

Ramanujacharya Avatara Mahotsavam begins

Hyderabad, May 1 Tirumala Chinna Jeeyar Swamy inaugurated the Avatara Mahotsavam of Sri Ramanujacharya at Annamacharya Kalamandiram, Tirupati, on Wednesday .The celebrations, held by the Alwar Divya Prabandha Project, will continue till May 2.In his Anugraha Bhadhanam, Sri Chinna Jeeyar Swamy said Sri Ramanujacharya as a reformer, spread the message of equality and devotion through the Bhakti movement. A discourse by Sri Sitaraman of Ahobilam Mutt and devotional music by Smt. Saraswati Prasad group added spiritual fervor. The event was attended by Rajagopala Rao, Special Officer of the Alwar Divya Prabandha Project, Program Coordinator Purushottam, and devotees.

V-P Dhankhar, PM greet people of Maharashtra, Gujarat on States' formation day

GNS News Agency, May 1

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday (May 1, 2025) greeted the people of Maharashtra and Gujarat on the formation day of their States, and praised the rapid strides both have made. The two western States, among the most prosperous in the country, were carved out of the erstwhile Bombay State in 1960.In his post on X, Mr. Modi said Maharashtra has always played a vital role in India's development. He said when one thinks of Maharashtra, "its glorious history and the courage of the people come to our mind". Maharashtra Day greetings to the people of the state, which has always played a vital role in India's development. When one thinks of Maharashtra, its glorious history and the courage of the people come to our mind. The state remains a strong pillar of progress and at the same... — Narendra Modi (@narendramodi) May 1, 2The State remains a strong pillar of progress and at the same time has remained connected to its roots, the Prime Minister said."My best wishes for the state's progress," he said.Greeting the people of Gujarat, his home State, Mr. Modi said, "The state has distinguished itself for its culture, spirit of enterprise and dynamism. The people of Gujarat have excelled in various fields. May the state keep attaining new heights of progress."On the proud



occasion of their Statehood Day, my best wishes to the people of Gujarat. The state has distinguished itself for its culture, spirit of enterprise and dynamism. The people of Gujarat have excelled in various fields. May the state keep attaining new heights of... — Narendra Modi (@narendramodi) May 1, 2025In his message, the Vice-President said the land of Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Gujarat, continues to inspire through its legacy of leadership, resilience and innovation.Referring to Maharashtra, Dhankhar said the state's legacy of social reform, cultural vibrancy, and economic leadership remains a source of national pride.

Right time for ‘create in India, create for world’: PM Modi calls WAVES 2025 global celebration of creativity



GNS News Agency, May 1

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday (May 1, 2025) emphasised on ‘creative responsibility’ at WAVES summit, saying we need to save young generation from some anti-humanity ideas. “It is right time for ‘create in India, create for world’ when the world is looking for new ways of story-telling,” he said.The Prime Minister inaugurated the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) 2025 at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai, calling it a transformative platform that unites creators, storytellers, innovators, and policymakers from around the world.In a keynote address to a packed auditorium of global delegates from as many as 30 countries, Mr. Modi said, “Today, artists, innovators, investors, and policy makers from more than 100 nations have gathered under one roof. We are laying the foundation for a global ecosystem of talent

and creativity. WAVES is such a global platform that belongs to every artist and creator.”The summit, themed “Connecting Creators, Connecting Countries,” aims to establish India as a central hub in the global creative economy. Integrating cinema, streaming platforms, animation, gaming, immersive technology (AVGC-XR), artificial intelligence, and more, WAVES 2025 aspires to unlock a \$50 billion opportunity for the Indian media and entertainment sector by 2029.Reflecting on India’s growing cultural influence, PM Modi said, “In recent years, Indian cinema has succeeded in carrying the spirit of India to the farthest corners of the world. From Raj Kapoor’s legacy in Russia to Satyajit Ray’s brilliance at Cannes, and RRR’s triumph at the Oscars, these milestones speak volumes.”

“112 years ago, on 3 May, 1913, Raja Harishchandra, the first feature film, was released. Dadadaheb Phalke was its creator. It was his birth anniversary yesterday. Over the last 100 years, Indian cinema has gone places. A.R. Rahman, Rajamouli, Ritwik Ghatak, everyone has made a place in the world for Indian cinema. In the last few years, I have met the people from the gaming industry, from stars in front of the camera. Whenever I met you all, I took ideas from you. I did an experiment a few years ago. Narsi Mehta’s song - Vaishnav jan toh, Gandhiji’s favourite, was sung by world artists during Gandhi 150. The whole world came together. We saw a glimpse of what India’s creative world can do together. Like the rising sun lends its colour to the sky, this summit is roaring with purpose right from the first moment,” he continued.

Our party not taking decisions out of fear of Rahul Gandhi: Kishan Reddy

New Delhi, May 1 Union Minister Kishan Reddy today expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the decision of the Union Cabinet to conduct a caste census as part of the regular census and added that the caste census would go down in history.Addressing media conference, he said after the decision of the Union Government, the Opposition parties were opening the door to political dramas. “In the past, under the auspices of the Congress Party, conspiracies and machinations were made regarding the BC reservations. All Muslims were included in the BCs.

Since the country's Independence, the Congress Party, which has divided people in the name of religion and created communal conflicts, had also conspired to break up society in the name of the castes. The Congress government is not the only one to show hypocritical love for SCs, STs and BCs, there are also many instances in history, where it has spewed venom whenever it gets the chance.When Ramnath Kovind, an SC, and Draupadi Murmu, an ST, were declared as the presidential candidates, the Congress party had a history of opposing them and fielding its own candidates. After the Modi government submitted complete details in the Supreme Court to resolve the decades-pending Madiga reservation issue, the way was paved for SC classification,” he said.

He alleged the Congress party has a history of insulting Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the name his from backward classes. The Congress party has been shedding crocodile tears for the BCs since its inception. The Congress has never worked for the uplift of the backward classes. The credit for giving legality to the National BC Commission in 2018 goes to the NDA government. In 2019, it implemented 10% reservation (EWS) for economically backward upper castes. We are moving forward with sincerity with the slogan of ‘Sab Ka Saath, Sab Ka Vikas’ to ensure proper justice for all sections of society,” he said. Reddy claimed that Modi was credited with providing 33% reservation to the women and empowering them and giving them self-respect and added that Modi government was credited with abolishing barbaric policies like ‘triple talaq’



against Muslim women and providing rights and power to Muslim women.

“We are working to ensure that no section of society feels that they are not being cared for. The Caste census was conducted from 1881 to 1931. But after independence, the Congress Party-led central government decided that caste census should not be conducted. Accordingly, the caste census has not been conducted since 1951 till date. From the beginning, the Congress Party has been against the caste census. Senior Congress leaders like Nehru and Maulana Azad openly expressed their aversion to the caste census. Rajiv Gandhi opposed the report given by the Mandal Commission.On September 6, 1990, Rajiv Gandhi spoke in Parliament saying that Muslims are educationally, socially and economically backward compared to the BCs in the country and they should be given a hand. He talked about the rights of Muslims aside and talked about the rights of the Muslims,” he said.

He said the then BJP leader Sushma Swaraj wrote a letter to the then Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee in the year 2010, stating that her party was in favour of the caste census and added that the Congress party ignored this issue and conducted the census in 2011. He said the BJP had been expressing full support for the caste census since the beginning, but the BJP's idea was that it should not be a political tool but should be useful for the social progress of all sections.

DRI nabs passenger smuggling gold worth Rs. 3.45 crore at RGIA

Hyderabad: The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) caught a passenger who was smuggling gold at RGIA Airport Shamshabad and seized 3.5 kilograms of gold from him.

The foreign origin gold was being handed over to the ground handling staff at the RGI Airport by the alleged smuggler when on a tip off the DRI caught him. The gold was supported to be handed over to another ground handling staff member outside the airport.The DRI seized 30 gold bars valued at Rs. 3, 45,79,300 and took into custody the passenger and two ground staffers. A case is registered.

Centre’s caste survey prevails over State census: CM Revanth Reddy

GNS News Agency, May 1

HYDERABAD: The Telangana government’s effort to conduct the BC caste survey spending over Rs 160 crore and involving 90,000 enumerators is likely to be a futile exercise with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy admitting that the Union Government census would prevail over the State census.As there was no data earlier, Telangana caste survey (Socio, Economical, Education, Employment, Political and caste survey) prevailed. Now that the Union government decided to conduct the exercise, it would prevail, the Chief Minister clarified at a press conference here on Thursday.On the possibilities of any difference in the State survey and the proposed Union government survey outcome, he defended saying it was not possible.“Why will people share false information? They might share false information pertaining to assets and liabilities but regarding caste details, they will not,” Revanth Reddy asserted.He welcomed the Union government’s decision to conduct caste enumeration in the next census and suggested that a group of Union Cabinet Ministers Committee and experts committees should be constituted for taking up the exercise.Before commencing the task, a comprehensive study should be conducted across the country as there were different caste equations in different States. For instance, the Boya community in Telangana was considered as BC but in Karnataka it was categorized as Tribal. Similarly, Lambadas were categorised as Tribals in Telangana but



in Maharashtra they were OBCs, he said.“Prepare Terms of Reference and finalise the process. We demand Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make a clear announcement on when the caste census will be started and by when it would be completed,” Revanth Reddy said, adding that the entire exercise should be done in one year but it all depends on the Union government’s plans.Countering the Union Ministers G Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay’s comments on Telangana caste census, he described them as “galli leaders” who should not be taken seriously.“They do not have any idea on what the Prime Minister is thinking. These bacchas (Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay) do not know. Rahul Gandhi also appreciated the Union government” Revanth Reddy said.

CM Revanth appeals to RTC workers to withdraw their proposed strike



Hyderabad, May 1 Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has requested that RTC workers reconsider their planned strike and instead cooperate with the State government. This appeal comes in light of the Telangana Road Transport Corporation workers’ union’s decision to initiate a statewide strike beginning May 7, citing the government’s failure to meet their long-standing demands. The Chief Minister’s urgent plea to the RTC employees is therefore quite significant.

During his speech at the May Day celebrations held at Ravindra Bharathi on Thursday, the Chief Minister emphasized that the Telangana State Road Transport Corpo-

ration (TGSRTC) is on the path to profitability, and it is the responsibility of the workers to safeguard their Corporation.In the last 10 years, the previous BRS government exploited and looted the Corporation financially. If there are any issues, it is recommended that the workers and Union leaders engage in dialogue with the relevant Minister, rather than demand immediate action. We will allocate all revenue directly to you, and it will be your responsibility to recommend how to utilise those funds. I won’t take any of it for personal use; everything will be dedicated to the advancement of the Corporation,” stated Revanth Reddy.He emphasised that the Corporation is beginning to recover from its losses and is now on the path to profitability. At this critical time, it is unwise for employees to strike; instead, they should work to safeguard the Corporation in every way possible.The Chief Minister cautioned RTC workers against falling prey to individuals who have not contributed anything in the past decade yet are trying to misguide them.Do not let yourself be influenced by the harmful remarks of the Opposition leaders. RTC workers, have faith in me. I will support you if you place your trust in me," Revanth Reddy expressed.The Chief Minister added that the state's economy is beginning to bounce back and expressed optimism for further recovery in the coming year, asserting that nothing can hinder the growth of Telangana.

KCR extends May Day greetings to workers

Hyderabad, May 1: BRS party chief KCR today said the hard work of the workers of the lower castes, who are part of the production and create national wealth, working in industries and other sectors was priceless and their sacrifice was extraordinary.

KCR extended his greetings to the working class, labourers and farmers on the occasion of International Labour Day, May Day. On this occasion, he remembered the historical background of the emergence of May Day and paid tribute to their sacrifices. He said the steps taken by the then BRS State government to protect the rights of the workers in the State with the inspiration of May Day increased their security of life. He also said Telangana had been set as a model for the country in the industrial development. He further said the State had implemented new industrial policies and attracted global investments. KCR said lakhs of unemployed people had been provided with job opportunities. He said special facilities and rights had been provided to women workers participating in the production and service sectors and added that they had stood by them. He said all kinds of assurances had been provided to workers working in unorganized sectors including



Singareni, auto drivers and many other industries.KCR clarified that only by further strengthening the pro-working class policies implemented by the BRS government and by working sincerely for their welfare, they can pay tribute to the May Day spirit and the sacrifices of the world working class.

KTR to attend Oxford India Forum conference

Hyderabad, May 1 BRS party working president K. Taraka Rama Rao will attend another prestigious conference. The Oxford India Forum organization has specially invited KTR to be the keynote speaker at its conference to be held in England on June 20 and 21, 2025. Siddharth Sethi, founder of the Oxford India Forum, said this year's conference is being organized with the theme "Advanced Technologies for India's Development".

Siddharth Sethi specifically mentioned that if KTR shared his experiences and ideas with international students and experts from different countries, the discussions will be more interesting and they will inspire all of them to be a part of India's development journey. “The speakers at this conference will mainly discuss how advanced technologies can be used to solve global problems and for sustainable

development in India. In the presence of students, teachers and experts from different countries, KTR will explain India's progress path, innovative policies implemented in Telangana, and the technology-based development model," he said. Siddharth Sethi also said that if KTR participates in this conference, he can strongly demonstrate to the world the positive impact and leadership qualities that India will have on the world in the coming days. Siddharth requested everyone to accept this invitation and come to the conference.The Oxford India Forum is the largest India-related event organiser in Europe. It is a platform to showcase India's progress and innovations to the world. The conference will discuss our country's development, changes in technology, and opportunities for global cooperation.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Regulating school fee

AFFORDABLE and quality education for all — that’s a key goal of the National Education Policy, 2020. A big roadblock on this ambitious path is the economic exploitation of parents by many private schools that are solely or primarily driven by the profit motive. The lack of adequate checks and balances has fuelled rampant commercialisation in the education sector. In a welcome move, the Delhi Cabinet has approved a Bill to regulate fee in all schools in the national capital, prescribing fines up to Rs 10 lakh for any hike without proper approval. The Bill, likely to be tabled in the Assembly soon, proposes the formation of committees at the school, district and state levels. These panels will examine fee hike proposals by school managements in a transparent and time-bound manner. The objective is to protect hapless parents from arbitrary decisions that reek of sheer extortion — a take-it-or-leave-it scenario in which the school authorities hold all the aces.

Several states, including Gujarat, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, have their own legislation to regulate the fee structure of schools. However, state governments have repeatedly found themselves embroiled in court battles over this matter. In 2021, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the Rajasthan Schools (Regulation of Fees) Act, 2016, confirming the state’s right to prevent profiteering in education. Recent protests by aggrieved parents have prompted the BJP government in Delhi to come up with a regulatory Bill. The legislation has tried to incorporate clear-cut enforcement provisions so as to minimise disputes between educational institutions and governments. Private schools often justify fee hike on the grounds of providing better facilities to students and higher salaries to teachers. However, most of them are reluctant to disclose details of income and expenditure.

TRIUMPHANT SSC RESULTS FOR PRAGATHI HIGH SCHOOL— Correspondent Keshava Reddy



PS.ASHOKAN“INDIAN CHRONICLE“MANTHANI MAY 2”“Pragathi High School, located in Centenary Colony, has once again demonstrated its academic distinction with a stellar 100% pass rate in the SSC (10th Class) examinations conducted in March.”“All 19 students who appeared for the examination have emerged successful, a reflection of the school’s unwavering commitment to excellence. Among them, G. Malavika secured an outstanding 568 out of 600 marks, earning the top rank in the school, followed closely by K. Akhila, who attained 558 marks and the second rank. Impressively, 11 students surpassed the 500-mark milestone, underscoring the school’s exceptional academic environment.”“Mr. Keshava Reddy, the esteemed Correspondent of the school, extended his heartfelt congratulations to the meritorious students. He lauded their perseverance, discipline, and academic integrity. He further reaffirmed that Pragathi High School has consistently remained a beacon of educational excellence in Ramagiri Mandal for over three decades.”“Mr. Reddy also expressed his deep appreciation to the dedicated faculty, supportive parents, and hardworking students, whose combined efforts culminated in this remarkable achievement.

Annual summer camp to be held at KVBR Indoor Stadium

Hyderabad: Sports Authority of Telangana (SATG) is conducting annual Summer Coaching Camp’ from May 1 to June 6 in nine disciplines in the mornings and evenings at the Kotla Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy Indoor Stadium (Yousufguda) here, according to G. Alexander Francis, Stadium Administrator, KVBR Stadium (Yousufguda).The application in online website : <https://satgasc.telangana.gov.in> in the fees structure is as follows: badminton Rs.2550/-, basketball Rs.2050/-, boxing Rs.550/-, gymnastics Rs.550/-, karate Rs.550/-, skating Rs.2050/-, wrestling Rs.550/-, table tennis Rs.2050/-, yoga free for parents & zumba musical dance for parents.

Workers play a key role in the development of the country: Aamudala Tulsidas



May 1,Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema co-ordinator”“Workers play a key role in the development of the country, “Tirupati TDP Shalivahana Parliament President Aamudala Tulsidas said. On Thursday, May Day celebrations were held at the Tirupati TDP Parliament office under the auspices of Yadava Corporation Chairman Narasimha Yadav. Speaking on the occasion of these celebrations, Aamudala Tulsidas made it clear that the coalition government will give priority to the welfare of workers.



He said that workers have played a key role in the development of the country. He said that the coalition government is going to bring more schemes for the welfare of workers in the coming period. He also extended May Day greetings to all the workers. Earlier, they also participated in a blood donation camp held at the youth hostel. Tirupati constituency Telugu Desam Party BC leaders Jagannatham, Mahesh Yadav, Vaddera Sriramulu, Rama Rao, Gnanasekhar, Gaus Basha TNTUC leaders Reddappa Naidu and others participated in this program.

'Indian School' students talented in SSC Exams..“



“Warangal, May 01 (Indian Chronicle):”“Indian School which is located at the Puppalagutta and Chintal Bridge in the Warangal city students were talented in the results of the tenth grade (SSC) examination. 100 percent

shines with firstst grade passing. For a total of 600 marks Ayesha Sanobar 582, S Jaswant 569, Nyala Vishnu 565, D Karthik 564, Fatima Nikkat 562, M Jashwant 562, Sayeeda Meshhakounaina 560, B Nandita 560, Syed Mohiuddin usaini 558, G varshini 551 Students achieved. And above 500 marks gained 13students. Govindarajulu, Principal and Chairman of the school, said that the changes in the education system are being observed from time to time and are providing discipline and creative education in a stressful environment. He said that the students of the Medical and IIT Foundation are taking more attention to their institute. He said that the students are being educated in a manner that will be prepared for all competitive exams. Congratulations to parents and faculty who encouraged students who have been successful in this huge success.

District Collector Jitesh V. Patil visited the Chatakonda 6th Battalion camp.



Ranjith naik Bhukya ,Bhadrachalam,May 1(Indian Chronicle) ““District Collector Jitesh V. Patil visited the Chatakonda 6th Battalion in Lakshmi Devi Palli mandal on Thursday. As part of this visit, the Collector interacted with a newly trained team of 100 members of the SDRF (State Disaster Response Force) and enquired about the actions they take during disasters and the equipment they have and how to use it. Later, he inspected the newly constructed



open gym in the battalion and made appropriate suggestions. The battalions were asked to inspect the newly installed clay brick-making (CSEB) machines and prepare plans to undertake road construction with clay bricks on an experimental basis. The Collector discussed the development works of the battalion with Battalion Assistant Commander Abdul Rashid and senior officers of the battalion and made several suggestions.

JOURNALISTS ARE PILLARS OF DEMOCRACY, THEIR ISSUES WILL BE ADDRESSED: MINISTER SRIDHAR BABU“



“PS ASHOKAN“INDIAN CHRONICLE“MANTHANI APRIL 2”“Telangana IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu assured that the state government is committed to addressing the challenges faced by journalists. He inaugurated the Manthani Division Press Club office on Thursday and pledged his full support in resolving their issues.”“Speaking at the event, the minister emphasized the crucial role of journalists in a democratic society, describing the media as the fourth pillar. He urged them to report news impartially and focus on matters that promote social progress. “Journalists must act as a bridge between the government and the public. If there are any issues in the Manthani constituency, bring them to my notice—I will ensure they are resolved,” he said.”“He encouraged unity among journalists and invited them to present their concerns directly. “The government is positively inclined towards the welfare of journalists,” he added, stressing that



the media should support leaders who are genuinely working for the people. “When people elect leaders with trust, it’s the media’s duty to highlight their commitment and public service.”“Motkuri Srinivas, President of the Manthani Division Press Club, stated that the club was not established out of competition but to uphold journalistic integrity. He reiterated the importance of unbiased reporting.”“The event was attended by Vice President Jabbar Khan, General Secretary Mallesh Yadav, Assistant Secretary Kishan, Spiritual and Cultural President Mahavadi Satish Kumar, Vice Presidents Ramadugu Srinivas, Disciplinary Committee Chairman P.S. Ashokan, Convener Siliveri Mahender, In-charge Tati Srinivas, Cherella Ravinder, Anti-Attack Committee Chairman A. Sarala Shankar, Advisor Nagali Rajababu, and journalists Subhan, Akula Raju, Akula Venu, Kasarla Shankar, Sadavali, Shravan, Narayana, and Vantini Lakshman.

Good health is the real wealth

Rachakonda CP Sudheer Babu



A mega health camp was successfully organized at the Neredmet CP office in the Malkajgiri zone, under the aegis of the Rachakonda Police Commissionerate and the Rachakonda Security Council (RKSC). Led by Rachakonda Commissioner and RKSC Chairman G. Sudheer Babu, the event provided medical services to over 300 people. Speaking on the occasion, CP Sudheer Babu urged everyone to make the most of such health camps and emphasized the importance of focusing on maintaining good health.The health camp offered various cancer screening tests, including mammography, cervical cancer screening, oral cancer screening, X-rays, and ultrasound scans. Additionally, Solis Eye Care Hospitals provided free digital eye check-ups, while courtesy dental care hospitals supplied necessary equipment and infrastructure for dental care. Dr. K. Kalpana Raghunath conducted an awareness session on early cancer detection, prevention, treatment, and lifestyle changes.The event was attended by Malkajgiri DCPs Padmaja, LB Nagar DCP Praveen Kumar, DCP Crimes Arvind Babu, DCP Women Safety Usha Vishwanath, DCP Admin Indira, DCP Cyber Crimes Nagalakshmi, Women Forum Joint Secretary Radhika Nath, RKSC Chief Coordinator Savitri, and others.

