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SCR to continue special trains between Charlapalli and Tirupati to clear passenger rush

Hyderabad: To clear the extra passenger rush, South Central Railway (SCR) will continue to run special trains between Charlapalli and Tirupati.

Accordingly, Charlapalli – Tirupati (07017) train will run between July 4 and 27, Tirupati – Charlapalli (07018) will run between July 5 and 28, Charlapalli – Tirupati (07251) will run between July 2 and 30 and Tirupati – Charlapalli (07252) will run between July 3 and 31. These trains will consist of 1AC, 2AC, 3AC, Sleeper and General Second Class coaches, SCR officials said.

Heavy rains forecast for Telangana, IMD issues yellow alert

Hyderabad: The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast heavy rains in parts of Telangana over the next six days. Yellow alerts have been issued for the districts of Nizamabad, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Vikarabad, Sangareddy, Medak, Kamareddy, Mahabubnagar, Nagarkurnool, Wanaparthy, Narayanpet, and Jogulamba Gadwal for Friday and Saturday. Heavy rain is very likely to occur at isolated places in these districts. According to the IMD bulletin, thunderstorms, accompanied by lightning and gusty winds with a speed of 40-50 kmph, are very likely to occur at isolated places in all districts of Telangana.

Telangana govt. increases DA for employees, issues orders

GNS News Agency, June 14

The Telangana government has announced an increase in the Dearness Allowance (DA) for state employees and pensioners by 3.64 per cent, delivering positive news to many. Following the issuance of G.O. 78 and 79 by Finance Department Principal Secretary Sandeep Kumar Sultan, the new DA increase will take effect from 1 January 2023.

With this adjustment, the current DA, which stands at 26.39 per cent, will rise to 30.03 per cent. Employees will see this increase reflected in their June salaries, to be disbursed in July. Notably, all DA arrears from 1 January 2023 to 31 May 2025 will be deposited into the General Provident Fund (GPF) accounts of employees. For those who have already retired, the DA arrears will be paid in 28 instalments. Additionally, 10 per cent of DA arrears for Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) employees will be credited to their PRAN accounts, with the remaining 90 per cent paid out in the same instalment format alongside the June salary.

The increase also applies to employees under the University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) pay scales, with their



DA rising from 38 per cent to 42 per cent. In a recent cabinet meeting, it was decided to grant a two-part DA increase to employees, with one part to be awarded immediately and the second in six months. This latest DA hike includes employees at various levels, including district, mandal, gram panchayat, municipalities, municipal corporations, agricultural market committees, district library institutions, work-charged establishments, as well as teaching and non-teaching staff at aided institutions and universities.

Air Force Academy's Graduation Parade: 254 cadets commissioned as flying officers

GNS News Agency, June 14

Hyderabad: In a ceremony filled with pride, honour, and excitement, a total of 254 flight cadets graduated during the Combined Graduation Parade (CGP) held at Air Force Academy here on Saturday. Of the total, nine officers from the Indian Navy, seven officers from the Indian Coast Guard, and one trainee from Vietnam, a friendly foreign country, were also awarded 'Wings' on successful completion of flying training.

The highlight of the parade was the 'Commissioning Ceremony' in which the graduating cadets were commissioned as Flying Officers by Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal AP Singh. Rohan Krishna Murthy from the flying branch was awarded the coveted 'President's Plaque' as well as the 'Chief of the Air Staff Sword of Honour' and commanded the parade. Nishta Vaid was awarded the 'President's Plaque'. Stating that CGP ceremony marks the culmination of years of perseverance and structured training as a cadet, the Air Chief Marshal said it is only the beginning of their learning journey, and urged them to continue to expand their horizons and discover new capabilities.



Recalling his own Commission into IAF 40 years ago, Singh said, "It was a very similar setting, if I can remember. Yes, it was a different venue. Tarmac in front of the flying faculty those days and we were in khaki." The ceremony also included thrilling displays by the Akash Ganga team, the Air Warrior Drill Team, and synchronised aerobatics by the Surya Kiran aerobatic team. The graduation parade was interspersed with well-coordinated and synchronised fly-pasts by trainer aircraft that included the Pilatus PC-7 Mk-II, Hawk, Kiran Mk-1 and Chetak.

Kakarla Jeevan Sai tops Telangana with 18th rank in NEET UG 2025



GNS News Agency, June 14

Hyderabad: Kakarla Jeevan Sai Kumar of Telangana

has bagged the 18th rank in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) UG 2025 results declared by the National Testing Agency (NTA) on Saturday. This is the best rank secured by a Telangana candidate in the top 20.

Among the top 100 rankers were Telangana candidates Shanmukha Nishanth Akshintala (37), Mangari Varun (46), Yandrapati Shanmukh (48), and Bidisha Majee (95). Overall, Mahesh Kumar of Rajasthan topped the examination, while Utkarsh Awadhiya of Madhya Pradesh and Krishnang Joshi of Maharashtra bagged second and third ranks, respectively. Avika Aggarwal of Delhi (NCT), who bagged the fifth rank, was declared the overall topper among the females.

This year, 72,094 candidates registered, 70,259 appeared, and 41,584 qualified in Telangana. Overall, 22,76,609 candidates applied, 22,09,318 appeared and 12,36,531 qualified.

Student leaders join Telangana Jagruthi in large numbers in Hyd

GNS News Agency, June 14

Hyderabad: Student leaders from different organisations joined Telangana Jagruthi, the cultural and social wing of the Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) in the presence of its chief and MLC K Kavitha on Saturday.

Draping them with traditional scarves, Kavitha formally welcomed them into the organization while emphasising the role of students in shaping society. Cabinet nod for separate Bills on BC reservations comes as major victory for Telangana Jagruthi, MLC Kavitha. Addressing the gathering, Kavitha called upon the student community to rise and lead the movement for 'Samajika Telangana' (social justice in Telangana). She highlighted the historic role of students in the Telangana statehood movement, stating that students fought in the forefront during the Telangana agitation and played a critical role in its success. "With the same spirit, they must now lead the charge in achieving social justice in Telangana," she said. Kavitha also criticised the Congress government's approach to local body elections, particularly regarding reservations for Backward Classes (BCs). "Holding local body elections without ensuring 42% reservations for BCs is unacceptable. We will not remain quiet if the elections were conducted without fulfilling this



promise. The government must implement 42% reservations before proceeding with elections," she demanded and pointed out that while BC reservation bills were pending with the Centre, rushing for the elections without addressing this issue would be unjust.

PM Narendra Modi to take part in G7 Summit in Canada; visit Cyprus, Croatia

GNS News Agency, June 14

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will undertake a three-nation tour starting Sunday, during which he will take part in the G7 Summit in Canada, and visit Cyprus and Croatia to shore up India's bilateral cooperation with these two countries. "This will be the first ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Croatia, marking an important milestone in the bilateral relationship," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced on Saturday. Modi will first visit Cyprus on June 15-16 at the invitation of the country's president, Nikos Christodoulides. "This will be the first visit of an Indian Prime Minister to Cyprus in over two decades," the MEA said in a statement. While in Cyprus capital, Nicosia, the Prime Minister will hold talks with President Christodoulides and address business leaders at Limassol, it said. "The visit will reaffirm the shared commitment of the two countries to deepen bilateral ties and strengthen India's engagement with the Mediterranean region and the European Union," the statement said. In the second leg of his visit, Prime Minister Modi will travel to Kananaskis in Canada on June 16-17 to participate in the G7 Summit at the invitation of Canada Prime Minister Mark Carney. This would be the Prime Minister's sixth consecutive participation in the G7 Summit. "At the Summit, the Prime Minister will exchange views with the leaders of G7 countries, other invited outreach countries and heads of international organisations on crucial global issues, including energy security, technology and innovation, particularly the AI-energy nexus and quantum-related issues," the MEA said. The Prime Minister will also hold several bilaterals on the sidelines of the Summit. The Group of Seven (G7) consists of seven of the world's advanced economies — Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the US, and the UK — and the European Union. Carney, an economist and political newcomer, took charge as Canada's Prime Minister in March following the exit of



Justin Trudeau from the top office. Modi received a call from Carney earlier this month, during which the latter invited the Prime Minister to attend the G7 meeting. The call was also an occasion for the two Prime Ministers to reflect and talk about India-Canada relations and how they can be taken forward, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told reporters on June 12. Describing India and Canada as "vibrant democracies", the external affairs ministry had also said that New Delhi believes the forthcoming meeting between the prime ministers of the two countries on the sidelines of the G7 Summit will offer an important opportunity to exchange views and "explore pathways" to reset bilateral ties. The MEA spokesperson also asserted that the "reset" of the relationship is based on mutual respect, shared interests and sensitivity to each other's concerns. The MEA statement said that in the final leg of his tour, Modi will undertake an official visit to Croatia on June 18 at the invitation of the Prime Minister of the European country, Andrej Plenkovic. Modi will hold a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Plenkovic and also meet the President of Croatia, Zoran Milanovic. "The visit to Croatia will also underscore India's commitment to further strengthening its engagement with partners in the European Union," the statement said.

8 Dreamliners inspected, full fleet checks in progress, says Aviation Minister

GNS News Agency, June 14

New Delhi: Following the tragic crash of an Air India Boeing 787 Dreamliner in Ahmedabad that claimed 241 lives, Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu on Saturday said that eight of the 34 Dreamliner planes in the Indian fleet have already been inspected and checks on the remaining aircraft will be completed urgently. The Union Minister emphasised that the government has started strict safety inspections of all Dreamliner aircraft in India.

Speaking at a press conference, the minister said, "We have directed the DGCA to carry out extended surveillance of all Boeing 787 planes. The ministry is taking this incident very seriously." "What happened near Ahmedabad airport has shocked the entire country, and I extend my deepest condolences to the families of the victims," the Union Minister added.

Earlier in the day, the minister chaired a high-level meeting at the Civil Aviation Ministry to review the current safety measures. Top officials from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Airports Authority of India (AAI), and other aviation bodies attended the meeting. To strengthen the ongoing investigation, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has added two new experts -- one in forensic analysis and another in medical examination. According to officials, the black box of the crashed aircraft is expected to reveal key details about what went wrong. This crash, which happened on June 12 and resulted in the deaths of 241 people on board, is the first



major fatal accident involving a Boeing 787 in India.

In response to the tragedy, the aviation ministry has made a set of new rules for Dreamliner aircraft. From June 15, a one-time detailed pre-departure check is mandatory for all 787 flights from India. These checks include important systems like fuel management, cabin air compressors, engine controls, and hydraulic systems. Airlines will also have to examine flight performance data before take-off. The DGCA has introduced new inspections of flight controls during aircraft transit checks and has instructed airlines to carry out power assurance tests within two weeks. All technical issues reported in the past 15 days must also be reviewed and resolved. Airlines are required to send detailed compliance reports to the DGCA.

Kharge slams Centre's Gaza vote abstention at UNGA, says India's foreign policy 'in shambles'

GNS News Agency, June 14

New Delhi: A day after India abstained in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) from a vote on a draft resolution that demanded an "immediate, unconditional and permanent" ceasefire in Gaza, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge said that "our Foreign Policy is in shambles" and added that "PM Modi must now take a call on his EAM's repeated blunders and set some accountability." As Israel continues to bomb Gaza which has already killed more than 50,000 people and displaced millions in the already torn area, the 193-member UN General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to adopt the resolution introduced by Spain that demanded an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire.

Taking to X, Congress President said, "It is now increasingly evident that our Foreign Policy is in shambles. Perhaps, PM Modi must now take a call on his EAM's repeated blunders and set some accountability. 149 countries voted for a UNGA resolution for a ceasefire in Gaza. India was only one of the 19 countries that abstained. We virtually stand isolated by this step."

Reiterating the Congress' statement that condemned the brutal attacks by Hamas on the people of Israel on October 8, 2023, Kharge said, "We have consistently condemned the indiscriminate actions that included a siege of the Gaza Strip and bombings in it as 60,000 people have died and there is a widespread and horrific humanitarian



crisis. "Taking a jibe at Indian Foreign Policy which now stands on the crossroads as New Delhi continues to call for talks and diplomacy between Israel and Palestine while routinely skipping the votes at such crucial drafts, Kharge asked, "Have we abandoned India's consistent stand advocating for a ceasefire, peace, and dialogue in the Middle East and West Asia?" "This stance is deeply rooted in our long-standing tradition of Non-Alignment and moral diplomacy, through which India has always championed justice and peace in international conflicts", he added. "On October 19, 2023, itself, the Indian National Congress had called for an immediate ceasefire and for humanitarian assistance to the beleaguered and dispossessed people of Gaza.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Nripendra Misra's good counsel deserves saffronites' attention

There are "limits" to correcting historical wrongs, Nripendra Misra recently told a newspaper. It is a sagacious remark that has come not a moment too soon. Misra's Ayodhya Ram temple's officer-architect-in-chief; he also headed the temple construction committee which was set up in February 2020. Additionally, he served as the principal secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi throughout his entire first term. By all accounts, he is a man of the system—and of the saffron ecosystem.

Three years ago, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat made a similar statement against the backdrop of the Gyanvapi dispute. "Why escalate the fight? Why look for a 'Shivling' in every Masjid?" he had asked Mohan Bhagwat while addressing the concluding ceremony of the third-year RSS officer training camp in Nagpur. Now that the Ram Temple has been built, would there be closure to other temple controversies or more claims would arise? Misra said, "I place this responsibility not so much on the government. It will have to be of various social groups, representatives, elected or not elected—they must recognise. They have limits on correcting issues." By shifting the responsibility from the government to broader society—social groups, elected and unelected representatives—he underscores the importance of collective wisdom and restraint. His perspective suggests that healing and reconciliation are not solely the work of political institutions but also civil society. The maturity of a nation is often judged not just by its ability to confront its past, but also by its capacity to move beyond it constructively. Misra's remarks advocate for a forward-looking approach, one that does not become trapped in an endless cycle of retribution or religious one-upmanship.

Tension at Malakpet as BJP leader Madhavi Latha intervenes in dispute between builder and flat owners

GNS News Agency, June 14

Hyderabad: Mild tension prevailed at Asmangarh, Malakpet, on Saturday after BJP leader Madhavi Latha visited the Elite Hills Apartment building, where a dispute is ongoing between flat owners and the builder.

Two people were injured in a scuffle between residents and associates of the builder, who belongs to another community, over a construction in the stilt area of the building two days ago. On Saturday, Madhavi Latha visited the building and met flat owners who claimed they had purchased their apartments from the builder a few years ago. However, the builder allegedly began constructing another structure in the stilt area, which was originally earmarked for parking. Tension escalated when Madhavi Latha placed an idol on a wall at the building's entrance and erected a small shed using bricks. Upon receiving information, the police rushed to the spot and beefed up security in the area. A police picket has been posted, and the situation is being closely monitored.

Tensions flare up between Congress leaders Danam Nagender, Vijaya Reddy



Tensions flared between MLA Danam Nagender and GHMC corporator Vijaya Reddy during a Congress constituency meeting in Khairatabad. A verbal clash broke out over protocol violations. This is the latest in a series of conflicts between the two leaders' camps.

GNS News Agency, June 14

Hyderabad: Tensions flared once again between Khairatabad MLA Danam Nagender and GHMC corporator Vijaya Reddy, daughter of the late former minister P. Janardhan Reddy, during a Congress constituency-level meeting held at Lake View, Banjara Hills, on Saturday.

The meeting, convened to discuss issues pertaining to the Khairatabad constituency, was attended by Mayor Gadwal Vijayalaxmi, party examiners, and other senior leaders. Vijaya Reddy and her supporters arrived late to the venue. When invited to speak, the corporator handed the microphone to her supporters, allowing some of them to address the gathering. This drew objections from Nagender's camp, which insisted on following party protocol. The disagreement escalated into a verbal clash, with both factions raising slogans against each other, disrupting the proceedings. District Congress Committee (DCC) president Rohin Reddy intervened and appealed for calm, warning of disciplinary action against those violating party decorum. Despite his efforts, heated exchanges continued for some time.

Eventually, Nagender invited Vijaya Reddy to speak, after which the meeting resumed, albeit behind schedule. This was not the first time tensions erupted between the two leaders. A similar incident occurred recently during the fine rice distribution at fair price shops, when their supporters clashed over the absence of Vijaya Reddy's photos on banners at the event.

Duddilla Srinubabu: A Tireless Champion of the Poor – Felicitated by Kotha Srinivas.



“PS Ashokan” Indian Chronicle “June, 14” “Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) General Secretary Duddilla Srinubabu, widely regarded as a steadfast advocate for the underprivileged, was warmly felicitated by Manthani Single Window Chairman Kotha Srinivas during a courtesy visit to his office in Hyderabad.” “On the occasion of Srinubabu's appointment as TPCC General Secretary, Chairman Kotha Srinivas extended his heartfelt congratulations by presenting a bouquet and a ceremonial shawl, acknowledging his unwavering service to the common man.” “Speaking on the occasion, Kotha Srinivas praised Srinubabu's deep commitment to public welfare and his consistent presence among the poor—assisting them with healthcare, essential services, and daily needs. He lauded the Congress Party's decision to elevate Srinubabu to a key leadership role, recognizing his grassroots service



and dedicated efforts to strengthen the party at all levels.” “He further expressed confidence that Srinubabu would play a pivotal role in fortifying the party's base and driving its mission forward across Telangana.” “Chairman Srinivas extended special thanks to Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, Minister Sridhar Babu, TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud, AICC Telangana in-charge Meenakshi Natarajan, and senior leader KC Venugopal, whose collective support facilitated this prestigious appointment.” “He concluded by expressing hope that the illustrious Duddilla family will continue to scale greater heights in public service and leadership in the coming days.” “Chairman Kotha Srinivas was accompanied by senior Congress leader Peraveni Lingayya Yadav and other dignitaries during the visit.

Lok Adalat: A Noble Avenue for Swift and Peaceful Justice. “Senior Civil Judge V. Bhavani urges citizens to embrace reconciliation over litigation.”



“Ps ashokan” Indian Chronicle “Manthani June, 14” “As part of the nationwide initiative by the National Legal Services Authority, the National Lok Adalat was held on Saturday at the Manthani Court, promoting the spirit of amicable and expedited justice.” “Addressing the gathering, Senior Civil Judge V. Bhavani described the Lok Adalat as an effective and dignified forum to resolve disputes without prolonged legal battles. She emphasized that conflicts arising out of momentary anger should be addressed through compromise rather than confrontation, underlining that reconciliation is the royal path to justice.” “She noted that land disputes are particularly widespread in rural areas, and encouraged people to utilize the support of revenue authorities for their resolution. She further advised that domestic disagreements, especially between spouses, should be



resolved within the family framework with the guidance of elders, avoiding unnecessary legal escalation.” “Judge Bhavani highlighted that courts are committed to ensuring justice in cheque bounce cases, and urged individuals to first consult the Mandal Legal Services Authority before proceeding with formal legal action. She also advised citizens to seek legal counsel before purchasing movable or immovable properties, to avoid future legal entanglements.” “She called upon officials in the Tahsildar's office to take proactive steps in assisting the public with conflict resolution.” “The event was attended by several dignitaries, including Bar Association President KVLN Haribabu, Vice President Raghuttam Reddy, Public Prosecutor Anjaneyulu, Advocate Kache Shashi Bhushan, Manthani CI Raju, SI Ramesh, Mutharam SI Naresh, and Ramagiri SI Chandrakumar, among others.

"Che Guevara: A Timeless Revolutionary Icon – Youth Urged to Embrace His Ideals"



“PS Ashokan” Indian Chronicle “Manthani, June 14” “On the occasion of the 97th birth anniversary of legendary revolutionary Che Guevara, grand celebrations were organized in Manthani town under the leadership of Congress leader Budida Tirupati and Student JAC leader Bejjanki Digambar.” “Addressing the gathering, the leaders emphasized that Che Guevara is not just a historical figure but a symbol of courage, rebellion, and unwavering commitment to justice. They described him as a fearless warrior against imperialism, a doctor, a Marxist thinker, a prolific writer, and

most importantly, a visionary revolutionary who relentlessly fought for freedom, equality, and the establishment of a just society.” “They appealed to today's youth to adopt Che's ideology as a guiding light in their lives, stating, “Let his life be a beacon of inspiration — a call to action, courage, and change.” “Prominent Congress leaders including Gudla Guruvesh, Manthani Rajesham, Velpula Suresh, Virugurula Prasad, Chityala Kumar, and Tati Buchanna Goud were present and actively participated in the event, marking it a momentous occasion of remembrance and reflection.

Uttar Pradesh govt approves proposal of Rs 27 crore to Aligarh lock museum

GNS News Agency, June 14

Aligarh (UP): The Uttar Pradesh government has approved a proposal for setting up a “lock museum” in Aligarh — the lock city of India. The proposal was given by the Aligarh Municipal Corporation to establish the museum aimed at recognising the over 150-year-old lock manufacturing industry of the city.

“Aligarh, which is known for locks and education, is going to get a new identity as, under the guidance of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath the biggest lock museum is going to be built here,” Aligarh Municipal Commissioner Prem Prakash Meena said. “The museum will be built at a cost of about Rs 27 crore under the Chief Minister Vaishvik Nagarodaya Yojana,” he claimed. “The proposal for the lock museum has been approved by the Ministry of Urban Development. A Detailed Project Report (DPR) of building the museum will be prepared and sent to the government. After getting financial approval from the government, the process of building the lock museum will gain momentum,” he said.

The DPR will be prepared by an experienced consultant, after finalising the best of the best designs, it will be sent to the government and further action will be taken after approval from the government, Meena said. He added that the construction is likely to start in the coming six to seven months. The museum will trace the history of Aligarh's lock manufacturing industry, Meena said, adding that it will have a dedicated section showcasing the modernisation of the locks through the decades.

It is a commendable and innovative effort by the Aligarh Municipal Corporation, Divisional Commissioner Sangeeta Singh said. A “wish point” will also be made in this lock museum, where people will be able to put a lock and make a wish, she added. The museum will attract people from across the country and abroad. Citizens, businessmen and schoolchildren will be able to see the journey of locks through the decades. The museum is proposed to be built on the land in front of Jawahar Bhawan, Aligarh. Aligarh Mayor Prashant Singhal said the lock museum will be the best gift of this municipal corporation board's tenure. Vijay Kumar Bajaj, one of the leading lock manufacturers whose family has been in the business for more than 75 years, said the museum is a good move. While speaking to PTI, Bajaj recalled that when his father set up a small plant shortly after independence, almost all operations in lock-making were manual. He said that the museum will serve as a focal point for restoring fresh energy in a field that has to catch up with the rest of the world if it wishes to survive in this rapidly changing era.

