 14, 2025) on the first leg of a Southeast Asia tour. Mr. Xi will visit Vietnam, Malaysia and Cambodia on his first overseas trip of the year as Beijing seeks to tighten regional trade ties and offset the impact of huge tariffs unleashed by his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump. A line of well-wishers stood outside the Vietnamese capital's airport waving Chinese flags as Mr. Xi arrived in Hanoi for the start of a tour that Beijing says "bears major importance" for the broader region. He said in a statement reported by China's Xinhua news agency soon after his arrival that he looked forward to an "in-depth exchange of views with Vietnamese leaders on issues concerning ties between the two parties and countries that have a global impact". Mr. Xi earlier urged the two countries to "resolutely safeguard the multilateral trading system, stable global industrial and supply chains, and open and cooperative international environment".

He also reiterated Beijing's line that a "trade war and tariff war will produce no winner, and protectionism will lead nowhere" in an article published on Monday in Vietnam's major state-run Nhan Dan newspaper. Beijing is trying to present itself as a stable alternative to an erratic Mr. Trump, who announced — and then mostly reversed — sweeping tariffs this month that sent global markets into a tailspin. Vietnam's top leader To Lam said in an article posted on the government's news portal on Monday that his country "is always ready to join hands with China to make cooperation between the two countries more substantive, profound, balanced and sustainable". Approximately 40 cooperation documents are expected to be signed by both nations, Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister Bui Thanh Son told state media.

Vietnam was Southeast Asia's biggest buyer of Chinese goods in 2024, with a bill of \$161.9 billion, followed by Malaysia with Chinese imports worth \$101.5 billion. Firming up ties with Southeast Asian neighbours could also help offset the impact from a closed United States, the largest single recipient of Chinese goods last year. Mr. Xi will be in Vietnam on Monday and Tuesday, his first trip there since December 2023. China and Vietnam, both ruled by communist parties, already share a "comprehensive strategic partnership", Hanoi's highest diplomatic status. Vietnam has long pursued a "bamboo diplomacy" approach — striving to stay on good terms with both China and the United States. The two countries have close economic ties, but Hanoi shares U.S. concerns about Beijing's increasing assertiveness in the contested South China Sea. China claims almost all of the South China Sea as its own but its claims are disputed by the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia and Brunei. The Chinese leader insisted in his article on Monday that Beijing and Hanoi could resolve those disputes through dialogue. "We should properly manage differences and safeguard peace and stability in our region," Mr. Xi wrote. "With vision, we are fully capable of properly settling maritime issues through consultation and negotiation," he said. Vietnam's Mr. Lam said in his article on the



government news portal that "joint efforts to control and satisfactorily resolve disagreements... is an important stabilising factor in the current complex and unpredictable international and regional situation". Malaysian Communications Minister Fahmi Fadzil said Mr. Xi's visit was "part of the government's efforts... to see better trade relations with various countries including China". Mr. Xi will then travel on Thursday to Cambodia, one of China's staunchest allies in Southeast Asia and where Beijing has extended its influence in recent years.

IAF planes faced GPS spoofing in Myanmar's airspace while carrying relief materials for quake victims

GNS News Agency, April 17

New Delhi: Indian Air Force's transport aircraft carrying relief materials to earthquake-hit Myanmar late last month faced "GPS spoofing", triggering security concerns as pilots were forced to rely on the backup systems, sources in the military establishment said on Sunday. India sent the first consignment of relief materials to Myanmar on March 29 in a C-130J aircraft and its pilots reported that the plane's GPS signal was tampered with when it was in Myanmar's airspace, the sources told PTI. New Delhi sent a total of six military transport aircraft to Myanmar transporting relief materials, field hospitals and rescue teams and a majority of them experienced GPS spoofing, they said. GPS spoofing is considered to be a form of cyber attack that includes generating false GPS signals. The false signals result in misleading the navigation equipment which creates a significant risk to aircraft. When the aircraft faced "GPS interference and spoofing", the pilots immediately activated the backup system called "inertial navigation system", the sources said. GPS spoofing is used to trick an aircraft into thinking it's in a different location as it receives false location data, according to experts. Besides the C-130J Super Hercules, the Indian Air Force also operated C-17 Globemaster heavy-lift transport aircraft to carry relief materials and rescue teams to Myanmar.

U.S. NSA Waltz puts off India visit amid 'Signalgate' controversy



GNS News Agency, April 17

Amidst turmoil in Washington over communication security breaches by the National Security Council, including the National Security Advisor's office itself, U.S. National Security Advisor (NSA) Michael Waltz has put off his visit to India slated for next week, a number of sources confirmed to The Hindu. Mr. Waltz was due to visit New Delhi from April 21 to 23, for official meetings and addressing the annual U.S.-India Forum sponsored by the Ministry of External Affairs and organized by the Ananta Centre. The U.S. NSA's office conveyed to the MEA and to NSA Ajit Doval's office a few days ago that he would postpone his visit to Delhi for now, the sources said. It was expected that Mr. Waltz would hold a number of different meetings and also call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the visit.

Apart from meeting NSA Doval and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Mr. Waltz was expected to attend a preliminary meeting of the Transforming Relations Utilising Strategic Technologies (TRUST) mechanism, the successor to the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (ICET) mechanism that the government had launched with the Biden administration in 2023. Mr. Waltz was also due to be a speaker at the U.S.-India Forum, a conference held

every year behind closed doors. His predecessor in the Biden Administration, Jake Sullivan, had visited Delhi in January this year for a farewell visit.

Officials said that since the Waltz visit had not been formally announced, it would be difficult to comment on the reasons for the cancellation. Speculation has been rife in US newspapers about Mr. Waltz's position being tenuous after the "Signalgate" controversy, wherein he accepted the blame for inadvertently adding a senior journalist to a chat on messaging platform Signal. In the chat, details of upcoming bombing operations on Houthis in Yemen, along with Vice-President J.D. Vance, Defence Secretary Peter Hegseth, Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Tulsi Gabbard and other senior members of U.S. President Trump's cabinet were discussed in real time. Reports added that Mr. Waltz had maintained several other such insecure Signal chats for other foreign policy issues involving Ukraine, China and Gaza, and that the National Security Advisor used his personal Gmail accounts for sensitive communication. While the White House has stood by Mr. Waltz, the reports have considerably embarrassed the administration and could be a reason for Mr. Waltz's decision to put off the India visit. According to sources, he may now reschedule his visit in the next few months, and could time it along with the next edition of Indus-X, a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Defense and the Indian Ministry of Defence, that brings businesses involved in defence innovation and strategic technologies together. Officials said some efforts are underway to see if Vice-President J.D. Vance can fill in for Mr. Waltz's spot at the Indo-U.S. Forum. Mr. Vance is travelling to India for a largely "private" visit with his wife and their three children, visiting tourist destinations in North India as well as Usha Chillikuri Vance's home-state of Andhra Pradesh. The Vanches are expected to be hosted by Prime Minister Modi on the 21st of April before Mr. Modi leaves for Saudi Arabia (April 22-23).

Trump's Commerce Secretary says new electronics tariff exemptions are temporary, chip tariffs coming

GNS News Agency, April 17

Tariff exemptions announced Friday on electronics like smartphones and laptops are only a temporary reprieve until the Trump administration develops a new tariff approach specific to the semiconductor industry, U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said. "They're exempt from the reciprocal tariffs but they're included in the semiconductor tariffs, which are coming in probably a month or two," Mr. Lutnick told ABC's "This Week" President Donald Trump added to the confusion hours later, declaring on social media that there was no "exception" at all because the goods are "just moving to a different" bucket and will still face a 20% tariff as part of his administration's move to punish China for its role in fentanyl trafficking.

The Trump administration late Friday had said it would exclude electronics from broader so-called reciprocal tariffs, a move that could help keep the prices down for popular consumer devices that aren't usually made in the U.S. The move was expected to benefit big tech companies like Apple and Samsung and chip makers like Nvidia, though the uncertainty of future tariffs may rein in an expected tech stock rally on Monday. U.S. Customs and Border Protection said items like smartphones, laptops, hard drives, flat-panel monitors and some chips would qualify for the exemption. Machines used to make semiconductors are excluded too. That means they won't be subject to most of the tariffs levied on China or the 10% baseline tariffs elsewhere.

It's the latest tariff change by the Trump administration, which has made several U-turns in its massive plan to put tariffs in place on goods from most countries. Lutnick's comments Sunday made clear that more changes were on the way, including a policy specific to the computer chip industry. On Air Force One Saturday night, President Donald Trump told reporters he would get into more specifics on exemptions on Monday. In his post Sunday on TruthSocial, he promised the White House was "taking a look at Semiconductors and the WHOLE ELECTRONICS SUPPLY CHAIN in the upcoming National Security Tariff Investigations." Some had assumed the exemption filed Friday night reflected the president's realization that his China tariffs are unlikely to shift more manufacturing of smartphones, computers and other gadgets to the U.S. any time soon, if ever.

The administration has predicted that the trade war prod Apple to make iPhones in the U.S. for the first time, but that was an unlikely scenario after Apple spent decades building up a finely calibrated supply chain in China. What's more, it would take several years and cost billions of dol-



lars to build new plants in the U.S., and then confront Apple with economic forces that could triple the price of an iPhone, threatening to torpedo sales of its marquee product. The turmoil has battered the stocks of tech's "Magnificent Seven" — Apple, Microsoft, Nvidia, Amazon, Tesla, Google parent Alphabet and Facebook parent Meta Platforms. At one point, the Magnificent Seven's combined market value had plunged by \$2.1 trillion, or 14%, from April 2 when Trump unveiled sweeping tariffs on a wide range of countries. When Trump paused the tariffs outside of China on Wednesday, the lost value in those companies was pared to \$644 billion, or a 4% decline. An electronics exemption would fulfill the kind of friendly treatment that industry was envisioning when Apple CEO Tim Cook, Tesla CEO Elon Musk, Google CEO Sundar Pichai, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and Amazon founder Jeff Bezos assembled behind the president during his Jan. 20 inauguration. That united display of fealty reflected Big Tech's hopes that Mr. Trump would be more accommodating than President Joe Biden's administration. Apple won praise from Trump in late February when the Cupertino, California, company committed to invest \$500 billion and add 20,000 jobs in the US during the next four years. The pledge was an echo of a \$350 billion investment commitment in the U.S. that Apple made during Trump's first term when the iPhone was exempted from China tariffs. The move removes "a huge black cloud overarching for now over the tech sector and the pressure facing U.S. Big Tech," said Wedbush analyst Dan Ives in a research note. Ives amended that note after Lutnick's comments Sunday, saying the confusing news out of the White House "is dizzying for the industry and investors and creating massive uncertainty and chaos for companies trying to plan their supply chain, inventory, and demand." Neither Apple nor Samsung responded to a request for comment over the weekend. Nvidia declined to comment.