Life imprisonment for five accused in murder case

“Ranjith naik Bhukya ,Bhadrachalam,May 1(Indian Chronicle) ““The District Court today pronounced its verdict, sentencing five accused to life imprisonment in the murder case that took place in Lachigudem village of Dummugudem mandal in February 2020. In the backdrop of a land dispute between the main accused in the case, Sonde Mudda Raju, r/o Lachigudem, Sonde Ravi, r/o Lachigudem, and the deceased Karam Ramakrishna, r/o Lachigudem, Sonde Mudiraju and Sonde Ravi, along with five other accused, conspired to kill Karam Ramakrishna. On the night of 10.02.2020, Karam Ramakrishna went to his house with knives and sticks while his wife and children were sleeping and seriously injured his wife, who was trying to stop him. A total of 08 accused were charged with murder; two of them died during the trial, and one was acquitted. The verdict was pronounced today, awarding life imprisonment to the remaining five main accused and a fine of Rs. 4,000 each. After the verdict, the accused were taken into custody by the Dummugudem police as per the orders of the district judge and sent to the Khammam District Jail. Today, the District SP Rohit Raju IPS specially congratulated the investigating officer Inspector Nallagatla Venkateswarlu, public prosecutors Radha Krishna, PVD Lakshmi and Nodal Officer SI Praveen, liaison officer Veera Babu and Dummugudem Court Duty Constable Tirupati for their efforts in ensuring that the accused are punished.”[6:16 pm, 1/5/2025] +91 96400 45005: end

AKSHARA HIGH SCHOOL, MANTHANI, CELEBRATES STELLAR ACHIEVEMENT WITH 100% SSC RESULTS“

“PS ASHOKAN“INDIAN CHRONICLE“MANTHANI MAY 1”“In a moment of immense pride, the students of Akshara High School, Manthani, Peddapalli District, have secured a remarkable 100% pass rate in the SSC examinations held today.”“Headmistress Mrs. Bindu Ashok extended her heartfelt congratulations to all the students for their dedication, perseverance, and academic excellence. She also expressed her sincere gratitude to the parents for their unwavering support and cooperation, which significantly contributed to this outstanding accomplishment.

CPI leader Narayana slams PM Modi

Rajamahendravaram, May 1CPI National Secretary Dr K Narayana today criticized PM Narendra Modi for making a mockery of the Constitution and democracy after coming to power and for dividing the country in the name of caste and religion.Speaking to media persons at the local CPI office on Thursday morning, he said the incident that happened in Simhachalam two days back, was unfortunate and demanded that an investigation should be conducted into it. “When Modi was coming to Amaravati, he asked Pawan Kalyan to twist his moustache and talk about the reconstruction of the State capital. When Chandrababu Naidu became the Chief Minister in 2014, the Prime Minister did not give any funds. That is why Chandrababu lost in the subsequent assembly election”, he said. He criticized former CMYS Jagannathan Reddy for completely destroying Amaravati after he came to power. He said Modi’s love for elections was not for national security and reminded that after the Kashmir Pahalgam incident, PM preferred to go to Bihar for election campaign instead of visiting the terror attack site along with an All-Party delegation. He criticized the Maoist encroachment in the name of Kagar by saying that innocent tribals were being killed in the name of the operation and added that the Kagar drama was being played just to hand over the natural resources like mining.

CPI National Executive Member Akkineni Vanaja, CPI District Secretary Tatipaka Madhu, District Assistant Secretary Kudrapu Rambabu, City Secretary V Kondala Rao, Assistant Secretary Sappa Ramana, AITUC State Treasurer B V V Kondala Rao and others participated in the press conference.



Outstanding Placement Season for ASCI PGDM



Hyderabad, May 1 The Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI) Business School marked an exceptional placement season for its Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) program for the Batch of 2025, rounding new milestones in placements for all eligible students despite global economic and geopolitical challenges.

The highest salary package touched an impressive Rs 13 lakh per annum along with other Incentives, setting a new benchmark for the program, students secured coveted roles including Relationship Manager, Management Trainee, Strategy & Planning Manager, Regional HR Coordinator, Research Analyst, Sales Management Associate,

Process Analyst, GST Business Analyst and Senior Associate. Leading recruiters such as Deloitte, SBI Mutual Funds, AMFI, Anand Rathi Shares and Stockbrokers Ltd, Broadridge, SBI Global Factors, Aditya Birla Group, SBI Life Insurance Company, Nuziveedu Seeds Limited, Motilal Oswal, Airtel, Swiggy, Berger Paints, Aragen, IndiaMART, IIT-Hyderabad, insight India, TMI, Niva Bupa, Keyloop Foundit, among others, participated actively in the placement process.Students represented a diverse mix from academic backgrounds like B.Com, BBA, B.Sc, and B.Tech, further enriched by ASCI's unique dual specialization model (Finance, Marketing, AI & Analytics, HR), which enhances cross-functional capabilities and career readiness. Notably, some students secured multiple job offers, reflecting the strong industry confidence in ASC's PGDM graduates. An outgoing student reflected, "ASCI PGDM has been a transformative journey, enriching my personal and professional growth. The academic foundation, mentorship, and pre-placement support prepared me to secure a coveted role with a leading organization. I'm grateful to ASCI for empowering me to step confidently into the corporate world. ASCI continues to reaffirm its position as a premier institution delivering future-ready professionals equipped to navigate and lead in a dynamic business environment. Further its B school campus is centrally located in Banjara Hills, Hyderabad with state-of-the-art classrooms and hostel facilities.

SATG conducting annual summer coaching camp

Hyderabad, May 1 Sports Authority of Telangana (SATG) is conducting the Annual Summer Coaching Camp 2025 from May 1 to June 6. This year, the camp is conducting in both the sessions i.e., morning and evening (Morning Timings 6 am to 9 am & evening timings 4 pm to 7 pm in seven Games of Sports at KVBR Stadium.

Fees structure is as follows: Badminton Rs.2550, Basketball Rs.2050, Boxing Rs.550, Gymnastics Rs.550, Karate Rs.550, Skating Rs.2050, Wrestling Rs.550. Table Tennis Rs.2050, Yoga Free for parents & Zumba Muscial Dance for parents Free Interested students / candidates please contact the concerned game coaches to enroll their names, the Age group starts from 5 years minimum according to the game age restrictions the candidate must submit the 2 Photos Aadhar Xerox copy.From this camp, the coaches will identify the in burn quality talented players and will recommend them to continue the sports practice and make them as carrier in sports to bring the laurels to



the State and country and this is the main basic platform to start the practice in the holidays and utilize the available Sports International infrastructure in your locality premises which is available.

Revanth stoops to any level for power: Jagadish Reddy



Suryapet, May 1 : Former minister and BRS party leader Jagadish Reddy today expressed his anger against CM Revanth Reddy. He gave a strong counter to Revanth Reddy's comments on former CM KCR. "Whether KCR raises Revanth Reddy's name or not, he will be afraid of him," Reddy mocked. Jagadish Reddy hoisted the May Day flag at the Suryapet Municipal Office. On the occasion, he spoke to the media.

Speaking on the occasion, he mocked that MLAs from his CM's own party were forgetting his name and wondered as to why do people remember the name of Revanth, who has not done any good work? Only those who were hurt by Revanth remember him to defeat him, Jagadish Reddy fired back. He said the Congress party was always the villain of Telangana. He alleged that Revanth has a habit of stooping to any extent for power. "Look at the implementation of promises made by KCR. Why would those, who said they have been in power for ten years be afraid if KCR is in a farmhouse? Revanth Reddy himself does not know how many days he will be in office," he saidHe questioned as to why those who said they had been in power for ten years were so afraid if KCR is in a farmhouse now? "The Congress is the one who merged Telangana with Andhra. Isn't it the Congress party's sin to shoot 359 people during the movement? Wasn't Congress the reason for the sacrifices of students during KCR's initiation? The people welcomed KCR's words at the Elkathurthi BRS silver jubilee meeting," he said.

Organized cricket betting racket busted, three held



Hyderabad, May 1: On credible information, the sleuths of Commissioner's Task Force, Central Zone Team, Hyderabad along with staff of Domalguda PS conducted raid at organized online Cricket betting den situated at Pawani Lingaiah Apartment, Street No. 8, Himayath Nagar, under the limits of Domalguda PS and apprehended three accused identified as Sriraj Boob (cricket Bookie), Hondmane Sainath (sub-bookie) and Regalla Gopynath (Punter), who have been organizing Cricket betting.Rs 1,20,000/- betting amount and three cell phones (used for online betting & installed betting apps. During IPL Cricket matches, he purchased main betting app www.radheexch.com from agent at abroad and its login ID & Password sharing to Punters for live betting, which provides on-line score ball to ball, as well as betting ratios and used to collect betting amount from the punters clandestinely and remit to main bookie on commission basis.

On April 30, the accused have been organizing and accepting cricket betting amount from punters directly and indirectly, through online betting for ongoing IPL Cricket

Match held in-between Chennai Super Kings Vs Punjab Kings, through online betting app www.radheexch.com. Meanwhile, on a tip off, police apprehended them and seized the above material from their possessiPreviously the accused Sriraj Boob and Hondmane Sainath were arrested in Cricket Betting cases. The accused along with seized material were handed over to SHO Domalguda PS.The apprehension was made by Inspector of Police, Central Zone Task Force, Sub-Inspector and staff of Task Force Central Zone team & staff of Domalguda PS, Hyderabad city, said Y.V.S. Sudheendra, Deputy commissioner of police, commissioner's task force, Hyderabad.

Bhu Bharathi Act to be implemented in 28 mandals from May 5: Ponguleti

Hyderabad, May 1: Minister for Revenue Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy has announced that the state government will roll out the Bhu Bharati Act in 28 mandals starting May 5, selecting one mandal per district for a pilot project in all districts except Hyderabad.In a statement made on Thursday, the Minister expressed that the Bhu Bharati Act is set to bring about significant changes and is receiving an extraordinary response from the people.

He mentioned that revenue meetings had been completed in 555 out of the 605 mandals—excluding Hyderabad—by April 30. The state government is now taking measures to address land issues in these pilot project mandals by June 2, following a thorough review of the applications submitted, Ponguleti said.

The Minister emphasised the importance of implementation, stating, "Passing a law is not sufficient; true justice for farmers will only come when the law is fully enforced. Our government is committed to taking all necessary steps in this regard." •

TMREIS president happy with commendable results



Hyderabad, May 1 Mohammed Faheemuddin Qureshi, Vice-Chairman and President Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions Society (TMREIS) today stated that TMREIS continued its journey of academic excellence by delivering outstanding performance in SSC Public Examinations 2025. The commendable results of

TMR Schools reflects the Society's commitment of providing holistic and quality education for the students from marginalized communities.

In a press statement, Mohammed Faheemuddin Qureshi said this year overall pass percentage is 97%. Out of 204 TMR Schools, 99 TMR Schools secured 100% results, a substantial increase as compared to last academic year 89 Schools and 87 TMR Schools secured 90-99% results. Further, 38 TMR students qualified JEE MAINS 2025 Examinations. The Society will continue to inspire academic brilliance and it will be ensured that more number of Schools secure 100% results in coming years.All the qualified students will be further groomed to pursue Intermediate, Polytechnic and other professional courses of their choice. TMREIS has already established Vocational Jr. Colleges in the State for helping the students in building their carrier in technical education besides regular streams.

Mohammed Faheemuddin Qureshi congratulated the students, parents, teachers, principals and the academic team for their hard work and untiring efforts in achieving excellent results. He also thanked Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy for sanctioning funds for development of poor minority students of TMREIS, which is instrumental in providing good infrastructure and facilities to the students.

Hydroponic Marijuana, a new entrant in Hyderabad's illicit market

GNS News Agency, May 1
Hyderabad: Marijuana, which until recently was also known to be cultivated clandestinely on terraces and back yards of houses has now made its way into the closets and to the bedrooms.The anti-drug teams and law enforcement agencies in the city are grappling with the surge in the smuggling and distribution of a new form of narcotic substance – ‘Hydroponic Marijuana’ or Hydroponic Cannabis, a potent form of cannabis cultivated using water-based, nutrient-rich solutions instead of traditional soil methods.

This sophisticated cultivation technique, often associated with higher tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content, has become increasingly prevalent among drug peddlers supplying it in the city's illicit market.As per available information, investigations revealed that smugglers employ ingenious methods to conceal hydroponic cannabis. Common tactics involve hiding the substance in airtight plastic bags within food packaging like chocolate boxes or tetra packs, aiming to evade detection by masking the strong odour of the contraband.Police officials said the allure of hydroponic marijuana lies in its high potency, with THC levels ranging anywhere between 30 per cent to 40 per cent significantly, surpassing the 3 per cent to 4 per cent found in conventional cannabis plants.

"This increased strength has led to a growing demand among consumers, particularly in urban centers. Consequently, the price of hydroponic cannabis has skyrocketed, fetching anywhere between Rs 80 lakh to Rs 1 crore per kg in the international market," said a senior official adding that drug smugglers are choosing it due to the high profitability of the trade.Meanwhile, police authorities say that despite



its potency, hydroponic cannabis often falls under less severe legal categories due to its classification under current narcotics laws, posing a unique challenge to the law enforcement agencies.Marijuana grown using hydroponic technique and artificial lights is known as hydro ganja. It is grown in a water-rich environment, not soil. Smugglers usually buy the seeds online and grow the plants using LED lights. It is a method of growing cannabis without the use of soil. Instead, plants are grown in nutrient-rich water solutions. Because, the roots are not restricted by soil, they can access oxygen faster and grow at an accelerated rate.* October 2024 : Directorate of Revenue Intelligence officials caught two passengers smuggling hydroponic cannabis in vacuum-sealed packets from Bangkok at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport. A total of 7 kgs of the contraband valued at Rs 7 crore in the illicit market was seized.* April 2025 : The Hyderabad Police caught four persons including a techie and an architect in possession of 1380 grams of hydroponic marijuana worth nearly Rs 1 crore in Nallakunta.

We welcome the response of CM Revanth Reddy on our strike -TGSRTC JAC

Hyderabad, May 1: The TGSRTC JAC today thanked the Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for responding to the strike to be taken by the RTC workers from May 7 of this month, on May Day, the World Labour Day. It, however, they were pained that the CM did not take any decision about lifting ban from the employees unions in the RTC.

"We were waiting with great hope that the CM would lift the restrictions on the RTC unions on this Labour Day, but it is very painful that he did not mention that issue. In the past, the Chief Minister himself had said there should be unions in the RTC and if the workers face any problems, they would have the opportunity to talk to the RTC officials and resolve them amicably. But today the CM did not say that, which has made all of us unhappy. Since the last seven months, we have given petitions to the Transport Minister,

the Finance Minister, and all the government officials, but since they have not come forward to resolve those problems so far, we had to give a strike notice in an insurmountable situation.

There are still six days left, and we are ready to hold talks with the government as suggested by the CM within this period. We have asked the CM to provide an opportunity to discuss the issues suggested by the government whenever he calls us for talks. 90% of our strike demands are non-financial issues. We will understand everything clearly only when we weigh them and discuss them with us. Because the officials are giving false information to the CM through false reports, no one is giving us the opportunity to tell the CM the facts. We request the Chief Minister to create that environment," the JAC said.

Governor hails Maharashtra, Gujarat for their roles in India's economic progress

Hyderabad, May 1 Governor Jishnu Dev Varma attended the Maharashtra and Gujarat States' Foundation Day celebrations as the Chief Guest at the Durbar Hall, Raj Bhavan here on Thursda Speaking on the occasion, the Governor extended warm greetings to the people of both States and praised Maharashtra and Gujarat for their vital roles in India's economic progress and cultural legacy. He highlighted the importance of the "Ek Bharat – Shreshtha Bharat" initiative in promoting national unity and harmony.

The Governor described Maharashtra as a hub of financial resilience and spiritual richness, and Gujarat as a land known for strong leadership, enterprise and devotion.He noted that though the two states were created on linguistic

grounds in 1960, their shared contributions continue to strengthen the spirit of national integration. The event also featured video messages from Maharashtra Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan, and Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat. Cultural performances showcasing the traditions of both States added colour and vibrancy to the celebration. Among the attendees were M. Dana Kishore, Principal Secretary to the Governor, G. Pallavi, Deputy Secretary to Governor, Mahesh Muralidhar Bhagwat, Rajendra Nimje, Sunitha Bhagawat, Patil Sangramsingh Ganpat Rao, Additional Director General, Centre for Good Governance; senior Raj Bhavan officials, and distinguished guests from Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Air Marshal Tejinder Singh takes over as AOC-in-C Training command

Hyderabad, May 1:Air Marshal Tejinder Singh took over as Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C), Training Command on Thursday. After assumption of his new appointment, the Air Marshal paid homage to the brave hearts by laying a wreath at the Training Command War Memorial.

An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Air Marshal Tejinder was commissioned in the fighter stream of the IAF on June 13, 1987. He is a Category 'A' Qualified Flying Instructor with over 4500 hours of flying, an alumnus of Defence Service Staff College and National Defence College. He has commanded a Fighter Squadron, a Radar Station, a premier Fighter Base and was Air Officer Commanding, Jammu and Kashmir.

His varied staff appointments include Operational Staff



at a Command HQ, Air Commodore (Personnel Officers-1) at Air HQ, Deputy Assistant Chief of Integrated Defence Staff, Financial (Planning) at HQ IDS, Air Commodore (Aerospace Safety).

Flyer from Dubai arrested at Hyderabad airport with 30 gold bars gold worth Rs 3.45 crore



GNS News Agency, May 1

Hyderabad airport gold seizureThe investigation revealed that the smuggled gold was supposed to be delivered to another ground staff member, waiting near the parking area at the airport. The Directorate Of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) said it seized 3.5 kg of smuggled gold of foreign origin at Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport on Thursday.Officials of the DRI's Hyderabad zonal unit, acting on specific intelligence, intercepted an Indian passenger who had travelled from Dubai to Hyderabad via Muscat. He was intercepted near the aerobridge at the in-

ternational passengers' arrival gate along with a ground handling staff member working at the airport, a DRI statement said."The smuggled gold of foreign origin was being handed over to the ground handling staff by the passenger near the aerobridge," the statement added.The investigation revealed that the smuggled gold was supposed to be delivered to another ground staff member, waiting near the parking area at the airport."The second ground staff waiting at the parking would later return the said gold outside the airport to the same passenger after he exits the customs area," the DRI's preliminary investigation has found.As many as 30 gold bars (10 tola each), concealed in three packets, were recovered from the passenger. The DRI valued the gold, weighing 3.5 kg gm and having 99.9% purity, at Rs 3.45 crore. The passenger and both members of the ground handling staff were arrested under the Customs Act 1962 and remanded in judicial custody, the DRI said, adding that further investigation was in progress.This is the first notable seizure of smuggled foreign gold at the airport in a long time. In August 2024, the DRI seized 1,390 g of gold worth over Rs 1 crore from a passenger arriving from Dubai. The gold was concealed in the passenger's shoes and backpack.Hyderabad International Airport has been a key entry point for smuggled gold into the country. The point of origin is often found to be the Middle East.

Pahalgam terror victim Vinay Narwal's wife appeals for communal harmony: 'We want peace and only peace'

GNS News Agency, May 1

On the birth anniversary of Lieutenant Vinay Narwal, who was killed in the Pahalgam terrorist attack, his wife Himanshi has made an emotional appeal for communal harmony. "We don't want people to go after Muslims and Kashmiris," she said Ahead of a blood donation camp organised at Karnal in Haryana to mark Narwal's birth anniversary, Himanshi said, "We want peace and only peace. Of course, we want justice. Of course, the people who have wronged him should be punished. I will donate blood, and all of us will donate blood."Assembly Speaker Harvinder Kalyan and cabinet minister Arvind Sharma visited the Narwal family to pay tribute to the 26-year-old victim.After the blood donation camp, Lieutenant Narwal's younger sister, Srishti, expressed her gratitude to every participant. "One couple came from Bangalore by flight to donate blood. So many people came from Delhi," she said.Newly married Indian Navy officer Lieutenant Vinay Narwal was among the victims of the terrorist attack that claimed 26 lives in South Kashmir's Pahalgam on April 22. He had been eagerly looking forward to celebrating his 27th birthday on May 1, for which his family had planned a grand event.



Narwal, who was on a honeymoon trip with Himanshi, was allegedly shot dead in front of her.Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has announced an ex gratia payment of Rs 50 lakh and a government job for a member of Vinay Narwal's family. "The government job will be given to any family member as per Narwal's parents' wishes," he stated.Narwal is also survived by his father Rajesh, a government employee; his mother, a homemaker; and his sister, a student.

MHADA Konkan Board launches 'Book My Home' portal for sale of 13,395 unsold flats in Mumbai Metropolitan Region



GNS News Agency, May 1

The Konkan Housing and Area Development Board (KHADB), a subsidiary of the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA), on Wednesday initiated an online application process for the sale of 13,395 unsold flats in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) through the 'Book My Home' portal.The portal and the application process were started on Wednesday by Sanjeev Jaiswal, Vice President and CEO, MHADA.The portal en-

ables potential homebuyers to see and choose flats in real time under the 'First Come, First Served' (FCFS) category.Earlier, the applicants in the FCFS scheme had no control over which flat they would get. "With the 'Book My Home' portal, applicants can now see the available flats in real time and select their desired unit and floor according to their eligibility. The portal also gives detailed information at the scheme and flat level, enabling users to make informed decisions," said Revati Gaikar, Chief Officer, KHADB.The unsold flats are within MHADA projects in Virar (Bolinj), Khoni, Shirdhon, Gotheagar, and Bhandarli. All these units fall under the MMR, with prices varying between Rs 17 lakh and Rs 30 lakh, subject to the area and location of the flat.The whole process from registration to flat choice is entirely online, and there is no manual intervention. Candidates have to upload scanned copies of their Aadhaar card, PAN card, and self-declaration at the time of registration. These documents are automatically verified by a digital system, after which candidates can view the list of available flats.Applicants, upon verification, can book a flat by choosing their desired unit from the available inventory in real time. The booking is done on an FCFS basis.

DISTRICT ARYA VAISHYA LEADERS JOIN CONGRESS, MINISTER SRIDHAR BABU INVITED TO VASAVI MATA FESTIVAL



"PS ASHOKAN"INDIAN CHRONICLE"MANTHANI APRIL 2."In a significant development, prominent leaders of the District Arya Vaishya Sangham officially joined the Congress Party in the presence of Hon'ble Minister for IT, Industries, and Legislative Affairs, Sri Duddilla Sridhar Babu. The event took place under the leadership of the District Arya Vaishya Sangham President."During the meeting, District General Secretary Allanki Lingamurthy and Treasurer Ellanki Rajender were warmly welcomed into the Congress Party by the Minister, who presented them with party scarves. Minister Sridhar Babu expressed confidence that their entry would strengthen the party at the grassroots level."The gathering was marked by the participation of several dignitaries and community leaders. These included state leader Komuravelli Vijay Kumar, Town Congress President Ellanki Vamsidhar, Single Window Director Ravikanti Satish, and Vasavi Mata Temple President Kotha Srinivas."Members of the Town Arya Vaishya Sangham were also present to lend their support to the new entrants. On this occasion, the Minister was formally invited to at-

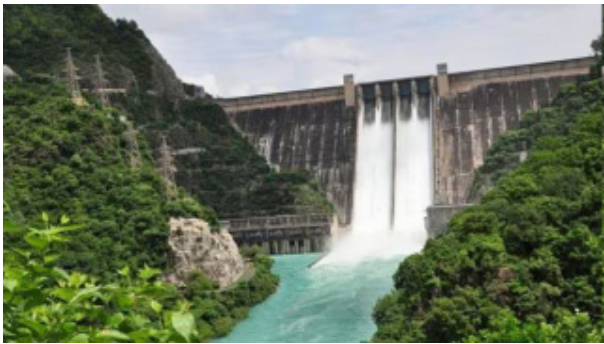
tend the Vasavi Mata religious program scheduled for the 7th of next month.