Tourist parks in Jammu and Kashmir to reopen in phased manner after security review: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha



GNS News Agency, June 14

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said the parks at tourist places, which were closed in view of security considerations after the April 22 Pahalgam attack, are being reopened in a phased manner to allow tourists to visit the destinations. “Some places were closed after April 22 (attack) in view of security considerations. The divisional commissioners and IGPs of Kashmir and Jammu have taken reports from every district and it has been decided to reopen some destinations in a phased manner,” Sinha said. The lieutenant governor was speaking to reporters after visiting the Nunwan Base Camp of the annual Amarnath Yatra in Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district. Sinha said the destinations that have been decided to be reopened for tourists in the first phase include Beatab Valley and parks near Pahalgam market in the famous tourist destination of Pahalgam, Verinag, Kokernag and Achabal gardens in Anantnag district. In Srinagar, Badamwari Park, Duck Park near Nigeen and Taqdeer Park near Hazratbal will also be reopened in the first phase. These eight places are being reopened and tourists can visit them, he added. The lieutenant governor also said that eight destinations would be reopened in Jammu region as well. “Eight places are being reopened in the first phase. In the next phase, some other destinations will be reopened,” he said.

CBI nab two for charging Rs 87.5 lakh per student to manipulate NEET UG 2025 scores

New Delhi: Exposing an MBBS admission racket, the CBI arrested two persons, including an admission consultant, for allegedly deceiving aspiring doctors by falsely promising to manipulate their NEET UG 2025 scores in exchange for Rs 87.5 lakh per candidate, an official said. Sandeep Shah, a resident of Solapur, Maharashtra, and Salim Patel, a resident of Navi Mumbai, were arrested after they collected money from parents of a few candidates at Hotel ITC Grand Central, Parel, Mumbai, the official said. In some cases, the accused collected money through hawala, he said. A case was registered against the two on June 9 for allegedly defrauding NEET candidates and their parents by falsely claiming to have connections with fictitious officials of the National Testing Agency (NTA). However, the investigation has not found any involvement of government officials or NTA personnel with the accused persons in the case, the CBI said. The probe agency said the two accused assured victims that they could manipulate the marks of low-scoring candidates in NEET UG 2025 in return for hefty payments.

Justice delayed is justice not received—Lok Adalat aims for speedy justice: Justice Shiva Nayak““““



“Shaik Sharief,Bhadrachalam,June14(Indian Chronicle):Justice delayed is justice not received. Lok Adalat aims for speedy justice, said Bhadrachalam Judicial Court Judge G. Shiva Nayak, who was formed under the inspiration of the Constitution as per Article 21 of the Constitution, and all litigants should use it. Shiva Nayak inaugurated the Pulihara Packets program organized for litigants under the auspices of the Bar Association, SBI, and Devsthanam on the occasion of the Lok Adalat held in the court premises on Saturday. He said that arranging Pulihara

packets for litigants who have come from far away is a great thing. Everyone should take advantage of the Lok Adalat and help resolve cases. A total of 1246 cases were resolved, 989 through agreements, 89 through compromise, and 168 through Bank PMLC. One crore fifty-five thousand rupees were collected through Bank PLC cases, three lakh twenty-nine thousand and sixty hundred rupees through summer trail cases, and one lakh rupees through CC cases. Bar Association President Kota Devadanam, lawyers, court staff, court constables, and litigants participated in this program.

All arrangements should be completed for the Rythu Nestham program: District Collector Jitesh V. Patil.“



““““Bhukya Ranjith naik,Bhadradi Kothagudem,June 14(Indian Chronicle):As part of the Rythu Nestham program to be held on Monday, 16th of this month, CM Revanth Reddy will speak face to face with farmers, and District Collector Jitesh V. Patil has instructed the officials to complete all arrangements for this program. In the context of the state Chief Minister Enumula Revanth Reddy speaking face to face with farmers at 4 pm as part of the Rythu Nestham program to be organized on Monday, the Collector held a review meeting with the officials of the relevant departments on Saturday through teleconference on the arrangements for the program. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that all arrangements should be completed to organize the Rythu Nestham program in 58 Rythu Vedikas across the district. He instructed the officials to

decorate all the Rythu Vedikas with mango arches and rangavallas in a festive atmosphere on Monday. He said that steps should be taken so that the farmers reach the Rythu Vedikas by 2:30 pm on Monday. He ordered that there should be no technical glitches in the audio and video and if there are any problems, they should be completed by tomorrow. All arrangements should be made so that the farmers who visit the Rythu Vedikas do not face any difficulties. Steps should be taken to ensure that women farmers also attend in large numbers. He advised the officials to extend invitations to local public representatives for this program. Details of how many farmers and how much Rythu Bharosa is being deposited at the state, district, constituency and mandal levels should be made available in each Rythu Vedika. Since farmers attend Rythu Vedikas in large numbers, he instructed the officials to set up stalls outside the Rythu Vedikas to create awareness about the ABCD drive. Farmers who have benefited from cultivating tunga within the Rythu Vedikas should be invited to the Rythu Nestham program and through them, other farmers should be made aware of the benefits of cultivating tunga. The Collector suggested that APMs from across the district should also attend the Rythu Nestham program, through which they can educate the women's union members about azolla cultivation, biochar production, fish farming, etc. so that they can develop economically. The Collector congratulated every officer and employee who contributed to this, saying that the entire country is looking towards the district in the construction of indus pits. He ordered that in the coming monsoon season, wherever rain water stagnates, the construction of indus pits should be undertaken immediately.

Lok Adalat for speedy resolution of cases: District Legal Services Authority Chairman Patil Vasant“



““““Bhukya Ranjith naik,Bhadradi Kothagudem,June 14(Indian Chronicle):District Legal Services Authority Chairman Patil Vasant suggested that people should forgive mistakes made in the heat of the moment with a big heart and follow the path of reconciliation. The judge said that reconciliation is the best way for the happiness of the society. He clarified that the aim of Lok Adalat is to see a smile on the faces of the quarreling parties. He said that a society without conflicts will develop. By putting aside family disputes and resolving their cases amicably through mediation in the National Lok Adalat, both parties will save money and time and live a free life, the judge said at a legal awareness program organized at the Bhadradi Kothagudem District Court premises on Saturday. He said that husband and wife should resolve minor problems at home and not come to the court steps. District Legal Services Authority Secretary M. said that the National Lok Adalat is a good platform for resolving court cases amicably. Rajender said. The litigants were provided with snacks and clean water in the afternoon. Principal Senior Civil Judge K. Kiran Kumar, First Additional Junior Civil Judge K. Sai Sri, Second Additional Junior Civil Judge Ravi Kumar, Second Class Magistrate Mendu Rajamallu, Kothagudem Bar Association President Lakkineni Satyanarayana, Cheap Legal Aid Defense Council

V. Purushottam Rao, Deputy Council P. Niranjan Rao, lawyers participated in this program. Members A. Parvathi, P. Vital, G. Ramachandra Reddy, N. Pratibha, Y. Yugandhar Naidu acted as members.

Shambhavi Choudhary condemns Lalu Yadav over Ambedkar portrait at his feet

GNS News Agency, June 14

Patna: A video from Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad Yadav's birthday celebration is making waves on social media, showing a portrait of B R Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, placed near Lalu Yadav's feet. The imagery has sparked outrage, with Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) MP Shambhavi Choudhary strongly condemning the act on Saturday. Speaking to IANS, Shambhavi Choudhary accused the RJD of repeatedly insulting Dalits and undermining their rights. We warned from the beginning," RJD only tries to mislead the Dalit community by pretending to stand with them. Yet, whenever the opportunity arises, they insult Dalits and their dignity," she

Temba Bavuma leads South Africa to historic World Test Championship triumph

GNS News Agency, June 14

Hyderabad: South Africa's 58-year-old head coach Shukri Conrad played just nine first-class games in 1987–90. The 35-year-old captain Temba Bavuma has never been on the radar when critics reeled out some of the big names of contemporary cricket despite playing 63 Tests.Yes, opener Aiden Markram scored arguably his greatest Test hundred (137) at Lord's to guide South Africa to a historic win against Australia in the 2025 World Test Championship final at Lord's on Saturday, defying odds and rewriting history.

But none can take the credit away from Bavuma, who achieved what was a dream for many of his illustrious predecessors. He led from the front with scores of 36 and 66 and, no doubt, inspired his teammates to come up with a complete team effort under enormous pressure.Now, South Africans can happily leave behind that tag of 'chokers' which for long haunted them—the most recent being the 2024 T20 World Cup final loss against India in Barbados last year when they needed 30 runs from 30 balls with the well-set David Miller at the crease.

Yes, before the WTC final began at the 'Mecca of Cricket', not many would have fancied South Africa's chances of stunning defending champions and the Pat Cummins-led Australia. It is not that they didn't have the talent to take on the best, but given the painful history of faltering at the final hurdle.So, in this backdrop, the way Bavuma led from the front was just amazing. His steely determination and the willingness to take the fight into the rival camp with astute captaincy, under pressure, and in handling the formidable pace attack of Kagiso Rabada, Lungi Ngidi, and Marco Jansen was a sight to behold for the South Africa fans, for sure.For most of his match-winning knock



(66) in the second essay of the WTC final, Bavuma was on one leg—literally. He suffered cramps when on 6, but with his batting partner Aiden Markram insisting the captain should continue to bat and not retire hurt, it was a message the South Africans conveyed to the Aussies loud and clear: they meant business this time around, and there was no messing around!

The result is there for all to see—Markram and Bavuma put on a third-wicket century stand that snatched the game away from the Australians. No doubt, luck favours the brave, and Bavuma was a beneficiary of one of those rare fielding lapses (when on 2) when the great Australian Steve Smith dropped a sitter at slip off Mitchell Starc.The way Markram insisted that Bavuma should bat on despite the hamstring was also a reflection of the kind of respect the captain has commanded from the entire team, which seemed to have rallied like never before.South Africa batting coach Ashwell Prince said that Bavuma had to fight throughout his career, and this WTC final could be a defining moment for his career.

BRS MLA Harish Rao warns of 400 TMC Godavari water loss to Andhra Pradesh

Hyderabad: Accusing the Congress government in Telangana and BJP leaders from the State of compromising Telangana's interests by maintaining a "stoic silence" on Andhra Pradesh's Rs 80,000-crore Godavari-Banakachherla link project, BRS leader and former Irrigation Minister T Harish Rao on Saturday warned that the project could result in large-scale water diversion — similar to what occurred via the Pothireddypadu head regulator in the Krishna basin — posing serious risks to Telangana's irrigation and water security.

Addressing a press conference with a detailed PowerPoint presentation, Rao said the project lacks statutory approvals from the Godavari River Management Board (GRMB), the Central Water Commission (CWC), and the Apex Council. He claimed that Andhra Pradesh's plan involves diverting 200 TMC of Godavari water in the first phase, with a proposed expansion to 400 TMC. The project includes a massive offline reservoir at Bollapalli with a gross storage capacity of 150 TMC — three times the size of Telangana's Mallanna Sagar, the largest reservoir under the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KLIP).

"Andhra Pradesh claims it will only use surplus flood flows, but this is a pretext," Rao alleged, accusing AP Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu of expediting the project to establish water usage claims before the proposed Godavari Water Disputes Tribunal becomes operational. He added that AP's feasibility report includes infrastructure such as tunnels and canals designed to handle 400 TMC, aimed at diverting water to the Krishna basin command areas in Rayalaseema and South Coastal Andhra.Rao criticised the Telangana Congress government, particularly Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy, for their inaction. "While Krishna waters were plundered, now Godavari waters are being looted through Banakachherla. Revanth Reddy and Uttam Kumar Reddy are silent, busy filing false cases against BRS leaders like KT Rama Rao instead of focusing on irrigation," he alleged. He questioned the State government's inaction even as



Andhra Pradesh proceeds with tenders and plans to commence construction in July.

"Revanth Reddy may have chosen to remain silent on the AP project out of gratitude for the mentorship he received from Chandrababu Naidu. But this 'guru dakshina' should not come at the cost of Telangana's rightful share of Godavari waters," Rao remarked.He also targeted Telangana BJP leaders, including Union Minister G Kishan Reddy and Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay, for failing to defend the State's interests. "Bandi Sanjay himself admitted in Andhra Pradesh that the Centre gave 10 times more funds to AP than to Telangana. Why are our two union Ministers, eight BJP MPs, and eight Congress MPs silent?" he asked, accusing the Congress of compromising the State's rights for political gains and 'friendly ties' with Andhra Pradesh.Rao demanded immediate action to halt what he termed an "illegal" project. He urged the State government to convene a special session of the Assembly to pass a resolution opposing the project, lead an all-party delegation to Delhi, and approach the Supreme Court if necessary. "If the Congress government fails to act, the BRS will launch a people's movement and a legal battle to safeguard Telangana's rights," he warned.

Manipur Police seize drugs worth Rs 22 cr ; one held

GNS News Agency, June 14

Imphal: Manipur Police have seized a huge quantity of highly-addictive methamphetamine tablets valued at over Rs 22 crore and arrested a truck driver, officials said here on Saturday.A senior official said that the Manipur Police intercepted a truck at the New Keithelmanbi Police picket in Imphal West District on Friday night and found huge amounts of drugs concealed inside the roof of the vehicle.The contraband items were found to be methamphetamine tablets, also known as Yaba or party tablets, upon sample testing. Accordingly, the driver of the truck, identified as Nawaj Sharif (34), a resident of Thoubal District, was arrested, and 57.285 kg of methamphetamine tablets worth Rs 22 crore were seized, the official said.Another police officer said that last week a joint team of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Customs, Assam Rifles, and the Manipur Police seized 7,755.75 grams of heroin valued at Rs 54.29 cr and 6,736 gram of opium valued at Rs 87.57 lakh in the international grey drug market, along with Rs 35.63 lakh cash.

Two walkie-talkies and one vehicle have also been seized, and five people were arrested under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act), the official said.

He said that the drugs, which were recovered from a house at Thadou Veng in Churachandpur district, were contained in many soap cases and small tin cans. Preliminary investigation indicates that the seized contraband drugs were



smuggled into the bordering areas of Churachandpur from Myanmar through the porous forested India-Myanmar border.In spite of the challenges and difficulties, a well-coordinated action by the law enforcement agencies led to the successful operation, an official statement had said. The NDPS Act prescribes stringent punishment to offenders, which may entail Rigorous Imprisonment up to ten years.Earlier on several occasions, large quantities of drugs were seized from Churachandpur, which shares an unfenced border with Myanmar and Mizoram. Myanmar, which shares a 1,643 km unfenced border with four northeastern states — Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, and Mizoram — serves as a key transit point for drugs, particularly heroin and methamphetamine tablets, entering India.

you tolerate such disregard for Ambedkar's image? This is a moment for introspection for all, she told IANS. She concluded with a sharp critique of political posturing: Politics on the backs of Dalits, claiming to fight for their rights, rings hollow when you cannot even honour Ambedkar's image in your own home. If this doesn't hurt Dalit sentiments, then what does?The BJP has also strongly reacted to the video, calling it a grave insult to Ambedkar and demanding a public apology from Lalu Yadav. This is not just carelessness," it reflects Lalu Yadav's anti-Dalit mindset, said Danish Iqbal, the BJP's Bihar media in-charge. Placing Baba Saheb's photo at his feet on his birthday is an unpardonable insult. BJP IT cell chief Amit Malviya also criticised Lalu Yadav in a social media post, stating,

‘I killed my wife, and this is her head’: Bengaluru man surrenders at police station after chilling murder



GNS News Agency, June 14

Police officers at the Suryanagar station in Bengaluru were left stunned in the early hours of Saturday when a man arrived carrying his wife’s severed head on a scooter and calmly surrendered. The incident unfolded around 1 am when M Shankar, 26, pulled up on a gearless scooter outside the police station. Three constables and an assistant sub-inspector, who were preparing for night patrol, noticed the severed head of a woman placed on the vehicle’s footboard. “We asked who he was and why he had come. Calmly, he said in Kannada, ‘I’ve come to surrender. I killed

my wife, and this is her head,” recalled one of the officers present at the police station. The couple lived in Heelalige and worked in an industrial area—Shankar as an assistant manager at a battery manufacturing unit in Bommanahalli, and Manasa at a nearby factory. According to police sources, the marriage had been troubled due to Shankar’s suspicions about his wife’s alleged relationship with a co-worker. The situation escalated on May 3 when Shankar claimed he caught Manasa with her alleged lover at their home after returning early from work.

Following this incident, Manasa left home and moved into a paying guest accommodation near her workplace, leaving their three-year-old daughter with her parents in Hebbagodi. Shankar subsequently filed a missing person complaint at the same police station, where he would later surrender. Police officers contacted Manasa and facilitated a brief mediation session, after which she returned home with Shankar in what appeared to be an attempt at reconciliation. However, tensions boiled over again on Friday evening. Neighbours reported hearing a heated argument between the couple, followed by sounds of violence. During the altercation, Shankar allegedly retrieved a knife from the kitchen and beheaded his wife. Police sources said Shankar sat beside the body for some time before deciding to surrender. He then placed the severed head on his scooter and rode to the police station.

‘Each tree is worth over one crore’: Raghunath Maruti Dhole on his remarkable conservation model

GNS News Agency, June 14

“When I was a child, I saw my mother cooking with firewood. I realised she was cutting trees to feed me. Our 400 generations did this for survival, and now it is my duty to replant,” says Raghunath Maruti Dhole, 69, reflecting on his forest conservation journey. Today he is responsible for a veritable revolution in the preservation of native plants in Pune. Through the Devrai Foundation, Dhole has been working to revive barren land using the model of the Devrai, sacred groves traditionally protected by local communities for spiritual reasons. Though the Naigaon-based Foundation was registered in 2013, Dhole’s personal efforts date back to the 1980s.



Dhole and his team including close friends—Dhananjay Shedbale, Suresh Namaji Shinde, and Uday Bhanudas Gujar—his wife and children developed a plantation model featuring between 119 and 190 native species of trees and plants. These species are drawn from sacred groves where no planting or cutting has taken place for centuries, reflecting the region’s original biodiversity. “We studied sacred groves from different regions and created a plantation plan for one acre of land, selecting 119 appropriate native species from a pool of 500,” Dhole explained. Speaking about the importance of preserving native plants and the ecological consequences of losing these native plants, he says, “If a species of tree vanishes, one butterfly species also vanishes because each tree depends on pollination.”

He continues, “Some 40 years ago, I planted two eucalyptus trees and later found out they were exotic. At the time, I didn’t know which species were native and which were not,” Dhole said. Highlighting these common planting mistakes, Dhole says, “Palash is a native tree that attracts many birds, butterflies, and honey bees but instead, we are planting Gulmohar, which is not native to India and provides no food or support to local wildlife.” He adds that many non-native species introduced during British colonial times are vulnerable to heavy rain and winds, undermining the ecosystem’s stability.

The foundation offers saplings and guidance free of cost but only to those who have one acre of land, water and protection ready. “Planting is just 1 per cent of the job, growing the tree is 99 per cent. If we charge for saplings, we turn nature into a business. That must be avoided,” Dhole emphasises. He continues, “So far, we have contributed to 414 sacred groves on barren lands in places like Solapur, Sangli, Amravati, Kolhapur and beyond Maharashtra in Bhopal, Gujarat, Calcutta, and Goa. We have also created

more than 80 ghanwans (dense forest), over 200 tree libraries, and set up 18 types of nurseries.” Dhole recounted once sending 43 saplings to Noida by plane, emphasising that roots can be safely wrapped and replanted when they reach their destination. The foundation has donated 3.4 million saplings, with a 70 per cent survival rate, over two million trees still thriving. “If you multiply that by what a single tree gives back in terms of oxygen, pollution control, soil regeneration, each tree is worth over one crore. This is real wealth,” he adds. In educational outreach, the foundation has also created over 200 tree libraries for schools. These mini-forests feature potted plants with informative cards giving details such as botanical names, flowering periods, and medicinal uses, encouraging students to connect with nature. While acknowledging the inevitability of urbanisation, he believes a balance is possible, he says, “If a tree must be cut for a road or building we can’t avoid it but plant a hundred elsewhere. Go to your native village and invest in trees there.” He urges a return to responsibility towards the land that sustains us. “Everyone has come from somewhere where the land has given us water, food, and childhood. It is time to repay it.”

Operating without external funding, the foundation remains community-driven. “Everyone has to repay the earth in some way. That is why we created Devrai Foundation, to ensure this work continues after I am gone,” Dhole says. Dhole’s commitment is global in outlook. “If a person wants to plant in Goa or China, let them. Trees do not recognise borders. They are a global asset.” “What I’ve learned in 40 years is that people love plants but they just need direction, the right saplings and a reason to start,” he says. He continues, “This is not charity. We cannot eat money or gold but we can eat fruit, breathe clean air, and drink water. All of this comes from trees. Nature is not asking for charity. It is asking us to remember who we are.”

Karnataka medical student orchestrates bomb hoax to avoid seminar presentation, triggers panic and evacuation



GNS News Agency, June 14 A postgraduate medical student has been arrested in Karnataka’s Dakshina Kannada district for orchestrating a fake bomb threat to avoid giving a scheduled seminar presentation, police said on Saturday. Chalasani Monika Choudhary, who studies at a private medical college in Deralakatte, was arrested by the Ullal police after investigations revealed she orchestrated the hoax on May 4. According to police sources, Choudhary was scheduled to present a seminar that morning as part of her academic requirements. To avoid the presentation, she devised an elaborate plan to shut down the college through a fake bomb threat. A police officer said that Choudhary contacted a friend working at an IT company in Hyderabad, asking him to call the medical college hospital’s landline number with a threatening message. The unsuspecting friend, unaware of the implications, made the call as requested, according to the police.

When the threatening call was received at the hospital, Choudhary declared it a bomb threat, triggering immediate evacuation procedures and panic among students and staff. A bomb disposal squad was called in to conduct a thorough search of the premises. In a calculated move, Choudhary then approached college authorities, claiming she had received multiple threatening calls on her mobile phone. Acting on the administration’s advice, she filed a complaint at the Ullal police station, positioning herself as the victim of the very threat she had orchestrated. The police formed a special investigation team to probe the matter, initially treating Choudhary as the complainant requiring protection. However, investigators soon noticed inconsistencies in Choudhary’s statements. The timing of the threat coinciding with her scheduled seminar also raised suspicions. A breakthrough came when the police traced the threatening call to Hyderabad and discovered

Choudhary’s connection to the caller. When interrogated, her friend revealed he had made the call at her request, claiming he was unaware of the motive behind it.

The accused has been arrested for providing false information and creating panic,” said a police officer involved in the investigation. “The entire incident was orchestrated to avoid an academic presentation she was supposed to present.”

Lured with hospital jobs, 3 Bangladeshi women trafficked to Mumbai and forced into sex trade

GNS News Agency, June 14

Mumbai The police are investigating whether the group trafficked women and forced them into the flesh trade in the past. The Malvani police arrested a 53-year-old man Saturday and are currently searching for his three accomplices for allegedly trafficking three women from Bangladesh to Mumbai, misleading them with false promises of employment at a hospital, only to force them into the sex trade. The police rescued the three Bangladeshi women and sent them to a shelter home.

According to the police, acting on specific information, the Malvani police raided a house Saturday night and rescued the three women. During the initial investigation, when the women’s statements were recorded, it was revealed that they are Bangladeshi nationals from poor families. The women were desperately seeking work to support their families, the police said.

