

Electricity staff restore 57 damaged poles, 44 distribution transformers

Hyderabad: The TGSPDCL said due to the heavy rains on Thursday, 57 poles and 44 distribution transformers were affected in Greater Hyderabad city and they were restored in record time.Due to the heavy rainfall, trees and many branches fell on power lines, and many poles and transformers collapsed. As a result, there were power interruptions in several areas.In the Hyderabad Central Circle jurisdiction, seven DTRs and 23 poles were damaged and in the Hyderabad South Circle jurisdiction, 11 DTRs and 15 poles were damaged.In the Secunderabad Circle jurisdiction, five DTRs; in the Saroonagar Circle, 14 DTRs and three poles; and in Habsiguda, seven DTRs, and seven poles were damaged.

Congress to challenge Waqf bill soon in Supreme Court



GNS News Agency, April 4

New Delhi: The Congress on Friday said it will “very soon” challenge in the Supreme Court the constitutionality of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 that was passed in

Parliament.The Waqf (Amendment) bill was cleared by Parliament early Friday, with the Rajya Sabha giving its nod.In a post on X, AICC general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, “The INC will very soon be challenging in the Supreme Court the constitutionality of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024”.“We are confident and will continue to resist all assaults of the Modi Govt on the principles, provisions, and practices that are contained in the Constitution of India,” he said.Ramesh said the INC’s challenge of the CAA, 2019 is being heard in the Supreme Court. The INC’s challenge of the 2019 amendments to the RTI Act, 2005 is being heard in the Supreme Court, he noted.The INC’s challenge to the validity of the amendments to the Conduct of Election Rules (2024) is being heard in the Supreme Court.The INC’s intervention to uphold the letter and spirit of the Places of Worship Act, 1991 is being heard in the Supreme Court,” the Congress leader said.The Lok Sabha had cleared the bill early Thursday.

Bhatti promises clearance of employees' pending bills soon

Hyderabad, April 4 (NSS): Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka has promised that the outstanding bills concerning employees will be settled soon.On Friday, representatives from the Telangana Employees JAC, headed by Chairman V. Lachi Reddy, met Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka at Praja Bhavan to present a petition calling for the immediate payment of these pending billsDuring the meeting, Lachi Reddy discussed the challenges faced by government employees, emphasising the urgent requirement for the settlement of both their pending bills and those of outsourcing employees at the State levelIn response to their concerns, the Deputy Chief Minister assured that the issues affecting employees will be addressed, and all pending bills will be paid as soon as possible.Among those who met the Deputy Chief Minister were Deputy Collectors’ Associa-



tion General Secretary K. Ramakrishna, TGTA State President Ramulu, General Secretary Ramesh Paka and others. (NSS)

Fine rice scheme getting huge public support, it’s a game-changer: Uttam

Hyderabad, April 4 (NSS): Minister for Civil Supplies and Irrigation N Uttam Kumar Reddy said Telangana’s free fine rice distribution scheme was receiving a great response from the people. He called it the largest food security initiative in India’s history.He was speaking during a video conference conducted by Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari with all District Collectors from the Secretariat on Friday. Uttam Kumar Reddy said the scheme was a proud achievement and a milestone in Telangana’s welfare journey.This scheme is bringing a real change in people’s lives. We must make this a historic and inclusive effort,” he said. The Minister said nearly 85 percent of the state’s population would benefit from this programme. He warned that there should be no delay or irregularity in rice supply.Strict action will be taken if there are any malpractices. Everything must be done perfectly,” he saidUttam Kumar Reddy asked officials to ensure proper monitoring, smooth transport, and full involvement of public representatives. He said MLAs, MLCs, and MPs should join the distribution process and also eat meals with beneficiaries to build trust.

He announced that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy would have lunch with a beneficiary in Bhadrachalam on April 6, the day of Sri Rama Navami. Uttam Kumar Reddy himself would have dinner with a PDS beneficiary in

Suryapet on Friday nighDuring the conference, District Collectors said distribution was going on smoothly in most areas. Over 99 percent coverage had been achieved in several districts, and the people response was very positive.Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari directed Collectors to counter false propaganda about the scheme. She asked them to share correct and factual information and highlight the success of the programme. The Minister said the government would soon begin physical distribution of ration cards. A Tricolour Card would be given to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and a Green Card to Above Poverty Line (APL) families. He instructed collectors to carry out perfect verification to ensure no eligible person was left out.He added that Telangana had 89.73 lakh ration cards at the time of its formation. But in the 10 years of the BRS rule, only 49,479 new cards were issued. No effort was made to add new members to existing cards. Now, under the Congress government, both fresh cards and member additions were being processed on a large scale.Later, the Minister held another video conference with MPs, MLAs, MLCs, and Corporation Chairmen from his chambers at the Secretariat. Ministers Komatireddy Venkatreddy, Ponnam Prabhakar and D Sridhar Babu also participated. Uttam Kumar Reddy told the elected representatives to visit fair price shops and actively take part in the rice distribution drive. He urged them to eat PDS rice meals with the people to show their involvement. (NSS)

Rice Scheme for the Poor“-- Fulfilling Promises is the Congress' Goal“-- Sridhar Babu Launches Rice Scheme in Manthani““

P. S. ASHOKAN “INDIAN-CHRONICLE “5-4-2025“MANTHANI “The state government has launched a rice scheme for the poor, said State IT Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu. On Friday, he distributed rice under this scheme to beneficiaries in Manthani. Speaking on the occasion, he mentioned that the Congress government is moving forward to fulfill all the promises made in the state. He added that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Minister for Consumer Affairs Uttam Kumar Reddy are working towards the goal of bringing happiness to the poor, in line with the promises made during the election. He further stated that the new Rajiv Youth Vikas Scheme, worth



10,000 crores, is aimed at promoting financial development for women. Through this scheme, they are committed to providing subsidies and empowering women.““Sridhar Babu pointed out that while the previous government failed

to fulfill its promises, the Congress government is actively implementing welfare schemes, which some are criticizing out of frustration. He emphasized that the goal of the Congress government is to ensure food security for the people. Dur-

ing the event, rice was distributed to white ration card-holding women from Manthani, Kamanpur, and Ramagiri mandals. The event was attended by Additional Collector Venu, RDO, Tahsildar, and various department officials and leaders.

Spotted deer attacked by stray dogs on University of Hyderabad campus after habitat loss

Hyderabad: With their homes shattered and green cover lost after Telangana Congress government bulldozed Kancha Gachibowli land, animals and birds are getting more exposed to attacks by stray dogs on the UoH campus.An incident of dogs attacking a spotted deer was reported on the University of Hyderabad (UoH) campus on Friday morning. Case filed against BRS leaders accusing them of fabricating videos, images of University of Hyderabad green coverA few students, along with university security personnel, quickly responded to the injured animal, providing immediate care before transporting it for further treatment. The video of the injured deer being transported has been widely shared on social media.

CM Revanth Reddy’s rule turns into Police Raj: BRS



Hyderabad, April 4 (NSS): BRS leader Dr R.S. Praveen Kumar this morning said a police officer in plain-clothes came to Telangana Bhavan and said he came to serve notices to Dileep Konatham. The police from Nirmal came regarding a post related to the HCU case. Cases have also been filed against Krishank, he said.Speaking to media persons at the Telangana Bhavan today, Dr R.S. Praveen Kumar said as illegal cases were being filed against BRS leaders at the behest of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the BRS party condemns these illegal cases. He lamented that women in the State are left without protection. In the past week alone, four incidents of rape against women have occurred; in Medchal, a woman was raped in the MMTS women’s bogie. In Sangareddy Kandi too, a woman was raped after her husband was tied up. In Nagarkurnool, a gang rape took place near a temple.

Reminding that on March 31, a German woman was raped in Pahadi Sharif, the BRS leader said many rapes happening is not a trivial matter. Though Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is also the Home Minister, why so many rapes were occurring, he said and asked despite such horrific incidents, Revanth Reddy failed to hold even review meetings. He also said Chief Minister holds reviews on municipal governance, but not on the Home Department. “Doesn’t the CM, who visits the Command Control Centre, held reviews on law and order?”, he asked. Though public consumption of alcohol is banned, the government was not

taking action, he bemoaned.

Praveen Kumar said during KCR’s tenure, 331 SHE Teams were set up for women’s safety and 11 lakh CCTV cameras were installed. Besides, KCR spent Rs 770 crore on for modernizing the police system. Now, even when people call Dial 100, the police men don’t respond and entirely focused on filing cases against BRS leaders. Stating that under Revanth’s rule, people are gradually losing faith in the police, he said when asked to provide safety to women, Revanth Reddy sent police to occupy 400 acres in HCU. There too, police swung lathis on female students.He said when BRS leaders demanded implementation of government promises, cases were filed against them. He also alleged that even those who raped minors weren’t being punished. Sitting in the Command Control Centre what the CM was doing?, he asked and said as Home Minister, Revanth Reddy should visit rape victims. He also asked what the Women’s Commission doing? “Why the Women’s Commission not issued notices to the police regarding the heinous rape incidents? What does the silence of the CM and Women’s Commission mean?”, he asked and wondered as to why fast-track courts were not being set up for the rape cases?

The BRS leader said the government’s focus is solely on jailing BRS leaders. They promised many things on the eve of elections, but deceived women by not implementing them. Now, the Congress government could not even provide basic safety to women. In the past, in the Disha case, KCR ensured strict punishment. There’s nothing wrong with hanging rapists, he said, adding fast-track courts should be immediately set up for these four rape cases and the accused be punished. He also said Revanth Reddy’s words alone won’t suffice; he must provide safety to women. Stating that Telangana’s jail capacity is 7,000, he said the State’s population is nearly four crore among them BRS has several lakh supporters. “No matter how many cases Revanth Reddy files, we will continue to work as the voice of the people”, he said, adding that the Congress leaders shouldn’t launch political counter attacks; they should answer the questions we’re raising BRS leaders Chirumalla Rakesh Kumar, Abhilash Rangineni, Tungabalu, and Aruna participated in the press meet held in the Telangana Bhavan. (NSS)

Harish Rao writes to Rahul against misdeeds of CM Revanth Reddy

Hyderabad, April 4 (NSS): Former minister, MLA Harish Rao has written a letter to Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and expressed his deep concern regarding the actions of the Congress government in Telangana, led by Revanth Reddy, which, unfortunately, seem to deviate from the principles you and your party stand for.

“You have consistently preached about upholding constitutional values, yet your party’s Chief Minister appears to be disregarding these very principles on a daily basis. In your 2024 election manifesto, you spoke about the automatic disqualification of defected MLAs. However, your party’s Chief Minister has acted in direct contradiction to this by facilitating the defection of 10 MLAs from the BRS party. This is a clear violation of the stance outlined in your manifesto. Further, the Chief Minister has made troubling remarks about the Supreme Court, both outside and inside the Assembly, encroaching upon the jurisdiction of the judiciary. It is deeply concerning that the Supreme Court found fault with your party’s Chief Minister on these matters.“While you have consistently stood against the “bulldozer raj” across India, it is disheartening to see your party’s Chief Minister employing bulldozers frequently. These bulldozers have been used to demolish the homes of the poor and middle class under the guise of HYDRA and Musi River beautification. This destructive behaviour has extended to Hyderabad Central University (HCU), where more than 100 acres of flora have been destroyed, and the habitat of numerous endangered species has been disturbed. The use of bulldozers has left the national bird, the peacock, and other species of birds in a perilous situation as they are deprived of shelter.

BJP fields Gautam Rao from Hyderabad local body MLC seat

Hyderabad, April 4 (NSS): Senior BJP party leader Dr. N. Gautam Rao has been finalized as the BJP MLC candidate for Hyderabad local body MLC seat. The BJP has released an official statement to this effect. With the BJP’s announcement, MLC candidate N. Gautam Rao will file his nomination papers.He served as the BJP Hyderabad Central district president. The Central Election Commission has already released the schedule for the Hyderabad local bodies’ MLC election last month. The term of the sitting MLC Prabhakar Rao will end on May 1. According to the latest schedule, a notification was issued on March 28 to fill this vacancy.With this, the nomination process has begun. Nominations will be received on April 4 and scrutiny of the nominations will be held on April 7. The deadline for withdrawal of the nominations is April 9. The election will be held on April 23 from 8 am to 4 pm. The EC said the counting of votes will be done on April 25 and the results will be announced later on the same dayMeanwhile, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) party has finalized the name of former MLC Miza Riyaz-ul Hassan Effendi as the party candidate for the Hyderabad Local Bodies MLC seat.

“Moreover, the use of police brutality against students and professors at HCU has been condemned by all including NSUI of HCU, except your party. I would like to remind you that when you visited after the tragic suicide of Rohit Vemula, the then BRS government provided you with an escort and facilitated your support for the protesting students at HCU. You had also promised the students that you would be there for them in times of need. It is shocking, then, to see your conspicuous silence during the police brutality that took place at HCU.“The Congress government in Telangana did not stop its brutal actions until the Supreme Court intervened. On behalf of the students of HCU and the people of Telangana, I demand an explanation for your silence and your party’s blindfolded behaviour during the entire episode at HCU. Furthermore, while you have been vocal about fighting against crony capitalism and the influence of the Adani Group across India, it is concerning that your Chief Minister is actively inviting Adani to Telangana. The forceful acquisition of land for an Adani cement factory is affecting tens of villages in the Nalgonda district. The brutal police action against tribal farmers in Laga Charla, who were protesting against the pharma village project, has not reached you, or perhaps you have chosen to ignore it.

“Have you noticed that while you fight against the Modi regime, your Chief Minister refers to him as “Bade Bhai”?. Telangana society demands an explanation from you: Are all these actions happening with your blessings and consent, or are you deliberately remaining silent on these attacks and unconstitutional behaviours? I hope you will take these issues seriously and instruct your Chief Minister and government to practice what you preach”, he added. (NSS)

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Disconnected Telangana govt schools in AI age

For a State which aspires to lead India's AI revolution, it is disappointing that just 21.9% of government schools have net connectivity

While addressing the Legislative Council on 27 March 2025, Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy expressed deep concern about the education sector in the State and stressed the pressing need for comprehensive reforms. The government spends Rs 55,000-60,000 on each student a year and more than Rs 1 lakh for residence students, which is higher than the nation's average, he said. However, despite spending an extravagant amount, the outcome remains a major concern as the schools have inadequate infrastructure facilities. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), 2024, published by the Pratham Foundation, highlights a serious decline in foundational literacy among schoolchildren over the past decade. In 2014, 12.2% of third-grade students could read a second-grade level text, but this number dropped to just 6.8% in 2024. Similarly, the percentage of fifth-grade students who can read at a second-grade level has fallen sharply from 53.7% in 2014 to just 29.3% in 2024. Among eighth graders, literacy levels have also steadily declined, with only 50.8% able to read a second-grade text in 2024, down from 73.9% in 2014. Comparable outcomes were also found vis-à-vis arithmetic. This decay suggests a severe learning crisis in primary and middle school education in the State. Despite various educational policies and interventions, foundational reading and mathematical skills have not improved. Instead, it has led to a sharp deceleration. Students without mastering basic literacy could have long-term consequences on their academic performance and future employability.

Two Mobile Vans Donated to TTD



April 4, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema co-ordinator *****On Friday, a devotee named Sri M.S. Sundar Ram of M.S. Ramaiah Educational Institutions, Bengaluru donated two huge Dost Mobile Vans of Ashok Leyland Company worth Rs. 45 lakhs to TTD to distribute Annaprasadam to the devotees. "Special pujas were performed to these vehicles at Tirumala on Friday. Later, the vehicle keys were handed over to TTD Additional EO Sri Ch Venkaiah Chowdary." "Speaking to the media on this occasion, the Additional EO said that these state-of-the-art vehicles will be very useful for distributing Annaprasadam to the devotees. He said that they will be useful for distributing Annaprasadam and drinking water along the queue lines even there is a heavy rush of devotees. Annaprasadam can be distributed to three thousand people at a time with these vehicles. "He said that these vehicles will be used with immediate effect. and also said that two vehicles were donated at present and another vehicle will be donated soon. "TTD Transport Depot Manager Lakshmi Prasanna, In-charge DI Haribabu, and others participated in this program.

Congress, BRS parties' fevical bond exposed: Bandi Sanjay

Hyderabad, April 4(NSS) Union Minister Bandi Sanjay today said that the allegations made by the Bharatiya Janata Party that the Congress and BRS parties were indulging in collusion politics in Telangana had been proven true and added that the Fevical bond between the two parties continues in Telangana .

In a statement, he said that The Congress and BRS parties united in the name of delimitation. "They are going to organize a public meeting in Telangana soon. The two parties are working together to make arrangements for this public meeting. They are deciding together who to invite. Similarly, on Thursday , during the voting on the Waqf Amendment Bill in Parliament, the Congress and BRS voted against the Narendra Modi government at the Center.

Today is the last day for the nomination of MLCs of GHMC local bodies. However, Congress and BRS parties have supported the Majlis candidate without fielding their candidates. As for the corruption cases, Before the elections, all the Congress leaders including the current Chief Minister Revanth Reddy have accused the KCR family of committing corruption worth lakhs of rupees in the Kaleshwaram project. They have accused them of committing corruption worth thousands of crores in the power purchase agreement and the Dharani portal. The Congress leaders said that they will send KCR's family to jail as soon as they come to power. After winning by a landslide , they are selling themselves out for money bags and are watering down all the corruption cases to conspire with the BRS party . What more proof is needed for the politics of collusion between Congress and BRS," he said.

Sanjay claimed that Due to providing reservations to Muslims, Majlis contested and won 30 seats where BCs had to contest in the last GHMC elections. "Now, due to providing 10 percent reservation to Muslims under the guise of the BC list, the BCs are going to be subjected to immense injustice in education and jobs. These two parties are ready to put Hyderabad in the hands of Majlis party. I want the Telangana society to think about the dark agreements and collusion politics of Congress and BRS," he said. (NSS)

Seminar on “How to Crack Civil Services in the First Attempt” Organised at VJIM.



