

TGCHE flags fake colleges offering engineering courses

Hyderabad: Telangana Council of Higher Education Chairman Prof V Balakista Reddy urged students and their parents to be vigilant against fake colleges running in the State. He warned that enrolling in unrecognised institutions could lead to serious academic and legal consequences.Speaking to presspersons, Prof Reddy said the Council has received several complaints against private entities, including ByteXL TechEd Pvt Ltd., Leapstart School of Technology, and Intellipaat School of Technology. Notices have already been served to these institutions for allegedly offering unauthorised BTech programmes such as CSE and AIML, besides publishing misleading brochures, he said.

India’s rapidly expanding infrastructure network boosting ‘Ease of Living’

GNS News Agency, June 11

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday (June 11, 2025) said it has been 11 years of infrastructure revolution and asserted that India’s rapidly expanding infrastructure network is boosting ‘Ease of Living’ and enhancing prosperity.“It’s been #11YearsOfInfraRevolution, with outstanding infrastructure being added that has enhanced India’s growth trajectory,” PM Modi said on X.From railways to highways and ports to airports, India’s rapidly expanding infrastructure network is boosting ‘Ease of Living’ and enhancing prosperity, he said.

PM Modi shared a thread from a Government’s citizen engagement platform that highlighted New India’s infrastructure development over the last 11 years.“Smart Cities. Safer Roads. Smoother Commutes- #NewIndia’s Infrastructure Promise. India’s infrastructure is racing into the future under PM @narendramodi’s leadership,” the post on the MyGovIndia read.“It’s a journey where steel and spirit merge, and each milestone carries the hopes of a billion. Highways that shorten distances, bridges that unite communities, and digital networks that spark innovation — India is building more than infrastructure. It’s building confidence, connectivity and a beautiful canvas for every Indian dream,” it said.The thread highlighted that the momentum shift isn’t just about progress — it’s about a promise to uplift every citizen and transform India’s future.In another post, PM Modi said, “India’s push for next-gen infrastructure is powered by sustainability and long-term vision. It is laying the foundations of a self-reliant India.”

KCR appears before Kaleshwaram Commission amid tight security



GNS News Agency, June 11

Hyderabad: Former Chief Minister and BRS president K Chandrashekhara Rao appeared before the Justice PC Ghose Commission at 11:30 am at BRK Bhavan in Hyderabad on Wednesday in connection with the inquiry into alleged irregularities in the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project.

Hyderabad RTA begins fitness drive for school buses before classes resume

GNS News Agency, June 11

Hyderabad: With schools all set to reopen in the city, the Road Transport Authority (RTA) officials are gearing up to conduct special drives across the city and inspect school buses for any irregularities.The city has nearly 1,260 school buses operated by various schools for transportation of students. The transport department has been conducting inspections of these school buses since second week of May to issue fitness certificates. So far, nearly 78 per cent of the buses have passed the fitness tests. Since certificates expire on May 15 each year, pre-academic inspections are crucial.Joint Transport Commissioner C Ramesh said of the 1,257 school buses currently in operation in Hyderabad, about 1,000 have received fitness certificates in the last one month. Inspections will continue until the academic term begins and even after. Educational institute vehicles without a valid fitness certificate will not be allowed to operate, he warned.On the other hand, about 4,894 educational institute buses in Rangareddy district and 4,970 educational institute buses in Medchal-Malkajgiri have renewed their fitness certificates.

It has been decided to ensure that no school bus in Hyderabad should be allowed to venture on city roads without getting the FC renewed or following safety precautions. RTA will seize vehicles and levy hefty penalties and the

“Operation Sankalp” launched to fight drug menace in Telangana



GNS News Agency, June 11

Hyderabad: In a major step towards creating a drug-free Telangana, the Telangana Anti-Narcotics Bureau (TGANB) has officially launched Operation Sankalp in as-

sociation with the Movie Artist Association (MAA), Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge (TASK), and Civil Force Trust.

The launch event was held with the presence of top officials and dignitaries. Sangeetha Shandilya, Director of TGANB, led the initiative. Also present were Dr Madala Ravi, Vice President of MAA, P Seetharama, SP, TGANB, and Shailaja, Director, Department for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD).The event marked a powerful moment in the State’s growing efforts to fight drug abuse and spread awareness, especially among youth. Through this initiative, various awareness campaigns, training programs, and community-driven activities will be conducted across Telangana.

Movie artists and influencers will actively take part to reach a wider audience and motivate the public to say no to drugs.“Operation Sankalp is not just a campaign, it’s a commitment to protect our future generations,” officials said.

Telugu female singer’s birthday bash lands in controversy; Marijuana, liquor seized in police raid

Hyderabad: A popular Telugu female singer’s birthday celebration has led to controversy with police conducting surprise raids on the celebrations held at a resort in Chevella on the city outskirts and allegedly seizing large amounts of marijuana and foreign liquor on Tuesday midnight.As per reports, many guests who attended this party tested positive for drugs in the drug tests conducted on them.According to available information, a large number of film and political celebrities as well as many youth attended this party.The Cyberabad police raided the resort after receiving information that drugs were being used at the party.A large amount of marijuana and various types of foreign liquor bottles were found during these searches.

Revanth Reddy may reassign portfolios held by him to new Ministers, rules out Cabinet reshuffle

GNS News Agency, June 11

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Wednesday indicated that the newly inducted Ministers in the State Cabinet may be allotted portfolios currently held by him, with no changes planned for the existing Ministers. However, any redistribution of departments would be based on consultations with party leaders and requests to reduce his workload.“There was no discussion in Delhi regarding a fresh Cabinet expansion or portfolio allocation,” he said.

The Chief Minister currently holds around 11 portfolios, including Home, Municipal Administration, Sports, and Education, some of which may be handed over to the new Ministers. Of the 18 sanctioned Cabinet berths, 15 have been filled, leaving three positions vacant.In an informal interaction with the media in Delhi before concluding his three-day visit, Revanth Reddy said he was there to brief the party leadership on the successful completion of the caste census and Scheduled Caste categorisation in Telangana, which he suggested could be replicated in Karnataka and other States.

On the political front, Revanth Reddy alleged that BRS president and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao and his family were “enemies of Telangana.” He asserted that as long as he remained in the Congress, none of them



would be allowed to join the party. Referring to Chandrashekhara Rao’s deposition before the Justice P.C. Ghose Commission, he hinted that he would soon release documents related to the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project.He also launched a broadside at Union Minister G Kishan Reddy, alleging that he had done nothing for Telangana and had obstructed key infrastructure projects.“Unlike other BJP Ministers who took Metro Rail and other infrastructure projects to Chennai and Bengaluru, he brought nothing to Telangana,” he added.

Constitution doesn’t pretend all are equal in land scarred by deep inequality: CJI Gavai in Oxford



GNS News Agency, June 11The Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai has hailed the Indian Constitution as an unpretentious social document that does not avert its gaze from the brutal truths of caste, poverty, exclusion and injustice in the country.“It (the Constitution) does not pretend that all are equal in a land scarred by deep inequality. Instead, it dares to intervene, to rewrite the script, to recalibrate power, and to restore dignity,” Chief Justice Gavai said in his recent Oxford Union speech on ‘From Representation to Realisation: Embodying the Constitution’s Promise’.Justice Gavai, who is the second Dalit Chief Justice of India, credited the freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution for his journey from a municipal school to the office of the Chief Justice of India.

“Many decades ago, millions of citizens of India were called ‘untouchables’. They were told they were impure. They were told that they did not belong. They were told that

they could not speak for themselves. But here we are today — where a person belonging to those very people is speaking openly, as the holder of the highest office in the judiciary of the country. This is what the Constitution of India did. It told the people of India that they belong, that they can speak for themselves, and that they have an equal place in every sphere of society and power... At the Oxford Union today, I stand before you to say: for India’s most vulnerable citizens, the Constitution is not merely a legal charter or a political framework. It is a feeling, a lifeline, a quiet revolution etched in ink,” the Chief Justice said in his speech on June 10.The CJI said the oppressed classes in India had never sought charity after centuries of exclusion and silence.

“Their call was for recognition, dignity, and protection in the new India. They sought not charity, but a rightful space in the fabric of a free and constitutional democracy. To be seen in the Constitution was to be seen by the nation. To be included in its text was to be included in its future,” Chief Justice Gavai said.The CJI said one of the most remarkable and often overlooked truths in the framing of the Indian Constitution was that many of the nation’s most vulnerable social groups were not merely subjects of Constitutional concern, they were active participants in its making.The Constituent Assembly had been composed of Dalits, Adivasis, women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and even those once unjustly branded as ‘criminal tribes’ to craft a broader Constitutional imagination, and collectively ensure the demands for justice and equality were met, the CJI said.

Congress, BJP colluded to target KCR on Kaleshwaram project: KTR



GNS News Agency, June 11

Hyderabad: As BRS chief and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao appeared before the Justice PC Ghose Commission on the Kaleshwaram project, BRS working president KT Rama Rao came out strongly against the “politically motivated smear campaign” by the Congress and BJP.Both the parties have colluded to tarnish the former Chief Minister’s image through baseless allegations. “This is not an inquiry, it is political vengeance. But the people of Telangana will respond with clarity and force,” he asserted.Speaking to reporters outside BRK Bhavan, Rama Rao who led a large gathering of BRS cadre, said the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project was a monumental achievement of independent India. He stated that no Chief Minister in the country’s history had executed such transformative work in a decade.“In another country, KCR would have been honoured with the highest civilian award,” he said.

The former Minister dismissed the damage to Medigadda barrage as being deliberately exaggerated. He reminded that the Kaleshwaram project, which was the world’s largest lift irrigation project, was completed within a record time of four years, irrigating over 45 lakh acres.But the Congress and the BJP together, are maligning the project for political benefits. I think the Commission also understood

this by now. Whatever questions will be asked, KCR will reply aptly,” he affirmed.Rama Rao explained that the Kaleshwaram project has over 100 components. Out of 85 pillars in the Medigadda barrage, only two were damaged and the rest of the system was intact.“Even that too, I suspect, could be some mischief from the Congress,” he said, blaming the Congress for “mischief.”He charged Rahul Gandhi and the BJP with working in tandem against the BRS.“This Commission should see through this political drama. Everyone will soon realise that KCR and BRS have done nothing wrong. At last, the truth will prevail, and Telangana will stand by its leader,” he declared.

Cabinet approves two multitasking projects across Jharkhand, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh

GNS News Agency, June 11

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved on Wednesday (June 11, 2025) two railway projects covering seven districts in Jharkhand, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh with a total cost of ₹6,405 crore.

One of them is the doubling of the 133-km-long Koderma-Barkakana track, which not only passes through a major coal-producing area of Jharkhand but also serves as the shortest and a more efficient rail link between Patna and Ranchi.The second project is the doubling of the 185-km Ballari-Chikajalur track that traverses through Ballari and Chitradurga districts of Karnataka and Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

India's aviation sector set for exponential growth

The airports of tomorrow are embracing cutting-edge technology to enhance the entire travel experience. Facial recognition, biometric scans, and AI-driven security checks will become the norm, making the journey from check-in to boarding gate smoother and reducing passenger queuing time by 30-40 per cent. India's remarkable aviation trajectory—now the world's third-largest domestic market, contributes 1.5 per cent to the national GDP and supports 7.7 million jobs. Over the last decade, more than 85 airports have been developed, with a roadmap to scale that number to 350 by 2047 in line with the Viksit Bharat goal. Strengthening digital ecosystems to manage rising cybersecurity risks has also been identified as a crucial area of focus. With over \$12 billion already invested in air transport infrastructure, India is setting its sights on capturing a \$4 billion share of the global Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) market by 2031, with the aim of establishing itself as a self-reliant aviation hub. Integrated multi-modal transport systems, Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered digital initiatives and net zero terminals are pivotal for creating globally benchmarked, passenger-centric infrastructure. By adopting AI, Machine Learning (ML), RFID, and advanced passenger information systems, India's aviation sector can shift from manual checks to smarter, targeted interventions. This transformation will make the aviation infrastructure more secure and passenger-friendly, which are both essential for the future of the country's aviation. However, there is a need to build infrastructure that is resilient, adaptive and efficient. Greenfield airports offer the luxury of blank canvas while brownfield sites may face constraints for unique, smart and adaptive design solutions.

India's most awarded premium sedan; The Volkswagen Virtus, completes three glorious years



Hyderabad: Volkswagen Virtus has crossed an impressive milestone of three glorious years of sale in India, firmly establishing itself as the benchmark in the premium sedan segment. Celebrating its third anniversary in June, the Virtus has captured a commanding 32% segment share (YTD'25), standing out as the only sedan consistently delivering a consistent performance. The Volkswagen Virtus is proudly 'Made in India, for India and the World'.

Since its launch, the Virtus has redefined what a premium sedan means for Indian customers. Its bold design, exhilarating performance, and signature German build quality have created a loyal fan base among driving enthusiasts who value both elegance and excitement.

Commenting on the milestone, Mr. Nitin Kohli, Brand Director, Volkswagen Passenger Cars India, said, "We are delighted that Virtus continues to lead the premium sedan segment, resonating deeply with aspirational customers who seek both style and substance. This milestone is a true testament to the trust our customers place in the Virtus and the Volkswagen brand. As the market evolves, we remain focused on innovation and delivering products that inspire confidence and pride."

In just three years since its launch, the Virtus has achieved remarkable success, becoming a trusted choice for discerning customers across India. The impressive popularity further underscores the growing consumer trust and preference for the Virtus that is growing at a healthy 7% (YTD'25) over the corresponding period last year. This sustained momentum reinforces Virtus's position as India's No. 1 selling premium sedan in both 2024 and 2025, setting new standards for excellence and customer satisfaction in the premium sedan segment.

Delhi Police nabs one of its own for taking Rs 5,000 bribe

GNS News Agency, June 11

The Delhi Police's Vigilance unit has arrested an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) for allegedly taking a bribe of Rs 5,000 to remove the names of a man's family members from a complaint, officers said Wednesday. The said complaint was filed over a quarrel that the man's family had with their neighbours. A female tea vendor, who acted as a middleman, has also been arrested.

According to officers, the complainant, who is a resident of Govindpuri and works as a daily wage earner, alleged in his complaint that ASI Sushil Sharma demanded Rs 10,000 for removing the names of his family members from the complaint. The complainant told vigilance officers that he had already paid Rs 5,000, but ASI Sharma was demanding the remaining amount. ASI Sharma was the investigating officer in the quarrel case.

Aggrieved by the bribe demand, the complainant approached the Vigilance Unit. "A team was then formed under the supervision of ACP (Vigilance) and a trap was laid on Tuesday," according to a statement from the unit. ASI Sharma had directed the complainant to give the money to a tea vendor, and the complainant did so. Just as the tea vendor handed over the money to ASI Sharma inside the police Station, the Vigilance Team, which was keeping a discreet watch over the proceedings, swooped in and arrested the duo. The money was recovered from the ASI's pocket, police said, adding that an FIR under relevant sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act and Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita has been registered against the accused persons. ASI Sharma joined the Delhi Police in 1990. He had been posted at the Govindpuri police station for the last two years. The accused have been sent to judicial custody for 14 days by the Rouse Avenue Court. Further investigation is being conducted, said police.

MG Windsor, India's Best-Selling EV, Inches Closer to 30,000* Sales Mark



Hyderabad: JSW MG Motor India today announced that the MG Windsor, India's best-selling EV, has surpassed the 27,000* sales milestone in a short span of just eight months. A consistent category leader since launch, the MG Windsor has continued to demonstrate strong sales momentum nationwide, reinforcing its market leadership. The recently introduced Windsor EV PRO with a larger battery and a host of other new tech and safety features, clocked a record-breaking 8,000 bookings within 24 hours of its launch in May 2025.

In addition to metros, there is a strong demand for this intelligent CUV from emerging markets as well, with non-metros constituting almost 48% of its total sales. The MG Windsor has taken the Indian EV market by storm, capturing widespread demand and solidifying its position as a game-changer in the industry. In addition, the MG Windsor has been recognized with more than 30 awards, including the most coveted Green Car Award 2025 by iCOTY.

The MG Windsor, India's first intelligent CUV, has disrupted the EV segment and emerged as a modern marvel in the automotive industry, capturing the combined essence of comfort, style, and technology. Offered with a starting BaaS price of INR 9.99L + INR 3.9/kms+, this CUV combines the expanse of a sedan and the versatility of an SUV. The MG Windsor delivers 100 kW (136ps) of power and 200Nm of torque.

The MG Windsor features a futuristic 'AeroGlide' design, transcending the traditional concept of segmentation. Inside, the car is offered with business-class comfort that features 'Aero Lounge' seats reclining to 135 degrees, providing utmost comfort. Additionally, the massive 15.6" GRANDVIEW Touch Display on the centre console provides an intuitive driving experience. Wholesale Figures*

About JSW MG Motor India

SAIC Motor, a global Fortune 500 company with a presence in over 100 countries and JSW Group (India's leading conglomerate with interests across B2B and B2C sectors) formed a joint venture - JSW MG Motor India Pvt. Ltd. in 2023. The joint venture aims to build a smart and sustainable automotive ecosystem while staying focused on developing a diverse portfolio of vehicles to give car buyers better access to advanced technologies and futuristic products with attractive value propositions. JSW MG Motor India Pvt. Ltd. is committed to introducing world-class technology, strengthening the manufacturing landscape, bringing the best of innovation across its business operations, and generating significant employment opportunities through extensive localisation.

Signify transforms 78K+ lives in Andhra Pradesh through Har Gaon Roshan CSR initiative



Hyderabad : In line with its #BrighterLivesBetterWorld vision, Signify, the world leader in lighting, has illuminated 230 villages in Parvathipuram Manyam district, Andhra Pradesh, under its flagship Har Gaon Roshan CSR initiative. This transformative project has brought sustainable lighting solutions to 17,766 families, positively impacting over 78,200 lives across the region.