The victims told the police that the accused falsely promised them jobs in hospitals in Mumbai. Last month, they were allegedly brought to Mumbai by illegally crossing the international border between India and Bangladesh. The accused allegedly bribed some government officials at the border to facilitate their illegal entry into India. The police registered a suo motu FIR and arrested Mansar Ahmed Sheikh, a Malvani resident, and are looking for Mehandi Hassan, Sanjeev alias Bachchan, and Akash alias Shaheen. The group members also allegedly helped one of the three women in making an Aadhaar card in her name to conceal her Bangladeshi nationality, an officer said.

Pope appoints Fr Jose Sebastian as new Bishop of Jalandhar



GNS News Agency, June 14

Pope Leo XIV Saturday appointed Fr Jose Sebastian Thekkumcherikunnel as the new Bishop of the Diocese of Jalandhar, in Punjab, a post that had remained virtually vacant for nearly seven years. Fr Jose (63) is currently serving as the financial administrator of the Diocese. “His Holiness Pope Leo XIV has appointed Rev. Jose Sebastian Thekkumcherikunnel, a priest of the Diocese of Jullundur and currently serving as its Financial Administrator, as the new Bishop of Jullundur. The appointment was made public in Rome at noon (15:30 IST) on Saturday,” said Bishop Agnelo Rufino Gracias in a statement. Bishop Gracias, Emeritus Auxiliary Bishop of Bombay, has been serving as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Jalandhar since 2018, when the last Bishop, Franco Mulakkal, was arrested after he was accused of rape by a nun. The Vatican had temporarily relieved him of his responsibilities as the Bishop. Though he was acquitted by a court in Kerala in 2022, the Vatican had asked for his resignation, and was accepted as “pro bono Ecclesiae” (for the good of the Church), in

June 2023.

In a message, Bishop Gracias said, “I was very keen that the one chosen to be the Bishop should be from among the ranks of the Jalandhar priests. I realize how much the Diocese suffered, because I came from outside with no knowledge of Punjabi and little acquaintance with the ethos of the Diocese. Fortunately, the Holy See has appointed a priest from the Diocese who knows it very well.” A meeting of the Diocesan Consultors is scheduled for June 9, during which the date and logistics of the Episcopal Ordination will be finalized and announced, read the statement. “The Diocese looks forward with renewed hope and unity, trusting in the leadership of Bishop-elect Thekkumcherikunnel to guide God’s people with wisdom, compassion, and faith,” it added. Tarsem Peter, who is closely associated with the Diocese, said the local appointment will boost the confidence of the local Catholics.

As per the details shared by the Diocese, Fr Jose was born in 1962 in Kalaketty, Kerala and was ordained a priest on May 1, 1991 for the Diocese of Jalandhar. He began his ministry as Assistant Parish Priest at St Mary’s Church in Fatehgarh Churiana and served as Parish Priest at St Joseph’s Church in Khasa and Sacred Heart Church in Amritsar, before being appointed as principal of St Francis School. From 1996 to 2002, he served as Dean and Parish Priest of St Francis Church in Amritsar and later at Jandiala Guru. From 2002 to 2004, he obtained a Licentiate in Canon Law from the Pontifical Urban University in Rome. On his return to Jalandhar, he served as Vice Chancellor, Defender of the Bond, and Director of Village Catechesis. From 2007 to 2020, he was Chancellor and Judicial Vicar of the Diocese. He also taught at the Holy Trinity Regional Major Seminary in Jalandhar and served as Head of the Theology Department. For next two years, he served as Rector and Parish Priest of St Mary’s Cathedral in Jalandhar Cantonment. Since 2022, he has been the Financial Administrator of the Diocese and was currently serving as the Parish Priest of St Joseph’s Church in Phagwara and Director of St Joseph’s Convent School.

40 kiosks in 1.25 acres: The rise of Panchkula’s night food street



GNS News Agency, June 14

As the sun sets over the bustling city of Panchkula, the aroma of sizzling noodles, melting cheese, and buttery parathas starts drawing in a vibrant crowd of night owls, disco-goers, and youngsters to Sector 5. Spread across 1.25 acres, this Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran (HSVP) initiative began taking shape after bids closed on January 19, 2022. Forty vibrant kiosks, mostly 3.05 by 6.05 meters, to give street vendors a permanent space while easing encroachments in residential areas. The first to open shop was Eat n Sip, launched in May 2024 with just Rs 700 and offering only Chinese food. “We faced losses for nine months,” says Rimpi, the kiosk owner. They gradually added continental dishes and eventually transformed into a 24/7 joint, now famous for its comforting desi ghee parathas served at odd hours, something no one else offers in the area.

Panchkula’s Sector 5 — what once saw drunk altercations and safety concerns — has now also improved thanks to increased police patrolling. “Earlier, we were worried about the night crowd, but now it’s much better. Cleanliness and safety are top priorities,” Rimpi adds. Eat N Sip has become a nighttime hotspot, drawing hungry youngsters and night-shift workers, especially after midnight. Another crowd-puller is MPG Foods, a pure vegetarian outlet that operates almost round the clock. Known for its consistent rush even post-midnight, the kiosk adds a touch of international flair with its Turkish ice cream, delighting both adults and children alike. Further down the row, Don Clooney, a recent addition with existing outlets in Chandigarh, has created a niche for itself with a menu full of Western delicacies and a standout dessert: Kunafa, which is a rare sight in the tricity area. “We opened just three months ago, but our customer base is growing every day,” says Sahil Pathania, who manages the branch and adds — “Most of our crowd comes between 9 pm and 1 am.” Then there’s Coyote Crunch, a cheerful dessert café known for its signature Coyoteez which is a layered dessert cup with gooey brownies, soft-serve ice cream, and sprinkles, particularly loved by kids. Their weekends are buzzing, keep-

ing the café pleasantly busy. The Night Food Street is more than a typical food zone. Once complete, it promises to be a cultural and culinary hub, featuring a DJ console, a dance floor, and a performance stage for live events, all designed to create a festive, open-air night market vibe.

While currently only 7-8 of the 40 kiosks are operational, the vendors expect the entire street to be fully functional in the next 1.5 years. However, the journey so far has not been easy for everyone. In the middle of the excitement, vendors like Ramavtar carry a quieter, heavier burden. Having operated his chole bhature cart near the same spot for nearly 30 years, he was pressured by HSVP officials to shift into the Night Food Street. It was an offer that came at a steep cost. Unable to afford a stall outright, he sold two of his houses just to rent a kiosk for Rs 1 lakh per month. “I used to feed poor people for free all the time,” he said. “Now I have to think twice. That kind of giving isn’t possible anymore.” With no staff to assist and growing pressure to cover costs, Ramavtar opens shop at 8:30 AM and shuts by 6 PM. The dream of a 24/7 food street remains inaccessible to him. “I need to sleep at night to work the next day. These days, even my sleep isn’t peaceful as I’m constantly thinking about the rent.”

Another vendor, raised concerns over the slow pace of construction. “There’s construction waste everywhere. No music, no events, no lights- how is this a food street yet?” he asked. By being still under construction, it affects footfall and the overall experience for his customers. Despite its modest start, Sector 5’s Night Food Street has managed to stir up enthusiasm among Panchkula’s residents. The mix of late-night bites, youth culture, and a sense of safety has already set a precedent. Visitors are already noticing the change. “It’s nice to see Panchkula trying something different. It feels like we’re finally catching up to the night culture cities like Delhi or Bangalore have,” said a customer. Another customer added, “The concept is great-food, music, lights...it really brings people together. Once it’s fully ready, I can see this becoming a major hangout spot.” As the vibrant lights shine and laughter echoes across the half-built street, one thing is clear: even in its unfinished state, Panchkula’s Night Food Street is already a spark in the city’s evening skyline. Similar night food markets coming up in other cities. Another such night food market is under construction in Ambala. Haryana’s energy, transport and labour minister Anil Vij who represents Ambala cantonment constituency in the Vidhan Sabha has also inspected the night food street market. “Aa many as 60 food outlet spaces are under construction in this night food street market next to Gandhi ground market in Ambala. Of these 40 will be vegetarian food spaces, while 20 shall be non-vegetarian. The market shall be operational in two months. A total cost of Rs. 5 crore is being incurred on the construction of this market”.

PGI’s multi-level parking in Chandigarh 80% ready, to start operation in July

GNS News Agency, June 14

PGIMER, Chandigarh, is all set to get a new multi-level parking facility next month, built at a cost of about Rs 50 crore. This much-awaited parking, located near the New OPD, aims to ease the growing traffic and parking problems on the campus. The PGI Standing Finance Committee had approved the project in 2015 for a second multi-level parking facility near the New OPD. However, due to multiple delays over the past 10 years, the project couldn’t move forward.



According to Pankaj Rai, Deputy Director, Administration, PGI, around 80% of the construction work on the multi-level parking will be completed by July, and the facility will become operational, and the remaining work is expected to be completed by November. Considering the increase in patient load and the number of vehicles, the project will provide significant relief to patients and visitors visiting PGI, saving them time. The multi-level parking will eventually have space for over 900 cars, but initially, about 550 cars can be parked by July. The new parking structure is being built over approximately 26,000 square metres of land and will have six floors and one basement. Due to delays over the years, the demand for parking has continued to increase. PGI’s New OPD registers more than 10,000 patients daily, many of whom are accompanied by one or two attendants. As a result, around 20,000 vehicles now enter the PGI campus each day. Due to the shortage of parking space, people often park at the Sector 11 market, outside

PGI gates, open grounds near the Advanced Cardiac Centre etc. Earlier, PGI was planning on increasing the frequency of its free shuttle service and e-rickshaws to reduce congestion in the institute’s parking lots, but as per a security guard, people don’t use these services. The existing and designated parking facilities and spaces at PGI are not enough, as the institute struggles with a massive crowd and traffic. PGI currently has a total of 5,505 car parking spaces, including both permanent and temporary. There are 3,753 permanent parking slots, 72 temporary slots in front of the NINE (Nursing College), 180 temporary slots behind the dental block, and 1,500 temporary slots near the swimming pool, with 3,446 parking slots for scooters and bikes. On paper, parking appears to be enough — but the ground reality is different. Every day, heavy traffic, patient vehicles, and staff cars overwhelm the system.

Rs 30 crore trade benefit fraud: Man deported from US arrested in Delhi



GNS News Agency, June 14

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Delhi Police has arrested a man in connection with a major cheating and forgery case involving trade benefits under the Foreign Trade Policy, the police said Saturday. Angad Pal Singh, also known as Angad Singh Chandhok, along with his associates, is alleged to have caused a loss of Rs 30.47 crore to the government by submitting forged documents to fraudulently avail export incentives, the police said. The case was registered on January 11, 2017, under sections 420 (cheating), 467 (forgery of valuable securities, wills, and other documents), 468 (forgery for the purpose of cheating), 471 (using as genuine a forged document), and 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code based on a complaint filed by ICICI Bank. The complaint stated that 467 fake foreign inward remittance certificates (FIRC)s were submitted by 18 account holders, representing 17 firms, to the ICICI Bank branch in Naraina during the processing of their export documentation.

These forged FIRC)s, reportedly issued by Corporation Bank in Bhikaji Cama Place, covered a period from September 26, 2013, to October 21, 2015. Based on these documents, ICICI Bank issued bank realisation certificates (BRC)s, which were subsequently used to claim trade benefits from the Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT). During the investigation of the case, it was found that as per the Foreign Trade Policy, two kinds of benefits used to be given to the exporters: duty drawback and scrips. The goods to be exported outside India used to pass through

a Customs depot or port, and duty drawback was directly credited to the exporter's account by the Customs once a consignment was exported. Whereas the office of DGFT extended the scrip, and this could be used at the time of import of food for exemption from duties. Duty credit scrips (DCS) used to be the credits given to the exporters as incentives," said DCP (Economic Offences Wing) Vikram Porwal.

"These licences/scrips used to be issued when payment against the export was received in the account of the exporter. After receiving payment against the export, the trader/proprietor of the firm used to submit the export documents to the authorised dealer bank, and after processing the documents, the bank used to issue a bank realisation certificate to the exporter. The exporter would thereafter produce the same to the DGFT and apply for the benefits. After going through the documents, the DGFT used to issue licences/scrips. These incentives used to be given to the exporters in the form of import duty credit and not as direct cash benefits. These credits could be used for the payment of Basic Customs duties and cess, and these scrips are transferable," DCP Porwal said further.

According to the police, Angad Pal Singh, along with his father, Surinder Singh, and brother, Harsahib Singh, jointly owned five firms: Kumar Trading Company, National Trader, Trident Overseas India, HSC Exim India, and AHC Auto Spares. He allegedly managed the operations of these firms and conspired with others, including bank employees, to execute the fraud. Following the registration of the case, the accused fled the country but was later deported from the United States and subsequently arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation in a separate fraud case. On June 2, the EOW arrested him in the current matter and obtained his police custody. He is currently in judicial custody, the police said. Angad Pal Singh is also accused in another EOW case, registered in 2017. He studied up to Class 12 in Delhi and joined his father's auto spare parts export business. Over time, he extended operations by involving other firms from his family and acquaintances, promising high returns. The investigation has revealed that while forged FIRC)s were used to obtain government benefits, no actual foreign remittance was received in their accounts.

Punjab tech univ ex-V-C faces probe over wife's 'illegal' appointment; CM Mann marks for action

GNS News Agency, June 14

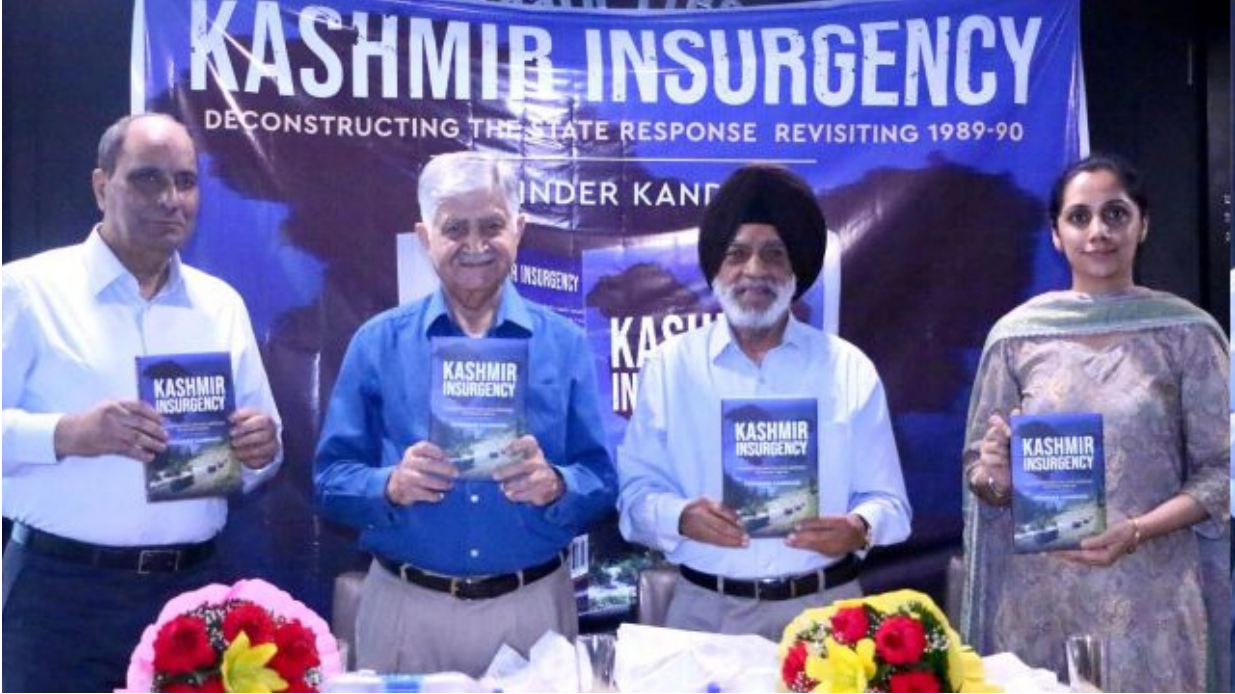
Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has marked for action a compliant against former Vice-Chancellor of Maharaja Ranjit Singh Punjab Technical University (MRSPТУ), Dr Sandeep Kansal, who is been accused of nepotism, misuse of authority, and favoritism — primarily concerning alleged irregularities involving the appointment and career advancement of his wife, Prof Mamta Kansal, it has been learnt. The former V-C has denied any wrongdoing. The complaint against Kansal has been marked for action by Chief Minister Mann and forwarded to the university registrar. According to the complaint, Prof Mamta was initially serving on contract at MIMIT Malout, but was allegedly transferred to Giani Zail Singh Campus, Bathinda (under MRSPТУ) on deputation, and soon regularised, allegedly through the direct influence of her husband. The complainants claim that the entire process was conducted in violation of university and state norms and termed it a "blatant case of backdoor entry."

The complainants have alleged that the appointment not only ignored due process but also resulted in financial loss to the government, as it circumvented recruitment transparency and merit-based evaluation. It further alleges that Prof. Mamta attempted the MRSPТУ's PhD entrance test twice but failed both times. These tests, according to the complaint, were conducted under duties allegedly assigned by her husband. After the failures, she reportedly obtained a PhD from a private university, which the complainants said, may have been done to bypass the university's academic standards. It was also alleged that Prof. Mamta's academic promotion is based on research papers co-authored by her husband, which violates University Grants Commission (UGC) norms on conflict of interest. According to UGC guidelines, a spouse's authorship cannot be counted toward academic promotions.



"All these allegations are motivated and wrong. My wife has been in profession for 20 years and she has got the job according to government regulations. Anonymous complaints were made against me when I had charge as VC of MRSPТУ," said Kansal while talking to The Indian Express. Meanwhile, there is another complaint in which Kansal has been accused of misusing university funds, harassing junior staff, and soliciting bribes for issuing official notifications. MRSPТУ Registrar Gurinder Pal Singh Brar said, "We have been conducting investigation into the both complaints and will soon send the report to CM's office." Kansal served as the third V-C of MRSPТУ from July 26, 2024, to March 25, 2025, aligning with the end of his tenure as Dean of Faculty. He currently teaches in the Department of Physics. His abrupt removal followed allegations of allowing political activity in the V-C's office. On March 22, 2025, Union Minister of State for Railways, Ravneet Singh Bittu, reportedly held a lengthy party meeting and public gathering in the V-C office, drawing criticism from the AAP-led state government. An inquiry was ordered through the Bathinda Deputy Commissioner, leading to Kansal's removal within two days.

In Chandigarh, former Army chief Gen VP Malik releases book on Kashmir insurgency of 1989-90



GNS News Agency, June 14

Former Army chief General V P Malik released the book at the event that was attended by several veterans and academics. The book, 'Unmasking the Kashmir Insurgency: Deconstructing the State Response -Revisiting 1989-90', consists of chapters of the Colonel's first-hand experiences and also of counter-insurgency operations in Kashmir obtained through RTI and exclusive interviews.

Through the book, the author provided a picture of the state's paralysis, institutional failures, intelligence lapses, and the moral vacuum that accompanied the mass displacement of Kashmiri Pandits. Speaking at the event, Col. Kandhari said, "I did not write the book as a scholar looking at the situation from the outside. I wrote it as someone who

lived through the events, who wore the uniform, and who still carries the memories and questions that never found answers." While former Army chief General VP Malik released the book, Colonel Daljeet Singh Cheema was the Guest of Honour at the event. In his keynote address, General Malik said that it is an interesting book that carries huge lessons for today and tomorrow in Jammu and Kashmir. Col Cheema said, "

The root cause of the insurgency is that Pakistan has never accepted the Partition as fair to them and it resulted in the first war of 1948 between the neighbours. After 1971, Pakistan realised it can never win a conventional war against India, so it evolved the 'Pakistan Military Doctrine of Bleed India' with thousand cuts."

Decade and a failed biz later, Punjab's Hoshiarpur farmer finds success — and money — in seedless cucumbers



GNS News Agency, June 14

Beneath sheets of polyfilm, nets, and walk-in tunnels spread across 3 acres in Bersha village of Punjab's Hoshiarpur district, a quiet revolution is taking shape quite literally. However, if the acres could talk, they would have shared a different story a decade ago. After completing his B.Com, Arvinder Singh Kang, 52, started a modest transport business in Delhi in 2011. However, his journey met with roadblocks when the then Delhi government made a series of policy changes and he suffered huge losses. On the insistence of his mother, who wanted her two sons to work on their fields and be more connected to the roots, Arvinder returned to his village in 2013. With no prior knowledge of farming, Arvinder, then 40, started experimenting. What started as a half-acre experiment in 2013, has now grown into a thriving three-acre operation in 12 years. He now cultivates high-yield seedless cucumbers under protected structures, including polyhouse, net house, and walk-in tunnels. His method has turned the crop into a year-round source of income, earning him a net profit of around Rs 12 lakh per acre — over 10 times what a farmer earns from growing wheat and paddy combined.

While he grows the seedless cucumbers on 3 acres, on the rest, he grows wheat, paddy, and sugarcane. Arvinder spent much of his early life moving across the country with his family, as his father worked as a Radar and Communication Engineer with the Airports Authority of India. "When my transport business in Delhi didn't do well, I decided to return to the village where my parents had settled after my father's retirement in 1997," he says, adding that his mother wanted him and his brother to start working on their land. This land, part of two murabbas gifted to his great-grandfather Sunder Singh Kang, by Queen Victoria for his service in World War I, became the foundation for Arvinder's second innings — as a farmer. "After returning, I gave a lot of thought to what I should grow, since I had no knowledge of farming," says Arvinder, adding, "I spent five to six months researching and meeting experienced farmers such as Harbinder Singh Sandhu, who has long practiced polyhouse farming in Hoshiarpur. Eventually, I began cultivating capsicum under protected structures on half an acre. I did this

Delhi govt plans redevelopment of Bhorgarh, other areas; 'aim to make industrial areas truly world-class', says Sirsa

GNS News Agency, June 14

The Delhi government will soon begin redevelopment of the Bhorgarh Industrial Area (Bawana Phase II) using the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, a release by the Office of the Industries Minister stated on Saturday. Delhi Industries Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa said the project aims to improve infrastructure and meet the demands of industrialists that have been pending for nearly a decade. "This move will transform Bhorgarh into a model industrial zone—clean, safe, efficient, and pollution-free. Long-standing demands of industrialists, pending for the last 10 years, shall be soon fulfilled by the present government."

According to the minister's office, a private concessionaire will be responsible for maintaining roads, building stormwater drains, installing smart lighting and CCTV cameras, managing waste, improving green spaces, and reducing air pollution in the area. "This is more than redevelopment — it is an environmental and economic intervention. We are building infrastructure that supports business and safeguards the environment. This is how we are working towards the Prime Minister's dream of a Viksit Delhi," Sirsa added. Along with Bhorgarh, ten more industrial areas will be redeveloped. As per the minister's office, Project Management Units (PMUs) are being set up for Okhla, Patparganj, Badli, Nangloi, Wazirpur, Jhilmil, and other areas. Tenders have already been issued and pre-bid meetings held.