Hyderabad, April 4:

A seminar titled “How to Crack Civil Services in the First Attempt – UPSC Master Class” was conducted at Vignana Jyothi Institute of Management (VJIM), Bachupally, on Friday. The event was jointly organized by Vings Media and G5 Media Group, in collaboration with 21st Century IAS Academy, with the objective of guiding and motivating UPSC aspirants through expert insights and actionable strategies. The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Bhavani Shankar, Chief Mentor and Director of 21st Century IAS Academy. He debunked common myths surrounding the UPSC examination and highlighted that students from

regular degree and postgraduate colleges have equal chances of success. Dr. Shankar emphasized that several UPSC questions are based on foundational concepts taught in school and encouraged aspirants to view civil services as an opportunity to bring about meaningful societal change. He further explained the preparation strategy through a detailed PowerPoint presentation, stressing the importance of dedication, the right approach, and a strong grasp of fundamentals. Welcoming the gathering, Prof. Dr. Bharath Bhushan Singh, Director of VJIM, noted the growth of Hyderabad as a prominent UPSC coaching hub, once dominated by Delhi. He encouraged students to make the best use of such platforms and aspire confidently for careers in civil services. The event was attended by distinguished academic leaders including Dr. D. Ravinath, Dean; Dr. N. Padmaja, Head of Academics; and Mr. K. Gopal Reddy, PRO of VJIM. This seminar forms part of a broader initiative by Vings Media and G5 Media Group, in partnership with 21st Century IAS Academy, to empower students across educational institutions with the knowledge, guidance, and motivation required to excel in the civil services examinations

Sri Rama Navami Celebrations in a Peaceful Atmosphere



Rachakonda CP Sudheer Babu

Hyderabad: On the occasion of Sri Rama Navami, Rachakonda Commissioner Sudheer Babu held a coordination meeting at the Rachakonda office in Neredmet with DCPs, ACPs, and other officials regarding the necessary security arrangements and precautions to be taken during the festivities. He issued several instructions to the officials during this meeting. Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner instructed that strict measures should be taken to ensure communal harmony and to prevent any law and

order issues during the Sri Rama Navami celebrations within the jurisdiction of the Rachakonda Commissionerate. He directed that special care should be taken during large gatherings like the Shobha Yatra (procession), where a large number of devotees are expected to participate. He advised the officials to coordinate with religious leaders and peace committee members who work towards maintaining communal harmony to prevent any untoward incidents. Similarly, regarding the security arrangements for the IPL cricket matches being held at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Uppal, the Commissioner issued several directives. He emphasized continuous surveillance through CCTV cameras around the stadium and instructed the personnel on duty to remain alert and ensure no untoward incidents occur, considering the large crowds attending the matches. The meeting was attended by DCP Malkajiri Padmaja, DCP LB Nagar Praveen Kumar, DCP Special Branch G. Narasimhareddy, DCP Crime Aravind Babu, DCP Special Branch Narasimha Reddy, DCP Traffic-1 Mallareddy, DCP Traffic-2 Srinivasulu, DCP Women Safety Usha Vishwanath, DCP Shyam Sundar, Additional DCP Admin Shivakumar, and other officials.

Sri Kodandarama Swamy Chakrasnanam held in grand manner



April 4, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema co-ordinator *****On the last day of the Tirupati, Sri Kodandaram Swamy Brahmothsavams, on Friday morning, the Chakrasnam was held in grand manner at the Pushkarini in Kapila Theertham. A large number of devotees participated and took holy baths. The Brahmothsavams will end with the dhawaja aawarohanam at night. Earlier, at 7.30 am, Sri Lakshmana and Sita Rama were taken to Kapila Theertham in a palanquin. From 9 am to 10.30 am, the ceremonial idols of Swami and Ammavaru were bathed as a snapa na



thirumanjanam ceremony in the temple mandapam of Sri Venugopalaswamy. Later, Chakrasnam was performed as per the agamasashtra with the chanting of Vedic mantras by the priests. After that, the Swami varu proceeded to the P.R. Thota of Sri Govindaraja Swamy High School. In the evening, Swami varu will leave from there and reach Sri Kodanda"ramalayam "via Tirthakatta Veedhi, Kotakommala Veedhi and Kottha Veedhi. In between, Swami varu Asthanam will held at Sri Anjaneyaswamy Temple and Sri Vaikhanasacharyula Temple.

BNI will always be at the forefront in shaping the youth into entrepreneurs: Praneeth Penumadu



April 4, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema co-ordinator *****Praneeth Penumadu said that BNI will always be at the forefront in shaping the youth into entrepreneurs. On Friday, the Tirupati branch of Business

Network International (BNI) Billionaires' meeting was attended by Edify Schools director, Praneeth Foundation Founder Praneeth Penumadu as the chief guest at a private hotel in Tirupati. Praneeth

Penumadu, who arrived at the program received a grand welcome. The program organizers honored Praneeth Penumadu with shawl and presented him with a bouquet. As part of the program, the meeting was

inaugurated by lighting the lamp. Speaking on the occasion, Praneeth Penumadu expressed his happiness and said that it was a great pleasure to participate in this program at the invitation of Dr. Vamsi Krishna, President of Tirupati Branch, Business Network International (BNI) Billionaires. He said that BNI acts as a mentor for young businessmen.

He called on BNI members to participate in social service in addition to improving the business opportunities . He expressed special congratulations to BNI for providing every member who is a partner in BNI with the opportunity to grow in terms of business. The Tirupati Branch, Business Network International (BNI) Billionaires key members and others participated in this program.

Two mobile vans donated to TTD

Tirumala, April 4 (NSS): On Friday, a devotee named M.S. Sundar Ram of M.S. Ramaiah Educational Institutions, Bengaluru donated two huge Dost Mobile Vans of Ashok Leyland Company worth Rs. 45 lakhs to TTD to distribute Annaprasadam to the devotees. Special pujas were performed to these vehicles at Tirumala on Friday. Later, the vehicle keys were handed over to TTD Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdary. Speaking to the media on this occasion, the Additional EO said that these state-of-the-art vehicles will be very useful for distributing Annaprasadam to the devotees. He said that they will be useful for distributing Annaprasadam and drinking water along the queue lines even there is a heavy rush of devotees. Annaprasadam can be distributed to three thousand people at a time with these vehicles. He said that these vehicles will be used with immediate effect. and also said that two vehicles were donated at present and another vehicle will be donated soon. TTD Transport Depot Manager Lakshmi Prasanna, In-charge DI Haribabu, and others participated in this program. (NSS)

Two red sandalwood smugglers sentenced to five years in prison each*** Rs. 6 lakh fine each***



"April 4, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema co-ordinator *****The Red Sandalwood Special Court on Friday announced the verdict, sentencing two smugglers to five years in prison each and imposing a fine of Rs. 6 lakh each in the red sandalwood smuggling case. As part of the implementation of the special operation designed by RSASTF Chief L. Subbarayudu to curb the smuggling of red sandalwood, the task force under the supervision of SP P. Srinivas has made plans to prove the evidence related to the cases registered in the past and under investigation and to punish the accused. As part of that, the crime committed by two accused, Cheraboyana Venkataramana and Pinjari Mahbub Basha, from Prakasam district, who were caught in Karakambadi Beatu and Tirupati Range, was proven. With this, Tirupati RSS ADJ Court Judge Narasimha Murthy sentenced them to five years in prison each and a fine of Rs. 6 lakh. They were then sent to Nellore Central Jail as per the court's orders. The task force senior officials congratulated the staff for their efforts to ensure that the accused are punished. The task force senior officials said that this verdict will act as a warning to the criminals who illegally cut and transport red sandalwood trees, the most valuable natural resource in the Seshachalam Reserve Forest.

Nagurla Venkateswarlu's swearing-in ceremony"



"Election of the Fertilizers, Pesticides and Seeds Dealers Welfare Association""Gourisetty Nagaraju as General Secretary, Narasimha Reddy as Treasurer""Nagurla thanked the members who expressed their joy""Hanumakonda, April 04, Indian Chronicle: ""Nagurla Venkateswarlu was unanimously elected as the President of the Fertilizers, Pesticides and Seeds Dealers Association on Friday. The oath-taking ceremony of Nagurla Venkateswarlu as the President was held at a meeting held at Shivanagar in the city center of Warangal. Election Authority Chairman Satyanarayana Reddy, members Sadanand, Venkat Rao, President Nagurla Venkateswarlu, General Secretary Gourisetty Nagaraju, Treasurer Boddireddy Narasimha Reddy administered the oath. Later, the new committee was felicitated. Later, the new president Venkateswarlu thanked the fellow members who entrusted him with this position with trust. He said that he would work for the welfare of the dealers and thanked everyone for appointing him as the president of the Pesticides and Fertilizers Association. He called for working for the rights of the fertilizers and pesticides dealers in the coming days. About 500 dealers, association members and others from Warangal districts participated in this program.



Raja Singh makes sensational comments on MLC selection

Hyderabad, April 4(NSS): The cold war continues in the Telangana BJP over the selection of the party's MLC candidate in Hyderabad local body elections. The party MLA Rajasingh made sensational comments on the announcement of the party leader Gautam Rao as the BJP MLC candidate in the State. He criticized that tickets were given to those who do slavery in the party.

He indirectly posted posts aimed at union minister Kishan Reddy. "Will you give posts to your parliamentary constituency?. Are you not seeing senior BJP leaders and activists in the rest of the parliament seats," he asked. He

lashed out by saying that the posts and tickets were given to those who do slavery to reddy and added that the rest of the people do not do slavery to Reddy. , With this, political differences between the leaders in the BJP have once again come out.

Meanwhile, the high command has announced N. Gautam Rao as the BJP MLC candidate for Hyderabad local body seat. He served as the BJP Hyderabad Central District President. Sitting MLC Prabhakar's term will end on May 1. With this, polling for this seat will be held on April 23 and counting of votes will be held on April 25. (NSS)

Telangana to move SC against AP's Godavari-Krishna projects: Uttam

Hyderabad, April 4 (NSS): Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies Uttam Kumar Reddy has informed that the State government has decided to approach the Supreme Court against two major river interlinking projects proposed by the Andhra Pradesh government - the Godavari-Banakacherla Link Scheme and the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme (RLIS). The Minister announced the decision during a high-level review meeting held at Jala Soudha here on Friday. He said both schemes violate established water-sharing agreements and pose a serious threat to Telangana's irrigation projects and drinking water requirements. The Minister stated that the projects were being taken up unilaterally by Andhra Pradesh without approvals from the appropriate regulatory authorities. As part of the legal preparation, a special meeting will be convened shortly with legal experts, Standing Counsels of the Irrigation department and the Advocate General to chalk out the strategy to file a petition in the Supreme Court. Telangana will firmly contest the schemes in court to safeguard its rightful share in Godavari and Krishna river waters," he said. The Godavari-Banakacherla Link Scheme is a massive project proposed by the Andhra Pradesh government at an estimated cost of Rs 80,112 crore. The plan involves diverting 200 TMC of water from the Godavari river at Polavaram to

Rayalaseema through the Bollapalli reservoir and Banakacherla head regulator. The proposal seeks to interlink the Godavari, Krishna, and Penna rivers. Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy said that this project directly violates the Godavari Water Disputes Tribunal (GWDT) Award of 1980 and the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act (APRA) of 2014. He pointed out that Andhra Pradesh has not secured mandatory clearances from the Central Water Commission (CWC), the Godavari River Management Board (GRMB), the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB), or the Apex Council. He said Andhra Pradesh is trying to use Sections 46(2) and 46(3) of APRA, which allow for the development of backward regions, to secure Central funds. However, Uttam Kumar Reddy warned that such provisions cannot override the requirement for statutory approvals and environmental safeguards. The Minister also raised concern about the safety of Bhadrachalam, a major town located along the Godavari river. He said the large-scale diversion of floodwaters from Polavaram to Rayalaseema could affect the natural flood pattern downstream and put the temple town at risk. He said that Telangana Government would seek Central assistance for the construction of a protection wall around Bhadrachalam to safeguard the town from future flood threats. During the review meeting, Uttam Kumar Reddy instructed senior officials to act without delay. (NSS)

Agriculture Commission urges Govt for amendments to Markets, Seed Acts

Hyderabad, April 4 (NSS): The Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Commission has requested that the State government amend the Telangana Agricultural Markets Act and the Seed Act to enhance farmers' welfare and promote agricultural development. On Friday, Chairman Kodanda Reddy, along with members Bhavani Reddy, Bhumi Sunil, and agricultural scientist Ramanjaneyulu, met Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari at the Secretariat to present a Memorandum outlining the proposed amendments to the Telangana Agricultural Markets Act and the Seed Act. The Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Commission provided a report to the Chief Secretary regarding legal measures to be considered due to a recent situation in which tribal farmers in the Mulugu district suffered significant losses from maize seeds. The Commission stated in its letter that the incident in Mulugu underscores the flaws in the seed and market regulations.

Since Telangana State was established, amendments made by the previous government to agricultural market

laws have significantly harmed farmers. In light of this, the Agriculture Commission has proposed several recommendations to Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari regarding necessary changes to the Telangana Agricultural Markets Act and the Seed Act. They noted that the previous BRS government altered Section 11A of the Agricultural Markets Act, creating an organizer system for companies that carries no responsibilities. It has now been recommended to revise this section to reinstate the regulations set by the Congress government in 2005. The Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Commission members pointed out that the Seed Act established by the Union Government does not include robust regulations for addressing companies that produce and sell counterfeit seeds. They recommended amending the Seed Act in a manner similar to what has been done in Maharashtra, advocating for more rigorous measures against the distribution of counterfeit seeds. The Commission also suggested renaming the Agricultural department, which focuses on farmers' welfare, to the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare. (NSS)

Congress MLC resents passage of Waqf (Amendment) Bill in Parliament

Hyderabad, April 4 (NSS): Congress MLC Amer Ali Khan has strongly condemned the passage of the controversial Waqf (Amendment) Bill in both Houses of Parliament, calling it a "deliberate and dangerous attempt to interfere in the religious and constitutional rights of Muslims." He said the Muslim community across India would not accept this imposition and vowed to continue the fight in the courts and on the streets.

In a statement on Friday, Amer Ali Khan said the Bill was undemocratic, unconstitutional, and intended to weaken Waqf institutions and erode the autonomy of Muslim-managed religious properties. "The Waqf Amendment Bill is a direct attack on our faith, our traditions, and our identity. It is not just a legislative change, it is an ideological assault. Muslims across India are deeply disturbed by this brazen

interference in religious affairs, and we will resist it with all democratic and legal means available," he said. Amer Ali Khan stated that the Bill empowers the government to centralise control over Waqf properties, bypassing the community's traditional structures and decision-making processes. He said this would lead to increased bureaucratic control, misuse of Waqf assets, and the eventual alienation of religious properties meant for the welfare of the poor and the upkeep of mosques, dargahs, and educational institutions. He accused the BJP government of consistently targeting minority institutions, adding that the Waqf Amendment Bill fits into a larger pattern of legislative overreach that seeks to dilute constitutional guarantees under Articles 25 to 30, which protect the rights of minorities to manage their religious and cultural affairs. (NSS)

State Government's Distribution of Free Sanna Rice to the Poor through the Public Distribution System is Historic, says State IT and Industries Minister DUDDILLA SSRIDHAR BABU.“



“P. S. ASHOKAN “INDIAN-CHRONICLE “MANTHANI “5-4-2025.” On Friday, Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu, as the Chief Guest, inaugurated the free Sanna rice distribution program organized by the Civil Supplies Department at BLM Garden in Kattaram Mandal. He distributed Sanna rice to Kondaparthi Padma, marking the launch of the scheme. “Speaking at the event, Minister Sridhar Babu mentioned that Telangana is the first state in the country to take the initiative to distribute free Sanna rice to the poor. He expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Civil Supplies Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy for starting such a significant humanitarian program and for providing the rice that ministers, corporation chairpersons, and district collectors consume to the poor. “He stated that the distribution of Sanna rice under the Public Distribution System (PDS) began across the state from April 1. “In the past, the distribution of low-quality rice (doddu rice) had led to issues like repackaging and illegal resale, resulting in the misuse of public funds running into crores of rupees. He highlighted that people prefer Sanna rice, and its consumption is higher, which is why the government decided to distribute Sanna rice through fair price shops to increase its usage and prevent the recycling of doddu rice. “The Minister revealed that the state government will bear an additional financial burden of nearly ₹2,858 crore for the distribution of Sanna rice to 3.10 crore beneficiaries, but despite this, the government continues to provide it to the poor. “He emphasized that ration dealers are crucial partners in the

government, and they must ensure the smooth distribution of rice without causing any inconvenience to the government. He assured that any issues faced by them would be resolved positively and urged them to ensure the regular distribution of Sanna rice to beneficiaries. “The Minister also mentioned that the government has provided a bonus of ₹2,000 crore for Sanna rice procurement, supporting farmers. He further stated that each individual will receive 6 kg of rice, and a family of four will save nearly ₹1,400 per month through this initiative. “In the Manthani constituency, there are 41,045 cardholders, and with the implementation of this scheme, about 1,17,069 beneficiaries will benefit. “He announced that 3,500 Indiramma houses would be granted to the poor without homes in the constituency and instructed officials to prepare a list of eligible beneficiaries in the next 15 days. He stressed the need to select the most deserving families, free from any corruption, and ensure a fair and unbiased selection process.”

Minor driving: Traffic police to cancel vehicle registration

Hyderabad, April 4 (NSS): In light of the rising incidents of minor driving leading to fatal road accidents, the Hyderabad Traffic Police is launching a special enforcement drive from April 5 to curb the dangerous practice. As per the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, underage individuals are strictly prohibited from driving vehicle. If a minor is caught driving, the vehicle owner—typically the parent or registered owner—is also held accountable and faces legal consequences. Section 199A of the MV Act, 1988—offences by Juveniles attracts fine and/or imprisonment will be imposed. The vehicle registration will be cancelled for 12 months. The juvenile will not be eligible to obtain Learner's or Driving License until he attains the age of 25 years. The Hyderabad Traffic Police urges all parents and guardians to strictly prohibit their minor children from driving. This special enforcement drive will involve strict legal action against violators to ensure safer roads for all. Citizens are requested to cooperate with traffic authorities and adhere to traffic laws to prevent accidents and save lives, stated D. Joel Davis, IPS, Joint Commissioner of Police, Traffic, Hyderabad. (NSS)

Former MLA Seetha Dayakar Reddy appointed as Chairperson of TSCPCR

Hyderabad, April 4 (NSS): The State government has named former MLA Kothakota Seetha Dayakar Reddy as the new Chairperson of the Telangana State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (TSCPCR). In addition to Seetha Dayakar Reddy, six other individuals have been appointed as members: Kancharla Vandana Goud, Marripalli Chandana, B. Apama, Gogula Saritha, Premalata Agarwal, and B. Vachan Kuma. The government issued official orders confirming that all appointees will serve for a term of three years from the date they take office or until they turn 60 years old. Accordingly, Seetha Dayakar Reddy received her appointment orders and officially took charge on Friday.