Safety norms at public places thrown to the wind

GNS News Agency, May 1

Hyderabad: Security goes for a toss at public places in the city with local police failing to enforce public safety measures in real sense.Several commercial complexes, eateries, restaurants, shopping malls and hospitals have done away with the practice of keeping Door Frame Metal Detectors (DFMDs) at the entrance and frisking the visitors.The managements appear to have disregarded the security norms for various reasons although the government had enacted The Telangana Public Safety (Measures) Enforcement Act, 2013 that makes it compulsory to have security apparatus in place in public places.Under the Act the establishments have to implement 'Public Safety Measures' such as Access Controls and Closed Circuit Television Surveillance at entry and exit points of the establishments. They have to ensure that the commercial establishment and their parking areas have access controls through physical and technical means, surveillance through closed circuit television surveillance cameras with a provision for storage of video footage for 30 days. Also, the technical equipment should adhere to the specifications notified by the government.The Act gives powers to Inspector of Police having jurisdiction over the area to, without prior notice, enter into any establishment, inspect and check the installation and functioning of the public safety measures. In case of failure on part of the establishment owners, the local ACP or SDPO should issue a notice to the management.

'AAP equally responsible, creating tension between Punjab and Haryana': farmers slam decision to release more water



GNS News Agency, May 1

Farmers' unions across Punjab have condemned the Bhakra Beas Management Board's (BBMB) decision to release additional water to Haryana, calling it coercive and politically motivated. Terming it an act of injustice against Punjab, they accused both the BJP-led Centre and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Punjab of collusion in trying to divide people and deprive the state's farmers of their rightful share. The BBMB on Wednesday ordered the release of an additional 8,500 cusecs of water to Haryana.Bharatiya Kisan Union Ekta-Dakaunda (Dhaner faction) state president Manjeet Singh Dhaner said, "The Centre and AAP are working hand-in-glove. This is not just water theft; it is a conspiracy to pit Punjabis and Haryanvis against each other." He called the situation intolerable and accused both governments of betraying Punjab's interests. His union is a constituent of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM).

Dhaner's remarks found support among other major farmer groups. Leaders from the Kirti Kisan Union, another constituent of SKM, said BBMB's decision ignores the urgent water needs of Punjab's farmers, who are preparing for the upcoming sowing season."Even on humanitarian grounds, Punjab is already releasing 4,000 cusecs of water to Haryana. Demanding more, and BBMB agreeing to it, is nothing short of ignoring Punjab's rights and necessities," said Kirti Kisan Union (KKU) president Nirbhay Singh Dhudike.KKU general secretary Rajinder Singh Deep Singh Wala called the decision an "assault" on Punjab's genuine needs. "This cannot be justified by logic or fairness. It reflects the Centre's step-motherly treatment towards Punjab," he added.

The union alleged that Haryana has already consumed its legitimate share, and any further release is unjustified and dangerous for Punjab's agriculture."The Kirti Kisan Union

The construction process of Indiramma houses should be expedited"- State Panchayat Raj Minister Seethakka"-

Minister inspects construction work in Raghavapatnam"- Students who achieved best results in tents honored"- Minister on extensive tour of the district



"Mulugu, Mahipal, Indian Chronicle: State Panchayat Raj, Rural Development and Women and Child Welfare Minister Dr. Danasari Anasuya (Seethakka) has ordered to expedite the construction process of Indiramma houses, which has been undertaken by the state government with great pride. On Thursday, the minister inspected the work of Indiramma houses under construction in Raghavapatnam, Govindaraopet mandal of Mulugu district along with District Collector Divakara TS, DFO Rahul Kishan Jadhav and Library Chairman Ravichander and made several suggestions to the officials. On this occasion, the Minister spoke to Ponnam Ravinder, Danasari Lingaiah, Krishnaveni, and Koram Rammohan, who are being built under the Indiramma Indla scheme. He asked them to bring any problems to the attention of the authorities. He ordered that the construction of sanctioned houses be expedited, a list of second-phase beneficiaries be prepared, and priority be given to the poorest of the poor. He said that the government has launched the Indiramma Indla scheme so that only people living in the house can build houses. He urged that the government has no intention of depriving people of houses by citing various reasons, and that houses should be built for every poor person who will not have a home in the next four years. He said that the progress of house construction at each stage will be recorded in the Indiramma Indla app. Later, the Minister inaugurated the Seethakka borewell. Officials participated in the program."- Without teachers, there is no society.: Minister felicitates students who showed excellent talent in the Tent"State Minister Seethakka clarified that without teachers, there is no society, knowledge is of great importance in life, and education is provided in government schools on par with private ones. He advised them to pursue higher education and achieve high standards and bring fame to their hometown, parents and teachers. The minister, along with Collector Divakara TS, felicitated the students who scored the best marks across the district in the 10th class results released by the government, at the Mulugu Collectorate on Thursday. He

reiterated its long-standing demand for a permanent solution to the regional water crisis. It suggested that the Sharada-Yamuna Link Canal be built to redirect excess water from the Sharada River—a tributary of the Ganga—towards Haryana, Rajasthan, Delhi, and western Uttar Pradesh, reducing dependency on Punjab's resources.Raminder Singh Patiala, press secretary of the KKU, said the Centre should utilise the otherwise wasted waters of the Ravi and Sharada rivers. "A fair financial package for Punjab is also essential to promote crop diversification and ensure every household and field gets clean canal water," he added.

Meanwhile, Gurdeep Singh Rampura, BKU Ekta-Dakaunda vice-president (Dhaner faction), claimed, "Union leaders received phone calls from intelligence agencies asking them to issue public statements on the matter. This shows that the Punjab government is now trying to use farmers as a shield," he said. He also criticised the government for accepting the Dam Safety Act and passing the Water Regulation Act despite opposition.Rampura pointed out that people from villages like Akhara, Bhundri, Mushkabad, and Bagge Kalan have been facing police action for protesting against polluting factories. "If the government truly cared about water, it should cancel the Dam Safety and Water Regulation Acts, stop polluting factories, and apologise to those who were suppressed for raising their voice," he said.Harnek Singh Mahima, the state general secretary of BKU Ekta-Dakaunda, noted that while the Punjab government restricts protesters from entering Chandigarh and uses force against them, it now seeks support from the same farmer unions. "Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, who boasts of 94 MLAs, should lead a dharna in Delhi over this issue himself," he said.Vice presidents of this union, Amandeep Singh Lalto and Harish Nadda, emphasised that the situation would not have arisen if the Dam Safety Act had been repealed earlier. They called for the resolution of water issues based on international norms and the Indian Constitution and vowed to resist exploitation without becoming tools of the government. The unions warned that depleting groundwater in northwestern India makes canal water essential, and any forced diversion from Punjab would have serious ecological and economic consequences. They urged the Centre to abandon divisive policies and hold talks on constructing the Sharada-Yamuna Link Canal."The public must remain united and resist this injustice. When governments have no answers, they try to divide people. We will not let that happen," a union leader said.



said that it is commendable that Mulugu district is ranked 8th at the state level with 97.63 percent. Teachers should work hard to be in the first place in the next academic year. He opined that if there is property, there is a chance to get rich, but no one has the chance to get rich from education. He clarified that 100 computers have already been provided to 10 schools in the district to teach with new knowledge, that education is being taught with AI knowledge, and that 150 computers will be provided to some more schools in the district in the coming days. He said that he was very impressed by the children speaking English in Kondaparthi village of Tadvai mandal, adopted by State Governor Jishnu Dev Verma. He said that students should choose courses that will be useful for their livelihood in the future, and everyone needs self-confidence. He said that parents of students studying in private schools and colleges are facing difficulties in paying fees to their respective schools, and parents of children should send their children to government schools and colleges. He said that no matter how much they study, there is no end to education, and he is still studying education even though he is still in the position of a minister. On this occasion, Minister Seethakka congratulated the students who achieved the best results and felicitated them with shawls. District Education Officer G. Panini,

GMADA unveils Mohali Phase 8 beautification project



GNS News Agency, May 1

The Greater Mohali Area Development Authority (GMADA) has launched an ambitious initiative to enhance the city's aesthetic appeal and infrastructure, with a special focus on Phase 8. Under this project, lakhs of rupees will be invested to transform key areas into lush, visually vibrant corridors. The GMADA's horticulture wing will spearhead the

beautification of the widened road stretching from Phase 7 to Phase 11, prioritising Phase 8 with ornamental flowering plants and evergreen species. A dedicated budget will ensure the installation of visually striking foliage along both sides of the road, complemented by upgraded roundabouts. "The selected plants will be climate-resilient and low-maintenance, ensuring sustainable growth while boosting the area's charm and environmental health," stated a GMADA official. A sum of Rs 62 lakh has been allocated for the upkeep of trees and decorative plants lining the Airport Road to Banur Road stretch. This includes maintenance of shrubs on the central verges and trees on both sides of the road, ensuring a pristine and eco-friendly commute. To streamline traffic in the bustling Sector 67-68 zone, the GMADA will construct a new side service road near the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER) at a cost of Rs 24 lakh. The road aims to alleviate congestion caused by increasing vehicular movement, benefiting residents, students, and daily commuters.

At Badal's 2nd barsi, Sukhbir: SAD will always follow in his footsteps

GNS News Agency, May 1

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Friday said the party will always follow the principles laid down by former chief minister Parkash Singh Badal and that he would never flinch from making any sacrifice to ensure communal harmony in the state. Addressing a gathering on the second 'Barsi' of the former CM, at their native Badal village in Muktsar, Sukhbir said, "I am committed to follow Badal Sahab's 'soch' and make Punjab the number one state in the country. I appeal to all those who have come here to keep the former CM's ideals in their hearts and work for strengthening the party."

He also emphasised on how Parkash Badal exemplified the slogan of 'Raj nahi Sewa' and always stayed away from religious politics. "That is how he received the love and affection of every community and earned the title of 'CM of the masses'," he said. Speaking about the former CM's passion for skill development, Sukhbir said that "it is a matter of great happiness that the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has approved the proposal for the establishment of a Skill Centre at Badal village". He said, "We will provide land for the Centre which will be the second such facility in the country after Bhubaneswar. The NSDC Advisor has handed over the approval letter and said that the centre, which would be named 'Parkash Singh Badal



Skill India Centre', will provide specialised training to 2,000 students each year." Speaking on the occasion, senior leader Balwinder Singh Bhunder recalled his decades-long association with Parkash Badal, highlighting various incidents of struggle and sacrifices made by the former CM for the people. SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhami also urged the gathering to draw inspiration from Badal's life, emphasising his 75 years of dedicated service to the Akali Dal. He described how the former CM took everyone along in the path of progress. Speaking on the occasion, Akal Takht acting Jathedar Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargajli listed various contributions by Badal, including the establishment of Sikh memorials and the commemoration of significant events.

3 directors of Chicago-based firm booked for cheating Mumbai diamond merchant of Rs 5.36 crore



GNS News Agency, May 1

mumbai police The zonal deputy commissioner of police reviewed the allegations and directed the police to lodge a criminal case and carry out a detailed investigation. The Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC) police in Mumbai booked three Chicago-based directors of a diamond company Thursday for allegedly cheating a merchant of Rs 5.36 crore. A probe is underway. According to the police complaint, from September 23, 2022, to July 25, 2023, the three partners pretended to buy IGI-certified lab-grown polished diamonds

from the complainant's company, based in Grant Road, through a broker. They gained the complainant's trust and after a deal was finalised, the company gave the Chicago firm 3,490.77 carats of diamonds, estimated to be worth Rs 18.60 crore in Indian currency. As per the deal, jhangad pavti (an informal acknowledgement receipt of the said diamonds) and bills were given to the overseas firm, the police complaint stated. The accused company gave 50 per cent of the security amount, based on the diamond's value, to the complainant's firm as per the terms and conditions of the MoU between the parties.

They also returned some of the diamonds to the complainant's company as mentioned in the terms and conditions. However, they allegedly misappropriated the remaining diamonds and did not return the equivalent money, thereby defrauding the complainant of Rs 5.36 crore, it was alleged. The firm eventually approached the BKC police. The zonal deputy commissioner of police reviewed the allegations and directed the police to lodge a criminal case and carry out a detailed investigation. The BKC police registered the case under sections 406, 409 (breach of trust), 420 (cheating) and 34 of the Indian Penal Code, said a police officer.

Over Rs 22.99 crore collected, yet no access to holiday homes: Panjab University students demand audit

GNS News Agency, May 1

Student leaders from Panjab University and its affiliated colleges accused the university administration of financial mismanagement in the Student Holiday Home Fund, demanding a forensic audit of over Rs 22.99 crore collected from students — even as holiday homes in Shimla and Dalhousie remain inaccessible and in disrepair. At a press conference on campus Friday, student representatives presented a dossier based on RTI filings, Senate records and budget annexures. The students further claimed that the fund — to which every student contributes Rs 78 annually — has seen no tangible output for over a decade. With around 2.68 lakh students across the main campus and over 200 affiliated colleges contributing each year, students allege the university has failed to justify the use of the funds.

Despite intermittent spending reported — Rs 13.9 lakh in 2010, Rs 39.75 lakh in 2016, and Rs 2 crore in 2018 for a "facelift" — students say there's no public record of utilisation certificates, booking logs, or audits. The 2018 works, covered in a national English daily, were limited to cosmetic repairs and left the homes non-functional. "Google reviews call them abandoned. There is no evidence that these homes were ever made usable for students," said student leader Archit Garg. Senate minutes cited by students show repeated concerns from members over the fund. In a 2018 meeting, Senate member Raghubir Dyal noted, "They resolved to keep charging students until construction begins. Crores are lying in the corpus." He also questioned the status of a proposed holiday home in Amritsar, for which Rs 2.5 crore was sanctioned. The students claim that RTI queries about the fund have been ignored or vaguely answered. They allege that unspent money has been diverted into fixed deposits — a detail confirmed in internal Senate discussions. While not technically illegal, students argue this violates the spirit of the fund. "Interest must be in lakhs. And yet students haven't benefited in any way," said Garg. They also pointed out that the Dean Students' Welfare committee — responsible for such oversight — is currently inactive. "Now they say they'll form a new committee. But who's responsible for the last ten years?" asked student leader Rahul Nain. Many students, especially from affiliated colleges in rural districts, said they weren't even aware of the fund. "We've been charged automatically every year with-



out being told what it's for," said a student from Ludhiana. The group — including Garg, Nain, Dalal, Sagar Khatri, Avtar, Sheeshpal and Rahul Chauhan — demanded a full forensic audit by an external agency, a freeze on further collections, public disclosure of tenders and expenses, and accountability from university officials. Legal advisors to the students said the issue could amount to misrepresentation under consumer protection laws. A university official said the matter is under internal review but declined to comment on missing audits or the status of the funds. Student leaders now plan to approach the Punjab government and the UGC. "

Why flyers at Delhi airport may face delays this week

GNS News Agency, May 1

Travelers flying in and out of Delhi's Indra Gandhi International Airport this week may experience delays as shifting wind patterns and ongoing runway work disrupt flight operations, airport authorities warned. In a statement posted late Friday on X (formerly Twitter), the Delhi Airport said a "shifting wind pattern in the vicinity of the airport" was impacting operations. Air Traffic Control has implemented flow management measures for flight arrivals from 11:30 p.m. to 2:30 a.m. IST to ensure safety. The authorities also warned that unfavourable weather conditions are also adding to the delays. "We would like to inform you that, as per the forecast from Indian Meteorological Department easterly winds are expected between 26th April and 4th May

Weeks after scrapping it, Telangana Council of Higher Education restores bucket system in UG



GNS News Agency, May 1

Hyderabad: Just a few weeks into the decision to abolish the bucket system that allows students to pick their undergraduate subjects from a pool, the system has been reinstated. During a recent meeting with the Telangana Coun-

cil of Higher Education officials, Education Department Secretary Dr. Yogita Rana and Commissioner of Collegiate Education A Sri Devasena are said to have expressed strong objections to the TGCHE's decision to scrap the bucket system and reinstate the same for the academic year 2025-26. According to sources, higher education department officials expressed their ire over TGCHE's decision, besides questioning the unilateral move. They were of the view that an expert committee should have been constituted, and recommendations should have been sought on the issue instead of making a unilateral decision that could lead to chaos. Earlier, the TGCHE scrapped the bucket system as per the unanimous decision of the conventional universities' vice-chancellors during a meeting held on April 4. Introduced in 2021, the bucket system allows students to choose their subjects from the list of four buckets in the same faculty. For instance, a student opting for a BA programme can pick combinations from buckets A, B, C and D, which have a pool of subjects. The universities' officials contended that this system has been causing significant imbalances in the admissions, with subjects like computer science witnessing high enrollment, while the less popular subjects in the arts are struggling to fill seats.

Delhi man kills neighbour's Husky pup by flinging from staircase of apartment

GNS News Agency, May 1

A man in Delhi has been booked for killing a Husky pup of his landlord by flinging it from the staircase balcony of the apartment, alleging that it had bitten his newborn, the police said. According to the police, the incident took place on the night of April 19, when the pup's owner, Jitender Nagpal, was away at work in Loni. The golden and black Husky named Cherry ran out of the house when Nagpal's son opened the door for the laundry worker. Cherry ran upstairs while Nagpal's son collected the clothes and paid the man. "The laundry man told my son that Cherry was on the third floor where my tenant Ravi Gupta lives with his family," recalled Nagpal. According to the First Information Report, Gupta violently flung the pup out of the building from the staircase landing's balcony when Nagpal's son ascended to the third floor to take Cherry back. Cherry was unconscious when Nagpal's son reached her, the FIR stated.

The police booked Gupta under Section 325 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Section 11 of The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. "They took him in for questioning, and he told the police that Cherry had bitten his newborn son. How could she have done that? She didn't even have time to enter his house," said Nagpal. Nagpal alleged that Gupta had taken Cherry to play with his daughter a few days back and had faced no issues then. Nagpal, who adopted Cherry in early March from an acquaintance, said, his children have been unable to get over their grief and trauma. "My children have been crying since the incident.



Cherry was closest to them. They couldn't eat or sleep all night after she died," said Nagpal. Nagpal said not much action could be taken against Gupta as the laws he's been booked under are bailable offences. "He (Gupta) was also let go by the police after a few hours. Cherry was like my daughter." "My children are my life. If they're happy, I'm happy. Hence, I agreed to their request to buy a pet dog," Nagpal recalled. Despite Gupta being his tenant, Nagpal said he was unable to evict Gupta from their house because Gupta's family has been living at their in-laws' house in Burari for quite some time.

Ensure no Pakistani stays beyond deadline set for leaving India, Haryana CM Saini tells DCs, SPs

GNS News Agency, May 1

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini Friday directed deputy commissioners and police superintendents to ensure that no Pakistani national stays in the state beyond the deadline set for leaving the country. Saini also directed officials to ensure the safety of Kashmiri students in the state. India Thursday announced that all visas issued to Pakistani nationals will be revoked from April 27 and advised Indian nationals residing in Pakistan to return home at the earliest, as tensions between the two countries escalated over the Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people, mostly tourists, on April 22.

"The deadline for those holding medical visas shall be till April 29. These timelines will not be applicable on Pakistani nationals holding long-term, diplomatic, or official visas," a Haryana government spokesperson said soon after Saini chaired a meeting of top state officials on the issue. Earlier, Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to Saini after which the CM called for a top level meeting to discuss the modalities on how to execute the MHA's directions. Sources told The Indian Express that there were at least 250 Pakistani nationals who came to Haryana in the last one month, on tourism, medical as well as business visas. Sources added that the intelligence wings of the state government as well as other intelligence agencies of the union government were also verifying the antecedents and locations of all the Pakistani nationals who have recently entered the State. "The process takes time to verify each and every individual who had entered and whether he/she exited or when he/she is due to exit. But, the exit dates do not matter in current scenario, as an exit date has been fixed. We are identifying each and every such individual and will ask them to go back as per the directions issued by the union home ministry", a senior official said.

Currently, there are 1,157 Kashmiri students pursuing their education in different educational institutions in Haryana. Saini also instructed the districts administrations to maintain close contact with educational institutions to address any concerns and provide students with a sense of safety and reassurance. Earlier in the day, chief secretary Anurag Rastogi had also chaired a meeting with the top police officials and directed them to ensure safety and security of the Kashmiri students. "Officials in the district are required to keep a hawk's eye on anti-social elements and to take prompt action against anyone attempting to disrupt public



order or social unity," Rastogi told officers. During the meeting, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Sumita Misra issued a series of instructions aimed at strengthening the security apparatus. She called upon district administrations to intensify patrolling, enhance local intelligence-gathering mechanisms, and maintain constant surveillance on potentially sensitive areas. Misra also directed officers to monitor social media platforms and take strict legal action against individuals spreading misinformation or attempting to vitiate the communal atmosphere online. "Any attempt to disturb social harmony will be dealt with a firm hand," Misra said. In light of the recent developments, Misra also directed all district officials to ensure full security and support for Kashmiri students studying in universities and colleges across Haryana. She urged district administrations to remain in close contact with educational institutions to address any concerns and provide a sense of safety and reassurance to the students.

Misra also directed that regular law and order assessments be conducted and contingency plans be kept ready to respond swiftly to any emerging situation. Director General of Police (DGP) Shatruijeet Kapur also addressed the meeting and instructed all district police chiefs to identify vulnerable areas and keep a close watch on them. He emphasised the need to reactivate peace committees at the district level to foster mutual understanding and maintain communal harmony. "These committees play a crucial role in promoting dialogue between communities and can act as a bridge to defuse tension during sensitive times," DGP Kapur stated. ADGP (CID) Saurabh Singh, Secretary (Home) Geeta Bharti, and senior officers of various other departments also attended the meeting.



work on runway 10/28 will be postponed and it would reopen in early May.

After Happy Passia, Punjab Police seeks to get six more US-based gangsters nabbed



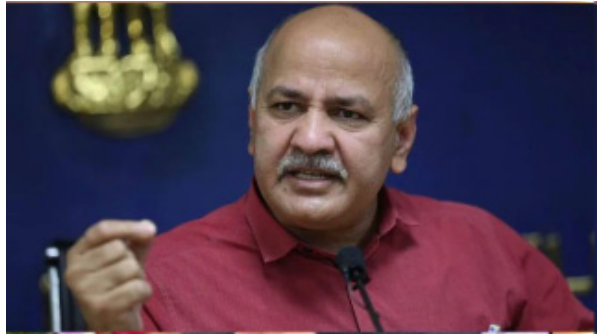
GNS News Agency, May 1

The police in Punjab is now actively following up the cases of six US-based individuals who are actively engaged in orchestrating terrorist and criminal activities in India at behest of Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI). The authorities stepped up the effort following the arrest of Khalistani terrorist Harpreet Singh, alias Happy Passia in the US. Federal Bureau of Investigation director Kash Patel described Passia as a member of a "foreign terrorist gang", and added that "the FBI will continue finding those who perpetrate violence — no matter where they are".

The remarks by Patel, the first Indian-American to lead the premier law enforcement agency of the US, has fuelled hope back home in India of a greater cooperation and efforts in tracing out gangsters and terrorists holed up in that country. The Punjab Police is focussing on Amritpal Singh alias Amrit Bal, Gurdev Singh alias Jaisal, Satbir Singh alias Satnam alias Satta, Gurjant Singh alias Bholu, Rajesh Kumar alias Sonu Khatri, and Gurpreet Singh alias Gopi Nawanshahria. All these individuals have been involved in crimes of extortion, murder and terrorism including the latest spate of grenade blasts in Punjab with the latter being undertaken with Khalistani separatists based in Pakistan. Senior police officials confirmed that the issue regarding the apprehension of these individuals by US law enforcing bodies, including FBI and ICE, has been taken up through the agencies concerned at the Centre. "Comprehensive dossiers regarding the crimes conducted by these individuals along with the fact that they have entered USA illegally on forged documents have been presented to the authorities in India and they have, in turn, been actively following it up with their US counterparts," said a senior police officer. Speaking to The Indian Express, Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav said, "We are in touch with central agencies and making efforts to get them back to India to face the law".