The government has also set a target to plant 85,000 green units in 2025–26, including 25,000 trees, 50,000 shrubs, and 10,000 bamboo plants, as per the statement. The

from 2013 to 2016." He later turned to seedless cucumber farming using polyhouses, net houses, and walk-in tunnels.

"Capsicum is almost a year-round crop. Cultivation begins in July, with the first harvest in November, continuing until June. It does give a good return, but with cucumbers, I can take three high-yield growing cycles in a year. The first runs from mid-February to mid-May, the second from late May to the end of August, and the third from September to the end of December. I leave my polyhouses idle from January to mid-February during the extreme winter," he says, adding each cucumber cycle involves planting about 9,000 plants per acre. Harvesting takes place every other day, with yields of around 80 bags per harvest, each weighing 20 kg. Before shifting to cucumbers, Kang received training at the Indo-Israel Centre of Excellence for Vegetables in Kartarpur (Jalandhar). He gets his seedlings prepared from the same Centre of Excellence, where they are raised under controlled temperature conditions—crucial during extreme summer and winter months. "Self-preparing nurseries in such temperatures isn't feasible; in extreme weather conditions seedlings can only be grown properly in climate-controlled environments. Once the seedlings are about a month old, I transplant them into my polyhouse, net house, and tunnels," he adds. "The sell the crop both directly from the farm and through local mandis, fetching an average of Rs 18–20 per kg throughout the year. The produce sells immediately after harvest."

He follows a strict cropping cycle: "I don't keep the first and second crop cycles beyond 2.5 to 3 months. After 10–15 rounds of picking, the yield drops, so I uproot the crop and immediately plant new seedlings. These are ready for harvest just 30 to 32 days after transplanting. The third cycle is the last one in a year, and I keep it for 4 to 4.5 months, as my structures remain unused from January to mid-February due to cold. I use water-soluble fertilisers in very limited amounts, administered through drip irrigation."

He adds, "The crop requires year-round attention and that's why the returns are so high. This isn't like wheat or paddy, where you sow the crop and return only at harvest time." While Kang acknowledges that the initial investment in protected cultivation is significant, he emphasizes that it pays off quickly. "The cost of setting up one acre of polyhouse is around Rs 42–45 lakh, which includes strong galvanized pillars, polyfilm, and a drip irrigation system. A net house costs around Rs 24 lakh per acre, while walk-in tunnels cost approximately Rs 2.5 lakh per acre," he says, adding that the best part is that the government provides a 50% subsidy on these structures and they last. "I don't earn even as much from the remaining seven acres—where I grow wheat, paddy, and sugarcane—as I do from just one acre of cucumbers," he says, adding, "Expanding protected farming is a gradual process that demands a lot of hard work and patience."



project builds on PPP model used in Bawana and Narela Industrial Areas. According to the statement, "These projects set a benchmark in cleanliness, maintenance, and infrastructure development. The same model will now be replicated at all remaining industrial areas under the administration of the Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (DSIIDC), ushering in a new era of industrial planning and eco-conscious growth." As per the statement, similar redevelopment is planned across all DSIIDC-managed industrial areas within a year. "The role of the concessionaire will be all-encompassing," Sirsa said, adding, "From laying and maintaining pothole-free roads and stormwater drainage to installing smart lighting and CCTV-based 24x7 surveillance — every aspect of urban industrial infrastructure will be upgraded. The aim is to make industrial areas truly world-class."

What's behind traffic snarls at 5 key border points in Delhi?

GNS News Agency, June 14

Daily traffic chaos along Delhi-NCR borders is more than just routine rush hour chaos — it's also fueled by toll booths and plazas run by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). According to a recent government report, these toll points are the primary culprits behind the massive jams seen during morning and evening peak hours. Five key Delhi borders, as per the document, face daily traffic due to the MCD toll booths: Sarhau/Rajokri border on NH-48; Delhi-Meerut Expressway; Dwarka Expressway near Bijwasan; Badarpur border (MCD plaza on NH-19/44); Urban Extension Road II (UER II) at Jharoda Kalan (near Najafgarh-Bahadurgarh Road). The issue was raised at a recent meeting between the Centre and the Delhi government on a plan to decongest the city, which includes ongoing big infrastructure projects being executed by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to improve connectivity between Delhi and neighbouring cities. There are over 150 MCD toll booths, of which 13 are RFID (Radio-Frequency Identification) enabled. Over 1 lakh commercial vehicles enter Delhi daily, of which more than 50% are cabs. The civic body earns around Rs 800 crore a year from toll charges. At the meeting, officials said, the NHAI highlighted that significant traffic congestion at Delhi's borders is attributed to the MCD toll plaza operations. "Traffic jams are witnessed due to the heavy flow of commercial vehicles at the specified locations. It has also been observed that traffic speed decreases at these [five] locations, raising the risk of collisions with high-speed vehicles approaching from behind..." said officials. Officials also highlighted that the MCD has deployed a fee-collecting agency at these locations, causing hindrance

to the free flow of traffic during peak hours. The MCD, in its response to the issues highlighted by the NHAI, said, "Traffic snarls are taking place due to narrowing/tunnelling of road just before the boundary of Airport and merging of UER-II traffic..." Officials said a possible solution to address this issue is implementing the gantry-based Multi-Lane-Free-Flow (MLFF) tolling system with FASTag integration. The MLFF system has no physical plaza. The tolling system will be mounted on gantries, which will capture vehicle information as they pass through. "The MLFF system enables seamless, real-time toll collection using passive RFID and ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) technologies. As vehicles approach the gantry, their FASTag and license plates are automatically scanned. This allows the system to electronically deduct the appropriate toll amount from the driver's prepaid account without the need to stop or slow down," said a senior official. Officials said that as the NHAI is the expert in the field of tolling, the MCD is planning to seek support from it. Officials from the corporation will visit and study NHAI's successful toll sites. "Apart from this, the MCD is also planning to protect its revenue by interlinking FASTag with bank accounts, permits, insurance, etc," said officials. In the meantime, the NHAI has asked the civic body to expedite the process of setting up the MLFF tolling systems at the five border areas. "The Indian Highways Management Company Limited (IHMCL) may be contacted for providing necessary support to MCD for fastag/tolling integration," read the document. The meeting also discussed other issues, including a request from the NHAI to the MCD to deposit toll tax collections that were due after March 22, 2020.

What is India’s latest approach to localising EV manufacturing?



More than a year since it was announced, the Ministry of Heavy Industries Monday notified guidelines of the Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Electric Passenger Cars in India. The scheme reduces existing duties on import of vehicles for overseas manufacturers from the present 70-100% to 15% subject to the maker meeting minimum requirements for investment and setting up facilities in the country. However, Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy indicating luxury EV maker Tesla's unwillingness to manufacture in India have prompted concerns about the promise of the scheme.

What does the policy propose?

At the centre of the notified policy is the provision to reduce customs duty on the import of ready-to-ship completely assembled electric four-wheelers to 15%. This would apply to all vehicles valued at \$35,000 - circumscribing cost, insurance and freight (CIF) - for a period of five years. However, this would be subject to the manufacturer investing a minimum of ₹4,150 crore over the next three years. They would also be expected to build infrastructure and facilities to enable 25% of the overall manufacturing activity be undertaken domestically (domestic value addition, or DVA) within three years, and 50% within five years. MHI specifies that a maximum of 8,000 vehicles can be imported at the reduced duty rate in a year with no carrying over of unutilised limits. The maximum duty permitted to be foregone under the scheme has been capped at ₹6,484 crore. Broadly, the objective of the overall scheme is to find a mid-way point where affordability for a captive market is attained, whilst also recognising that import substitution would require a layered approach and a protracted timeline. MHI calculated that an imported vehicle valued at \$35,000 (?29.75 lakh) would now be liable to pay basic customs duty of ₹4.6 lakh at the reduced 15% rate compared to ₹20.8 lakhs at the erstwhile 70% rate. Therefore, combining with IGST levied at 5% on the resulting value, the total foregone duty amount to ₹17.2 lakh with the final landing cost coming to about ₹36 lakh. Now, in line with an initial investment of ₹4,150 crore and a foregone duty of ₹17.2 lakh for each vehicle, the maker would be allowed to import 24,155 units in total.

But does this help our overall ecosystem?

Shouvik Chakraborty, Assistant Research Professor at the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (U.S.) argues that a domestic industrial policy aligned with a vision for future could be a step in the right direction. Although he holds the current policy would bode well for India only if there is sharing of technology with domestic automakers. Further, he observes, "Countries these days are extremely cautious about transferring technology outside (to maintain their competitive advantage). In that light, India must not become a do-

mestic hub for producing components of a vehicle." Dinesh Abrol, adjunct faculty at the Transdisciplinary Research Cluster on Sustainable Studies at JNU in Delhi, observes that no foreign firm has ever helped build some other country's ecosystem. He attributed China and South Korea's ability to build manufacturing setups to their focus on skilling, research and development alongside undertaking innovation projects. "This enabled conditions for a technology transfer and prompting companies to come and invest into the ecosystem," he states. Essential to note, China as the leading manufacturer of EVs accounted for 70% of the global manufacturing in 2024.

The other set of concerns relate to the potentially increased focus on four-wheeler EVs, and their probable impact on India's ambitions to achieve Net Zero by 2070. According to data compiled by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Association (FADA), EVs accounted for 7.8% of all vehicles sold in FY 2025. This was predominantly led by electric three-wheelers (at 57% in its category), followed by two-wheelers (6.1%), passenger vehicles (2.6%) and commercial vehicles (0.9%). Significantly, the International Energy Association (IEA) identified India as the world's largest market for electric three-wheelers in 2024. Sales grew about 20% YoY, it observed. Mr. Chakraborty emphasises that most Indians travel by public transport, and policies must also focus on building the same. "Means of last mile connectivity, as bikes and shuttles, is also very important. It is not of much help if one has to walk few kilometres to avail public transport. This is not how we can fight climate change" he states. The final set of concerns relate to input costs. S&P Global Mobility observed in an analysis published March this year that high initial costs, typically 20-30% higher than ICE counterparts, coupled with India's reliance on imported components and batteries "hinder" the growth of the EV sector. It held notwithstanding government efforts to promote localisation through varied policies, the rate was "not increasing as expected". Other than the impact on the ecosystem, concerns in the realm extend to costs and competitiveness. Reuters had reported in December 2023 about Tata Motors opposing Tesla's proposal to lower import duties. It had argued, according to the report, lowering duties would "vitiate" the investment climate which was premised around expectations of the tax regime favouring locals remaining unchanged. The automaker had further held that India's EV players required more government support in the early growth stage of the industry. According to IEA's EV Outlook, domestic OEMs accounted for more than 80% of the electric cars produced domestically in 2024. Additionally, it attributed a less than 15% share of Chinese imports in the country's EV sales in 2024 to high import duties on EVs and the availability of locally made, affordable electric models. Thus, the lowering of duties prompt concerns about the potential impact (though not potentially from China) on domestic industries. According to Mr. Abrol, the policy is premised around foreign-capital and is export-focussed. He suggested the policy should instead be oriented toward building local ecosystem and spurring research and development alongside innovation. Mr. Abrol holds the lack of availability of skilled persons is due to the missing contribution of the public sector. Mr. Chakraborty further states, by nature western technologies in general are more capital-intensive than those in labour-intensive economies. "Even if it is export-oriented, it will create jobs in an area," he states, adding, "However, the overall context needs to be considered in terms of how many jobs it is displacing, this is also considering that EVs have less conventional parts than a gasoline-powered vehicle."

Why should a vegetarian order from non-veg serving eatery if it hurts sentiments? Consumer panel says

A consumer redressal commission in Mumbai has said if meat-based food hurts a "strictly vegetarian" person's religious sentiments, why should the individual opt to order from a restaurant serving both veg and non-veg items. It seems reasonable that "a prudent person would be able to distinguish between veg and non-veg food before consuming," the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Mumbai Suburban (Additional) said in an order passed last month. The commission dismissed a complaint by two persons against an eatery for allegedly wrongly serving them non-vegetarian food. "If the complainants were strictly vegetarian and non-veg food hurts their religious sentiments, then why did they opt to order the food items from the restaurant which was delivering both non-veg and vegetarian food, instead of ordering the food from the restaurant which was exclusively vegetarian and served only and only vegetarian food," it said. As per the complainants, they had ordered a steamed 'Darjeeling momo combo' with a soft drink from a Momo outlet at Sion in Mumbai on December 19, 2020. They claimed to have specifically emphasised their vegetarian preference twice. However, they received steamed "chicken Darjeeling momos", the complainants said. They further alleged that the eatery staff ignored their instructions and that the display board at the outlet did not clearly indicate vegetarian or non-vegetarian options for the combo. The complainants claimed they suffered mental trauma, emotional distress and their religious feelings were hurt due to the negligence of the company.

They sought ₹6 lakh in compensation for the distress caused. The company, on the other hand, contended the complainants themselves ordered non-vegetarian items, as indicated by the invoice. It alleged that the complainants physically abused their employee and created a nuisance,



leading them to refund the order and provide the products free of cost. The company submitted that the complainants were not "consumers" under the Consumer Protection Act due to the refund. Despite the alleged behaviour, the company said it offered a gift voucher worth ₹1,200 as a goodwill gesture, but the complainants demanded ₹3 lakh each. The complaint was filed with mala fide intention to harass the company, it claimed. The commission noted that the invoice indicated the complainants ordered non-veg momos.

"A prudent person would be able to distinguish between veg and non-veg food before consuming it seems reasonable," the commission noted. The commission pointed out that while the offer board's photo did not clearly state if the steamed Darjeeling Momo combo was veg or non-veg, it did mention "veg/non-veg" at the bottom, implying the availability of both the options. Furthermore, the complainants failed to provide evidence or details regarding any religious ceremonies they claimed were affected, the commission said. The complainants have not been able to establish any deficiency in service on the part of the company, it added.

Keralite at the helm of the world’s biggest container ship

As the world's largest container vessel, MSC Irina, operated by the Swiss-based container shipping giant Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC), called at the Vizhinjam International Seaport, it was a proud moment for Keralite Willy Antony, its captain. The Thrissur native has been into seafaring since childhood. His father, the late Palakkaran Antony, was a marine surveyor based in Wellington Island, Kochi. From cadet to captain of the biggest vessel in the world, Mr. Antony has had a 29-year-long career, with 19 years exclusively in the MSC. Currently, he is helming the lead ship of the MSC Irina class, a series of six identical ultra-large container vessels (ULCVs). On the eve of berthing the vessel at Vizhinjam, he told The Hindu it that it was sheer passion and dedication that helped him rise through the ranks. He left home to become a seafarer after his higher secondary education and did a diploma in nautical science before becoming a cadet in 1996. Down the years, he has manoeuvred all types of vessels. He has been manning

the ULCVs right from the time they were introduced in the MSC fleet. Mr. Antony said the size and capacity of container ships would further increase as huge vessels can transport more cargo in a single voyage. Bigger vessels increase operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness too as carbon emissions of such vessels are relatively low when compared to the size of the cargo they transport. He said he had sailed through territories lorded over by pirates many times. "Luckily, I have not encountered any untoward incidents." Mr. Antony said that Vizhinjam port offered huge possibilities for an economic leap for the country. "As a seafarer, I would say the project should have materialised much earlier. Young people who wish to take up sailing should first learn thoroughly about life at sea and the hardships involved in the life of a sailor. They should work hard to achieve their goals and should be passionate about this job. Only then will life at sea be beautiful," he said. His wife Hilda and son Benhail, a Class IX student, were accompanying him on his voyage to Vizhinjam.

Exclusion of Arunachal weightlifter from Commonwealth trials slammed



GNS News Agency, June 14

The Arunachal Olympic Association (AOA) and other organisations in the State have slammed the exclusion of weightlifter Sambo Lapung, a consistent gold medal winner, from the trials for the Commonwealth Championships 2025. Lapung appealed to the Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWF) a few days ago, requesting a chance to participate in the trials scheduled for June 13-14, but his plea was rejected. In a letter to Indian Olympic Association president P.T. Usha on June 5, AOA secretary general Bamang Tago sought justice for Lapung, who was allegedly ignored to accommodate Harshit Sehrawat of Haryana.

A copy of the letter was sent to Mansukh Mandaviya, the Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Kiren Rijiju, the Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, the Secretary to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, and the Director General of the Sports Authority of India. Lapung hails from the East Kameng district, which falls under the Arunachal West parliamentary constituency represented by Mr Rijiju. "Lapung, a three-time national gold medalist and

record holder, has consistently dominated the 96 kg category, securing gold at the Senior National Weightlifting Championships held in Chandigarh (2022), Itanagar (2023), and Himachal Pradesh (2024). His outstanding performances include lifting 338 kg in the 2023 Nationals, outperforming his closest competitors, including Harshit Sehrawat, who secured silver with a total of 328 kg," Mr Tago wrote. "Despite this, the IWF released a selection list that excluded Lapung from the 94 kg category trials, while selecting Sehrawat, typically a 102 kg lifter, based on his silver medal performance at the Inter Railways Championship (335 kg). This selection, bypassing a reigning national champion who has repeatedly outperformed the selected athlete in direct competition, has raised serious concerns over transparency, meritocracy, and possible regional bias," he wrote. Later, Mr Tago told reporters that Sehrawat could have been favoured because his father is a coach or because of the State he hails from.

"This matter is not only about one individual. It reflects a growing pattern of underrepresentation and neglect of athletes from the northeastern region in national-level selections. Talents such as Sambo Lapung, Kojum Taba, Jimjang Deru, and Soram Hitler Tagru have brought pride to the country. Yet, their efforts are too often overlooked during crucial opportunities," he said. The East Kameng Social Welfare and Cultural Organisation also criticised the IWF for ignoring Lapung and sought the intervention of Mr Rijiju. The organisation said Lapung's exclusion not only undermines his achievements but also wounds the sentiments of the people of Arunachal Pradesh and the region beyond. "This decision reinforces a recurring pattern of perceived stereotyping and discrimination against athletes from our region in mainland India," its chairperson, Raya Flago, said.

In Assam’s Goalpara, children give lessons on coexistence with elephants

GNS News Agency, June 14

Children of a government-run school in western Assam's Goalpara district engaged in activities toward mitigating human-elephant conflicts. Children of a government-run school in western Assam's Goalpara district engaged in activities toward mitigating human-elephant conflicts | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement Kabita Sutradhar, a Class 4 student of government-run Dorapara Lower Primary School in western Assam's Goalpara district, has a simple solution to reducing human-elephant conflicts (HECs).

She says one must first know what the elephant is called in the language or dialect of each community sharing the animal's domain, and then try to understand what these communities think about the elephant and how they read natural signs to anticipate its moves. "The elephant is called hathi, gaja, and oirabat in Assamese and Bengali, miyong in Bodo, mongma in Garo, midar in Hajong, huti in Rabha, jongli in Mishing, and hadi in the Tiwa language," she said at an event to mark World Environment Day on June 5. The event was organised by the Centre for Microfinance and Livelihood (CML), an initiative of Tata Trusts, working with 159 primary schools in the Balijana Education Block of the Goalpara district.

Some of these schools are on the routes elephants take to migrate or move between rivers and jungles. Many children of these schools are used to HECs in their villages, too. Witnesses to conflicts Kuldeep Das, the CML's coordinator for the district, said Kabita and other students displayed wisdom beyond their age and underscored, without probably realising it, traditional methods of handling a critical situation with a modern outlook. "Some of these children have been witnesses to conflicts near the schools in our project area, when the elephants come down from the hills yonder during winter when paddy ripens," he said. Dipanwita Kalita, the mathematics coordinator for the district, said a key component of the project has been to provide primary school libraries with quality books and learning materials to develop foundational literacy and numeracy and reduce dropout. Some of these "child-friendly" books are on environment and elephants, which the children read aloud during the event.



"Our project involving the local communities goes beyond classroom activities. It focuses on coexistence with elephants and other animals just as diverse communities coexist in the area," Mr. Das said. An event coordinator said the students displayed wisdom beyond their age while underscoring traditional methods of handling a critical situation with a modern outlook. An event coordinator said the students displayed wisdom beyond their age while underscoring traditional methods of handling a critical situation with a modern outlook. The focus was also on the elephants in north-central Assam's Udalguri district, where HEC-related crop damage and property loss are serious concerns for local communities. Members of Aaranyak, an Assam-based biodiversity conservation group, distributed high-intensity torchlights to 10 residents of Nunaikhuuti village, one of the HEC flashpoints in Assam. "These torches are intended to improve night-time visibility and help deter elephants, providing a simple yet effective tool for community safety in a HEC situation," a spokesperson of the group said. The villagers were also taught practical mitigation strategies and the use of HaatiApp, a mobile phone application designed to monitor the movement of wild elephants and respond to conflicts with elephants. According to a 2024 survey by the Assam Forest Department, the State has an estimated 5,828 elephants. A year-old report by Aaranyak said 812 people and more than 300 elephants died because of HEC in about a decade.

Not all cognitive decline is dementia and not all dementia is Alzheimer’s stress clinicians this brain awareness month

The estimated dementia prevalence in India is 7.4% among adults aged 60 and older. This translates to about 8.8 million Indians currently living with dementia. The prevalence is projected to increase significantly in the coming years, with estimates suggesting a rise to 1.7 crore (17 million) by 2036. And it is also increasingly recognised in India as a condition far more complex than memory loss. Dementia represents a progressive decline in cognitive abilities, including language, executive functioning, behaviour, and the capacity to perform daily tasks. Alzheimer's disease remains the most well-known form of dementia, but it is only one of many. Indian clinicians are now focusing on comprehensive evaluations to identify reversible causes, clarifying diagnoses using advanced biomarkers, and staying informed about global advances in therapy -- all while staying grounded in clinical realities and patient context.

According to Prabash Prabhakaran, director and senior consultant- neurology, SIMS Hospital, Chennai, dementia is often misunderstood as only memory loss, whereas one of the earliest signs could be executive dysfunction -- such as a person forgetting how to prepare a familiar dish. He also emphasises the importance of looking for apraxia, which is the loss of learned motor skills, along with changes in gait and bladder control. A distinctive pattern like "magnetic gait," where a person shuffles slowly and cannot lift their feet properly, may offer clues pointing to specific subtypes such as Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus. Even in patients with clear signs of cognitive decline, Dr. Prabhakaran warns against over-reliance on imaging or biomarker tests in isolation, stressing that without a robust clinical picture, these tools can mislead more than help.