The project was officially inaugurated in a ceremony attended by Shri Shyam Prasad, IAS (District Collector, Parvathipuram Manyam), alongside senior leadership from Signify and implementation partner Jana Kalyana Samakhya (JKS). The project implementation, carried out in partnership with grassroots NGO Jana Kalyana Samakhya (JKS), involved community engagement to ensure the outdoor lighting solutions were optimally placed and properly maintained. Local community members were trained in basic maintenance of the lighting systems, creating a sustainable model for long-term impact.

Nikhil Gupta, Head of Marketing, Strategy, Government Affairs & CSR - Signify, Greater India, said,

"Access to reliable lighting is a cornerstone of development—it empowers individuals, strengthens communi-

ties, and drives progress. With Har Gaon Roshan, our aim goes beyond infrastructure; we are enabling safer environments, better learning outcomes, and economic opportunities. Each installation reflects our enduring commitment to sustainability, social impact, and our belief in the transformative power of light to create brighter lives and a better world."

The Har Gaon Roshan CSR initiative taps villages in remote and underserved regions where electricity infrastructure is available, but adequate outdoor lighting is still lacking. By leveraging energy-efficient LED lighting solutions, the program provides sustainable illumination that requires minimal maintenance while delivering maximum impact. This milestone in Andhra Pradesh represents a significant advancement in Signify's ongoing commitment to illuminate rural India.

The Har Gaon Roshan CSR initiative has already brought light to a host of villages across India. This collaborative effort has been carried out with active support from the district administration and village representatives, bringing together various stakeholders to realise a shared goal of rural empowerment through lighting.

11 Years of Modi Government: Labour Ministry Drives Transformation in Social Security and Welfare



As the Government of India marks 11 years of inclusive and reform-driven governance under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Ministry of Labour and Employment highlights its key achievements in labour welfare, social security, and public healthcare. Three premier institutions in Hyderabad exemplify this transformation. The EPFO Regional Office, Barkatpura, has set new standards in service delivery through digital innovations, speedy claim settlements, and effective grievance redressal. With over 27 lakh accounts managed and 98% of Pension on Higher Wages claims implemented, it stands as a national model of efficiency.

At Sanath Nagar, the ESIC Medical College and Super Specialty Hospital has emerged as a leader in public healthcare and medical education. Equipped with over 1,000 beds and advanced diagnostics, the campus serves more than 72 lakh beneficiaries with IT-enabled, patient-centric services. Meanwhile, the Directorate General of Labour Welfare (DGLW) continues to uplift over 50 lakh unorganised workers through educational scholarships,

healthcare assistance, and social protection, particularly in the Beedi, Cine, and mining sectors.

To provide an in-depth, ground-level understanding of these success stories, the Ministry is organising a Press Tour to Hyderabad from 11th – 14th June 2025. Journalists will have the opportunity to interact directly with officials, beneficiaries, and frontline service providers. Through guided walkthroughs, live demonstrations, and presentations, media representatives will witness how 11 years of focused governance have resulted in tangible, people-centric outcomes in the labour sector. A delegation of senior media professionals from New Delhi, led by Shri Manish Gautam, Director, Press Information Bureau (PIB), New Delhi, visited PIB Hyderabad. The primary focus of the tour is to provide media representatives with firsthand exposure to the impactful work carried out by institutions under the Ministry, particularly the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), and Directorate General of Labour Welfare (DGLW).

Disha meeting postponed: District Collector Jitesh V. Patil.



“Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem, June 11 (Indian Chronicle): The Disha Committee meeting scheduled to be held at the IDOC office at 3 pm on Thursday has been postponed due to unavoidable reasons, District Collector Jitesh V. Patil said in a statement. He said that the date of the next committee meeting will be announced soon. Therefore, he advised the Parliament, Legislative Council, MLAs, MPPs, Disha Committee members, district officials of all departments, and others to take into account the information that the committee meeting has been postponed.

Comprehensive Orientation Programs Elevate Standards Across Manthani Mandal Schools



“PS Ashokan “Indian Chronicle” Manthani June 11 “Under the proactive leadership of the Mandal Education Department, a series of meticulously planned orientation programs were conducted to enhance the effectiveness and professionalism of school staff across primary, upper primary, and high schools in Manthani Mandal. “Empowering Sanitation Staff for Healthier Campuses” A one-day orientation session was organized at the Government High School, Manthani, exclusively for sanitation workers (scavengers) serving in various schools across the Mandal. The session was led by expert resource person Mr. Lokey Raj Pavan, who offered in-depth insights into modern sanitation practices, personal hygiene protocols, and methods to maintain hygienic learning environments. “Mandal Educational Officer (MEO) Ms. Dasari Lakshmi, who graced the occasion as chief guest, underscored the indispensable role of sanitation staff in maintaining disease-free campuses, especially with the onset of seasonal illnesses. “Clean surroundings are the foundation for effective learning,” she emphasized. “Scavengers play a silent yet pivotal role in safeguarding students’ health. Their diligence directly impacts the academic ecosystem.” “FLN Training Equips Teachers with Vision and Strategy” Simultaneously, a dynamic orientation program on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) was conducted for teachers across the Mandal, focusing on setting measurable academic targets and strategies to enhance learning outcomes for the current academic year. “The training, presided over by ZPHS Complex Headmaster Mr. Mosam Srinivas, featured experienced resource persons including Mr. N. Laxman, Mr. Erla Ramesh, Mr. Kota Laxman, Mr. Maddi Ramu, and Cluster Resource Persons (CRPs). Addressing the gathering, Mr. Srinivas encouraged teachers to “set clear goals, track student progress methodically, and commit to continuous improvement.” “Mid-Day Meal Cooks Trained in Hygiene and Nutrition Standards” In a third initiative, mid-day meal cooks from various schools were brought together at ZPHS Boys High School for a specialized orientation on maintaining food hygiene and ensuring nutritious meal preparation. “Under the supervision of Headmaster Mr. Mosam Srinivas, the training addressed food safety protocols, cleanliness in kitchens, and adherence to nutritional guidelines laid down by the education department. “Providing hygienic and wholesome meals is not just a duty but a moral responsibility,” Mr. Srinivas remarked. He also stressed the need for consistent implementation of standard operating procedures in meal preparation. “The session witnessed active participation from cooks, headmasters, teachers, CRPs Mr. Mallayya, Ms. Swapna, Ms. Supraja, Ms. Radhika, and MIS Coordinator Ms. Srujana, who collectively reaffirmed their commitment to quality in school environments.

Former Telangana Digital Media director Konatham Dileep arrested, released on bail

GNS News Agency, June 11

Nirmal: Former Telangana Digital Media Director Konatham Dileep, whose arrest was recorded by Nirmal police on Wednesday, was granted bail after being produced before a local court. His arrest followed detention at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad late on Tuesday night upon his return from the United States. Dileep had travelled to Virginia to attend the launch of a memoir dedicated to his late father, Konatham Bakka Reddy, on May 18. He was taken into custody upon arrival in Hyderabad. Sources said Dileep was detained in connection with FIR No. 353 of 2025, and subsequently taken to Nirmal for further proceedings. The arrest comes amid allegations that the Revanth Reddy-led government is targeting Dileep for his criticism of the State administration on social media. Over the past year, around 15 cases have reportedly been filed against him — cases he has consistently described as “illegal” and a form of political harassment for questioning the Congress government’s failures.

Kashmiri man dies in Delhi hospital: Family alleges police torture, cops deny



GNS News Agency, June 11

The death of a 30-year-old Kashmiri garment salesman at Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital has sparked outrage in the Valley. Zubair Ahmed Bhat's family has pointed fingers at the Delhi Police, alleging he was beaten up at the local police station. People's Democratic Party (PDP) leader Iltija Mufti and Chairman of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference Mirwaiz Umar Farooq have come out in support of the family. Speaking to The Indian Express, his 24-year-old brother Faizan alleged: "On May 28, Zubair texted us, saying he had been beaten up by the police. The police said that he banged his head on the wall. Then why is there no injury?"

Police, however, maintained that Zubair was found injured in Southeast Delhi's Lajpat Nagar on May 29. They said he was taken to Safdarjung Hospital in a PCR van and died on June 2. Police also said Zubair was suffering from migraine-related issues and that the injuries he sustained were self-inflicted. DCP (Southeast) Hemant Tiwari said the allegations of police beating up the deceased are false. "On May 28, around 2 pm, the deceased got a call from his family. He then had a chat with his siblings, where he claimed that he was beaten by the police. On May 29, he checked out of the hotel at 11 am, and around 6 pm, police got a PCR call from the Lajpat Nagar 2 area. CCTV footage of the time between May 28, when he claimed to be beaten, and May 29, when we got the PCR call, shows that he was roaming around in the Lajpat Nagar area and looked physically healthy," he said. Zubair was the only earning person in his four-member family, comprising his brother, sister,

and mother. Speaking to the media last week, PDP's Iltija Mufti said, "... What was his fault? That he is Kashmiri? Is being Kashmiri a crime?... And where is the NC government? They are absolutely silent on this. They are not able to protect the youth of Kashmir. They should come and meet the family. Their MLAs haven't been elected to inaugurate showrooms and collect ribbons." I request that the government give the family long-term relief. Not just cash relief, give them government jobs," she added. Farooq also visited the family last Friday and offered condolence prayers with them. The X handle of the Office of Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir said, "... Mirwaiz assured the family that he stands with them and the people in their pursuit of justice for Zubair." Congress's Pawan Khera also raised questions. In a post on X, he wrote: "In the capital city, a young Kashmiri dies under mysterious circumstances and not a word of it gets discussed in mainstream media? If you don't question the authorities, obviously the authorities won't give you answers. @DelhiPolice needs to respond to questions surrounding the death of Zubair Ahmad Bhat." According to Zubair's sister, Iqra, he left for Delhi last Tuesday.

"He worked with Kashmir Arts — he was a salesman. He would work in Bangladesh during the winters and in Kashmir during the summers. When he reached Delhi, he called and told us that he had booked a hotel in Lajpat Nagar." His family said Zubair was supposed to pick up his fiancée, a Bangladeshi national, from the airport.

They were to be married in August. But when Faizan called his brother on the evening of May 29, he said a policeman answered and said Zubair was sick. "He said he has been admitted to Safdarjung Hospital. Our family friend from Bangladesh, whom Zubair was supposed to pick up from the airport, rushed to the hospital," he said. On May 30, Faizan and his family reached the hospital from Srinagar. On Monday, Zubair succumbed to his injuries. The post-mortem report from Safdarjung Hospital, seen by The Indian Express, lists the cause of death as septicemia and related complications. It says the patients had a history of high fever, HCV (Hepatitis C virus) with AFI (Acute Febrile Illness) and AMS (Altered Mental Status). Upon arrival at the hospital, the report states, he was diagnosed with septic encephalitis with pneumonitis with sepsis with MODS (multiple organ dysfunction syndrome).

Strict action should be taken against people who disrupt peace and security: SP Rohit Raj



""Shaikh Sharief, Bhadrachalam, June 11 (Indian Chronicle): District SP Rohit Raj said that strict action should be taken against people who disrupt peace and security.

On Wednesday, he visited Bhadrachalam Police Station. On this occasion, he inspected the surroundings of the police station. Later, he made several suggestions to the police officers and staff there. He advised them to keep the surroundings of the police station clean at all times and to act responsibly in providing justice to the victims who come to the police station with various problems. He said that strict action should be taken against people who behave in a way that disrupts peace and security. Later, he inquired about the details of several cases registered within the police station limits. He said that everyone should work for the speedy resolution of pending cases. The officers working at the police station inquired about the problems of the staff. He said that the people of the district should be alerted from time to time and publicized widely so that they do not fall prey to cyber crimes. Additional SP Operations G. Narender, Bhadrachalam ASP Vikrant Kumar Singh IPS, Bhadrachalam Inspector Nagaraju, SCI Swapna, Ramakrishna, Shyam Prasad, and staff participated.

Tribute Paid to Legendary Medical Leader Dr. Vonteti Bhoomi Reddy

"Warangal, June 11 (Indian Chronicle): ""Tribute Paid to Legendary Medical Leader Dr. Vonteti Bhoomi Reddy on Wednesday, a solemn gathering was held in Karimnagar to pay heartfelt tributes to the late Dr. Vonteti Bhoomireddy, a towering figure in the medical and social service sectors. Senior leaders of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) — Dr. Pesaru Vijayachander Reddy, Dr. K. Sudhaker Reddy, and Dr. Kasturi Prameela — visited Karimnagar and led the tribute, recognizing Dr. Bhoomireddy's unparalleled contributions to medicine and community welfare. Dr. Bhoomireddy played a pivotal role in the development of the Indian Medical Association and TANA (Telugu Association of North America), and was a driving force behind the establishment of Chalmers Ananda Rao Institute of Medical Sciences. For many years, he remained a lone pillar of dedicated healthcare service in Karimnagar, earning immense respect and admiration from the public. Apart from his medical achievements, Dr. Bhoomireddy was deeply involved in community service through organizations like the Lions Club and the Indian Red



Cross Society. His life stands as a testament to compassion, dedication, and societal commitment. "Prominent doctors and IMA leaders including Dr. Vijender Reddy, Dr. B.N. Rao, Dr. Kishan, Dr. Naresh (President, IMA Karimnagar), Dr. Ram Kiran, and several others

joined in offering floral tributes and expressing their condolences. The delegation personally met his son Shri Surya Narayana Reddy and conveyed their sympathies, extending emotional support to the bereaved family. Hon'ble Dr. Kavvampally Satyanarayana, MLA of Manakondur, also attended

the tribute event and paid his respects, acknowledging Dr. Bhoomireddy Garu's immense role in improving healthcare services and community development in the region. Dr. Vonteti Bhoomireddy Garu's legacy will remain a guiding light for future generations of doctors and social leaders.

Consider withdrawing decision on quota in minority institutions, HC tells Maharashtra govt

GNS News Agency, June 11

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday told the Maharashtra government to consider withdrawing the portion in its decision that applied SC/ST/OBC reservation in minority trust-run junior colleges for First Year Junior College (FYJC) or Class 11 admissions. After the court's query, the state government lawyer submitted that it may be possible to withdraw the clause in the impugned May 6 Government Resolution (GR) and that she would take instructions from higher authorities and inform the court about the same on Thursday.

A bench of Justices Makarand S Karnik and Nitin R Borkar was hearing batch of by the Maharashtra Association of Minority Educational Institutions, two minority colleges in Solapur and those from South Mumbai, including Jai Hind, KC, HR and St Xavier's colleges, challenging the GRs concerned and terming them "arbitrary" and "imposed without any authority of law". The association cited various past judgements in similar cases and argued that the minority institutions are not required to maintain social reservations. According to the established practice followed until the previous academic year, 45 per cent of the total intake in minority institutions was kept open to all students, regardless of category, after allocating 50 per cent for the respective minority community and 5 per cent for the management quota. However, from this year, the FYJC admission portal showed that SC/ST/OBC reservations are being applied to those 45 per cent seats, which led to confusion and controversy in FYJC admissions for the academic year 2025-26. After Government Pleader Neha Bhide submitted that the GR was issued to bring uniformity in online FYJC admissions, the bench said that in 2019 similar GR was withdrawn by the government. "Why did you (state government) bring minority institutions? It should not be diffi-

cult to withdraw. Why do you not talk to officers and withdraw this. Every time you do not need order from us when things are so apparent. It can be a bona fide mistake. Issue a corrigendum. Solve the problem. If not, we are here (to hear pleas and pass order)." Justice Karnik orally remarked. Bhide said that while withdrawing the entire GR was not possible, "it is possible that clause 11 can be removed". The court asked her to take instructions from high-level officials and inform the decision on Thursday, when the matter will be heard next. Clause 11 in the May 6 GR issued by state's school education department stated, "If admissions are lower than the intake capacity in minority quota, admissions can be given as per interchanging between linguistic and religious minority groups. Even after that, if seats remain vacant, those surrendered vacant seats will be filled based on the centralised admission process where all social and parallel reservations are applicable." While colleges claimed that the GR pertained to left-over seats in minority quota, government officials said it implied that social reservation will be applicable to all open (non-minority) seats in minority-trust run colleges. Thereafter, as per state government, it issued corrective GR on June 2, which implied social reservation to all open seats in minority colleges. The Association, through its writ plea, sought court's directive to authorities to take immediate steps to correct/update the online admission portal for class 11 admissions for the member institutions in Maharashtra. It said the same should be done by deleting/removing the social reservation quota (SC/ST/OBC Reservation quota) and updating/rectifying the in-house and management quota as per the May 6 Government Resolution (GR) like quota and seat distribution followed in Academic Year 2024-25. It sought that the concerned clause be declared arbitrary and unconstitutional and the same be set aside.

Congress high command's leadership list sparks discontent in Siddipet and Medak

GNS News Agency, June 11

Siddipet: Congress leaders from Siddipet and Medak districts have expressed disappointment after none of their names appeared in the list of 27 Vice-Presidents and 69 General Secretaries announced by the All India Congress Committee (AICC) on Tuesday. The list was released by the party's national general secretary KC Venugopal. While seven leaders from the erstwhile Medak district were appointed, all hailed from Sangareddy district. Notably, four of them were from the Patancheru Assembly constituency. Gali Anil Kumar, MA Faheem and Chinnapatla Sangameshwar were appointed as Vice-Presidents, while A Sanjeev Mudiraj, Sasikala Yadava Reddy, Dr Girija Shetkar and Topaji Ananta Kishan were made General Secretaries. Anil Kumar, Sasikala, Sanjeev and Faheem are from Patancheru, whereas Ananta Kishan and Sangameshwar are from Sangareddy. All six are known to be close to the party's working president and Sangareddy MLA T Jagga Reddy. Dr Girija Shetkar, who is from Narayankhed constituency, is the daughter of Zaheerabad MP Suresh Shetkar.