Punjab Police officers who are dealing with the matter say that more success is expected in these cases in the coming weeks as the US administration under President Donald Trump has intensified action against persons who have entered that country illegally. "There is a major focus on people who are also wanted for crime in their countries of origin and to deport them forthwith. This is a golden opportunity for us to get our hands on these persons who are

After complaints, Punjab govt asks its officials to give MLAs their due respect



GNS News Agency, May 1

Amid complaints by AAP MLAs that officials were not giving them respect, the Punjab government has issued orders to heads of all departments in the state mentioning that they should give "due respect to MLAs as per protocol so as to ensure the dignity of people's representatives." A letter by the department of parliamentary affairs to all department heads on Wednesday stated that it has come to the notice of the government that despite instructions issued from time to time, complaints have been received from elected representatives against some official and employees. Therefore, the officers are again instructed to give due respect to the members of the Assembly "as per the protocol so as to ensure the dignity of the people's representatives".

The order further states that whenever an MLA writes to a department regarding his constituency, a proper reply should be given on time so that he can get correct informa-

Road rage murder leads to arson, internet snapped in Rajasthan's Jhalawar

GNS News Agency, May 1

Rajasthan Road rage, Rajasthan Road rage murder, Rajasthan arson, Road rage, Road rage murder, arson, Indian express news, current affairs Raipur Police Station SHO Bannalal Jat sustained critical head injury in stone-pelting and was referred to Jaipur after primary treatment in Jhalawar. Authorities in Jhalawar suspended internet services after several shops were set on fire after the alleged gunning down of a 20-year-old local videographer by some unidentified people in a road rage incident, officials said on Friday. Shambhu Singh, a resident of Lahasudiya (Dug), died of a gunshot fired from a car, with two persons inside it. Chiranjee Lal Meena, Additional SP Jhalawar said that two accused shot the photographer while he was covering a wedding. "The accused and the victim had some previous grudges due to which the accused shot Shambhu. As the matter involved two communities, things escalated quickly and a mob burnt two shops. The fire then spread to some small shops nearby and around 15 of them were gutted. They also pelted stones. We have brought the situation under control and arrested the accused and also seized the car used in the crime. We will investigate the case and take action against the accused." Raipur Police Station SHO Bannalal Jat sustained critical head injury in stone-pelting and was referred to Jaipur after primary treatment in Jhalawar. Around half a dozen other policemen sustained minor wounds in the confrontation with the mob.

Considering the charged atmosphere, Kota Divisional

actively involved in spreading unrest in Punjab," said a senior officer. From village Birowal in Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar (Nawanshahr) district, Nawanshahria is known for his involvement in high-profile criminal activities, including murder, extortion, and terrorist conspiracies. He is believed to be a key figure in a network with links to the Pakistan-based terrorist Harwinder Singh Rinda and the proscribed Babbar Khalsa International (BKI). Nawanshahria gained attention for his role in the murder of former BKI militant Rattandeep Singh on April 3, 2024, in Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar. He fled to the United States in May 2024, using a counterfeit passport and is reportedly hiding in California.

Nawanshahria's criminal history includes orchestrating attacks on police infrastructure, such as the December 13, 2024 grenade attack on Ghania Ke Bangar police station in Batala, claimed via social media alongside Passia. His operations extends across several countries, with associates in Greece, the UK, and Pakistan, making him a significant target for Indian law enforcement agencies.

A notorious gangster from Naushehra Pannuan in Tarn Taran district, Satta is accused of involvement in terrorist activities linked to the Babbar Khalsa International (BKI). He is a key operative in a transnational criminal and terrorist network, allegedly controlled by Rinda and Canada-based gangster Lakhbir Singh, alias Landa.

Satta is implicated in several high-profile crimes including the rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) attack on Sarhali police station in December 2022. This month, Punjab Police busted two ISI-backed terror modules, allegedly controlled by Satta from abroad (possibly France) and Greece-based Jaswinder, alias Mannu Agwan. The recoveries included RPGs, grenades, and RDX. These modules planned attacks on police officials and stations. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has named Satta in its chargesheet for his role in BKI's terrorist network, which spans Canada, the US, EU, UAE, Nepal, and Pakistan. He is accused of raising funds for the BKI through narcotics and weapons smuggling into Punjab and coordinating terror acts. Satta's operations rely on encrypted communication apps like WhatsApp and Zangi — the latter is banned in India. He employs the "dead drop" technique to evade detection. His criminal history includes a 2010 case involving IED and RDX recovery. A key figure in a global drug syndicate, Bholu belongs to Havelian village in Punjab's Tarn Taran. He is reported to have ties with other prominent criminals, including Amritpal Singh alias Baath, and Shehnaz Singh, alias Shawn Bhinder, an international drug lord. Bhinder was arrested by Punjab Police on March 10 and was wanted by the FBI. DGP Gaurav Yadav had said.

Bholu's activities primarily revolve around smuggling of heroin and other narcotics from Pakistan and Afghanistan into India, as well as facilitating the distribution of cocaine from Colombia to the US and Canada. Bholu's gang is also implicated in other criminal activities, including extortion and arms smuggling, contributing to the nexus of organized crime and drug trafficking in Punjab.

tion regarding the same.

While referring to a letter, sent by the government to all department heads in 2021, (No. PRAF-11/30/2021-4PA/191144 04.06.2021), the department of parliamentary affairs stated that this letter was sent after the Centre's guidelines. Through this letter, it was clarified that all the officers/employees, including police, should be instructed that when the personalities elected in the democratic structure approach for public welfare work, they should be treated politely and respectfully in government offices and all public institutions. The government has sought an acknowledgement from all departmental head about the receipt of this letter. The letter is sent to the Special Chief Secretaries/Additional Chief Secretaries/Finance Commissioners/Principal Secretaries and Administrative Secretaries to bring these instructions to the notice of all officers/employees of the State and ensure strict compliance. Ever since the AAP has taken over the reins of the state, party MLAs have been complaining that they were not being heard and treated well by the officers. They have often complained to Speaker Kultar Singh Sandhwan. The issue was also raised at a recent meeting of party leaders chaired by state AAP in-charge Manish Sisodia. The 2021 letter was sent to the officers in June 2021, during former Chief Minister Amarinder Singh's regime. The then ruling party MLAs had similar complaints at that time. Amarinder, who was then facing a revolt from his party colleagues, had directed the government to issue a letter to bureaucrats. However, the revolt took place and Amarinder had to resign as CM subsequently in September 2021.



Raipur Police Station SHO Bannalal Jat sustained critical head injury in stone-pelting and was referred to Jaipur after primary treatment in Jhalawar.

Commissioner Rajendra Singh Shekhawat ordered suspension of internet services in Dug, Gangdhar and Pedawa sub-divisions from 12 am Friday to 12 am Saturday. Earlier, Singh's family and locals went on a protest demanding the culprits be brought to book and refused a post-mortem. They relented after the intervention of Dug MLA Kaluram Meghwal. Meghwal announced that Singh's kin would receive Rs 40 lakh in compensation — Rs 5 lakh from the government and the remaining sum from public contribution — as well as a contractual job for his younger brother.

Gurgaon-Delhi road handed over to National Highways authority for widening



GNS News Agency, May 1

Soon, people travelling between Delhi and Gurgaon through M G Road may enjoy a smooth commute, with the Public Works Department (PWD) deciding to hand over the 8.8-km-long Mandi Road to the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) for widening and upgradation.

‘Adopt a flyover’: Delhi govt set to roll out new policy



GNS News Agency, May 1

To beautify flyovers and improve the aesthetics of the areas beneath them, which are currently encroached upon or in poor condition, the Delhi government is set to introduce a policy called 'Adopt a Flyover', Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh has said. Planned as a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, the policy will encourage public sector undertakings, private companies, non-profit organisations, and other institutions to take up the onus of beautifying flyovers and utilising the spaces beneath them, said officials.

"More than 100 flyovers in Delhi are under the PWD's jurisdiction. We have noticed that spaces under these flyovers are filled with garbage and waste... many have also been encroached upon... So, we are planning to come up with a policy that will help utilise these areas," Singh said on Thursday. Under this policy, the PWD will invite tenders and selected companies can adopt flyovers. "A company or an institution can adopt five flyovers in one package for its beautification and upkeep," Singh said. He added that even after the flyovers have been adopted, the PWD will continue to look into their repair and maintenance. "These

The redevelopment of this stretch was one of the PWD's long-pending projects. The stretch, which connects Chattarpur and Gurgaon, is surrounded by upscale residential areas, farmhouses, shops and sees heavy traffic. "To decongest Mandi Road, we have decided to hand over this road to NHAI, which will take charge of its expansion, construction and management. The project requires significant land acquisition and NHAI is more efficient in handling such tasks..." PWD Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh said. Officials said around 20 hectares are required to widen Mandi Road from both sides. The road starts from M G Road near Chattarpur Metro station and goes up till Faridabad Road in Haryana. "Initially, there was a plan to construct a bypass. A consultant was appointed in 2012 to prepare the DPR... Bids were invited, but the project, estimated to cost Rs 597 crore, was put on hold..." said an official. Singh said the PWD also plans to construct a flyover from near the main Chattarpur Road to SSN Marg, and a feasibility study will be conducted for the same. "Both interventions are aimed at reducing traffic in this area," he added.

companies will maintain cleanliness, remove encroachment under the flyovers and defacement from walls, as well as increase greenery. The area below a flyover can also be developed into a play area, open gym, or a library," Singh said, adding that street arts on pillars and flyover walls will give the structures an aesthetic look. This will not only showcase Delhi roads in a good light but also help people to enjoy the commute, he said. Singh said directions have been issued to the department to prepare a proposal for the policy. "The aim is also to make the flyovers and road stretches beautiful — be it in South or Outer Delhi. While the government will hand out contracts to companies for a year, we will give them ratings — gold and platinum — for best work.... Gradually, subways and underpasses will be brought under the policy," he added.

The PWD maintains around 1,400 km of key roads, including flyovers and underpasses. Under the previous AAP government, the PWD had proposed to develop spaces below the flyovers by building sports areas and multi-utility centres, among others. Officials had said a badminton court, open gym, yoga and multi-utility area were planned under the Lajpat Nagar flyover — the 5.5-km stretch from Moolchand to Ashram. However, the then PWD Minister, Atishi, had denied any such plan. "There is no such plan under consideration. No such plan can be made without my approval and no such plan has ever been put up before me," she had said. Meanwhile, Singh said the government is planning to develop a revenue advertisement policy for foot overbridges (FOBs). "The aim is to generate revenue by giving advertisements on FOBs... The plan has been approved and will be sent to the MCD for further approval and processing," he added. Further, to keep roadsides, pavements and footpaths clean, the PWD has revised its drainage, cleaning and desilting contract rules. Now, contractors will have to remove debris and silt from the drain within 24 hours, said officials.

Windstorm wreaks havoc in Mulugu“—



Tree branches break, power lines are cut"— 38 power poles broken, three transformers fail"— Power outage in Tellawarlu"— Officials restore power in a day"Mulugu, Mahipal, Indian Chronicle: Windstorm wreaks havoc in Mulugu mandal since Wednesday evening. People are in a state of panic due to strong winds. Roof sheets flew over houses and shops set up by small traders were also washed away. Many trees fell and power lines were cut. Official figures show that 38 power poles broke and 3 transformers failed in the Mulugu, Velthurlapalli, Lakshmidivpet and Mallampalli sub-stations. Pin insulators were also damaged. Roof sheets over houses in Mulugu district headquarters. Similarly, tree branches broke and many houses were destroyed. Due to heavy winds, power supply was cut off from 7 pm on Wednesday to Thursday morning, leaving Mulugu town and other villages in darkness. Locals are discussing that the windstorm has never been experienced before. Meanwhile, DE Nageshwar Rao said that the electricity staff worked hard from night to Thursday evening as per the orders of the higher authorities and restored the supply in a single day. CMD Karnati Varun Reddy and other officials have been continuously monitoring the supply situation from the control room and have made various suggestions.

The DE revealed that they are working at the field level with the cooperation of the people to ensure that the restoration work is done quickly. and wherever there is disruption



tion, the staff immediately responds and undertakes repair work and provides power supply."

WE WILL INTENSIFY STRUGGLES WITH THE SPIRIT OF MAY DAY TO PROTECT WORKERS' RIGHTS: BUDIDA GANESH, CITU DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBER""



PS ASHOKAN"INDIAN CHRONICLE"MANTHANI APRIL 2""Manthani, May 1: May Day was celebrated with great fervor today in Manthani. A large rally was conducted through the streets of the town, starting from the main areas and concluding at Gandhi Chowk. ""At the RTC Depot, senior CITU leader Chintala Govind and SWF President Anjaneyulu jointly hoisted the flag. Addressing the gathering, Budida Ganesh, a District Committee Member of CITU, strongly criticized the BJP-led Central Government. He alleged that the government is trampling upon the rights won by workers through long struggles and sacrifices inspired by the spirit of May Day and the freedom movement. ""He declared that CITU will intensify its movements to uphold and protect workers' rights and ensure the realization of the ideals of the labor martyrs. ""Several leaders and activists participated in the event, including SFI District President Arla Sandeep, KVPWS District Vice President Manthani Lingayya, and local leaders Chippakurthi Chandu, Singarapu Gattayya, Mallesh, Anil, Ajay, and Rajayya. A large number of workers also took part, showing unity and determination in the ongoing labor movement.

Rubio to host signing of agreement between Rwanda, DR Congo



GNS News Agency, May 1

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio will host the signing of an agreement between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo following a truce pledge, officials said. The State Department on its public schedule said that Mr. Rubio would sign a "declaration of principles" with DRC Foreign Minister Therese Kayikwamba Wagner and Rwandan For-

eign Minister Olivier Nduhungirehe. The State Department did not immediately offer further details. In a surprise announcement Wednesday, the DRC and M23 rebels, who have made rapid advances, said they had agreed to halt fighting in the east of the country while they work toward a permanent truce. Thousands have been killed in a conflict that has raged along the border of the two countries since January. UN experts, the United States and other Western governments say that Rwanda supports the M23, which in recent months has seized key cities in the turbulent but resource-rich east of the DRC. Rwanda denies providing military support to the M23. But after a visit this month, the U.S. envoy — businessman Massad Boulos, who is the father-in-law of President Donald Trump's daughter Tiffany — has called for Rwanda to halt support and withdraw "all Rwandan troops from DRC territory." Qatar, which has worked with the United States on a range of thorny diplomatic issues, spearheaded talks between Rwanda and the DRC. The DRC has sought U.S. support in part by offering to reach its own agreement with the United States on access to critical minerals.

Trump signs order to ramp up U.S. deep-sea mining

GNS News Agency, May 1

U.S. President Donald Trump has defied international norms and instructed a quick start to deep-sea mining in domestic waters and beyond, sparking an angry warning from Beijing that the move "violates international law." Washington wants to lead efforts to scoop up mineral-rich deep-sea nodules and other material from the seabed, sidestepping an international regulatory effort and overriding the concerns of environmentalists.

White House aides say it could pump hundreds of billions of dollars into the American economy, and counter Beijing's chokehold on key minerals. But it would also undermine decades of efforts by global regulators at the International Seabed Authority to devise a level playing field and environmental protections for the industry. The United States never ratified the agreements that empower the ISA's jurisdiction over seabeds in international waters, and is not a member of the UN-affiliated body. Instead, the Trump administration is "relying on an obscure 1980 law that empowers the federal government to issue seabed mining permits in international waters," the New York Times reported. Mr. Trump's order gives the Secretary of Commerce 60 days to "expedite the process for reviewing and issuing seabed mineral exploration licenses and commercial recovery permits in areas beyond national jurisdiction." The move sparked anger in Beijing, which holds more exploration licenses than any other country but has held off mining awaiting the ISA's rules. "No country should bypass the International Seabed Authority and international law and arbitrarily authorise exploration and development activities," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said in response to a question from AFP. "The US authorisation of exploration and exploitation of mineral resources on its so-called outer continental shelf violates international law and harms the overall interests of the international community."

Commercial deep-sea mining remains in its infancy, but with a global race underway for rare earth minerals — and the industry dominated by China — Washington appears set on expanding its collection capacity to benefit its defence, advanced manufacturing and energy industries. Environmental groups warn the process can cause major ecological damage. "Fast-tracking deep-sea mining is an environmental disaster in the making," Emily



Jeffers, a senior attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity, said in a statement. "Trump is trying to open one of Earth's most fragile and least understood ecosystems to reckless industrial exploitation." The boosted deep-sea mining policy is aimed in part at "strengthening partnerships with allies and industry to counter China's growing influence over seabed mineral resources," the White House said. The ISA is scrambling to devise a rulebook for deep-sea mining, balancing its economic potential against warnings of irreversible environmental damage. Last week, the American firm Impossible Metals said it had asked U.S. officials to "commence a leasing process" in a parcel of the Pacific Ocean surrounding far-flung US territory American Samoa. That would be within U.S. jurisdiction, rather than international waters. However, Canada-based deep-sea mining frontrunner The Metals Company recently stunned industry observers by abruptly announcing it would seek US approval to mine in international waters. Its CEO Gerard Barron lauded Mr. Trump's order Thursday. "By building on decades of domestic innovation and regulatory groundwork, this action reasserts America's role in securing critical seabed resources and ensures the US is not left behind in a strategic arena increasingly influenced by China," Barron said in a statement. Key seabed resources include polymetallic nodules: potato-sized pebbles found at depths of 13,000 to 20,000 feet (4,000 to 6,000 meters) that contain manganese, iron, cobalt, copper and nickel. A senior administration official told reporters shortly before the signing that the United States could retrieve more than a billion metric tons of material, and the process could create an estimated 100,000 jobs and generate \$300 billion in domestic GDP over 10 years.

Former South Korean President Moon calls his bribery indictment 'unjust'



GNS News Agency, May 1

Former South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Friday (April 25, 2025) called his indictment on bribery charges "unjust," accusing prosecutors of abusing their power in what he called a politically motivated investigation. Mr. Moon's comments came a day after prosecutors in the southern city of Jeonju announced his indictment over allegations that a budget airline gave his son-in-law a lucrative no-show job during his presidency.

Meeting with National Assembly speaker Woo Won-shik, Moon said he feels that prosecutors are "pushing forward in a predetermined direction, no matter what" and that his case was an example of "how politicized the prosecution has become and how prosecutorial power is being abused." The former liberal leader was visiting the National Assembly for an event marking the seventh anniversary of his 2018 summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, held during a brief period of engagement between the rival Koreas. Moon's indictment adds to a long list of South Korean leaders who have faced criminal allegations or scandals near the end of their terms or after leaving office. On June 3, South Korea will hold a Presidential election to select a successor to conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol, who was recently removed from office over an ill-conceived imposition of martial law in December. Mr. Yoon, who previously served as prosecutor general under the Moon administration before a high-profile fallout with the liberal leadership, is now facing a criminal trial on rebellion charges related to the decree. Moon's political allies at the main opposition Democratic Party have portrayed the indictment as a political vendetta, pushed by Yoon's supporters at the prosecution service to humiliate the former liberal leader ahead of the election.

Prosecutors allege that Mr. Moon, who served as president from 2017-2022, received bribes totalling 217 million won (\$151,000) from Lee Sang-jik, founder of the budget carrier Thai Eastar Jet. The bribes were allegedly in the form of financial support for Moon's son-in-law between 2018-2020. Prosecutors say the man, who reportedly di-

Pakistan military resorts to unprovoked firing along LoC

GNS News Agency, May 1

Srinagar/ New Delhi: The Pakistani military resorted to unprovoked firing all across the Line of Control and Indian troops effectively responded to them, military sources said on Saturday. The exchange of fire for a second consecutive night came amid heightened tension between India and Pakistan following Tuesday's Pahalgalam terror attack that killed 26 civilians. The Pakistani troops fired at Indian positions along the Line of Control (LoC) on Thursday night as well and India had responded appropriately. "On the night of April 25 and 26, unprovoked small arms firings were carried out by various Pakistan Army post all across the LoC in Kashmir," a source said. "Indian troops responded appropriately with small arms," they said. No casualties were reported in the firing.

The Pakistan military has been put on high alert following India's assertion that it would hunt down the terrorists involved in the Pahalgalam strike. In view of the cross-border linkages to the Pahalgalam attack, India on Wednesday announced a raft of punitive measures, including the suspension of the 65-year-old Indus Waters Treaty, closing of the Attari land-border crossing and the expulsion of Pakistani military attaches. New Delhi also asked all Pakistanis who entered the country via the Attari land border to leave by May 1. In its response, Pakistan on Thursday announced shutting its airspace to all Indian airlines and suspended trade with New Delhi, including through third countries. Pakistan also rejected India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty and said any measures to stop the flow of water belonging to Pakistan under the pact would be seen as an "act of war". Amid nationwide outrage over the Pahalgalam attack, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the killers would be pursued "to the ends of the earth" as he promised to "identify, track and punish every terrorist and their backers"

Blood will flow if India stops river water, Bilawal Bhutto threatens



GNS News Agency, May 1

Islamabad: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has threatened that blood would flow in rivers if water is stopped, in a sharp response to India's decision to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) after the Pahalgalam terror attack. "The Indus is ours and will remain ours — either our water will flow through it, or their blood," the former Foreign Minister was quoted as saying by The News on Friday while addressing a public rally in the Sukkur area of his home Sindh province. The Indus flows through the province, and the Indus Valley Civilisation city of Mohenjo-Daro flourished on its banks. And Bilawal said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has claimed India is heir to a civilisation thousands of years old, "But that civilisation lies in Mohenjo-daro, in Larkana. We are its true custodians, and we will defend it." Bilawal said that Modi cannot sever the aeons-old bond between the people of Sindh and the Indus, adding that "the Indian government has cast its eyes on Pakistan's water, and the situation demands unity among

all four provinces to defend and protect their water." He said that neither the people of Pakistan nor the international community would tolerate Modi's "warmongering" or any attempts to divert the Indus waters away from Pakistan. "We will send a message to the world that robbery on the Sindhu won't be accepted." The PPP chairman urged his supporters to prepare for a resolute struggle to defend their river from Indian aggression. Bilawal, who has also served as Pakistan's youngest foreign minister, said the country and its people condemned the recent terrorist attack in India because Pakistanis themselves remain victims of terrorism.

India on Wednesday downgraded diplomatic ties with Islamabad. That call was taken by India after the attack on Tuesday in Pahalgalam that killed 26 people, mostly tourists. The Resistance Front (TRF), a proxy of the banned Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba, claimed responsibility for the attack. In response to India's decision to suspend the IWT, Pakistan on Thursday threatened to suspend the Simla Agreement and put other bilateral accords with India on hold. Pakistan also suspended all trade, closed its airspace for Indian airlines and said any attempt to divert the water meant for it under the Indus Water Treaty will be considered an Act of War. The Simla Agreement was signed in 1972. The treaty, signed in Shimla, was inked by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Bilawal's grandfather. Also, the PPP chairman announced on Friday that the federal government has now agreed to subject the construction of the controversial six new canals to consensus among all provinces. "I want to share that the federal government has decided that no new canals will be built without consensus in the CCI (Council of Common Interests)," he said.