Seetha Dayakar Reddy began her political career in 1994 and was elected as a member of the Devarakadra

ZPTC in 2001, later taking on the role of Zilla Parishad Chairperson. In 2009, she was elected as the MLA for Devarakadra in Mahbubnagar district. Concurrently, her husband, Dayakar Reddy, won the Maktal MLA seat, marking a notable achievement for the couple as they entered the Assembly together. In 2014, Seetha Dayakar Reddy ran for the Devarakadra MLA position for the second time but faced defeat in that election. She started her political journey with the Telugu Desam Party and remained with the party until the most recent Assembly elections. A few weeks prior to the elections, she switched to the Congress party. Given her extensive political background and educational credentials, the State government appointed her as the chairperson of the Telangana State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (TSCPCR). (NSS)

Narayan Artificial Limb Measurement Camp on April 6

Hyderabad, April 4 (NSS): National award-winning NGO Narayan Seva Sansthan is organizing a free camp for the welfare of differently-abled individuals in Telangana. The event will be held on April 6, at Minerva Gardens, Gardens Street, Champapet, Hyderabad. According to Bhagwan Prasad Gaur, Director of Media & Public Relations at Narayan Seva Sansthan, the organization is committed to empowering and making differently-abled individuals self-reliant. This initiative aims to assist those who have lost their limbs due to accidents or illnesses, as well as those struggling with outdated or heavy artificial limbs. Inspired by Padma Shri awardee Kailash Manav, the organization has been dedicated to serving humanity and the differently-abled for the past 40 years. Speaking to media persons, Alka Chaudhary, patron of the organization, emphasized the significance of the free camp. She mentioned that a team of experienced ortho and prosthetic doctors from the organization will examine the beneficiaries and take precise mea-

surements for high-quality, lightweight, and durable Narayan Artificial Limbs. These custom-made artificial limbs will be provided free of charge in a fitment camp to be organized approximately two months later. Camp coordinator Mahendra Singh Rawat said free meals, tea, and refreshments will be provided to the patients and their families attending the camp. Director Gaur, Patron Chaudhary, Patel, social worker Riddhesh Jagirdar, Abhay Chaudhary, and Coordinator Rawat jointly unveiled the camp's poster. Jasmat Bhai, another patron, informed that respected individuals and ministers from Hyderabad have been invited to attend the camp. Director Gaur appealed to the differently-abled individuals to take full advantage of this opportunity. Those wishing to participate must bring their Aadhar card, disability certificate, and two passport-sized photographs as proof of their disability. For more information regarding the camp, individuals can contact the organization's helpline number: 70235-09999. (NSS)

Padmashri Madugula Nagaphani Sharma felicitation ceremony at National Sanskrit University

April 4, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema co-rdinator “TTD Additional EO CH Venkaiah Chowdhury said that the Padma Shri award to Dvisahasravadhani Madugula Nagaphani Sharma is a matter of pride for the Telugu people and that if one has a firm grasp of one's mother tongue, one can easily learn other languages. “Brahmashri Madugula Nagaphani Sharma felicitation ceremony was organized by the alumni association of the university on Friday evening at the Chelikani Annarao Bhavan conference hall of the National Sanskrit University, Tirupati. The program was organized on the occasion of Dvisahasravadhani and orator Brahmashri Madugula Nagaphani Sharma, an alumnus of Tirupati National Sanskrit University, to receive the prestigious Padma Shri award from India. On behalf of the Puri Student Union of the university, it is a pleasure to be felicitated in the auditorium today, and he intended on this occasion that all students should also study and attain such a high position. He advised everyone to study and gain knowledge about the process of meditation. “Speech by Brahmashri Madugula Phani Sharma “Afterwards, he said that he feels very fortunate to study at the National Sanskrit University, that the Telugu language is very great, and that everyone should learn the knowledge available in the Telugu language. On this occasion, he explained to the students the importance of the process of



Krishnamurthy “Vice Chancellor Acharya G.S.R. Krishnamurthy said that it is a matter of pride for Brahmashri Madugula Nagaphani Sharma, an alumnus of Tirupati National Sanskrit University, to receive the prestigious Padma Shri award from India. On behalf of the Puri Student Union of the university, it is a pleasure to be felicitated in the auditorium today, and he intended on this occasion that all students should also study and attain such a high position. He advised everyone to study and gain knowledge about the process of meditation. “Speech by Brahmashri Madugula Phani Sharma “Afterwards, he said that he feels very fortunate to study at the National Sanskrit University, that the Telugu language is very great, and that everyone should learn the knowledge available in the Telugu language. On this occasion, he explained to the students the importance of the process of

concentration, Avadharana. He advised all the students to learn things like writing verses, memorizing, etc. “Sri Venkateswara Vedic University Vice-Chancellor Acharya Rani Sadashivamurthy and former Acharya of the National Sanskrit University Kompella Rama Suryanarayana were present. The distinguished guests were former Vice Chancellor of Sri Venkateswara University, Rallapalli Ramamurthy, former Vice Chancellor of Dravida University, Acharya Kolakaluri Madhujyothi, Director and Treasurer of Tirupati Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Dr. Nadimpally Satyanarayana Raju, Dean of SWIMS, Dr. Alladi Mohan, University Legal Advisors Ajay Kumar, DSP Bali Reddy, Rompicharla Yashwanth Dikshitulu and others. Brahmashri Madugula mentioned their association with Nagaphani Sharma and praised the con-

tribution made by Nagaphani Sharma to the Telugu language and the field of education. “The coordinator of this program was also Prof. Satyanarayanacharya, General Secretary of the Alumni Association, Dean of Literature and Culture. Similarly, the program was well organized by Dr. D. Nallanna, the faculty member of the Telugu department. The entire program was conducted well by Prof. Satchidananda Murthy of the Education Department. “Vijayalakshmi, a teacher of the Telugu Department, participated in the program, while Acharya Ganganisetty Lakshminarayana delivered the welcome address. The congratulatory letter of appreciation at the Brahmashri Madugula Nagaphani Sharma Honorary Ceremony was written and delivered by Satavadhani Uppaladhadiyam Bharat Sharma, a student of ITEP, National Sanskrit University.

CP discusses security arrangements for Ramanavami Shobha Yatra

Hyderabad, April 4 (NSS): In view of the Sri Ramanavami Shobha Yatra to be held on April 6, 2025, C. V. Anand, IPS, Commissioner of Police Hyderabad, held a video conference with Hyderabad Police officers. He explained the history of the procession and the various incidents over the years during the Shobha Yatra, discussed security arrangements in detail and gave specific instructions in light of the route inspection down yesterday along with the Sri Ramanavami Utsav committees and other department officers. He suggested that special surveillance be set up at the intersection where the main procession and smaller processions connect. It was also sug-



gested that special additional forces be deployed in problematic areas around religious places and that continuous surveillance be maintained. As a precautionary measure, all officers and staff, all Zonal Control Room

officers, and Special Branch officers in the city should be alert from now on. Special attention must also be paid to pickpockets and chain snatchers. Vikram Singh Mann, IPS, Additional Commis-

sioner of Police Law and Order, S. Chaitanya Kumar, DCP, Special Branch, Pushpa, DCP, IT Cell, and Zonal DCPs, Inspectors, ACPs, and other officers participated in the program virtually. (NSS)

Sri Prasanna Venkateswara Swamy Temple Dhwajastambha Samprokshan concluded with Poornahuti



“April 4, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema co-ordinator
““The Dhwajastambha Samprokshan at the Sri Prasanna Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Appalayagunta on Friday concluded with Poornahuti. “ under the auspices of the temple priest Suryakumara”charya, “Vedic rituals were conducted in the Yagasala from 7.30 am to 9.30 am on Friday. Maha Poornahuti and Kumbha Prokshan were conducted from 9.30 am to 10.30 am in the morning. “Temple Deputy EO Govindarajan, AEO Devarajulu, Superintendent Srivani, Temple Inspector Sivakumar and a large number of devotees participated in this program.



Mega Job Mela in Parakal, Unemployed people are heavily involved..



“Parakala, April 04, Indian Chronicle: ““Mega Job Mela conducted by the Parkal MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy in warangal dist. Unemployed people are heavily involved in



this program. Minister Sridhar Babu presented the appointment papers to the un employed people. State IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu was the chief guest at the mega job mela program organized by Parakala constituency legislators at the Lalita Convention Hall in Hanumakonda districtStarted.Appointment papers were handed over to candidates who were selected for the next various companies. In the municipality premises “The sewing training center was inaugurated. Similarly, a review meeting was held with the top officials in the municipality of Parakal.

Warangal Western constituency legislators Naini Rajender Reddy and Vardhanapet constituency legislators KR Nagaraju, Bhupalapalli constituency legislators Gundra Satyanarayana, Hanumakonda and Warangal districts collectors Pravinya, Sathya Sarada, GWC Commissioner Ashwini Tanaji Vankade, Kuda Chairman participated.

Will stand by Dalit tribals of Petlur - District Collector



“April 4, Indian chronicle, Rayalaseema co-ordinator
““District Collector Dr. Venkateswar assured that he will stand by Dalits who are living in Sitaram Yechury Nagar in Petlur village of Venkatagiri mandal .A dharna was organized under the auspices of the CPM at the District Collector’s office to protest the atrocities being committed against the dalits by the forest officials. Later, a petition was submitted to the District Collector. Speaking, the District Collector said that he would send the Sub-Collector and DFO forest officials to the places, conduct a thorough investigation and grant pattas, and that the government has also given orders to provide house plots and distribute lands to the poor. He said that he would ensure that there will be no problem with drinking water. Referring to the earlier dharna, CPM District Secretary Vandavasi Nagaraju said that the atrocities committed by the forest officials on the poor were against the constitution and that it was illegal to



interfere even after the boundaries were set. He said that Dalits and tribals have been fighting for many years. He said that it is not right for forest officials to show their arrogance towards the poor by ignoring the encroachments of big landowners. He asked the District Collector to take the initiative and resolve the problem. Venkatagiri Regional Committee Secretary Vaddipalli Changaiah said that they had submitted petitions in the revenue conference and received receipts and that they had already built a house and were living there. He expressed his concern that the forest officials were punishing the poor by not providing them with electricity and drinking water. The local MLA asked them to stand by the poor. After this dharna, a dharna was organized at the office of the Divisional Forest Officer. The petition was submitted “. CITU District President G Balasubramaniam, District Secretary S Muniraja, Ramanaiah and others participated in this program.

"RTC Retired Workers' Issues Should Be Addressed"

P. S. ASHOKAN “IN-
DIAN-CHRONICLE
“MANTHANI “5-4-
2025.”“Today, a protest was held in front of the Manthani RTC Depot gate under the leadership of SWF, and a petition was submitted to the DM office. Speaking on this occasion, Boodida Ganesh, a member of the CITU district committee, stated... that nearly 24,000 retired workers are employed in RTC, and the RTC management, along with the state and central governments, are neglecting to resolve their issues. He demanded the implementation of higher pensions for retired workers, payment of arrears as per the 2017 agreement, and opportunities for retired



workers and their spouses to travel in super-luxury buses. He also highlighted several other issues and called for the resolution of

these problems by both RTC management and the state and central governments. CITU leaders Arla

Sandeep, Velpula Suresh, and RTC SWF Manthani Depot President Pallellar Anjaneyulu participated in the program.

self-help savings groups are playing Key role in national development: Chittoor MP Daggumalla Prasada Rao

““NDA government working towards women empowerment.”“April 4,Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema co-ordinator ““Self-help savings groups are playing a key role in national development, said Telugu Desam Party Parliamentary Deputy Floor Leader, National SC ST Welfare Parliamentary Committee Member, Chittoor Member of Parliament“Daggumalla Prasada Rao.MP also added that the NDA government is working towards women empowerment. ““ Chittoor MP Daggumalla Prasada Rao, who attended the budget sessions in the Delhi Parliament, tried to find out the details of the last five years and this year from Union and Urban Affairs Minister Tohan Sahu during the question and answer session in the Lok Sabha on Friday, regarding the support and cooperation provided by the central government to self-help savings societies, employment opportunities, and the key role played by self-help savings societies in the development of the country. The relevant department not only responded positively to this, but also provided the details regarding the matter he requested in writing, Chittoor MP Daggumalla Prasada Rao told the media. He informed that the NDA government is working with determination to provide all kinds of support to women in self-help savings societies. He said that it is giving high priority to Andhra Pradesh and aims to make women entrepreneurs. He said that they are working with the aim of introducing Indian culture and traditions to the world through self-help savings groups, which are excelling in all kinds of activities. He said that in line with this, the central government is bringing reforms for the well-being of women.



Chittoor Parliamentarian Daggumalla Prasada Rao said that the priority given by the AP government to self-help savings groups, which are praised as the brainchild of state Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, is a matter of common knowledge... He said that the central government’s allocations in this budget towards realizing Chandrababu Naidu’s dreams are a testament to the sincerity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

Scrutiny and validation of applications for TDR bonds in transparent manner

Great response to the TDR Mela. ““Commissioner N. Maurya““TDR bond applications are being verified for those who have lost their land on master plan roads, said Municipal Commissioner N. Maurya. The Commissioner inaugurated a special fair organized at the Municipal Corporation office for the validation of TDR bond applications. Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner said that a special fair is being organized for a week to provide TDR bonds to those who have lost their land as part of the construction of master plan roads in the city. He said that this fair is receiving special response. He said that the applications of those who have lost their land are being registered online. He said that later the committee will examine it and give an endorsement, and then a gift deed will have to be given. He said that in the past, most people registered residential properties with commercial door numbers. He said that such properties and those without proper supporting documents were short-listed. He said that if all of them come with proper documents, they will be registered online. He said that those with ghost stories will be examined again and a decision will be taken. He said that the matters related to getting this gift deed done have been informed to the Tirupati and Renigunta sub-registrars. He said that while nine applications were examined in the first phase, eight were short-listed due to lack of proper supporting documents. He said that all the applications were regular and only one TDR bond was given in Jabbar Layout as there was no commercial building. He urged those who had lost their lands to take advantage of this fair. Town Planning Director Vidyullatha and Additional Director Srinivasulu participated and examined the TDR bond applications and collected details roadwise of the master plan. The procedure for verification, validation and registration of TDR bond applications was ex-



plained. Tirupati and Renigunta Sub-Registrars, DCP Mahapatra, ACPs Balaji, Murthy and others participated in this fair.

The leaders of the NDA government paid homage to the State Yadava Corporation chairman, Narasimha Yadav.



““The rally began by paying homage to NTR...”“A huge rally that lasted till Tuda Grounds...”“April 4, Indian chronicle, Rayalaseema co-ordinator ““It is inevitable that Tirupati Parliament President G Narasimha Yadav was elected as the Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Yadava Corporation. In this order, Narasimha Yadav took out a huge rally in Tirupati on Friday amidst a huge crowd of fans. As part of the rally, he first paid homage to the statue of NTR at Prakasam Road and started the rally. At every step of the rally that lasted from Balaji Colony to Tuda Maidan, the leaders and fans of the coalition government honored Narasimha Yadav with garlands and shawls and wished him well. In particular, TDP Tirupati in-charge, former MLA Sugunamma, and Chandragiri MLA Pulivarthi were felicitated at Nani Balaji Colony. Similarly, Jana Sena leaders Corporators Narasimha and SK Babu were felicitated at Pula Veedhi, while Puligoru Muralikrishna was felicitated at Bandla Veedhi and conveyed their best wishes. In a huge rally attended by fans and supporters, including the Mandutenda, Anna Ramachandra Yadav, Anna Ramakrishna Yadav, Anna Anita Yadav, and Shankar Yadav welcomed them on a large scale near Gangamma Temple and conveyed their best wishes. After reaching the rally at Tuda Maidan, Andhra Pradesh State Corporation Chairman Narasimha Yadav spoke to the media and said that TDP



supremo and state Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu will always be at the forefront in supporting every worker who works hard for the party. He informed that he will be indebted to Nara Chandrababu Naidu and Nara Lokesh for giving him this opportunity. He made it clear that he will serve the BCs and the Yadavs in a befitting manner with this opportunity provided by Nara Chandrababu Naidu. Later, the leaders of the coalition government said that TDP chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu has given a befitting position to Narasimha Yadav, who worked hard for the party. Coalition leaders, fans, activists, sympathizers and others participated in this program.

CAG report debunks Congress government's allegations on Telangana's debt under BRS

Hyderabad: After the Centre, it is the turn of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report to effectively dismantle the Congress government's allegations that the previous BRS regime had pushed Telangana into excessive debt. As per the actual expenditure, the total outstanding debts and liabilities of Telangana stood at Rs 5.24 lakh crore as of March 31, 2024, the report, tabled in the Assembly on Thursday reveals. This includes Rs 4,03,664 crore of budgetary borrowings, Rs 1,20,944 crore in off-Budget borrowings obtained by corporations and special purpose vehicles under the State government guarantees and also Rs 6,949 crore, which was extended by the Union government as back-to-back loans to compensate for the GST shortfall caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent economic slowdown. Ironically, the total outstanding debts include the loans obtained by the Congress government between December 2023 and March 2024, after coming to power in December 2023. The report, tabled in the Assembly after auditing, provides a detailed breakdown of Telangana's financial standing, debunking the allegations of fiscal mismanagement. While the budgetary borrowings

comprise 27 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), the total liabilities including off-Budget borrowings account for 34.57 per cent of the GSDP. The CAG report also indicates that the BRS government prioritised capital expenditure over revenue spending. Between 2019-20 and 2023-24, a significant portion of borrowed funds was allocated to infrastructure and development projects, contradicting Congress' claims of reckless borrowing. The report states that in 2019-20, Rs 25,559 crore of Rs 38,285 crore borrowed was spent on capital projects. Similar trends were observed in subsequent years: Rs 26,790 crore of Rs 47,132 crore in 2020-21, Rs 28,883 crore of Rs 46,995 crore in 2021-22, and Rs 17,881 crore of Rs 41,560 crore in 2022-23. Notably, in 2023-24, the BRS government used Rs 43,918 crore — an impressive 87 per cent of the total Rs 50,528 crore borrowed — for capital expenditure. Further reinforcing Telangana's strong fiscal health, the CAG report highlights that actual State Budget realisations stood at nearly 79 per cent of estimated projections in 2023-24. Against the budgeted Rs 2,77,690 crore, actual expenditure reached Rs 2,19,307 crore.

SGPC general secretary S S Mand presents annual budget; over Rs 1,000 crore allocated for maintenance of gurdwaras

GNS News Agency, April 4

Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) general secretary Sher Singh Mand presented the religious body's annual budget of Rs 1,386.47 crore for the financial year 2025-26 in a general house meeting in Amritsar on Friday. According to the budget, the majority of SGPC's revenue comes from Gurdwara Sahib funds, which contribute Rs 1,062 crore. Other sources of income include the Dhamam Parchar Committee, generating Rs 17 crore, educational institutions (Rs 270.31 crore), General Board Fund (Rs 11.70 crore), Trust fund (Rs 15.56 crore), education fund (Rs 70 lakh), sports fund (Rs 4 lakh), printing presses (Rs 8.12 crore), and Baba Buddha Ji Charitable Hospital (Rs 1 crore). In terms of expenditure, Rs 1,062 crore has been allocated for the maintenance and management of gurdwaras. The Dhamam Parchar Committee will receive Rs 1,10 crore, while educational institutions have been allocated Rs 295 crore. Other allocations include Rs 86 crore for the General Board Fund, Rs 65.36 crore for the Trust fund, Rs 50.80 crore for the Vidya Fund, Rs 3.90 crore for the sports fund, Rs 8.12 crore for printing presses, and Rs 5.50 crore for Baba Buddha Ji Charitable Hospital. At present, SGPC operates several educational institutions, including Guru Ram Das Medical Sciences University in Amritsar, Meeri Peeri Medical Science and Research Institute in Shahabad Markanda, and Sri Guru Granth Sahib World University in Fatehgarh Sahib. In addition to these, SGPC manages 31 higher education institutions offering courses in arts, science, commerce, engineering, and polytechnic disciplines, as well as 47 primary and secondary educational institutions across Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and Maharashtra.