The announcement by the high command left party



leaders from Siddipet, Gajwel, Dubbak, Medak, Narsapur and Zaheerabad constituencies feeling disheartened. Gajwel in-charge Tumukunta Narsi Reddy, Dubbak in-charge Cheruku Srinivas Reddy, senior leader and former Narsapur MLA Madan Reddy, former Medak MLA Mynampally Hanumantha Rao and Sravan Kumar Reddy were among those who had aspired for the posts. Leaders also pointed out that even when the Congress government announced nominated posts earlier, all three allotted to the erstwhile Medak district went to leaders from Sangareddy alone.

Early monsoon preparations and better drainage infrastructure key to avoiding repeat of Mumbai Metro flooding, say experts



GNS News Agency, June 11

monsoonService at the Acharya Atre Chowk station was suspended following the seepage. MMRCL attributed the flooding to the collapse of a protective wall near the station. The heavy rainfall that lashed Mumbai on May 26 caused major embarrassment to Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Limited (MMRCL) after water gushed into the stations of the city's first underground metro, barely 17 days after it was inaugurated. While MMRCL termed the incident a one-off case and promised corrective measures, city planning experts and activists believe better planning of vital infrastructure projects is essential to avoid such lapses.Subhir Badami, a transportation analyst and IIT-Bombay alumnus, said the issue arose from the expectation that the monsoon would arrive two weeks later. He explained that undulations in the city often lead to the accumulation of excess water, and stated that the incident was not a reflection of engineering failure."We must finish all civil monsoon preparatory work by May 15, that should be our

‘Alliances are not formed through media sound bites’: MNS leader Amit Thackeray on the possibility of an alliance with Shiv Sena (UBT)

GNS News Agency, June 11

Amid mounting speculation over a possible alliance between the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) and Raj Thackeray's Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, MNS leader and Raj Thackeray's son Amit Thackeray Thursday took a veiled dig at Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut and other leaders who have been making statements hinting at a rapprochement."Alliances aren't formed through media sound bites or newspaper headlines. Direct dialogue is necessary," Amit Thackeray said, speaking to reporters in Mumbai.Referring to the frequent commentary from Sena (UBT) leaders, he said, "Every morning, someone gets up and says something about the alliance. But who are they trying to fool? If there is to be an alliance, the two brothers, Raj and Uddhav Thackeray, need to talk. They have each other's phone numbers."Talking about attempts for the formation of an alliance in recent years, Amit Thackeray claimed that during the Covid-19 pandemic, it was Raj Thackeray who had taken the first step by calling Uddhav Thackeray, the then chief minister of Maharashtra. "This time, there's just talk in the media, but no real effort," he added.When asked whether he personally supports the alliance, Amit Thackeray replied, "Whatever Raj Thackeray wants is what I want."

He, though, remarked that Uddhav Thackeray and Raj Thackeray should talk to each other to discuss the possibility of a tie-up."Two brothers should speak. We (other than the two) talking on this issue will not make any difference. I don't have any issue with the two brothers coming together," Amit Thackeray said.The remarks came days after Raut stated that Raj Thackeray had expressed willingness to join hands, and that Uddhav Thackeray had "responded positively".On Thursday, too, Raut said that Shiv Sena (UBT) leaders were positive about the formation of an alliance between the two parties."Our thoughts are pure and clear. We can make any sacrifice in the interest of Maharashtra," Raut added.However, MNS leader Prakash Mahajan said if the Shiv Sena (UBT) were serious about an alliance, then Aaditya Thackeray should take the lead and meet Raj Thackeray."A leader of appropriate or equal stature in the Sena UBT should go to Raj Thackeray for discussions on a possible tie-up," Mahajan said, adding that "if

Fellow inmates kill undertrial prisoner inside lockup in Delhi’s Saket court complex



GNS News Agency, June 11

An undertrial prisoner was allegedly killed by two others inside the jail lockup in the Saket court complex on Thursday afternoon. The three knew each other, police said. The police said Jaidev and Jitender first banged the head of Aman, 24, on the wall of the cell and then pinned him down and strangled him with their feet.

Ankit Chauhan, DCP, South, said, "Jitender and Aman had old animosity between them due to an incident of assault that happened in 2024 when they both were outside the jail. Aman allegedly assaulted Jitender and his brother with a knife in that incident."Aman was accused in a case of attempted murder and was brought to the lockup for production before the court. At the time of the incident, several undertrial prisoners were present inside the lockup, the police said. The area has been cordoned off and the security cover increased.In April 2023, shots rang out for close to a minute in the same court complex as a suspended lawyer chased a woman and allegedly fired multiple times at her, before fleeing on his scooter.The lawyer, Kameshwar Kumar Singh, 49, was later arrested from his brother's home in Faridabad. The woman, M Radha, 42, sustained injuries after two bullets grazed her left abdomen and right arm. A lawyer's clerk also received bullet injuries on his right arm. A video of the incident showed Singh training his pistol at

target instead of May 31," he said, emphasising the need to understand climate change patterns and take timely action.Alan Abraham, an architect and urban planner, said the incident was more than just a metro-specific issue. He explained that it is a problem symptomatic of the area.

"If drainage issues remain unresolved, flooding will be a natural consequence, turning the area into a problem zone," he said, adding that while solutions like dewatering pumps help, they can only handle limited volumes of water.He stressed the need for improved urban planning to enhance the city's fabric, particularly in light of increasing construction and built-up areas. He also warned that similar incidents could occur again.Activist Zoru Bhathena criticised MMRCL's explanation that the incident was caused by an "unforeseen natural event". He argued that such reasoning was inadequate and highlighted a lack of preparedness."The officials have made a story that our metro is flood-proof. Then, their report blamed the flooding on an 'unforeseen natural event'. The stories put out by them have created this issue, as Mumbai receives such rainfall almost every year. Flooding is inevitable," Bhathena said.Water gushed into the newly inaugurated Acharya Atre Chowk Metro Station on May 27 following the downpour, raising concerns about the infrastructure and safety of the Aqua Line (Line 3) of Mumbai Metro.Service at the Acharya Atre Chowk station was suspended following the seepage. MMRCL attributed the flooding to the collapse of a protective wall near the station.MMRCL has since taken steps to prevent water ingress in stations during the monsoon, including the deployment of dewatering pumps and the cleaning of drains around metro stations to prevent water accumulation.



a junior leader is sent for talks, then Raj Thackeray will also send a junior functionary."Mahajan said there was no harm in the politically estranged Thackeray cousins coming together."We (the MNS) had tried this experiment in 2014 and 2017. If they are serious, then there is no issue in taking the lead," he said.Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Aaditya Thackeray, son of Uddhav Thackeray, had also earlier signalled willingness for forming an alliance, saying, "We've already expressed our intent. Anyone who wishes to work for the welfare of the Marathi people and Maharashtra is welcome." Citing a recent joint protest involving Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Deepesh Mhatre and MNS's Raju Patil, Aaditya Thackeray said such examples show the shared ground between the two parties.

"We know what is in the minds of the people, and our minds are clear. Whichever leader is ready to come with us for the benefit of Maharashtra, whichever party is coming forward, we will fight together with them," Aditya Thackeray clarified.While leaders from both sides continue to make suggestive remarks, political observers said that the absence of a direct meeting between Uddhav and Raj Thackeray is the biggest stumbling block for the alliance.A senior political analyst said, "For all the noise, unless the cousins meet face-to-face, the idea of a Sena-MNS alliance will remain just that – an idea."In 2005, Raj Thackeray quit the undivided Shiv Sena, a party founded by his uncle Bal Thackeray, after reportedly feeling sidelined. Thereafter, he launched the MNS in March 2006.

Radha on the stairs leading up to the lawyers' block and shooting several rounds at her, even as the woman ran screaming.According to the police, the motive appeared to be personal enmity. The suspended lawyer had filed a case alleging the woman had cheated him out of Rs 25 lakh.

Hiring of staff in India’s services sector at all-time high in May

New Delhi: Driven by a strong demand for exports, India's services sector activity kept up its high pace of growth in May. According to the latest HSBC survey, It also saw hiring of staff by firms surge to an all-time high during the month.Registering 58.8 in May, the seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services PM Business Activity Index which is based on a single question asking how the level of business activity compares with the situation the month before, was broadly in line with April's reading of 58.7 (PMI) and therefore signalled another sharp rate of expansion. Growth was reportedly underpinned by healthy demand conditions, new client wins and greater staffing capacity, the survey states.Notably, companies observed a near-record improvement in international demand for their services during May. Over the course of the survey's 19-and-a-half-year history, faster increases in new export orders were only recorded in May and June 2024. When citing sources of growth, firms mentioned Asia, Europe and North America in particular, the survey said.New orders rose at a sharp pace that was largely aligned with those registered from February to April, similar to the trend for output. The survey added service providers continued to recruit additional staff to accommodate for ongoing expansions in new business intakes.

Sharmistha Panoli, who was arrested over ‘communal’ social media post, gets interim bail from Calcutta High Court



GNS News Agency, June 11

Sharmishta Panoli was arrested from her Gurgaon residence on Friday afternoonSharmishta Panoli was arrested from her Gurgaon residence on Friday afternoon.The Calcutta High court on Thursday granted interim bail to Sharmishta Panoli, a 22-year old law student who was arrested for allegedly posting an "offensive" video with "communal" statements.Justice Raja Basu Chowdhury granted the interim bail on a security bond of Rs 10,000, "noting the gravity of the offence, that the petitioner is a law student and is of a tender age, and also considering the submission

of her counsel that she is ready to cooperate".

While instructing police to provide "appropriate protection" to Panoli, Justice Chowdhury said that the petitioner "shall not leave the country... If education requirements require that, it shall be moved before the Chief Judicial Magistrate."Stating that the arrest warrant for Panoli "appears to be issued in a mechanical manner", the court said that in the case, "the primary challenge was that the complaint did not disclose a cognizable offence... nothing of the words spoken by the petitioner (Panoli) could be made out".Sharmishta Panoli's father Prithviraj Panoli told The Indian Express, "As a parent I am very happy, we had full faith in the judiciary. She can now lead a normal life and not a jail life. We are trying to bring her out as soon as possible. As any parent, we would want security for our child. We cannot explain the fear we had due to the nature of threats. It was a very scary situation for us. She is a very intelligent girl and she will learn. I had not asked her, but she herself deleted the videos."This comes two days after a Calcutta HC single bench of Justice Partha Sarathi Chatterjee had rejected Panoli's interim bail application and ordered police to produce the case diary.Panoli was arrested from Gurgaon, Haryana, by the Kolkata Police on May 30. She was brought to Kolkata on transit remand and had been remanded to judicial custody till June 13.

Fake SEBI documents, nomadic operation: How ex-banker from Andhra led share trading racket before Gurgaon police pull plug

GNS News Agency, June 11

The Gurgaon cyber police, on June 1, arrested a former banker from Andhra Pradesh and four others for allegedly running a share trading racket during a raid at a hotel in Punjab's Zirakpur.The accused have been identified as Chinta Manoj Kumar, 38, a former HDFC Bank manager from Guntur in Andhra Pradesh; Gurvinder and Ravi from Jind, Haryana; Rohit Kumar from Hisar, Haryana; and Akshay from Una, Himachal Pradesh.

The five allegedly swindled at least Rs 5 lakh from a woman by luring her into share trading investments with promises of high profits using fake Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)-registered company documents. The accused also provided mule bank accounts to cyber fraudsters, according to the police.On March 18, the complainant reported to the Gurgaon cybercrime police station (west) that on January 13, 2025, she received a WhatsApp message with a link from an unknown number. The accused allegedly sent emails and forged SEBI documents to gain the victim's trust, convincing her to install a mobile app. Through the app, the victim was allegedly persuaded to make multiple transactions, resulting in financial loss.A team supervised by Priyanshu Dewan, Assistant Commissioner of Police (cybercrime), investigated the case and made the arrests.Speaking to The Indian Express, Inspector Sandeep, who led the operation, said, "It is their greed for making money that makes them enter this cyberfraud and lure others into it. We are looking into and investigating their role in cyberfrauds in other states as well."He said it took time to nab the accused as they would frequently change their base of operations to avoid authorities. "He (Manoj) had hired the other accused through a social media site," said Inspector Sandeep.

After the arrest, Manoj, who allegedly quit his bank job citing work pressure, and Akshay were remanded in two-day police custody Monday and sent in judicial custody Wednesday. Gurvinder, Ravi, and Rohit were also sent in judicial custody.The police recovered seven mobile phones,



two laptops, and two current account kits with a daily transaction limit of Rs 5 crore from the accused.Investigations revealed that Rs 4.4 lakh of the defrauded amount was transferred to a current account purchased by Manoj from an accomplice, Vikas, who is also arrested, for Rs 80,000. Vikas had bought the account from its holder for Rs 40,000, said the police.Manoj allegedly passed the account to Rohit for a 3 per cent commission. Rohit then handed it to Gurvinder and Ravi, who further transferred it to Akshay for a commission, the police said. Akshay, connected to cyber fraudsters via WhatsApp and Telegram, allegedly facilitated the account's use in the fraud.Meanwhile, the Gurgaon police have so far arrested 34 bank employees involved in similar cyber frauds, Dewan said."It is seen that professionals like bankers, chartered accountants and other financial services experts are both aiding and abetting such offences by facilitating the creation and use of mule accounts. These accounts are being opened in large volumes and have fake directors and proprietors listed. They give technical and other (logistical) assistance in routing and re-routing the proceeds of the crime (duped amounts). We are taking the strictest of legal action against all the perpetrators that have come to light so far," said Dewan.Dewan said the police will communicate with senior executives of both public and private sector banks, as well as correspond with institutions like SEBI, to highlight the misuse of their names.

Delhi man under ‘digital arrest’ duped of Rs 14 lakh, 3 cyber fraudsters held from Rajasthan



GNS News Agency, June 11

Ahmedabad-based firm has China links, indian expressThe three accused -- Vasim, 30, and Javed, 48, and Khalid -- were arrested from their residences in Rajasthan's Mewar region, the Delhi Police said. (Source: File/Representational)The Delhi Police on Wednesday arrested three cyber fraudsters who allegedly posed as Crime Branch officials and extorted Rs 14 lakh from an individual, who was placed under 'digital arrest', and blackmailed with his nude photos.The three accused — Vasim, 30, and Javed, 48, and Khalid — were arrested from their residences in Rajasthan's Mewar region, the Delhi Police said.

The police said that the racket came to light when the complainant approached the Delhi Police, claiming that he had been duped by fraudsters who recorded his nudes on a WhatsApp call."During the call, an obscene video of a girl started playing, and she manipulated the complainant into getting nude, subsequently recording his video. The complainant, later, received three obscene videos of himself, which had been recorded by the fraudster," Vichitra Veer, Deputy Commissioner of Police, West, said.The victim told the police that a man claiming to be from the Crime Branch then contacted him over WhatsApp and told him that the girl he had talked to was a minor and that his phone was tracked by the police.To get away with the 'crime', the caller asked the complainant to pay Rs 1.5 lakh initially and then called him twice to blackmail him into giving an additional Rs 2.5 lakh and Rs 4 lakh. The complainant gave in to the demand."The complainant stated that the fraudster called again and threatened that the girl had committed suicide and that the complainant would be arrested. He further demanded ?6 lakh for "settling" the case, which the complainant also transferred," DCP Veer said.After losing Rs 14 lakh, the complainant approached the cyber police station.Investigators traced the accounts to which the

money was transferred, leading them to Mewat, a known cybercrime hub. Following this, the police raided the houses of Vasim and Javed in the Deeg district of Rajasthan and arrested them. During interrogation, Vasim revealed that Khalid had recorded the nude videos and impersonated a Crime Branch officer."A raid was conducted at Khalid's residence, and he was apprehended too," DCP Veer said.All three men were formally arrested on Wednesday after questioning. A police officer noted that typically, users of mule accounts are unaware of the main suspects in digital arrest schemes; they are usually tasked with siphoning off money from the account and transferring it to another."However, in this case, the suspects knew each other as they were all working together. This facilitated to nab the main accused swiftly," the officer said.

department, 24 officers Shifted

GNS News Agency, June 11

PoliceThe reshuffle also includes postings to units like the Women Cell, Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU), and various SHO-level assignments across the district.

In a major reshuffle within the Mohali police department, 24 police officials have been transferred to new postings, as per an official order issued by the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), SAS Nagar.

Among the significant transfers, Inspector Amandeep Singh has been posted as SHO Sohana from Police Lines, while Inspector Sunil Kumar has been shifted from SHO Majri to SHO City Kharar.Inspector Navdeep Sharma, formerly at SHO Mullanpur, will now take charge as SHO Sadar Kurali, and Inspector Gauravbans Singh has been moved from SHO Sadar Kurali to SHO City Kurali.

Inspector Simran Singh has been transferred from SHO Airport to SHO Lalru, while Inspector Jashanpreet Singh takes over as SHO Dhakoli, replacing his SHO City Kharar posting. Inspector Satinder Singh has been posted to SHO Zirakpur.Multiple personnel have been reassigned to the Anti-Narcotics Cell, including Head Constable Harjit Singh, L/ASI Mandeep Kaur, and SR/CTs Jagjit Singh, Sultan Singh, Daljit Singh, and Harpreet Singh.The reshuffle also includes postings to units like the Women Cell, Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU), and various SHO-level assignments across the district.