Treating the dead with dignity

GNS News Agency, May 1

In the pre-privatisation era, public hospitals faced huge challenges in managing patients due to overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure such as beds and equipment, and limited resources. The 1990s were also the time when frequent epidemics of gastroenteritis and cholera hit Delhi, claiming lives across hospitals in the city. In 1992, I was sent to Safdarjung Hospital to report on the condition of gastroenteritis-affected patients and the status of the government hospital. As is the case even now, the general ward that morning three decades ago was overflowing with patients. Amid that chaos, as I walked across the ward, I noticed that two people had died. I was distressed by the sight but there was something that would disturb me even more: the insensitivity of the staff.

For the paramedics, nurses, and medicos on duty, caregiving and declaring death are both routine business. There were at least 30 beds in that room and a majority made space for more than one patient. The over-burdened doctors showed no urgency in coming to the bed where the bodies lay still. However, after they completed the mandatory paper work, there was a flurry of activity. "Bed No.2 waaale ko borey me pack kar do jaldi (pack the man in bed No. 2 in the sack quickly)", shouted a technician across the room. I watched the body being swiftly shoved into a jute bag. I had no connection with the patient, but I was upset. Why was a body being treated in such an inhumane, undignified manner? The next set of patients was immediately brought in to occupy the bed.

I encountered more such situations inside government hospitals in later years of reporting. I particularly remember visiting the mortuary at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences after the Uphaar cinema fire tragedy in 1997 — bodies were flung across the ward and walls rendered the air. To exit emotionally from such situations is not easy for reporters. I would often argue with my doctor friends about this callousness. They would acknowledge that empathy is crucial in healthcare, but would also cite the many barriers they faced — time constraints, a heavy workload, stress, burn-out, and emotional exhaustion — that made it impossible for them to demonstrate it. In a country such as ours, numbers are a bane. Following a death, bills are brought out



quickly and beds vacated, leaving the affected families helpless. Why can't hospitals be grounded in comfort and dignity? I was once told there is unnecessary suffering because a dying patient is often viewed as a failure.

I wondered, could a department established just to handle bodies address the gap? End-of-life care is not yet fully realised in our hospitals. It is important to talk to those in mourning and treat a body with dignity. This helps the family deal with grief at that moment, which is necessary yet ignored. Recently, my father died at AIIMS. Seeing how the hospital handled his body showed me how we can reconfigure entire care systems. One may argue that the perspective changes when a body is being donated for medical purposes (as was the case with my father's body) and that such care may not be possible in every case. But I believe that the respectful environment created by the anatomy department is not difficult to replicate. The AIIMS anatomy department has devised simple ways to honour the departed. One person simply told me, "Your father is under our care." Those few words impacted me. After my father's passing, his body was given to us the next day, washed and wrapped in a clean white sheet. We were provided space within the department to perform a few basic rites. We were also told that once the medical purpose was served, AIIMS would perform the cremation on behalf of the family and give us his ashes later for immersion. I couldn't have asked for a more dignified closure.

U.S. funding cuts likely to impact long-term research in malaria: Jane Carlton

GNS News Agency, May 1

1. What is the immediate impact that reduced funding is seeing on the Malaria Control programme worldwide? How does this adversely impact key high stress countries like India and African countries?

According to a recent study by Oxford Economics, the United States disbursed ~\$15.6 billion for malaria control through the Global Fund (GF) and the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) from 2003 to 2023, around 27% of total global malaria funding over that timeframe. This resulted in reducing malaria cases, improved quality of life for millions of people, and created more stable and resilient countries. It's been estimated by the World Health Organization that 2.2 billion cases and 12.7 million deaths have been averted since 2000 due to the concerted action of Western governments. Malaria control programs in India are likely to be less adversely impacted because PMI/USAID targeted African countries is where 95% of malaria deaths occur. Of more long-term concern is the impact that reduced funding of malaria R&D by the U.S. National Institutes of Health and Centre for Disease Control will have on partnerships between Indian and American scientists, for example the Fogarty International Center research and training grants and International Centers of Excellence for Malaria Research, which have been in operation for many years, training and teaching the next generation of malaria researchers. However, now we see an immediate impact of U.S. aid cuts upon malaria control and surveillance programmes particularly in African countries. We are hearing from our collaborators in Ethiopia that due to the closure of PMI offices, the supply chain of bednets has been halted. And the malaria control activities in the two highest malaria-burden regions in Ethiopia, Gambella and Benshangul Gumuz, have been stopped. A plan to investigate an outbreak of malaria in the capital Addis Ababa supported by PMI has been halted. Our collaborators in Uganda are telling us that indoor residual spraying funded by PMI has been stopped, and that personnel in charge of medical services at refugee camps are being laid off and won't be able to supply antimalarial drugs being used for test and treat in the population.

Why is malaria still a threat despite the aggressive, sustained battle against it on all fronts, including research, containment, drugs and prevention mechanisms etc. ?

The malaria parasite is a crafty beast. It is highly genetically variable and has evolved resistance to almost ev-

ery antimalarial drug that has been developed. It also evades the human immune system by changing the proteins on its surface so that the immune system can no longer recognise it. The Anopheles mosquito that transmits it has also developed resistance to many of the insecticides that are used to prevent people from being bitten. And let's not forget that malaria is a disease that afflicts the most vulnerable in resource-poor regions that do not have access to good healthcare. So there is a perfect storm of the complexity of malaria that has meant its elimination is much more challenging than other infectious diseases.

What are the newest tools available to us to fight malaria worldwide?

Very excitingly there are now two WHO-approved malaria vaccines, RTS,S and R21-M, which are recommended for use in children in endemic countries in Africa. There is evidence in early studies that malaria has reduced in the children that received the vaccine. Of interest too, are a new generation of bed-nets that are dual-ingredient insecticide-treated and are expected to mitigate insecticide resistance in mosquito populations in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere. And in certain countries there have been development of specific, tailored elimination programmes, such as the successful Durgama Anchalare Malaria Nirakaran (DAMaN) programme in Odisha, India, in hard-to-reach and inaccessible regions.

What is the latest development in technology to detect and contain this menace?

At the Johns Hopkins Malaria Research Institute we are developing and characterising genetically modified strains of Anopheles mosquito that prevent the malaria parasite from developing within them. We are also developing AI methods to discover biomarkers in the blood of malaria patients that can be developed into better diagnostic tests. And we are leveraging the research developed during the COVID-19 pandemic to develop mRNA vaccines that are an improvement upon the current two available today.

Has malaria crossed zones and countries that were previously untouched?

Historically yes, malaria was likely introduced to the Americas during the trans-Atlantic slave-trade in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. And with the increases in temperature due to climate change, the flight and breeding range of Anopheles mosquitoes will likely move, with the possibility of malaria parasite transmission in areas that used to be malaria-free.

Escape to the hills: Demand surges in the Nilgiris



While Ooty and Coonoor have their bustling spots, imagine owning your own sanctuary of tranquility. Of waking up to crisp, eucalyptus-tinged air and setting out on long walks to de-stress from your city life. With the India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicting an “above-normal number of heatwave days” this summer, it’s no wonder people are already dreaming of month-long holidays in mist-clad hills. In Tamil Nadu, this would include Ooty and Coonoor in the Nilgiris, known for their water bodies, scenic trails, tea gardens and colonial era bungalows. Over the past two years, the real estate market in the Nilgiris has experienced a significant surge, attracting diverse buyers, ranging from the who’s who of the corporate world to retirees seeking a quiet lifestyle to ambitious youngsters who want to make a smart investment. Experts in the real estate sector argue that Ooty, once a popular destination, has now become saturated. They say Coonoor and Kotagiri are the two primary regions being considered by buyers. Property prices here have soared over the past two years and land, which was previously valued at ₹4 lakh to ₹5 lakh per cent has now exceeded ₹10 lakh (depending on the location) per cent.

“Coonoor has evolved into a settler’s paradise, while Kotagiri has become an investor’s playground,” says Ashish Kishore Mehboobani, founder and managing partner of Avant Realty by A&N consultants. “Before COVID-19, the market was healthy — but the pandemic completely shifted the market dynamics. People started seeking silence over city noise, views over skylines, and clean air over chaos. Real estate in Coonoor is no longer for the ordinary — it’s aspirational and curated. Kotagiri, on the other hand, is value-rich and offers budget-friendly opportunities for anyone dreaming of a place in the hills,” he continues. Having consistently tracked the real estate scene in this hill station, Mehboobani observes that Upper Coonoor is equivalent to Chennai’s Boat Club Road. “Brooklands, Tiger Hill, Upper Attadi, Bandishola and Bettati are sought after for their exclusivity, colonial charm, and natural beauty. In Kotagiri, the belt between Kotagiri town and Kattabettu is getting attention for its convenience and pristine views,” he explains, adding that the next hotspots are just beyond the town limits — within a 10 km radius of both Coonoor and Kotagiri. “Areas like Aravenu, Kodamalai and parts of the Ketti Valley outskirts are quietly but quickly gaining traction,” he says.

Coonoor wins over PuneIn Coonoor, prices in premium pockets now range from ₹8 lakh to ₹16 lakh per cent, while Kotagiri ranges between ₹2.75 lakh per cent and ₹6 lakh per cent depending on view, access, and location. Local developers in this area mention that the price of a ready-to-move-in home ranges from ₹75 lakh to several crores of rupees. Colonial-era bungalows, which come up for sale, are priced from 3 crore to ₹6 crore and can go up to ₹15 crore. These properties often include expansive gardens or, in some cases, a small tea estate. Developers reveal that a few properties are still up for grabs with a price tag of above ₹15 crore. “Some of these properties are over 100 years old and they include antique furniture that are made of rosewood and teak wood. If one has to source such furniture elsewhere, it would cost them a few lakhs of rupees as rosewood is very expensive now,” a real estate developer in Coonoor points out.

Nostalgia, the driving forceSo what is driving the real estate market of Nilgiris, which like Kodaikanal and other

The bitter truth about job losses caused by A.I.: Will reskilling help?



GNS News Agency, May 1

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to penetrate various sectors and industries, the bitter truth emerges: job losses are becoming a reality. While many industry leaders assure that these changes will lead to retraining and reskilling, historical trends have shown that entire demographics could be left stranded. AI is proving its capabilities in data analysis and decision-making at an unprecedented pace. Despite concerns about reliability, the deployment of AI has become synonymous with faster actions and streamlined processes. This shift raises critical questions: Will we witness mass unemployment akin to previous technological revolutions? What measures can individuals take to

safeguard their careers against the encroaching AI wave? To address these pressing issues, The Hindu hosted a live webinar titled ‘The Bitter Truth About Job Losses Caused by AI’ on Saturday, April 19, at 5:00 p.m. Experts from the tech sector discussed the implications of AI on employment and offered strategies for adaptation. The panellists included Sidharth Sivasailam, Tata Consultancy Services; Alosies George, Senior Engineering Manager, TROOP; and Kalyan Mangalapalli, emerging technology consultant. AI in different sectorsDigital economy encompassing areas like IT services, BPO, digital manufacturing, supply chains, tech, and start-ups has contributed to the Indian economy and job creation. Digital transformation

hill stations, is part of the Western Ghats? Nilgiris is a distinctive destination where property buyers often share a deep emotional connection to the area. Many have personal ties, having studied or spent formative years in the hills. Coonoor town has become a favoured retirement locale for army officials who trained at the Defence Services Staff College (DSSC) during their younger days. Many actors and filmmakers who have visited this hill station for their shoots have ultimately chosen to make it their second home. Locations in and around Sim’s Park and Bandishola have become a coveted destination for some of the most prominent industrialists and tech giants in India’s IT sector. Interest from Hyderabad and Kochi “A few of our clientele, particularly those in their early 60s and 70s, have shown a growing interest in the Nilgiris region. They’re drawn to the idea of setting up summer offices, joining the ranks of India’s elite who already have a presence there. Also, we’ve observed a trend among residents from urban cities like Chennai, Hyderabad, Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram, who prefer acquiring second homes in hill stations to escape the intense summer heat,” explains Jerry Kingsley, India head, Value and Risk Advisory & City Lead Capital Markets, Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL). “In addition to this, a prominent Indian hotel chain has recognised the potential in these region. They are establishing a new homestay in Coonoor, further enhancing the appeal of the Nilgiris as a prime destination for luxury vacation accommodations,” he reveals. Nature and safety, a big plus

V. Ramkumar, a retired corporate professional has lived in several cities across India and abroad. Over time, the question of where to settle has begun to occupy his thoughts. Originally from Hyderabad, with his wife hailing from Mumbai, they had considered Pune as their retirement destination. “Initially, Pune seemed like the perfect place. But I realised that the city’s traffic and pollution were becoming increasingly difficult to tolerate. I always had an interest in nature and wildlife, and decided to move to the Nilgiris,” he shares. Years ago, he had purchased a parcel of land in the Nilgiris and when retirement was finally on the horizon, he and his wife built a home here. “Crime rate is less, people are warm and the cost of living is reasonable here,” Ramkumar notes. Real estate analysts point out that the presence of historic clubs and the Wellington Gymkhana Club Golf Course is attracting the cosmopolitan crowd. S. Sridharan, director, Lyra Properties and EC Member, CREDAI National confirms that the region has become a popular retreat for middle-aged individuals seeking a break from burnout, with many venturing into activities such as vegetable gardening. “Local communities are selling land as they move to Coimbatore or other areas, and many bungalows are being sold by owners whose children have moved abroad and no longer wish to maintain the properties,” he says. Approvals and other challenges

While owning a home in the hills offers numerous advantages, such as breathtaking views and a peaceful environment, it also comes with its fair share of challenges, agree real estate experts. The availability of premium homes, both modern and refurbished, is limited due to several factors such as strict approval processes, scarcity of prime land, and high land costs, says Kingsley. These constraints create a competitive market for desirable properties, potentially driving up prices and requiring buyers to balance preferences with practical considerations, he adds. Sridharan explains that one of the key challenges of real estate development in Coonoor, as in many other hill stations, lies in navigating the approval process. “Obtaining three essential No Objection Certificates [NoCs] from various departments, including the mines and forest departments, is crucial. Only after securing these can developers or individuals proceed with their projects,” he says. The mines department assesses land levels, while the forest department ensures compliance with environmental regulations. Unauthorised layouts are also a concern, especially as roads are being laid without proper approval. “To address this, there needs to be a common set of rules for everyone. The approval process should be streamlined by the government to make it easier and more efficient,” he adds.

increasingly complex roles as A.I. systems evolve. While some argue that advancements will create new job categories, experts caution that this transition may not happen swiftly enough to mitigate immediate employment impacts. Mr. Sivasailam, however, states that companies in no way rely only on AI for developing codes and that human intervention is necessary. “We don’t have to work with a blank page; we work with prompts and take it forward, but these tools are nowhere near a stage where one can just rely on them,” he said. At this stage, AI is more about bringing efficiency to the process. While jobs may not be fully immune, AI is viewed more as an accelerator than a replacement. For instance, A.I. tools speed up the development of software systems, which means you can create more, improve them faster, and work on optimising them. In short, AI is enhancing the work we do rather than posing a threat to jobs right now. As industries adapt rapidly towards automation powered by AI technology, workers must remain vigilant in developing skills that complement rather than compete with machine efficiency. Emphasizing human creativity, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving abilities will be crucial as society navigates this transformative landscape.

to increase the productivity of labour will be key in transforming India’s economy. Though many jobs are being created in the AI-focused global capability centres, the adoption of A.I. must be approached carefully to manage job disruptions. Mr. George highlighted that a lot has changed since 2022 in certain sectors due to AI. In industries where it has not yet made its mark, the bubble is getting bigger and better due to the release of new models and workflows. He said AI is getting bigger in areas like translation, and it can do a pretty good job at sentiment analysis and natural language processing. AI deployment with caution Amidst these discussions lies a stark reality — job displacement may not only affect low-skilled positions but also

Teaching children to eat well must begin in school



Last month, world leaders gathered in Paris for the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit. It was also a time for the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to announce the extension of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition, from its original timeframe of 2016-25, to 2030. This extension seeks to sustain the global momentum to end all forms of malnutrition and align efforts more closely with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This could be a turning point in nutrition not only to accelerate progress but also to shift the focus beyond food access — to understanding what people eat, how they eat, and why they eat, especially when it comes to children. Nutrition is not just a health concern. It is intricately connected to education, equity and environmental sustainability.

So far, global nutrition efforts have rightly focused on the first 1,000 days of life — from conception to two years of age — as a critical window to prevent malnutrition. But we now know that the next 4,000 days matter just as much. This includes the period of adolescent growth spurt — a time of rapid physical, emotional, and behavioural changes and offering a second window of opportunity to overcome early childhood deficits. Good nutrition during this phase can help children catch up on growth and set the foundation for long-term health. But to do that, we must shift our focus from just feeding children to teaching them how to eat well. A side event at the Paris summit — “Learn to Eat Well: Bio-diverse Diets and Youth as Agents of Change” — made this point loud and clear. It signals a global shift in thinking: that food and nutrition education must begin in schools, go beyond counting calories, and help children make choices that are good for themselves and the planet. Today, children are growing up in a world where food is everywhere — ordered with a tap, delivered to the door, and heavily marketed. Choosing what to eat has become increasingly complex.

Most children lack the knowledge and the skills to make healthy choices. Their diets are often shaped by habits, peer influence, or advertising rather than nutrition or tradition. As a result, many children skip breakfast, eat too few fruits and vegetables, and consume too much sugar and processed food. Importance of dietary diversityA key casualty is dietary diversity — eating a variety of foods to get all the nutrients the body needs. The UN recently adopted Minimum Dietary Diversity as a global indicator under Sustainable Development Goal 2 (End Hunger). It simply asks: did a child eat at least five of 10 food groups in the last 24 hours?

Sadly, in many places — including both cities and vil-

Ruskin Bond at home in Landour: A look back at how the hill town inspired his writing

From his perch on a first-floor house on the edge of a spur in Landour, Ruskin Bond has watched the world change amidst the unchanged mountains. Landour, once a quiet outpost of Mussoorie in Uttarakhand that went quieter when the air turned cold and the days became short, now has an all-season pass. On every must-visit reel on Instagram, Landour has day trippers and overnighters trooping in, ensuring it has no dull days anymore. Some of them manage to make their way up the steep stairs to meet Bond. Not all are lucky, though. “Tourists come for selfies at all hours, when I am sleeping or early in the morning. Now that I am old and don’t always keep well, I can’t meet too many people. But I do meet children sometimes,” says the author who turns 91 on May 19. The visitors that Bond, one of India’s most prolific and loved writers, receives are varied — children, with parents in tow and writers in search of a foreword. Then, there are the honeymooners. Bond, who has remained single lifelong, hasn’t quite figured out why the couples have chosen him for the honour. Some visits are fun. “Two weeks ago, a Sikh lady came from England. Her brother had been a boy with me in Dirlam Bazar in Dehradun in the 1950s. I hadn’t seen her since then. It was so nice seeing her. In those days, I was very poor, I had just started to write and she thought I was still poor — there is really nothing magnificent about my house,” he says, pointing at the study and the dining room and kitchen that lie ahead. “So when she was going, she stuffed some notes into my pocket. I thought it would look bad if I force them back on her, so I kept them. They were two thousand rupees and I thought, nice, getting pocket money again,” he says. “But that’s not a hint that people should put money in my pockets,” he laughs. Ivy Cottage in Landour has been Bond’s home since 1980. It is from the windows of his bedroom overlooking the road below that he has let the world come in and weave in with his words. “The old building has been kind to me,” he says.

Bond’s run-up to his birthday is, perhaps, different from most people’s. His preparations are less to do with parties and more to do with books. His book, ‘Another Day in Landour: Looking Out from My Window’ (HarperCollins), has just released and he has another coming out on his birthday. “Another Day in Landour is sort of extracts from a journal kept a year before last, just a year after Covid. It’s not very long but I enjoyed putting it together,” says the author who has a formidable repertoire of short stories, novels and poems. He likes to write early in the mornings, sitting in his front balcony, catching the early sun. “Sometimes I will write every day and then there will be days when I won’t,” says Bond, showing a page written in his hand for a forthcoming book. He still writes by hand and mails the original or its photocopy to his publishers. “Now the post office wants to interview me to encourage people to write more letters because no one is using them anymore. So I guess I am the last man standing who is still writing by hand, the last writer who still writes with a pen, a ballpoint usually,” he says. He doesn’t go out much these days, happy to be home in his snug study, reading and writing or looking out of his window to the mountains across from his cosy, strip-like bedroom. Mountains, mountain folks, a blade of grass, a laughing thrush — the subject of his books haven’t changed all that much over the years even though the world around him has altered dramatically.

“But I do touch on the world nowadays in this journal

lages in India — most children do not. Their diets lack variety, which harms their health and reflects deeper problems in our food systems and education. Poor diets are linked to malnutrition, childhood obesity, chronic diseases such as diabetes, and mental health issues. Research shows that almost 70% preventable adult diseases begin with habits formed in childhood — especially eating habits. This highlights the urgent need to start early, and schools are the best place to build healthy habits. Yet, food and nutrition education is missing in most classrooms or is out-dated and not linked to real life. The absence of a proper curriculum and age-appropriate learning resources make it even harder to teach children how to eat well. Teachers often lack the training and the tools to teach it well. Without structured guidance, schools struggle to deliver meaningful food and nutrition education. This is why we need a structured and age-appropriate curriculum that goes beyond food groups and includes lifestyle habits and environmental awareness. It should start early — at the preschool level — and grow with the child until at least the middle stage, helping them connect the dots between food, health, identity, and sustainability.

Such a curriculum could cover everything from how the human body works and the importance of diverse foods in our diets, to how food systems impact the environment. A central part of this must be promoting bio-diverse diets — ones that include a variety of local, seasonal, and culturally familiar foods. These diets provide better nutrition, support local farmers, reduce environmental impact, and preserve traditional food knowledge. It must be a part of school life. Teaching children to eat well should not be limited to one-off awareness sessions or occasional activities. It needs to be woven into school life. This means having weekly lessons with age-appropriate, well-designed learning materials, supported by healthier school canteens, kitchen gardens, simple cooking sessions, and student-led campaigns. These real-life experiences help children build lasting knowledge, habits, and values around food, health, and well-being. Around the world, schools are already showing what is possible — students growing vegetables, cooking simple meals, reading food labels, and learning how their food choices affect their health and the planet. In India, the National Education Policy and the School Health and Wellness Programme have created room for such integrated learning. But we need a clearer structure, comprehensive curriculum, at least one dedicated weekly session all through the academic year, appropriate learning resources, and properly trained teachers. Children must be seen not only as learners but also as key influencers. With the right knowledge and tools, they can influence their families, friends, and even their communities — whether by asking for better school meals, reducing food waste, or spreading awareness about healthy eating. In the end, learning to eat well is not just about food. It is about helping children to care for their health, understand their culture, respect the planet, and grow into thoughtful, responsible citizens. In a world facing the dual burdens of under-nutrition and overconsumption, climate change and cultural loss, food literacy is no longer a luxury — it is essential. If we want to raise a generation that is healthier, more compassionate, and better prepared for the future, we must start by making learning to eat well a part of every child’s education — starting today.



and in my next book too there are random reflections on life as it was and as it is today. There is even something about my disenchantment with world politics,” he says. Watching news every evening especially to “see what Trump” is up to, reading biographies and history — he is reading one on the Zulu Wars at present — and watching an occasional true-crime series on OTT, keeps him busy. “The world has changed and it has changed for the better only in the sense of technology and being more comfortable but human beings haven’t changed. In my ninety years on this planet, I haven’t seen people change very much. They have all the faults that they used to have and the virtues too,” he adds. “Children, of course, are growing up in a different world, they are growing up with technology. But only this morning I saw kids, they were quick to abandon their phones when there was a prospect of ice cream on the table.” Bond, whose first novel,

The Room on the Roof, published in 1956, received the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize, has found a huge readership among the young. “What appeals to them, perhaps, in my writing is that there has always been a slightly rebellious streak going back to the early days,” he says. Bond started out writing for the general reader and only took to writing for children when he was in his forties. He doesn’t quite agree that children are not reading anymore. “We complain that children don’t read but in terms of actual numbers, there are far more readers today than there were 20 or 40 years ago. At that time education was limited — at least as far as English went — to a few public or private schools. Not everybody could afford them.