Nobel Literature Prize winner Mario Vargas Llosa dies at 89

GNS News Agency, April 17

He was a prolific author and essayist with such celebrated novels as "The Time of the Hero" (La Ciudad y los Perros) and "Feast of the Goat," and won myriad prizes, including the 2010 Nobel. "It is with deep sorrow that we announce that our father, Mario Vargas Llosa, passed away peacefully in Lima today, surrounded by his family," read a letter signed by his children Álvaro, Gonzalo and Morgana, and posted by Mr. Álvaro on X.

"His departure will sadden his relatives, his friends and his readers around the world, but we hope that they will find comfort, as we do, in the fact that he enjoyed a long, adventurous and fruitful life, and leaves behind him a body of work that will outlive him," they added. The author's lawyer and close friend, Enrique Gherzi, confirmed the death to The Associated Press and recalled the writer's last birthday on March 28 at the home of his daughter, Ms. Morgana. "He spent it happy; his close friends surrounded him, he ate his cake, we joked that day that there were still 89 more years to go, he had a long, fruitful, and free life," Mr. Gherzi said. Vargas Llosa published his first collection of stories "The Cubs and Other Stories" (Los Jefes) in 1959. But he burst onto the literary stage in 1963 with his groundbreaking debut "The Time of the Hero," a novel that drew on his experiences at a Peruvian military academy and angered the country's military. A thousand copies were burned by military authorities, with some generals calling the book false and Vargas Llosa a communist. That, and subsequent novels such as "Conversation in the Cathedral," (Conversación en la Catedral) in 1969, quickly established Vargas Llosa as one of the leaders of the so-called "Boom," or new wave of Latin American writers of the 1960s and 1970s, alongside Gabriel García Márquez and Carlos Fuentes.

Vargas Llosa started writing early, and at 15 was a part-time crime reporter for La Crónica newspaper. According to his official website, other jobs he had included revising names on cemetery tombs in Peru, working as a teacher in the Berlitz school in Paris and briefly on the Spanish desk at Agence France-Presse in Paris.

He continued publishing articles in the press for most of his life, most notably in a twice-monthly political opinion column titled "Piedra de Toque" (Touchstones) that was printed in several newspapers. Vargas Llosa came to be a fierce defender of personal and economic liberties, gradually edging away from his communism-linked past, and regularly attacked Latin American leftist leaders he viewed as dictators. Although an early supporter of the Cuban revolution led by Fidel Castro, he later grew disillusioned and denounced Castro's Cuba. By 1980, he said he no longer believed in socialism as a solution for developing nations.

In a famous incident in Mexico City in 1976, Vargas Llosa punched fellow Nobel Prize winner and ex-friend García Márquez, whom he later ridiculed as "Castro's courtisan." It was never clear whether the fight was over politics or a personal dispute, as neither writer ever wanted to discuss it publicly. As he slowly turned his political trajectory toward free-market conservatism, Vargas Llosa lost the support of many of his Latin American literary contemporaries and attracted much criticism even from admirers of his work. Jorge Mario Pedro Vargas Llosa was born March 28, 1936, in Peru's southern city of Arequipa, high in the Andes at the foot of the Misti volcano. His father, Ernesto Vargas Maldonado, left the family before he was born. To avoid public scandal, his mother, Dora Llosa Ureta, took her child to Bolivia, where her father was the Peruvian consul in Cochabamba.

A Governor's conduct and a judgment of significance



GNS News Agency, April 17

Last week, in a judgment of wide-ranging significance, in *The State of Tamil Nadu vs The Governor of Tamil Nadu and Anr.*, a two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court of India, comprising Justice J.B. Pardiwala and Justice R. Mahadevan, reaffirmed the limits that bind gubernatorial authority. In doing so, the Court reminded us of a constitutional truth that ought to be self-evident: the Governor of a State is neither an appendage of the Union nor an independent power centre, but is constrained by legal norms and democratic principle.

A need to respect democratic obligationsAt the heart of the case was a seemingly simple but institutionally weighty question: what happens when a Governor, in defiance of duty, fails to act on a Bill duly passed by the State's legislature? The answers from the Court not only helped validate a clutch of Bills passed by the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly — each of which had languished without assent — but also contained in them a broader, unequivocal message. The office of the Governor, while significant, is not exempt from the obligations of representative democracy. To withhold assent indefinitely, without reason, subverts federalism and imperils the constitutional order. Initially numbering 12, the contested Bills trace their origins to as far as 2020, with two enacted under the previous All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam administration. Among them were Bills that sought to supplant the Governor's power to appoint Vice-Chancellors to public universities — proposals that emanated out of a long-standing skirmish between the Raj Bhavan and the elected government over institutional control. For years, the Governor took no discernible action. When the State government moved the Supreme Court in November 2023, he promptly referred two of the Bills to the President for her consideration. The Legislative Assembly, in turn, convened a special session to reenact the remaining 10 Bills. But when these were sent to the Governor, he swiftly passed them on to the President. Since then, the President assented to only one, rejected seven outright, and left two pending.

It was this sequence of events which formed the basis for the State government's case in the Court. The Governor, through his conduct, the State claimed, had choked the legislative process and undermined the people's will. His prolonged inaction, and ultimately delayed referral, therefore, demanded judicial scrutiny. India's federal design rests on a delicate balance. The Constitution carefully demarcates legislative authority between the Union and the States. Article 245 prescribes the territorial jurisdiction of each, allowing Parliament to legislate for the entire country or any part thereof, while State legislatures are confined to their respective territories.

The scope of legislative powers is categorised into three distinct lists outlined in the Constitution's Seventh Schedule. The Union enjoys exclusive authority over items in List I, while subjects in List III, the Concurrent List, allow for legislation by both the Union and State governments, albeit with a proviso: a state enactment inconsistent with parliamentary legislation requires presidential assent to prevail. Matters in List II, on the other hand, remain under the sole legislative domain of the States. However, in the event of conflict with a parliamentary law, primacy is given to the Union legislation. In this scheme, the Governor, though appointed by the President, functions as the constitutional head of the State. Barring specific instances where the Constitution expressly permits discretion, he is bound to act on the aid and the advice of the State's Council of Ministers.

It is in this context that Article 200 of the Constitution, which deals with how a Governor ought to assent to a Bill, assumed significance before the Court. Much of the dispute would turn on its interpretation. On a plain reading of

Article 200, the Governor may: grant assent; withhold assent (and return the Bill to the Assembly for reconsideration), or reserve the Bill for the President's consideration.

The Union of India, in their response to Tamil Nadu's petition, contended that the first proviso to Article 200 provided the Governor an independent, fourth course of action: he could simply withhold his assent to a Bill, without referring it back to the Assembly. In other words, he could stamp his rejection with an absolute veto over the bill. But this argument had expressly been rejected by the Court in *State of Punjab vs Principal Secretary to the Governor of Punjab (2023)*. There, it found that the proviso to Article 200 contains no independent power. Once an ordinary Bill is passed by the Assembly, the Governor has only one of three options available: to either assent to it, or reserve it for the President's consideration, or withhold the assent, in which case, the Governor must also refer it back to the Assembly for reconsideration.

It was also the Union's case that in deciding whether to reserve a Bill for the President's assent, the Governor could exercise an autonomous discretion. That is, he had the independent ability to decide what course of action to follow. In answering this argument, the Court harked to the debates in the Constituent Assembly. It noted that the draft version of Article 200 (then Article 175) had explicitly stated that the Governor "may, in his discretion" reserve a Bill for the consideration of the President. This phrase was consciously omitted in the finally adopted version. Its removal, the Court held, was not inadvertent but deliberate, aimed at ensuring that the Governor's role was constrained by the advice of the elected executive. Indeed, the Court identified only three narrow circumstances in which the Governor could act without ministerial counsel: first, where the second proviso to Article 200 applied, that is where a Bill derogated from the powers of a High Court; second, where a Bill fell within a class for which presidential assent was explicitly mandated, such as under Article 31C where a law was sought to be protected from judicial review; and third, where a Bill so fundamentally undermined constitutional values as to warrant presidential attention.

This conclusion came with an important caveat. Even where a Governor exercises discretion, the action is still amenable to judicial review. Relying on its earlier judgment in *Rameshwar Prasad vs Union of India (2006)*, the Court found that while Article 361 grants personal immunity to Governors, it does not insulate their actions from legal scrutiny. Consider the alternative: a Governor may simply paralyse the entire legislative process by sitting over Bills for years on end, all the while hiding behind the cloak of gubernatorial immunity, holding, in the process, the entire governance of a State hostage. In any event, in this case, the Court found that there was no discretion available to the Governor. Having chosen to withhold assent, he could not plausibly have then referred the Bills to the President, on their being re-presented to him. There was no trace of executive advice backing his decisions nor were his acts grounded in any identifiable, let alone defensible, constitutional rationale.

Having found the Governor's actions unconstitutional, the Court could not doubt have considered issuing what the law describes as a writ of mandamus, compelling him to grant his assent to the Bills. But given the substantial time that had lapsed and given that previous Court decisions had been overlooked, the Court chose the ostensibly extreme option. With a view to achieving complete justice — a power available to it under Article 142 — it declared that these 10 Bills would be deemed to have been assented to on the date when they were re-presented to the Governor. Some might see this as judicial overreach, but issuing a mandamus might well have been rather more unworkable. Should the Court's orders be breached, it cannot plausibly hold the Governor in contempt. Therefore, the ultimate direction must be seen as a logical sequitur to the Court's findings: on the Bills being passed anew by the State Assembly, and on the Council of Ministers recommending their assent, the Governor was left with no discretion in the matter. The significance of the judgment for the specific Bills, which were at stake, is plain to see. But the verdict also carries with it a larger message. It upholds a fact intrinsic to our Republic: that the Governor, though appointed by the Union government, functions on the aid and advice of the State executive; the office is meant to serve not as a source of political disputes, but as a constitutional sentinel, upholding the values of representative democracy.