Ex-serviceman who shot son dead, injured wife often used to threaten to kill them: FIR



GNS News Agency, June 11

The 55-year-old ex-serviceman, Baljinder Singh, who allegedly shot dead his son and left his wife injured at their residence in Buani village of Ludhiana district late Tuesday night, would often threaten the mother-son duo to kill them after getting drunk. A police complaint was also registered against him in this connection earlier, his brother-in-law (wife's brother), Takwinder Singh, told Khanna police. An "in-ebriated" Baljinder allegedly opened fire from his 32-bore

licensed pistol at his wife, Balwinder Kaur, 52, and son Jagmeet Singh, 26, following a heated argument. Jagmeet suffered three bullet injuries in his chest and stomach and died on the spot, while Balwinder is undergoing treatment at a hospital in Ludhiana and is stated to be stable, police said. Khanna police booked Baljinder Singh for murder under section 103 of the BNS and section 27 of the Arms Act at the Doraha police station on the statement of Balwinder's brother, Takwinder Singh of Jassar village. Takwinder stated in his complaint that Balwinder married Baljinder over 30 years ago, and the couple had two sons, another being Manpreet, 28. "They never had a pleasant relationship, as Baljinder mostly used to stay out during his service in the Army. However, after his retirement 7-8 years ago, he started a private school bus business," the complainant said. "While staying with his family after retirement, he would get drunk daily and fight with his wife and younger son, threatening to kill them with his pistol. In 2024, a police complaint was filed, and Doraha police initiated preventive action against him. But he started abusing his wife and son again," the complainant alleged. Takwinder alleged that Tuesday night, his sister told him over the phone that Baljinder was again misbehaving with them. "I visited them immediately and found Baljinder furious and misbehaving with everyone. I tried to pacify him, and when I was about to leave their house, Baljinder again took out his weapon and said that he would finish his wife and son. He opened fire, targeting them before my eyes. Jagmeet suffered bullet injuries in his chest and stomach, while Balwinder got bullets in her back. They were rushed to a hospital in Ludhiana while Baljinder fled the scene. Jagmeet died," the complainant stated. Doraha police station SHO Inspector Akash Dutt said, "Earlier too, action was taken against Baljinder and he was detained on his wife's complaint as he used to threaten and abuse them after getting drunk. The accused is absconding and is yet to be arrested. His son's autopsy will be conducted on Thursday, and his wife is stable now."

Khushwant Singh litfest makes Oxford debut with message of peace across borders

GNS News Agency, June 11

Bringing alive many of Khushwant Singh's enduring passions — heritage and ecological preservation, cross-border ties between India and Pakistan, and the shared poetic legacy of South Asia — the Oxford edition was hosted in collaboration with the University of Oxford and the Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development, among other partners. This year's theme, "Humanity Across Borders," framed the entire discourse as a tribute to the prolific and iconoclastic author's values. The opening session featured novelist and literary agent Keshava Guha, who discussed his second book, *The Tiger's Share*, with Somerville College alumna and novelist Francesca Kay. The novel delves into the complexities of contemporary Delhi society, unspooling themes of ecological crisis and familial tensions.

Another highlight was the discussion between science writer Matt Ridley and infectious disease epidemiologist Dr Sunetra Gupta on Ridley's latest book, *Birds, Sex and Beauty*. The two examined recent developments in evolutionary theory with wit and depth, before turning to a contentious debate on the origins of the Covid-19 virus. Ridley, grandson of British architect Edwin Lutyens, spoke of his



family's links with Khushwant Singh's father, Sir Sobha Singh, while defending the lab-leak theory—a position Gupta firmly challenged. The Oxford edition also deepened the bond between India and Somerville College, whose historic connection includes early Indian women scholars like Princesses Catherine and Bamba Duleep Singh —daughters of Maharaja Duleep Singh and pioneers in the suffragette movement — as well as Indira Gandhi, who studied at Somerville before becoming India's first woman prime minister.

Hyderabad police arrest Rajasthan teen for posing as IAS, IPS officers to swindle money from their contacts



GNS News Agency, June 11

The Hyderabad police Wednesday announced the arrest of a 19-year-old man from Rajasthan for allegedly impersonating senior Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) officers online and fraudulently obtaining money from their contacts. They said he was involved in two similar cyber fraud cases in Telangana.

The accused, identified as Arbai Khan, is a resident of Bahadurpur Patti Meeran in Alwar of Rajasthan. He was arrested based on a complaint from senior Telangana IAS officer Navin Mittal. The probe found that the accused cre-

ated fake Facebook and Whatsapp accounts in the name of IPS and IAS officers, cheated their colleagues, and extorted money from them. In one instance, the accused allegedly tricked one of Mittal's friends into sending Rs 99,000 by claiming to be selling household items. According to the police, the fraudulent account was used to send friend requests and solicit money from the complainant's friends and relatives. The accused also allegedly used the complainant's photographs to create multiple fake profiles, falsely claiming to be a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) officer, and sent inappropriate and misleading messages. He was creating fake DPs and collecting money, the police added. A mobile phone used in the commission of the crime has been seized. The Hyderabad cybercrime police registered a First Information Report (FIR) under sections 66 C, 66 D (cybercrimes involving identity theft and cheating by personation using computer resources) of the Information Technology Act, and 318(4) (cheating), 319(2) (cheating by personation) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhitha (BNS). The accused was brought to Hyderabad on a transit warrant and remanded in judicial custody by a local court Wednesday. The police issued an advisory to the public to remain vigilant and not fall prey to messages or friend requests on social media platforms that claim to be from senior government officials and request money.

management of cardiovascular diseases (CVD), he said. An award-winning short film, 'Rakhiye Dil Ka Khayal Dil Se', written, produced and directed by Dr Deepak Puri and his Cardiomersion team, will also be released on June 6. The film has been awarded the best director award in the Indies Film Festival, and was also shortlisted by WHO in the universal viewing category in 2024 and highlighting sudden heart attack deaths in youngsters. The film motivates viewers to remain physically active and enjoy the health benefits of music and nature, and depicts shows why even apparently healthy and fit youngsters have sudden cardiac arrest and how this can be prevented by early risk factor screening and by adopting a healthy lifestyle. According to Dr Puri, nowadays youngsters blindly follow celebrities who themselves have stressful, unhealthy lifestyles. Many youngsters are falling into the trap of addictions, while most of the youngsters also follow self-medication or unconventional therapies, which have no scientifically proven basis and precious lives are lost. Most of the youngsters are unable to identify the symptoms of a heart attack and lose precious time during which their heart muscles get damaged. The film also celebrates the 100th birth anniversary of film star Dev Anand and his healthy lifestyle, who, says Dr Puri, believed that one should remain physically and mentally active throughout life instead of getting trapped in the web of risk factors that lead to lifestyle diseases like heart attacks, cancers and stroke.

Film by cardiologist highlights sudden heart-attack deaths in youngsters

GNS News Agency, June 11

Film by cardiologist highlights sudden heart-attack deaths in youngstersThe film motivates viewers to remain physically active and enjoy the health benefits of music and nature, and depicts shows why even apparently healthy and fit youngsters have sudden cardiac arrest. As many as 112 speakers from 25 countries and top cardiologists, cardiovascular and thoracic surgeons and doctors across the country will be part of a three-day 15th annual Cardiomersion Global Conference this week.

This year's conference is being held on a hybrid model, with foreign participants gathering in Rome while Indian counterparts will join virtually from Chandigarh to discuss the latest cardiovascular care updates. Cardiomersion was founded in 2011 to spread awareness about the comprehensive management of cardiovascular diseases. Dr Deepak Puri, founder chairman of Cardiomersion and senior director, CTVS at Max Hospital, Mohali, said that the 15th conference will focus on an integrated approach for comprehensive cardiovascular care with insightful sessions, expert discussions, and collaborative exchanges among experts from across the globe held under the theme of 'clinical prospects of drug research and interventions in cardiovascular thoracic disease management to share advancing technologies with advancing clinical and surgical skills.' The conference will also provide a comprehensive platform for the latest advancements and innovations in the

How an auto rickshaw driver's search for passengers led Mumbai police to a double murder



GNS News Agency, June 11

It was just another day for Arvind Singh. On September 9, 2014, when the auto rickshaw driver in Mumbai set out on his rounds at around 2 am, his only intention was to look for passengers. But within hours, Singh would end up witnessing an assault, receive a death threat, and later be accused of driving rashly and causing the deaths of two people. Singh was doing his routine rounds of Khar, located in Mumbai's western suburbs, when he heard loud shouting. A woman was allegedly being assaulted by a man with a paver block. Singh intervened and tried to stop the man, but he allegedly threatened to kill him.

Singh immediately rushed to the nearby Khar police station to seek help from the police. Two police personnel sat in Singh's rickshaw and arrived at the spot. According to the police, they spotted the woman Singh had seen earlier lying injured. While the man who Singh said had seen attacking her earlier was not around, another unidentified

man was lying there, with blood oozing from his head. The police called for an ambulance to take the injured to the hospital and began searching for the attacker. Not far from the spot, Singh allegedly spotted and identified the accused. The police detained the man and brought him to the police station for further interrogation. The man allegedly told the police that his name was Ravi Gouda and the woman Singh had seen him assault was his wife, Shanta. The police claimed that the other man found near Shanta was Chandu. He was allegedly attacked by Gouda because he suspected they were having an affair. Both Shanta and Chandu were rushed to the hospital but died during treatment. During the trial, Gouda's lawyer claimed that no proof was submitted that Shanta was related to him. It was also alleged that Singh had driven rashly and caused the death of the two victims and had concocted a false story to save himself. The police countered this claim and relied on another eyewitness, who also deposed about seeing Gouda attack the two victims. While deciding the case, the court said that the medical expert had examined the nature of the injuries caused to the two victims and concluded that they could have been caused by a paver block, and not in an accident. The court also noted that as the police station was close to the spot and the police had immediately reached the scene of the crime, the investigation was carried out within a short time of the offence. "...this short period of time goes to suggest that there was no room for any concoction either for the witnesses or for that matter for the police. The event happened in the middle of the night and most of the investigation...was completed within a short period," the Mumbai sessions court said in its order, convicting the accused in 2021.

Punjab and Haryana High Court ruling boosts NRIs' right to reclaim property, clears eviction path for landowners

GNS News Agency, June 11

In a major relief to Non-Resident Indian property owners, the Punjab and Haryana High Court last month upheld an eviction order in favour of an NRI based in England, in a long-pending property dispute with her tenants in Amritsar. The judgment was delivered by Justice Pankaj Jain on May 3. Dismissing a clutch of petitions filed by tenants, Popular Shuttle Company and Amrik Singh, the High Court backed the eviction order passed by the Rent Controller, Amritsar, allowing Harbans Kaur to reclaim her property in East Mohan Nagar, Amritsar.

The tenants had challenged the eviction on several grounds, including maintainability, partial eviction, and alleged misuse of procedural law. But the court rejected each contention, reinforcing that NRIs are entitled to reclaim property under Section 13-B of the East Punjab Urban Rent Restriction Act, 1949, provided they satisfy the ownership and bona fide need conditions. Harbans Kaur had filed for eviction on the grounds that she and her husband, who planned to retire from an engineering firm in the UK and start a Latha machine workshop, required the premises for personal and business use. The tenants, represented by Senior Advocate B R Mahajan and a legal team comprising Prateek Mahajan, Nikita Goel and Harita Dhanda, questioned whether Kaur could file a second petition after withdrawing an earlier one. They cited provisions of the Civil Procedure Code (Order XXIII Rule 1), arguing that this barred the fresh eviction plea.

But the court disagreed, citing settled law. "Reliance placed by Mr Mahajan on Order XXIII Rule 1 CPC is misconceived and cannot be accepted," Justice Jain ruled. He noted that a Rent Controller, unlike a civil court, does not have the authority to refuse a fresh petition from the landlady. The court also held that Kaur's petition against multiple tenants was valid. "Section 13-B does not restrict the right of a landlady to the number of tenants, but it re-



stricts her right to seek eviction qua number of buildings," the judge said. He referred to the Delhi High Court's ruling in *Atma Ram Properties Pvt Ltd v. Prem Nath Motors Pvt Ltd* to support the maintainability of a single petition involving common legal and factual questions. The tenants' argument of "partial eviction" — claiming only parts of the property were lawfully rented — was also dismissed. The court backed the Rent Controller's factual findings that written rent agreements existed for specific portions, and oral tenancy claims for the rest could not be accepted. On the nature of use, the tenants argued that a non-residential property could not be reclaimed for residential needs. The court found this unconvincing. "The landlady sought ejectment... pleading residential as well as non-residential need," said Justice Jain, adding there was no legal bar on such dual-purpose use under the Act. In conclusion, the High Court dismissed all connected matters, reaffirming the eviction order. "In view of the above, finding no merit in the present revision petition, the same is ordered to be dismissed," the judge said. The ruling reaffirms the statutory right of NRIs to reclaim property for personal use, without being caught in prolonged litigation. Under Section 13-B of the 1949 Act, an NRI landowner can seek eviction once during their lifetime, provided they have owned the property for at least five years and can prove genuine need.

Man with many names: He posed as a journalist, cheated over 100 people by promising jobs with global firms

GNS News Agency, June 11

The Noida police Wednesday arrested a 36-year-old man who allegedly posed as a journalist and duped over 100 people by promising them jobs at several multinational companies. "The accused has been identified as Wasim Ahmed, a native of Bijnor currently residing in the Ecotech-3 area of Gautam Buddha Nagar. The Sector-63 police arrested him," said Shakti Mohan Avasthy, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Central Noida.

According to the police, more than 200 visiting cards, interview forms, job-related documents, two mobile phones, and a Wagon R car have been recovered from his possession. Avasthy said the arrest was made after the police received a complaint on April 26 from a man, Yogendra, at Noida's Sector-63 police station. He said he was duped by a 'so-called' journalist who promised to get him a job. "Based on local intelligence, the police nabbed Ahmed," said Avasthy. According to the police, during the investigation, they discovered that Ahmed went by several names, including Ravindra Sharma, Kapil Bhati, Piyush Bhati, Rohit Kumar, Rohit Chandela and Rahul Bhati. "For the last six months, Ahmed ran an office in Noida's Sector-81 and employed two women, whom he paid Rs 12,000 a month and cheated unemployed youth on the pretext of getting them jobs at companies like Samsung, Oppo, Vivo, Haier, and LG, among several others," said the DCP. The police said that Ahmed, during interrogation, revealed he also



owned a YouTube channel, TODAY Jobs Noida, where he advertised vacancies, and youths would reach his office in search of jobs. "He would charge them registration and certain file charges, then, after taking their fake interviews, give them fake appointment letters from companies like Samsung, Oppo, Vivo, Haier, LG, etc.," said Avasthy. "When these people would discover they had not gotten a job with the promised company and would call him, Ahmed would switch off his phone. If those duped people visited his office, he would make excuses and scare them away by calling himself a journalist," the DCP said. The DCP said Ahmed has a criminal history and previously served prison sentences twice, having been implicated in similar cases at Sector-49 and Sector-20, respectively.

Woman 'held hostage' by family in Bihar produced before Bombay High Court by Pune police

The police in Pune's Ambegaon Tuesday presented a 24-year-old woman, who had allegedly been held hostage by her family in Bihar's Samastipur, before the Bombay High Court based on a habeas corpus petition by her friend. Speaking to The Indian Express, Senior Inspector Sharad Zine of the Ambegaon police station said the woman's friend, through advocates Dyanesh Patil and Abhang Suryawamshi, approached the Bombay High Court. "The woman was earlier staying in Pune and shifted to Navi Mumbai, where she stayed with the petitioner," he said. As per the petition, when the woman went to Bihar to be with her parents, her mobile phone was allegedly taken away from her. She managed to access someone else's phone

to drop a message to her friend about her situation. The friend filed a criminal writ petition in this regard to request that she be brought back.

The Bombay High Court on May 29 issued a writ of habeas corpus (a writ that seeks the production of a person before a court) for the Pune district police to produce the woman before it. The responsibility fell on the Ambegaon police as she had been staying within their jurisdiction. Zine said the team that went to Bihar comprised Assistant Police Inspector Priyanka Gore, Head Constable Vinayak Padale, and woman Constable Nilima Jadhav. "The woman was in her home in the village of Ujiarpur in Samastipur district of Bihar.

25% rice yet to be milled in Punjab; frustrated millers say repeat of last year, ask govt to create space in godowns



Nearly 25 per cent of rice in Punjab remains unmilled two months after the milling deadline, leading to concerns from millers about logistical challenges and rising costs. As of June 2, only around 75 per cent of the expected rice from the current kharif marketing season 2024-25 has been delivered to government agencies. With 171.84 lakh tonnes of paddy stored, millers face pressure to expedite milling to avoid quality deterioration before the monsoon. Punjab government agencies have stored 171.84 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of paddy in around 5,000 rice mills, which are to deliver 116.29 LMT of rice after milling to the government. To date, mills have delivered over 87 LMT of rice to government agencies. Punjab's stores currently hold 140 LMT of rice, which implies that 53 LMT of last year's rice remains in storage Punjab has limited storage capacity and the new Rabi marketing season's wheat procurement has also just concluded with the government procurement. This means that around 100 LMT of the freshly arrived 119 LMT wheat needs space.

Last year, millers were up in arms as the government delayed the milling process until the end of September, while the new paddy procurement season begins on October 1. That time, procurement of paddy was also delayed for weeks because millers refused to store the government's rice in their mills, demanding that the milling deadline be set to March 31, along with some other demands. Despite repeated reminders and the earlier suggested deadline of March 31 for milling completion, a significant portion of paddy remains unprocessed in rice mills across several districts. There is a lack of uniformity in milling; some districts have reached up to 97 per cent completion, while others have up to 44 per cent of milling pending.

Out of 44.2 LMT of paddy stored by Markfed, only 22.26 LMT of rice has been delivered, leaving nearly 7 LMT still pending. In agencies like Pungrain, PSWC, and PUNSUP, over 12 lakh tonnes, 3.30 lakh tonnes, and over 6 lakh tonnes of rice, respectively, are pending. Millers are frustrated with delays, logistical bottlenecks, rising storage costs, and the risk of paddy shrinkage due to hot weather conditions and spoilage ahead of the monsoon.