One of the most critical steps in dementia care in India is to rule out reversible causes before settling on a diagnosis like Alzheimer's. This clinical vigilance ensures that treatable conditions are not missed. For instance, vitamin B12 deficiency is a common cause of cognitive issues, especially among vegetarians, and can be easily corrected with supplements. Hypothyroidism is another frequently overlooked condition that can mimic dementia and is reversible with thyroid hormone replacement. Dr. Prabhakaran shares that cases of Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus -- where dementia presents alongside gait instability and blad-

der dysfunction -- can sometimes be reversed almost miraculously by draining around 30 ml of cerebrospinal fluid. There are also rarer possibilities like autoimmune dementia, which constitutes about two to three percent of cases. In such instances, antibody testing for approximately 23 known markers is now available in India. Familial dementia and vasculitis-related cognitive disorders also fall into this category of conditions where early detection can dramatically change outcomes. As Dr. Prabhakaran puts it, "Even if just one patient benefits from identifying a reversible cause, the clinical effort is worth it." Imaging continues to be a helpful tool, not for confirmation but for exclusion. MRI scans are used to rule out brain masses, hydrocephalus, and vascular insults. While certain patterns of brain atrophy, particularly in the temporal and parietal lobes, may suggest Alzheimer's disease, these findings are supportive rather than definitive. FDG-PET scans, which measure glucose metabolism, can reveal hypometabolism in specific brain regions, often correlating with suspected Alzheimer's pathology. However, PET scans are advised only when there is already a strong clinical suspicion -- they are not used as screening tools. A major advancement in recent years is the use of blood-based biomarkers that measure levels of tau protein and beta-amyloid -- proteins central to Alzheimer's disease pathology. These are available in India but remain expensive and are not part of routine diagnostics. Dr. Prabhakaran explains that these tests are best used in specific scenarios: when the clinical presentation is ambiguous, when there is mild cognitive impairment, or in cases of early-onset or rapidly progressing dementia. He cautions against using biomarkers indiscriminately, underscoring that their role should always be hypothesis-driven. Srividhya S, associate consultant, department of neurology, Rela Hospital, Chennai notes that biomarker changes can occur nearly 20 years before symptoms appear. She highlights the usefulness of these tests in ruling out Alzheimer's, pointing to their strong negative predictive value. A negative result can give both doctors and families confidence to pursue alternative explanations and care pathways. The role of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) testing also deserves attention. U. Meenakshisundaram, director & senior consultant, neurology, MGM Healthcare, Chennai, notes that Indian labs now offer CSF analysis for beta-amyloid and phosphorylated tau at a cost of around 20,000–25,000.

From mines to minds: how lithium shapes energy and psychiatry



In a significant stride towards bolstering strategic resources, Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s recent visit to the United States last month culminated in the launching of a collaborative initiative focused on recovering and processing critical minerals, notably lithium. This partnership underscores the rising importance of lithium in various sectors, from energy storage to pharmaceuticals. Lithium, denoted by the symbol Li, has atomic number 3 and is a silvery-white alkali metal. It was discovered in 1817 when Swedish chemist Johan August identified it within the mineral petalite. In 1821, William Brande successfully isolated lithium in its elemental form through the electrolysis of lithium oxide.

Due to continuing exploration, measured and indicated lithium resources have increased substantially worldwide, totalling about 105 million tons as per the U.S. geological survey in 2024. Major lithium reserves are concentrated in South America’s ‘Lithium Triangle’—encompassing parts of Bolivia, Argentina, and Chile. Australia is the leading producer, extracting lithium from hard-rock spodumene deposits. India’s lithium deposits are in Reasi (Jammu & Kashmir) and Mandya (Karnataka), with exploration ongoing in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Himachal Pradesh. The recent Indo-U.S. initiative aims to recover and process lithium. In 1859, Alfred Baring Garrod published a paper in The London and Edinburgh Monthly Journal of Medical Science examining lithium’s potential to dissolve uric acid crystals, proposing its use for gout treatment. The hypothesis stemmed from chemical observations rather than clinical trials. While lithium salts showed promise in vitro, therapeutic applications were limited by toxicity and impractical dosing. The study marked one of the earliest discussions on lithium’s physiological effects, but its medical relevance remained uncertain. In 1949, Australian psychiatrist John Cade published a seminal paper in the Medical Journal of Australia detailing his discovery of lithium’s antimanic properties. Cade hypothesised that mania was linked to a metabolic imbalance and conducted experiments, injecting guinea pigs with urine from manic patients, observing toxic effects. He administered various compounds to identify the poisonous substance, noting that lithium carbonate has a calming impact on the animals without sedation. Translating these findings to clinical practice, Cade treated ten patients with mania using lithium salts, reporting significant mood stabilisation and reduction in manic symptoms. This groundbreaking study introduced lithium as an effective treatment for mood disorders like acute mania and bipolar disorder.

Melbourne’s Noack and Trautner (1951) and French psychiatrists Despinoy and De Romeuf (1951) indepen-

dently tested lithium in manic patients, reporting effectiveness. Despite initial scepticism and concerns over toxicity, further studies, notably by Danish psychiatrist Mogens Schou in the 1950s and 60s, confirmed lithium’s efficacy as a mood stabiliser. By 1970, lithium was approved for the treatment of bipolar disorder in the United States.

Mechanism of action and ongoing mysteriesLithium’s exact mechanism in stabilising mood disorders is not fully understood. It is hypothesised that it influences neurotransmitter activity and intracellular signalling pathways, by competing with sodium ions due to their chemical similarities as alkali metals. This competition may alter neuronal excitability and neurotransmission. Despite its long history of use, the precise biological underpinnings of lithium’s mood-stabilising effects continue to be a research subject. Lithium has a narrow therapeutic window (0.6–1.2 mEq/L), requiring regular monitoring to prevent toxicity. It is absorbed orally, distributed evenly in total bodywater, and is excreted unchanged via kidneys, necessitating renal function monitoring. It is not used in pregnant women.

With lithium, the difference between an effective dose and a toxic dose is small. At therapeutic levels, lithium stabilises mood, but even slight elevations can lead to toxicity, causing neurological, renal, and cardiac complications. Lithium also interferes with thyroid function, leading to hypothyroidism. Over time, this can lead to fatigue, weight gain, and depressive symptoms, further complicating bipolar disorder management. Lithium exemplifies the Paracelsus’ principle—“the dose makes the poison”—whereby a slight deviation from the therapeutic range can turn it from a life-saving mood stabiliser into a toxic agent. It also has a delayed onset of action—often requiring weeks to show full effects—which means that more rapid-acting medications are usually preferred in acute manic episodes. Second-generation antipsychotics have emerged as viable alternatives to lithium due to their mechanism of action and better safety profile. Unlike lithium, which acts as the source of bipolar disorder by inhibiting sodium-GPCR protein pumps in neurons, SGAs act at a downstream level by modulating neurotransmitter activity, particularly dopamine and serotonin. This difference means that while lithium exerts its effects at the root of the disorder by stabilising neuronal activity, SGAs regulate the symptoms more directly by blocking excessive neurotransmitter action. Despite the increasing use of SGAs, lithium remains the drug of choice for specific bipolar disorder presentations, manic episodes and suicidal tendency prevention. It is most effective for classic euphoric mania and bipolar disorder with a strong genetic component. Lithium uniquely reduces the risk of suicide in bipolar patients, a benefit that SGAs do not replicate. Its mood-stabilising properties are particularly valuable in preventing relapses, ensuring long-term remission, and managing treatment-resistant cases. What prompted John Cade to hypothesise lithium for mood stabilisation remains a greater mystery than the unknowns surrounding its mechanism of action. His work was published in 1949 when the relationship between medical research and ethics fundamentally differed from today’s standards. Cade’s experiments immediately after WW-2 reflected an era where scientific curiosity often operated in a vacuum, independent of ethical considerations. With the establishment of modern research ethics, including informed consent, clinical trial regulations, and oversight committees, such an experiment—would not even be possible today. Yet, these historical inquiries remind us that medical advancements have often emerged from unconventional and ethically questionable explorations. In addition to its role in psychiatry, lithium is indispensable in battery technology, nuclear energy, ceramics, and lubricants. It plays a crucial part in carbon neutrality by enabling renewable energy storage.

children, the JU might have to grapple with funds crunch for a while. Politics at the universityAt the centre of the controversy is the politics at the university. Jadavpur University has been a bastion of student unions with Left ideology for the past several decades. The campus saw violence during the turbulent Naxal movement of the 1970’s. Despite being in power for almost 14 years in West Bengal, Trinamool Congress that has not been able to establish itself among the students of this premier university. The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, has also tried to establish a presence in the university but without much success. March 2025 is not the first time Jadavpur University has made headlines for the wrong reasons. In September 2019, almost a similar situation had emerged when the students laid siege to the convoy of the then Union Minister Babul Supriyo inside the university campus. Mr. Supriyo, who was a BJP MP then, was rescued by then West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar. Beyond the colourful graffiti adorning the walls of the university campus and the slogans of revolution painted all around, student politics has often taken difficult turns, from the occasional laying siege at the office of Vice Chancellors and authorities to the ‘Hok Kolorob (Let there be Noise) movement in 2014 when the siege went to 150 hours. In August 2023, a first-year student allegedly fell to death while being ragged by his seniors. Thirteen students were arrested in connection with the case that is being heard in the Calcutta High Court There is much more than aggressive student politics that needs to be addressed by all the stakeholders of the university.

The students protest surveillance on the campus and oppose setting up a police outpost, but block movement of others and gherao Vice Chancellors and other constitutional functionaries visiting the institute. The authorities on the other hand try to keep passing the buck. When the Education Minister’s car was surrounded by students on March 1, 2025 the University Vice Chancellor Bhaskar Gupta was nowhere to be seen. He later fell ill and was hospitalised for a few days. Even in the past when there was a ragging death at the campus hostel or a Union Minister convoy was stopped, the university authorities were not seen handling the issue proactively and shifted the blame to institutional lapses. The different teachers’ associations seem to be more committed to the different ideologies they represent and their actions are more inclined in the interest of the ideology rather than the interest of the university.

A land where ambition grows minus an outbound ticket



The recent drama over the unceremonious repatriation of Indians who attempted illegally to enter the United States of America, and who ended up handcuffed and manacled in an American military aircraft that dumped them on the tarmac in Amritsar, raises a whole series of issues. Migration, after all, is not merely a policy issue. It is a human story, woven into our collective memories and dreams. Immigration has long been an integral part of human history, shaping civilisations, economies, and societies across the globe. India, with its rich tradition of global engagement, has long seen its people traverse continents in pursuit of opportunity, new lives, better futures. Every year, millions of Indians embark on this journey, making India the country with the highest number of emigrants in the world. Today, Indians are no longer just workers abroad; they are leaders, shaping global industries. With Sundar Pichai at Google, Satya Nadella at Microsoft, and a host of others born and raised in India heading Fortune500 companies, Indian migrants drive innovation and economic power in the West. History proves that migration has always been a force multiplier, enriching both migrants and host nations. Yet, in an era of rising walls, both physical and political, migration faces unprecedented scrutiny.

For decades, the lure of the American Dream has beckoned young Indians with the promise of economic opportunity, social mobility, and the prospect of a better future. While the IT engineers in Silicon Valley went on scholarships or work visas and stayed on, the Sikh cab drivers navigating the streets of New York may have found less conventional means of entry. But these illegal migrants are not fugitives but opportunity-seekers wanting a fair shot at prosperity. With remittances to India crossing \$120 billion in 2023, migration fuels a cycle where families seek to replicate the success of relatives abroad. It is the vast expanse of opportunity in major U.S. cities, the promise of work under the radar, and the prospect of eventual amnesty (like so many before them) that draws them in. An estimated 7,25,000 undocumented Indian migrants — nearly one in four of all Indians in the U.S. — live and work clandestinely in the U.S. There is a painful paradox at the heart of India’s illegal migration story. We celebrate tech billionaires while youth unemployment soars, showcase gleaming infrastructure while millions struggle for dignified work. India’s growth story features booming statistics, shrinking opportunities, and a rising economy still unable to assure its own people that their future lies at home. The lure of foreign shores is sometimes about ambition, sometimes about survival. This has birthed a thriving network of unscrupulous agents weaving fantasies of western riches, convincing even people from India’s most prosperous States to leave. Gujarat — a State championed as an economic success story, the launchpad of the Prime Minister’s rise — sees thousands risking everything to migrate. Punjab, too, is revered as India’s breadbasket; it feeds the nation, yet its youth are leaving in droves. Rising unemployment, dwindling agricultural returns, and an insidious drug crisis have eroded hope, leaving many with little choice but to seek their fortunes abroad, legally or otherwise.

In their desperation, many Indians turn to shadowy networks, paying staggering sums to be smuggled across borders. What was once the path of young, single men now sees entire middle-class families — the bedrock of India’s ambitions— risking everything for a fresh start abroad. The Gujarati family that froze to death trapped in a snowdrift on the Canadian-U.S. border in January 2022 was upper middle-class at home. Some of those who were sent back

by the U.S. had paid a crore of rupees to get there. Who would have imagined that people with a crore of rupees would not thrive in India? Why is India, one of the world’s fastest-growing economies, a rising geopolitical force, and a nation with unparalleled human capital, still unable to provide enough opportunities for its own people? Why has the pursuit of dignity, stability, and economic security led millions of Indians to distant shores, even where they are not welcome? These are uncomfortable questions — ones we can no longer ignore. More mirage than dream There is also the question of what they find when they get there. The American Dream, once seen as a golden ticket, is increasingly a mirage. Many find themselves trapped in an endless cycle of uncertainty — living in fear of deportation, working in jobs that barely sustain them, struggling to integrate into societies that, at times, view them with racist suspicion. And for many who leave, the struggle does not end when they cross the border — it follows them, sometimes in the most tragic ways. We hear of migrants working endless hours in exploitative conditions, of families back home waiting for news that never comes. And now, for many, the journey merely ends in humiliating deportation. The United States is well within its legal authority to return those who have entered its territory unlawfully. They have been doing so: the Biden administration deported 1,100 Indians in the last fiscal year. Since October 2020, nearly 1,70,000 Indian migrants have been detained by U.S. Customs and Border Protection while attempting to cross the border illegally, largely from Canada or Mexico; they are all subject to deportation. However, the manner in which this process is conducted has been dismaying. Deportation must be carried out with dignity and a respect for human rights. The recent images of shackled and handcuffed migrants being loaded onto military aircraft, suggesting more a criminal extradition of felons than an immigration enforcement measure, have understandably agitated Indians. Colombia and Mexico have rejected such treatment of their citizens, rightly arguing that deportation is an administrative process, not a punitive spectacle. Humiliating individuals to deter others serves no just purpose — it merely erodes dignity and distorts perceptions. We must ask: should a democracy treat another’s citizens this way? Does border enforcement justify undermining the very values the deporting nation upholds? Diplomacy is not just policy but also a reflection of national character. While India does not, and should not, endorse illegal immigration, we cannot be silent spectators to the mistreatment of our citizens. A nation’s stature is not just economic clout or international reach but the respect its passport commands. True global engagement is not just about alliances and trade deals; it is about setting an unwavering standard — wherever an Indian stands, their nation stands with them. Another paradox: We hail the aspirational young Indian, but he prefers to fulfil his aspirations abroad. India must not be a place migrants are forced to return to, but one they want to return to. Those coming back are not just deportees but skilled, ambitious individuals whose aspirations can drive India’s growth. We must make opportunities accessible to all, not concentrated among the privileged. Inclusive growth, innovation, and investments in infrastructure, education, and entrepreneurship must be national imperatives. More than just jobs, India must offer careers that inspire people to stay, build, and invest in their future here. As the world builds walls, India must build bridges — to opportunity, prosperity, and a future where migration is an option, not a necessity. If India is to truly rise, it must become a nation where people do not feel compelled to leave, but empowered to stay. India must not just be the world’s largest exporter of talent but a magnet for it — a place where ambition flourishes without an outbound ticket, where success is celebrated at home, and where prosperity is not a foreign fantasy but a reality shaped on our own soil. Let us make India, once again, a land of hope. Not because the world is rejecting our people, but because, if we do the right things, they will have no need to look elsewhere. Shashi Tharoor is a fourth-term Member of Parliament (Congress), Lok Sabha, for Thiruvananthapuram, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, and the Sahitya Akademi Award-winning author of 26 books, including Pax India: India and the World of the 21st Century (2012). The writer is grateful to Urjasvi Ahlawat for her assistance

How can India meet its rising power demand?

As the fastest-growing major economy in a rapidly heating world, India’s electricity demand is growing fast. Since FY21, India’s electricity consumption has risen at approximately 9% per annum, compared to an average of 5% annually in the preceding decade. The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) had projected electricity demand to grow at a 6% CAGR between 2022 and 2030. However, recent trends suggest a strong likelihood of overshooting these estimates. Can India’s power sector keep up with this demand and transition to renewables at the same time?

What’s driving India’s electricity demand?

Besides economic growth and urbanisation, climate change-induced heat stress, marked by increasingly hotter summers, is one of the key factors driving electricity demand. Currently, industries, households, and agriculture comprise 33%, 28%, and 19% of total electricity use in India, respectively. Yet, household electricity demand has grown the fastest over the past decade. The summer of 2024 witnessed a 40-50% year-on-year growth in room air conditioner sales, driven by rising incomes and record-breaking temperatures. All-India peak demand crossed 250 GW on May 30, 2024, which was 6.3% higher than projections. In 2025, after recording the warmest-ever February in 125 years, India must now brace for extended heatwaves and a peak electricity demand growth of 9-10%.

How has India met rising demand so far?

Since the early 2000s, power generation capacity has quadrupled to 460 GW, making India the third-largest electricity producer globally. Driven by the imperatives of clean energy transition, India’s power sector is undergoing a major shift with the rise of Renewable Energy (RE) technologies like solar and wind. In 2010, the Indian government set a target of 20 GW of RE by 2020, which was revised upwards in 2014 to 175 GW by 2022. In 2021, India further amped its target to achieve 500 GW of non-fossil fuel power capacity by 2030. The government has continuously adopted several long-term and short-term measures to meet the spikes in demand. For instance, to manage the peak in 2022, it increased coal allocation to the power sector and prioritised its transportation through railways. It also directed imported coal-based power plants to operate at full capacity. States that have added substantive solar capacities utilised the surplus solar power to meet day peaks. Nights peaks continue to pose a challenge. In many ways, 2024 was a landmark year — India added a record 28 GW of new RE ca-

capacity, bumping up the share of RE in the electricity mix to 13.5%. The share of coal in the capacity mix fell below half, though it still caters to 75% of power demand. India’s RE capacity now stands at 165 GW. Another 32 GW of RE is expected to be commissioned in 2025. In the following five years, India would need to add about 50 GW of RE every year to meet its 2030 goal.

Why should India further raise its clean energy ambitions?

Episodes of power shortages in the last two years amid rapid growth in demand pose an important question. How should India act and plan to meet its rising energy demand reliably and cost-effectively? A new study by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) answers this question by simulating six scenarios of India’s power sector in 2030. CEEW found that failure to achieve 500 GW of clean energy capacity by 2030 will lead to power shortages and higher power costs, even if demand grows moderately. For instance, 0.26% of the demand will not be met if we achieve only 400 GW. Just this small percentage alone could impact the power supply to ~1 million households for 2.5 hours daily. States in northern India would be the worst affected because of network constraints. If demand grows faster (at 6.4% CAGR between 2023 and 2030 instead of 5.8%) and the 500 GW target is achieved, India will still need additional generation capacity to avoid major power shortages. Here, India has two choices — add six GW of new coal (beyond the under-construction capacities now) or 100 GW of new RE capacity (beyond the stated 500 GW). The first choice will meet the demand, but the coal fleet will remain under high stress with a likelihood of increased downtime. This could result in sudden shortages and increased costs. The study finds that the latter choice of 100 GW of new RE capacity, distributed across States, is a better option.

How can India aim for 600 GW by 2030?

India must achieve 600 GW of clean energy by 2030 to keep pace with demand. This will help the country deliver reliable power at lower costs, saving up to ₹42,400 crore (\$5 billion) in procurement costs in 2030 alone. It will also yield higher social and health benefits, with 1,00,000 new jobs (during 2025-2030) and up to 23% lower emission of air pollutants in 2030. However, a 600 GW target would require 70 GW of RE addition annually until 2030 which may sound wishful.

Are nicotine stains on your teeth irreversible?



Home remedies might offer minor improvements, but they often fall short when addressing the damage caused by prolonged tobacco use.If you're a smoker, nicotine stains are likely all too familiar.Nicotine stains are often one of the most visible signs of tobacco use. For many, these stubborn yellow or brown discolourations feel like a permanent fixture, a reminder of the smoking habit that might linger long after the last cigarette. While you might want to get rid of it in a jiffy, the stains don't leave that easily (just like the memories of your ex). But does that mean that the stains are completely irreversible?

Understanding the reason behind nicotine stainsTo tackle nicotine stains, it's important to understand how they form. Nicotine by itself is colourless, but when it combines with oxygen, it turns yellow and leaves stubborn traces on the teeth. Add to this the tar from cigarette smoke or residue from chewing tobacco, and your enamel—the outer layer of your teeth—becomes a prime target for discolouration.Dr Saakshi Hinduja, consultant, general and aesthetic dentist, Aster CMI Hospital, Bengaluru, explains, "Enamel is porous, meaning it readily absorbs these pigments, making the stains harder to remove over time. Even seemingly less harmful options like vaping can contribute to similar staining, leaving your smile looking dull and aged."How oral health goes for a toss

While there's no denying that smoking could be detrimental to your teeth, it isn't any better for your oral health.Dr Faisal Noor Ahmad, assistant professor at Sharda University, Uttar Pradesh, warns: Nicotine reduces saliva production, which is crucial for neutralising acids and washing away food particles, leading to an increased risk of cavities and tooth decay. Tobacco use also contributes to gum disease by impairing blood flow, making it harder for the gums to heal and fight off infections. Additionally, prolonged use of tobacco weakens enamel, making teeth more susceptible to damage, sensitivity, and decay These habits can also cause bad breath, gum recession, and, in severe cases, lead to oral cancer, underscoring the need to quit for improved dental and overall health.Smoking can also cause bad breath, gum recession, and, in severe cases, lead to oral cancer. (Photo: Unsplash)

Can whitening products help with stains?

Now, when you spot those stains appearing on your teeth, there's this moment of disbelief and casualness at first, but as and when they start showing up pretty evidently, that's when the alarm sets in – how do I get rid of them?The first thing you will probably start doing is searching for quick

remedies on YouTube and Google. When nothing works, you will look for a quick fix at a medical store near you. But does that really help? Here's what Dr Hinduja says:"Over-the-counter whitening products can help lighten nicotine stains to some extent, especially for mild staining. However, they may not be as effective as professional teeth whitening treatments, particularly for deep-seated stains."Dr Ahmad says that whitening toothpastes, strips, and gels contain mild abrasives or low concentrations of bleaching agents like hydrogen peroxide, which can lighten surface stains over time.Now, as mentioned earlier, since the enamel is porous, and if the stains have penetrated too deep, the result wouldn't be as desired. To top it all, consistent use can do some damage to your teeth."Consistent use of these products may provide gradual improvement but cause damage to the tooth surface over time. For stubborn or extensive staining, professional whitening treatments or dental cleanings are typically more effective. Additionally, overuse of over-the-counter products can lead to tooth sensitivity or enamel damage, so their application should be monitored carefully," adds Dr Ahmad.