"A major challenge faced by these institutions is the non-fulfilment of government-aided teaching posts, as vacancies created by retiring teachers are not being filled by the government. Due to the lack of government approval



for teachers hired under aided posts, SGPC has taken on the responsibility of paying their salaries," said Sher Singh Mand in his speech. "Previously, SGPC's educational institutions were running at a financial deficit, but they are now moving towards self-sufficiency. The number of student admissions is increasing every year, and all staff salaries are being paid on time. Pending liabilities have been cleared, and after settling all dues, the buildings of these institutions are being renovated, and new infrastructure is being developed. Play stations have been installed in primary and public schools for young children," he added. Mand said efforts would be made to beautify the educational buildings and create new infrastructure in the upcoming financial year. SGPC is also reaching out to social welfare organisations for support in further strengthening these institutions, he added. He said, "Last year, with the assistance of a private bank, hundreds of computers, 21 high-tech soundproof ICT labs, and 80 high-tech smart classrooms were installed in schools and colleges. For student transportation, three air-conditioned buses with 46 seats, two air-conditioned buses with 42 seats, and three 'Magic' school vans have been provided, with six more to be delivered soon. Additionally, another bank has contributed towards setting up new smart classrooms."

Pitching for investment in West Bengal, direct Kolkata-London direct flights to facing protests: 5 takeaways of Mamata's UK visit

GNS News Agency, April 4

After completing a six-day London visit, the West Bengal Chief Minister is returning to Kolkata on Saturday. During her visit, CM Mamata Banerjee raised some issues concerning her state. On the other hand, she faced criticism and protests as well. Here are the key takeaways. According to the West Bengal government, it saw immense success in the Bengal Global Business Summit which was organised last February. Only a month later, Banerjee had the opportunity to invite industry leaders from Britain to invest in West Bengal, while addressing an interactive session as part of a business meet jointly organised by the UK India Business Council (UKIBC) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in London. A senior official of the delegation said, "We got some business proposals from British business houses, and also signed some MOUs. If this process and following up will continue, no doubt we will see immense success in our industrialisation process." In her speech at Oxford University, the Chief Minister elaborately explained her social welfare programmes, specifically for the women and backward classes. She explained how projects like the Kanyashree and Lakshmi Bhandar schemes became "popular" in her state. During her speech, Banerjee also had to face some protests by some students of Oxford. They

questioned her on issues like the R G Kar rape and murder case, the Singur issue, and a recent incident at Jadavpur University where state education minister Bratya Basu's convoy allegedly collided with a student during protests.

Some of the audience was seen to protest with placards and question her stance on communal issues. Banerjee said on the R G Kar issue, "Do you know that this case is pending? The responsibility of investigating this case is now in the hands of the Central government, the case is no longer in our hands." She said, "Don't disrespect your institution by insulting me. I have come here as a representative of the country. Don't insult your country." Banerjee, during her speech at Oxford's Kellogg College, urged the University to set up a campus in Kolkata. She said that the students of West Bengal are "very intelligent" and ready to study at such a campus, assuring the authorities of Oxford that the State can "arrange land in an hour" for it. At the BGBS, Banerjee had pitched direct flights from Kolkata to London to the British delegation. During her six-day London tour, she made this demand almost everyday to businessmen, even representatives of the British Airways, at meetings. Banerjee said, "London is not far away from Kolkata. We need a direct flight from London. I came to London from Kolkata, spending 18 hours... (A direct flight) will be a great success for the West Bengal government."

Financial Assistance to the Family of the Deceased

"P. S. ASHOKAN "INDIAN-CHRONICLE "MANTHANI "5-4-2025."On Friday, friends of the late Arishanapelli Srinivas, the former president of the Padmashali Sangham, provided financial assistance of ₹2 lakh to his family." "To provide some context, Arishanapelli Srinivas, a resident of Gunjapadugu village in Manthani Mandal, passed away recently due to an untimely death. Upon hearing the news, his friends came together to support the grieving family by collecting funds and offering financial aid." "Speaking at the condolence meeting held on Friday, his friends expressed their sorrow, stating that it was heartbreaking to lose a close companion who always shared both joys and sorrows with everyone. While he may no longer be physically with them, the moments spent together and the love and affection he showed will forever remain cherished memories.

They assured Srinivas's family that they would continue to provide support in the future." "The family members were deeply immersed in grief during the program, which was organized with the heartfelt support of Delhi-based (Orchestra Artists Group). The event saw a large number



of family members, relatives, and well-wishers in attendance.

'Bound to happen': R G Kar rape-murder victim's father on Oxford students protesting against Mamata



GNS News Agency, April 4

After the R G Kar rape and murder case in August 2024, where a postgraduate trainee doctor was found dead in a seminar hall of the medical college, protests broke out across West Bengal. The state's Chief Minister, on her first foreign tour since then, once again faced protests on her last day in London at Oxford University's Kellogg College. Banerjee's speech was briefly disrupted after a group of protesters — students at the University — raised slogans over the R G Kar case. The victim's father told The Indian Express that "this was bound to happen". "She (Banerjee) will have to face protests in every foreign soil she sets foot in. Not only this city or state, but other states and countries also protested, asking for justice for my daughter. Around 16 countries had kept in touch with me, showing support for my fight," he said.

Colonel assault case: HC flays affidavit filed by Patiala SSP, asks why accused were not arrested

GNS News Agency, April 4

Criticising the affidavit filed by Nanak Singh, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Patiala, the Punjab and Haryana High Court on Friday raised serious questions over the delay in registering the First Information Report (FIR) and the Daily Diary Report (DDR) in the alleged assault of a serving Colonel and his son by 12 Punjab Police personnel on the intervening night of March 13 and 14. Justice Sandeep Moudgil asked why quick action was not taken even though the district police chief had come to know about the incident early on March 14.

Col Pushpinder Singh Bath currently posted at the Army headquarters in Delhi, had alleged that the police personnel, including four Inspector-rank officers, attacked him and his son without any provocation. Earlier this week, he approached the high court seeking a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into the incident. The Colonel's plea stated that he and son Angad Singh Bath were assaulted, left to recover as the police officials drank water, and were then assaulted again. The Colonel allegedly suffered a dislocated arm while his son's nose was fractured. CCTV evidence from the roadside dhaba reportedly shows the assault. When the Punjab state counsel submitted that the court should give the Special Investigation Team (SIT) time to conduct a fair and impartial investigation and that he did not want the case to go off "on a slight tangent", pitting one uniformed force against the other, Justice Moudgil said, "What you will do in the future is not a concern at all. We have to find out whether the allegations made by the petitioner are true." He said the crux of the case was the petitioner's loss of trust and faith in the Punjab Police.

The state counsel reminded the court that a senior Army officer of the rank of Major General and a top police officer (Punjab DGP) had addressed a joint press conference to keep the issue from becoming a police-versus-Army issue. To this, Justice Moudgil remarked, "In how many (such) cases...are the accused within your reach not arrested? They (the accused) are not being punished. By suspending them, you are not obliging anybody." The judge sought clarity on the timing of a text message sent by the petitioner's wife to the SSP. The message was evidently sent at 9.48 am on March 14, but the SSP's affidavit stated that it was received at noon. This confusion was later cleared by the state counsel. The judge also asked the state counsel to clarify when the accused were identified. Advocate P S Ahluwalia, representing the Colonel, divulged that SSP Singh had first called a relative of Col Bath at 7.30 am on

"Did she know that she would face a protest? She went prepared with pictures of herself covered in bandages," the father said. During their protest, Banerjee had told the students, "I can see ultra Left and Left faces," and displayed a picture of the injuries she sustained during the Left regime. To those raising the questions, she asked if they were "communal". The victim's father also told The Indian Express that "even now, in the (Calcutta) High Court, the state is trying to stop us from getting justice but we will fight, if need be, we will snatch away justice. They (state administration) have been trying to delay everything. We were made to run pillar to post for more than six months for my daughter's death certificate." Junior doctor Debasish Halder, one of the faces of the R G Kar protests, told The Indian Express, "Anyone can protest, everyone has the right to. It was a huge protest all over the world... There were protests in London also. Since she had visited London, thus those who had previously protested, protested again in front of her and raised questions. Everyone had fought for the R G Kar victim." In August 2024, the 31-year-old junior doctor's body was found in the seminar room of the R G Kar Medical College and Hospital. A day after the crime, civic volunteer Sanjay Roy was arrested and charged with rape and murder. It took 59 days for the trial to complete after it began on November 11, 2024. The CBI took charge of the case on August 13, and the charges against the accused were framed on December 4. In January 2025, the lower court convicted civic volunteer Roy for the rape and murder, and he was sentenced to life imprisonment.



March 14 following the intervention of senior police officer Gurtej Singh and he had spoken to the petitioner and his wife. "Why did the SSP not disclose this information?" Justice Moudgil asked while directing Ahluwalia to put this on an affidavit.

The delay in registering the DDR was another issue. The court asked why it was recorded only at 12.53 pm on March 14 when the initial complaint was made much earlier. "There is a delay in lodging the DDR, in filing the FIR, and in arresting the accused. Now you are asking for two more weeks?" Justice Moudgil asked the state counsel. When the counsel submitted that the district police were under tremendous pressure as they were on high alert due to the buildup of farmers at the Shambhu and Khanauri borders between March 18 and 20, Justice Moudgil asked whether he meant to say that no FIRs were registered in the district during this period. The court also inquired whether the police tested the CCTV footage obtained from a roadside eatery.

Advocate Ahluwalia, representing the petitioner, argued that the local police had failed to act decisively from the outset, and insisted on a CBI probe. He alleged that the SSP's affidavit contained perjury. "When direct allegations are made against police officers, an independent probe is necessary," he submitted. The court also questioned the police's approach in handling the accused. "Have they been arrested before interrogating the petitioner? You served the petitioner a notice, and he responded. Why is he being called again? What are you trying to indicate? You are only trying to buy time," Justice Moudgil remarked. Further, the court sought an affidavit detailing why police officers were present at the location of the assault and whether they were on duty at the time. It also sought details of all FIRs registered in Patiala district between March 18 and 20, when police were on high alert due to the farmers' protest.

4 days before retirement, Jadavpur University interim VC removed from post; says 'don't know why'

GNS News Agency, April 4

The University has been in turmoil since March 1, when protests for students' elections turned violent — after a WBCUPA meeting, state education minister Bratya Basu was allegedly attacked by JU students, and his car also allegedly injured a first-year student. An order sent by Raj Bhavan to the interim Vice Chancellor stated, "The authorisation given to professor Bhaskar Gupta, as per order no WBG/AB/657 dated April 2024, to exercise the powers and perform the duties of the Vice Chancellor of Jadavpur University is withdrawn with further orders and shall come into effect immediately." Questions have been repeatedly raised about the role of the Vice Chancellor in the safety and security of the University. Bhaskar Gupta took over the post in April 2024. According to official documents, he was scheduled to retire on March 31 this year. Speaking to The Indian Express, Ghosh said, "I have left the post as directed in the letter. I really do not know why such a decision was taken, nothing has been mentioned in the letter. I love the University and it is not necessary that I have to serve the University as a Vice Chancellor. Only four days remained until my retirement." "The incident which happened inside the University earlier this month was very saddening, I have always said that," he said. At the time of the inci-



dent, students had demanded to speak with Gupta, who claimed that he was unwell, and was admitted to a private health facility on March 5. Later, he was discharged, and took part in a virtual meeting with other University authorities to ascertain steps to be taken to "ensure safety and security" on campus. Seven FIRs have been registered in connection with the incident. So far, one alumnus of the University has been arrested and is currently out on bail. Several PILs had been filed in the Calcutta High Court over police inaction and over-action.

Basar temple earns Rs 53.36 lakh for 43 days

GNS News Agency, April 4

Nirmal: The ancient Sri Gnana Saraswathi Devasthanam-Basar saw an income of Rs 53.36 lakh for 43 days. The counting of hundials was conducted on the premises of the temple on Friday.

In a statement, executive officer of the temple K Sudhakar Reddy said that the temple registered income of Rs 53,36,176, 73 grams of mixed gold and 2.10 kilograms of silver ornaments by way of offerings by devotees from February 13 to March 28.



New real estate ready-reckoner rates could hit affordability of economic housing projects in Maharashtra



GNS News Agency, April 4

Maharashtra real estate associations had asked for a freeze on the rise in ready-reckoner rates given the already higher-than-expected rise in construction costs.Real estate associations had asked for a freeze on the rise in ready-reckoner rates given the already higher-than-expected rise in construction costs.

The affordability of economic housing projects in Pune is likely to take a hit as the Maharashtra government has increased the ready-reckoner rates, further hampering the growth of the real estate market, which is already complaining of sluggish sales.A statement issued by the office of the inspector-general of stamp duty and registration stated the rates have increased after a gap of two years. For rural areas, the rate increase is 3.36 per cent, for nagar panchayat and municipal council it is 4.97 per cent, and for municipal corporations (except Mumbai) the rise is 5.95 per cent. In the state capital, the hike is 3.39 per cent.Abhay

Kele, president of the National Real Estate Development Council (Naredco), said the rise in ready-reckoner rates in rural areas can hit the affordability of the economic housing projects. "Most of the areas where construction for economic housing is going on are in the villages and thus their affordability would be hit post this rise," he said.

Real estate associations had asked for a freeze on the rise in ready-reckoner rates given the already higher-than-expected rise in construction costs. The sector, most builders point out, has entered a stagnant phase with sales slowing down. This rise will deter many people who otherwise would have gone for investment, they add.The Solapur municipal corporation has seen the highest rise of 10.17 per cent, while the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation has seen the lowest rise of 3.39 per cent. Pimpri-Chinchwad has seen a rise of 6.69 per cent while Pune Municipal Corporation has seen a rise of 4.16 per cent. The overall increase in ready-reckoner rates within municipal corporations is 5.95 per cent.Ready-reckoner rates are determined by taking into consideration registered documents and also conducting physical surveys of the places. Before the rates are finalised, meetings are held with the stakeholders including realtors.But the rate hike could affect affordable housing by raising upfront costs. Lloyd Mascarenhas of real estate consultancy firm ANAROCK Group said this would make housing less affordable to some lower income buyers. "The higher financial burden could push the overall cost of acquisition beyond such buyers' reach, and may result in more fence-sitting. Affordable housing is sensitive to price changes, and this hike, coupled with steadily rising input costs for developers and additional levies, may dampen demand in this segment to some extent," he said.

Rice cultivation and changing climate, a growing concern for Punjab, finds study

GNS News Agency, April 4

Climate change is a global concern, but in Punjab, a state that plays a crucial role in India's food security, a key factor driving regional climate shifts is the significant rise in rice cultivation, a new study has found. Over the past few decades, this change has profoundly affected the region's weather patterns, resulting in fluctuations in key meteorological parameters, including the monsoon, temperature, humidity, evaporation rates, and sunshine hours.The study conducted by three scientists from Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Ludhiana, is titled 'Rice Cultivation: A Contributor to Climate Change in Indian Punjab – A Perspective'. It was published in Theoretical and Applied Climatology journal on February 5.



Primarily conducted during the summer months but reflecting the year-round impact of climate on Punjab, the study reveals that the major shift toward rice cultivation began in the late 1960s with the advent of the 'Green Revolution'. This shift, it says, transformed the central plains zone, which accounts for about 55 per cent of the state's area and over 70 per cent of its rice-growing land in the summer. In contrast, the flanking zones, which are mainly devoted to vegetables, maize, and cotton, have lower rice coverage, as per the study.According to the study, meteorological data from 1970 to 2020 shows that rice-intensive regions in the state have experienced a consistent rise in minimum daily temperatures of 0.054°C per year, while non-rice regions saw negligible changes.

The study conducted by Prabhjyot Kaur, head of the Department of Climate Change and Agricultural Meteorology at PAU, along with Assistant Professor Harleen Kaur and N S Bains, former director of research at PAU, states that changes in temperature, humidity, and evaporation were most pronounced during the rapid expansion of rice cultivation between 1970 and 1995. The extensive creation of puddled rice fields, covering around 3 million hectares, is believed to be a significant factor behind these climate shifts. The study also explores how this sharp increase in rice acreage (up nearly 705 per cent in 50 years) might have altered monsoon rainfall patterns in the region.Altered monsoon patterns

The study notes that in Punjab, the rice-growing season typically begins in the second week of June, with the transplantation of nurseries under puddled conditions, and the crop matures around the first week of October. During this period, the monsoon rains usually arrive in a brief window from late June to early July, closely aligning with the rice growth cycle. The monsoon typically withdraws by mid-September, just as the rice nears maturation.However, since the early 2000s, Punjab has seen a significant shift toward rice-based agroecology, which has coincided with changes in the monsoon pattern, as per the study. Historically, the monsoon season in Punjab lasted around 77 days. But since 2000, it has been extending by an average of 0.8 days per year, reaching 98 days in 2020 and 118 days in 2021. Despite the longer duration, however, the total amount of rainfall has decreased, with an average annual decline of 6 mm. Over 21 years, from 2000 to 2020, rainfall during the monsoon was below normal in 18 years. In many of these years, rainfall was up to 20 per cent below normal, and in some cases, it exceeded a 20 per cent deficit.

Kaur says that this shift in rainfall patterns coincides with the expansion of rice cultivation in Punjab, particularly after the area under rice cultivation surpassed 2.0 million hectares, or roughly two-thirds of the current area. These changes in the monsoon pattern signal a departure from the traditional rainfall regime, where the onset of monsoon in July would bring long, unbroken spells of rain across the state, followed by scattered showers in August.As per the study, the rainfall was up to 20 per cent below normal in nine years (2000, 2003, 2005–06, 2010–11, 2013, 2019, and 2020) and more than 20 per cent below normal during another set of nine years (2002, 2004, 2007, 2009, 2012, 2014–2017).The study suggests that the alteration in monsoon behaviour may be linked to the presence of standing water in rice fields, which weakens the atmospheric triggers that once initiated the rainfall process. Additionally, the cooling effect from large areas of standing water may hinder the cascading condensation processes that typically stabilise rainfall patterns.Rising temperaturesAdditionally, the study notes that the expansion of wetland rice farming has been linked to increased emissions of greenhouse gases such as methane (CH4) and nitrous oxide (N2O), contributing to a rise in nighttime temperatures and warming of the air boundary layer. This intensification of the greenhouse effect has been further compounded by a decrease in monsoon rainfall.For instance, in Ludhiana, from 1970 to 2020, rice acreage grew from 5,000 hectares to 258.6 thousand hectares, a 52-fold increase. The percentage of land under rice in Ludhiana rose from 8.1 per cent (1970–79) to 70.1 per cent (2011–2020). In non-rice-intensive zones like Bathinda and Nawanshahar, which were also a part of the study, rice acreage increased from 5.3 per cent to 40.0 per

cent (1977–86 to 2011–2020) and 13.8 per cent to 46.2 per cent (1984–93 to 2011–2020), respectively.