So the number of young people who could read was limited whereas now the number of young people who can read is vast. So even if it is a small number that reads, in terms of actual numbers, they are thousands and hundreds of thousands. That small minority in terms of numbers is quite vast which is why publishers are doing fairly well. When I started out, you had to look for a publisher abroad,” he says.

The number of literary festivals mushrooming all over small-town India, perhaps, only shows that there is a growing, diverse group of readers. Reading, says Bond, in any case, has always been the pursuit of a minority. “In my final year of school, in a class of about 30 boys, there were just two or three of us who actually read books — and at that time there were none of the distractions that we blame today.

Indian Overseas Bank that had a humble beginning has more than 3,000 branches



Indian Overseas Bank (IOB), headquartered in Chennai, recently commemorated its 89th Foundation Day. It was registered as a joint stock bank on November 20, 1936, in Madras. In 1937, M.Ct.M. Chidambaram Chettyar founded the bank to promote overseas banking and facilitate foreign exchange operations. It initially catered to the Nattukottai Chettiers, a mercantile community that had migrated from Chettinad to Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Burma (Myanmar), Malaya, Singapore, Java, Sumatra, and Saigon Chettyar had served as the chairman of the bank since its founding until 1954. According to information from the bank, Chettyar was a member of the Council of State in Delhi. In addition to his role in advancing banking, he was involved in the insurance sector. He served as the chairman of United India Life Assurance Co. Ltd. and held directorial positions in several other prominent Indian companies.

The other key figures who played a vital role in the bank's early growth were K.V.Al. Rm. Alagappa Chettiar, the deputy chairman. A Barrister-at-Law, he was a prominent banker and businessman in South India. He went on to establish Alagappa University at Karaikudi. H. Bhimasena Rau, the retired Accountant-General of the Government of India, and Chuniil B. Mehta, a well-known cotton and bulion merchant of Bombay, were also instrumental in driving up the bank's business in its initial days. Two well-known businessmen with investment in Malaya — P.K.N.K.M. Nagappa Chettiar and P.V. Raman Chettiar — also played a key role.

IOB opened its registered office on February 10, 1937, in a rented building on First Line Beach in Madras. After a few months, it was shifted to United India Building, where United India Insurance Co. was operating. The Madras branch began operations on February 10, 1937, and was located in the Esplanade. In the same year, branches were established in Rangoon (now Yangon) in Burma and in Karaikudi. In the 1930s, nearly half the population of Burma consisted of ethnic Indians. And Chettiers from Tamil Nadu were in large numbers, engaged in money-lending and trading. The bank's second overseas branch was established in Kuala Lumpur in 1938, followed by a branch in Ipoh, Malaysia, in the same year. IOB inaugurated a branch in Singapore on February 12, 1941.The bank's authorised capital was ₹50 lakh, consisting of 50,000 shares of ₹100 each. The paid-up capital in the first year was ₹12.50 lakh, consisting of 25,000 shares of which ₹50 per share was called up. By June 1941, ₹30 per share was called up, and the paid-up capital rose to ₹20 lakh. In September that year, the paid-up capital was increased to ₹50 lakh with 25,000

shares of 100 each issued at a premium of ₹20 per share and only 10 per share called up. The initial subscribers to the capital were K. Srinivasan and K. Gopalan, the brothers and proprietors of The Hindu. S. Krishnaswamy, a retired professor of Madras University, was also one of the prominent shareholders. The net profit earned by the bank from its inception on February 10, 1937 to December 31, 1938 was ₹1,454 annas 8 and pies 8.

Problem in BurmaOne unexpected development the bank had to face was the change in the political system in Burma. In 1963, the Burmese government nationalised the banks. The assets and liabilities of IOB's Rangoon branch were taken over by Peoples' Bank No.8.Over the years, IOB has taken over eight smaller banks in Tamil Nadu. In the 1960s, many smaller banks in the southern States ran into difficulties, with several going into liquidation. Numerous mergers occurred, some voluntarily and some mandated by the regulator. In 2007, it took over one of the banks it had promoted with other private sector banks. For instance, the Coimbatore Varthak Vridhi Bank Ltd. was first merged with Srinivasa Perumal Bank Ltd. in 1964, and the merged entity was then merged with IOB in 1966. The other banks that merged with IOB include South Indian Bank Ltd. (in 1990), Tiruppur Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd. (in 1966), Coimbatore Aryan Bank Ltd., Coimbatore Standard Bank Ltd., Kulithalai Bank Ltd., Nanjinad Bank Ltd., Bharat Overseas Bank, and Suvama Sahakari Bank. The bank has been at the forefront of technological innovation that started with the establishment of the Information Technology Department in 1985, known as the Computer Policy and Planning Department. IOB was among the first public sector banks to achieve 100% branch computerisation by March 31, 2003. It also implemented a data warehouse by 1999. When IOB was in the private sector from 1937 to July 1969, its shares were listed in the Madras Stock Exchange. Its capital was ₹1 crore as on March 1969. From 1969, the Government of India was the sole owner and hence the shares were not quoted until the process of partial privatisation was initiated during 2000. In 2000, as the Government of India started partial privatisation, the bank was permitted to access the capital markets for raising capital.

The first-ever public offer of the bank opened on September 25, 2000. The Government of India, being the sole owner of the bank, was offering 11,12,00,000 shares at the face value of ₹10 per share. The aim was to unlock the value to the tune of ₹111.20 crore and to encourage the culture of equity through sharing of national assets in the form of shares. The issue closed on September 29. It was oversubscribed 1.87 times in spite of unfavourable market conditions. The staff quota was oversubscribed 1.72 times. After this public offer, the government's stake stood at 75%. The shares were listed on the Chennai, Bombay, and National Stock Exchanges. The allotment was made in October 2000.As of December 31, 2024, IOB had 3,322 branches and a customer base of 4 crore, with 21,147 employees. The bank is planning to establish four new regional offices this fiscal, with three already added. Around 100 new branches are anticipated by 2025-26. IOB remains focused on improving its performance and reducing non-performing assets, reinforcing its commitment to sustainable growth and customer satisfaction.

Four Indian companies among those sanctioned by US over alleged involvement in Iran's oil trade

The United States has sanctioned four India-based companies over their alleged involvement in trade and transportation of Iranian crude oil and petroleum products. As part of the Trump administration's "maximum pressure campaign" on Iran, the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), and the US Department of State on Monday imposed sanctions on over 30 persons and vessels in various countries, and these four India-based firms are on the list. According to information from the OFAC and the US Department of State, the four Indian companies are Navi Mumbai-based Flux Maritime LLP, National Capital Region (NCR)-based BSM Marine LLP and Austinsip Management Pvt Ltd, and Thanjavur-based Cosmos Lines Inc. Three of these four companies have been sanctioned for being commercial or technical managers of vessels allegedly involved in transportation of Iranian oil and petroleum products, while one—Cosmos Lines—has been sanctioned for its alleged involvement in transport of Iranian petroleum.

"Among those sanctioned today are oil brokers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Hong Kong, tanker operators and mangers in India and People's Republic of China (PRC), the head of Iran's National Iranian Oil Company, and the Iranian Oil Terminals Company, whose operations help finance Iran's destabilizing activities. The vessels sanctioned today are responsible for shipping tens of millions of barrels of crude oil valued in the hundreds of millions of dollars," the OFAC said in a release Monday.

"The Iranian regime continues to destabilize global security with its nuclear threat, ballistic missile program, and support for terrorist groups. Iran's oil exports are enabled by a network of illicit shipping facilitators in multiple jurisdictions who, through obfuscation and deception, load and transport Iranian oil for sale to buyers in Asia. Today, the United States is taking action under President Trump's maximum pressure campaign on Iran to stem the flow of revenue the regime uses to fund these destabilizing activities," US Department of State said in a separate release. This is not the first instance of Indian companies being placed under sanctions for involvement in sanctioned energy transportation and trade through the so-called shadow fleet of



tankers. For instance, in October, India-based Gabbaro Ship Services was sanctioned for alleged involvement in transportation of Iranian oil. In August and September, three India-registered shipping firms were sanctioned by the US over their alleged involvement in transporting liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Russia's Arctic LNG 2 project, which is under American sanctions.

The shadow fleet refers to vessels involved in Russian, Iranian, and Venezuelan crude oil and petroleum products trade. With Western fleet operators loath to get involved in the oil trade of these countries due to sanctions of varying degrees, operators from countries like Greece, Russia, and China, and tax havens like Marshall Islands, Liberia, and Panama have emerged as the major players. The oil and gas industries of Russia, Iran, and Venezuela have been under sanctions or restrictions from international powers, particularly the US. A large number of opaque fleet tankers have complex and obscure ownership structures and are registered in geographies with lax regulatory oversight. Often, such vessels, which are quite old, operate with sub-standard insurance and certifications. Sukalp Sharma is a Senior Assistant Editor with and writes on a host of subjects and sectors, notably energy and aviation.

He has over 13 years of experience in journalism with a body of work spanning areas like politics, development, equity markets, corporates, trade, and economic policy. He considers himself an above-average photographer, which goes well with his love for travel. .

Meta to expand India operations, hire more for engineering and AI roles

New Delhi: Global technology giant Meta is expanding its presence in India and would hire engineers and product specialists for artificial intelligence (AI) roles. Meta, the parent company of Facebook, has announced a new office in Bengaluru. With this move, Meta is following the path of other major tech giants like Microsoft, Google, and Amazon, which have already established strong engineering and product teams in Bengaluru and across India.

According to a job listing on Meta's website, the company is hiring an engineering director who will be responsible for building a strong technical team in Bengaluru. This role will play a key part in shaping Meta's long-term engineering presence in India. Several Meta employees on LinkedIn shared that the Bengaluru centre is being set up by the company's enterprise engineering team. This team focuses on creating internal tools to enhance productivity within Meta. The company is also recruiting hardware engi-

neers to support its growing AI infrastructure, including data centre operations and custom chip development. Meta, which entered the Indian market in 2010, already has offices in cities like Gurugram, New Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Bengaluru. However, most of its workforce in the country has been engaged in functions like sales, marketing, business development, operations, policy, legal, and finance. The new Bengaluru office marks a shift, as the company looks to expand its engineering capabilities in India. According to the Meta spokesperson, the company is looking to hire a small number of engineering professionals in Bengaluru. India is Meta's largest user market, with over a billion people using its products, including Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. The country has often been a testing ground for Meta's new features and tools. In 2020, Instagram Reels was first widely launched in India after TikTok was banned.

Over 80% of Indian IT workforce suffers from Fatty Liver Disease: UoH study



Hyderabad: In a concerning trend, about 84 per cent of the IT employees in the country are suffering from Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Fatty Liver Disease (MAFLD). This has been revealed in a study conducted by University of Hyderabad (UoH) scientists and researcher scholars, in collaboration with a senior hepatologist of the Asian Institute of Gastroenterology (AIG) Hospital. The study also found that around 71 per cent of IT employees are obese and about 34 per cent have metabolic syndrome, a cluster of diseased conditions that increase the risk of fatty liver, obesity, diabetes and increased blood pressure. This condition among IT employees is attributed to the sedentary life, involving long hours of sitting at the desk, work-related stress, inadequate sleep and shift work. Unhealthy diets such as intake of high-calorie diet, sugar-sweetened beverages and lack of physical activity is another factor, which is fuelling the risk of several non-communicable diseases including fatty liver disease called MAFLD.

According to researchers, fatty liver occurs when more than five per cent of fat builds up in the liver due to various behavioural and metabolic risk factors. The condition, if unchecked, can progress to severe forms of liver diseases like cirrhosis and cancer, requiring liver transplantation. The research was conducted by Prof. Kalyankar Mahadev and Prof. CT Anitha, along with their research scholars Bharam Bhargava and Nanditha Pramod, in collaboration with senior hepatologist Dr. PN Rao and his team from AIG Hospital. Although most of the major IT companies have an in-built health wellness programme, their employees should take advantage and adhere to the existing programmes for their physical well-being, the researchers said. Regular and periodic health check-ups and screening for fatty liver along with proper work-life balance and stress management programmes may reduce the incidence of fatty liver, they added. The research work has been accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal – Scientific Reports by Nature Publishers.

A dating app that matches you over books, not looks

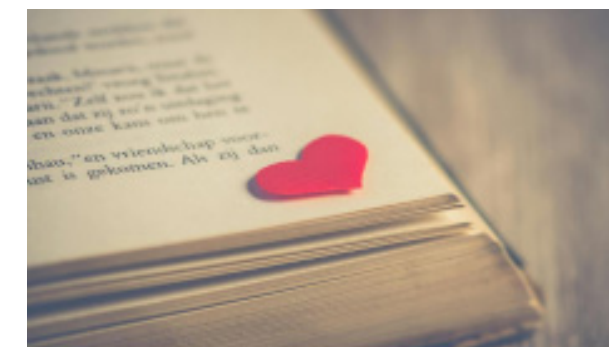
In an age where dating apps are largely driven by appearances, Bookmark has taken a different approach — one that prioritises conversations over looks. Founded in February 2024, the app connects people through books rather than profile pictures, offering a refreshing alternative to the swipe-first culture of mainstream dating platforms. The idea stems from Cubbon Reads, the silent reading movement in Bengaluru started by Bookmark's co-founders, Harsh Snehanshu and Shruti Sah. Harsh explains, "One beautiful thing we noticed with Cubbon Reads is that many people would come alone the first time. The next week, we would see them coming in groups. People started becoming friends, and over time, some of them also started dating. It happened right in front of our eyes, and we thought, 'Hey, we can use books to connect people.'"

That concept — of books as a bridge between people — became the foundation for Bookmark. Sid Zadaun and Avrojoyti Das, Bookmark's co-founders, helped Harsh and Shruti transform this idea into a full-fledged dating app. Within a year, Bookmark has seen over 15,000 installs across India, facilitated 50,000 matches, and built a strong community of 5,000 monthly active users. More than a dating app, Bookmark is not just about romance — it also enables friendships through its Book Buddy feature, which allows users to connect even if they are not looking for a romantic relationship. "Our larger vision is to give people a primal reason to get back to reading," says Harsh. "If you read, you can find someone to have deeper conversations with. The beautiful thing about books is that they don't follow an algorithm; you have to find your own." The app's unique structure ensures that profile pictures remain hidden until two users have exchanged at least 10 messages. This way, initial conversations are based purely on literary tastes and responses to prompts rather than appearances.

For Swapnil Joshi, a 28-year-old banker, this was a game-changer. "Book lovers are often stereotyped as introverts, and there's some truth to that. It's harder for them to get on dating apps and strike up a conversation," he says. "On this app, you get profiles based on the books you read and your responses to prompts, not on your physical features." This system, he says, leads to better conversations. "Since I read a lot of philosophy, my conversations were often deep and lasted long. Shared literary preferences serve as an excellent icebreaker." Bookmark worked for him — he met his current partner on the app and plans to live with them. Challenging the swipe culture

The modern dating scenario is filled with 'swipe fatigue' — the endless, exhausting cycle of liking profiles without meaningful interactions. Bookmark counters this by limiting users to five likes per day unless they opt for a premium subscription, which allows 30. "There's a lot of discussion around the exhaustion that comes with using dating apps," says Shruti. "People mindlessly scroll through thousands of profiles, not realising there's another human being on the other side. We wanted to make the process more thoughtful." For Hemashwetha KS, a 29-year-old community manager, this deliberate pace is what sets Bookmark apart. "The concept of 'books over looks' really appealed to me," she says. "The 10-message rule means you actually take time to know someone before judging them on their appearance. It feels much more organic." A safer space Online dating safety is a major concern, but Bookmark's structure helps reduce unwanted interactions. The app has 25% paying women users, which the founders claim is five times that of Bumble, a sign that women feel safer and more invested in the platform. "If one doesn't feel like engaging in a conversation, they can unmatched or block the person easily," says Hemashwetha. This sentiment is echoed by Swapnil, who notes that the book-based structure makes it harder for people to pretend. "Women I spoke to on the app told me it was easy to spot pickup artists, who just pretend to like books," he says. The app's gender ratio currently stands at 70 (men):30 (women) — a slight improvement over Tinder's 75:25 split — indicating a healthier balance than many mainstream dating platforms.

What is in store? With its first year behind it, Bookmark is now looking to expand internationally. The founders see strong potential in the US, Europe, and Australia, with high book readership. "The majority of Goodreads users and book



sales come from these regions," says Shruti. "We're actively seeking investment to scale globally." Beyond geographical growth, Bookmark also plans to evolve into a broader platform for interest-based dating. "Much like how Flipkart and Amazon started with books and then expanded, we want to do the same," says Harsh. "Books are just the starting point because they are easy to showcase on a profile. But we want to create similar spaces for film lovers and music enthusiasts in the future." While reading preferences alone may not guarantee compatibility, they certainly provide a strong foundation. "If your opinions, political leanings, and social interests don't align, what's the point?" asks Shruti. "Everyone I look up to in terms of relationships has told me the same thing — whoever you choose in life, you must enjoy talking to them." Swapnil agrees. "Shared reading interests definitely help," he says. "Of course, compatibility is a mix of emotional and intellectual factors, but this is a great starting point." Ultimately, Bookmark's success lies in its ability to foster connections that go beyond fleeting attraction. Whether it's a romantic relationship or a literary friendship, the app aims to redefine how people engage with online dating. "In the past, people would say, 'He doesn't read, but I love him,'" says Harsh. "That mindset doesn't work anymore. We are living in a time where we need to be informed, and reading is one of the best ways to do that." For those who believe that a well-read mind is the most attractive trait of all, Bookmark offers an alternative to the swipe-first, talk-later culture of modern dating. And as Swapnil's story proves, sometimes, a shared love for books can turn a page into a lifelong chapter.

Asteroid YR4 spares Earth, 1.7 percent impact peril to moon

Hyderabad: The city-leveling asteroid 2024 YR4, which was hurtling towards Earth from outer space with 3.2 per cent chances of impact, has been downgraded by NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Agency) to 0.004 per cent and is expected to safely pass Earth in 2032. However, there is still a chance of the asteroid YR 4 to impact the moon on December 22, 2032. That probability is currently at 1.7 percent. "When first discovered, asteroid 2024 YR4 had a very small, but notable chance of impacting our planet in 2032. As observations of the asteroid continued to be submitted to the Minor Planet Center, experts at NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory's (JPL's) Center for Near-Earth Object Studies were able to calculate more precise models of the asteroid's trajectory and now have found there is no significant potential for this asteroid to impact our planet for the next century. The latest observations have further reduced the uncertainty of its future trajectory, and the range of possible locations the asteroid could be on Dec. 22, 2032, has moved farther away from the Earth," NASA in a statement said. There still remains a very small chance for asteroid 2024 YR4 to impact the Moon on Dec. 22, 2032. That probability is currently 1.7 percent. NASA will continue to observe asteroid 2024 YR4 with observatories funded by its Planetary Defense Coordination Office, and NASA's James Webb Space Telescope will observe the asteroid in March to further gain insights about its size for scientific purposes, NASA added.

Airspace curbs: DGCA issues advisory to airlines on passenger handling steps due to longer flights



Aviation watchdog DGCA on Saturday issued an advisory to airlines on providing proper communication and in-flight catering services to passengers as international flights are having longer flying time due to the Pakistan airspace closure. Pakistan has closed its airspace for Indian airlines, resulting in longer flying hours for their international flights, especially those flying out from north Indian cities, including Delhi. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued an advisory on passenger handling measures in view of airspace restrictions resulting in extended flight durations and technical stops. The advisory focuses on five main areas — pre-flight passenger communication, in-flight catering and comfort, medical preparedness and alternate aerodromes, customer service and support readiness, and intra-departmental coordination.

DGCA said that due to recent developments involving international airspace closures and overflight restrictions, airline operations have been impacted. There are significant rerouting of international and regional flights, increased block times compared to scheduled durations, and possi-

bility of technical halts enroute for operational or fuel requirements. Generally, block time refers to the duration of a flight from the origin to the destination. Airlines have to ensure that all passengers are proactively informed about the change in routing due to airspace restrictions and revised total expected travel time (departure to arrival), the regulator said.

Also, the possibility of a technical stop at an intermediate airport should be informed to the passengers. According to the watchdog, carriers have to clarify to the passengers that the technical stop is operational in nature and that they will generally remain onboard during such stops. The information must be communicated at check-in, boarding gates, and where feasible, through SMS/e-mail alerts, it added. According to DGCA, airlines must ensure that catering uplift is revised based on actual expected block time (including technical halt) so that adequate meals and beverages are available for the full duration. Among others, carriers need to make sure that there are sufficient medical kits and first aid resources. On the customer service side, DGCA said that airlines should brief call center/reservations teams on likely delays and schedule disruptions as well as establish processes for managing missed onward connections and delay-related assistance. Amid escalating tensions between India and Pakistan in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack that killed at least 26 people, Pakistan on Thursday barred Indian airlines from using its airspace. On Friday, IndiGo said that around 50 international routes operated by it will require longer sectors and hence may be subject to some schedule adjustments. "With the same restrictions and limited rerouting options, unfortunately Almaty and Tashkent are outside the operational range of IndiGo's current fleet," it had said.

Overseas remittances by Indians under LRS were down 29% in February to \$1,964.21 mn: Here's why

Overseas remittances, remittances, Irs, Liberalised Remittance Scheme, rbi, Reserve Bank of India, RBI data, Indian express business, business news, current affairs Remittances for 'travel and studies abroad' declined in the wake of the sharp fall in students going abroad. Overseas remittances by Indian residents under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) fell by 29 per cent to \$1,964.21 million in February 2025 from \$2,768.89 million in January. According to RBI data, remittances for travel purpose declined by 33.77 per cent to \$1,090.61 million in February 2023 from \$1,646.74 million in the previous month. Outflows under the 'studies abroad' category declined by 50.52 per cent to \$182.17 million in February from \$368.21 million in January.

Remittances for 'travel and studies abroad' declined in the wake of the sharp fall in students going abroad. As reported by The Indian Express recently, for the first time in four years, the number of Indian students heading to foreign universities has simultaneously declined across the top three destination countries — Canada, the United States and the UK. The data shows a sharp decline of at least 25 per cent in Indian students receiving study permits across these key destinations in 2024. Moreover, according to travel industry sources, a good number of people dropped or postponed their travel plans since the global economy and markets faced volatile movements during the period. RBI data shows that remittances for investment in equity and debt spurted to \$173.84 million in February from \$104.98 million in the previous month. The Union Budget in February 2025 increased the threshold for collecting Tax Collected at Source (TCS) on LRS transactions from Rs 7 lakh to Rs 10 lakh. This change was expected to benefit the travel and foreign exchange sectors, providing a boost to outbound tourism, education and the airline sectors.