"The milling should have been wrapped up by March 31. Extending the season puts pressure on our infrastructure and affects planning for the next crop cycle," said a leading rice miller from Sangrur, the district with 26.61 per cent pending rice delivery. Sangrur district has 15.69 LMT of paddy stored, of which only about 7.8 LMT of rice has been delivered so far, against a target of 10.61 LMT. Other districts with high volumes of balance rice in the mills include Moga: 15.3 LMT paddy stored; only 5.8 LMT rice delivered (56.06 per cent), Ludhiana West: 9.81 LMT paddy stored; 3.91 LMT rice delivered (58.98 per cent), Ludhiana East: 61.48 per cent milling completed and Barnala: 65.18

per cent rice delivered. In contrast, districts like Fazilka, Pathankot, and Hoshiarpur have performed better, with more than 95 per cent of milling completed. In Amritsar and Tarn Taran, 92 per cent and 90 per cent of the rice, respectively, has been delivered by mills.

The Department of Food, Civil Supplies, and Consumer Affairs, along with procurement agencies such as Punjab State Grains Procurement Corporation (PUNGRAIN), Punjab State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited (PUNSUP), and Punjab State Warehousing Corporation (PSWC), are now under pressure to expedite the process. Combined figures from all agencies show that out of 171.8 LMT paddy procured, only about 87 LMT of rice has been delivered so far, leaving a shortfall of nearly 29.3 LMT across the state. Transport backlog is further compounding the delays. Out of the over 4 lakh wagons required to move rice, over 1 lakh wagons are still pending. Districts like Moga account for a significant portion of this backlog, with 15,708 pending wagons. Millers warn that the impending monsoon could compromise paddy quality if not milled on time. "Moisture and fungus risk increase drastically. If the milling is not expedited, this could lead to both economic and food safety issues," said another miller from Moga. While government officials acknowledge the delay, they cite lack of space in government godowns because the RMS also concluded recently and the government procured 119 LMT out of which 18-19 LMT was transported to other states and around 100 LMT is lying in the state, including 60 LMT in cover and plinth due to lack of space in the covered godowns.

With only four months left before the next procurement cycle, millers urge the state to take immediate corrective steps or risk rolling over the backlog into the next season, putting even greater strain on Punjab's already burdened food grain infrastructure. Prem Goel, president of the Punjab Rice Millers Association, said, "Last year, too, we took up the matter with the government to complete custom rice milling by the end of March. Even after two more months beyond March 31, the government has yet to take delivery of 25 per cent of the rice. The delay is due to the lack of space in government stores to keep the milled rice, forcing mills to store government paddy at their own cost. If any shrinkage or discolouration in the grain takes place, the financial burden also falls on us." He added that there are districts with high pending custom-milled rice (CMR), while in districts with 97 per cent delivery, operations are smooth. "Even the Moga administration last month wrote to the general manager, FCI Punjab, requesting augmentation of storage space for rice mills in Moga to ensure smooth milling and delivery."

Punjab's storage capacity is under stress as the state has a total foodgrain storage capacity of 220 LMT, including 174 LMT covered storage — 167 LMT in government godowns and the rest in private silos. Punjab's total food procurement exceeds 300 LMT, comprising 170–180 LMT of paddy, which yields 116–120 LMT of rice and 120–132 LMT of wheat. To manage this, the state must immediately transport the grain to needy states or risk overflowing godowns, thereby expediting the pending rice milling. Officials said they are trying to complete the milling by the end of July. B Srinivasan, general manager of FCI Punjab, said, "At the moment, Punjab has a total foodgrain storage capacity of 220 LMT, while the total rice stock position as of June 2 stands at 140 LMT in the state and Wheat is around 100 LMT but regular transportation of the grain from Punjab to other states is taking place."

Karnataka Govt suspends senior IFS officer R Gokul over stand on forest land donated to HMT Ltd in Bengaluru

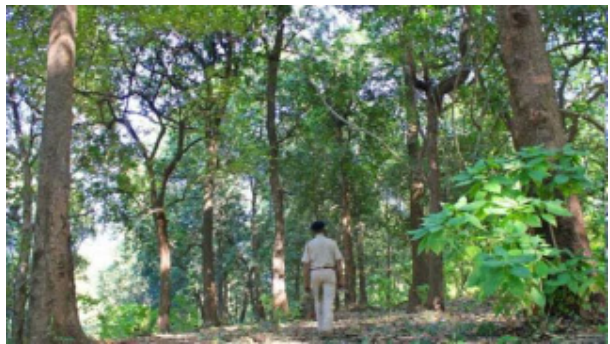
Bengaluru In recent years, large portions of the land given to HMT by the forest department for industrial purposes have allegedly been used to facilitate major real estate projects through the connivance of state and central government officials. The Karnataka Government Wednesday suspended a senior Indian Forest Service officer, R Gokul, for allegedly facilitating the handover of forest land worth nearly Rs 14,000 crore, held by the public sector company Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT) in Bengaluru, to third parties, including private entities.

The government issued the suspension order stating that "in exercise of the powers under Rule 3(1) (a) of the All India Service (Discipline & Appeal) Rules, 1969, Sri R. Gokul, IFS, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Director General, EMPRI, Bengaluru, is placed under suspension with immediate effect, pending inquiry." The reason for Gokul's suspension has been cited as his actions regarding the "denotification of lands granted to HMT measuring 443 Acres 6 guntas situated at Peenya Jalahalli Plantation". According to the government order, an interlocutory application was filed by forest officials before the Supreme Court in 2020 "without obtaining the approval of the then minister-in-charge or sanction from the state cabinet" for permission to denotify 443.6 acres of land granted to HMT at the Peenya Jalahalli Plantation.

Initially, the state government issued notices to Sandeep Dave, a retired IAS officer and the former additional chief secretary for Forest, Ecology and Environment; Vijay Kumar Gogi, retired IFS officer and the former principal secretary for Forest, Ecology and Environment; Smitha Bijur, IFS, ex-principal secretary, Forest, Ecology and Environment and Gokul. The government has reported receiving replies to the notices from three of the four officers (other than Sandeep Dave) but said that Gokul had written to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) after receiving his notice "seeking protection" in an illegal mining case from the 2010 period where he is a key witness against a mafia that was operated by political figures.

The IFS officer also did not obtain permission or inform the government when he filed an "Intervention Application (113311/2025) in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India against IA (190307/2024 WP (C) 337/1995) filed by the State Government in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India for withdrawal of the IA (60477/2020 in WP (C) 337/1995) related to the de-notification of lands belonging to HMT Ltd," said the suspension order. The government order said the conduct of Gokul "is in violation of Rule 17 of All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968, and the State Government is prima facie satisfied that it is necessary" to place him under suspension with immediate effect.

Last week, Karnataka Minister for Forest and Environment Eshwar Khandre announced that the government



had recommended action against two serving IFS officers, one retired IFS officer, and one retired IAS officer for filing of an application in the Supreme Court "seeking permission for denotification of HMT forest land worth over Rs. 14,000 crore". "This plantation is owned by HMT. It is illegal for the organisation to sell to government departments/organisations and private individuals. However, the fact that forest officials did not make any attempt to recover the land and, without even drawing the attention of the Cabinet, submitted an Interim Application (IA) to the Supreme Court seeking denotification in 2020 is a cause for doubt," Khandre has said. The controversy pertains to 599 acres of land in a plantation in the Peenya Jalahalli region in North Bengaluru, which was declared a forest in 1896 and was later transferred to HMT in the 1960s to create industrial infrastructure through a donation deed by the district collector. In recent years, large portions of the land given to HMT by the forest department for industrial purposes have been used to facilitate major real estate projects through the connivance of state and central government officials. Over the last year, a dispute arose over the land between the Union Heavy Industries Ministry headed by H D Kumaraswamy, who is looking at monetising the land to resuscitate the fortunes of HMT, and the state forest department, which is trying to recover the HMT land by arguing that it remains a forest land.

In November last year, the Karnataka Government issued notices to the forest officials concerned over the filing of the IA in the SC on the HMT forest land. In January this year, the state government ordered that since 281 acres of the 599 acres of land donated to HMT is vacant land "without any building," the forest department must take possession of the vacant forest land. Over 200 acres of the HMT land in Bengaluru have been handed over to private players and others, even as HMT Ltd has collapsed in the last four decades. One of the major transfers of land happened between 1999 and 2004 when the Congress was in power, leading to the construction of apartment complexes by some of the big real estate developers of Bengaluru.

Has the environmental crisis in India exacerbated? | Explained



The story so far: As we observe June 5 as World Environment Day, one takes stock of how the previous decade has exacerbated/mitigated existing environmental crises.

What are main environmental crises?

The world is grappling with three deeply intertwined planetary crises: carbon emissions, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Over the last 10 years, these crises have deepened, despite growing awareness and international efforts. Between 2015 and 2024, global CO2 emissions rose from around 34.1 billion metric tonnes to 37.4 billion metric tonnes, a nearly 10% increase. In the same period, India's emissions surged from 2.33 billion to 3.12 billion metric tonnes, persistent dependence on coal and oil. On the biodiversity front, mass extinctions and ecological disruptions are becoming the norm. India, with its mega-diverse ecosystems, faces growing threats from deforestation, wetland degradation, and monoculture agriculture. Meanwhile, pollution, particularly air pollution, has remained stubbornly high. India consistently ranks among the world's most polluted countries, with Delhi topping global lists.

What are the root causes?

There are myriad causative factors. First is fossil fuel dependency. Most global carbon emissions are driven by coal, oil, and gas consumption in power generation, transportation, and heavy industry. In India, coal still accounts for nearly 70% of electricity generation. Second, we have deforestation and land-use change. In India, forest clearances for roads, mining, and dams have increased, especially in biodiversity-rich regions like the Western Ghats and the northeast. Third, agricultural intensification. High-input monocultures, especially driven by agribusinesses, destroy habitats and pollute water bodies with nitrates, pesticides, and plastics. Waste mismanagement and unchecked urbanisation is also a major factor causing environmental degradation. Unregulated landfills, untreated sewage, and industrial effluents have polluted rivers like the Ganga and Yamuna. India generates 62 million tonnes of waste annually, of which barely 20% is scientifically processed. And finally, overconsumption and industrialisation. The Global North's high consumption and global supply chains

The unsung heroes in Royal Challengers Bengaluru's rise to the summit

One of the oft-used cliches is that the IPL is a marathon, not a sprint. Delhi Capitals will ruefully agree — after all, they won their first four matches in a canter yet failed to make even a serious push for the Playoffs. It's also said regularly that while batters win matches, bowlers win tournaments. One need not look beyond Royal Challengers Bengaluru to understand exactly what that means. On an emotional, dramatic Tuesday night in front of nearly 100,000 spectators at the gigantic Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, the most passionate sports fans in the world were finally rewarded for loyalty when Rajat Patidar did what Rahul Dravid, Kevin Pietersen, Anil Kumble, Daniel Vettori, Virat Kohli and Faf du Plessis before him had failed to accomplish. In his first season as the captain of the franchise, any franchise, the unassuming Madhya Pradesh batter took his team over the finish line, sparking waves of unchecked celebration throughout the night on the pothole-ridden streets of Bengaluru. After 17 unsuccessful attempts, RCB had finally shed the monkey off their back. There was unalloyed delight, of course, but also a huge sigh of relief. And the unmistakable air of having 'done it for Virat', in a throwback to 2011 when triumph at the 50-over World Cup in Mumbai was dedicated to the peerless Sachin Tendulkar.

Kohli was the obvious cynosure, like he always is when he takes the cricket field, and there is no mistaking his imprint on the march to the Promised Land. He topped 600 runs in an IPL season for the third time on the bounce, finishing with a franchise-high 657 runs. Only Orange Cap winner Sai Sudharsan (759) and the tournament's Most Valuable Player, Suryakumar Yadav (717), boasted a higher tally. No one scored as many half-centuries (8) as the former India and RCB skipper and his strike-rate of 144.71 was a marked improvement on his overall IPL strike-rate of 132.86. Alongside the effervescent Phil Salt, Kohli formed an exceptional opening pair. The Englishman, who had struck up an excellent alliance with Sunil Narine at the top of the tree when Kolkata Knight Riders won a third title last season, ended up with 403 runs, strike-rate 175.98. Until he pulled up lame with a hamstring injury deep into the league stage, Australian finisher Tim David had sent the RCB faithful into raptures by smashing 16 fours and 14 sixes in 101 deliveries to average 62.33 and strike at 185.14 runs per 100 balls faced, while Romario Shepherd became a household name after a 14-ball half-century (the joint second-fastest in the tournament's history) against Chennai Super Kings a month back. Patidar himself and feisty, inventive wicketkeeper-batter Jitesh Sharma were the other batting heroes at various stages while local lads Devdutt Padikkal and his injury replacement Mayank Agarwal more than held their own, which meant that for the first time in their history, IPL weren't reliant merely on their top three or four, as has been the case for much of their existence.

One of the reasons why RCB only made three finals in the first 17 years was because they didn't have sustained firepower in their bowling. There would be the occasional high-performing asset — none more so than Yuzvendra Chahal — but one couldn't shake off the feeling that RCB had been so fixated on their explosive top order which included Kohli (the only man to play for the same franchise for all 18 years) and at various stages Chris Gayle, A.B. de Villiers, Yuvraj Singh and Shane Watson that they didn't quite pay the same attention to their bowling. That anomaly was emphatically corrected at the big November auction in Jeddah, and the results are there for all to see. RCB weren't just content to secure the services of Josh Hazlewood; they stuck with Yash Dayal, the left-arm quick, while roping in the experienced Bhuvneshwar Kumar. The two Indians played all 15 matches while Aussie Hazlewood missed three games with a shoulder injury, during which time his value to the team became even more evident. Rasik Salam and Lungi Ngidi were used sparingly — both played only two

externalise pollution and ecological damage to the Global South.

What is the role of the Global North and large capital in accelerating this crisis?

The Global North and transnational capital have played a central role in pushing the planet toward ecological catastrophe. Historically, industrialised nations accumulated wealth through resource extraction and carbon-intensive growth, and today, they continue to drive the crisis via consumption-heavy economies. Just to cite one example, in the last four decades there has been an increase of more than 40% carbon emissions since the industrial revolution and merely 30 TNCs are responsible for contributing more than 35% of it. Even as they offshore pollution-intensive industries to countries like India, they maintain control over global finance, supply chains, and climate discourse. This allows them to delay meaningful climate action, while preaching sustainability to the Global South.

Large corporations, particularly in fossil fuels, mining, agribusiness, and fast fashion, are among the worst offenders. A 2017 study showed just 100 companies were responsible for 71% of global emissions since 1988. These corporations influence policy through lobbying and resist regulation that could impact profits. In India, foreign investment has flowed into extractive and polluting sectors — from coal mines in Jharkhand to palm oil plantations in the Andaman Islands — often with state support and at the expense of local communities and ecosystems.

How is India positioned?

As a developing economy, India has a smaller per capita carbon footprint (~1.9 tonnes/year vs. the U.S.'s 14.7 tonnes), yet its aggregate emissions are rising due to rapid industrialisation and urbanisation. The poor bear the brunt of pollution and climate shocks — whether in Delhi's smog-choked slums or drought-stricken villages in Maharashtra. Yet India is also a victim of the environmental damage caused by global forces. Climate change, largely driven by the historical emissions of richer nations, has intensified India's monsoons, floods, and heatwaves, while biodiversity loss has weakened India's food systems and health infrastructure.

What needs to be done?

A meaningful response must include accountability from nations of the Global North. Wealthy nations must drastically cut emissions, provide climate finance, and stop outsourcing dirty industries. Large polluting corporations must also be held accountable through strict laws and carbon taxation. Moreover, the future of development must be based on ecological concerns. For example, corporations that do not adhere to the 'green policy' should not be allowed to trade in the market. Creating such protocols will pave way for systemic changes. Sustainable development should be encouraged with a shift toward low-carbon livelihoods, ecological agriculture, and community-led conservation.

games apiece — which was because Shepherd slotted in nicely as a fourth seamer when required. The West Indian did go at 10.78 runs per over but had the happy knack of picking up big wickets, none bigger than Punjab Kings captain Shreyas Iyer, caught behind in the final for just one after having knocked Mumbai Indians out in Sunday's Qualifier 2 with a special unbeaten 87.

The pundits were unanimous in their view that RCB had had an excellent auction, that they had most bases covered. If it was only 'most' and not 'all' bases, that was because the spin department looked a little undercooked. Their main specialist spinners were Krunal Pandya, the fastish left-arm, and Suyash Sharma, the little leggie who tends to look at the sky when he releases the ball. Competent, sure, was the verdict, but game-changing? Decisively impactful? Hmmm, the jury went. How wrong we were all to be proved. The older Pandya brother will never fall in the 'classical' category — not that he will ever lay claim to it — but he is street-smart, clever, a half-step ahead of the game, making the most of whatever he has without attempting to overreach. Throughout the campaign, his changes of pace and angles were exemplary; he even bowled the bouncer, often clocked in the mid-110s, with reasonable regularity. He rushed through his overs, he was seldom collared — his economy of 8.23 was the best among all RCB bowlers who played at least two matches — but most importantly, he kept adding to the wickets column. On Tuesday, Krunal packed off Prabhsimran Singh and dangerous Aussie Josh Inglis, two wicketkeeper-batters eminently capable of changing the course of a game in a matter of a few overs. Like he had done in the previous 14 games, he was relentless, probing, testing — not with loop and drift and dip and turn, but with common sense which in reality isn't all that common. By the time he was done with his spell, he had picked up two for 17, enough to secure him the Player of the Final award for an unprecedented second time in the IPL. Krunal's 17 wickets were the joint second highest for RCB, alongside Bhuvneshwar; unsurprisingly, Hazlewood topped the charts with 22 sticks. Suyash wasn't in the same wicket-taking league as his 'spin' twin, but he too had a season to remember — eight wickets, economy 8.84. At KKR, he had often slipped in as an Impact Player; here, he often played entire matches, the surest indication of how highly he is rated by the team management even in the nascent stages of his career. In his 14 appearances, Suyash bowled 50 overs, the second most by an RCB bowler (behind Bhuvneshwar's 52), reiterating the confidence Patidar and Jitesh, who stood in as captain when Patidar was nursing a finger injury, had in the 22-year-old. While the spinners unexpectedly whipped up a storm, Bhuvneshwar and Dayal ensured that Hazlewood wasn't left to do all the heavy lifting on his own. Bhuvneshwar is a seasoned campaigner who won the title with Sunrisers Hyderabad in 2016 and is closing in on 200 IPL wickets. He provided the cutting edge with the new ball, making up for a slight drop in pace by bringing his experience into play and dipping into his vast reservoir of tricks. He was also a mentor to Dayal, useful tips from mid-on or mid-off ensuring that the left-arm quick didn't get carried away. Dayal has been one of the stars for RCB in the last couple of seasons. He was a shining light in Gujarat Titans' surge to the title on their debut in 2022, but like Chetan Sharma and his last-ball six (conceded to Javed Miandad in Sharjah), he was remembered more for having gone for five sixes in the last over the following year when Rinku Singh muscled KKR to one of the more famous T20 victories. The way the 27-year-old from Allahabad has bounced back is the stuff of legend. Now, Dayal doesn't invoke memories of Rinku anymore. He has established his own identity as a wicket-taker with the new ball, because he is able to swing the white ball when it is new,

How the Bangalore Palace (Utilisation and Regulation of Land) Bill will help Karnataka government bypass Supreme Court ruling



Even as the opposition BJP and Janata Dal (Secular) vociferously opposed it and called it an act of “political vendetta”, the Karnataka Legislative Assembly passed the Bangalore Palace (Utilisation and Regulation of Land) Bill, 2025, on March 6. It was passed in the Legislative Council on March 10. The legislation arises out of the nearly a decade-old contempt case over the Bangalore Palace Grounds, which the Karnataka government has been fighting with the erstwhile royal family of Mysuru in the Supreme Court. Replacing an Ordinance that was passed earlier, the Bill reserves the Karnataka government’s right to acquire or not acquire the Palace Grounds land for the widening of the traffic-choked Ballari Road and Jayamahala Road.