Playing politics on the runway

GNS News Agency, April 17

Seldom do infrastructure projects, especially in the mobility sector, catch the attention of lawmakers. The lack of attempts being made to fix Bengaluru's potholed roads or speed up the progress of the metro rail project indicate this apathy in the Karnataka's capital city. However, one large project is drawing the attention of lawmakers. Even those outside the city seem interested in getting a slice of this massive real estate pie, which could be around 5,000 acres of land. This project is the second greenfield international airport in Bengaluru, which is a necessity for the city as the

Kemp Gowda International Airport (KIA) will not be able to accommodate more than its peak capacity of 80 million-90 million passengers by the turn of the next decade. With no scope for the KIA's expansion, the Karnataka government began exploring potential sites for the second airport a decade early, which is a welcome sign. Having finalised three potential sites for the second airport — two on Kanakapura Road in south

Bengaluru and one on Nelamangala-Kunigal Road — the Karnataka State Small Industries Development Corporation, the industrial and investment promotion agency of the State government, recently invited an Airports Authority of India (AAI) team to inspect them and conduct a feasibility study on these sites.

To coincide with the AAI team's visit, 42 legislators from various political parties led by veteran Congress leader T.B. Jayachandra petitioned Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to develop the airport at Sira in Tumakuru district, which is about 120 kilometres from Bengaluru. Prior to this, Home Minister Dr. G Parameshwara had also pitched for Tumakuru, his home district located north of Bengaluru, as the best location for a second airport.

The lobbying for the airport to be developed in these locations has deeper political overtones, especially given

the ongoing battle over chief ministership between the incumbent, Mr. Siddaramaiah, and his deputy, D.K. Shivakumar. Two of the three shortlisted sites which were inspected by the AAI team are part of, or are close to, Mr. Shivakumar's Assembly constituency, Kanakapura. Those who oppose the development of the airport in south Bengaluru have hinted that Mr. Shivakumar will stand to gain if the project comes up there. Meanwhile, Infrastructure Development Minister M.B. Patil said that the second airport is being constructed for the city and the decision is not about personal preferences. He said that the government would go by the Centre's directives, viability and feasibility reports, and a detailed project report prepared by global consultants. He also shot down the demands of the 42 legislators, stating that setting up a greenfield international airport in Sira is not viable and that a district-level airport could, at best, be built there. That leaves south Bengaluru as the most viable option. Is this a step in the right direction? Experts and IT heads and a majority of those living in the southern part of the city believe it is. Prior to the opening of the KIA in Devanahalli, located in north Bengaluru, there were calls for keeping operational the existing Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) airport, located in the eastern part of the city, for commercial operations or at least short-haul flights. Protesters demanding this argued that commuting to KIA would be tedious for those living in south and east Bengaluru due to traffic woes. But the HAL airport had to close commercial operations due to an agreement between the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation and Bengaluru International Airport Limited, the operator of KIA. As per the agreement signed on July 5, 2004, no airport can operate within an aerial distance of 150 km of the airport before the 25th anniversary of KIA, which falls in May 2033. As this agreement expires in 2033, KIA too will run out of capacity, paving the way for the second airport. Residents of south Bengaluru point out that building an airport beyond the existing one does not address their concern. Besides, constructing an airport in southern Bengaluru would also thwart competition from the proposed Hosur airport, which the Tamil Nadu government is pursuing. After all, commuting to the proposed Hosur airport to board a domestic flight would be a better option for residents of the southern part of the city than travelling more than two hours to reach KIA or an airport beyond it.

News in Frames: Tackling a tough track

Once an emblem of the rich heritage and a mainstay for everyday commuters to criss-cross the city, trams in Kolkata run now on just two routes: Gariahat to Esplanade, and Esplanade to Shyambazar. The city, which introduced trams in 1873, has witnessed a sprawling network get reduced to a nostalgic whisper. Yet, this slow-moving heritage on wheels keeps going, thanks to determined efforts of enthusiasts such as the Calcutta Tram Users Association (CTUA). From March 28 to 31, the association organised a Tram Festival to celebrate this iconic mode of transport. The event featured heritage rides, exhibitions, and discussions highlighting trams not only as a symbol of Kolkata's identity, but also as a sustainable, environment-friendly solution for urban mobility. "It is more than just a ride; it is a memory for many and a clean future for the city," said Surendra Ram, a tram driver since 1995. "I have seen generations travel with me: students, office-goers, lovers

sharing a quiet corner — the tram is enmeshed into Kolkata's soul," he added.

Meanwhile, a specially decorated tram, adorned with the theme of the Sundarbans with vibrant images of the Bengal tiger as a way to raise awareness of the consequences of climate change and the need for eco-friendly modes of transportation to protect the environment, has become a popular attraction. According to the CTUA, successive State governments have shown little or no intent to preserve this non-polluting, energy-efficient means of transport. A public interest litigation seeking restoration of tram services is being heard in court. As Kolkata hurtles forward, many fear that it may lose its patient, and graceful commuter. For now, the tram bell rings, perhaps calling out not just to alert those on its path, but also to move public will and vision.

What has the SC ruled on the T.N. Governor? | Explained



GNS News Agency, April 17

The story so far: On April 8, the Supreme Court declared Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi's prolonged refusal to give his assent to 10 Bills as illegal and erroneous in law. In a landmark verdict, Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan underscored the importance of cooperative federalism, amid growing concerns over the increasing politicisation of the Governor's office in Opposition-ruled States.

What is the process of granting assent?

Article 200 of the Constitution delineates the powers conferred upon a Governor when a Bill, having been passed by the State legislature, is presented for assent. The only exception is Money Bills, which are deemed to have automatically received assent. In all other cases, once a Bill has been passed by both Houses of the legislature, the Governor can exercise one of three options: grant assent, withhold assent and return the Bill to the Assembly for reconsideration, or reserve it for the President's consideration. However, only those Bills that undermine the High Court's powers to the extent of endangering its constitutionally mandated role can be reserved for Presidential consideration. The first proviso to Article 200 stipulates that if the Governor decides to withhold assent, the Bill must be returned to the Assembly "as soon as possible", accompanied by a request to reconsider the proposed legislation or suggest amendments. However, if the Assembly, upon such reconsideration, passes the Bill with or without the amendments, the Governor is constitutionally obliged to grant assent.

Can the Governor exercise a 'pocket veto'?

The ongoing impasse between the Governors and Opposition-ruled State governments primarily hinges on the interpretation of this proviso. While it mandates prompt action, it stops short of prescribing a definitive timeline. This constitutional silence has often been exploited by Governors to indefinitely delay action on a Bill without formally returning it — a tactic colloquially known as the "pocket veto." However, the judges pointed out that the use of the term "shall" in the substantive portion of Article 200, when read in conjunction with the phrase "as soon as possible" in its proviso, precludes the possibility of any such pocket veto. Justice Pardiwala, who authored the judgment, clarified that the Governor's option to "withhold assent" cannot be equated with an unqualified power to reject or veto legislation duly enacted by the State legislature. He cautioned that such an interpretation would undermine the very foundation of a representative democracy.

When can the President's consideration be sought?

Further limiting the discretionary powers of the Governor, the court ruled that a Bill cannot be reserved for the President's consideration once it has been returned to the State legislature, reconsidered and resubmitted for assent. The only exception is if the Bill, in its second iteration, is materially different from the original version. The judgment also clarified that such reservation cannot be based on "per-

sonal dissatisfaction" or "political expediency" and is only permissible in instances where there is a grave threat to democratic principles.

Notably, the judges have set a three-month deadline for the President to decide whether to assent to Bills referred by the Governor. The clock will begin ticking from the day the reference is received. "Any delay beyond this period must be accompanied by justifiable reasons and communicated to the concerned State," the ruling states. A recommendation has also been made to the President to seek the Supreme Court's advice on such Bills, in line with the procedure outlined in Article 143 of the Constitution, as a measure of prudence. The judges pointed out that this course of action is important, given the lack of a mechanism at the State level for the Governor to refer Bills to constitutional courts for their opinion.

What are the timelines prescribed?

The court has imposed similar timelines on the Governor to prevent any obstruction of the State's legislative process. It clarified that when the Governor, acting on the Cabinet's advice, opts to withhold assent or reserve a Bill for the President's consideration, such action must be taken forthwith and no later than one month. If the Governor withholds assent contrary to ministerial advice, the Bill must be returned within three months, accompanied by a message detailing the rationale for the decision. Similarly, if the Governor reserves a Bill for the President against the Cabinet's recommendation, this must also be done within three months. Finally, if the Bill is re-passed by the State legislature after reconsideration, the Governor is required to grant assent within one month. However, the ruling noted that any departure from these timelines may be condoned if there are "reasonable grounds".

Is judicial review permissible?

The judges emphasised that any exercise of gubernatorial discretion must be amenable to judicial review to prevent any "disregard" for the will of the people, as expressed through their elected representatives. Invoking its inherent powers under Article 142 of the Constitution, the court deemed the 10 pending Bills to have received assent. Justice Pardiwala reasoned that the exercise of such extraordinary powers was warranted, given the Governor's "scant respect" for prior rulings. He was particularly critical of the Governor's decision to return the Bills without providing reasons, in clear violation of the court's binding directive in *State of Punjab versus Principal Secretary to the Governor of Punjab (2024)*.

What are the potential implications?