Under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme, resident



individuals, including minors, can freely remit up to \$2,50,000 per financial year for permissible current or capital account transactions. These transactions include education, medical treatment abroad, purchase of property, and investments in foreign stocks. Outward remittances under LRS were \$31.735 billion during the year ended March 2024. Travel has emerged as the primary source of remittance outflow from India, accounting for over 50 per cent of total outflows at \$17 billion from just 1.5 per cent share in FY14. Student remittances were \$3.47 billion in FY24. Tax collected at source is not an additional tax liability as people can claim a refund while filing income tax returns.

As per the TCS rates under Liberalised Remittance Scheme proposed in the 2023-24 Budget, overseas tour package attracted TCS of 20 per cent from October 1, compared to 5 per cent. However, TCS will not be levied on credit card spending abroad. LRS remittance processed by the bank as an Authorised Dealer towards air travel ticket booking or hotel booking by a resident individual customer would be subject to TCS of 20 per cent above Rs 10 lakh, according to a leading private bank.

Reliance Industries' net profit rises by 6.4% YoY to Rs 22,611 crore, announces dividend



Despite a challenging global business environment, Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) reported a 6.4 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 22,611 crore for the quarter ended March 2025 as against Rs 21,243 crore in the same period of last year. The net profit attributable to the owners of the company was at Rs 19,407 crore for the March quarter as against Rs 18,951 crore a year ago, showing a rise of 2.40 per cent.

RIL dividend 2025 and net worth RIL's board of directors also declared a dividend of Rs 5.5 per share for the year. The FY25 revenue of the company was Rs 10.71 lakh crore and profit rose 2.9 per cent at Rs 81,309 crore. RIL has also become the first company to have a net worth of over Rs 10 lakh crore. Jio Platform Ltd, the digital arm of RIL, posted a 25.7 per cent rise in net profit at Rs 7,022 crore for the March quarter. Revenue increased by 17.8 per cent to Rs 39,853 crore for the fourth quarter.

Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL) reported a 29.1 per cent rise in net profit at Rs 3,545 crore for the March quarter and posted a 15.7 per cent increase in revenue at Rs 88,620 crore. RIL Chairman and MD, Mukesh D. Ambani, said FY25 has been a challenging year for the global business environment, with weak macro-economic conditions and a shifting geo-political landscape. "Our focus on operational discipline, customer-centric innovation and fulfilling India's growth requirements has helped Reliance deliver a steady financial performance during the year," he said.

The oil to chemicals business posted a resilient performance despite considerable volatility in energy markets. Significant demand-supply imbalances in downstream chemicals markets have led to multi-year low margins. Our business teams ensured optimisation of integrated operations and feedstock costs to enhance margin capture across value chains," Ambani said. RIL's oil & gas business recorded its highest ever annual EBITDA led by higher pro-

duction from our KGD6 and CBM blocks. The retail segment also delivered consistent growth. "In FY25, the business focused on a strategic recalibration of our store network, aimed at improving operational efficiencies and long-term sustainability. The enhanced product catalogue and user experience across all formats, strengthened customer engagement," Ambani said. Ambani said Jio continues to invest in innovation, focusing on AI capabilities and next generation technologies, which will shape India's digital future. "During FY25, we have laid a strong foundation for our projects in renewable energy and battery operations. In the coming quarters, we will see the transition of this business from incubation to operationalisation. I firmly believe that the new energy growth engine will create significant value for Reliance, for India and for the world," he said.

Youngest son Anant Ambani appointed as whole-time director at Reliance Industries

Hyderabad: In a significant development at Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), the youngest son, Anant Ambani, was appointed as a whole-time director of the company on Friday.

The decision was announced following a board meeting, and the appointment is set to take effect from May 1, 2025. Anant will serve in this role for five years.

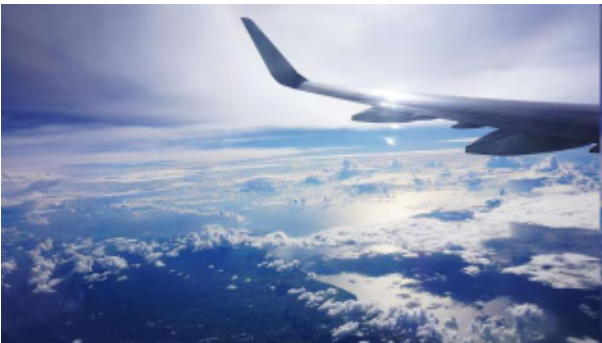
Anant Ambani, who has been actively associated with the company in various capacities, currently serves as a non-executive director on the RIL board.

The appointment follows a recommendation from the Human Resources, Nomination and Remuneration Committee, officials said.

This promotion of the youngest Ambani marks the family's ongoing efforts to integrate the next generation into key leadership roles as part of a broader succession plan for the conglomerate.

Meanwhile, the eldest son, Akash Ambani, currently serves as the chairman of Reliance Jio Infocomm, while their daughter, Isha Ambani, is the executive director at Reliance Retail Ventures. Both siblings are also non-executive directors on the board of RIL.

Pakistan airspace closure: Over 800 weekly flights of Indian airlines may be impacted; IndiGo suspends flights to Tashkent, Almaty



Pakistan According to industry insiders, while it is still too early to assess the impact, the airlines' costs are bound to rise, which could translate into higher airfares for passengers. According to industry insiders, while it is still too early to assess the impact, the airlines' costs are bound to rise, which could translate into higher airfares for passengers. With Pakistan closing its airspace to Indian airlines from Thursday evening, over 800 flights a week are likely to be impacted by longer flight times, increased fuel burn, and a few other complexities related to crew and flight scheduling, all of which would increase operational costs. The initial impact is already visible with Indian airlines' flights from North India to West Asia, the Caucasus, Europe, the UK, and North America's eastern region switching from their routine paths to longer routes, adding anywhere between 15 minutes to a few hours to the journey, depending on the distance and the location of the destination.

Meanwhile, the Indian carriers are working to adjust their schedules to factor in the ban from Pakistani airspace. On Friday, IndiGo announced the suspension of its daily flights from Delhi to Almaty and Tashkent in Central Asia from April 27 and April 28 until "at least" May 7. The airline said that with the airspace restrictions imposed by Pakistan and limited rerouting options, both the Central Asian cities are now outside the operational range of its existing fleet of narrow-body aircraft. IndiGo added that the closure of Pakistani airspace would affect 50 of its international routes, which may require schedule adjustments.

All major Indian airlines operate international flights to destinations to the west of the country, and many of these flights were routinely overflying Pakistan. Air India operates flights to West Asia, Europe, the UK, and North America, while IndiGo operates flights to West Asia, Turkey, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. Air India Express, Akasa Air, and SpiceJet's west-bound international flights are to destinations in West Asia. According to data from Cirium, an aviation analytics company, currently there are almost 400 weekly westward international departures from North Indian airports—Delhi, Amritsar, Jaipur, and Lucknow—that were routinely flying over Pakistan. Given that all these flights have return legs, the total number of affected flights goes up to around 800 from these airports. Of these, around 640 flights are from or to India's largest airport—Delhi's Indira Gandhi International airport—which is likely to be the most affected due to the move by Pakistan. Additionally, a hand-

Report says Apple plans to sell only India-made iPhones in US: What it means

Amid the raging trade war between the United States and China, Apple is planning a major pivot. By 2026, the company is looking to produce in India all iPhones sold in the US as a way to further shield itself from uncertain tariff action on Beijing, according to a report by the Financial Times. While this would mark the Cupertino-based tech giant's biggest foray away from China, a country where it has meticulously built a deep and complex supplier base, it would simultaneously have to significantly ramp up its current production capacity in India in a year.

Apple sells more than 60 million iPhones in the US a year, and in the last fiscal, it produced a total of \$22 billion worth of iPhones in India, which is around 20 per cent of its global production capacity. Of this production, it exported iPhones worth around \$18 billion from India. Apple doubled down on production in India in 2020, after the Indian government announced its production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for smartphone manufacturing, under which it was to subsidise manufacturers depending on the amount of their incremental sales. While the company started by making some of its older iPhones in India, today it produces all models, including the higher-end Pro range for global consumption. Apple, through its contract manufacturers, has been the biggest beneficiary of the scheme, which has helped it move some production away from China. The company started with three contract manufacturers here — Foxconn, Wistron and Pegatron — and the latter two have now been acquired by the Tata Group.

There are some challenges though. As of Apple's latest official list of suppliers, in 2023, as many as 157 of the company's various vendors and suppliers manufactured in mainland China, up from 151 the previous year. The number of Indian suppliers was 14. As per people in the know, that has now gone up to 64 suppliers in the country, marking a slow but gradual movement of much of its supplier base to India as well. Apple was caught in the crosshairs of the retaliatory tariff action by US President Donald Trump earlier this month, where China was among the worst hit.

Is your summer 'thanda' in Hyderabad safe?

Hyderabad: People have an affinity to grab a 'thanda' to hydrate when temperatures consistently start to peak. Quite often, in the urgency to grab a cool drink, people, especially those who spend a lot of time outdoors, and even petty vendors tend to overlook basic precautions that are mandatory to ensure food safety and illnesses. To avoid outbreak of food and water-borne ailments, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in its advisory has been urging small food business operators to observe basic precautions while handling high risk food items like cut fruits, fresh juice, beverages and salads.

The FSSAI has also urged vendors like juice shops to maintain basic good hygienic practices that are vital to ensure food safety and prevention of water and food-borne diseases during summer. Usually, FSSAI also makes it mandatory for petty vendors to register with them. The registration is usually granted by the authorities after being satisfied with the safety, hygiene and sanitary conditions of the premises. However, recent inspections by Food Safety authorities at five juice centres in Ameerpet painted a very different picture. In addition to major food safety violations

ful of ultra-long-haul flights from other Indian cities like Mumbai are also getting impacted as their flight paths used to go through the Pakistani airspace.

In fact, flight tracking data shows that some of Air India's ultra-long-haul flights to and from North America had to take technical halts—planned stops for refueling or crew change—at European airports like Copenhagen and Vienna on Friday, breaking the journey of the otherwise non-stop flights. These included the airline's Delhi-Washington and Delhi-New York flights, both of which took a stopover in Vienna, and its Delhi-Chicago, Delhi-Toronto, Delhi-Newark, Mumbai-New York, and Vancouver-Delhi flights, which took a halt in Copenhagen. The airline had announced on Thursday that some of its international flights "will take an alternative extended route" in view of the airspace closure by Pakistan. The last time when Pakistan closed its airspace for an extended period—in 2019 following the Balakot airstrikes by the Indian Air Force—some of Air India's flights to North America had to take technical halts midway on a regular basis. Air India has so far not commented on whether such halts on the ultra-long-haul flights will now be a routine occurrence.

These are still early days and airlines are busy chalking out their schedules to adjust to this new reality. According to industry insiders, while it is still too early to assess the impact, the airlines' costs are bound to rise, which could translate into higher airfares for passengers. Additionally, airlines from other countries will get cost and time advantage over Indian airlines as the Pakistani airspace remains open for them. All this is forcing Indian airlines to adjust their schedules, and could even lead to them suspending flights to a few destinations where it may be operationally or financially unviable to operate flights that circumvent the Pakistani airspace, like IndiGo's flights to Almaty and Tashkent. According to sources in airlines, flight schedules are being worked on, and the carriers could soon announce changes to their schedules and even their networks to provide clarity and schedule stability to flyers. Indian carriers have so far not commented on the likely financial impact of Pakistan's move and a clearer picture of the impact—financial as well as operational—is likely to emerge over the next few days. When Pakistan closed its airspace for over four months in 2019, Indian airlines are estimated to have lost around Rs 700 crore due to higher fuel expenses and operational complications that came with longer routes many of their flights were forced to take. Air India was the worst affected Indian carrier at the time, as it operated more west-bound international flights than other airlines. Moreover, it was and continues to be the only Indian airline that operates long-haul and ultra-long-haul flights to Europe and North America.

Since then, other Indian airlines—particularly IndiGo—have also expanded their international networks to include various destinations that can be served by their existing fleets that mainly comprises narrow-body jets. IndiGo is the only Indian airline that currently flies to destinations in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Turkey.



While there have been some concessions along the way, such as the US administration exempting smartphones and computers from many of the levies, there is fear that the categories could see fresh tariffs in the future, something that Trump has hinted at. India received a relatively much lower tariff rate, and was also among the countries where the US paused retaliatory tariffs for 90 days. Making and exporting from India, therefore, could be a more cost-effective proposition for Apple.

Apple and its manufacturing partners have been the biggest beneficiaries of subsidies under the PLI scheme for smartphones. The Indian Express had earlier reported that, under the scheme, the government has disbursed close to \$1 billion in the three years from 2022-23 to 2024-25, with the three contract manufacturers of Apple receiving cumulatively over 75 per cent of the amount. Apple's contract manufacturers, Foxconn, Tata Electronics and Pegatron (which was recently acquired by the Tatas), have received a total of almost Rs 6,600 crore over three years — 2022-23 and 2024-25. In 2023-24, Foxconn, which is Apple's biggest contract manufacturer globally, received a subsidy disbursement of Rs 2,450 crore, the highest during the year. However, in 2024-25, the data showed no incentive was issued to Foxconn. In 2024-25, Samsung received the highest subsidy of close to Rs 958 crore.



at several levels, at least three such facilities even did not have a valid FSSAI license to prepare and sell. "Apart from heat strokes, consumption of stale food and contaminated water are the two most common causes for illness during peak summer. Water-borne ailments are usually associated with lack of access to potable drinking water while heat strokes are due to exposure to high temperatures of over 40 degree Celsius," says seasonal diseases expert and senior health, Dr K Shankar

‘Who is KL Rahul?’ A question that is finally getting answered, and Indian cricket is better for it



GNS News Agency, May 1

As a teenager, it was his copybook batting technique that first caught the eye. He was Rahul from Bengaluru. How hard could it have been for Indian cricket to typecast KL Rahul as the next Rahul Dravid?

This obvious comparison lasted for a while till he landed on the Koffee with Karan couch and made some very un-Dravid-like statements. It landed him in trouble, got him decoupled from his more famous namesake. Since then, KL Rahul has been an enigma – difficult to slot. He wasn’t a dasher, nor a stopper. He was popular but not really the posterboy. He didn’t have a type, there was never a consensus on him. This IPL, the question – ‘Who is KL Rahul?’ – is getting answered. He is getting defined. At the pre-season big auction, he flew under the radar. He moved from Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) to Delhi Capitals (DC) with a pay-cut and demotion. Season 18 isn’t likely to be his best-ever but could be the year he graduated – found his niche, and also peace. Rahul in 2025 has been scoring runs, winning matches, changing opinions and also shaking a monkey off his back.

The last bit happened the other day when he settled a few old IPL scores in a game against his old franchise. Many see this as the ‘the real-Rahul-standing-up’ moment. After playing a winning hand, he gave this season’s coldest handshake to his one-time boss – LSG owner Sanjiv Goenka. They have a history. Last season, TV cameras had captured Goenka’s mostly one-sided animated conversation with Rahul after one of LSG’s many defeats. Social media had called it a dressing down. Round II, as expected, again turned out to be an internet event. This time, Rahul’s expressionless formal greeting after the game was seen as a wronged captain’s royal snub to the employer who wasn’t quite kind to him. The fans exhausted every gleeful emoji available to applaud Rahul’s ‘coolness’. Rahul has always had his tattoos, but needle-work doesn’t always guarantee street cred. He had that signature fingers-in-ears ‘shut-out-the-noise’ celebration, but it somewhat highlighted his vulnerability, not coolness. But Rahul, like that day when meeting Goenka, has always remained dignified.

Actually, that’s how Bengaluru boys typically react. They aren’t into over-the-top celebrations, their messaging is nuanced. Dravid, after his epic Eden Gardens knock in 2001, showed his bat to the press box as the media had dared to write the team off before the Test. This other time, as Rajasthan Royals coach, he threw his cap on the ground in disgust after his players failed to seal an easy win. This very season, Rahul too had claimed ownership of his backyard, the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, by stamping the turf with his bat after beating Royal Challengers Bengaluru. RCB were expected to break the bank to get Rahul at the auction, but turned their backs on the home boy, eventually deciding to hand over the captaincy to the retained Rajat Patidar from Indore. Dravid or KL aren’t known for thundering press conferences to show their displeasure, they drop hints. Last season, TV cameras had captured Goenka’s mostly one-sided animated conversation with Rahul. Round II (R), as expected, again turned out to be an internet event. (Screengrab/BCCI) Last season, TV cameras had captured Goenka’s mostly one-sided animated conversation with Rahul. Round II (R), as expected, again turned out to be an internet event.

But for that foot-in-mouth hour on the infamous talk show, Rahul has always measured his words. He is a man of few words and fewer expressions. Victory and defeat, he has treated the two imposters equally. His first big inter-

Anil Kumble: Dewald Brevis could be CSK’s next big star



GNS News Agency, May 1

Even as Chennai Super Kings endure one of their most challenging seasons, legendary spinner Anil Kumble believes the seeds of a brighter future are already being sown, with Dewald Brevis at the heart of it. Speaking on JioHotstar, Kumble offered glowing praise for the young South African, who has emerged as a rare positive in an otherwise difficult campaign. “His ability to play spin really stood out. Chennai isn’t easy. It’s a two-paced wicket where the odd ball holds up,” Kumble said. “He’s done it before in South Africa, in first-class cricket, and at the U-19 level, which is how he came into the IPL.” Brevis’ arrival itself is a story in itself. Drafted in mid-season as an injury replacement, his impact has been immediate, evoking memories of another famous late entrant.

“He came in as a replacement, wasn’t even part of the squad originally, and that reminds me of how one ‘Universe Boss’ (Chris Gayle) too walked in as a replacement for RCB in 2011 and became an icon,” Kumble remarked. Drawing such parallels is no casual endorsement. For Kumble, Brevis’ range of strokes, composure under pressure, and maturity on tough wickets like Chennai’s make him a player CSK must now build around. “Brevis has all the shots. With Rachin Ravindra, Mhatre, and Pathirana, CSK has a young core to build on. Brevis has the potential to be a long-term asset for the franchise.” Kumble also reflected on Chennai’s team choices this season, suggesting that greater continuity, particularly at the top of the order, could have helped. But with qualification hopes fading, he urged CSK to view the final stretch as a platform to prepare for the future. “With five games left, it’s the perfect time to give youngsters a decent run and start building for the future.” Former CSK

national outing was during the Under-19 World Cup in New Zealand in 2010. India played most of their games at a university campus close to Christchurch. With a face covered with adolescent zits, Rahul looked like a schoolkid who had sneaked into a college complex. The same was true for his opening partner – his Karnataka mate Mayank Agarwal. Both were young, Mayank had braces fortifying his front teeth. In one of the earlier matches, the two had a grand partnership. Mayank was the more aggressive of the two, his attack was aerial. Rahul, meanwhile, had elegant groundstrokes. On the dew-covered sparkling turf in New Zealand, his drives would draw lines that connected the crease to the boundary rope. That day, both agreed to a joint interview. Mayank would say that he loved Virender Sehwag. Rahul, the quieter of the two, mentioned Dravid. “Yes, people have told me I bat like Dravid. I practised with him. I called him before leaving for New Zealand and he gave me a few tips,” he had said.

After the chat, the two readily agreed to be photographed. Mayank puts his arm around Rahul. “Dostana pose?” he joked. He came up with that half-bent leg pose like couples do and leaned on Rahul. For reference, Dostana is a Bollywood comedy about two young men pretending to be gay. The pals giggled. Rahul played along but looked embarrassed, something that was surprisingly missing when he and Hardik Pandya broke the ‘what happens in dressing home, stays there’ bro code on TV. For that infamous 2019 TV show, both Rahul and Hardik got suspended. That year, Rahul also got dropped from the Indian team. That period, he confided to a friend, was the “most useless and negative of his life”. The same set of trusted mates, most of them cricketers, would help him train, spot his mistakes and help him return to the Indian team. The nightmare would be over. Rahul would hit Test centuries in England and South Africa. Like the legend he was constantly compared to, Rahul had the skills to succeed overseas but he was more Wallop than Wall. Rahul’s white-ball game, and the potential in him to be a youth icon, was the kind that would make franchises weak in their knees. They would fall over each other to sign him up. In their haste to put him on billboards, they even made him the captain. That proved to be a folly. Never to lead even a junior side, Rahul was given the reins to run a franchise team. He had to handle his players on the field and owners off it. Like Dravid, at times, it was too much for him. The highly-skilled batsman, who didn’t allow T20 to mess with his batting technique, couldn’t prevent IPL pressure from impacting his form. There were times when he would succeed as a batsman, but couldn’t inspire his team to give results. This stopped him from graduating to the elite club of super-star cricketers. The constant changing of his batting spot when playing for India has also resulted in him not settling into a role. In Tests, he has opened the innings and also batted at 3, 4 and 6. It’s somewhat the same in T20s. But the ODIs musical chairs are worse – Rahul has batted in all spots from 1 to 7. He has also been India’s perpetual spare wheel – the stand-in wicket-keeper, opener and captain. That didn’t allow a permanent standing in the team or the dressing room.

But with time, Rahul learnt to live with the ad-hocism he was subjected to. During the last Test series in Australia, he brilliantly opened the innings in Rohit Sharma’s absence but got dropped to No.3 when the designated captain returned. In the ICC Champions Trophy, he returned to keep wickets in ODIs, with the team management opting for him over Rishabh Pant. But he would be sent to bat after all-rounder Axar Patel at No.6. In both campaigns, he repeatedly played India’s Man Friday. This IPL, he is playing under Axar, his junior by many years. But such demotions haven’t mattered to him, or perhaps he has got used to them. Rahul remains the team’s rock and someone the juniors look up to. When opening with Yashasvi Jaiswal during BGT, he played the perfect senior, reining in the aggressive youngster. During the Champions Trophy and at DC, he is the voice that wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav listens to. He is the ultimate backroom boy, the Mr Reliable and the perpetual captaincy option. After years, he is again Team India’s Dravid. He is popular in the team and after that ‘coldest handshake’, has finally connected with the masses. The fans always liked him, but now they might even love him. Who in the world doesn’t like a noisy boss getting a subtle snub?

batter Ambati Rayudu, also speaking on the show, shared a similar sentiment, seeing this season’s setbacks as a harsh but necessary reminder. “I know it’s the lowest of lows, but it’s also a great learning for CSK,” Rayudu said. “Even MS Dhoni has acknowledged that the game has moved on. From here on, they’ll be very, very vigilant about evolving with the game.” Rayudu pointed to Brevis and Mhatre’s emergence as major positives, suggesting that such transitions often require painful resets. “Sometimes, it takes a season like this to ground a team and remind them that the game is always bigger than us. You have to stick to the basics and stay humble,” he added. As a new era beckons for CSK, the emergence of Brevis could be the story that offers fans hope.