Apart from helping the State government address the contempt petition, the Bill is seen as a move to circumvent the top court’s order that had earlier directed the government to compensate the Mysuru royal family with Transferable Development Rights (TDR) worth ₹3,400 crore for taking over the land.

The Bangalore Palace (Utilisation and Regulation of Land) Bill, 2025, empowers the State Government to utilise any portion of the Bangalore Palace for an infrastructure project, and to decide whether to go ahead with it, in whole or in part. If the government proceeds with the project, it will pay the required compensation to the claimants for the portion of palace land utilised. The Bill defines “claimants” as those who have a right, title, or interest in the Bangalore Palace or the open space around it. However, if the State decides to drop the project, it holds the right to restore possession of the part of the Bangalore Palace land which was sought. While it will bear the entire expenditure for this, it will not compensate the claimants.

The Bill states that for the purpose of compensation, the guidance value will be calculated as of November 21, 1996, according to section 8 and section 9 of the Bangalore

Palace (Acquisition and Transfer) Act, 1996. This is in direct contradiction to the apex court’s directions to calculate the compensation according to the guidance value of Stamps and Registration Department, revised in 2023-24, under undersection 45B of the Karnataka Stamp Act, 1957. The Bill says that the compensation paid to the claimants will be proportionate to the extent of the land used and will include TDR. Granting the government absolute authority, the Bill states that whatever compensation is prescribed under it is final, and the claimants have no other right to compensation.

In the event of a dispute over compensation between claimants, the Bill gives power to the State government to deposit the compensation before the Commissioner, who will be appointed by the government. None of the claimants can withdraw any part of this compensation without furnishing a copy of the final order from a civil court to the Commissioner. In all matters of release of compensation to the rightful recipient among the legally embattled claimants, the decision of the Commissioner is absolute. In another measure that seeks to give the government full control over the property, the Bill protects officers of the State Government or its instrumentalities (such as BDA and BBMP) from proceedings, civil or criminal, or any punishment for an “action taken in good faith”.

Why was the land acquired?

The Bangalore Palace Grounds, located in the heart of Bengaluru city, is spread across 472 acres and 16 guntas of expansive land. In 2009, the Karnataka government decided to notify 15 acres and 17.5 guntas (62,475 square metres) for widening stretches on the traffic-choked Ballari Road and Jayamahala Road. While the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) calculated the TDR value, Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) issued a notice to provide TDR compensation of ₹1 crore to the property owners — the erstwhile royal family of Mysuru. In July, 2024, the BDA took possession of the palace grounds and handed it over to the BBMP.

How was the valuation done?

Amid confusions that the TDR compensation would be 1,400 crore, the BBMP had clarified that the calculation was done based on the provisions under the Bangalore Palace (Acquisition and Transfer) Act, 1996, passed for the sole purpose of acquisition and transfer of the palace property. With the BDA fixing a rate of ₹120.68 per square metre (based on the 1996 value of the land), officials said that 472 acres of palace land would be worth 11 crore, and 15 acres would be valued at ₹60 lakh, and 1.5 times the

sum would come to around 1 crore. However, the erstwhile royal family decided to contest this “measly valuation” of the sprawling palace land, whose current market value is estimated to be around 100 crore per acre. Moreover, in June 2023, when the BBMP issued a notification for acquisition of a portion of palace land for widening of Jayamahala Road from Mehkri Circle to Cantonment Railway Station, it had mentioned the “market value of the land” and had not invoked the value of land as per the Palace Acquisition Act.

What were the Supreme Court’s directions?

On December 10, 2024, the Supreme Court ruled in favour of the Mysuru royals, ordering Karnataka government to issue fresh TDR as per the guidance value of adjoining lands, this time in line with the Karnataka Stamps Act, 1957.

The Supreme Court fixed the value of TDR for Ballari Road at ₹2,83,500/sqm and ₹2,04,000/sqm for Jayamahala Road as per the prevailing guidance value under Section 45B of Karnataka Stamp Act, 1957. Under the TDR, the compensation is to be 1.5 times the market value or the guidance value, whichever is higher. This took the total value of the TDR to an estimated 3,011.66 crore.

What is the State government’s stand?

Following the setback, the Karnataka government initially decided to drop the proposal to acquire the palace land, arguing that the TDR value fixed by the apex court had made the acquisition financially unviable. “The Supreme Court rate for the TDR to be given for land acquisition is expected to cause financial burden on the State exchequer and will have adverse impact on financial discipline,” a Karnataka Cabinet note said. The Cabinet also felt that financially unviable projects are against public interest and public policy. Six weeks later, on January, 2025, the State government promulgated the Bangalore Palace (Utilisation and Regulation of Land) Ordinance, 2025. Taking a stern view of the State government’s changing stands, the Supreme Court on February 27 yet again asked the Karnataka government to deposit with it the TDR certificates of over ₹3,000 crore within 10 days. Days later, even as the Bangalore Palace (Utilisation and Regulation of Land) Bill was tabled and later passed in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly during the Budget session, the Karnataka Cabinet also decided to deposit TDR certificates worth ₹3,400 crore with the Supreme Court. However, sources said, it will be done with a request to the Supreme Court to keep the TDR certificates with it for now and take a call on whether to pay this to the royal family, based on the outcome of the petition filed before it over ownership of Bengaluru Palace Grounds.

Two of three Indian nationals executed in UAE buried, says MEA

The two Indian nationals executed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in February for murder were buried in Abu Dhabi on Thursday (March 6, 2025). A third Indian national was also executed the same month, the UAE has informed India. Officials of the Indian Embassy in the UAE were present at the burial of Shahzadi Khan of Uttar Pradesh and Mohammed Rinash Arangilottu of Kerala. The third Indian, Muraleedharan Perumthatta Valappil, also from Kerala, was convicted of murdering an Indian national. His last rites are awaited.

Shahzadi Khan’s family members could not attend her burial but “authorised representatives” of the family were present, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. Arangilottu’s family members were present, it added. While Khan was executed after being accused of murdering a child, Arangilottu was convicted of killing an Emirati national. Earlier on Monday (March 3, 2025), the MEA informed the Delhi High Court that 33-year-old Khan was executed on February 15, which the UAE authorities conveyed to the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi on February 28. The family of Khan was subsequently informed by the MEA about the execution. Her case drew attention because of the nature of the crime that she was accused of. Sources said she was accused of murdering the infant of an Indian couple, Nazia and Faiz, who were also her employers. The Hindu reported on Thursday (March 6, 2025) that her family had written to the MEA seeking details of the legal options that were explored to save her from being executed. In response to The Hindu, official sources said the Indian Embassy had reached out to Khan and tried “all options within the legal framework of the UAE” to get a mercy petition for Khan. This did not succeed as her employer had refused to support such a plea. The execution of three Indians within a month is being considered a rare occurrence in the Gulf where a large number of Indian nationals are employed both as white-collar and blue-collar workers. The incidents in the UAE have come weeks after the case of Nimisha Priya of Kerala hit the headlines. Nimisha Priya is on death row in Yemen after being convicted of murdering and dismembering her abusive employer. The death sentence in her case has not been carried out till now as there are doubts over which one of the contesting governments in the war-torn country passed the sentence. On January 1, the Embassy of Yemen in Delhi said the case was being handled by the Houthi militia and that the Chairman of the Presidential Leadership Council of the Republic of Yemen Rashad Al-Alimi had not “ratified” the death sentence.

The legacy of Begum Rokeya and Sakhawat Memorial Girls School in Kolkata

Nestled in an upscale Kolkata neighbourhood, Lord Sinha Road; off Park Street is the school of Begum Rokeya’s dreams. Sakhawat Memorial Girls School stands out in a neighbourhood famous for premium private schools such as La Martiniere, Shri Shikshayatan, Birla High School and St. Xavier’s. This government school that charges fees of ₹250/month for primary sections and ₹290/month for secondary sections stands tall on its founder’s vision to empower women through education so they can participate in society as full citizens.

Begum Rokeya is a 20th century pioneer in education and emancipation of Muslim women in the subcontinent and the writer of the much revered and pathbreaking feminist novel- Sultana’s Dream (1905). Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain was born in 1880 in Rangpur (now in Bangladesh) to a well off but orthodox Bengali Muslim family. The societal norms of the era allowed girls to have religious education via learning only Arabic and Persian. It deprived girls of basic formal education. Rokeya was helped by her sister Karimunnisa and brother Ibrahim Saber who taught her English and Bengali. She was married at the age of 16 to a much older man named Khan Bahadur Sakhawat Hossain who was supportive of furthering her studies. He passed away 10 years into their marriage but he did leave behind a substantial amount of funds for Rokeya to pursue her dream of opening a girls school. Five months after the death of her husband, Rokeya started a high school in Bhagalpur. She named it after him -- Sakhawat Memorial Girls High School. Disputes with her in-laws made her shift the school to Kolkata. The school had a rocky start with few willing to take admission in it. Rokeya started a door-to-door campaign to encourage students to join her school but was met with a lot of opposition and reluctance. However, after much persuasion, the first batch commenced with nine girls. Rokeya Begum ran the school for some 24 years until she passed away. Despite the initial hesitation of parents and several other obstacles, the school has been providing education to girls for more than 100 years. The school has grown to be amongst the best girls schools in the region. It has some 1,300 students now, from Kindergarten to Class 12.

The school offers admission into its Pre-Primary section from the age of 6 and has Class 1-12. Its curriculum is affiliated to WBSE (West Bengal Board of Secondary Education) and WBCHSE (West Bengal Council for Higher Secondary Education). Two mediums of instruction are offered in parallel: Bengali and Urdu running parallel from Pre-Primary to the Secondary level. The school has two mediums of instruction in the Higher Secondary level as well. Science subjects are taught in both Bengali and English medium in the H.S level. The Bengali/Urdu student ratio is 70 to 30. In accordance with the vision and rich literary background of Begum Rokeya, the school houses a well stacked library adorned with more than 2,000 books and journals. Two large buildings and a small but lush playground are the school’s hallmarks. The classrooms are clean and airy; there are a few extra rooms for co-curricular activities and workshops. Begum Rokeya is a 20th century pioneer in education and emancipation of Muslim women in the subcontinent and the writer of the much revered and pathbreaking feminist novel- Sultana’s Dream (1905). Begum Rokeya is a 20th century pioneer in education and emancipation of Muslim women in the subcontinent and the writer of the much revered and pathbreaking feminist novel- Sultana’s Dream (1905). To motivate students to take part in community service the school runs an Eco club and a Consumer club. A Career Hub and a yearly career fair are some features. Being a state government school, its students are beneficiaries of all state sponsored programmes i.e Mid Day Meals, Free books and uniform. Sakhawat Memorial Government Girls’ High School has been registered under “Global Schools” – a part of the UK-India Educational Research Initiative programme (UKIERI), launched by The British Council of India, in collaboration with the government of India and the UK government.

India, Mauritius and a visit to deepen long-standing ties

In our current era of geopolitical churn and uncertainty, Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Mauritius (March 11-12, 2025), will be a celebration of the deep and long-standing ties between the two countries. Mr. Modi had last visited the island country in 2015, but on this occasion, he will be the guest of honour at its Independence Day celebrations on March 12. India-Mauritius relations have enjoyed political consensus, irrespective of the party in power in either country. Mauritius has a new government in power led by Navinchandra Ramgoolam of the Labour Party, whose coalition won a landslide victory in the elections held in November last year. While India-Mauritius relations will continue to be positive and stable, the visit provides an opportunity for Mr. Modi to establish a personal connect with Mr. Ramgoolam and reassure him of India’s continuing support to the island’s security and prosperity. It was during the latter half of my tenure as India’s High Commissioner to Mauritius (1992-97) that Mr. Ramgoolam was Prime Minister. India-Mauritius relations saw significant growth under his leadership and he was particularly sensitive to India’s security concerns. I have no doubt that he will prove to be a trusted partner for India and will open new vistas for our cooperation.

Mr. Ramgoolam’s father, Sir Seewosagur Ramgoolam, had led the struggle for his country’s independence and was its first Prime Minister. Not many people know that Sir Seewosagur worked closely with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose during Bose’s stay in Britain between 1919-21. They were part of the Indian students’ movement in London working for Indian independence. Ramgoolam did the proof-reading for Bose’s famous work, The Indian Struggle, and received an autographed copy in appreciation.

There are strong people-to-people ties between the two countries. Nearly 70% of the population of Mauritius is of Indian origin, being the descendants of Indian indentured labour who were brought by the colonial rulers to work on sugar plantations. About 50% trace their ancestry to Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and still speak the Bhojpuri dialect. There are smaller communities of Tamil-, Telugu-, and Marathi-speaking communities who have preserved their languages and traditional culture. Mauritius appears like a microcosm of India. However, the country is home to other ethnic groups including African and mixed populations, which create its proud rainbow culture. Though only 2% of the population, the island’s French population is wealthy and influential, still owning its large sugar plantations, dominating its banking and financial sector and other commercial business. The challenge for India’s diplomats lies in maintaining links with all segments of the Mauritian population, even while celebrating the kinship and cultural ties that exist with its Indian-origin population. India has done much to nourish the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Indian-origin population. In 1976, it inaugurated the Mahatma Gandhi Institute as a premier institution for promoting Indian languages and culture. The Indian Cultural Centre in Mauritius is the largest of anywhere in the world and is one of the most active. The island hosts the World Hindi Secretariat that is supported by India. India-Mauritius bilateral trade has expanded rapidly over the past few years, reaching \$554 million in 2022-23. Mauritius is a part of the African Union and has preferential trade agreements with African countries. It is bilingual, with most of its citizens being fluent in English and French. With its well-developed finance and banking sector and reliable laws and regulations, Mauritius has become a preferred platform for doing business with Africa particularly Francophone Africa. Thanks to a favourable Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with India, Mauritius is also a major channel for foreign investment into India. Mauritius has emerged as a successful international financial centre, mainly on the back of the DTAA. Mauritius is the sentinel of the western Indian Ocean and maritime security cooperation between our two countries is critical to enhancing India’s maritime security. The Colombo Security Conclave brings together India, Sri Lanka, the Maldives,

Study finds high rates of polypharmacy, self-medication among older adults in India

A cross-sectional study conducted among 600 older adults across six Indian cities has found that the prevalence of polypharmacy and unsafe self-medication is high in this population. Polypharmacy refers to the intake of five or more medications per day. Among those who self-medicated, a majority lacked knowledge about self-medication, and did not understand the risks associated with it, the study found. In the study - ‘Polypharmacy and self-medication among older adults in Indian urban communities - a cross-sectional study’ - published in Scientific Reports, researchers Das, S., Gnanavel, P., Smanla, S. et al. from the Department of Global Public Health, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden, the Indian Council of Medical Research - Centre for Aging and Mental Health, Kolkata and a number of medical institutions including the Department of Community Medicine, Government Medical College, Omandurar Government Estate, Chennai, have taken a close look at the medication usage and self-medication practices among older adults in New Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, Ujjain, Patna and Guwahati.

A total of 100 older adults were recruited in each city. Of the 600, 477 were aged 60 to 80 years and 123 were the age of 80. More than half of them (353), were women. There were three or more co-morbid conditions in 423 of these individuals. The researchers used an updated screening tool, the Older Persons’ Prescriptions and Screening Tool to Alert to Right Treatment (STOPP-START) criteria to identify potentially inappropriate medications (PIM) and potential prescribing omissions (PPO) respectively.

The study found that the prevalence of polypharmacy was 33.7% with significant associations to multiple comorbidities, recent transition of care and recent hospitalisation. A total of 314 individuals were taking one to four oral allopathic medicines (solid formulations) daily. The highest prevalence of polypharmacy was found in Guwahati (57%), while Ujjain had the lowest prevalence (11.7%). A total of 2,741 medicines were prescribed to all individuals. The most common were antihypertensive medicines followed by antidiabetic medicines, hypolipidemic medicines, calcium supplements and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, the study said. The study found that 25.2% of the individuals used at least one fixed-drug combination (solid oral formulations). The most common combinations were antihypertensive and antidiabetic fixed-drug combinations.