P.D.T. Achary, former Secretary General of the Lok Sabha, told *The Hindu* that the ruling upholds the principles of federalism and provides Opposition-ruled State governments a clear constitutional remedy against inordinate delays by Governors in granting assent to Bills passed by the legislature. "The Supreme Court has been reining in the discretionary powers of Governors for some time now. However, what sets this judgment apart is its articulation of definitive timelines for both the Governor and the President, ensuring that the enactment of crucial legislation is not indefinitely stalled," he said. Senior advocate Shadan Farsat noted that the top court has rarely invoked its inherent powers to create a legal fiction of deemed assent. "By recognising automatic assent in cases where the Governor fails to adhere to the prescribed timelines, the court has instituted a crucial safeguard against abuse of the office," he said. He added that the ruling could pave the way for similar judicial intervention in cases where the Union government delays acting on collegium recommendations. "Extending such powers to judicial appointments would help prevent an executive veto over the collegium's decisions," he told.

Basics of a career in genomics research

Imagine a career where your everyday work could impact the lives of millions of people. Were you curious to know more about genomics during COVID-19? The pandemic was a big reminder of the role and importance of genomics and its potential to solve some of the most pressing issues of our time. As we stand on the brink of unprecedented breakthroughs in healthcare, students and young professionals have a unique opportunity to shape the future by entering the field of genomics. Genomics is not just an academic pursuit; it is a transformative field with the power to solve some of humanity's greatest challenges. It is at the intersection of Biology, Data Science, and technology; a trifecta of skills that defines the future of healthcare. It is not just about understanding genes but about leveraging that knowledge to address critical issues like cancer, rare genetic disorders, and even infectious diseases like COVID-19. Its applications go beyond healthcare. From agriculture to climate science, genomics is driving innovations such as genetically engineered crops that withstand harsh conditions and microbiomes that promote environmental sustainability. What it involves Genomics research focuses on studying an organism's entire DNA, including all its genes, to uncover insights into health, disease, and evolution. It involves: Genomics research typically requires a Bachelor's degree in Biotechnology, Genetics, Molecular Biology, or related field and a Master's degree for specialised roles in genomics, bioinformatics, or clinical applications. A Ph.D. is essential for leadership positions in research and academia. Aspirants require a blend of technical, analytical, and soft skills. Additional certifications in bioinformatics, next-generation sequencing (NGS), or clinical genomics (e.g., ACMG, NSGC) and technical expertise in CRISPR, data analysis tools like R and Python, and laboratory techniques such as PCR are crucial. Strong data analysis skills to interpret large datasets and detect patterns are essential, along with interdisciplinary knowledge combining Biology, Computer Science, and Statistics. Effective communication and is vital to write research papers, collaborate



with teams, and explain findings to non-specialists. Genomics offers diverse career paths. Junior and senior research fellows (JRF/SRF) and PhD researchers focus on lab work, experiments, and scientific advancements. Lab technicians play a vital role in maintaining operations and conducting key experiments. Field application scientists support tools like Illumina machines through troubleshooting and optimisation. Scientific liaisons bridge the gap between researchers and clinicians, translating genomic insights into practical applications. Additionally, business development professionals drive collaborations and market growth, leveraging their understanding of genomics to expand industry impact. Governments and private sectors worldwide are investing heavily in genomics and biotech and the market is projected to grow exponentially, creating an array of career opportunities from research and development to entrepreneurship and policy-making. In India, initiatives like Startup India, Make in India, and increased focus on healthcare innovation offer fertile ground for aspiring professionals. There is a need for talented and passionate professionals who are pushing the boundaries of what is possible. Genomics is transforming healthcare by enabling earlier disease detection, personalised therapies, and targeted drug development.

Surge in gold loans, NPAs: Will the proposed RBI norms achieve what is set out to do — moderate growth?



dial measures in a time-bound manner. Further, the gold loan portfolio should be closely monitored, especially in the 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.

Earlier, borrowers could repledge the jewellery on the same day by paying only the interest. This had led to evergreening of gold loans as borrowers extended loans indefinitely without making repayment of principal. After the RBI asked lenders to tighten the gold loan processes in September last year, 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. The change has made it costlier for borrowers, as they will have to borrow again to repledge the loan and extend the loan tenure for another year.

On April 9, the RBI released draft comprehensive guidelines on gold loans. Under the proposed norms, the RBI has barred lenders from granting any advance against primary gold/ silver or financial assets backed by primary gold/ silver like units of Exchange-traded funds (ETFs) or units of mutual funds. The maximum loan-to-value (LTV) ratio in respect of consumption gold loans should not exceed 75 per cent of the value of gold. The guidelines said that the eligible gold collateral should not be used concurrently for extending loans for income generating purposes as well as consumption loans. Lenders should not extend loans where ownership of the collateral is doubtful, and they should keep a record of the verification of the ownership of the collateral. Tenor of consumption loans in the nature of bullet repayment loans where both principal and interest become due at maturity should be capped at 12 months, the RBI said.

What has made gold loans an attractive option for individuals seeking immediate financial assistance is the ease of obtaining these loans, coupled with minimal documentation and swift processing. Major financial institutions, including PSU banks, offer instant gold loans with flexible repayment options, further increasing their attraction. On top of this, the sharp rise in gold prices has ensured that borrowers will get a higher loan amount from their gold holdings. Gold holds a significant place in Indian culture, often being accumulated over generations. During times of financial needs like hospital expenses and college fees, individuals are more willing to pledge their gold holdings like jewellery to secure loans. "The slowdown in the economy in the last few months would have prompted consumers to pledge gold to meet the financial requirements. During periods of economic uncertainty like trade wars or inflation, gold is perceived as a stable asset, prompting individuals to opt for gold loans to meet immediate financial needs," said an analyst. The growth of digital platforms, apps and fintech solutions has also made gold loans more accessible and attractive, even in remote areas, contributing to their rising popularity. As gold prices continue to glitter, loans in this segment are likely to remain a popular financing option for individuals across the country.

labour-intensive exports could generate jobs, while deeper integration in the services sector could strengthen India's IT industry. But to achieve that, India may be forced to cut its protections.

Last week, China had accused the US of resorting to "unilateralism and economic hegemony", thereby undermining the multilateral trading system centred around the WTO. The imposition of Section 301 tariffs, China said, is a prime example of such unilateral practices. "The US Section 301 tariff measures are a classic case of unilateralism and protectionism. They seriously damage the global trade order and the security and stability of global industrial and supply chains," a Chinese white paper stated. Notably, Section 301 is a legal tool that allows the US administration to unilaterally investigate and act against what it perceives as unfair trade practices by other countries. Under this mechanism, the US had earlier revoked India's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) benefits. "In April 2018, China brought a case concerning the US tariff measures to the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism. On September 15, 2020, a WTO panel ruled that the US tariffs imposed on certain Chinese products violated the Most Favoured Nation obligation under Article I of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), 1994. This ruling fully upheld China's claims. The US filed an appeal on October 26, 2020. However, due to US obstruction, the WTO Appellate Body remains paralysed, leaving the case in limbo," the paper said.

Government to allocate major chunk of funds to startup sectors like new age tech, AI

New Delhi: The commerce and industry ministry will allocate a major part of the second Rs 10,000 crore Fund of Funds Scheme (FFS) for startups to budding entrepreneurs in sectors such as new-age technology, artificial intelligence, and machine building, an official said. In the Budget, the government announced a new FFS with a corpus of Rs 10,000 crore. In 2016, the government launched a similar scheme. "We are going to dedicate a lot of this Rs 10,000 crore fund of funds largely for the new age tech, AI, and machine building," the official said.

The 2016 scheme was set up to catalyse venture capital investments and is operationalised by the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), which provides capital to Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi)-registered AIFs, which in turn invest in startups. SIDBI is expected to manage the second scheme also, the official added. With an intent to build a strong ecosystem of the country for nurturing innovation and promoting startups, the government launched the Startup India initiative on January 16, 2016.

As per the government's eligibility conditions, entities are recognised as 'startups' under the Startup India initiative by the department. So far, over 1,50,000 entities have been recognised as startups across more than 55 industries. These units are eligible to avail tax and non-tax incentives under the Startup India action plan.



Space tech offers a replicable template, iDEX in defence & BIRAC in biotech working well: PSA Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood



According to the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, Ajay Kumar Sood, while there is now an increasing sensitivity to putting deep tech startups on an accelerated path, India needs to think beyond manufacturing. Prof. Sood, who is also the Chairperson of the Prime Minister's Science, Technology & Innovation Advisory Council and is a National Science Chair Professor at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore, told Anil Sasi in an interview that Indian startups are working well in sectors such as quantum technology and that his office is working on how to include deep tech startups in allocations from the fund-of-funds announced earlier. One of your key mandates is technology foresight. When we look at sectors such as deep tech startups, the one big concern is that the number of deep tech startups that are coming out in India is low and that they are not really in the cutting-edge technology segments. Do you see that changing?

So, the good news is that there is an increasing sensitivity to take the deep tech startups on an accelerated path. Our office has helped prepare a deep tech policy (the National Deep Tech Startup Policy), which was up for public consultation and so on... What we would like to do from that is make an action plan, not us, but DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade) and other places, make an action plan to see how it can help. For example, this fund-of-funds that has been announced in this year's Budget, the question is, can we allocate some of it for deep tech startups? That is a suggestion we have.

And also we have this Rs 1 lakh crore corpus fund, which was announced in last year's Budget... which is like a loan, a zero per cent loan. Again, the question is how do we include deep tech startups? Because deep tech startups, as you know, need long-term patient funding that (might be) difficult with the venture capital funds and others, because they may not wait for so long (for projects to pick up)... So our goal will be to create instruments. Some of them could be policy decisions. Some of them can be like the fund-of-funds and so on, so that our deep tech startups get stabilised here and they remain with their IP (intellectual property) here... Because it's not only starting up, it also should be sustainable here... So, for example, in quantum itself, there are now about 35 companies alone, and they are deep tech, obviously. A few of them are big. But many of them are small startups. So, under the National Quantum Mission, there is a provision to fund startups, and is being done. Now, eight startups have been funded under the quantum mission for these deep tech startups. Similarly, this will happen in the AI mission. In the AI mission, which is now being done by MeitY, one vertical is full on startups. So, my own sense is now that there is very high sensitivity to enhancing deep tech startups, but we have to see that all conditions are favourable (for fostering this).

There is this conversation around this proposed centre for deep tech translation. How do you see this evolving?