The study emphasises that rising temperatures linked to rice cultivation are evident in Ludhiana, where from the 1970s to the 2000s, minimum temperatures increased by over 3.7°C. This change was much more pronounced here than in non-rice-intensive areas like Bathinda and Nawanshahar, where temperatures rose by only 0.6°C and 0.1°C, respectively, the study notes.The presence of standing water in rice fields is believed to contribute to this warming trend by retaining heat and raising night-time temperatures, thus reducing the diurnal temperature range — the difference between day and night temperatures — according to the study.The increase in nighttime temperatures has broader implications. With higher humidity due to the water-filled rice fields and decreased evaporation rates, the local microclimate has become more humid. The study also observed a rise in humidity and a decline in pan evaporation in Ludhiana.

This trend corresponds with the presence of standing water in rice fields, which increases moisture in the air and reduces evaporation rates. Additionally, a decrease in sunshine hours over the decades was recorded, which could be linked to increased cloud cover or changes in the region's rainfall pattern.The researchers adopted two approaches for the study: a comparison between rice-intensive and non-rice-intensive locations and a phase-wise analysis of rice acreage along with periods of rapid expansion of rice cultivation (1970-1995) and slower expansion (1996-2020).Rice cultivation has also led to the over-exploitation of groundwater, endangering the viability of agriculture in the long run and the health of the region's ecosystems, the study has found."From rising temperatures and altered monsoon patterns to the depletion of groundwater, the impacts of intensive rice cultivation are shaping the region's climate and future agricultural practices. While rice farming has been a cornerstone of Punjab's agricultural economy, its environmental cost is becoming increasingly clear. The state needs to change this farming practice sooner rather than later," said Kaur.

Spike in fire calls in Delhi as summer arrives early, officials urge caution

GNS News Agency, April 4

The summer season began earlier this year in Delhi, with temperatures rising from the last week of March. As the heat increased, so did the number of fire calls. This March, the Delhi Fire Service received 1,809 fire calls, compared to 1,328 calls the same month last year. Eleven people died in fire accidents in March, while 56 were either saved or injured.

"Usually, during summer, a small fire also takes no time to turn big owing to heat. A little ignition of a cigarette or even a spark from shoes, if they have a nail, can lead to a fire. In March itself, we have received at least 60-70 calls a day, and the number will easily be 100 calls a day in the coming weeks," a senior fire official said, adding that 720 of the 1,809 fire calls were related to garbage fires.Due to the rise in calls, fire officials have implemented several measures, including restricting leave for all staff members. Previously, the station officer was responsible for approving leave requests, but now the assistant divisional officer (ADO) will handle this duty to ensure maximum staff availability.Delhi has 65 fire stations, all on alert, as is customary during summer. Also, the workshop staff, who typically receive rest days over the weekend, work around the clock to ensure that fire tenders are regularly maintained."All equipment required for firefighting is also being checked and repaired to ensure that everything is readily available in case of an emergency. We also advise the public to get the servicing done for air conditioners before using them, not to use them for long hours, or to leave them unattended. Besides, multiplying of wires should be avoided as overloading also leads to fire," the official added.

Penalties to rise as BMC set to implement new solid waste management bylaws



GNS News Agency, April 4

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Monday proposed the implementation of the new solid waste management bylaws by releasing a draft and inviting suggestions and objections from residents. Having come into existence in 2006, the bylaws are a set of regulations to ensure public places are clean. They prohibit littering in public by enforcing penalties and mandate a proper waste management methodology starting from segregation to scientific disposal.

Why is BMC implementing new bylaws?

As the solid waste management bylaws have remained unchanged for nearly 19 years, the civic body decided to amend them for stricter enforcement. Some of the key amendments include hiking of penalties and the introduction of a user fee. Over the past decade, several new Acts and regulations like the plastic waste management rules (2016), construction and demolition waste management rules (2016) and biomedical waste management rules (2016) came into force. Several aspects of these laws were not incorporated in the bylaws. The latest move will ensure that several parameters of these rules are included in the BMC's regulations so that they can be implemented at the ground level.

How are the new guidelines going to affect residents?

For residents of Mumbai, the most important aspect will be the introduction of a user fee. Till now, the BMC didn't charge any fee for collecting waste from residential units and commercial establishments. Alongside this, the BMC has also announced hikes in penalties for spitting, littering and garbage burning in public spaces to ensure strict enforcement.According to the proposed guidelines, the BMC has increased the penalty of littering and spitting on roads to Rs 500 and Rs 250, respectively, from Rs 200. Bathing at public spaces is going to cost Rs 300, up from Rs 100. Urination and defecation in the open will invite a penalty of

Bengaluru comic author Falah Faisal on how he got started, and what it takes to create a superhero



GNS News Agency, April 4

For most people with a passing knowledge of comic books, the term "superhero" probably brings to mind iconic characters such as Superman or Wonder Woman. But a bit closer to home, Bengaluru writer Falah Faisal decided to take a crack at the concept, coming up with his own hero, 'Musalman' – by turns a cricketer and a costumed crime-fighter.While the superhero's location is not explicitly mentioned (aside from the fictional Antim Pradesh), Faisal says, "Inherently, it is a product of the city.....my work is clearly a product of Bengaluru, its environment and education and sociopolitical milieu."Early on, Falah Faisal had wanted to become a filmmaker – an aspiration he still holds. He said, "In 2016, I worked with a YouTube channel in Bombay and moved back as my father met with an accident. While I was figuring out what I wanted to do, I came across the movie American Splendor about Harvey Pekar, an underground comic book artist. I thought, this guy was a hospital clerk and if he can make comics, what is stopping me? What was initially a video idea became a comic script."

The first story arc of Musalman was drawn by an illustrator who goes by the moniker 'The Artist Spud', while the current artwork is done by artist Arun Prasanthen.On the process and rationale behind creating a comic hero who is visibly Muslim both in name and costume, Faisal said, "A stand-up comedian friend of mine used to make a joke about how he looked like a Muslim Clark Kent (the secret identity of Superman). That made me think – what if there was a Muslim Superman? I do feel that growing up, Muslims were portrayed negatively in the media in the post 9/11

Rs 500, up from Rs 100. The BMC has also proposed a penalty of Rs 200 on individual waste generators and Rs 1,000 on bulk waste generators for delivering non-segregated waste.Earlier this week, the BMC proposed that the penalty of garbage burning be hiked to Rs 1,000 from Rs 100. The authorities maintained that commercial properties where waste is burnt at public spaces will be charged Rs 10,000 as a penalty. Penalties for littering and defecation by pets in public spaces have been revised to Rs 1,000 from Rs 500. The BMC has also proposed a penalty of Rs 20,000 for unauthorised dumping of constructing debris and a penalty of Rs 25,000 has been proposed for transporting construction debris without taking approval from authorities.

Why is BMC levying a user fee from residents?

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has mandated the levying of users free from residents by urban local bodies, as part of the new solid waste management rules.According to the proposed structure, residential units that have a built-up area less than 50 sq m will be charged Rs 100 per month, units having an area between 50 sq m and 300 sq m will be charged Rs 500, while any residential unit above 500 sq m will have to pay Rs 1,000 every month. Hotels and restaurants will be levied a monthly fee between Rs 1,500-Rs 7,500 depending on their categorisation, while clinics and dispensaries will be charged between Rs 2,000-Rs 5,000 depending on their bed capacity. Commercial establishments like small shops will have to pay Rs 500, while banquets and public halls will have to pay charges between Rs 5,000 and Rs 7,500 depending on their capacity.Kiran Dighavkar, deputy municipal commissioner (solid waste management), told The Indian Express, "Almost all the major civic bodies including Bangalore, Pune and Kolkata had implemented it already. Therefore, as part of the new bylaws, we have proposed an introduction of these charges. The new fee will be levied on a monthly basis while it will be charged annually as an additional component in the property tax bills."The BMC in its draft of the amendment said that it aims to generate an annual revenue of Rs 687 crore by implementing solid waste management fees on residential units alone. Civic officials maintained that the generated revenue will be used to strengthen Mumbai's solid waste management infrastructure."Mumbai generates around 8,000 metric tonnes (MT) of waste daily and we require a mammoth of manpower and services for providing solid waste management services. The generated revenue will allow us to strengthen our infrastructure and provide us an alternative source of revenue," Dighavkar said.

world. You didn't have many good characters to look forward to and aspire to. I wanted to create something that gives the next generation of kids something to look up to as a positive role model as opposed to seeing ourselves as villains". On these lines, he has come up with a whole array of characters and villains – from the martial artist Begum Badass to the villainous Taana Shah.For all this, Faisal doesn't let the comic take itself overly seriously, with a strong sense of humour and satire grounding the work – something that he attributes to the influence of shows such as South Park.He added, "A lot of stuff that I watched in my formative years was satirical. I was also hugely influenced by Alan Moore and Grant Morrison (the former is known for comics such as V for Vendetta, while the latter created the cult classic Invisibles comic.)."He also lists American author Kurt Vonnegut amongst his influences. Another factor that has shaped his work is the format he started out in. Faisal says, "Back in the day, Instagram gave you only ten images in which I had to include a beginning, middle and end, and a cliffhanger for the next episode. So I had to structure it based on the limitations of the medium."

Another long standing creation of his, Falahdeen, is based on what he describes as Grant Morrison's concept of "putting on a fiction suit, entering your own story, and influencing it from within". Falahdeen, a roommate of the hero Musalman, is an irreverent take on the Aladdin tale, while also serving as Faisal's avatar within his comic world.Faisal views his character Musalman as a unifying force, written in a syncretic context, with elements of Hindu mythology cropping up in storylines. With regard to the occasional online troll who might be drawn by the title of the comic, he says, "I have had the opposite effect, where trolls are often converted to being a fan when they actually see the work." He is also looking to put out a collection of the initial comics that describe the origin of the character in the form of a graphic novel titled Musalman Finds His Roots, via crowdfunding.By way of advice for aspiring comic creators, he says, "Read, read and read. There is no substitute for reading comics to teach the visual language of storytelling. If you like a comic, try and make it your own way....do not have the anxiety about creating something completely original. If you have influences, feel free to do a homage to them. You will not know if it works or not until you put it out to an audience."

ATF rates slashed. Will air travel get cheaper?

GNS News Agency, April 4

New Delhi: The price of jet fuel, or ATF, on Tuesday was cut by a steep 6.1 per cent and the rates of commercial LPG that is used in hotels and restaurants were reduced by Rs 41 per 19-kg cylinder in the monthly revision done in line with benchmark international prices.

The Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) price was reduced by Rs 5,870.54 per kilolitre, or 6.15 per cent, to Rs 89,441.18 per kl in the national capital – home to one of the busiest airports in the country, according to state-owned fuel retailers.The reduction negates the increase in prices effected since February.The ATF price in Mumbai was cut to Rs 83,575.42, while those in Chennai and Kolkata were reduced by Rs 92,503.80 and Rs 91,921 per kl, respectively, from Rs 84,511.93 per kl previously.Oil firms also reduced the price of commercial LPG by Rs 42 to Rs 1,762 per 19-kg cylinder in the national capital.This reduction follows a Rs 6 per cylinder hike effected on March 1.Commercial LPG now costs Rs 1,713.50 per 19-kg cylinder in Mumbai, Rs 1,868.50 in Kolkata and Rs 1,921.50 in Chennai. Prices of ATF and LPG differ from State to State depending on the incidence of local taxes, including VAT.The rate of cooking gas used in domestic households, however, remained un-



changed at Rs 803 per 14.2-kg cylinder.

State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) revise prices of ATF and cooking gas on the first of every month based on the average price of benchmark international fuel and foreign exchange rate.Prices of petrol and diesel continue to remain frozen. Rates had been cut by Rs 2 per litre in mid-March last year, ahead of the general elections. Petrol costs Rs 94.72 a litre in Delhi, while diesel is priced at Rs 87.62.

Growing cybercrime and the need for an Indian cybersecurity force



In today’s rapidly evolving digital landscape, the importance of cybersecurity cannot be stressed enough. In India alone, a company falls victim to cyberattacks every 11 seconds. By August 2024, nearly 60% of businesses globally had experienced a ransomware attack. On a global scale, we contend with 5.5 billion malware attacks annually and an astounding 6.3 trillion attempted breaches — an average of 6.5 attacks every second.

According to some leading research sites such as CRN India, ransomware poses a significant threat in India, with eight out of 10 enterprises confirming that they have experienced such attacks. Further, almost 40% of large enterprises in India have fallen victim to phishing email-led attacks. A striking 92% of all surveyed enterprises believe that operational disruption would be a significant consequence of a ransomware attack. This data present a compelling portrait of the digital landscape we navigate. While digitalisation brings substantial economic and social benefits, it also introduces unique challenges — much like any powerful tool — that we must be prepared to address effectively. As cybercrime continues to evolve into a sophisticated enterprise, the need for robust cybersecurity measures becomes imperative. Effective cybersecurity demands not only the integration of cutting-edge technology and innovation but also the ability to navigate the complexities that accompany these advancements. The impact of cyberattacks on enterprises extends far beyond organisational boundaries, affecting individuals and communities. A recent ransomware attack on a company disrupted payment systems for 300 small, especially rural and cooperative banks across the country. As such incidents multiply, their repercussions on the nation’s economy and the financial well-being of its citizens are increasingly evident.

Shortage of skilled professionalsThe rising prevalence of these threats also underscores the urgency to address the shortage of skilled professionals in the cybersecurity sector. India’s G-20 Sherpa and former NITI Aayog CEO, Amitabh Kant, recently unveiled a report that highlighted that over 1,16,000 cybersecurity incidents were reported in 2023, a significant increase from previous years. This alarming rise emphasises the pressing need for a larger, trained and skilled professionals to combat the challenges in an ever-evolving cybersecurity landscape.

According to a white paper from the World Economic Forum, India is home to nearly one-third of the world’s graduates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Yet, 30% of the 40,000 job vacancies for cybersecurity professionals in 2024 remain unfilled due to talent shortages. The current market for skilled talent offers a valuable opportunity for bolstering national security and enhancing economic growth. As cybercrime becomes more sophisticated, the Indian cybersecurity market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 18.33% from 2024 to 2029, as PwC India says, reflecting increased investment in cybersecurity measures by financial institutions. The demand for cybersecurity professionals has surged in the South Asian region and the ‘Five Eyes’ countries (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States), driven primarily by rapid digital transformation. A report from the Data Security Council of India indicates that the country will need 1.5 million cybersecurity professionals by 2025.

Therefore, it is crucial to train future generations in cybersecurity fundamentals to capitalise on India’s demographic dividend. While India produces a wealth of technically skilled professionals known for their strong work ethic, ensuring that they are adequately equipped to tackle future challenges particularly in cybersecurity is essential. As a burgeoning hub for technology and innovation, India holds immense potential for developing its cybersecurity infrastructure. As educational institutions collaborate with policymakers to expand opportunities in cyberspace, key areas remain where targeted growth can drive more impactful outcomes. The findings of the 2023 Ministry of

Education report indicate that fewer than 30% of institutions offer comprehensive cybersecurity courses. And, even though these institutions offer cybersecurity courses in India, many need updated curricula that align with industry needs. Despite facing cyberattack challenges and accounting for 13.7% of all such incidents, India is emerging as a critical player in the global cybersecurity landscape. The PwC India report says that approximately 28% of global organisations have more than half of their cybersecurity teams based in India, with 17% housing over 75% of their teams there. Models to look at in the world India can learn lessons from countries such as the U.S. and Israel, which have developed unique curricula and methodologies to equip their youth with essential cyber skills. The U.S. National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) framework provides a structured approach to education and skill development. At the same time, Israeli universities emphasise interdisciplinary studies that combine cybersecurity with fields such as Artificial Intelligence and data science. Although some Indian universities offer specialised courses in cybersecurity, there remains a substantial opportunity for hands-on training and exposure to real-world scenarios.

With India reporting at least 40,000 job vacancies in cybersecurity as of May 2024, and at least 30% of these positions requiring trained professionals, the urgency of addressing these gaps and taking positive inspiration from other nations and academic recommendations cannot be overstated. While India has always focused on balancing and learning from global best practices, it has delved deeper into the realm of developing frameworks and mechanisms for cybersecurity strengthening. The National Cybersecurity Reference Framework aims to provide clear guidelines on roles and responsibilities in cybersecurity based on existing regulations. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology collaborates with technology companies to enhance cybersecurity training and skill development among government officials, which is crucial for improving the skills of learners and officials nationwide. Recognising the ever-evolving landscape of cyber threats, India is prioritising skill development initiatives through collaborations with educational institutions, industry certifications, and in-house training programmes. The rise in cybersecurity certification offerings, covering over 400 institutions, demonstrates a unified effort to cultivate local talent and address the increasing demand for qualified cybersecurity professionals. Additionally, India’s government can draw inspiration from Israel’s heavy investment in research and development for cybersecurity. Increasing funding for research initiatives in this field is essential. Cybersecurity education should also encompass soft skills training, such as critical thinking and teamwork, as U.S. employers report that these skills are necessary for 75% of cybersecurity roles. To establish a robust cybersecurity framework in India, we can constructively draw from global practices that have yielded positive results. For instance, New Zealand successfully created a cybersecurity infrastructure that provides employment opportunities for its youth while developing a curriculum suited to future challenges. Implementing incentives for educational institutions to expand their cybersecurity offerings is crucial, as is fostering collaboration between government and industry to enhance workforce development programmes that produce skilled professionals.

India can position itself as a regional hubWe must aspire to balance economic growth with national security and social considerations, guided by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s recommendations on digital security strategies. Furthermore, India’s active engagement with the U.N. Cybercrime Treaty offers a platform for strengthening its legal framework and enhancing international cooperation. By drawing inspiration from initiatives such as the U.K.’s Cyber Accreditation Program and Singapore’s Cybersecurity Academy, India can strategically position itself as a regional hub, leveraging the projected \$345.4 billion global cybersecurity market to export talent and stimulate economic growth. Revitalising historical educational development systems will further support these initiatives, fostering a comprehensive culture of digital security across the economy and society. Comprehensive educational reforms must be prioritised to empower India’s cybersecurity workforce and unlock global opportunities. With fewer than 30% of institutions offering robust cybersecurity courses, India can expand its talent pool by incentivising course offerings and fostering public-private partnerships. As the global cybersecurity market is projected to reach \$345.4 billion by 2026, India has a unique opportunity to balance national security with economic growth. By actively engaging in international cybersecurity initiatives, India can position itself as a leader in this dynamic field.

that 95% of cancer information apps designed for healthcare workers contained scientifically valid information. In contrast, only 32% of cancer information apps intended for the general public provided accurate information. Furthermore, the health app industry has largely evaded regulation and oversight. The accuracy of online symptom trackers in providing correct diagnoses is alarmingly low, with some studies suggesting a success rate as low as 34%. Additionally, these tools often neglect to consider crucial factors such as personal and family medical history.