Are unique electoral ID numbers being duplicated? | Explained

The story so far: On February 27, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee alleged that the ruling BJP was “with the blessings of Election Commission of India [EC]” including voters from other States in the West Bengal voters’ list. She cited multiple voters with the same Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC) numbers. The EC responded that irrespective of the EPIC number, a person can cast a vote only at their designated polling stations in their respective States or UTs. The poll body said it would remove these duplications. The Trinamool Congress rejected the clarification stating that it was a “cover-up”.

What is an EPIC card?

The EPIC number is a 10-digit voter ID card number issued by the EC to each voter. The number is a unique alphanumeric code assigned to each registered elector to prevent impersonation. It was introduced in 1993 under the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960, to enhance electoral transparency. It is assigned via the ERONET digital platform when a new voter registers, after which it is linked to State and constituency data to ensure regional uniqueness. The ERONET is a web-based platform which was developed for election officials, in multiple languages and scripts, to handle all processes pertaining to registration, migration, and deletion of names from electoral rolls. The platform au-



The researchers found the proportion of prescriptions with PIM and PPO were 28.8% and 20.3% respectively. The highest prevalence of PIM use - 46.2% - was attributed to medications prescribed without evidence-based clinical indications and those prescribed beyond the recommended duration. A total of 164 persons were using concomitant traditional and complementary medicines mostly for chronic conditions. Of these, 80 persons used certain traditional and complementary solid oral formulations without names or labels. In fact, the authors observed that the presence of unlabelled solid oral formulations among traditional medications raised concerns regarding patient safety and underlined the importance of regulatory oversight and adherence to quality standards in healthcare delivery. The prevalence of self-medication was 19.7%, associated with factors, such as staying alone, multiple comorbidities and recent hospitalisations. The most common medicines that were self-medicated were nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (59%) followed by paracetamol (42.4%) and antibiotics for upper respiratory tract infection and diarrhoea (33.9%).

A lack of awareness and unsafe practices were found among self-medicating individuals. Among those who self-medicated, 65.3% lacked knowledge of self-medication, 50% did not comprehend the risks and 40.7% reported unsafe self-medication practices. These findings emphasise the necessity for interventions to promote safe medication use in older adults, the authors said, stressing the need to address the issue by raising awareness and establishing services for medication reconciliation, review and feedback to improve medication safety and management in them.

tomates the process of electoral roll management.

What was the EC’s response?

The Commission said that the allotment of identical EPIC numbers to some voters from different States or UTs was due to the decentralised and manual mechanism being followed prior to shifting the electoral roll database of all States/UTs to the ERONET platform. “

This resulted in certain State/UT CEO offices using the same EPIC alphanumeric series and leaving a scope for the possibility of duplicate EPIC numbers being allotted to electors in different Assembly Constituencies in different States/UTs”. However, it clarified that while EPIC numbers of some of the electors may be identical, the other details including demographic details, constituency and polling booth are different for voters with the same EPIC number.

It said that irrespective of the EPIC number, an elector can cast a vote only at their designated polling station in their respective constituency in their State/UT where they are enrolled in the electoral roll and nowhere else. In order to allay any apprehensions, the EC said that it would ensure allotment of unique EPIC numbers to registered electors. “Any case of duplicate EPIC number will be rectified by allotting a unique EPIC number. The ERONET 2.0 platform will be updated to aid and assist in this process”.

As U.S. pulls back from WHO and Paris climate deal, China is primed to expand its soft power



Under President Donald Trump, the U.S. has been withdrawing from several key international commitments it had long supported and invested in. It announced its departure from the World Health Organization (WHO) and then from the Paris Agreement. With the U.S. pulling back from global commitments, China has quietly been advancing its position on the world stage. Through promises of financial aid, Beijing has positioned itself as a potential alternative to the Western superpower. With over a quarter of global bilateral sovereign debt now owed to China, and the country's investments spanning continents, the Asian giant has been steadily expanding its soft power influence. Is China trying to fill the void left by a retreating U.S. in the international arena?

The 78th World Health Assembly, the decision-making body of the WHO, approved the budget this month for the first time without the participation of the U.S., a founding member and a top donor of the WHO. Mr. Trump has accused the WHO of being biased towards China and mis-handling the COVID-19 pandemic. He has also said that the WHO demands onerous payments, which are out of proportion with other countries' assessed payments. While the U.S.'s exit has left a significant void in the WHO, China has committed an additional \$500 million over the next five years. China has also been increasing its membership dues to the WHO in recent years. China's share in the WHO's total assessed payments more than doubled post the pandemic, from 6.5% in 2015-16 to 15% in 2024-25 (Chart 1). While China's contribution still falls short of that of the

U.S. — which has accounted for around 20% of the WHO's total assessed funding every year — it continues to inch closer. With the U.S. stepping back and China pledging increased support, its share is poised to rise even further. The Trump administration also announced the U.S.'s withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and said it will immediately cease or revoke any purported financial commitment made under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The U.S.'s share in contributions to the UNFCCC was close to 22% of its core budget, followed by China (17%) — the second highest globally (Chart 2). China also holds strategic investments across numerous countries, and many of them owe China a significant share of their external debt. Data show that China is the world's largest debt collector. China's share in bilateral global debts owed remained around 1% until 2003. In just two decades, this share surged to 26%. On the other hand, the U.S.'s share in bilateral global debts owed plummeted from 36% in 1973 to just 4% in 2023 (Chart 3). This influence is also impacting attitudes towards China. A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2024 shows that more than 60% of the respondents across 21 countries believe that China influences their economy by a great deal or by a fair amount (Chart 4). Chart 4 | The share of respondents (in %) who said in 2024 that China is having _ (of) influence on economic conditions in their country Note: The above chart shows data for only 21 countries out of the 35 that were surveyed. The median value is for all the countries surveyed. The question was asked as a part of Pew Research Center's Spring 2024 Global Attitudes Survey across 35 countries. The Democracy Perception Index survey, published by the Alliance of Democracies Foundation, revealed that most countries have a more favourable view of China compared to the U.S. this year. Of the 96 countries surveyed this year, respondents from 76 countries had a more positive view of China, whereas only 20 had a positive view of the U.S. As Chen Xu, China's Ambassador to Geneva, told reporters last month, "We have to adapt ourselves to multilateral organisations without the Americans. Life goes on." The data for the charts are sourced from the WHO Budget Portal, UNFCCC, Pew Research Center, World Bank and Reuters

Rise of automation promises a future of 'dark factories', says TCS' Chandrasekaran

IT and business services were rapidly moving toward autonomous operations, and the rise of autonomous robots and AI agents promised a future of 'dark factories' and AI-assisted enterprise functions, said N. Chandrasekaran, chairman, Tata Consultancy Services. He said, "The path is clear: IT and business services are moving toward autonomous operations. The rise of autonomous robots and AI agents promises a future of 'dark factories' and AI-assisted enterprise functions," he said in TCS Annual Report FY2025 released on Tuesday. The single most transformative force in 2024 was Generative AI, which achieved near-human reasoning capabilities, he said in his letter to shareholders. "GenAI is not just another tech cycle—it is a civilisational shift. TCS is uniquely positioned to lead this transition, with its domain expertise, deep client relationships, and contextual knowledge," he assured them.

He further said, software development was being re-defined by AI-led modernisation, as legacy code was being transformed rapidly. Artificial AI was being embedded deeply into enterprise systems. Looking ahead, TCS has charted out four distinct progressions: 1. Establish a large pool of AI agents working alongside our human workforce, 2. Deliver solutions through a human+AI model, 3. Consciously invest in AI data centers and cloud infrastructure and 4. Forge industry-best partnerships with hardware providers, solution innovators, and startups.

According to Mr. Chandrasekaran, who is also the chairman of Tata Sons and Tata Group, the evolving geopolitical landscape and the emergence of a multipolar world are now reshaping how global businesses operate. "We are in the midst of an irreversible transition towards green en-



ergy; businesses must adapt by developing market-appropriate solutions," he said adding TCS has developed an AI-powered clever energy platform that has been helping clients optimise energy consumption, reducing emissions and energy costs. He further said, the financial year 2025 was a year of profound global disruption. "In the face of this turbulence, TCS demonstrated exceptional resilience." TCS's financial performance was robust, Mr. Chandrasekaran said, with FY 2025 revenue of over \$30 billion and an industry-leading operating margin of 24.3%. Significant innovation was happening in the AI ecosystem across infrastructure, data platforms, models, and AI native business applications, said TCS, CEO and MD, K. Krithivasan in the report. "These innovations are forcing companies to invest in technology modernisation and rapidly adopt AI to meet evolving customer expectations. Across industries, clients are increasingly shifting their focus from use case based approach to ROI led scaling of AI," he said.

A bumpy ride: Chennai's speed breakers break more than just speed

For P. Saravanan, a person with disability and a member of the Social Justice Movement, navigating his vehicle over the speedbreakers in Kaladipettai under Tiruvottiyur Zone is a source of physical pain, on a daily basis. His struggle is far from isolated as several residents have complained about speedbreakers that flout the design standards of Indian Road Congress (IRC) across the city. As per IRC 1988, speedbreakers should be 3.7 metres wide and 10 centimetres high with a 17 metre radius hump, designed for 25 km/h speeds, and marked with reflective thermoplastic paint and warning signs placed in advance. Further, the IRC 2018 adds that placement, gradient, material, and signage are crucial for effectiveness. "The thin rubber-plastic speedbreaker installed two months ago by the Greater Chennai Corporation in Tiruvottiyur is the toughest to negotiate. Yet, it has not been removed despite repeated complaints," he said.

Earlier in May, in Anna Main road of K.K. Nagar, a 22-year-old pregnant woman sustained severe injuries after falling from a two-wheeler, as her husband, who was riding the vehicle, failed to notice a speedbreaker there. Meera Ravikumar, a social activist in Adyar, said that few speedbreakers in Gandhi Nagar under Ward 173 are taller than 10 cm and cause back pain for those forced to frequently pass by them. "Many are yet to be painted with reflective thermoplastic paint for better visibility at night. The rubber-plastic speedbreaker found in Kastuba Nagar is very uncomfortable for two-wheeler and bicycle riders," she said.

P. Arunkumar, 39, of Manali, stated that in Kannadasan Nagar, emulsion paint was used on a speedbreaker instead of reflective thermoplastic paint, making markings fade quickly, which lead to minor accidents, especially at night when visibility is low. He said that in areas like Korukkupet, speedbreakers are abruptly laid without a smooth transition from the road. Prabhukrishnamoorthy of M.K.B. Nagar said there are over 10 unmarked speedbreakers on the road between Basin Bridge and Madhavaram, and stretches from Kasimedu to Ennore and Moolakadaai to Kavangarai had over 30 unmarked humps. According to a recent complaint submitted by civic activist Balaji Gopalan, speedbreakers in Wards 149 and 150 violate many IRC norms. He said that when a hump in Ward 151 exceeding 10 cm height, was flagged via the Chief Minister's grievance cell, the GCC responded that it was within standards, though it was visibly too high. He added that an RTI filed over eight months ago, seeking details on the number of faulty speedbreakers



As per IRC 1988, speedbreakers should be 3.7 metres wide and 10 centimetres high with a 17 metre radius hump, designed for 25 km/h speeds, and marked with reflective thermoplastic paint and warning signs placed in advance.

in the city and action taken against officials responsible, remains unanswered. According to the audit conducted in June and July 2024 by 1000 volunteers of NGO Arappor lyakkam, 201 of the surveyed speed breakers in 467 spots across the city, including those under Greater Chennai Corporation, Iyyapanthangal, Agaramthen and Thiruneermalai, do not meet IRC regulations. A senior official said little progress was made since February, when 41 speed breakers in Teynampet, Royapuram, and Thiru-Vi-Ka Nagar Zones, 29 in Kodambakkam Zone, and 20 in Adyar Zone were corrected ensuring proper height and reflective paint marking, after the speedbreaker committee met with Greater Chennai Traffic Police personnel. No further meetings have been held since, he added. GCC Commissioner J. Kumaragurubaran stated that nearly 2,000 speedbreakers in the city were identified as not conforming to IRC norms across the city and were taken up for correction before heavy rains hit in 2024. He added that another corrective drive can be undertaken to address the pending issues as raised by commuters.

A case of practical, pragmatic and innovative education



There has been much attention on the issues of the practical utility, employment generating capacity, innovativeness of the research universe and the capacity of the Indian educational universe for global competition under the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The NEP 2020 is a long-term structural reform, designed for phased implementation. It aims to transform India's education system by fostering innovation, strengthening industry-academia collaboration, and enhancing student employability through a wide array of initiatives. The NEP-2020 works in a three-fold way: ensuring originality and indigenously-rooted imagination in research; constant competitiveness in the global educational sphere, and preparing students on a multiple career path. Towards better employability

The NEP proposes a four-year innovative flexible teaching programme which is certainly not designed to push students into low-paying jobs, as some allege. Instead, students earn other credentials during their educational journey and return later to complete their degrees. This is beneficial to students who might otherwise be forced to drop out without formal qualifications. It enables them to pursue diverse career trajectories with tangible credentials. Along with a vocationalisation of education and industry internships, students gain meaningful knowledge with practical exposure, thereby enhancing their employability. Before the NEP, it was a serious concern whether Indian education provided real world competencies. Under the NEP, there is a push for industry-academia linkages, vocational training, and internships to enhance the employability outcome. Around 167 universities and 59 colleges have already begun four-year undergraduate degrees — 224 universities and 101 colleges offer a multidisciplinary degree programme. To enable an original and innovative research universe, a vibrant research internship programme for undergraduate and postgraduate students has evolved in higher education institutions. This initiative aims to bridge the gap between academic learning and industry requirements by embedding hands-on, practical training within the curriculum.

Additionally, the scheme allows diploma holders, including students who have exited degree programmes or pursued standalone diploma courses, to enrol as apprentices within five years of graduation. These apprenticeships provide on-the-job training at industry establishments and include a stipend, partially funded by the government. Around 197 universities and 93 colleges offer internships to students (3,07,564 students are at the undergraduate level and 58,834 students placed for internships at the postgraduate level). Research and development (R&D) cells have been established in 242 universities, while 113 colleges have established R&D cells that are working to develop innovative research skills among our students. As a result of these efforts, 11 Indian universities feature in the QS 500 listing.

Why India is the third-largest economy, not fourth or fifth

Over the weekend Niti Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam declared that India had overtaken Japan to become the fourth-largest economy in the world. He based this claim on data from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This claim reportedly led to two fairly divergent reactions. First, a wave of self-congratulation among Indians who take this particular detail as a clinching argument that the government of the day has brought about a fundamental improvement in India's economy. Second, an examination of the claim and a counter-assertion, again based on IMF data, that India is still the fifth-largest economy, not the fourth. As it often happens in these days of deeply polarised opinions, the discussion has fast reduced to a dialogue of the deaf. Before answering, let's broaden the scope of this explainer by making another claim (also based on IMF data): India is the third largest economy in the world, and, the fact is, it has been that way since Prime Minister Manmohan Singh-led UPA days. Here's the proof: Look at CHART 1. It shows India's GDP (dark green line) breaking away from the rest of the bunch. India became the third largest economy in 2009, when it, curiously enough, overtook Japan. An aside: There is one more pertinent break in this chart: It comes in 2016 when China overtakes the US as the largest economy in the world. The year 2016 is crucial as it was the year when the US first elected Donald Trump and what has followed since is a dedicated US policy to contain China's growing economic might not just under Trump but also under President Biden. Those who have been celebrating India's rise as the fourth-largest economy might wonder how this particular calculation — that shows India becoming the third largest economy as early as 2009 — is done. And those who have been quibbling over when exactly will India overtake Japan are more likely to wonder why this fact — one that pegs India even higher in terms of GDP — has been ignored by the current government for the past 11 years. To understand all these issues one has to understand both the economics and the politics of such economic rankings. Suppose you and your classmate both get a similar kind of job, and both get roughly the same salary. You get Rs 50,000 per month and he gets Rs 45,000 per month.