The team performance was pleasing: SRH head coach Vettori

HYDERABAD: Sunrisers Hyderabad head coach Daniel Vettori said that every bowler contributed to the team’s win against Chennai Super Kings in the IPL league match at Chepauk in Chennai on Friday night. “That’s the pleasing aspect when you put together a team performance, because that’s what’s been lacking for us this year. We haven’t been able to put together all three facets,” Vettori said in the post-match briefing. “The initial plan was around left-right-hand combinations, and that’s in a way to counter Noor and Jadu and how good they are through those middle stages. That’s why Kamindu came in today, because of his ability to play spin, his left-handedness,” he explained. On Kamindu Mendis’ brilliant catch to send back the dangerous Dewald Brevis, Vettori said it was just instinct. “It’s an innate ability to be able to move, to see the ball and time you’re diving. So it’s probably one of those catches that even a brilliant fielder only has one or two in their career,” he said. “So special moment from the catch, but more importantly for us, the moment in the game where Brevis was starting to take control, putting a lot of pressure back on us. And if he’d stayed in, probably the score would have gotten away from us and it would have been a difficult chase,” Vettori said.

CSK will be very watchful about evolving with the game now, says Rayudu



GNS News Agency, May 1

New Delhi: After Chennai Super Kings’ (CSK) sorry run in IPL 2025 continued with a five-wicket defeat to Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH), former India batter Ambati Rayudu stated that the five-time champions will henceforth be highly attentive about evolving as per the current style of playing T20 cricket. Despite making some changes to their playing eleven at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, CSK’s quest to get a win didn’t yield the desired result, resulting in them still staying at tenth place in the points table. “I know it’s the lowest of lows, but it’s also a great learning for CSK. If you rest on your laurels and don’t keep an eye on the future, this is what can happen. From here on, they’ll be very, very vigilant about evolving with the game. Even MS

Dhoni has acknowledged that the game has moved on, and I’m sure he’s already thinking about building a team for next year.”

“We’ve seen some shining lights in the batting line-up, particularly Brevis and Mhatre – those are real positives. Sometimes, it takes a season like this to ground a team and remind them that the game is always bigger than us. You have to stick to the basics and stay humble,” said Rayudu on JioStar. The only silver linings for CSK were Ayush Mhatre’s 30 and Dewald Brevis making 42 on his debut for the franchise. Rayudu also addressed CSK’s continuous batting struggles in the season. “I don’t think there’s confusion in shot selection – if anything, there aren’t enough shots being played. The batters are taking more time than they should.” The change in personnel was needed, and what we’re seeing now is more of a trial run for next season. I don’t think CSK can carry forward most of their current squad – at best, seven or eight players might be retained,” he added. Saturday’s IPL 2025 game will see Shreyas Iyer leading Punjab Kings against his former side, Kolkata Knight Riders, at the Eden Gardens. PBKS had earlier defeated KKR when they defended 111 in New Chandigarh. “He’ll carry great memories of the ground and of KKR, having won the IPL with them last season. There’ll be a bit of fire in the belly—he wasn’t retained, and now he’s captaining Punjab. I think he’ll be focused and motivated. Punjab looks the stronger side this season, and I see them as serious contenders for the playoffs,” concluded Rayudu.

CSK’s IPL 2025 Auction plans went wrong, says Stephen Fleming after 7th defeat: ‘Other teams got better’

GNS News Agency, May 1

Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming admitted to the team’s IPL Auction 2025 after they slumped to a seventh defeat in nine matches on Friday, losing by five wickets to the Sunrisers Hyderabad at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chepauk. A second streak of four defeats this season has also coincided with CSK’s worst performance at home ever in the league, with hopes of a Playoffs qualification sliced to shreds. “It is hard to say we got it completely right with the performances that we have had,” Fleming said after CSK put on another meek batting performance at home. “So we have been looking over that in detail just around our style of play. Also, looking at how the game is evolving

“And it is not easy. And that is why we are proud of our record today. We have been able to be consistent for so long, and it doesn’t take much for it to go another way. Other teams have got better, and that is the point of the auction. But we just haven’t been able to get it right.” Fleming said the situation demanded better understanding and effort from the players. “So you take responsibility from the top down and then you just ask a little more of the players.” “But yeah, that (auction) has to be an area where we need to reflect and say it wasn’t as good as what it could have been or it



hasn’t worked out how we wanted.” “It is also not perfect science,” Fleming said. “The auction is a very fluid beast. It’s like buying [for] 25 hours and see it come away at the end of it mentally and sometimes physically exhausted. And to be fair, I still think we have got a good squad. We are not far away.” A couple of key injuries, just a bit of a lack of form. And we have just struggled really to nail a gameplan. We’ve chopped and changed too much. I think it was trying to look for something that perhaps we felt wasn’t there. So yeah, there is a lot of responsibility and soul-searching and it certainly starts with me at the top, 100%,” admitted Fleming.

Meet the international contingent of Neeraj Chopra’s NC Classic: Former World champion, ‘Mr YouTube’, a German all-time great



GNS News Agency, May 1

Neeraj Chopra’s team on Thursday night confirmed the list of international athletes for a first-of-its-kind Category A javelin event in India, the eponymous NC Classic to be held in Bengaluru on May 24. Aside from the Paris Olympics gold medalist being absent, there is still enough starpower in the final international lineup in the men’s javelin only event. The list of Indian contenders – apart from Neeraj Chopra, of course – is still to be confirmed. Anderson Peters (Grenada): Neeraj Chopra and Anderson Peters go way back. They have been competing against each other since 2016, starting from the IAAF U20 World Championships in Bydgoszcz, Poland. It was Neeraj’s first international breakthrough as he threw 86.48m to create a new Junior World Record that still stands. That day at Zdzislaw Krzyszkowiak Stadium, Peters had finished with a bronze medal. Peters has since gone on to become a two-time World Champion (2019, 2022), and has repeatedly shown an ability to come up with explosive throws, boasting a personal best of 93.07m which he achieved in Doha in May 2022. In the 21 events that they have competed Head-to-Head, Neeraj has gotten the better of Peters 15 times, but the 27-year-old from Grenada has had some crucial wins ahead of Neeraj, like at the 2022 World Championships, where he pipped the Indian star to a gold. Peters faced a significant spell away from the circuit after suffering serious injuries during a brawl on a boat in 2022, but has since come back close to his best, finishing with bronze in Paris behind Arshad and Neeraj. Thomas Röhler (Germany): Part of the fearsome group of javelin throwers from Germany alongside Johannes Vetter and Andreas Hofmann, Rohler is one of the OGs. The 2016 Olympic Champion is considered one of the sport’s all-time greats. Between 2016 and

2018, Rohler had a best mark of 90m+ seven different times, with a personal best of 93.90m. He has been struggling with injuries in recent years though, going past 80m just once in 2024 and didn’t participate in Paris but has been gearing up towards a comeback. Julius Yego (Kenya): The man often referred to as Mr. YouTube in javelin circles, Yego is a pioneer in this discipline, much like Neeraj, achieving plenty of firsts for Kenya. From a country known for track event specialists, Yego was a pathbreaker in javelin throw. His initial dreams were to become an endurance runner too but after getting lapped in a 10,000m race when he was 13 he decided to change from track to field. With a lack of coaching expertise in that event growing up, he spent hours on YouTube learning from the likes of two-time Olympic champion Andreas Thorkildsen and 2007 World Champion Tero Pitkamaki on YouTube to learn technical skills. He then went on to spend time in Finland under an IAAF Scholarship where he refined it further. He went on to become World Champion (2015) and Olympic silver medalist (2016). He is past his prime but boasts of a best mark at 92.72m. Curtis Thompson (USA): The 2025 athletics season, especially for javelin throw, is in its infancy but the early marker has been laid down by America’s Thompson. Having been around since 2013, Thompson’s rise has been steady rather than spectacular. He crossed 80m+ for the first time in 2021, and earlier this year threw a new personal best in Austin, Texas, the world-leading mark currently at 87.76m. Genki Dean (Japan): While Japan boasts of arguably the best female javelin thrower in the world right now in Haruka Kitaguchi, Dean has been a solid competitor for a while on the men’s side. He is the Asian Games 2023 bronze medalist, and has a personal best of 84.28m. Luiz Mauricio da Silva (Brazil): A finalist at Paris 2024, Brazil’s da Silva has a personal best of 85.91m.

Bullet Train Explosion movie review: Netflix’s Japanese thriller is on the right track, but Dharmendra and Vinod Khanna have been there, done that



GNS News Agency, May 1

It’s a crying shame that Bullet Train Explosion — the new Japanese action movie on Netflix — doesn’t end with a Simi Garewal stand-in leading a choir of children into song. It’s the only minor addition that would’ve made an already enjoyable movie even better. Bullet Train Explosion is so closely linked to The Burning Train that if Vinod Khanna were to show up in his fireproof suit, you wouldn’t bat an eyelid. But it’s actually a legacy-quel to the 1975 Sonny Chiba vehicle Bullet Train, which was ripped off by not only BR Chopra, but also Jan de Bont, who directed the smash hit Keanu Reeves-starrer Speed.Glossy, fast-paced, and directed with a no-nonsense attitude that is reflected in its characters, Bullet Train Explosion pays tribute to the disaster movies of the 1970s and 1990s. The film is piloted by the experienced visual effects whiz Shinji Higuchi, whose past work includes two Attack on Titan hits and Shin Godzilla. Unlike most major Hollywood movies these days, and virtually every Hindi film that punches above its weight — we’re looking at you, Sky Force — you can’t really tell the difference between practical and visual effects in Bullet Train Explosion. They likely used miniatures as well, but it’s all rather seamlessly done.

The drama unfolds across several geographical locations, and features an ensemble so vast that your ability to keep track of who’s who is challenged on a minute-by-minute basis. We have the virtuous conductor Takaichi, who leads by example aboard the Shinkansen when a mysterious bomber calls in, and reveals that they have rigged the locomotive to explode if it slows down to below 100 mph. The bomber demands 100 billion yen, crowd-funded by the people of Japan to save their own. The passengers are a mix of everyday working class, along with a mid-level politician, an influencer, and a bunch of teenage schoolkids.

Shah Rukh Khan had a condition before he signed Baazigar, recalls writer: ‘Akshay Kumar, Salman Khan refused to do the film’

Shah Rukh Khan was just in the second year of his Bollywood career when he signed on to play an anti-hero in Abbas Mustan’s Baazigar (1993). The film changed his career trajectory and became a blockbuster hit at the box office. But he was not always the first choice for the film. Baazigar was first offered to Akshay Kumar and Salman Khan, but they refused to take up the film, which eventually landed with Shah Rukh Khan.

Robin Bhatt, the younger half-brother of Mahesh Bhatt and Mukesh Bhatt, recently recalled stepping out of the Bhatt clan to try his hands on a new subject unlike his previous films like Aashiqui, Sadak, and Dil Hai Ke Manta Nahin. Recalling how he happened to write Baazigar, Robin shared with Friday Talkies, “One day I received this call and was asked if I have watched the film ‘A Kiss Before Dying’. I said, it is originally a novel, and I have read it and we can surely make a film on it. Then I was told to write a screenplay as Abbas Mustan wanted to direct it. That’s how Baazigar was born.”

Baazigar, which is an adaption of a 1953 novel, A Kiss Before Dying, had a twisted plot where the hero was the villain. This character was against the moralistic heroes of those times but this created a problem for the makers, as no hero was willing to star in it. Robin shared, “I finished writing, but we didn’t know who to cast. We went to Akshay, he refused. Then we approached Salim Khan, and he said ‘Why would Salman do this film?’ He too refused it.” At this time, it occurred to Robin that only one man will willingly take up this role without any hesitation and it was none other than Shah Rukh Khan.

Higuchi cuts back and forth between the action on the train, and the tense drama unfolding in the control room, where a large group of men clash (and eventually collaborate) over how to handle the situation. There’s something about race-against-time thrillers set on trains. But it’s a dying breed of cinema. Last year’s Kill didn’t do much to move the needle; in an effort to make a violent movie, they forgot to make a good one. Barring the Korean crossover hit Train to Busan, the genre seemed to have died with the late, great Tony Scott, who went out with the back-to-back meathead masterpieces The Taking of Pelham 123 and Unstoppable. Only one of those movies had an actual villain, while in the other, Unstoppable, the train itself was the antagonist. Bullet Train Explosion is a combination of the two.

There is a villain, but we don’t actually meet them until the third act. Until then, the movie focuses on the rescue operation. In that regard, Bullet Train Explosion is a lot like United 93 — a movie about regular people getting the job done. Higuchi supplements the larger narrative with sequences that have their own mini-arcs. The earliest set-piece revolves around the train’s automatic braking system, which is designed to turn on when the locomotive nears a station. The driver is instructed to turn the automatic braking system off, but because a manoeuvre like this has never been attempted before, nobody in the control room knows if the plan will actually work. Will the manual override fail? Will the train blow up?Of course it wont; a full two hours of run-time remains — Tokyo, the final destination, is over 600 kms away. But that doesn’t stop you from leaning in along with the rest of the control room. It’s an early indicator of how capably Bullet Train Explosion has been crafted. An even more thrilling set-piece around the half-way mark involves a second train being linked up with the main one, a gangway being erected between them, allowing passengers to be ferried from one to the other. By the time the villain is introduced in the flesh, you’d have likely forgotten about them amid all the derring-do being displayed by the Japanese working class.

The villain’s motivations might seem incredible, but they reframe what was a rather universal action movie into a singularly Japanese story. Ideas of honour and shame are brought up, as is generational trauma and loneliness. The final act turns into a morality play that might remind you of The Dark Knight — it is revealed that the villain never expected their demands to be met, such is their lack of faith in Japanese society. Wafer-thin as the character is, the villain represents the utter hopelessness that we hear has become an epidemic in Japan. All of this adds an unexpected heft to a movie that dares to switch tracks even though it didn’t really need to.



“I remember we often stayed in this hotel called Villa. He would come there for Raju Bangaya Gentleman sittings. I would be there to work on my subjects. Sometimes he used to meet me. During these meetings, I had understood that he is different and thinks differently. So one day, I narrated the story to him and just when we arrived at the interval, Shah Rukh happily agreed to do the film. He didn’t even care to hear the second half.”Shah Rukh Khan didn’t just agree to do the film but also put a condition before the makers. “I will do the film if only you will leave the script as it is. You will not try and justify the character or make him grey.”This approach of Shah Rukh Khan instilled confidence in director duo Abbas-Mustan, who went ahead with the script as it is and rest it history. It also starred actors Shilpa Shetty, Kajol, Raakhee and Johnny Lever.

Mohanlal-Shobana starrer becomes second-biggest Malayalam opener of 2025 after Empuraan, earns Rs 5.5 crore

Thudaram box office collection day 1: It is very rare that a superstar like Mohanlal’s film has a very lowkey release. It is even more rare to see it happen right after he delivers the biggest blockbuster of Malayalam cinema. But then, that is the way Malayalam cinema works, and it has bode well for Mohanlal’s latest release, Thudaram, directed by Tharun Moorthy. Despite a lot of interesting aspects in the film, the makers decided to let the movie do all the talking, and that’s what Thudaram did by opening at a whopping Rs 5.5 crore on Day 1, as per industry tracker Sacnilk.

This is the second biggest opening for a Malayalam film this year after Prithviraj Sukumaran-Mohanlal’s L2: Empuraan made Rs 18.6 crore on Day 1. Interestingly, this film, which faced multiple delays in release, has done better than the recent Vishu releases, including Mammooty’s Bazooka, the crowd-favourite Alappuzha Gymkhana, and the first hit of the year, Rekhachithram, which opened to Rs 3.2 crore, Rs 2.65 crore, and Rs 1.9 crore, respectively.The highlight of the opening day numbers for Thudaram was the 62.27 % occupancy with the evening and night shows garnering an impressive 68.25 % and 84 %, respectively.

In fact, the occupancy of the night shows in cities like Kochi, Kozhikode, Thrissur, Kollam, Kottayam, and Alappuzha ranged from 95% to 99%.With positive reviews from critics, and audience praising Thudaram for being a film that gives them their ‘vintage Mohanlal,’ Thudaram is expected to grow over the weekend.In fact, after the first-day responses to Thudaram, Mohanlal wrote, “I’m deeply moved and truly humbled by the love and heartfelt response for #Thudaram. Each message and every word of appreciation has touched me in ways I can’t fully express. Thank you for opening your hearts to this story, for seeing its soul, and for embracing it with such grace. This gratitude is not mine alone. It belongs to every single person who walked this journey with me, giving their love, effort, and spirit to every frame. To Renjith M, Tharun Moorthy, KR Sunil, Shobhana, Binu Pappu, Prakash Varma, Shaji Kumar, Jakes Bejoy and our extraordinary team — your artistry and passion made Thudaram what it is. This film was made with care, with purpose, and above all, with truth. To see it resonate so deeply is more than a reward. It is a true blessing. With all my heart, thank you. With love and gratitude. Always.”

Netflix’s Japanese thriller is on the right track, but Dharmendra and Vinod Khanna have been there, done that



It’s a crying shame that Bullet Train Explosion — the new Japanese action movie on Netflix — doesn’t end with a Simi Garewal stand-in leading a choir of children into song. It’s the only minor addition that would’ve made an already enjoyable movie even better. Bullet Train Explosion is so closely linked to The Burning Train that if Vinod Khanna were to show up in his fireproof suit, you wouldn’t bat an eyelid. But it’s actually a legacy-quel to the 1975 Sonny Chiba vehicle Bullet Train, which was ripped off by not only BR Chopra, but also Jan de Bont, who directed the smash hit Keanu Reeves-starrer Speed.Glossy, fast-paced, and directed with a no-nonsense attitude that is reflected in its characters, Bullet Train Explosion pays tribute to the disaster movies of the 1970s and 1990s. The film is piloted by the experienced visual effects whiz Shinji Higuchi, whose past work includes two Attack on Titan hits and Shin Godzilla. Unlike most major Hollywood movies these days, and virtually every Hindi film that punches above its weight — we’re looking at you, Sky Force — you can’t really tell the difference between practical and visual effects in Bullet Train Explosion. They likely used miniatures as well, but it’s all rather seamlessly done.

The drama unfolds across several geographical locations, and features an ensemble so vast that your ability to keep track of who’s who is challenged on a minute-by-minute basis. We have the virtuous conductor Takaichi, who leads by example aboard the Shinkansen when a mysterious bomber calls in, and reveals that they have rigged the locomotive to explode if it slows down to below 100 mph. The bomber demands 100 billion yen, crowd-funded by the people of Japan to save their own. The passengers are a mix of everyday working class, along with a mid-level politician, an influencer, and a bunch of teenage schoolkids.

Legendary K-pop idol makes Hollywood debut in John Wick spin-off Ballerina with Keanu Reeves and Ana de Armas

Second-generation female group idol Choi Sooyoung is reportedly making her big Hollywood debut in the iconic John Wick spin-off, Ballerina. The upcoming film will see Ana de Armas take on the central role. Scheduled for release on June 6, Ballerina takes place between John Wick: Chapter 3, titled Parabellum and Chapter 4. The movie explores a world of underground assassins and global crime networks, with Sooyoung playing a key role. The film also features Keanu Reeves and Anjelica Huston. Meanwhile, John Wick 5 has officially begun production. The franchise is also expanding with its first-ever animated prequel and a Caine spin-off.

Ballerina follows the story of Eve Macarro, a ballerina-turned-assassin played by Ana de Armas. As her path crosses with John Wick’s, Eve’s thirst to avenge her father’s death only intensifies. Raised by the ruthless Ruska Roma syndicate, Eve is determined to track down every person responsible for the biggest tragedy of her life. As reported by The Korea Times, Sooyoung takes on the role of Katla Park. In the movie, fans will watch Armas’ character as she faces her first mission: protecting Katla at the dangerous Minus Eleven club. Katla, the daughter of Il Seong, a major player in the Ruska Roma organisation, sets the stage for a chain of intense and thrilling events.While it’s her first in Hollywood, Sooyoung is not new to acting. The K-pop idol long ago turned to on-screen roles and has played key parts in various K-dramas and movies, including Not Others, Fanletter, Please, If You Wish Upon Me, Move to Heaven, So I Married an Anti-Fan, Run On, and so on. The lead dancer and rapper of Girls’ Generation made her debut in 2000 with SM Entertainment. For fans waiting for her new K-drama, she will first lead the soon-to-air tvN K-drama Second Shot at Love alongside Gong Myung, Jo Yoon Hee, Kang Hyung Suk, Kim Sung Ryung, and Kim Sang Ho. The K-drama is scheduled to premiere on May 12.

Len Wiseman’s directorial Ballerina promises a blend of professional choreography and intense action



that fans expect from the John Wick series. Other stars like Lance Reddick, Norman Reedus, and Ian McShane are also part of the cast. The character posters of the movie were released a while ago. The movie will also star Gabriel Byrne, who will step into the shoes of Chancellor, the spinoff’s main antagonist, facing off with Ana de Armas’ Eve. “The opportunity to have my movie and actually just go for it, go crazy, it was a no-brainer,” Armas said, speaking to USA Today about her role in the movie. “I knew I wanted to be a part of that world, and that specific tone of ‘John Wick’ was really cool.”The Oscar-nominated star has time and again wowed her fans with actioners like Ghosted, The Gray Man, and the James Bond film No Time to Die. Keanu Reeves, Ana de Armas are teaming up for the third time after Exposed in 2016 and Knock Knock in 2015. During CinemaCon, Armas revealed how she first met Reeves, “I met him when I barely spoke English when I moved to L.A. 10 years ago.” She recalled meeting the actor for the very first time in Santiago de Chile during a lunch with the filmmakers of Knock Knock. Armas was sitting across the table from him and was nervous. “I couldn’t talk to him much because I was so self-conscious about my English,” Ana recalled, adding, “I was really struggling and really trying hard to follow the conversation,” she told The Hollywood Reporter.

Park Bo Gum reveals he got ghosted by IU’s on-screen lover after Tangerines wrap-up: ‘I texted... but no reply’

From Park Bo Gum joking about being ghosted by his co-star, to Chae Seo An quietly grinding through seven part-time jobs even after delivering the mega hit, and Park Hae Joon getting all introspective about playing the “perfect husband,” When Life Gives You Tangerines might’ve wrapped, but the stories spilling out after the cameras stopped rolling are as exciting as the plot.

On April 25, Park Bo Gum turned host for KBS2TV’s The Seasons: Park Bo Gum’s Cantabile. He was joined by guests that night, Jeong Eun Ji and Lee Jun Young (both idol-turned-actors). For the night’s theme, “Youth Record,” Eun Ji delivered an electrifying performance, flaunting her knack for hitting high notes, while the other two bonded over banter, confessions, and a bit of industry gossip. But what really gave the audience a good laugh was Bo Gum’s unexpected confession. During the event, the Reply 1988 star brought up how he had exchanged numbers with Lee Jun Young (the actor who played the role of Young Beom) dur-

ing the script reading and wrap-up party for their Netflix drama When Life Gives You Tangerines. With the most innocent expression, Bo-gum said: “We exchanged numbers, and I sent him a message... but he never replied.” Lee was caught off guard. He scrambled to explain himself, but the audience was already playfully booing him. The video has since gone viral on Naver and X.

In the show, Lee’s character Young Beom, plays the love interest of IU’s character, Yang Geum Myung, when she enrolls in Seoul National University. After years of being in an on-again, off-again relationship, the couple doesn’t get their happy ending. Young Beom marries a girl chosen by Geum-myung’s mother, and a time jump follows, revealing Geum-myung finding happiness with Kim Seon Ho’s character. Despite his supporting role, fans loved Lee Jun Young’s performance and even rooted for their love story.While the drama might’ve been a hit, not everything was sunshine for every cast member involved.