Anyone with access to the internet and basic computer literacy can upload any information online. Online health information is often not peer reviewed. A friend or colleague does not mean that the information is accurate, complete or relevant. Social media influencers often present their content in a highly engaging manner, making it trend quickly. However, despite the attractiveness of the content, it is essential to verify the original source of the information. Fact-checking websites can also be a valuable resource. As the internet has become a popular and frequently consulted source of medical information, it is crucial to exercise caution when sharing content on social media also. Sharing a post without confirming its trustworthiness can inadvertently contribute to the spread of misinformation, which can have dangerous and even harmful consequences. Searching for reliable, trustworthy, accurate information pre supposes a basic knowledge to evaluate contents. Developing a health “app” does not pre suppose domain expertise. Understanding credibility and background of the developer is crucial. “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.” Red flags include “breakthrough” remedies, secret” ingredients, sensational language, unvalidated claims outdated references, anonymous authors, broken links and poor website design. Misinformation spreads at unprecedented speed and scale, particularly false news stories. A user exposed to misinformation once, could see more and more of it over time, further reinforcing one’s mis- understanding.

CAG flags ‘suspicious’ PDS deliveries: ‘244 quintals in car, 300 on 3-wheeler’



CAG flags ‘suspicious’ PDS deliveries: ‘244 quintals in car, 300 on 3-wheeler’The report had two photographs showing alleged improper maintenance of WSDs titled — “stray pigs at KFCSC Raichur (main WSD)” and “infested rice bags at KFCSC Mandya (U)”. A minitruck — which has a carrying capacity of 7.5 quintals — transported 277.69 quintals and 281.29 quintals of foodgrains in two trips, a car transported 244.20 quintals in a single trip, a three-wheeler (passenger) hauled even a higher quantity of 300.02 quintals in just one trip: these are some of the findings of the CAG in its audit of Karnataka’s Public Distribution System implementation.

Revealing the use of passenger vehicles and light goods vehicles in transporting foodgrains, the CAG report ‘Performance Audit on Supply Chain Management of Public Distribution’ noted, “The vehicles used for transporting food grains should be in accordance with the list of vehicles submitted to the Department (of Food and Civil Supplies). Audit verified vehicle numbers as per truck chits with that of vehicle details in ‘Vaahan’ portal and found that many of them were passenger vehicles. Transportation claims were submitted by the contractors using both passenger and light goods vehicles, including cars, autos, three-wheelers and mini trucks claiming to have lifted and transported foodgrains...”The CAG said that wholesale contract transporters are required to obtain the authorisation of the Department of Food and Civil Supplies for vehicles to be used in wholesale transportation along with maintenance of the vehicle as per the conditions of contract. “Audit test checked 2,510 truck chits in seven districts and found that in 1,725 trips, transportation of foodgrains was carried out in vehicles not authorised by the department,” it said. As per the report, which covered the period 2017-22, a quantity of 244.20 quintals of foodgrains was claimed to be transported in a single trip using Tata Indica (V2) under the Hanumanthanagar

How Delhi Police helped trace over 1,000 missing people in two years

In his red T-shirt and blue pants, with a backpack on, the 14-year-old boy was last spotted cycling past central Delhi’s Bara Hindu Rao area. He had been reported missing from his home in Najafgarh. At his office in Civil Lines, sub-inspector Vinod Walia of the Delhi Police’s Missing Persons’ Tracing Squad looked at the distance the child had covered and the time he had taken to do so. Speed = Distance/Time. If the police left fast enough, he calculated, they might catch up with him in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand. It worked: a week after the boy went missing, Walia and his team of four people traced the 14-year-old and brought him back home to Najafgarh.

“The boy’s father had passed away during Covid. He did not have many friends who could tell us much. The family got his MacBook unlocked at a service centre in Nehru Place — his data gave us an indication of where he might have gone,” says Walia, adding that the boy’s search history revealed that he had researched religious places. “What was worrying for us was the fact that his internet searches included things that were similar in the Burari case where 11 people of a family hung themselves (in Delhi in 2018) — spirituality, peace, meditation and what not. We also saw his Google Maps and figured out he was planning to head to Kedarnath via Rishikesh,” Walia tells The Indian Express. A team from the Delhi Police’s North district soon left for Rishikesh and also alerted their counterparts in Uttarakhand. Along with the police in Rishikesh, the Delhi Police finally spotted the boy sitting at one of the ghats. He was then handed over back to his family.

The team in actionIt was in January 2022 that the North district police’s Missing Persons’ Tracing Squad started ‘Operation Talash’ with a specific mandate: to look for missing persons not only from the recent past but also from years ago. The operation, started by then DCP Sagar Singh Kalsi, touched a milestone last month of 1,005 solved cases, including those that involve abduction and human trafficking. Of the approximately 21,000 people declared ‘missing’ in Delhi, 950 are from North Delhi. On the ground floor of the office of DCP North in Civil Lines, the squad occupies a room that’s buzzing with energy as orders are passed around. On one side of the room is the team tracks call data records, CCTV footage and social media; on the other are the members who scroll through Zipnet — a specialised police database of missing people. The moment a case comes up in the database, two teams are assigned the job. While one goes to the spot from where the person is reported missing, the other tries to collect as much technical evidence as possible. The moment they hit upon a concrete clue that might lead them to the victim, they rush to the ground — whether it’s in the city or outstation. Some cases take a day to solve, others take weeks and even months. The squad works in teams of two — one person does the field work and the other parses through technical evidence and the internet to aid the search. Time is of the essence in new cases, and the squad goes through as much data as possible to aid its search.

When the team hits upon a clue, the personnel rush to the ground. For the unit, the most difficult cases are the ones that involve children. According to Head Constable Ashish Kumar, who received an out-of-turn promotion in 2022 for “exceptional work”, most minors who go missing do so either after a fight at home or because of relationships. Constable Reena Chauhan, a recipient of the Delhi Police’s Asadharan Karya Puraskar for ‘exceptional devotion’ in 2023, cites the example of one the oldest cases the squad cracked — that of a 13-year-old girl who went missing from Sarai Rohilla 10 years ago. “We found her in a town in Uttar Pradesh. She is now 23, has children and is married to the man she had fled with. Irrespective of whether a case is five or 10 years old, our aim is to find the missing,” Chauhan says. Some cases are harder than others, such as those involving the hearing impaired. “These are challenging because the missing person cannot communicate with anyone. When you question people on the ground, they too have no clue,” says Constable Gurpreet Singh. He cites a case from June 18, 2023, that’s particularly close to his heart. The case involved a 16-year-old hearing impaired adolescent boy who got lost and couldn’t find his way back

Wholesale Depot (WSD), while 492.20 quintals of foodgrains were shown as transported in two trips of Maruti 800 Omni. It also gives instances of transportation of 277.69 quintals and 281.29 quintals of foodgrains in two trips using a Tata Ace EX BS3 minitruck under Banashankari Wholesale Depot. “The carrying capacity of these mini trucks was 7.5 quintals only,” the report said. The claims of the transporters in delivering 4,014.44 quintals of foodgrains using (the) above passenger vehicles is highly suspicious and the same could not be vouched in audit. The Department failed to disallow the transportation costs claimed by the transporters, as the possibility of delivering such huge quantities is highly impossible considering their carrying capacities. The reply of the Government is silent about the audit findings,” the report said. The CAG said wholesale contract transporters are required to obtain the authorisation of Dept of Food and Civil Supplies for vehicles to be used in transportation. The report said, “Audit test checked 2,510 truck chits in seven districts and found that in 1,725 trips, transportation of foodgrains was carried out in vehicles not authorised by the department.”“Audit observed that though the transporters submitted the list of vehicles to be used in transportation, they also resorted to usage of vehicles which were not authorised/not in the list of vehicles as per contract agreement. Further, the godown manager of WSD failed to ensure that the essential commodities are delivered by the authorised trucks listed out in the contract agreement. Consequently, the contractors submitted claims against the consignments made in unauthorised vehicles which were allowed by the Department...” the CAG said. Highlighting the risks from alleged lack of hygiene at WSDs levels, it said, “Audit observed that poor maintenance of WSDs increased the risk of contamination and pest infestation of foodgrains leading to loss and degraded foodgrain quality... The Department stated that no provision was made towards handling losses and wastages. In the absence of proper set criteria for accounting of handling losses and wastages, the audit could not quantify the losses on this account.”The report had 2 photographs showing alleged improper maintenance of WSDs titled — “stray pigs at KFCSC Raichur (main WSD)” and “infested rice bags at KFCSC Mandya (U)”. Sharing the government’s response to the findings, it said, “The State Government replied (April 2023) that Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Corporation Limited (KFCSC) was directed to forward proposals for improvement of Wholesale Depots based on the standard and good warehousing practices.”



home to Burari. The teenager was found nearly a month later, on July 15, at North West Delhi’s Bawana. “For days, we were out on the streets with his photo to look for him. Each day, we scanned CCTVs. Our search finally ended when we found him at a shelter home in Bawana. I still can’t forget how he smiled and hugged us when we found him. That happiness was unmatched... he was nearly in tears,” he says. But for Chauhan, it’s the cases where children repeatedly run away that are the real challenge. She cites the example of a 14-year-old who left home on September 16, 2023. The girl was tracked down to Surat, Gujarat, and brought back but the child has since run away thrice.

“We can’t do anything because she’s a minor and it’s our duty to bring her back. Each time she ran away, we brought her back — the latest being last month. She says she doesn’t want to stay with her parents but we can’t help in that situation because we are bound by the law,” Chauhan says. Assistant Sub-Inspectors Deenanath, who only uses his first name, and Jagbir Singh both agree that such cases are especially demanding. They cite a case from May 13, 2024, when two sisters aged 12 and 14 went missing from the Wazirabad police station area. Days later, a three-member team that included a woman personnel went to Madurai, Tamil Nadu, where they found that the girls were working as domestic help. “Her father, with whom they didn’t share a good relationship, went with us but they refused to return because they liked the independence. It became a huge task for us. After a lot of counselling, we somehow persuaded them,” says Deenanath.

Then there is the challenge of working under difficult conditions, such as having to travel without reservation in time-sensitive cases. The team also cited an instance of how one policeman led a three-member team that had to once stand in the bathroom of a train that was chock-a-block. “We laugh about all these episodes later but we feel that there should be some reservation for the police and should be given at least one seat while travelling for such operations,” one policeman says. A happy ending

IPS officer Raja Banthia, the current DCP of North Delhi, believes reaching a milestone of 1,000 cases is remarkable given the difficulties involved. “Abduction, kidnapping and human trafficking cases are a big challenge. It ends up being a lifelong nightmare for the families who lose their loved ones... In today’s world, people living in metro cities are often unaware of their own neighbours, making it easy for criminals involved in human trafficking.

This makes it challenging for the police department to trace such missing people,” he says. But for Walia, the challenges involved in the task are offset by something more priceless: the joy of reuniting families. “We experience tears, happiness, sorrow, love and all kinds of emotions while looking for missing children and reuniting them with their families,” he says. For the family in Najafgarh, finding their missing 14-year-old son marked the end of a harrowing week. “He left home saying ‘I’m going to become a monk,’” the boy’s uncle says. “We informed the police and searched for all routes, trains, buses or any medium of transport... We were worried that he could be kidnapped. We finally managed to trace him on the eighth day. There was a great sense of satisfaction in seeing him unharmed.”

From internet shutdowns to no-meat-in-dairy-feed rules: Key USTR report flags trade concerns over India before reciprocal tariffs kick in



A day before imposing reciprocal tariffs, the United States raised a range of concerns over India's trade practices that harm American interests. These range from "localised internet shutdowns that disrupt commercial operations" to "an Indian regulation requiring that dairy products intended for food must be derived from animals that have not consumed feed containing blood meal". Hinting at possible US demands in ongoing trade negotiations with India, the United States Trade Representative's (USTR's) new report on foreign trade barriers covering 29 major trade partners has flagged India's regulations on the import of milk, pork, and fish products, which it said "require genetically modified-free certificates without providing a scientific or risk-based justification".

Indicating that Washington fears another China in the making, the report stated that the US has placed India on the 'Priority Watch List' due to inconsistent progress on intellectual property (IP) concerns. It highlighted the lack of specific laws for "trade secret protection" as a significant issue, along with long waiting periods for patent grants. The US has also expressed concerns over India's price caps on coronary stents and knee implants, stating that these controls have not kept pace with inflation and do not account for production costs or innovation, potentially discouraging US companies from serving the Indian market. US demands on dairy, agriculture and GM products

The report reiterated a long-standing American concern over India's agricultural support programmes, which, according to the US, distort markets. However, Indian officials have argued that US subsidies for farmers are much higher compared to what India provides. The US also raised concerns about India's application of quantitative restrictions on imports of various pulses to manage domestic oversupply, noting the opaque and unpredictable nature of these restrictions. "Restrictions on boric acid imports, including arbitrary quantity approvals and requirements favouring domestic manufacturers, are also a concern," the report said.

"India requires that dairy products intended for food be

derived from animals that have not consumed feed containing internal organs, blood meal, or tissues of ruminant or porcine origin, and that exporting countries certify to these conditions, which lack a discernible animal health or human health justification," the report said. The report also highlighted long standing differences between Washington and New Delhi over genetically modified (GM) products exported by the US. "The Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006 includes specific provisions for regulating food products derived from genetically engineered (GE) products; however, as of 31 December 2024, FSSAI was still in the process of establishing its regulations. India's biotechnology approval processes are slow, opaque, and subject to political influences, and do not appear to take into account science-based approval processes for GE products in exporting countries," the report said. Data localisation and digital trade barriers

The US has expressed concerns about data localisation requirements for payment service suppliers and banks. "In 2018, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) implemented a requirement that all payment service suppliers store all information related to electronic payments by Indian citizens on servers located in India. RBI announced this rule without advance notice or input from stakeholders. In 2019, RBI stated that the requirement to store payments data locally also applied to banks operating in India. Foreign firms assert that the data storage requirement hampers the ability of service suppliers to detect fraud and ensure the security of their global networks," the report said. The Indian Express reported on Friday that concerns over India's strict data localisation norms were raised by the US during the four-day negotiations that ended on Saturday. "The United States continues to encourage India to adopt an 'open skies' satellite policy to allow consumers the flexibility to select the satellite capacity provider that best suits their business requirements and to promote market access for foreign satellite service providers," the report added. Incidentally, DOGE chief Elon Musk, a confidant of President Donald Trump, is a promoter of the Starlink satellite communication provider. US concerns over India's patent regime include copyright piracy, particularly online, and issues with statutory licensing. In the field of patents, long waiting periods for patent grants, excessive reporting requirements, and concerns regarding patentability criteria were noted. The report added that the US continues to monitor restrictions on patent-eligible subject matter in Section 3(d) of the Indian Patents Act. "Concerns also exist regarding the protection of undisclosed test data and the lack of an effective mechanism for the early resolution of pharmaceutical patent disputes. Inadequate IP enforcement, delays in trademark opposition proceedings, and the lack of specific laws for trade secret protection are also significant concerns," the report said.

Amid DeepSeek pressure, why OpenAI is launching an open weight AI model



After first saying that OpenAI may have been "on the wrong side of history" when it comes to open sourcing its technologies, CEO Sam Altman has announced that the artificial intelligence (AI) company will launch its first "open weight" language model since GPT-2 in the coming months. This comes as the company battles perceptions that it might be ceding territory to rivals such as DeepSeek and Meta, who have launched some versions of open weight AI models. "We've been thinking about this for a long time but other priorities took precedence. now it feels important to do," Altman said in a post on X. The model will have "reasoning" capabilities along the lines of OpenAI's o3-mini. Open weight vs open source AI model To be sure, Altman said that OpenAI would launch an open weight model, and not an open source model — the former has less transparency compared to the latter.

Open source models provide full transparency, sharing source code, model architecture, training algorithms, and weights under a licence allowing free use, modification, and distribution. Ideally, training data is disclosed, but legal constraints often limit this. In contrast, open weight models only have the trained model weights, not the source code, training data, or full architecture details. This restricts transparency and customisation, since users can run the model but not fully modify or retrain it.

Indians working abroad sent home a record \$129.4 billion in 2024

New Delhi: Indians working abroad sent home a record \$129.4 billion in 2024 with the highest-ever inflows of \$36 billion in the October-December quarter, according to the latest figures compiled by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). India tops the list of recipient countries for remittances in 2024 and is way ahead of second-placed Mexico with \$68 billion. China (\$48 billion) is at the third spot followed by the Philippines (\$40 billion), and Pakistan (\$33 billion), according to figures compiled by World Bank economists.

The growth rate of remittances in 2024 is estimated to be 5.8 per cent, compared to 1.2 per cent registered in 2023, according to World Bank data. The number of Indians working overseas has tripled from 6.6 million in 1990 to 18.5 million in 2024, with its share in global migrants rising from 4.3 per cent to over 6 per cent during the same period.

Indian migrants in the Gulf countries account for around half of the total Indian migrants in the world. The recovery of the job markets in the high-income countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, has been the key driver of remittances. This is especially true for the United States where the employment of foreign-born workers has recovered steadily and is 11 per



cent higher than the pre-pandemic level seen in February 2020. Officially recorded remittances to low-and middle-income countries (LMICs) are expected to reach \$685 billion in 2024. According to the World Bank, remittances have continued to outpace other types of external financial flows, such as FDI, to low and middle-income countries and will continue to increase because of enormous migration pressures driven by demographic trends, income gaps, and climate change.

Fresh US tariff threat looms over purchase of Russian oil



India could attract additional 25 per cent to 50 per cent US tariffs over the purchase of Russian oil, with US President Donald Trump indicating Sunday he was upset at the progress of peace talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin and warning of imposition of secondary tariffs on buyers of Russian oil if he felt Moscow was blocking his efforts to end the war in Ukraine. India may also not receive a concession on the sweeping US reciprocal tariffs set to be imposed on April 2, as Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One that "all countries" would face the new tariffs. This comes even as the US and India concluded their four-day talks on Saturday to determine the contours of a trade agreement.