So we may not have a centre, per se, because that is just an articulation of the high priority we will give (for this initiative). It can be a centre, it can be a distributed effort, it can be a virtual centre. But what we are saying is there has to be a concerted effort, a body that should focus on deep tech startups in a consolidated manner by looking at all aspects of it. So, it may not be an institute, or any such thing. But it could be a mix of many things, it could possibly be virtual. The intention is to step up the focus on these deep tech startups. One area where India has done exceedingly well is the national space programme, not just proving that we can do cutting-edge stuff, but that it can be done by the public sector, and at a fraction of the cost benchmarks. And now we are getting in private players who are doing well too. Can we replicate the success of the space sector to other areas, such as deep tech, or nuclear, or EVs?

For example, in defence, there is the iDEX programme (Innovations for Defence Excellence, an initiative of the Ministry of Defence to support innovation and technology development in the defence and aerospace sectors). Actually, iDEX is a huge success. People probably don't know much about it. iDEX is for the deep tech startups in this space, because they are working on cutting-edge technologies that are required by the strategic sector. It's not a random thing, it is what is needed (in the sector). Can you come up with a solution (for this problem)? That's the challenge,

With or without skin: The best way to have cashew nuts is...

When enjoying cashews, you might have wondered whether to eat them with or without their skin. So, here's some help from Dr Birali Swetha, chief dietician, Gleneagles Aware Hospital, LB Nagar, Hyderabad, who said that both have their benefits, but the choice depends on your health goals. With skin, cashews that still have their brown skin, known as the testa, offer extra health benefits, said Kanikka Malhotra, consultant dietician and certified diabetes educator. "Cashews with skin are less processed and retain more natural antioxidants, including polyphenols, which help combat oxidative stress. The skin also adds a small amount of dietary fibre, aiding digestion and promoting gut health. However, the skin can taste slightly bitter, which some may find unappealing," said Dr Birali. Lightly roasted cashews with skin can be a good choice for maximum health benefits, as roasting reduces bitterness while preserving nutrients.

Without skin

On the other hand, skinless cashews are more commonly consumed due to their mild, creamy flavour and smooth texture. "They are still rich in healthy monounsaturated fats, protein, and essential minerals like magnesium, zinc, and iron. While they lack the added polyphenols from the skin, they remain a great option for heart health and energy," said Dr Birali. If taste and texture are a priority, skinless cashews are still a nutritious addition to your diet. They're incredibly versatile and can be used in everything from baking to savoury dishes. "The peeling process ensures that the nuts are safe to eat since the outer

and iDEX (is) enormously successful. And, in recent years, the funding for this has been increased. So, iDEX is a very good example. Similarly, there is BIRAC (Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council, a Department of Biotechnology initiative) to promote startups in the biotechnology sector. The biotech ecosystem has grown in startups because of BIRAC. They have invested probably a few hundred crores over the years, and it has resulted in many times more biotechnology companies coming up. And they are also deep tech projects.

So two examples are there already, iDEX in defence and BIRAC in biotechnology, they are very similar to what we're doing in space. See, in space, there is an advantage, because the players exactly know what to do. Similarly, in defence too, one knows exactly what is required. But in other areas, we have to also create the demand for future products. So, this is where we will need the support.

Another thing which should happen, is that we have been very good in design, because we have a lot of designers. Over 2,000 or so, or more. But what we need is that we should have designing capabilities on our specifications, not on someone else's specifications, which means some intellectual thinking has already (been done) somewhere else. So that's what will make our country a leading product nation. What do you need in a product nation? Think about it. It's not manufacturing... Manufacturing, of course, is required, down the line, but it (manufacturing) is not the only thing, because then you will get into the middle-income trap. Because the profits will go somewhere else, and much of the profits are before and after manufacturing. So, what we need is, can we really have a product that is not based on somebody else's design, but our design. So, I think, that is what the culture we need to bring in. Our youngsters are very, very good, actually. I mean, the design companies that are there in Bengaluru, all our engineers there, are very good, but they are designing for somebody else and to their specifications. Question is, why can't we have our GCC (global capability centres). And there are some companies that are coming up now, in manufacturing, such as Bharat Forge, the Tatas are doing (some work), Tech Mahindra is there... More has to happen. So, my passion is how to foster that. In the nuclear sector, with the US Department of Energy specific authorisation (10CFR810) that enables an American company Holtec Int. the possibility of transfer of technology to at least three companies to start off with, how crucial is this development in your view?

See, nuclear energy is inevitable, because if you look at the energy mix, which is required for net zero carbon by 2070, nuclear energy is integral to this energy transition period. You can't get away from that. Given that, whatever is required: whether it is SMR or whether it is 500 megawatt conventional reactors or any other reactor type, all has to be used now. SMRs have a distinct advantage, that if you need a very focused energy supply, like for data centres, and there could be many more examples, an SMR offers a possible application, even if it is not economical. So, I would like to say that we need to keep all options open and it's not a question of 'or'; rather it should be, 'and', when it comes to multiple technologies.

On EV mobility, your department has kept the technology option open, just like you mentioned for the energy sector. But within sections of the government, the conclusion seems to be that battery electrics are the only option. Shouldn't we pursue a multiple technologies pathway to achieve electrification of mobility? I completely agree, multiple technologies (is the way forward). Take the fuel cell, green hydrogen, and the fuel cell is a very good option, along with EVs. I'm not saying EV should be (ruled) out, but with EVs, I don't think that lithium chemistry (for batteries) is the end of the world... Other electro chemistries have to be tried, and are being tried... Solid-state batteries are the ultimate, in my view, because they'll be the safest, and energy density will be the highest, but there you still have some R&D issues, so it's still not commercial yet... But that's where we should work. Fully solid-state batteries, where the electrolyte is also solid. But sodium ion batteries are already an option. Our R&D roadmap (e-mobility R&D Roadmap for India' released last year) actually tells you which technologies you have to (pursue) now, so that you are not import dependent after five years. And based on that, the good news is that in the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (established through the ANRF Act of 2023 that was notified in February 2024 and is chaired by the Prime Minister), the first mission we have launched is on electric vehicles and the R&D needed. (This is) where we need to be competitive. It's not a replacement R&D, there's a difference. Something we are importing, you want to replace that. That is one option. But you have to also know what you will need after five years, three years, because R&D takes that long... So EVs are absolutely essential, but when I say EV, it should be more generic (in technology terms). Fuel cell is one option, and hybrids, and so on... So, options are there. And in my view, a country of our size and our breadth, we need all options.

shell contains toxic substances if not handled properly. However, this process removes some of the beneficial compounds in the skin," said Dr Malhotra. "Whichever you choose, moderation is key. Cashews are calorie-dense, so portion control is essential for balanced nutrition," said Dr Birali.

How to decide?

Convenience: Cashews without skin are generally easier to eat and digest. "Cashews with skin can sometimes be messy, with the skin clinging to fingers or getting caught in teeth. Skinless cashews offer a more convenient and less messy eating experience," said dietician Vidhi Chawla, founder of Fisco Diet and Aesthetic Clinic. Smoother texture: The smooth, creamy texture of skinless cashews makes them ideal for blending into nut kinds of butter, smoothies, and other recipes. "Skinless cashews can be easily incorporated into various dishes, such as stir-fries, salads, and baked goods, without affecting the overall texture or appearance of the dish," said Chawla. Aesthetics: Some people prefer the appearance of skinless cashews, finding them more visually appealing. "Skinless cashews tend to be more uniform in size and shape, which can be aesthetically pleasing, especially when used in garnishes or decorative elements," said Chawla. Ultimately, choosing between cashews with or without skin is a personal preference. "Opt for cashews with skin for maximum nutritional benefits and a more intense flavour experience. Skinless cashews may be a better choice for convenience and a smoother texture."

Sai Sudharsan — the perfect sync between consistency and authority



GNS News Agency, April 17

Ahead of double-header Sunday (April 13), a 29-year-old from Trinidad & Tobago (Nicholas Pooran) helmed the run-making charts while a 20-year-old from Khost in Afghanistan (Noor Ahmad) wore the Purple Cap. Two of the three hundreds of Season 18 have come from the scything willows of 24-year-olds (Priyansh Arya and, famously on Saturday night, Abhishek Sharma), the third from a 26-year-old seasoned campaigner on the international comeback trail (Ishan Kishan). Left certainly has been overwhelmingly right. Add to this flamboyant bunch — and make no mistake, this is a largely flamboyant bunch of batters to whom hitting sixes is second nature, complemented by a left-arm wrist-spinner who, even if he wanted to be, couldn't be anything but flamboyant — a quiet, understated rangy 23-year-old left-hander from Chennai who cries out for attention not with flashy earrings and outlandish gestures but with the simplicity of his strokeplay, at once effortless and breathtaking.

Answering to the name of B. Sai Sudharsan, the Gujarat Titans opener is engaged in a gripping battle with Pooran for the race to the Orange Cap. The symbol of supremacy when it comes to run-making in the IPL has changed hands more than once and is currently in the possession of the Caribbean charmer. But while the Orange Cap will be a welcome addition to his kitbag, Sudharsan's primary focus is not on the slice of individual glory. The larger cause, team success, resonates with him; he was part of the squad (but not the XI) that won its maiden final on debut in 2022, top-scored with 96 in the last-ball loss to Chennai Super Kings in the title clash 12 months later and has been one of their more consistent performers in the

last four seasons. Now armed with a maturity that goes well beyond his biological age, it sets him up as potentially one for the future from a leadership perspective too.

Pooran and Sudharsan have been engaged in a fabulous battle of nip-and-tuck in the race for top run-making honours. The far more explosive Trinidadian leads the way with 349 runs from six innings at an average and a strike-rate superior to Sudharsan. Where the latter averages 54.83 and strikes at 151.61 per 100 runs scored (he has 329 runs, also from six innings), Pooran's corresponding numbers are 69.80 and 215.43 respectively. The older batter has smashed 31 sixes (just one fewer than Chennai Super Kings' entire team tally at the conclusion of their sixth game) to Sudharsan's 13 but then again, this isn't a battle between Pooran and Sudharsan, this isn't a comparison of who is more valuable to their team. For starters, Pooran strides out at No. 3, behind the aggressive opening pair of Mitchell Marsh and Aiden Markram, with Lucknow Super Giants packing most of their explosive power in the top half of their batting order. New skipper Rishabh Pant has yet to catch fire but behind Pooran, there is no shortage of batting muscle — Ayush Badoni, David Miller, Abdul Samad. This is a fearsome group of ball-strikers in a tournament where every team, with the exception of CSK, seems to have assiduously assembled fearsome groups of ball-strikers.