You need professional helpHome remedies might offer minor improvements, but they often fall short when addressing the damage caused by prolonged tobacco use. While consistent care can lighten stains slightly, reversing them entirely is usually beyond the scope of DIY solutions. A more effective approach is to consult a dentist for professional treatments. Dental cleaning, including scaling and polishing, can remove surface stains caused by nicotine. For deeper discoloration, professional teeth whitening treatments are commonly used, employing proper concentration bleaching agents like hydrogen peroxide to break down stains embedded in the enamel by masking the gums Advanced options such as laser whitening enhance the bleaching process for faster and more dramatic results In cases of severe staining or enamel damage, cosmetic procedures like veneers or capping can restore the teeth's appearance by covering the discoloured areasDental cleaning, including scaling and polishing, can remove surface stains caused by nicotine. (Photo: Unsplash)There's a butIf these treatments give you some solace, you might want to take a minute and rethink your lifestyle choices because even the treatments come with their own set of problems."The most common issue is tooth sensitivity, which occurs when the whitening agents temporarily expose the dentine layer beneath the enamel. Some people may also experience gum irritation if the bleaching solution comes into contact with the soft tissues. Overuse of whitening products, especially at-home kits, can lead to enamel erosion, making teeth more prone to decay and further staining," Dr Ahmad mentions.

So, prevention is better than cureWhile tackling stubborn stains is important, it's equally vital to address the root cause—smoking itself. "Quitting nicotine use is the most effective way to prevent new stains and improve overall oral health," says Dr Ahmad.For those unwilling to quit, adopting healthier oral hygiene habits can make a difference. Brushing your teeth at least twice a day, flossing daily, and using an antibacterial mouthwash can help reduce staining. Drinking water after using nicotine products rinses away residue while limiting foods and drinks known to stain, such as coffee and red wine, offers additional protection for your teeth.

Why the Indian mindset of hoarding and cluttering is a problem

How many things can you count on your fingers that serve no purpose, yet you still hold onto them? We all struggle with hoarding and cluttering, but it's crucial not to let this habit affect your mental well-being.Cluttering and hoarding can impact mental healthWhen you buy a T-shirt, you probably think of it as just another piece of clothing—something you'll wear a few times, then pass on or discard. But your mom? She sees it differently.To her, it's not just a T-shirt; it's an investment. First, she'll insist it's still as good as new and that you should wear it a few more times. When you're reluctant, she'll take it off your hands, repurpose it into a dusting cloth, and then slowly transform it into a floor-wiping rag.

If you've got a few T-shirts to get rid of, she'll give them to the house help after carefully considering all the other ways they could be reused. This isn't just about old T-shirts. It's the same story with the jars that come with packaged products or the food delivery boxes we receive.In an Indian household, there's no room for aesthetics when it comes to stacking and storing; everything has a second, third, or even fourth life.If you think you're any better than the previous generation, take a moment to look at the things you're holding onto—those expired makeup products, the winter coats you haven't worn in years, the random bits and bobs cluttering up your drawers. Let's be real: cluttering and hoarding are problems for all of us, whether we admit it or not.The attachment to old itemsDr Arti Anand, senior consultant-clinical psychologist at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi, tells India Today that we usually associate old items with memories and emotions, which makes it difficult for us to part with them.

These items also serve as a tangible connection to the past, evoking nostalgic memories that become precious to an individual. Research has also indicated that nostalgia provides a sense of comfort, social connection, and continuity.Adding to this, Dr Sarthak Dave, an Ahmedabad-based psychiatrist, says, "For 200 years, colonisers drained India of its wealth and left its people to endure starvation. This prolonged period profoundly influenced generations, conditioning them to survive with minimal resources and make the most of what was available. That's why many of us were taught by our elders to squeeze every last bit of toothpaste from the tube or use a pencil until it's too small to hold."The doctor mentions that this history also explains why many Indians struggle with a tendency to hoard—finding it difficult to let go of old clothes, empty jars, or even expired food.There's always a lingering hope that these seemingly useless items might prove useful someday."This mindset often stems from a deep-rooted connection to the past, where poverty and resource scarcity shaped how possessions were valued. For many, discarding items feels almost wasteful, as if it dishonours the struggles and hardships endured by previous generations," he says.Psychologically, humans have an innate need for control and often panic when things feel out of control. Letting go of old items can evoke feelings of loss and separation anxiety. People often fear that discarding these items will sever connections to loved ones, memories, or experiences.Hence, hoarding becomes a coping mechanism, creating an illusion of control during times of crisis."This behaviour is driven by the emotional and financial value attached to possessions, the fear of unexplained loss, and anxiety over needing something in the future and not having it, which could lead to regret or some major problem," explains Dr Dave.

Dr Anand agrees, "Indian culture values collectivism

Why pickled amla is a superfood to add to your Indian winter diet



Winters are almost here, and if you're living in or around the national capital, they bring an unwelcome guest - pollution (like every year). With the chill in the air comes a smoggy haze that no one signed up for. This toxic combination, along with modern lifestyle habits, can lead to various issues that are far from pleasant.Beyond the obvious health risks, winter and pollution often accelerate our already existing lifestyle problems like excessive hair fall, premature greying, and acne or pores on our skin, and gut issues (cold temperatures often reduce the efficiency of our digestive system).

To combat these, many people turn to supplements and medicines. But what if we told you that Instagram has rediscovered an age-old Indian kitchen favourite to enhance our winter diet?Yes, we are talking about Indian gooseberries, aka amla, and social media, especially Instagram, is filled with recipes and ways you can add them to your diet. Out of these, people seem to be having a special inclination towards the pickled ones, which can make it last longer, and also give added benefits.But should you add them to your winter diet? We asked experts.

Why is amla good for you?

Amla is rich in Vitamin C, which experts say nourishes our skin and hair.Nahid Khilji, a dietitian, diabetes educator and co-founder of Health Hatch, tells India Today that Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant that helps to boost collagen production to keep skin firm, reduce wrinkles, improve elasticity, lock in moisture, and reduce dullness.According to her, amla also has anti-inflammatory properties that help to reduce inflammation, soothing acne, redness, or irritation. Vitamin C also helps with even skin tones by reducing dark spots.Dr Bhavna Garg, a senior consultant, dietitian, and nutritionist at Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital, Kaushambi, Uttar Pradesh, lists various benefits of amla, including for skin and hair."Drinking a glass of amla juice regularly can reduce hair fall and strengthen the hair follicles from the root to the tip. Drinking amla juice daily is equally beneficial in stimulating hair growth. Regular intake provides immunity, strengthens hair follicles and adds volume to the hair, besides clearing dandruff," she says.For skin, Dr Garg says that because of its high Vitamin C content, amla is an effective 'natural skin brightener'. "It can help minimise the appearance of dark spots, blemishes, and pigmentation. Amla is rich in vitamins such as Vitamin C and E which help to protect the skin from oxidative stress," she says. Dr Garg also adds that some studies suggest that the nutrients in amla can help boost melanin production in the hair follicles, potentially reversing grey hair.

Is pickled amla better?

India has a longstanding tradition of pickling. If you're from here, you probably remember those summer days when your mother or grandmother would pickle sour and tangy raw mangoes, lemons, or other citrus fruits.However, alongside these traditional Indian pickles, Instagram is currently buzzing over a more Western-inspired method of pickling amla; a technique that skips the excessive oil. This approach involves combining vinegar, water, salt, and just a touch of oil, allowing the amla to ferment naturally. This fermentation process, apparently increases the vitamin value of amla, according to some experts, while others suggested that raw amla is far more better.For instance, Kalagiri

Kim Kardashian reflects on the bittersweet reality of being a mother: ‘The sad part about motherhood is...’

Kim Kardashian has opened up about the emotional complexities of motherhood, sharing a heartfelt post with her followers on Instagram. On Saturday, November 9, the 44-year-old mother of four posted about one of the most bittersweet aspects of parenting. "The sad part about motherhood is that you're raising the one person you can't live without... to live without you," she wrote, accompanied by a teary-eyed emoji over a background of crumpled white paper.Kim Kardashian posted about one of the most bittersweet aspects of parenting. Kim Kardashian posted about one of the most bittersweet aspects of parenting.

Kardashian, who shares children North, 11, Saint, 8, Chicago, 6, and Psalm, 5, with her ex-husband Kanye West, has always been open about her experience as a mother. According to a People report quoting a source, Kardashian has been the "primary caregiver" for their children since filing for divorce in February 2021, balancing her career, personal life, and parenting responsibilities. As children grow, parents often struggle between being supportive and en-

These nuts and dry fruits can trigger acne; here's how you can reduce their negative impact on skin

Nuts and dry fruits are popular healthy snacks, especially for those on a weight-loss journey. However, if you're struggling with acne and frequent breakouts, you might want to reconsider your choices. While packed with nutrients, certain nuts, and dried fruits can aggravate skin issues when consumed in excess.

According to Deepalakshmi, a registered dietitian at Shree Balaji Medical Centre, Chennai, the relationship between diet and acne is complex. "Nuts high in omega-6 fatty acids, such as walnuts and peanuts, can promote inflammation—a key driver of acne—when consumed in large quantities. An imbalance between omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids may trigger the body's inflammatory response, worsening skin conditions," she said.

On the other hand, nuts like macadamias, almonds, hazelnuts, and chestnuts have lower omega-6 content and are considered safer for those with acne-prone skin. "These varieties are also rich in vitamin E and selenium, which help protect skin cells from damage and support overall skin health," she said.

Do dried fruits contribute to breakouts?

"Dried fruits can also impact acne, primarily due to

Sanjana Reddy, diet expert manager of Freedom from Diabetes, says that pickled amla offers enhanced bioavailability, preservation, and nutritional benefits compared to raw amla. Have a look:Enhanced bioavailability: Increased antioxidant absorption and improved bioavailability of vitamins and minerals. Enhanced digestive enzyme activityPreservation and shelf life: Longer shelf life (up to 6 months). Easy storage and transportationNutritional boost: Increased Vitamin C content (due to fermentation). Enhanced anti-inflammatory propertiesDigestive health: Supports gut health through probiotics. May relieve symptoms of IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome)Kalagiri also compared the nutritional values of both pickled amla and raw ones, and concluded that pickled have better nutritional values:Nahid, on the other hand, says that raw amla has higher Vitamin C content than pickled amla, and even though pickled amla is a good source of probiotics due to the fermentation process, it has more salt compared to raw amla, making it less healthy. Moreover, the traditional method of pickling in India involves a lot of oil, so it's best to avoid excess oil and store-bought varieties."The fermentation process makes pickled amla great for gut health. During fermentation, beneficial probiotics are produced, which help balance the gut microbiome. The probiotics improve bowel movement, thereby reducing bloating and constipation. Also, pickled amla (fermented foods) enhances the production of digestive enzymes, which improves nutrient breakdown and absorption. But watch your portion size since pickled amla can be high in salt and oil," she adds.

Why should citrus pickles be a part of your diet?

If you can limit the amount of salt and oil you add to your pickles, Dr Garg says that pickles made from citrus foods like lemons or amla can offer many health benefits, including aiding digestion, as they contain probiotics - good bacteria that support gut health.Other benefits, according to her, include lower blood sugar spikes, reduced signs of ageing, and positive effects on the immune system.

What does science have to say about pickled amla and its benefits?

Although experts agree that amla provides various benefits, they also point out that many of these claims are based on anecdotal evidence, and more scientific studies are needed to substantiate the health benefits of pickled amla.For instance, Nahid notes that while limited scientific research exists on the benefits of pickled amla, raw amla has been extensively studied for its therapeutic properties."A good example is the comprehensive review published in The Pharma Journal (2022), which highlights the numerous benefits of raw amla, including its high vitamin C content, antioxidant potential, and role in managing various health conditions," she adds.Another 2015 review published in PubMed, shows that amla is one of the richest sources of vitamin C, packing 600 - 700 mg of vitamin C into each fruit.Tips for maximum health benefitsIf you're looking to include freshly pickled amla in your diet, don't worry, we got you. Here are some expert-approved ways to enjoy its benefits without compromising on health:Use minimal oil: While oil helps preserve the pickle, you can reduce the amount of oil if you're looking to make a lighter version. Just make sure the amla pieces are well coated and submerged Fermentation: Allowing the pickle to ferment for a few days enhances the probiotic content, which is excellent for gut health Storage: The pickle will continue to improve in flavour and health benefits with age. Store it in a glass jar, as metal containers can react with acidity Consume moderately: Pickled amla is packed with nutrients, but due to its salty and tangy nature, it's best to consume it in moderation as part of a balanced diet."The best time to relish amla is during winter, as it's a seasonal fruit harvested at its peak. Harvested at this time, it offers the best in flavour, nutrients, and quality. It's also the season when our immune systems need extra support, and amla steps in as a natural immunity booster, helping to keep common winter ailments at bay," Nahid concludes.

couraging self-sufficiency, as highlighted in Kardashian's post. To understand how parents can best approach this balance, indianexpress.com spoke with Neha Cadabam, a child psychologist at Cadabams Mindtalk, about strategies for supporting children in developing their independence while maintaining a strong, healthy bond.Fostering a strong bond with their children while also encouraging their independenceCadabam states that building a strong bond with children while fostering independence requires a balance between connection and empowerment. "Studies show that children who experience secure attachment are more likely to become confident and self-reliant as they grow."She adds, "One effective way to create this bond is through responsive parenting—listening to a child's needs, validating their emotions, and providing consistent support. This teaches children that they have a safe base to return to, giving them the confidence to venture out. Parents can nurture autonomy by setting clear boundaries and providing choices within those boundaries."

Tips to minimise impact

Holistic health coach Isha Lall shared a few tips to reduce their negative impact on the skin:

Soak overnight – soaking reduces their heating nature Balance them with cooling foods – pair with coconut water and fennel

Try to cap it at a handful"When it comes to managing acne through diet, moderation is key. Incorporating antioxidant-rich foods and omega-3 fatty acids while staying hydrated can help maintain skin balance," Deepalakshmi said. She also reminded that everyone's skin reacts differently to food, and hence, keeping a food diary and consulting with a dermatologist or nutritionist for tailored advice can provide a more effective strategy for clearer skin.

Lilavati Trust alleges fraud against HDFC Bank CEO, bank calls it ‘malicious’



In an unexpected development, reportedly linked to loan defaults, the Lilavati Kirtilal Mehta Medical Trust (LKMM Trust)—which oversees a prominent healthcare institution in Mumbai—on Saturday called for the immediate suspension and prosecution of HDFC Bank Managing Director and CEO, Sashidhar Jagdishan, accusing him of involvement in a series of financial frauds concerning the Trust. Responding late in the evening, an HDFC Bank spokesperson strongly denied the allegations made by the Trust, its trustees, and officials, dismissing them as “baseless and malicious”. “The Trustee, Prashant Mehta and his family members owe substantial amounts to HDFC Bank which were never repaid,” the bank spokesperson said.

“The Trust calls upon the board of HDFC Bank, the RBI, SEBI and the Finance Ministry to suspend Jagdishan from all executive and board roles with immediate effect,” the Trust said in a statement earlier in the day. “FIR No. 818/2025 was registered under orders of the Bombay Magistrate Court after a seized cash diary revealed Rs 14.42 crore misappropriated by trustees, of which Rs 2.05 crore was received by Jagdishan — establishing his direct involvement,” the Trust alleged in a statement. There are seven other accused in the said case. According to the bank spokesperson, Jagdishan is being targeted by unscrupulous persons who are abusing the legal process to thwart the recovery of the long outstanding loan due to the bank from recalcitrant defaulters. “The outrageous and preposterous allegations are strongly and categorically denied,” he said. Recovery and enforcement actions have been taken by the bank over two decades and at every stage Prashant Mehta and his other family members have launched numerous vexatious legal actions, bank spokesperson said.

“Having consistently failed at all levels including the Supreme Court, they have now resorted to the recent mala

fide personal attacks on the Bank’s MD & CEO with the sole objective of intimidating and bullying the bank and its MD & CEO from carrying out the mandate of recovering all outstanding loans in every possible manner permissible under law,” the bank spokesperson said. He said the bank has obtained comprehensive legal advice and representation in this regard and it is committed to pursuing legal remedies and options to defend its MD & CEO’s reputation. “The bank takes immense pride in the integrity and leadership of its MD & CEO,” the spokesperson said.

Citing violation of the RBI’s ‘Fit and Proper’ criteria, the Trust alleged that active criminal allegations of conspiracy, corruption, and breach of trust disqualify him from continuing as CEO under the RBI norms. “His continued position poses a serious risk of evidence tampering, institutional interference, and intimidation of witnesses,” it alleged. “The offer of Rs 1.5 crore disguised as CSR funds to hospital staff shows intent to destroy evidence and obstruct justice,” the Trust alleged. Despite judicial findings and multiple complaints, HDFC Bank failed to act, violating Section 166 of the Companies Act and SEBI governance mandates, the Trust alleged.

The conflict between the old and new members of the LKMM Trust has been ongoing for years. In 2023, following a prolonged legal battle, control of the trust was awarded to the family of Kishore Mehta, prevailing over the family of Vijay Mehta. Lilavati Hospital, established in 1997 by Kishore Mehta, gradually saw members of Vijay Mehta’s family brought onto the board of trustees over time. However, controversy arose in 2002–03 when it was alleged that Vijay Mehta’s family had forged board members’ signatures to seize control of the trust while Kishore Mehta was receiving medical treatment abroad. Both Kishore and Vijay Mehta have since passed away.

“This is not a private feud or a commercial misunderstanding. This is a deeply rooted criminal betrayal of fiduciary obligations, charity law, public money, and the rule of law. Sashidhar Jagdishan has abused his institutional position not only to suppress truth but to subvert justice. We seek his immediate removal to restore faith in India’s banking and legal systems,” alleged Prashant Kishor Mehta, Permanent Trustee of LKMM Trust. Earlier this year, the trustees of Mumbai’s Lilavati Hospital filed complaints of fraud against seven former trustees and 10 others alleging financial irregularities to the tune of Rs 1,250 crore over the past two decades. A case under sections of the law including cheating, forgery, and criminal breach of trust was registered on March 6. This was the third FIR registered on the allegations since June last year

‘See huge blue ocean opportunity in India for regional jets, perfect fit between turboprops, larger planes’: Embraer’s Raul Villaron

Hitherto a small player in India’s aviation landscape, Brazilian aircraft manufacturer Embraer has its sights set on India as its next growth market—for commercial as well as defence aircraft. The company is already in the running for the Indian Air Force’s (IAF) medium transport aircraft procurement project, and is also pitching its portfolio of regional commercial jets—a segment yet to take off in India—to fast-expanding Indian airlines. As part of the effort to capitalise on the opportunity, Embraer recently announced an India-focussed subsidiary. In a freewheeling interaction with Sukalp Sharma, Embraer’s President and Group CEO Francisco Gomes Neto and Embraer Commercial Aviation’s Head of Asia-Pacific Raul Villaron discuss the company’s India ambitions and vision, including the possibility of local manufacturing. Edited excerpts:

The Embraer C390 is seen as a frontrunner for the IAF’s medium transport aircraft procurement project. How confident are you about winning the contract? How does the C390 stack up against competing aircraft like Lockheed Martin C130? Neto: We are convinced that the C390 is the best solution for the Indian Air Force. If you look at the last orders we got for C390—Portugal, Hungary, the Netherlands, Austria—most of them replaced the C130 with the C390 because our aircraft is more modern, faster, and carries more load. It’s multi-mission by design, it is more flexible. With the C390, you can perform the same missions with less aircraft. At what stage are your conversations with the IAF and the government? When do you expect a decision? Neto: I think we’re moving well. They are learning more and more about the features of our aircraft, and we believe we have a good chance, although nothing is decided... We expect a decision in a couple of years. But this is not in our hands. This is more in the hands of the Indian Air Force.

If you get the IAF contract, you will be setting up an FAL (final assembly line) to build the aircraft in India. Are you also open to having an FAL here for your commercial jets as well?

Neto: Everything depends on the size of the order. In the case of a C390, the expectation is to have a deal for 40 to 80 aircraft, which is a lot for that size of aircraft. If the orders (for commercial aircraft) are large enough, it would be possible for us... We are bringing a procurement team already to India because we want to explore a supply chain, even without selling many commercial jets here. We already want to find component suppliers here for aircraft to be sold in other markets.

Coming to commercial aircraft, Embraer specialises in regional or small narrow-body planes. This segment did not take off in India, even as the country emerged as a massive market for larger aircraft. What is Embraer’s view on the India opportunity in the segment?

Villaron: We see a huge blue ocean opportunity in India, where most of the unserved markets are either too long for turboprops or too thin for (typical) narrow-bodies. We see a potential for 300 (small narrow-body) aircraft in the next 10 years, and 500 aircraft in the next 20 years in India. Historically, Indian airlines either ordered turboprops or larger narrow-bodies. We feel turboprops now have a mature network in India and there aren’t many growth opportunities left. It’s limiting the airlines’ ability to expand regional networks because the (turboprops’) range doesn’t let them go beyond the short sectors. Also, with improvement in India’s roads and airport infrastructure, the benefits of turboprops are eroding with time. Meanwhile, the regular narrow-bodies are upgauging (getting bigger). So, the gap between a turboprop and a typical narrow-body is widening and is becoming difficult to bridge. You want to replace a 70-seater (turboprop) due to higher demand, but a 180-seater (regular narrow-body jet like Airbus A320 and Boeing 737) has more seats (than needed). But a small narrow-body like ours—up to 146 seats—fits perfectly in that gap.

Why couldn’t Embraer break into India’s commercial aviation market?



"We feel turboprops now have a mature network in India and there aren't many growth opportunities left," says Embraer Commercial Aviation’s Head of Asia-Pacific Raul Villaron

Villaron: Embraer didn’t have a strong penetration in India compared to the US, Europe, and some other markets, as our earlier E1 (series) aircraft’s main value proposition was trip cost, while the seat cost was higher, which did not suit a country like India where yields are very low. But our new E2 (family of aircraft) comes with more seats, and its seat cost is very competitive—same as larger narrow-body planes—while the trip cost is still 20-25 per cent lower than theirs.

Are you in active discussions with Indian airlines for your E2 aircraft?

Villaron: Yes. Our main partner in India is (regional airline) Star Air (with five previous generation Embraer regional jets), and they have announced their plans to expand their fleet. So, we are talking to them to understand their needs. They took delivery of another Embraer aircraft just a month ago. The business plan and the opportunity that we see for the airline is interesting, so we are talking to them.

What about major Indian airlines that are predominantly in larger narrow-body operations?

Villaron: As good salespeople, we talk to everyone. We want to present these opportunities that are so clear to us. We want to make sure the airlines visualise that as well. The big ones (IndiGo, Air India, etc). I think are busy with the large aircraft orders they have placed and the expansion internationally. But they also recognise there is a need to work on the regional network. IndiGo has a turboprop fleet, which at a certain point will need to be replaced and we believe that jets are going to be the next phase of the regional network expansion in India. As for Air India, their main competitor (IndiGo) has a regional network, while they don’t. So, I believe they would need to look at these opportunities. We are the leaders in the regional segment, so we are confident that we will be considered.