Russia has been India's top oil import source during April-December 2024, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Sources in India's refining sector indicated that more clarity was needed on what exactly the US would do and whether there would be any scope for exemptions if Trump were to follow through on his threat of additional tariffs. "It is difficult to say how this will pan out. We need more clarity on what he (Trump) meant when he spoke about potential tariffs on buyers of Russian crude. Will it be limited to tariffs, or would it involve possible secondary sanctions on buyers? That is also a critical question," said an industry source.

India's Russian oil imports have averaged 1.85 million barrels per day (bpd) in the first 21 days of March, sharply higher than February's 1.47 million bpd and January's 1.64 million bpd, according to provisional data from commodity market analytics firm Kpler. IF RUSSIAN OIL were to be priced out from the market, it could lead to higher global oil prices. While securing sufficient oil supplies over the medium term should not be an issue for India, higher oil prices and the loss of discounted Russian barrels, would be a setback for the country. So far, the Indian government and refiners have been clear they will not buy any oil that is under sanctions or involves sanctioned third parties. India has not purchased crude from Iran for years due to US sanctions.

Enduring partnership between RBI and government essential, says President Murmu



Mumbai: President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday said technological advancements are increasing the risks of financial frauds and underlined the need for an "enduring partnership" between the central bank and the government for maintaining macroeconomic stability. Speaking at the closing ceremony of the commemoration of the 90th year of the Reserve Bank of India, Murmu lauded the RBI for taking proactive measures to strengthen and safeguard a secure banking environment. "With the rapid advancement of technology, the risk of financial fraud and cyber threats is also increasing," she said, adding that this is a growing concern which demands constant vigil. The President said the RBI's "remarkable journey" of the last 90 years has been closely aligned with the vision and policies of the government.

"This enduring partnership has been essential in navigating complex economic transitions, implementing critical financial reforms, and maintaining macroeconomic stability," she added. The biggest achievement for RBI over its 90-year existence has been earning the trust of the people, the President said, adding that people "instinctively place" their utmost faith in the financial system overseen by the central bank. "I have no hesitation in saying that the RBI has emerged as one of the most critically important institutions in the nation," she said. The RBI has earned the trust by delivering on its mandate of price stability, growth, and financial stability, and also adapted to meet the evolving needs of the country. The swift responses to challenges like the Covid-19 pandemic highlight RBI's resilience and adaptability, she said.

A teaser of a five-episode web series, which includes visuals of India's gold holdings coming out for the first time in public, was shown to the audience at the event. Speaking on the occasion, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said the next decade will be crucial in shaping the financial architecture of the Indian economy. "We remain committed to expanding and deepening financial inclusion. We shall strive to foster a culture of continuous improvement in customer services and strengthening consumer protection," she said. "It will be our endeavour to optimise our regulatory frameworks by balancing the interests of financial stability and efficiency. We will continue to support technology and innovation. We shall remain vigilant, adaptive and forward looking," he said. A specially created customised stamp celebrating RBI's 90-year journey was released on the occasion. Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said the RBI has stood as a steadfast pillar anchoring India's economic progress. Finance Secretary Ajay Seth,

Even Venezuelan crude that was coming to India was through sanction exemptions granted by the US to certain oil companies. 'India may have to halt Russian oil purchases'

Industry watchers and analysts, at least for the time being, are not bracing for the full impact of Trump's tariff threats. The US President has been mercurial in his tariff threats since taking office in January, but despite his threats to Russia — the world's second-largest oil exporter — global oil prices have not seen a sharp rise. However, if the White House proceeds with imposing tariffs on buyers of Russian oil or enforces secondary sanctions, Indian refiners are likely to halt their purchases of Russian crude, which currently holds the largest share in India's oil import basket at over 30 per cent.

In such an event, they would most likely turn to their traditional suppliers in West Asia, such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). While Indian refiners may be forced to scramble for alternative suppliers in the short term, oil supplies over the medium term are expected to stabilise. Oil tops the list of India's merchandise imports by value, and oil prices impact various aspects of the country's economy. "It is extremely unlikely that Indian refiners will persist with Russian crude imports if the US imposes tariffs. A quick shift to suppliers like Saudi Arabia and Iraq is likely to replace the lost Russian oil volumes," said an oil sector analyst. US open to a deal on reciprocal tariffs Trump said that the US is open to negotiations on reciprocal tariffs but that "those pacts" would have to be discussed after the reciprocal tariffs go live on April 2. The Indian Express reported last week that US negotiators did not divulge any details of the reciprocal tariffs to the Indian side during trade talks.

Trump's clarification that all countries will face reciprocal tariffs follows remarks from White House economic adviser Kevin Hassett, who told Fox Business that the measures would be heavily focused on 10 to 15 countries that account for the bulk of the US trade deficit. "There are more than 100 countries that don't really have any tariffs on us and don't have any non-tariff barriers," Hassett said, according to Reuters. Despite hopes within Indian industry for a resolution on reciprocal tariffs, Indian and US negotiators have yet to agree on the terms of reference (ToR) outlining the scope of the deal. While talks remain in their early stages, the delay in finalising the ToR indicates that both countries are not yet on the same page to begin formal negotiations on a bilateral trade agreement (BTA), experts said. US also reported that Indian negotiators are concerned the US could use reciprocal tariffs as leverage to push for an early deal on goods, particularly regarding market access for American products in India, such as automobiles, whisky, and agricultural products.

Sebi chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey, former RBI Governor Urjit Patel, and almost the entire banking leaders' fraternity including SBI chairman C S Setty were present at the event.

Nikhil Kamath's Gruhas leads Rs 12.5 crore investment in Lehlah

Gruhas cofounder Nikhil Kamath said the future of commerce may belong to platforms that empower individuals to monetise their influence while making discovery and purchasing seamless. Gruhas cofounder Nikhil Kamath said the future of commerce may belong to platforms that empower individuals to monetise their influence while making discovery and purchasing seamless.

LehLah, a creator-led content commerce startup, has raised Rs 12.5 cr as seed funding from a group of investors led by Gruhas, a company co-founded by Nikhil Kamath and Abhijeet Pai. The funds will be utilised for product development, increasing brand visibility, and expanding the team.

Commenting on the funding, Nikhil Kamath said: "Shopping today isn't just about products — it's about trust, influence, and community. People don't want to be sold to; they want recommendations from those they relate to. The future of commerce may belong to platforms that empower individuals to monetise their influence while making discovery and purchasing seamless. Only time will truly tell."

Ashna Ruia, founder, LehLah stated: "We are excited to embark on this new chapter with the backing of Gruhas, who share our vision for transforming the creator economy. This support enables us to amplify our mission of empowering creators to build thriving businesses around their passions. As we continue to innovate and scale, we are inspired by the opportunity to redefine the intersection of creativity, commerce, and community, with key partners like Nikhil Kamath by our side." A content commerce platform, LehLah empowers creators to monetise their influence by sharing affiliate links for curated product recommendations thereby bridging the gap between creators and brand partners.

Searching for success — How Mumbai Indians revolutionised scouting for IPL talent



GNS News Agency, April 4

Mumbai Indians have a rising star in their ranks in Ashwani Kumar, who won the Player Of The Match in his debut against Kolkata Knight Riders during the Indian Premier League (IPL 2025) match on Monday. Here's a closer look at how MI balances top foreign talent with young breakout stars. Over the years, Mumbai Indians have unearthed top talent in the IPL through its extensive scouting network. Hardik Pandya, Jasprit Bumrah, Ishan Kishan, Nehar Wadhwa, Vignesh Puthur and most recently Ashwani Kumar joined the list of difference makers for the legacy franchise.

23-year-old Ashwani Kumar stole the spotlight on his debut with a magical spell of four wickets in three overs, including the wicket of power hitter Andre Russell. The Ajinkya Rahane-led contingent crumbled as they set a meagre total of just 116. Another promising talent scooped up by MI this season is Vignesh Puthur. The left-arm wrist spinner picked up three big wickets against arch-rivals Chennai Super Kings on his debut. Despite his side ending up on the wrong side of the scoreboard, Puthur turned heads by claiming the wickets of CSK captain Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shivam Dube and Deepak Hooda. While Ashwani becomes the most recent addition to a list of big names scouted by the Mumbai Indians, Jasprit Bumrah, the backbone of India's bowling unit, Hardik Pandya, captain of the MI franchise and Ishan Kishan, who recently joined Sunrisers Hyderabad for 11.25 crore are all finds of Mumbai's extensive scouting network.

Don't drop R Ashwin, but stop him from bowling in the powerplay: Kris Srikkanth to CSK

GNS News Agency, April 4

There are also calls for CSK to drop R Ashwin and bring in a seamer like Anshul Kamboj who would strengthen their new ball options. (BCCI) There are also calls for CSK to drop R Ashwin and bring in a seamer like Anshul Kamboj who would strengthen their new ball options. (BCCI) With Chennai Super Kings struggling at the top with their opening combination, former India player Kris Srikkanth has advocated for the inclusion of Devon Conway in place of Jamie Overton for their next match against Delhi Capitals on Saturday.

Having started their campaign with a win over Mumbai Indians, CSK have lost their next two matches against Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Rajasthan Royals with their top-order continuing to give trouble. In three matches so far, CSK have preferred to open with Rachin Ravindra and Rahul Tripathi with Ruturaj Gaikwad coming in at No 3. With Tripathi struggling for form and Rachin blowing hot and cold, Conway's continuous omission has raised eyebrows. There are also calls for CSK to drop R Ashwin and bring in a seamer like Anshul Kamboj who would strengthen their new ball options.

And speaking on his YouTube channel Cheeky Cheeka, Srikkanth says Conway should come into the XI. "Conway has to come in place of Jamie Overton and also bring in Anshul Kamboj into the XI. With regards to Ashwin,

How does Mumbai Indians' scouting unit find top talent?

MI scouts keep a close watch on domestic tournaments like the Ranji Trophy, Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, Vijay Hazare Trophy and Buchi Babu Tournament. Several former cricketers are also part of MI's expansive scouting network. Parthiv Patel, Kiran More and John Wright have been part of this network. A close watch is kept on young talent over multiple seasons, before they are recommended for trials. Once identified, MI provides a platform for these players to further develop their abilities through training camps and assessments under the Head Coach and senior players. The final step demands approval from the team captain and owners. Only after these steps does MI go forward with signing a player and offering them a contract.

MI's best finds over the years — where are they now?

Hardik Pandya — The 31-year-old all-rounder started his long-standing association with MI in 2015 and has risen to the ranks of captain. He also played an important role in two of India's major triumphs in ICC Tournaments — the Champions Trophy in March 2025 and the T20 World Cup in 2024.

Jasprit Bumrah — The right-arm medium pacer, regarded as the best of his generation by many, is known for his reliability in both opening and death overs. The 31-year-old has been part of Mumbai's bowling line-up for over a decade and has picked up 165 wickets in the process. Bumrah has been part of five iconic IPL triumphs and is MI's second-highest wicket-taker after Lasith Malinga. Suryakumar Yadav — Mumbai's trusted middle-order batsman was scouted by the franchise back in 2012. Notably, the right-hand batsman has won IPL crowns with both MI and KKR. He currently leads India's T20 squad and is well-known for his six-hitting abilities, giving him the title of Mr.360. Axar Patel — The Delhi Capitals skipper started his IPL career with Mumbai in 2013. He currently operates as the vice-captain of Indian's T20 unit and is one of the most reliable all-rounders in the game. Also known as 'Bapu', the left-arm orthodox bowler is among the few who have claimed an IPL hat-trick against Gujarat Lions (2016).

In recent years, Chennai Super Kings, Rajasthan Royals and Delhi Capitals have also followed Mumbai's model, establishing their own scouting networks. However, Mumbai's scouting program remains unrivalled.



don't drop him, but stop him from bowling in the powerplay. Between 7-18th over he can be effective, with Jadeja and Noor Ahmad, they can easily slip in 10 overs at least. I will drop Tripathi and bring in Kamboj and then Conway in place of Overton," Srikkanth said. One of the big criticisms of CSK is that they don't give opportunities to uncapped players like the way Mumbai Indians do. This season, in their batting ranks they have the highly-rated Andre Siddarth warming the bench, and Srikkanth said the 18-year-old should be used as an Impact Player. "I would make Shivam Dube play in the XI and bring in Andre Siddarth as an Impact Player. Even Mukhesh Chowdhary is a good option, he has bowled well for CSK in the past," Srikkanth added.

doesn't matter what the conditions are. One thing I've learnt over the years is that certainly is working with the person is as important or perhaps more important than working with the athlete if you like or the competitor. If you are not looking after that person then it is very hard for him to be an outstanding competitor. You realise that the game is not quite that simple."

Ashwani Kumar ate only one banana before the match but picked 4 wickets: MI bowling coach

GNS News Agency, April 4

Hyderabad: Mumbai Indians bowling coach Paras Mhambrey is impressed with left-arm pacer Ashwani Kumar's impressive debut in the IPL against the Kolkata Knight Riders. "To see someone coming in, one first game, under pressure, happy for him. He worked and focused on his strengths and that gave him results. It's not about performance, it's about going and enjoying what you do best," Mhambrey said in a chat with iplt20.com.

"Left arm seamer who swings the ball and has got a high pace, ticks a lot of boxes for us. Wankhede, we always knew, is a wicket that has a lot of bounce compared to others. He's the kind of guy who swings the ball at a high pace as well, so we felt it was the right surface for him to pay," Mhambrey said. Ashwani, who only ate a banana before the match, credited skipper Hardik Pandya for making him feel at ease on debut and easing his nerves. "It is a very good feeling. I hadn't thought that I'll do so well. Hardik bhai told me, 'you're from Punjab and Punjabis are fearless, so just scare the opponents and enjoy yourself,'" Ashwani said when talking to iplt20.com about the unique advice he received.

The debutant was overjoyed to bag Andre Russell's wicket in particular. "Manish Pandey had hit me for a four already. Hardik bhai told me to bowl at the body for him. My favourite wicket was Andre Russell's because he is a very big player. Hardik bhai told me don't be afraid, so I just wanted to bowl to my plans," he said.

Couldn't have asked for better start from Rajat Patidar, says RCB head coach Andy Flower



GNS News Agency, April 4

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's head coach Andy Flower is not only pleased with their start but also the manner in which their new captain Rajat Patidar has started the tournament. With two wins from two matches, RCB are set to host Gujarat Titans in their first home match. And speaking to RCB website, Flower was in total praise for Patidar, who played a key role in their win over Chennai Super Kings last Friday. "It is just the start of the tournament, there is still long way to go. But we couldn't have asked for a better start from Rajat. He has led from the front with the bat. Important for a leader to evidence how he wants to play through

his own actions and he is doing that. I'm enjoying that — growing a relationship with him. Hopefully is in the same boat and enjoying it as well," Flower said.

In a video shared by RCB, Flower can be seen telling Patidar, "Remember when you bat, you don't have to live up to any reputation. You use your cricketing nuanace, play the situation and play to your strengths." Flower who is in his second season with RCB and is looking to end their title drought said, one of the proudest moments of his glittering coaching career was the franchise's performance last season where they made a stunning turnaround. "A very proud moment for me personally was last year when, we were under a lot of pressure, had won just one game from 8 and then we turned it around, won 6 six in a row and made it to the play-offs. So the way we handled ourselves as a group then I was very proud," Flower said. Speaking of his own methods, which has seen him won titles in CPL, ILT20, Flower said, "I just challenge them whenever I've to. Your job is to win the battle, doesn't matter what the conditions are. One thing I've learnt over the years is that certainly is working with the person is as important or perhaps more important than working with the athlete if you like or the competitor. If you are not looking after that person then it is very hard for him to be an outstanding competitor. You realise that the game is not quite that simple."

Will IPL break the 300 barrier this season? Looks unlikely

GNS News Agency, April 4

Deep batting line-ups do not necessarily translate into a heap of runs in this IPL. Deep batting line-ups do not necessarily translate into a heap of runs in this IPL. (BCCI) As hyped by the broadcasters, will this IPL see a team breaking the 300 barrier? Sunrisers Hyderabad, after scaling 250 thrice during their runners-up finish last year, came close to the new magical target in their opening. They scored 286/7 but that was a run short of their own previous best, also IPL's record total. Blazing starts have become non-negotiable after SRH and Kolkata Knight Riders' blistering pursuits last year, and the Mega Auction shake-up for most franchises has revolved around bulking up their respective top-order assets. However, inflated auction prices have left teams now with partly wonky middle orders that could eventually prove to be the central differentiator in the Playoffs race. Scoring patterns indicate that '300' is remarkably achievable but it takes more than just a gung-ho Powerplay onslaught to do so. But in doing so, they disregarded their middle-order and this could come in the way of team's crossing the high 300 hurdle. Deep batting line-ups do not necessarily translate into a heap of runs in this IPL. After two defeats, Chennai Super Kings fans will debate and vary over the strength of a superficial line-up that bears eight noted batters on paper and limited striking ability beyond No. 4.

While it may have slipped in the superior rampage of their respective top orders last year, KKR and SRH marched into the final with sustained middle-order boosts during crucial league-stage outings. The run-scoring trends of the top two teams from last season exemplify how KKR outperformed their final opponent and the rest of the league. The KKR top-3 scored the most runs (1015) behind SRH (1051, 75.15%) in won matches in 2024. While SRH's middle-order (No. 4-7) plundered 1256 runs last year, KKR bore the second-lowest contribution from the bunch of all 10 teams, aggregating only 933 runs. However, the Knights achieved greater consistency with 82 percent of middle-order runs resulting in wins, as opposed to SRH's 58.35 percent (733 runs), eventually trimming the Orange Army's 12-run strike-rate advantage over KKR. If the plans and personnel are foolproof, the results will be imprinted from the outset to form early trends. SRH's middle order had a dashy start in 2024, scoring at 175 in the first three games to



set the tone for the rest of the season. While they have touched 167 in the first three matches this year, SRH have been outgunned by Delhi Capitals (186.20) and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (189.47) after two games each, emitting signals of improved stability in other camps.

The turbo-charged starts further highlight the early concerns that follow for multiple franchises. Five-time champions Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings are the only teams to bear a top-3 that have failed to attain a minimum 150 strike-rate thus far this season. The staggered middle-order returns have consequently sliced the chock-a-block run-scoring competition in the top order, with five teams failing to put on similar strike rates to maintain a healthy run flow. The woes are pronounced with perennial slow-starters, MI, and general accumulators, CSK. Last year, MI topped the middle-order scoring charts with 1300 runs at 157.19. Though only 28 percent of those shaped wins, it was MI's evident source of strength behind a misfiring top-order that tallied a total of 994 runs at 149.12. The starts haven't been any better this season either as MI's top-three average a lowly 12.83 for 77 runs with the lowest strike-rate (114.72). The middle-order combinations have also failed to light up spectacularly, channelling 160 runs at a dismissible 119.40 SR, again the lowest of all 10 teams. CSK are in a similar rut already. The attritional top 3's middling 140.78 are followed by a meek middle-order setting that has gathered only 164 runs at 113.88. Unreadable home pitches and a defence of a talisman incapable of heavy lifting will not find any more takers should the batting middlemen continue to fail in this cut-throat scoring business.