Gujarat Titans aren't an exception, by any stretch of the imagination. On paper, they might not appear to possess the same depth when it comes to scoring rapidly but of their six batters who have faced at least 30 balls this season, skipper Shubman Gill's strike rate of 149.64 is the least. One would think that in a line-up that, Gill apart, boasts Jos Buttler, Sherfane Rutherford and Shahrukh Khan, Sudharsan would be the fulcrum around whom the rest would operate. But astonishingly, for want of a better word it is the Tamil Nadu left-hander who tops the boundary-hitting charts for his franchise, with 31 fours and 13 sixes from 217 deliveries faced. Sudharsan's IPL career graph is the perfect illustration of how to marry consistency with authority, how to make the most of experience gained and situations encountered, how to keep growing better and better and finding novel methods of keeping oneself a step ahead of the opposition in these days of constant scrutiny and supreme dependence on data and analytics. Each edition of the IPL has been more fruitful numerically than the previous one — he is now in his fourth season — but more than

the quantum of runs, it is the manner in which he has made them that has been impressive.

It is inevitable that batters will need to improvise — some might point to Virat Kohli, unfairly, and say that he is pretty much the poster boy for batting orthodoxly in 20-over cricket without any drop in returns or efficacy but the former Indian skipper can't be the norm in any cricketing discussion — in the T20 format, and especially those who have cut their teeth bang in the middle of the 20-over revolution, unlike a Kohli. Sudharsan is nearly a decade and a half younger than Kohli and therefore is more of an offspring of the 20-over revolution than Kohli will ever be, but that doesn't mean that he goes to the reverse sweep or the switch hit at the drop of a hat. In Royal Challengers Bengaluru's first home game of the season on April 2, Sai Sudharsan made a polished 49 at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium on April 2, one of the driving forces behind his team's nonchalant assault on the hosts' 169 for eight.

During his time in the middle until he ceded centre-stage to Buttler and Rutherford, Sai Sudharsan lit up the venue with several wondrous strokes. There were muscular pulls and rasping square-cuts; his only six came when he walked across his stumps and paddled a full, fast ball from Josh Hazlewood to fine-leg for six. It was a terrific piece of improvisation, bold and adventurous and a grand example of the spectrum that traverses risk and reward. But the connoisseurs who watched that game at the ground and on television would have been delighted at Sudharsan's choice of the stroke that had given him the greatest joy. That came a ball after the six. Somewhat overcompensating for having bowled so full and on leg, Hazlewood pulled his length back and sent down a good delivery, potentially headed to the top of the off-stump. Sudharsan was prepared. An initial movement translated into a forward press and he punched the ball on the up past the Aussie quick, sending it racing off the pitch to the straight boundary with minimal effort and subliminal effect. It was a stroke that had 'class' written all over it, class that has been Sudharsan ally for a long time now.

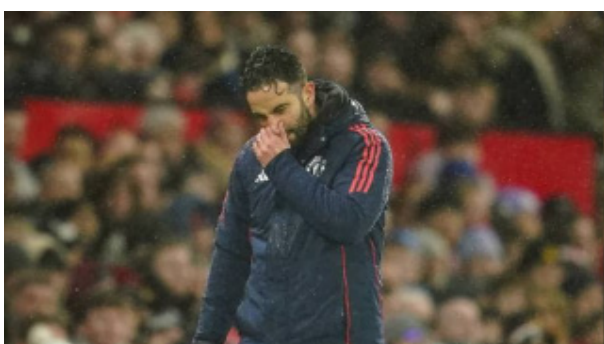
This season, Sudharsan has four half-centuries and the aforementioned 49 from six innings. If that's not a sign of consistency, then little else is. Despite all this, he may not be even close to the fringes of the Indian T20 team, such is the depth that Ajit Agarkar and Suryakumar Yadav and Gautam Gambhir can pick from. The queue, especially

CSK bring 17-year-old Mumbai opener to replace Ruturaj Gaikwad who was ruled out of IPL 2025

GNS News Agency, April 17

Mumbai opener Ayush Mhatre, 17, has been roped in by Chennai Super Kings as a replacement for skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad who was ruled out of IPL 2025 due to a fracture in his elbow. Mhatre was called up by CSK for a trial two weeks ago to gauge his batting in the nets and after Gaikwad's injury, they have decided to bring in the youngster. Mhatre has played nine first-class games for Mumbai, scoring two centuries and a half century. He also represented Mumbai in seven list A games in which he has a high score of 181 against Nagaland to go with 148 against Saurashtra during the Vijay Hazare Trophy. He will be joining CSK side soon, while it is not clear whether he will get a chance to play in the team right away. Mhatre made his debut as an opener for the Mumbai Ranji Trophy team last year in the Irani Trophy against Rest of India. Like many a cricketer from the city, he went through the hard yards. He would wake up at 4:15 am, catch the 5 am train from Virar — his home is 46 kilometres from the Mumbai downtown — to reach the famed Oval maidan for his practice sessions. His aggressive batting style made the selectors fast-track him to the senior side. He was 13 when his local side Virar-Sainath Sports Club decided to elevate him to their senior team, where he took on older boys with ease. It was his grandfather, a retired railway employee, who would drop him to Mumbai's maidans daily. "I started to play when I was 6 but my real cricket started when I was 10," Mhatre had told The Indian Express last year. "I got admission in Don Bosco High School in Matunga and it was my grandfather Laxmikant Naik (Nana) who took the responsibility to take me there every day. So in the morning, I used to go for practice in Matunga, attend school, and then go to Churchgate to attend another practice. My family used to tell my grandfather not to ruin my sleep but now, they too feel that my sacrifice is paying off." His father Yogesh had once lost his job, and Ayush is grateful for their support despite everything. "My father and mother never made me realise that there is some financial problem at home. Like if a bat is broken, then I didn't ask for a new one. Even today my father travels with me on the local train so that if any verbal fight happens with someone, he will handle it, so that I don't take any negativity when I'm going to bat," he added. His father now works at the Vasai Corporation Bank as a clerk. A Rohit Sharma fan, he has cut himself off from social media since last season, and his family has told him to keep things simple.

'Reflection of our season': Ruben Amorim reacts to 'worst ever' Manchester United season after 4-1 loss to Newcastle United



GNS News Agency, April 17

The Red Devils suffered a humiliating 4-1 demolition at the hands of Premier League side Newcastle United. The PL fixture at St. James' Park saw Ruben Amorim's side continue their disastrous form, with the result also meaning that United is enduring its worst ever season at this point of a campaign.

Sat extremely low in the League standings at 15th, the club is just three points above 17th placed West Ham United. With the 4-1 loss, United is now on a 4-game winless streak, enjoying just 3 wins in their last 10 games in all competitions. The game against Newcastle on Saturday forced head coach Ruben Amorim to admit that his side have been extremely poor this season. "It (the defeat) is the reflection of our season. We need to do things so much better. We need to improve in a lot of things", said Amorim. In his first season at the helm, the club has broken the record for the worst ever League season, 32 games in. The meagre 38 goals scored, 10 wins and 38 points on the board are an all-time lowest. With even a top-half finish looking unlikely, the club needs to figure things out if they are to avoid further humiliation in the remaining six games. United's only chance to win a trophy is the UEFA Europa League, in which they will play a heated second leg against Olympique Lyon at Old Trafford after throwing away the win in enemy turf in the first leg. On aggregate, the score is 2 goals apiece.

Lionel Messi fails to score in nervy 0-0 draw for Inter Miami

GNS News Agency, April 17

Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi (10) takes a freekick against the Chicago Fire during the second half of an MLS soccer game Sunday, April 13, 2025, in Chicago. (AP Photo) Inter Miami's Lionel Messi takes a freekick against the Chicago Fire during the second half of an MLS soccer game.

On the back of an impressive 3-1 win over Los Angeles in the CONCACAF Champions Cup Quarter final, Inter Miami were up against Chicago Fire in the MLS on game number 7 for the Herons this season. Miami was on 14 points prior to kick-off, and a win would've taken them to third position in the Eastern Conference. Lionel Messi, despite starting the game on the pitch alongside Luis Suarez, was surprisingly kept silent by a side which hadn't tasted victory in their last two games.

Messi started the game with a blistering shot towards goal in the fourth minute, expertly tipped over the bar by Chicago keeper Chris Brady. Throughout the game, the forward tried his luck on goal, to no avail. His first free kick ricocheted off the crossbar in the 64th minute, while his second in minute 78 failing to find the target. Messi's final attempt from a direct kick nearly crept its way into the net, but to Chicago's luck, came off the woodwork. Chicago then went on to threaten Miami with a late winner, although Herons keeper Oscar Ustari stood his ground, making seven saves in comparison to Chicago's 3 in the 90 minutes played.

'Dhoni not a soothsayer... doesn't have a magic wand': CSK coach Stephen Fleming

GNS News Agency, April 17

Chennai Super Kings coach Stephen Fleming said that the team was in a "lot of hurt" after they slumped to their fifth defeat in a row which saw them plummet to the bottom of the IPL 2025 points table with just two points. Chennai Super Kings have had little to celebrate all season after winning their IPL opener. What made their season go from bad to worse was CSK captain Ruturaj Gaikwad being ruled out of IPL 2025 due to a fractured elbow. With Gaikwad out, CSK called on franchise legend Mahendra Singh Dhoni to lead the team out of dire straits. But Fleming has warned against unrealistic expectations from Dhoni's captaincy. "His [Dhoni's] influence will be always prominent but he's not a soothsayer, he hasn't got a magic wand," Fleming said at the pre-game press conference before the IPL 2025 game against Lucknow Super Giants. "He can't just rub it over the side otherwise he would have brought it out earlier."