Airbus, which has a significant presence in India, also has a small narrow-body product, A220. What is your pitch to the airlines for your E2 portfolio—E190-E2 and E195-E2—vis-à-vis the A220?

Villaron: If we do a nose-to-nose aircraft comparison, the E2 is much more efficient. It’s about 10 per cent cheaper to operate due to lower fuel burn. It’s a much lighter aircraft, has a higher-aspect-ratio wing with better aerodynamics. It has a longer interval, so maintenance cost is lower. We use a similar engine as the A220 but because our aircraft is lighter, it stays longer on the wing... We are confident that even though our competitor is strong in India, when you compare the two aircraft, our product is better. Also, if you’re looking for something that really complements the gap in India’s fleet, you need to buy something from the gap, not something that’s almost as big as the thing you’re not looking for. The A220, with around 160 seats, is very close to a (regular) narrow-body that has 180 seats.

Surviving brain tumour: My 6-year-old and 80-year-old patients show how precision surgery and rehab help



There is a lot of information fog on brain tumours. So let me begin with some of my success stories. A six-and-a-half-year old girl has gone back to school after six months and has resumed her normal activities and hobbies. An 80-year-old doctor is now playing golf. I even have a patient of glioblastoma, the most common and malignant brain tumour, who has survived five years after surgery, a rarity in such cases. Many ask me if brain tumour cases are rising in India. I wouldn’t say that incidence has increased. But now high-quality MRI and scan options are available in a greater number of cities, so more cases are getting reported. Now we do not need a biopsy to differentiate between brain tumour and brain TB. AI-assisted devices can interpret lesions.

Brain tumour can affect anybody at any age and you can’t pinpoint causes except that the DNA in the cell changes. Risk factors are family history, exposure to radiation and obesity, the last linked to a certain type of brain tumour called meningioma, which is often benign. Challenges of surgery with kids are that they have less blood volume, so we cannot afford blood loss. You can give them limited anaesthesia and no radiation. The six-and-a-half-year-old came with vomiting, headache and gait imbalance, suggesting the tumour in her brain stem area had increased the swelling, built up fluid and pressure within her brain. We first implanted a shunt, a tube really, to drain the excess

fluid into her abdominal cavity for excretion. The definitive surgery we did a week later. It was difficult because of the tumour’s location within the brain, surrounded as it was by delicate tissues and vital structures. Surgery can be difficult due to the tumour’s potential spread and the brain’s confined space. We thought we could extract only 80 per cent of the tumour and might have to leave behind 20 per cent. But with precision surgery, we were able to extract all of it on the table. She didn’t need any supportive therapies like chemotherapy and radiation. My 80-year-old had a pituitary gland tumour. For two years, he resisted surgery since it was benign. But when he began experiencing vision loss and memory loss as well as seizures, surgery was the only option. Besides, he had age-related diabetes, which elevated his risks. Here we used minimally invasive procedures and extracted the tumour through an endoscope we had inserted through his nose. He has recovered his vision, his memory is improving and he has even resumed driving, all within a year of the procedure. His post-op scans are fine. He will have to do another MRI after three months of surgery and then once in a year for the next three years.

WHY MINIMALLY INVASIVE TECHNIQUES SPEED UP RECOVERY

Endoscopic surgery, keyhole surgery, and robotic surgery use smaller incisions to access the brain, minimizing damage to surrounding tissue and accelerating recovery. We have stereotactic radiosurgery, which delivers focussed radiation to the tumour. Intraoperative MRI now allows surgeons to visualise the brain and tumour in real-time during surgery, guiding precise removal.

WHAT ABOUT SURVIVAL?

If the tumour is non-cancerous, the survival rate of patients post-surgery can be 90 per cent. However, the patient’s age, the grade and type of tumour matter. But survival prospects have improved. All you need is a concentrated focus on recovery as seizures and pains persist in some patients. Monitoring for relapses, cognitive therapies and mental counselling are needed for a long time. But we have been able to ensure quality of life.

Yoga under a tree? How forest bathing, a Japanese routine, can help

In a world dominated by screens, deadlines and constant stimulation, a quiet revolution is taking place — one leaf, one breath and one step at a time. It is a nature immersive experience called forest bathing that lowers our stress hormones like cortisol, lowers blood pressure, improves concentration, and enhances mood.

What is Forest Bathing? Originating in Japan, Shinrin-Yoku, or forest bathing, refers to the practice of immersing oneself in a natural environment — usually a forest or a green zone — with mindful, slow-paced walking and deep, sensory engagement, particularly with deep breaths. The term doesn’t imply actual bathing with water but rather bathing in the forest’s atmosphere: its scents, sounds, textures and rhythms. Multiple studies in Japan and South Korea have shown that Shinrin-Yoku helps reduce cortisol (stress hormone) levels, lower blood pressure, improve concentration and enhance mood. A 2022 study showed that any kind of aerobic activity outdoors had a better impact on cardiovascular health than walking around a manicured lawn. A forest environment also boosts the activity of natural killer cells, vital components of the immune system, especially due to the presence of plant-derived compounds known as phytoncides. Besides, the forest or any green belt has higher oxygen levels compared to the urban or indoor environment. As you inhale oxygen-rich air, your oxygenation improves as does your brain function. Another study compared the health status of 12 men, aged between 37 and 55, after they practised forest bathing in three different forests. Afterwards, the men showed a 50 per cent increase in natural killer cells (which can kill tumor cells) and an increase in the anti-cancer proteins, perforin, granzymes and granulysin. Parks, wooded trails, and eco-retreats around Bengaluru, Pune and Dehradun report more mindful walking groups and yoga-in-



nature sessions. Our sages were, in a sense, the original forest bathers. When we spend prolonged time in artificial environments, disconnected from the natural rhythms of the sun, wind, and soil, our elemental harmony is disturbed. This imbalance manifests as fatigue, restlessness, emotional volatility, and even chronic illness. Just 20–30 minutes of walking in a natural setting has been shown to restore attention capacity. Yoga sessions are increasingly held by riversides or under trees, integrating Shinrin-Yoku with breath, movement and meditation. Integrating Forest Bathing into Urban Lives You don’t need a dense forest to start, though. Here’s how to incorporate the essence of forest bathing into your city routine: Visit a local park with your phone on silent—walk slowly, breathe deeply and observe. Witness the world and vastness of nature around you and allow your mind to naturally come to stillness. Sit under a tree during your lunch break and allow your eyes to look into the vastness far in front of you. Practise yoga or pranayama in the park, on a balcony garden, or near indoor plants with the window open. Take your morning chai outdoors and just watch and listen.

Magnesium pills: Are you taking the right ones for sleep?

When one of his patients ended up having bad stomach cramps, diarrhoea and dehydration, Dr Balakrishna G K, HOD & Sr Consultant Internal Medicine, Gleneagles BGS Hospital, Bengaluru, was stumped. Till he found that he had taken magnesium citrate — commonly used in hospitals to flush out the bowels before procedures. “He had taken it thinking it would help him sleep since he had read that magnesium supplements helped people sleep better. Each supplement has a different compound for a specific purpose,” he says.

Magnesium is suddenly everywhere — promoted as a fix for sleep troubles, stress, brain fog, and muscle cramps. “But what many people don’t realise is that magnesium isn’t a one-size-fits-all solution. There are different forms of it, each with distinct purposes, and using the wrong one can create more problems than it solves,” says Dr Balakrishna.

Which magnesium supplement is good for sleep? Magnesium glycinate is something we often recommend when someone with a magnesium deficiency is dealing with stress or struggling to sleep. It has a gentle, calming effect and doesn’t usually upset the stomach, which makes it easier to take over time. But people should know it’s not a sleeping pill. At best, it can help the body unwind, but it won’t replace the need for proper sleep hygiene or medical intervention when necessary. In fact, the reason some people feel it ‘works’ is because they start pairing it with a better wind-down routine. That’s more behavioural than pharmacological.

Which supplement should not be ingested? Another form, magnesium sulfate — or Epsom salt — is meant only for external use in baths to soothe sore muscles. It’s not meant to be ingested. Magnesium L-threonate, which has been hyped for its cognitive benefits, is still being researched — and we simply don’t have enough data yet to call it effective.

Why the confusion about magnesium supplements? Many supplement bottles don’t mention which form or compound is inside. Often, products simply say ‘Magnesium 400 mg’ without revealing the compound — and in many cases, that’s magnesium oxide. This is one of the cheapest forms available and frequently used in commer-



Magnesium is suddenly everywhere — promoted as a fix for sleep troubles, stress, brain fog, and muscle cramps. “But what many people don’t realise is that magnesium isn’t a one-size-fits-all solution

cial supplements. But it also has poor bioavailability, which means the body absorbs only a small fraction of what’s on the label. So people think they’re correcting a deficiency, when in reality, they may not be absorbing enough to make a difference. Magnesium from food is almost never harmful — the body has a natural way of regulating how much it absorbs. But supplements can easily overshoot the mark, especially if taken without medical supervision. Nuts, seeds, whole grains, legumes, and leafy greens are excellent dietary sources and should always be the first line of replenishment. The recommended daily dosage for adults is between 310–420 mg per day. If someone has kidney issues, magnesium supplements aren’t something to take lightly. The kidneys play a big role in clearing excess magnesium from the body. When they’re not functioning well, magnesium can quietly build up in the system without any early red flags — and that can become risky before anyone even knows something’s wrong. There’s also a drug interaction angle that often gets missed. Magnesium can interfere with the absorption of thyroid medications, certain antibiotics, and even some blood pressure pills. Supplements can be helpful — but only when the form, dose, and purpose are aligned with actual needs.

Carlos Alcaraz must reduce errors, win mental battle to beat near-perfect Jannik Sinner



GNS News Agency, June 14

Over the last three years, as Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz have mounted their ascension to the top of the rankings and won multiple Majors, they have also created an engrossing rivalry. Their 11 previous contests — Alcaraz leads 7-4 — have witnessed some of the best that tennis has to offer at the moment. But never before have they played in a Grand Slam final.

How to break Sinner?

The Italian World No. 1 has set a high standard of dominance on tour last year, and after returning from a three-month anti-doping suspension just last month, it has continued at Roland Garros. He has won 18 consecutive sets, dropping serve only twice, and often dispatching opponents with such ease that they celebrate just for winning one game. Alcaraz does have a blueprint to break through his rival — having won each of their last four matches — but its effectiveness is in question given Sinner's baseline performance in Paris so far. Sinner commands the back of the court against virtually everyone other than the Spaniard, whose superior forehand does much damage and allows him to contend with, and even hit through, Sinner. But the Italian's forehand has been near-perfect this tournament. He has 116 winners from that wing while leaking only 140 errors (forced and unforced) for a negative differential of only 24, a massive anomaly in today's game. To put that into perspective, Alcaraz, whose forehand is widely considered the best in the game today, has hit more winners (141) but also has 217 errors, making for a differential of 76 which is much closer to the tour average, showing not only

Alcaraz's tendency to be more erratic, but Sinner's abnormally serene consistency. The Italian's pure hitting power is meeting accuracy, and more crucially, restraint, to produce as few errors as possible. Much will depend on the crosscourt exchanges on Sunday, if Alcaraz can once again step it up on the forehand and start extracting errors from Sinner (which nobody has been able to do at Roland Garros so far), he will gain a substantial advantage.

Another key area is rally length. In their semifinal, Sinner outplayed Novak Djokovic. The Italian won 15 more points than him in total, but the gulf in class between the two was there in the rally breakdowns. Sinner was far superior in the shorter rallies, winning 12 more points in those that lasted four shots or shorter. Within the 5-8 shot bracket, Djokovic won four more points whereas in rallies that were nine shots or more, Sinner showed his superior power and fitness to win seven more points. Against Alexander Bublik in the quarterfinal too, Sinner won 30 more points than his opponent in the rallies that lasted four shots or shorter, but that advantage ceased once the exchanges went longer, with the Italian winning only six more points than his opponent in rallies that were five shots or longer. Sinner's superiority on both serve and return means he gets on top in rallies from the very beginning; if Alcaraz can throw in variety and resilience to elongate the exchanges and disrupt the Italian's baseline rhythm, he may unlock a way to wear the Italian down.

Which version of Alcaraz shows up?

Despite what the numbers and finer analysis say, much of this encounter will hinge on whether or not Alcaraz can shed his recent tendencies to let his level lapse in the longer matches. Alcaraz knows how to win Major finals. He beat Djokovic in back-to-back Wimbledon finals with a blinding level of tennis, but he also wore down Alexander Zverev in last year's final in Paris in five sets despite never playing his best and hitting one error too many. In the past year, that aspect of his game, one may call it a fragility, has crept up a lot — he has lost sets in four of his last six matches in Paris alone — and a player in as fine a touch as Sinner will make him pay for those dips. At his highest level, as he has produced in Major finals in the past and against Sinner in each of their last four matches including as recently as last month's Italian Open final, the match may be on his racquet. But he must win battles of the mind first.

Indian badminton's biggest current nemesis – a dosai-loving, soft-spoken Malaysian guided by Herry, the Indonesian Magician

GNS News Agency, June 14

Twitter imbeciles of sport in India, looked at Aaron Chia, watched him outwit Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty at Singapore last week, and brought out the first three-letter body-shaming word they could summon. The Malaysian doubles player, one of the finest in the world, with one World championship in 2022 and two Olympic bronzes in 2021 and 2024, is not very tall, but stocky. Neither of which has interfered with him and partner Soh Wooi Yik developing a doubles game that can trouble the best in the world.

Social media trolling and fan-wars often stem from ignorant understanding of the sport, and fans from two nations have often traded vile racist and body shaming insults directed at the shuttlers, with all of Aaron Chia, Satwik and Chirag being targets. Between the pairings, cordiality and respect prevail effortlessly, and badminton is always interesting. But the disservice to a game matchup, and a wazzocky focus on nationalities means, when the Indians do beat the Malaysians, there is little comprehension of what they have achieved either. So who is Aaron Chia? An extremely soft-spoken wizard of badminton who had once enthusiastically spoken of competing with buddies on the number of dosais he could polish off, like some Indians compete on pani puris. Prolifically talented with strokeplay, not needing overt aggression or any other antics because his racquet can write entire symphonies. Stocky yes, but he put himself through such a regimented punishing routine before the Paris Olympics — not to lose weight per se, but lean out to achieve agility and quicken reflexes. The Malaysians beat the Indians and went on to take bronze. A masterly reader of the game, who keeps pulling wins even if their coaches and opponents know they can improve their attack from the back court exponentially. At the net, his skills from serve variations to puppeteering entire passages of play with his deceptions and reflexes and racquet sleights, have cost Indians some massive matches. The head to head is 10-3, but the two pairings have played some of the toughest badminton and are part of each other's storyline, like Carolina Marin and Nozomi Okuhara are pivotal to Sindhu's career arc. While the Olympics loss was the most heartbreaking one handed out to the Indians, Aaron-Wooi also notched a 21-16 in the decider at the 2022 World Championship semis. Satwik-Chirag had denied the Malaysians the Asian Games gold match, and also won their Indonesian Open crown, beating the Malaysians.

But even two Olympic bronzes and a first-ever World title doesn't assure Aaron Chia-Soh Wooi Yik of eternal loyalty of their own fans. Men's doubles can be cruel that way. At the Sudirman Cup this summer, Aaron-Wooi were fielded in a Knockout against Japan, ahead of the higher ranked Sze Fei-Izzuddin. Fresh from winning the Asian Championships, the Malaysian coaching group reckoned they were riding a wave against Hoki-Kobayashi.

The matchups in doubles get intriguing depending on playing styles that combinations are uncomfortable with. So Satwik-Chirag rarely struggle against Hoki-Kobayashi, but the Malaysians had an eight-match losing streak, and a wretched H2H of 2-11 playing the Japanese. Losing in the Sudirman Cup 3-2 to Japan as they lost the fifth decisive game, plunged Aaron-Wooi's popularity greatly.

It was a proper scandal, with soul-searching and firings of coaches demanded, the usual refrain of allowing juniors to take over and a dark time for Aaron Chia personally. Those that pick on Satwik-Chirag for their colour, are not very kind to their own either. It's why when the duo won the Singapore Open and finally reversed the scoreline, even the Malaysian deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi breathed a sigh of relief, recalled a loss from India Open and gushed on FB saying, "But today, they came back to redeem that defeat and proved their mettle on the final stage." As such, the duo called "backup pair" in Malaysia, are in the middle of a purple patch — winning three of their last five tournaments. It prompted former World No 1 Malaysian Koo Kien Keat, who formed a world No. 1 partnership with Tan Boon Heong, to challenge them to match his Malaysian record for most men's doubles titles in a calendar year — six in 2007. No matter how big your achievements in men's doubles, the top level is so punishing that



Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik have caused plenty of grief for Satwik-Chirag inflicting defeats, but the respectful rivalry deserves appreciation of badminton skills, not trolling by online trolls.

every pairing has its nemeses, mental demons and injury litanies and struggles — making it mentally challenging to retain the perch. Aaron-Wooi themselves were called bottlers on the World Tour, losing six consecutive finals before finally netting the Super 750 Denmark Open in 2023. Boorish badminton fans, looking for eternal highs and dispensing judgments on Twitter, are hardly aware of how tough the grind is, with every Chinese, Danish, Korean and Indonesian pair under constant scrutiny in a teeming calendar with no respite. What will help Aaron-Wooi, not too unlike the Indians having the sagacious coaches Tan Kim Her and Pulella Gopichand with them, is the arrival of Indonesian coaching great Herry Iman Pierngadi. Herry, the Magician, also variously called 'Fire Dragon' is a 68-year-old Indonesian legend who trained Markis Kido-Hendra Setiawan to thumping the Chinese at home in the Beijing Olympics final and shepherded Chandra Wijaya-Tony Gunawan. He faced a barrage of criticisms after the Sudirman exit, but stayed calm and unfazed knowing he knew better. Coach Herry has put an end to the Aaron-Wooi ifiness and hesitation especially in crunch scenarios against the Chinese. "They now stick to their gameplan, even under pressure, and that's a huge step forward," says Kein Keat, as quoted by Straits Times. The duo tended to panic and snatch at shuttles in crunch situations but that has drastically reduced. The coach has polished their game that can now launch comebacks from brink of defeats, something Malaysians, considered brittle, were not known for. At the All England they lost in the first round, and Herry would call it the worst day of his coaching career. But the last month has seen them gain solidity.

An example of Aaron and Wooi getting even more formidable since Herry's coaching was in a tournament semifinal when he told them they had come quite far so they could afford to play on like a training game. Freed of pressure, Aaron hit the high notes. Herry told FMT he was pleased to watch them displaying much improved tactical maturity, especially when under immense pressure from their opponents. For Satwik-Chirag, who progressed at Indonesia even after Aaron-Wooi slumped in Round 1 after three good weeks, the next battle gets interesting. Coach Tan is equally astute and will pit his planning wits against Herry IP, a legend whenever the two pairs meet. When fully fit, Satwik-Chirag can outgun Aaron-Wooi though the intricacies of strategy on both sides are a delicious prospect. The retired Indonesians Ahsan-Setiawan are role models for both the Malaysians and Indians. And both Satwik-Chirag will tell you they can counter Aaron Chia, but will see no reason to disrespect the amiable genius who has never been obnoxious on court. Wins and losses will get traded on court, but fans would do well to respect Aaron Chia as a formidable opponent whose shuttle skills deserve awe — a better three letter word than ones they foolishly throw his way for being stocky.

How Sarpanch Shreyas joined the India captaincy race this IPL



GNS News Agency, June 14

What has been the most staggering takeaway of this IPL season? According to one of Indian cricket's influential decision-makers it has been the emergence of Shreyas Iyer, the leader. On the eve of the final, gazing well beyond the RCB vs Punjab Kings title clash, the official would say: "Right now he just plays ODIs but after this IPL we can't keep him out of T20 internationals and even Tests. Plus he also has now officially joined the white-ball captaincy race." Welcome to Indian cricket, where one exceptional IPL can alter opinions and change perspectives. At the start of 2024, Shreyas didn't have BCCI's central contract. That same year, he wasn't among the 15 picked for the T20 World Cup, not even among the 4 standbys. His dreadful 2024 would wrap up with KKR refusing to retain him — the defending IPL champions shockingly putting their winning captain on sale at the auction.

Subsequently, at Punjab Kings, Shreyas would find a new home, and a lot more. A swagger, aura and one delightfully North Indian term of endearment — to name a few. His famous gangsta walk with subtle head turns and shoulder shuffles, the reassuring non-plussed presence during crunch situations made his teammates call him Sarpanch Sahab — the village headman.

Till that Mumbai Indians Eliminator, where Shreyas played the knock of his life — some are calling it IPL's best-ever — the Punjab Kings captain had been having a reasonably successful season. He had runs, nothing new there, but now there were whispers of him exuding authority even when he didn't have a bat in hand. A puppet in the hands of his coach — Gautam Gambhir at KKR and now Ricky Ponting. All that sounds so ancient and utterly preposterous now. That night at Ahmedabad, Shreyas would shake off that rumour of him being a remote-control captain for good. At the world's biggest cricket stadium he led by example. There were a couple of incidents from that game that announced his big league arrival.

First he defanged Jasprit Bumrah, showcasing the subtle skill of diverting that famous yorker beyond the boundary line. Wickets fell at the other end, but he didn't panic. A close game that MI's Galacticos are known to win, was lost, just because Shreyas didn't flinch. He kept hitting sixes — be it Bumrah or the rookie left-arm pacer Ashwani Kumar. Once the job was done, he didn't go overboard or step out of his character. Coolness didn't leave him, it just multiplied. He spit out the well-chewed gum, shook hands with the rivals and casually stepped off the pitch — his exit from the spotlight as everyday as a 9-to-5 employee logging out after a busy shift. Festive offer Shreyas is not a Dhoni. Nor can he be compared to a Rohit or a Virat. He is a one-of-a-kind cricketer with many contradictions. (BCCI) Shreyas is not a Dhoni. Nor can he be compared to a Rohit or a Virat. He is a one-of-a-kind cricketer with many contradictions. (BCCI)

The other less-noticed captain-like act was his cold stare and harsh words to Shashank Singh, whose run-out at a crucial time had almost jeopardised the chase. He didn't

Despite police's 'warning' letter, Karnataka govt held RCB felicitation event

GNS News Agency, June 14

Bengaluru: Even as the Congress-led government is highlighting the "failure" of the Police Department in connection with Bengaluru stamped that claimed 11 lives, it has emerged that a letter from the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Vidhana Soudha Division, Bengaluru, had warned against holding the event, citing security and overcrowding concerns. The letter, dated June 4, was sent to the Chief Secretary of the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms (DPAR). Responding to letters from the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) and the Under Secretary of the DPAR regarding the organisation of a felicitation event on the grand steps of Vidhana Soudha, DCP MN Karibasavanna Gowda issued the warning in his three-page reply. In his letter, the DCP highlighted that RCB fans are likely to arrive in lakhs. As the event is organised in haste at the grand steps of Vidhana Soudha, there will be difficulty in organising security due to a shortage of staff and officers. The letter highlighted, "The Vidhana Soudha building is a vital installation. A request has been made to install CCTV cameras in front of the building, but they have not been installed yet. As the fans are likely to come in lakhs, CCTV installation is very important. Otherwise, there is a possibility of disruption to the security system."