Indian women's hockey legend Vandana Katariya announces international retirement

GNS News Agency, April 4

India's women hockey stalwart Vandana Katariya has brought an end to her international career which spanned over 15 years. With 320 international caps and 158 goals to her name, Vandana leaves as the most capped Indian women's player. And beyond the numbers, she leaves behind an inspiring legacy, a story of resilience, determination and relentless hunger to push Indian team to greater heights. The 32-year-old forward, who made her senior team debut in 2009, was an integral part of some of the most defining moments in the sport, including India's historic fourth-place finish at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, where she became the first and only Indian woman to score a hat-trick at the Games.

Announcing her retirement, Vandana, who played her last match for India during the Bhubaneswar leg of the FIH Pro League 2024-25 in February, shared the mix of emotions. "This decision wasn't easy, but I know it's the right time. Hockey has been my life for as long as I can remember, and wearing the Indian jersey was the greatest honour. But every journey has its course, and I leave with immense



pride, gratitude, and love for the sport. Indian hockey is in great hands, and I will always be its biggest supporter." She extended her heartfelt appreciation to everyone who played a role in her journey. "I want to thank my coaches, teammates, support staff, Hockey India, my family, and all the fans who have supported me over the years. Every cheer, every message, every word of encouragement meant the world to me."

Speed demon Nihal Sarin's career starting to gather pace again after years of slowdown

Over the last few years, for Nihal Sarin, a speed demon on the chess board, things had started to slow down. He was one of the first prodigies from the current generation of Indian grandmasters to make headlines, especially when he became the youngest Indian to breach the 2,600-rating mark. But since he first broke into the 2,600 bracket in June 2019, he has never managed to put a foot out the door in six years (in the published rankings). Since September 2022, he has been rated over 2,650, coming close to entering the 2,700 club on more than a few occasions. Such is the world of elite chess, especially for Indians, that staying put in one spot can feel like you're being left behind. As Nihal makes a fresh bid to break into the 2,700-club — resuscitated by victory at the recent Agzamov Memorial in Tashkent in an elite field that had eight players rated over 2600 — the question remains, why had one of the country's top chess talents been moored in 2,600-club so long? Was it because he prefers to play online chess? Was it because his style is more suited for rapid and blitz events as compared to classical tournaments? Neither is

true, says his father Sarin, who explains that the problem is that at the 2600-rating threshold, chances to play against 2700+ players in closed invitational events (where organisers decide who to invite to play) is rare. With India's burgeoning riches on the 64 squares, tournament organisers like Norway Chess and Tata Steel Chess in Wijk aan Zee can only extend invitations to so many Indians, with the first preference being players like D Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa and Arjun Erigaisi. This left someone like Nihal no invitations for closed classical tournaments. But how does one get invited to play higher-rated players without at least being in the 2,700 bracket? The answer was playing in open tournaments — the wild west of chess tournaments where you don't know your opponents, they could be a 2,300-rated GM from Serbia you have never heard of. Or a super elite 2,700+ player playing just to get some tournament practice in. This was the path that Arjun took when his inbox was in the middle of a similar drought of invitations a couple of years back. "There were not many tournaments to play at his level. He has been at the 2,650-plus rating for the past few years now."

Junaid Khan would have done a better job than dad Aamir Khan in Laal Singh Chaddha, says Mansoor: ‘Kya bakwaas hai ki opening nahi milegi’



Mansoor Khan is as famous for directing cult classics like Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak (1988) and Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar (1992) as he's for famously quitting films after Josh (2000), moving to Coonoor and starting a cheese farm. If one can draw a parallel to his directorial debut, like Aamir Khan and Juhi Chawla's rebellious characters, he's been leading a life away from societal restrictions and perceptions. The one time he did venture out of natural habitat at the Red Lorry Film Festival in Mumbai last month for a special screening of Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak, SCREEN caught up with him for an exclusive interview. Mansoor discusses what he's up to now, whether he plans to return to direction again, and his evaluation of cousin Aamir's storied career. Visiting a film festival like this and watching the audience engage with your work 37 years later, does that make you come back and direct another one? No. I'm a storyteller. I like telling stories. I hate direction. It's too tedious and stressful. Aamir gave the audience here the wrong impression that I was a cinema lover. I was not, yaar. I'm ashamed to say I haven't seen 99.99% of films ever made. But I have a flair for writing stories, and I also think I'm pretty good at it. The medium is not important. Whether it's documentaries, stage, or lectures, it's the content which I'm into.

Do you remember exactly when you decided to quit movies?

No, that decision was made a long ago. I was just waiting for the right time to exit.

Was it easy?

Namrata Shirodkar opens up about daughter Sitara Ghattamaneni's acting debut: ‘She is just 12’

Nepotism has always existed in cinema, and it will continue to exist, irrespective of what is spoken about star kids, and what is written about the phenomenon. Star kids have a huge following on social media, and they get huge endorsements way before they sign their first film. One of the biggest superstars of Telugu cinema, Mahesh Babu is the son of superstar Krishna. It is expected that Mahesh and his actor-wife Namrata Shirodkar's children Gautam and Sitara will also follow the footsteps of their parents and grandparents.

Recently, there was a viral video of Gautam performing a mime-act that showcased his acting talents. He is currently pursuing a degree in arts at the New York University. Similarly, Sitara, who is 12, has a huge social media profile, and has starred in a few advertisements, including one with her father Mahesh Babu. In fact, Sitara has already entered the industry by dubbing for baby Elsa in the Telugu version of Disney's Frozen 2.

And in a recent media interaction, Sitara, who was joined by Namrata, was asked about her impending big screen debut. The smart youngster simply pointed towards her mother to take this question. Namrata, who first appeared onscreen as a five-year-old in Shirdi ke Sai Baba, said, "Sitara is just 12 years old now, so there's a lot of time left for us to discuss it." While it is not new for star kids to appear in the films of their parents or play important roles in big projects before making their inevitable plunge into cinema, both Gautam and Sitara are taking it slow, but still firmly remaining under media's glare. This is a new trend for star kids of this generation who embrace the privilege of their stardom, and hope to create the right impact on the way to the ultimate destination — the big screen. In the same interaction, Namrata was also asked about the filming of SS Rajamouli's next with Mahesh Babu, which is tentatively titled, SSMB 29. Unwilling to say anything that isn't already there in the open, Namrata said, "Silence is the best formula for the time being." Meanwhile, even though the makers of SSMB 29 haven't announced the rest of the star cast, it has now become clear, thanks to leaked videos and official posts by other stakeholders of the film, that the film stars Priyanka Chopra-Jonas and Prithviraj Sukumaran in pivotal roles.

Prithviraj's mother defends him amid 'L2: Empuraan' controversy

Hyderabad: Prithviraj Sukumaran's mother, Mallika Sukumaran, has spoken out against the misinformation and criticism surrounding L2: Empuraan. She urged people to be fair and not accuse others of crimes they did not commit. "I am over 70 years old, and I believe people should understand the truth," she said. "Those who spread falsehoods will have to answer to God." She also addressed rumors that Prithviraj pleaded with the censor board to approve the film. She clarified that his presence during the film's certification was standard procedure, as either the director or producer must be available to answer any questions. Criticising media coverage, she condemned a journalist who referred to Prithviraj as a "dumb" person who frequently changes his stance. "It is wrong to use such words publicly. Prithviraj does not change his opinions like some media persons who switch channels," she remarked.

It was supereasy. It was a relief, yaar.

So, what have you been upto after that?

I've written two books. My first one (The Third Curve) was non-fiction, but a very important book. You must make an attempt to read that. Both my books are not about morality, they're about reality. My second book (ONE: The Story of the Ultimate Myth) is very dear to me. It took me 20 years to write. Not because I didn't know what to write, but how to put such a complex thought took time. I'm also writing a third book. But I want to convert my second into a film. But the final proof is in the pudding, which is the screenplay. So if the screenplay comes out worthy enough, then only I'll do it. Aamir loves the book. He wants to make the film, probably more than me. And he will act in it. Are you willing to go back to direction then? You just said it was tedious and stressful. Only for this. I also tried to think if I should be only a supervising director on this while somebody else can direct it. But then I realised that the feeling, depth, nuances and thought of this book, I don't think anybody else can convey as a director. And I'm not trying to say they're any lesser. But it's 20 years of soaking in.

A few years ago, Aamir also contemplated quitting films, only to revoke that later. Did you have a conversation with him then?

Ya. I didn't have a conversation, he had a whole meeting where he announced. That's what I was feeling then. But I find it hard to believe Aamir doing it even for six months. He just loves cinema, every aspect of it.

Do you think it was his passion driving the movies you guys did together, more than yours?

He might have had his own passion as an actor. But as a writer and director, I had my own. I can't do anything without passion or belief. People tell me, "You made good films. Make one more." I can't do it just for that. Sadly, I'm not interested in lovers, vendetta, action, political drama, murder mystery etc anymore. I don't want to tell any normal human story.

I've noticed a generational pattern in your family, of walking away from films even after being born in a film family, whether it's you, Aamir (temporarily), or Imran Khan. Why do you think that's the case?

Not at all. Aamir, Imran, and my dad (late filmmaker

Naga Vamsi lashes out at critics of Mad Square: ‘If you hate me that much, ban my films, don’t take ads...’



In recent times, producer Naga Vamsi is undoubtedly one of the most enterprising celebrities of Telugu cinema. If his responses to Boney Kapoor in a year-end roundtable kept him in the headlines for a while, his comments on how there is no nepotism in Telugu cinema ensured he was in the spotlight for a few more days. Naga Vamsi's Sithara Entertainment recently bankrolled Mad Square, the sequel to the 2023 film, which starred Narine Nithin, Ram Nithin, and Sangeeth Sobhan. Although the original opened to rave reviews, the second part had a mixed response from the critics and audiences alike.

In a media interaction after the release of Mad Square, Naga Vamsi spoke about a lot of things, including the responses to the film. When asked about the film's negative reviews, Naga Vamsi reiterated his long-standing argument that reviews are just one person's opinion. "You mustn't consider reviews as a result of an election where a result means things are decided for everyone. In films, everyone can have their own individual opinion, and it is still valid," said Naga Vamsi. The filmmaker vehemently argued that if

Nasir Hussain) are the cinema guys. I'm the black sheep. I watch very few films. I did it for a particular reason at that point of time. But now, I'll do it for other reasons because I have something to say. Many people tell me, "How many will read a book today?" But a book has its own strength. They think cinema is the most powerful medium. It's a visual medium so it's powerful for certain genres — love, hate, vendetta, murder, titillation. But it's not the ultimate medium. No medium is ultimate. Something you can do on stage, you can't achieve on film. So it'll be a challenge (to adapt his book into a film). So only if I can convert the screenplay well, and if Aamir and I are convinced, only then I'll do it.

Aamir has also produced some non-fiction titles, like Satyamev Jayate and Rubari Roshni. Were you not inclined towards those?

No. That's the thing. Before I left for Coonoor, I was going through a hell lot of depression. I wrote three scripts which were socially oriented. Aamir loved all three. He said, "If you make these three, I won't do any other film. I'll do these." So I kept quiet. Then my thinking shifted. So what I'm trying to tell you is what this book is about, all those are sub-topics. This is the root cause. So I don't want to go into sub-topics. Aap log karo jisko karna hai (whoever wants to do, should do).

Did moving to Coonoor liberate you?

I was always like that. I had a house in Mandwa (island in Maharashtra). I was into sailing. I was already planning to live there. So it wasn't a new idea. The idea had popped in my mind in 1978. You weren't even born then (laughs)!

Do you believe that the problem with films today is that they don't look outward like you do? That they're not rooted?

At any point of given time, there were some sensible films being made and some fun films, over-the-top, and some rubbish films. Maybe the balance has shifted a little here and there. But this will be true in any day and age, whether it's Hollywood or Bollywood. Some films being made are very slick technically, in fact too slick. I'd like to quote Farhan (Akhtar). He's a cinema lover, but he pointed out something as a creator. Nowadays, we've become so exact in our scheduling of movie magic that it takes away the spontaneity.

sections of the media actually disliked him or his films, then they could just go ahead and boycott his productions. "If you hate me that much, ban my films, don't write about them, and don't take advertisements from me. If you do that, I will then promote my film, and show how I can do the same without that support," said Naga Vamsi.

Naga Vamsi's Mad Square also faced allegations of box office numbers being inflated by the makers. Even in the press interaction, Naga Vamsi pointed out that the film has made Rs 70 crores gross, and is hoping Mad Square enters the Rs 100 crore club. But when asked about his responses to certain reports that the numbers were inflated, Naga Vamsi immediately said, "I am the producer of the film, and I get all the details from the distributors. If anyone has a doubt, feel free to contact me to get these details. Also, you also have to give me the proof of the inflation. Without any proof, how can you say such things." Mad Square, directed by Kalyan Shankar, hit the screens on March 28, also features Priyanka Jawalkar, Vishnu Oi, Sunil, Subhalekha Sudhakar, and Satyam Rajesh.

‘You don’t like making money’: What Javed Akhtar told Anurag Kashyap after watching Mukkabaaz, said it could have been a hit if...

Filmmaker Anurag Kashyap recently spoke about his love for open-ended films and how iconic writer Javed Akhtar once pointed out that this preference prevents him from making money at the box office. In a recent interaction, Anurag recalled Akhtar telling him that if he had shown his character winning at the end of Mukkabaaz, the film would have been a hit. Speaking at Annapurna College of Film and Media, Anurag said "Javed sahaab is such a senior filmmaker. He saw Mukkabaaz and he liked it very much. He told me, 'You have a problem. You don't like making money.' I asked him 'Why?' He said, 'What would you have lost if you had made your character win in the end?' I told him then I wouldn't have made the film."

Anurag went on to explain. "The purpose of the film was to show how bad our sports world is and how hypocritical we are. I like things open-ended because the moment I close it, the film is over for you. Then all you do is talk about whether it is a good or bad film or whether you enjoyed it or not. The discussion is over for you at that point but an open ended film stays with you. They bother you because it could have been very simple but it isn't, they make you think, they aren't giving a solution."

Mukkabaaz starred Vineet Kumar Singh in the lead role. The film wasn't a major box office success but received widespread critical acclaim. In an earlier interaction,



Anurag had declared that he moved out of Mumbai because the film industry had turned 'toxic.' "I've left Mumbai. I want to stay away from film people. The industry has become too toxic. Everyone is chasing unrealistic targets, trying to make the next Rs 500 or Rs 800 crore film. The creative atmosphere is gone," he said during a chat with The Hindu. Anurag made his acting debut in Malayalam cinema with Rifle Club (2024), where he played the role of an antagonist.

Ranveer Allahbadia says ‘people’s true character was revealed’ during India’s Got Latent row: ‘So many losses... things I had to endure’



YouTube-podcaster Ranveer Allahbadia finally addressed the India's Got Latent controversy in his latest podcast, which is his first release after the row. During a candid conversation with the podcast guest Buddhist monk Palga Rinpoche, he revealed that the incident took a toll on his mental health. He also shared that the ordeal was an emotional ride and several people advised him to take a temporary break from content creation.

On Monday, Ranveer posted a new podcast on his YouTube channel in conversation with Palga Rinpoche. He said in Hindi, "My mental health took a toll at that time... I was trying to be reflective, thinking about what else I have done wrong apart from that remark. I was doing meditation and trying to calm down... My family was hurt, and I was heartbroken. During that phase, I had to handle myself, my family, and my team. I kept asking myself, 'What just happened?' So many losses, I hurt family members, and things that I had to endure."

"I'm undergoing self-reflection, but I still haven't found the answers. The approach for transformation is to learn from mistakes and move forward... I will make Indians understand. My personal ambitions have taken a backseat. I've understood the world a lot in these three weeks. And I don't mean this in a negative way. When such situations arise, people's true character is revealed. I saw a lot of good in people too. My close friends and mentors stood by me, and even people I had never met before reached out to help. Some people said that I should take a break from content creation for 1-2 years because if something this bad has happened, it might be due to a long-term series of mistakes on my part. But I believe that I have reached this point through my actions and hard work. Toh agar iss daldal se nikalna hoga toh vo bhi action aur mehnat se hi hoga, I think (If I have to get out of this mess, it will also be through action and hard work)," he further added.

Ranveer Allahbadia aka Beer Biceps landed in a controversy after appearing in an episode of Samay Raina's show India's Got Latent. During the episode, he asked a controversial question to a contestant, "Would you rather watch your parents have sex every day for the rest of your life or join in once to make it stop forever?" It received a lot of backlash, and many FIRs against the makers and people present on the episode.

‘Vidhu Vinod Chopra was pressurising Rajkumar Hirani to make Munna Bhai 3, its trailer was ready’: Chetan Bhagat on how 3 Idiots was made, why he didn’t get proper credit

While 3 Idiots is known for the iconic film that it is today, there were several controversies after its release in 2009. One of them was author Chetan Bhagat's claim that director Rajkumar Hirani didn't give him due credit for the film's story, which was loosely based on his novel Five Point Someone. In a recent interview with The Tallantop, Bhagat addressed the row, claiming the film's producer Vidhu Vinod Chopra was responsible for him failing to get proper credit. He also revealed that Hirani chose 3 Idiots over Munna Bhai 3, even after the latter's trailer was ready.

Back in 2005 during the controversy, Hirani had countered Bhagat by saying he had agreed to the contract stating rolling credits of the novel. However, the author now shared that Vidhu Vinod Chopra was responsible for his credits. "Controversy baad mai hui thi. It was a misunderstanding. Raju knows that I like him and he likes me. Deep down, we have a lot of respect for each other. We were very good friends. There was a producer involved also, picture toh producer ki hi hoti hai. Director and actors are not the owners of the movie." He continued, "My credits weren't given properly. I don't want to get into the detail. Even I don't know kis cheez ka sign kara liya (I don't know what they made me sign), I was told something else. If you are making a film on an author's book, you know credit his name properly. They did give my name in the movie but with the hairdresser. I don't think anybody has ever done this in the history of cinema." When asked if he was paid a handsome amount for the film, Bhagat revealed, "No, not at that time. It was Rs 1 lakh for the rights and a bonus of Rs 10 lakhs. I got the bonus also, they had done those things. But, the name wasn't given right."

He didn't want to fight with the makers, but calls from fellow writers motivated him. "I didn't even want to fight so much. I can't tell you how many calls I received from other writers, who said this has happened to us, you are known, there is a chance today, because journalists are asking writers about what happened. If you are quiet today, what will happen to us?" "I even thought that agar maine panga leliya, meri koi aur film banegi hi nahi iss industry mein (If I took cudgels, the industry will never make another film of mine). Things changed after that day for writers. Nobody does this anymore. Writers get proper contracts and credits. If you buy something, you can use it, you can't say that it is mine," Bhagat added.