"It's a case of us working very hard along with MS to turn it around and certainly in both of our cricketing careers, we've been in situations that require a lot of energy and we've got to make sure that the energy is put in the right place." Fleming also said that the team was hurting after their timid defeat to the Kolkata Knight Riders in the previous game where CSK could just manage to score 103 for 9, their lowest total in Chennai. Defending champion KKR chased down the target in just 10.1 overs with eight wick-



ets in hand. "There's a lot of hurt that we can turn to motivation but it's not about words, it's about players grabbing the moment, finding form, finding their groove and almost shaking off any apprehension which can creep in," said the CSK coach. "We've got to look at it in small steps and just continue to work to get better at all three facets really and then you start competing," Fleming added. "I think the disappointing aspect in particular the last game was the lack of competition we put up and that hurt a lot. So there's certainly been a lot of internal soul searching but also a lot of work around what we need to do and it's important that we put a performance out that is representative of the proud franchise that we are."

'Major changes... not in CSK's DNA': Matthew Hayden ahead of Chennai Super Kings clash with LSG



GNS News Agency, April 17

Coming into the Indian Super League clash against the Lucknow Super Giants on Monday, five-time champions Chennai Super Kings find themselves in last spot, having lost five matches in a row after winning their IPL 2025 opener. With just two points against their name from six games, time is running out for Chennai to mount a bid for the IPL 2025 playoffs. With the fate of their season already on the line, will CSK try and implement major changes to try and resuscitate their IPL 2025 campaign? It would be

against their DNA, believes former Australia cricketer Matthew Hayden.

"I doubt we'll see major changes—it's just not in CSK's DNA. Their approach will likely be: back yourselves, trust the process. They might not be the team that scores 60 runs in the powerplay, but they have to find a point of difference. Without change, it becomes insanity—doing the same thing over and over expecting different results. Whether they recognise and act on that is still uncertain, but something clearly needs to shift," said Hayden.

CSK Skipper MS Dhoni during the IPL 2025 match against KKR at Chepauk. (Sportspics for IPL) CSK Skipper MS Dhoni during the IPL 2025 match against KKR at Chepauk. (Sportspics for IPL) What has also hurt Chennai this season is that they have now lost three games in a row at Chepauk, their home stadium. Their aversion to making major changes in the middle of the season notwithstanding, Chennai have had to adapt radically after their captain Ruturaj Gaikwad was ruled out of IPL 2025 due to a fractured elbow. CSK appointed longtime talisman Mahendra Singh Dhoni as their captain for the rest of the IPL season and have brought in 17-year-old Mumbai opener Ayush Mhatre as a replacement for Gaikwad.

Axar Patel fined for slow over rate

GNS News Agency, April 17

HYDERABAD: Delhi Capitals captain Axar Patel has been fined Rs 12 lakh for his team's slow over rate during the IPL game against Mumbai Indians on Sunday night in Delhi. As per Article 2.22 of the IPL's code of conduct, a captain is fined Rs 12 lakh for the first slow over rate offence in a season. The IPL has done away with match suspensions and there are only fines and in-game field restrictions. Reflecting on the loss to Mumbai, Axar said they had the game. "I think we had soft dismissals from the middle order, some bad shots," Axar said. "We lost by 12 runs with an over to go so we could have still won it. It can't happen that your lower-order batters will always save you in chases. There are some odd days where you play wrong shots, so I don't think there is any point in thinking too much about it," he said.



As per Article 2.22 of the IPL's code of conduct, a captain is fined Rs 12 lakh for the first slow over rate offence in a season

Varanasi club Inter Kashi powers UP's football dreams — with a Spanish touch



INTER KASHI are just a technicality away from winning the I-League and subsequent promotion to the Indian Super League. After the end of the season earlier this month, Churchill Brothers and the two-year-old UP-based club had found themselves in a limbo. With the result of one of Inter Kashi's league games undecided — it has been alleged that their opponent Namdhari FC played an ineligible player — the All India Football Federation (AIFF) had put the title, and Inter Kashi's dream, on hold. But whichever way the decision goes, the world's most popular sport finally has a presence in India's most populous state.

Club president Prithijit Das, who hails from West Bengal and had previously worked with the AIFF, believes that the population of Uttar Pradesh, combined with its GDP, provides an opportunity for a cultural change in how football is viewed in a state where cricket pitches and hockey turfs are readily available, but football grounds not so much.

Inter Kashi came into existence in 2023 and was inducted into the I-League directly. "We had the opportunity to build a club in one of the oldest cities in the world. Also, the Uttar Pradesh Football Sangh is based out of Varanasi. So, where you have no football culture, it makes a lot of sense to have a club from the city where the football association is situated," Das told in their first year, Inter Kashi signed English professional Peter Hartley. The next year, they went one step further and hired Antonio Habas as their coach. The Spaniard, the most successful coach in the history of the ISL (two titles with ATK and the ISL Winner's Shield with Mohun Bagan Super Giant), chose to work in the Indian second division once he was convinced about Inter Kashi's goals.

"I accepted the proposal because, from the very beginning, the club struck me as honest and transparent in its approach, with a clear vision," said Habas. "At the same time, we put together a high-level technical and support staff, with whom it was very easy to work." But despite being the first club from Uttar Pradesh that could possibly make it to the ISL, the challenges faced by Inter Kashi are largely institutional. Habas is uniquely placed to delve into them. "The main gap lies in the infrastructure that supports the game — in the I-League, training facilities and pitches are clearly of lower quality. In some aspects, it's a league that feels more semi-professional than professional. You can't run a league with professional actors but provide only semi-professional means to develop it," said the Spaniard. Inter Kashi captain Sumeet Passi is a forward who has played for multiple I-League and ISL teams and understands the desire to grow football in a region where it's not a part of the culture. Passi, whose father played football for Railways, hails from Haryana, a state which has given India some of its top sportspeople — yet not many footballers. He feels Inter Kashi has done the basics right. "In my experience, there are only one or two teams in the I-League that are able to provide players with accommodation, travel arrangements and hotels during the season. They give salaries on time. That set-up isn't a given," said Passi. The club hasn't been able to play their home matches in Varanasi, but will do so next season as a facility has been allotted to them. Das said the venue would seat 5,000 fans at first and comply with Asian Football Confederation rules, with expansions planned subsequently. While there aren't any players from Uttar Pradesh in the team as of now, efforts are on to build youth teams that can nurture players in the state and turn them into professional footballers.

Ajith Kumar-starrer earns Rs 150 cr worldwide, books 4th spot on global most watched films list



GNS News Agency, April 17

Good Bad Ugly box office collection day 4: Some films become announcements of the arrivals of the star in the centre of things, and some become reminders of the stardom of the star in the centre of things. Ajith Kumar, who has always been one of the top-tier stars of Tamil cinema, has had a rather sedate decade or so with his films aiming to be less 'masala' and more 'message' to the audience. For the first time in almost a decade, Ajith threw caution to the winds and starred in a film that celebrated his stardom, and was replete with references to his celebrated filmography. And the result? Adhik Ravichandran's Good Bad Ugly is right on track to be the highest-grossing Ajith film, and is showing no signs of slowing down after four days of its stellar run.

Good Bad Ugly recorded a collection of Rs 20.5 crore (Nett) in the domestic market, according to trade website Sacnilk. Although his previous film, Vidaamuyarchi opened to similar numbers on Day 1, the Magizh Thirumeni faced a solid dip from Day 2, and never quite recovered from the slump. After three days of release, the film made Rs 36.25 crore, and in comparison, during the same three-day weekend window, Good Bad Ugly has amassed a total of Rs 55.25 crore. The domestic tally of Good Bad Ugly has reached Rs 84.50 crore, and has already entered the Rs 150 crore club in the global box office. According to Comscore, the film is in the fourth position in the global box-office chart, and

has surpassed films like Drop, Warfare, A Working Man, and Disney's Snow White.

What has truly worked in favour of Good Bad Ugly is the positive reviews from the audience and critics, despite voices calling out the film for being more of a fan service, and less of a film. However, the support from the theatre-going audience has allowed the makers to celebrate the success, and recently, director Adhik, and Good Bad Ugly actors Priya Prakash Varrier and Sunil were part of the celebration event in Hyderabad. The film marks the Tamil debut of noted Telugu cinema producers Mythri Movie Makers, who also helmed the recent pan-Indian blockbuster Pushpa 2: The Rule. Another highlight of the film has been the increasing audience occupancy over the weekend. While the Saturday numbers were at 61.53%, the film managed to have a 69.13% occupancy, with an impressive 74.16%, 76.79%, and 73.46% in the matinee, evening, and night shows. This is a reflection of the kind of response the film is garnering with the Tamil cinema audience. The bulk of the collections are coming from the Tamil version of the film, and the Telugu version isn't making a huge impact with just 18.43% occupancy, and collecting almost Rs 4 crore in its extended opening weekend.

With Monday also being a holiday due to the Tamil New Year's day, it is expected that Good Bad Ugly will have a strong fifth day, and earn Rs 100 crore (nett) in India. Notably, Vidaamuyarchi's biggest drop happened on Monday (Rs 3.2 crore), and if Good Bad Ugly can avoid this dip, it would augur well for the film, which also stars Trisha, Simran, Arjun Das, Karthikeya, Sunil, Redin Kingsley, and Yogi Babu. In addition, with the school holidays in place, and hardly any big-ticket film hitting the screens till May 1, Good Bad Ugly is expected to have a smooth run till the end of the month. The film has entered the top 10 list of highest-grossing Indian films of 2025. With only Rs 22 crore separating Good Bad Ugly and Sikandar, which is in fifth position, it is expected that the Ajith-starrer will enter the top five in a few days. While there has been no official update about Ajith's next, there have been reports that the superstar will reunite with his Good Bad Ugly director Adhik for AK 64. There are also speculations that he might work with filmmakers like Karthik Subbaraj, Prashanth Neel and Siva too. With Good Bad Ugly finally hitting the screens and making a huge impact at the box-office, it is expected that team Ajith Kumar would share an update about his next film very soon.