The DCP underlined that RCB's fan base is huge, requiring the deployment of officers and police personnel from outside, which takes time. He also noted the need for coordination with police attached to the law and order and traffic divisions, and that there was a shortage of time. The letter further highlighted the possibility of drone camera usage and the need to establish an anti-drone system.

The Vidhana Soudha building is a heritage building and categorised as a vital installation, requiring time to organise such an event to ensure the security of the building. However, despite these concerns, the DCP underlined in the letter that the department would act as per the government's directions. Notably, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday announced the suspension of five senior police officers, including the Bengaluru Police Commissioner and DCP (Central Division), in connection with the stamped. The order further underlined that: "The CEO of RCB had intimidated the Commissioner of Police, Bengaluru City on June 3 about holding the victory parade and celebrations on June 4. However, the office of Police Commissioner failed to give a written reply to the organisers, rejecting permission on the grounds of lack of time to prepare for such a huge event."

The RCB and the Cricket Association went ahead to write on social media about the celebrations and invited the fans to the Chinnaswamy stadium without going through the usual practice of issuing tickets or passes. "Despite, the knowledge of these developments and expectation of huge turnout of cricket fans by the police, steps were not taken to either have the event organised systematically at the sta-

get carried away in the euphoria of the dramatic win. He had to make a point to an important member of his team. And he did. That day the Shreyas-cult grew. As it happens in all such moments, the myth-making machinery came alive. From the Punjab Kings camp, stories about the newest Captain Cool would emerge. A 'comic influencer' hired by the franchise, Piyush Sharma aka Banker OP, would record a fun reaction vlog with famous youtuber Tanmay Bhat. Like a true fan boy, he would share what Shreyas did once he reached the hotel that night. "Woh bahut passionate hai, usko bus trophy jeetni hai, uska ek match jitne ka hisaab nahi hai. (He's very passionate, his focus is on winning the trophy. His calculation isn't about just winning one match)," says Sharma. His recollection doesn't end there. "We all are cheering but he remains unaffected. There is cake cutting, drinks and a party too. His relatives too were around. He did the formality of cutting the cake and said 'ok, I am going to my room to sleep'." Sports reserves a remarkable fascination for the understated elegance of its heroes. Inexpressiveness of stars is seen as a virtue. This is what made MS Dhoni endlessly intriguing. Reading Mahi's mind, till date, remains a national obsession. But Shreyas is not a Dhoni. Nor can he be compared to a Rohit or a Virat. He is a one-of-a-kind cricketer with many contradictions. The boy from Worli grew up in a home that wakes up to the tunes of the Vishnu Sahasranamam and where non-vegetarian food needs to be consumed outside the front door. But he has unconventional tastes and hobbies for an Iyer next door. He is easily the most accomplished Indian cricketer on the dance floor ever, an amateur magician and has tattooed a lion on his shoulder.

The Iyers are a close-knit family where parents take pride in narrating the pranks their children play on them to visitors. When The Indian Express visited their home once, the father spoke of how Shreyas was in the habit of fooling them on phone. He once faked an English accent to check if his father was traveling to the UK to watch his son play a county game. When his mother is in the kitchen, Shreyas's 'what's cooking' inquiry is unique: "Aaj kya bigaad rahi ho (what meal are you spoiling today)". But still Shreyas might be the only Indian cricketer who still gets dropped to the airport by both his parents.

A cricketer who has had more than his share of hardships, setbacks and unfair snubs; Shreyas has seen it all. His father once shared a low-point of his son's life. Shreyas sat on the living room couch, on the verge of breaking down, wondering why he couldn't score runs. "Why don't you give up on cricket?" he asked his son. Shreyas got angry, saying how can he even think of it. The passion would help him survive and he would make it to the Indian team. But still there are days when cricket truly frustrates him. In a recent podcast, he spoke about an episode in the net session at the start of Champions Trophy. Not satisfied with his batting, failing to find his touch, Shreyas was uncontrollably sobbing after his batting stint. The next day, his batting improved and so did his mood. The interviewer asks him if he has a friend who he can call when the chips are down and he wants to rant. "I may sound condescending but I don't need to call. In the last 10 years, I have seen everything. I have got answers for everything," he says.

Though, his friends are there for him for a very uniquely different task. On Shreyas's instructions, they send him a new English word everyday so he can increase his vocabulary. Superfluous, insecure and talisman are the recent additions to his personal word bank, he says with pride. Shreyas is a one-of-a-kind. Once during this IPL he was asked about the preparation of his team. It's a query that deserves a cliché but not when Shreyas has the mic in hand. "We need to dot the 'i's and cross the 't's," he said. In 2025, the dotting and crossing has been finally done. This IPL, Shreyas became the Sarpanch. He has acted like a headman and he would hope that his village will be the world.



dium or give adequate information to the public to take necessary precautions for their safety or provide additional Police force for appropriate crowd management," the order noted. "Further, the above situation was not discussed with the higher-ups for taking necessary guidance and advice on the matter. As a result, the situation went out of control and brought a lot of misery, loss of precious life and embarrassment to the Government. In view of the above, the conduct of the above-mentioned IPS Officers is in gross violation of AIS (Conduct) Rules, and that of the ACP and PI is in gross violation of Karnataka State Police (Disciplinary Proceedings) Rules, 1965," the order stated.

Cummins is outstanding as captain, says Finch

GNS News Agency, June 14

Hyderabad: Former Australian cricketer Aaron Finch said Pat Cummins' captaincy was outstanding and that kept improving day after day.

"Pat's shown an ability to lead a team, not just on the field, but off the field. And that's a huge part of captaining an international team. Your ability to bring everything together at the right time. His partnership with Andrew McDonald, the coach, has been great for Australian cricket," the former Aussie captain Finch said during a chat with StarSports.

"I think both teams (South Africa and Australia for the WTC final from June 11 at Lord's in England) are very similarly matched with their bowling attacks. You look at Mitchell Starc, Pat Cummins, Jos Hazlewood, Scott Boland, they're probably the four front runners at this stage, along with Nathan Lyon," Finch said.

"And, then you've got Kagiso Rabada, Lungi Ngidi, Marco Jansen and Keshav Maharaj. So I think they both match up so closely together, but I'd give Australia just the edge, having probably played more test cricket as a bowling group in the English conditions," he said.

20 years after Bobby, ‘unlucky’ Rudaali changed Dimple Kapadia’s fortune; broke the idea of ‘glamorous’ heroine and established her as an actor



Dimple Kapadia was only 14 when Raj Kapoor decided that she had every quality of becoming the next big star in Hindi movies. After the debacle of Mera Naam Joker, he needed a hit to get RK Films out of the massive debt. He needed a film that had the capacity of changing his fortune and so, he decided to launch his 21-year-old son Rishi Kapoor and Dimple in Bobby. By the time the film released, Dimple was 16, and even before she could actually experience her success, she got married to the superstar of that time Rajesh Khanna. Reading this in 2025, one would wonder why her marriage was a hindrance to her enjoying her success, and the truth is as orthodox as it could be.

Rajesh wanted his wife to be a mother to his children, while he went out and worked in the movies and still had the privilege of being called the father to his daughters – Twinkle and Rinke. “I had no problems with my wife working. But when I married Dimple, I wanted a mother for my children. I didn’t want them to be brought up by servants. And I had no idea of Dimple’s talent; Bobby had still not released,” he told Movie magazine in 1980. His declaration resulted in Dimple giving up a highly promising career in the movies. Many years later, she made a comeback with Ramesh Sippy’s 1985 film Saagar, after she moved out of Rajesh’s house. Dimple continued to work through the 1980s as she was a single mother responsible for her two daughters. After films like Allah Rakha, Bees Saal Baad, Pati Parmeshwar and many similar titles which were equally forgettable, Dimple became popular but it was only after Kalpana Lajmi’s 1993 film Rudaali that Dimple started her career as a celebrated actor. Rudaali fetched Dimple her only National Film Award for Best Actress. Rudaali was unlike many of her previous projects where makers often cast her to increase the glamour quotient of their film. Dimple knew what she wanted to be as an actor, and she was finally getting her due. “I suppose I was always associated with glamour. I had taken that for granted so my entire energy went towards projecting myself as an actress, building up myself as an actress and I wanted to be recognised as an actress,” she said on The Prithvi Nandi Show in the early 1990s.

Rudaali had her playing the role of a rather unfortu-

Varun Grover’s short film Kiss may be uneven and overly constructed, but it dares to gesture towards the transcendental power of cinema

It begins when the lights fade in a theatre. That hush before the image shivers to life, somehow we believe we are simple observers, seated in the dark, watching a story unfold that belongs to someone else. We think it’s their lives, their heartbreak, their triumph, their small glances loaded with unsaid things. We imagine them unaware of us, as if we are invisible voyeurs, granted the privilege of watching without being watched. There’s a strange thrill in that: to see without consequence, to peer into the private, the sacred, and call it fiction. But what if that silence isn’t anonymity? What if what plays out on screen isn’t theirs but yours? What if you’re not just looking, but being looked at? And not by others, but by yourself. What if the theatre was a mirror, and the film, your life? What if you are both the watcher and the watched? Both audience and actor. And the story, no matter how far it strays, always finds its way back to you.

That’s what cinema dares to do. Not to show you the world, but to hold a mirror up to your face when you least expect it. It doesn’t speak in answers. It doesn’t beg to be understood. It draws blood from the places you buried too deep to name. It makes you ache for the things you did, the things you didn’t do. It drags you through memory and regret and tenderness like a reel spinning towards a frame you can’t unsee. And somehow, it gives you something resembling closure. Not the kind that ties things neatly but the kind that lets you exhale. That’s why cinema matters. Not because it tells a story. But because it listens to yours.

You might wonder whether Kiss, Varun Grover’s directorial debut, stirs any of these deep, disquieting emotions, the kind cinema, at its best, can summon. But it largely doesn’t. The film feels too manufactured, too self-conscious in its construction to allow for real pathos. Emotion doesn’t land when every beat feels premeditated, every gesture aimed too directly at meaning. What we witness instead is the unmistakable imprint of a first-time filmmaker, or perhaps even an accomplished screenwriter, trying a little too hard to make a point. And so expectedly we’re given a provocatively high-concept premise: a young filmmaker, Sam (Adarsh Gourav) (mocked later in the film as “Kurosawa ka najayaz aulaad”) sits before a censor board, hoping for a clean certificate. But the gatekeepers, particularly Chahaun (Shubhrajyoti Barat) and Salil (Swanand Kirkire), take issue with a kissing scene. They can’t seem to stomach it. What follows is an absurd and strangely bureaucratic ritual: the three men watch and rewatch the scene, each trying to clock the exact duration of the kiss. One says 28 seconds. Another says over two minutes. Each time, the number shifts. No one can explain it. Time bends. The kiss stretches and contracts. Something about it escapes measurement, and with it, meaning.

But then, right at the midpoint, around the seven-minute mark, the film shifts. Almost subtly, it changes shape, as if slipping into another register altogether. What follows is, undeniably, an inventive turn: bold in structure, unconventional in its rhythm. And yet, the fingerprints of a first-time

nate woman named Shanichari. She got her ominous name from those who lived around her because they believed that she was the carrier of bad luck. “Apne baap ko kha gayi (She killed her own father),” they said and made her believe that a newborn was somehow responsible for her father’s death. Her mother abandoned her as a baby, and since then, she grew up around men who were always ready to pounce on her. Dimple’s Shanichari grew up defending herself from harassment and ended up in a village where an upper caste zamindar believed that he was doing her a favour by asking for consent, instead of assaulting her. She is bullied, manipulated by the so-called leaders of the society and when a local priest forces her to take on a massive debt that leaves her distraught, Shanichari has no choice but to work as a bonded labour. But despite all these troubles in her life, she never sheds a tear. Contrary to the title Rudaali, which is used for a professional mourner, Dimple’s character has never cried. She is not even one of those who mulls over her troubles. It’s almost like she has accepted this troubled life as her normal and does not even believe that things could ever get better. She plays Shanichari like a woman who can’t afford to be fragile, vulnerable. She always has to keep her guard up for she can’t depend on anyone. In moments where life shows her its darkest side, she is disappointed but she never breaks down. Dimple has a strange resolve on her face as she plays Shanichari. She can empathise with this woman’s pain but completely understands that breaking down won’t do her any good. Mahesh Bhatt, in a 1985 interview with India Today, implied that Dimple Kapadia had been through so much in her life that she did not need any training to be an actor. “Dimple Kapadia has gone through so much in her life that she need not read up the text books of method acting to play a real woman. She only has to be herself,” he said. In a significant scene in Rudaali, when Dimple’s character befriends a woman from a neighbouring village, who forces her to cry just to let out her emotions, she detests the thought of expressing emotions in a public manner. This was strangely common between Dimple and Shanichari. Since her separation from her husband in the 1980s, Dimple fiercely guarded her personal life. There have been very few interactions where she candidly spoke about her family. A year before she signed Rudaali, Dimple gave a rare interview to Prithvi Nandi where she spoke about her sister Reem’s suicide in 1991, and her brother Suhail’s drug problem. Talking about Reem’s suicide, Dimple shared that she was yet to cope with it. “With my brother’s drug problem, yes, it was very difficult. It was the first time it happened in our family and he was destroying himself and my parents were completely destroyed. There was so much violence all around and today he is alright, he is back to normal. But those years were really bad,” she said. Dimple was dealing with a lot in her personal life when she decided to take up Rudaali and Shanichari almost became an outlet for her emotions. Dimple Kapadia wasn’t always the wisest when it came to selecting her roles but things started to change when she appeared in films like Rudaali and Lekin. She limited her appearances and after 2001’s Dil Chahta Hai, she became conscious about her choices. Luck By Chance, Finding Fanny, Being Cyrus have been some of her most applauded films in the last few years.



While watching the short, you can sense the fingerprints of a first-time director. The hesitation is overtly visible. The subtext is spelled out, and everything feels too constructed.

director remain visible. You sense the hesitation. The subtext doesn’t simmer, it’s spoken out loud. The dialogue carries weight it shouldn’t have to. Characters are held in place so tightly by the concept that they barely get a chance to breathe, let alone live. Still, that’s not to say Kiss lacks merit. While it may not strike with emotional force, it does provoke thought. There’s an intellectual current running beneath the unevenness. An intent that’s clear, even when the execution falters. This isn’t the kind of work that announces Grover’s mastery. But perhaps that’s precisely the point. Kiss doesn’t show us what Grover is capable of at his best. It shows us what he still manages to pull off on an uncertain day. On a day when most of mainstream Hindi cinema struggles to find either a spine or a spark.

It’s to Grover’s credit that, even within the uneven contours of Kiss, he imagines a world that feels almost Imitiaz Ali-esque. A realm suspended beyond binaries, where right and wrong dissolve, where the mind’s machinery and the heart’s fragility blur into something more elemental. It is a world unmoored from ideological poles, where censors and creators, in some strange alchemy, find themselves facing the same screen, fighting the same battles. A place where rage gives way to warmth, where the noise of offense is overtaken by empathy. And no surprise, that place is a movie theatre. No wonder, at the outset, Sam asks, “How can an artiste explain why?” But that, in fact, is the very question cinema keeps circling back to. The interrogation has never been of what is shown, but why it is shown. The why is the wound. The why is the origin. Every frame holds a reckoning between the artiste and the world, between the fiction onscreen and the reality it refuses to escape. It is to Grover’s credit that, even on an off day, in an odd and imperfect film, he manages to articulate that. He reminds us that cinema is still where all our hopes collect. After all, life begins when the lights fade in a theatre.

Mercy for None Review: So Ji Sub’s sad eyes are the only redemption in Netflix’s flawed adaptation



Mercy for None, on paper, might seem like another gritty Korean noir, Netflix’s shot at recreating the success of The Glory, Beyond Evil, My Name, Abyss, and the likes. But this one’s not just about blood and brawls. The story’s carried by emotion and the weight of unfinished business. Casting So Ji Sub was a masterstroke; the actor practically breathes life into the live adaptation of the popular webtoon War of Plaza. The plot holds up, but it’s the strong noir lineup that compensates for the weak execution.

Over time, South Korea’s landscape of storytelling in the dark genre has grown sharper and more commendable than most industries out there—be it Bong Joon Ho’s Parasite or Kim Jee-woon’s I Saw the Devil, drawing in global audiences. And while plenty have tried gangster sagas with a Hollywood gloss, So Ji Sub just did it better. A former gangster limps his way back into the crime world, 11 years after his Achilles tendon was cut as punishment for tipping the balance between South Korea’s two biggest gangster groups. Gi Jun, played by So Ji Sub, one of the deadliest fighters in the business, had struck a deal with the bosses: he’d walk away from their world, but in return, they’d keep his younger brother Gi Seok safe. But when Gi Seok falls prey to an inside betrayal, Gi Jun throws himself back into

the chaos to settle the score. The best part of So Ji Sub’s acting is the calmness he carried throughout the seven-episode run. He came back to find his brother’s lifeless body and didn’t shed a single tear. Took down everyone involved, one by one, in a slow-paced but steadily burning storyline. Had minimal dialogues, but strong ones. Most of the time, I wasn’t even watching the action—my eyes focused on his. Gloomy, heavy, grieving. His face held the same mix of disgust and heartbreak, watching the betrayal unfold around him. Since his leg’s damaged, most of the action leans on his hands. He handles the choreography clean, sharp, like muscle memory, just brutal, efficient hits. Nam Gi Seok, played by Lee Jun Hyuk, barely had a few minutes on screen, but the Stranger actor made every second count without letting the audience down. Gong Myoung (Extreme Job) as Gu Jun Mo, honestly, the casting didn’t fully hit for me—he’s got too much of an innocent face to pull off true villainy. The Trauma Code’s Choo Young Woo caught us off guard as the prosecutor with a hidden agenda. Huh Joon Ho and An Kil Kang, both playing veteran gangster bosses, brought the weight of their long, rich careers to the table. This is the kind of show you start already knowing no one’s squeaky clean, and you’re half-expecting the protagonist’s downfall. But, apart from action and revenge, Mercy for None also has some symbolic expressions, which tease the end in just the first episode. Like when Gi Jun wipes out his first targets, then limps off into a pitch-black underpass. That’s the point of no return, no happy ending. But for So Ji Sub, this kind of role is second skin by now. Over his 30-year run, he’s mastered the quiet storm act, a boxer in Al-ways, a gangster in Rough Cut, a conflicted hitman in A Company Man.

But the show’s not without hiccups. So Ji Sub spends most of the series looking quietly broken, always silent, always vaguely grieving. His vibe feels like someone carrying the ghosts of a past way darker than just what happened 11 years ago. But we never really get to peek behind that curtain. There’s no personal backstory, no emotional unpacking. We’re just expected to accept what’s happening and move on. For a series that’s supposed to be packed with action, the villains don’t even stand a chance near the protagonist. Gi Jun feels untouchable from the start, which takes the tension out of every fight. And despite the whole thing circling around family and loyalty, there’s no female arc. The plot’s patchy, the action sometimes clunky, but if you’re here for So Ji Sub, it still works as a decent one-time binge.

Nawazuddin Siddiqui emulated Al Pacino on first day of Gangs Of Wasseypur shoot, Anurag Kashyap asked him, ‘Bewakuf hai kya tu?’

Nawazuddin Siddiqui’s portrayal of the cold-blooded gangster Faisal Khan in Gangs Of Wasseypur (2012) is still remembered after all these years. The actor recently revealed that on the first day of shoot, he was attempting to emulate American actor Al Pacino. However, director and close friend Anurag Kashyap advised him to drop the approach and just be himself. During a candid conversation with Filmfare, the actor shared, “I went on the first day acting like Al Pacino. I had thought about emulating him beforehand. Thoda bhoot chaaya hua tha. I used to have phases – Robert De Niro for three months, Al Pacino for three months, and Brando. He said, ‘Bewakuf hai kya tu? Don’t do that, you will become stiff and stuck at one place.’”

Nawazuddin Siddiqui added that Anurag Kashyap gave him a wake-up call to act like himself and not mimic Al Pacino. “I did the scenes Al Pacino style on the first day of shoot. Anurag came to my room at night and asked what am I upto. He said you are being very stiff, Al Pacino type. I told him that I wanted to show my power,” he said. The actor added, “Anurag said that vo mera kaam hai, main tere peeche 6 foot ke log khade kardunga, apne aap powerful lagega (That’s my work, I will put tall men behind you, you will look powerful). Don’t do anything, be normal. I couldn’t sleep the whole night. I felt that he was right.” It was after the director’s intervention that Nawazuddin Siddiqui acted naturally on the next day of shoot. “The very next day, I went and forgot everything. Bhaad mein jaaye, main Nawaz hu, main jaisa dikhta hu vaisa hi jaakar karunga.” Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Anurag Kashyap’s Gangs Of Wasseypur was



a commercial and critically success. The film also starred Manoj Bajpayee, Huma Qureshi, Richa Chadha, Pankaj Tripathi and Jaideep Ahlawat.

Ronth trailer: Roshan Mathew and Dileesh Pothan trade barbs during night patrols somewhere in Shahi Kabir’s ‘cop universe’

Ronth trailer: “People here behave not because of courts or laws, but because they’re scared of getting thrashed by the cops,” Sub Inspector Yohannan (Dileesh Pothan) tells his subordinate Dinanath (Roshan Mathew) during one of their patrols. As the promo progresses, we see a few more instances of Yohannan assertively lecturing the young officer on how to conduct himself as a cop, while the latter listens with visible disinterest. In fact, the trailer for writer-director Shahi Kabir’s Ronth unfolds through a series of patrols by the two officers, during which they encounter various tasks; most of them mundane, but some risky. “I’m on duty with that douchebag Yohannan tonight. He’s been pestering me for quite some time now,” Dinanath tells a woman over the phone at the beginning of the 132-second trailer, highlighting the tension in their relationship. Yet when duty calls, he has no



choice but to obey his senior officer. Throughout the promo, Yohannan is cold and condescending toward Dinanath, who, in turn, keeps his distance. “You’re on driver duty, right? So, you do that alone! I’m the officer here; I know what to do,” Yohannan snaps at

Dinanath in front of others. Later, during a night patrol, Dinanath pushes back with, “I’m on driver duty, right? So I know how to handle this,” after Yohannan tells him to go slowly. Still, when his superior gives an order, Dinanath has no choice but to comply, even while en-

during constant insults. As the promo nears its end, the two find themselves in increasingly tense situations, with their lives potentially at risk. “A gripping cop drama which follows a stoic senior police officer haunted by his past and his idealistic young partner assigned to night patrols.