Randeep Hooda says Bollywood is 'threatened' by him, ignored his meaty role in Extraction while other actors do major campaigns for tiny parts in Hollywood: 'I got no work'

Bollywood actor Randeep Hooda landed his first Hollywood role in Joe Russo and Anthony Russo's film Extraction, where he shared screen space with Avengers star Chris Hemsworth. Randeep played a major character and also got substantial screen time in the film. However, in a recent interaction, the actor complained about how his meaty role in the Hollywood flick was completely ignored by the Hindi film industry, with none lauding him publicly.

Speaking to Shubhankar Mishra, he said, "I didn't get any appreciation from Bollywood but people who watched Extraction lauded me. I had various fan moments." The actor admitted that while Bollywood ignored him, he received appreciation from South filmmakers. "When I worked with filmmakers in the Telugu cinema...many action directors have seen the film and want to emulate the same and they even ask me how we did it in Extraction. That sense of respect is there. But nobody talked about it. Even for small roles in Hollywood films people do so much campaign and people also congratulate them," he said.

While Randeep admitted that his PR might be weak,



he also shared that people feel threatened by his success. "I feel people feel threatened and I didn't get appreciation from film fraternity for any role and I don't need it after a point of time. I am doing my work and trying to better myself and not compete with myself. I appreciate myself," he said. He added, "I don't know why people didn't appreciate me publicly. But I am not sad about it. When they meet, they meet nicely and they will call me but they don't talk about it publicly. I also didn't get any big award for acting." While Extraction received mixed reviews, it became the most-watched original film on Netflix. It also starred Golshifteh Farahani, Pankaj Tripathi, and David Harbour in key roles.

Katy Perry gives a tour of Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin capsule which will take her and 5 other women to space: 'Taking Up Space is a double entendre now'

Katy Perry gives a sneak peek into the capsule taking her and five other women to space. Katy Perry gives a sneak peek into the capsule taking her and five other women to space. Pop star Katy Perry will be the biggest name in an all-female group set to touch the edge of space on Monday, roaring into the cosmos on one of billionaire Jeff Bezos' rockets. The Firework and California Gurls singer will be lofted more than 100 kilometres above the Earth's surface in a vessel from Blue Origin, the space company owned by the Amazon founder.

On Monday morning, Katy gave her Instagram followers a sneak peek into the capsule that will take her and five other women into space. Wearing a blue spacesuit with Perry written on her chest, Katy showed the insides of the capsule that she and others have been training in for the last few days. She zoomed in on her seat, #2, with K. Perry stamped on it. She also revealed her call name is Feather. "I gotta sing in space," she said. She also showed where her "girlfriends" would be sitting along with her in the capsule. "We are the Taking Up Space crew. Of course, that saying has had a different meaning to it. But now, for the first time ever, it's a double entendre," said Katy. An all-female spaceflight seems an apt endeavour for the 40-year-old pop star, whose collection of hits include songs about extra-terrestrials (E.T.) and fireworks shooting across the sky (Firework), as well as feminist anthems like her 2013 hit, Roar, and WOMAN'S WORLD, off her most recent album.

"I won't say I can't believe I'm here. I do believe it. I think that believing your dreams and saying that is actually how you make your dreams come true," says Perry at the end of her video. She will join Jeff Bezos' fiancée Lauren Sanchez, a helicopter pilot and former TV journalist, who picked the women who will join her on a 10-minute spaceflight from West Texas aboard a New Shepard rocket. The other women joining them are journalist Gayle Kin, Aisha Bowe, a former NASA rocket scientist who now heads an engineering firm, research scientist Amanda Nguyen, and



Wearing a blue spacesuit with "Perry" written on her chest, Katy Perry showed the insides of the capsule that she and others have been training in for the last few days.

movie producer Kerianne Flynn. It is the first all-female space crew since Valentina Tereshkova's historic solo flight in 1963.

Perry recently told Elle magazine that she was taking part "for my daughter Daisy," whom she shares with actor Orlando Bloom, "to inspire her to never have limits on her dreams." "I'm just so excited to see the inspiration through her eyes and the light in her eyes when she sees that rocket go, and she goes back to school the next day and says 'Mom went to space,'" Perry added. Lasting around 10 minutes, the flight will bring the passengers beyond the Karman line — the internationally recognized boundary of space. There will be a brief period when the women can unbuckle from their seats and float in zero gravity.

Kareena Kapoor, Prithviraj Sukumaran unite for Meghna Gulzar's crime thriller Daayra



The last time Meghna Gulzar and Kareena Kapoor Khan ventured into the crime thriller genre, their respective contributions yielded remarkable returns. Gulzar helmed the seminal investigative drama Talvar, while Khan delivered compelling performances in Jaane Jaan and The Buckingham Murders. Now, with the addition of Prithviraj Sukumaran — renowned for his work in critically acclaimed Malayalam thrillers such as Mumbai Police and Memories — the convergence of these three cinematic voices promises a distinctly original narrative.

Junglee Pictures, having previously collaborated with Gulzar on Talvar and Raazi, reunites with the director for a third venture: Daayra. Currently in pre-production, this crime drama — co-written by Yash and Sima — marks the first collaboration between Kareena Kapoor Khan and Sukumaran, setting the stage for a project of considerable anticipation. Gulzar, steering what many are calling a cast-

ing coup, is eager to commence filming, remarking, "With co-writers Sima and Yash, unravelling the greys within the masses, was both challenging and exciting. And as Kareena and Prithviraj bring the lead characters to life, the narrative dynamics are all set to elevate further."

Sukumaran, equally struck by Gulzar's screenplay, shares, "It is layered and will definitely connect with the masses. Working with Meghna Gulzar's vision, Junglee Pictures and an actor like Kareena Kapoor will be a great collaborative experience. Daayra is a story that is one of a kind and digs deep into the societal norms, world of crime and punishment that unfolds." Currently marking her 25th year in cinema, Khan appears to be moving beyond conventional star-driven vehicles, choosing instead to collaborate with directors such as Hansal Mehta and Sujoy Ghosh. Gulzar, it seems, is an ideal creative partner at this juncture, and Khan is eager to begin filming what she describes as "a powerful and timely film of our times."

Ajith Kumar and Vijay fans clash at a screening of Good Bad Ugly in Kerala; netizens call out the pitfalls of fandom

Fans of Ajith and Vijay clash in Kerala. Ajith and Vijay fans indulge in physical altercation during a Good Bad Ugly screening in Kerala. Ajith Kumar's latest release, Good Bad Ugly, directed by Adhik Ravichandran, has been breaking records, and is on the way to becoming the highest-grossing Tamil film of 2025. While everything seems to be going good for Good Bad Ugly, things took an ugly turn after an incident of a fan fight in Kerala went viral on social media.

In the video, which has been shared by multiple accounts, we see the events unfolding in a theatre in Kerala where there was a physical altercation between Ajith and Vijay fans after the latter group allegedly created a ruckus in the theatre by chanting celebratory wishes for Vijay, who has recently started a political party.

For the unversed, this rivalry goes back a couple of decades, and fans of both the stars have constantly indulged in such issues. Although both stars have had dialogues and songs in their films adding fuel to this rivalry, things have settled down in the past decade with both actors moving on different paths with their films. However, the constant altercations between members of both fandoms in real life, and on social media, prompted Ajith to disband all his fan clubs, and he has consistently condoned this unchecked behaviour by his fans.

According to Pinkvilla, the disturbance in the theatre led to disruption of the screening, especially because the altercation turned violent, and people had to be escorted out of the theatre. This has led to heated arguments on social media too with sections of netizens calling out the



violent response even as fans of both actors were indulging in a game of oneupmanship, in terms of box-office pull, fan strength, etc... Recently, Trisha, who plays a starring role in Good Bad Ugly, expressed her concern over people trolling her for acting in the Ajith film. She called them out for posting nonsensical stuff, and labelled them toxic for their mindset. While this fan fights and rivalry used to be normal back in the day, it is disappointing to see this continue even in the digital age. Incidentally, during one of his off-the-race track interviews, Ajith vehemently told people to stop celebrating their matinee idols and look after their own lives and take care of their families. Also, in a beautiful move, there is a reference to Vijay's iconic "I am waiting" dialogue in Good Bad Ugly with Ajith uttering the same. When the stars are exhibiting so much camaraderie, it is disappointing that the fans haven't gotten the memo, and are still wasting time and resources in fighting an unnecessary fight that is not helping anyone involved.

'Ranbir Kapoor-Alia Bhatt's romance began during Highway, maybe': 'Hurt' Randeep Hooda recalls how Ranbir was parachuted into Imtiaz Ali's film promos

Soon after making her debut in Karan Johar's Student Of The Year, Alia Bhatt proved her mettle in acting with Imtiaz Ali's Highway. The film remains one of her best performances and one of the most memorable films of Imtiaz's career. However, while Alia and Imtiaz received all the praise, Randeep Hooda, who played a pivotal role in the film, was overlooked by the makers. In a recent interaction, the Murder 3 actor recalled the time he was excluded from Highway's promotions.

He shared that he didn't understand the decision of the makers to keep him out of the film's promotions, as he played the male lead in the film. During the interaction, the interviewer shared how he saw Ranbir Kapoor with Alia and Imtiaz at the Highway promotions, but there was no sign of Randeep. Reacting to the same, he told Shubhankar Mishra, "Maine bhi voh dekha aur mujhe bhi samajh nahi aaya Ranbir Kapoor ka iss picture se kya lena dena hai (I also didn't understand, what does Ranbir Kapoor have to do with this film?)." Ranbir had interviewed Alia and Imtiaz for a news channel as part of Highway's promotions.

Expressing how he was 'hurt' by the decision, he said, "I felt really bad. If I would have gotten support at that time, it would have helped my career." However, Randeep admitted that Highway might have been the beginning of Ranbir and Alia's romance, which culminated in their marriage. He said, "Maybe that's where their love story began. I offer them



my best wishes. If this film brought them together, I'm truly happy for them." While Randeep couldn't agree with the makers' decision, he tried to rationalise it by saying that they decided to focus on Alia because they were telling a story of female exploitation. "But once audiences saw it, they realised that without Mahabir Bhati (his character), the film wouldn't have had the same impact," he added. The actor shared that he was called to join promotions only in the last 1-2 days when the promotions weren't getting traction. He said, "Maybe in the last day or two, the film wasn't picking up momentum, so they included me."