If your answer is that your friend is better off then you intuitively grasp the concept of "cost of living". It is different from "inflation". The cost of living captures the purchasing power of your salary: What can you buy from the same amount of money? For instance, the rent of a similar-sized apartment is likely to make a much bigger dent in your Mumbai salary than in your friend's lower salary in Patna. Of course, prices may not vary for everything — a motorcycle is likely to be similarly priced in both cities but it is quite possible that a motorcycle will not help your commute in Mumbai while it is likely to be enough for your friend in Patna. Purchasing power changes both over time — recall how your parents or grandparents often reminisce about what all they could buy for say Rs 100 or even Rs 10 in "their time" — and over space — as exhibited from example above. The point is: How do we know that France or Japan is a bigger and better economy than India? One approach is to look at the nominal GDP: That is to add up the current market value of all final goods and services produced within

India also has the highest representation in the QS Asia Rankings 2025, with 163 universities across the continent. Under subject-specific performance, Indian institutions recorded a 25.7% jump in total entries (533), with 10 higher education institutions (including six Indian Institutes of Technology, and two Indian Institutes of Management) placed in the global top 50 across various disciplines. Such data show that India's capacity has been maturing since the NEP reforms. Patents filed by Indian higher education institutions have grown from 7,405 in 2021-22 to 19,155 in 2022-23, which is a 158% increase. India's performance in the Global Innovation Index has been laudable (39th overall). This is an exponential improvement from a decade ago, when India was 76. In the post-NEP period, there has been much change in the Indian research and innovation sphere. Policy and schemes such as the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) 2023 Act, the All India Council for Technical Education's (AICTE) initiative to have Idea Development, Evaluation and Application (IDEA) labs and the Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC) have all contributed in giving depth to the Indian research universe. SPARC has been instrumental in fostering a culture of research and innovation by facilitating collaborative projects between Indian and foreign educational institutions. It has identified educational partners from 28 countries, which include the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia and France to advance joint research efforts. To develop indigenous scientific imagination and educational wisdom, the NEP 2020 has focused on the Indian Knowledge System (vision and pedagogy). It is being implemented from school to higher education: Initiatives such as the Smart India Hackathon are nurturing innovation at the grass-root level. Since inception, it has empowered over 13.9 lakh students, with idea submissions growing sevenfold since 2017. Employability is a multifaceted issue that must be assessed in the context of various dynamic factors, including industry hiring cycles, global macroeconomic trends, and post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery. Employment conditions before and after 2014 may be interpreted by some to show a declining trend in employment among educated youth (15 to 29 years) from 2004-05 to the 2017-18, especially among women. But from 2018-19 on, there has been constant growth in the employment rate of educated youth. By 2023-24, the employment rate of men was 53.4% and that of women at 22.7%, approaching 2004-05 levels. The overall employment rate increased to 38.6%. For all age groups, also, employment grew after 2017-18, touching 43.7% in 2023-24. The female employment rate grew post-2017-18, reaching 30.7% in 2023-24. The good job ratio has been growing fast in India. It is supported by the fact that the proportion of regular workers has grown, particularly for men (from 17.2% in 2004-05 to 24.88% in 2023-24. It is further documented that there is a constant decline in casual labour, especially among females (30.31% to 16.68%) and overall (28.85% to 19.83%) in NSS employment and unemployment and Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data. This suggests a qualitative transition away from irregular, unorganised, low-paying jobs. There is an increase in the proportion of regular workers among men (from 17.2% in 2004-05 to 24.88% in 2023-24), which suggests that more individuals are moving into formal and structured job roles. This data and changing conditions prove that this shift in the employment sector highlights more decent and sustainable employment conditions, contributing positively to economic stability and worker well-being. This cannot be possible without practical, pragmatic and innovative education.



the geographical boundaries of an economy in a year. Alternatively, you could add up the current incomes accruing to everyone in the economy. It shows how India overtook the UK in nominal GDP terms soon after the Covid pandemic. It is noteworthy that at that time Germany was the fourth-largest economy and Japan was the third-largest one. CHART 2 further shows that as of the 2024 end, India was still behind both Japan and Germany but equally importantly, IMF's projections (dotted line) show that India overtaking Japan and Germany is just a matter of time.

A crucial thing to remember here is that nominal GDP that is plotted here in CHART 2 is in US dollar terms. There are two straight problems this creates. As an earlier edition of ExplainSpeaking explained, India's GDP, even when it is counted in Indian rupees undergoes several revisions. Two, converting the Indian GDP from rupees to US dollars requires the exchange rate. This exchange rate has gone up and down over the time. In other words, if the Indian rupee weakens against the US dollar while the Japanese yen strengthens against the dollar, the relative positions can change even though the underlying GDP of India and Japan may not have changed even by one unit. But the bigger problem with nominal GDP comparisons is that they are not as meaningful because they miss out on the purchasing power aspect. It is for this reason that the IMF also calculates GDP based on something called the Purchasing Power Parity. Now let's say the tables are turned and your friend moves from Patna to Paris while your job is still in Delhi. On paper — that is, when you just convert his salary by exchange rate — he earns more than you. But here's the odd thing:

You find that he buys his mobile phones when he visits India, gets a haircut as well as a dental check, buys story books for his children, and sometimes even buys food items from India to carry back to France. It is perfectly reasonable for him to do that because his purchasing power may not have gone above yours even though his nominal salary (when converted into Indian rupees) is higher than yours. Here's another way to understand purchasing power. The cooking and cleaning services provided by maids in Indian cities are priced at a very low amount both in Indian rupees and even more so in euro or dollar terms. To get the same facility, your friend would have to be much richer (think GDP because all individual incomes add up to national GDP) than what you are in India. To get a meaningful international comparison of GDP, the IMF uses the PPP estimates, provided by the International Comparisons Program (ICP), which is a global statistical initiative that produces internationally comparable Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) estimates.

Made-in-India Rafale fuselages from 2028: Tata Advanced Systems, Dassault ink pacts for manufacturing facility in Hyderabad



Tata Advanced Systems Rafale: In a boost to defence and aerospace manufacturing in India, the country is set to become the first nation other than France where the fuselage of the Rafale fighter aircraft will be manufactured. Under a partnership between France’s Dassault Aviation and Tata Advanced Systems (TASL), the latter will set up a “cutting-edge” production facility in Hyderabad for the manufacture of key structural sections of the Rafale, including the lateral shells of the rear fuselage, the complete rear section, the central fuselage, and the front section. The first fuselage sections are expected to roll off the Hyderabad assembly line in financial year 2027-28, with the facility expected to deliver up to two complete fuselages per month. The facility will cater to India as well as other global markets of the medium multi-role combat aircraft.

The Indian Air Force already operates 36 Rafales. The Indian Navy will induct 26 Rafale Marine jets by 2030 as part of the Rs 63,000-crore deal between India and France inked in April this year. The deal included provisions for technology transfer and the establishment of maintenance and production facilities in India. Apart from France and India,

the Rafale is deployed in or on order from various countries, including Egypt, Qatar, the UAE, Greece, Indonesia, Croatia, and Serbia.Dassault Aviation and TASL have signed four production transfer agreements to manufacture the Rafale fighter aircraft fuselage in India, marking a significant step forward in strengthening the country’s aerospace manufacturing capabilities and supporting global supply chains. This facility represents a significant investment in India’s aerospace infrastructure and will serve as a critical hub for high-precision manufacturing, Dassault and TASL said in a joint release.

“For the first time, Rafale fuselages will be produced outside France. This is a decisive step in strengthening our supply chain in India. Thanks to the expansion of our local partners, including TASL, one of the major players in the Indian aerospace industry, this supply chain will contribute to the successful ramp-up of the Rafale, and, with our support, will meet our quality and competitiveness requirements”, said Eric Trappier, Chairman and CEO of Dassault Aviation.Sukaran Singh, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Tata Advanced Systems Limited, said: “This partnership marks a significant step in India’s aerospace journey. The production of the complete Rafale fuselage in India underscores the deepening trust in Tata Advanced Systems’ capabilities and the strength of our collaboration with Dassault Aviation. It also reflects the remarkable progress India has made in establishing a modern, robust aerospace manufacturing ecosystem that can support global platforms.”The signing of these contracts reflects Dassault Aviation’s strong commitment to India’s ‘Make in India’ and AtmaNirbhar initiatives, the partners said.“This partnership aims to strengthen India’s position as a key player in the global aerospace supply chain while supporting its goal of greater economic self-reliance,” Dassault and TASL added.

OTT platforms, air & rail portals to be part of new inflation series as MoSPI taps new data sources

Data from over-the-top (OTT) platforms and online portals for airfare and rail fare could soon be part of India’s inflation basket. India’s statistics ministry is exploring tapping into alternative data sources such as online platforms for air and rail fares, OTT services, and administrative records for price data for petrol, diesel and LPG for the new Consumer Price Index (CPI) series, Saurabh Garg, Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) told in an interview.The new CPI series, which is expected to come out from the first quarter of 2026, is also likely to directly incorporate data from Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) and Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC).

“For the new CPI series, MoSPI is expanding its approach by exploring alternative data sources, such as online platforms for airfare, rail fare, OTT platforms and administrative records for price data of petrol, diesel and LPG. Discussions are ongoing with IRCTC, under the Ministry of Railways, and the PPAC under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for direct transfer of data for integration in CPI,” Garg said.The Ministry is also exploring the use of scanner data and web scraping with an aim to enhance the accuracy, efficiency and comprehensiveness of price data collection, Garg said. “The possibility of collecting price data from e-commerce websites is also being considered,” he added.The Ministry is currently undertaking a base revision exercise for all major datasets such as CPI-based inflation, Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). For GDP, the new series is scheduled to be released on February 27, 2026 with financial year 2022-23 as the new base year, Garg said.The revised base year for IIP has also been tentatively identified as 2022 -23, Garg said, adding that the IIP with the revised base would be released from 2026-27. At present, the base year for GDP and IIP is 2011-12 and for CPI is 2012.For CPI, 2024



has been identified as the revised base year. “...the item basket and the weightage of the items would be decided based on the NSO’s Household Consumer Expenditure Survey (HCES) conducted in 2023-24. The new CPI series is expected to be published from the first quarter of 2026,” Garg said.

Among other alternative datasets being tapped by the Ministry, Garg said data of Goods and Services Tax (GST), e-Vahan portal, UPI transactions from NPCI are going to be used for GDP calculation by the National Statistics Office (NSO) in addition to the use of data from Office of Controller General of Accounts (CGA), MCA-21, RBI. MoSPI has also used the GSTN (GST Network) database for its new service sector survey, Annual Survey of Service Sector Enterprises (ASSESE).The latest HCES for 2023-24 had incorporated questions on streaming services, air fare and rail fare. At present, the retail inflation basket based on CPI (Combined) has a weight of 0.077 percent for air fare (economy class), 0.185 per cent for railway fare, 2.187 per cent for petrol for vehicles and 0.148 per cent for diesel for vehicles. There’s a 0.08 per cent weightage for internet expenses, 0.82 per cent weight for monthly charges for cable TV connection, and 1.839 per cent for mobile phone charges.

India ‘shared deep concerns’ on ADB’s \$800-mn loan to Pakistan

Asian Development Bank, Asian Development Bank loan to Pakistan, loan to Pakistan, adb loan to Pakistan, Pakistan, OPERATION SINDOOR, Pahalgam terrorist attack, Pahalgam terrorists, Indian army, india Pakistan ceasefire, Pakistan drone strike, drone strike, Pakistan drone strike reponse, drone strike reponse, Army strikes, Army strikes in Pakistan, Army strikes Pakistan terror sites, Indian army, Army strikes PoK, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, Pahalgam attack, Pahalgam terror attack, india pakistan ties, india pakistan tensions, article 370, Indian army, Abrogation of Article 370, terrorism, terrorist attack, Kashmir attack, Jammu and Kashmir terrorist attack, Jammu and Kashmir, cross-border infiltration, border security, border infiltration, Pahalgam attack, Pahalgam terror attack, Pahalgam terrorist attack, Pahalgam terrorists, Indian army, india pakistan ties, india pakistan tensions, article 370, Indian army, Abrogation of Article 370, terrorism, terrorist attack, Kashmir attack, Jammu and Kashmir terrorist attack, Jammu and Kashmir, cross-border infiltration, border security, border infiltration, Indian express news, current affairsEarlier in the day, the Congress in a post on X stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi met ADB President Masato Kanda on June 1 and three days later ADB cleared the \$800-million loan to Pakistan.



source said.

ADB on Tuesday approved a \$800 million programme to strengthen fiscal sustainability and improve public financial management in Pakistan. Earlier in the day, the Congress in a post on X stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi met ADB President Masato Kanda on June 1 and three days later ADB cleared the \$800-million loan to Pakistan. “Asian Development Bank (ADB) has given Rs 6,861 crore to Pakistan. Just 3 days ago, Narendra Modi met Asian Development Bank President Masato Kanda and just 3 days later, a huge amount was given to Pakistan. Earlier, the Modi government’s influence did not work on the IMF and Pakistan got the loan. That too when the conflict between India and Pakistan was going on,” the pose by Congress said.

Government sources said India expects the ADB management to adequately ring-fence the ADB financing, to prevent any such misuse. “Pakistan’s poor track record of implementation stems from the military’s deeply entrenched interference in economic affairs, posing risks of policy slippages and reversal of reforms as has been witnessed in the past,” the source said.Even when a civilian government is in power, the army continues to play an outsized role in domestic politics and extends its tentacles deep into the economy, sources said. “Pakistan’s policy of cross-border terrorism has led to a worsening of the security situation in the region and has significantly escalated macroeconomic risks for the country, which also heightens the enterprise risks for the ADB,” the source said.

Centre asks States to ensure supply of medical oxygen, isolation beds, ventilators



Seven more COVID-19 deaths had been reported in the country in the previous 24 hours, as of 8 a.m. on Wednesdaymorning. Maharashtra reported the highest number of deaths (four). One death each has been reported from Delhi, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu. The total death toll stands at 44, according to data from the Union Health Ministry.“The public is advised to practice hand hygiene, cough etiquette, and avoid crowded places when unwell. Individuals with acute respiratory illness should self-monitor and seek medical care if symptoms worsen,” a senior Health Ministry official said, after a series of technical review meetings were held on June 2 and June 3 in view of the recent increase in COVID-19 cases in India.

The official said that State governments had already been instructed to ensure the availability of oxygen, isolation beds, ventilators, and essential medicines.“State and District surveillance units under the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) are closely monitoring influenza-like illness (ILI) and Severe Acute Respiratory Illness

(SARI),” the official added.India reported 864 more COVID-19 cases during this period, taking the number of cases in 2025 to 4,302, the Health Ministry said in its updated data.

According to details released by the Ministry, the deceased in Maharashtra included a 55-year-old male with cardiac arrhythmia and other health complications. “Patient was also a known case of COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) with chronic bronchitis,” the data stated.Another male, 73, had cardiogenic shock, Parkinson’s disease, COVID-19 pneumonia, and hypertension.Two other fatalities in Maharashtra were a 23-year-old female with diabetes mellitus, and a 27-year-old male with a comorbid condition, and alcohol withdrawal seizure.

The death in Tamil Nadu was that of a male, 76, with acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), COVID-19 pneumonia, and sepsis with multi-organ dysfunction syndrome (MODS).While details are awaited from the case in Gujarat, Delhi reported one more death — a female, 22, with lower respiratory tract infection, COVID-19 pneumonia, shock, and Type 1 respiratory failure.“Deaths have been reported primarily among individuals with pre-existing illnesses,” a Ministry official said.The official added that mock drills assessing oxygen supply systems are currently ongoing. Also, surveillance testing has been recommended for all admitted SARI cases, and for 5% of ILI cases, as per guidelines.All positive SARI samples are sent for Whole Genome Sequencing through the Indian Council of Medical Research - Virus Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (ICMR-VRDL) network.“The Union Health Ministry continues to closely monitor the situation,” the official said.

How six years of gender clinics in T.N. have improved access to healthcare for transpersons

John (name changed), a 28-year-old transman, felt a wave of nervousness as he walked into the gender guidance clinic for transgender persons at Chennai’s Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGGGH). But that anxiety soon gave way to relief. At the clinic, he underwent a series of counselling sessions and medical consultations with a team of doctors before proceeding with gender affirmation surgery.“The doctors at RGGGH were very friendly. They made me feel comfortable throughout the surgery and recovery,” says Mr. John, who got a mastectomy. “I can’t even feel the stitches now. More importantly, I feel more like myself.”

In 2019, Tamil Nadu became the second State in the country, after Kerala, to set up a clinic exclusively for transgender people at RGGGH, and later, at Government Rajaji Hospital in Madurai, offering free gender affirmation surgeries. In fact, RGGGH had been performing free surgeries for transpersons since 2009, but they were conducted as part of general outpatient services. “The gender clinic ensures that all services are available under one roof, so transpersons don’t have to go from one place to another to receive gender-affirming care,” says M. Sugumar, head of the plastic surgery department at RGGGH, who is also in charge of the gender clinic. His team includes Senthil Kumaran, assistant professor in the department of plastic Surgery at RGGGH, and a postgraduate resident. The entrance to the gender clinic at RGGGH is marked by colours of the trans pride flagAs of 2024, the hospital has performed 171 gender affirmation surgeries for transmen and women, which include penectomies, breast implants, and mastectomies, among other procedures. More than 1,500 trans persons have sought care at the clinic, as of 2024. There was a drop in the number of surgeries during the COVID-19 pandemic, as most outpatient services were shut. However, since then, the number of surgeries has increased, says Dr. Sugumar. He attributes this rise to the progressive policies of the State government, as well as growing awareness and education within the transgender community.

What does the clinic offer?

The clinic, which operates on Fridays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., houses a psychiatrist, an endocrinologist, a venereologist, a physician, and plastic surgeons. “A transperson who visits the clinic is first referred to the psychiatrist. After several rounds of counselling, the endocrinologist evaluates the hormonal aspects, and the physician, the physical aspects. The venereologist ensures the person’s sexual health, and the plastic surgery department performs the surgery,” explains Dr. Sugumar. Each surgery may cost between ₹1.5 lakh to 3 lakh in private hospitals.Trans people aged 18 and above are eligible for surgery, but doctors work with them for about a year to ensure they are certain about proceeding, as the surgery is difficult to reverse. “It’s a time-consuming process, but it’s necessary. Doctors need to ensure we are fully prepared for surgery,” points out Mr. John, an accountant.

However, Jaya, a transgender activist and general manager of Sahodaran — an NGO that works for the welfare of the LGBTQIA+ community — says the length of the process can be a barrier for many in the community, especially those who have left their natal families in order to undergo surgery. “Some transpersons may have left their homes with very little savings to support themselves during the process. While due diligence is important, there should be better mechanisms in place to support transpersons during this period of transition,” she adds.The clinic, which operates on Fridays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., employs a psychiatrist, an endocrinologist, a venereologist, a physician, and plastic surgeonsSurgeries also come with certain risk factors. For instance, Kamali, a transwoman, underwent gender affirmation surgery in 2015 (before the gender clinic was established) at RGGGH, and experienced complications a few months later. “I developed an infection, but the doctors were able to resolve it. I’ve been well since,” says Ms. Kamali, 34, who works with the NGO Thozhi.“All surgeries carry risks,” adds Dr. Sugumar. A procedure like penoplasty (the construction of the penis) performed on transmen, for instance, involves greater risk and is relatively rare.

Besides surgeries, the clinic also offers gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT), which involves using hormones to align a person’s physical characteristics with their gender identity. Anthri Nyx, a trans woman, has been undergoing GAHT at RGGGH for about eight months now, and she couldn’t be happier with the results.“It’s neither GAHT nor gender affirmation surgeries that make us transpersons. We are transgender by birth. But accessing these crucial treatments is important; they help us feel more fulfilled and accepted by others,” she says, adding that the doctors at the clinic are friendly, sensitive, and non-judgemental.However, although the clinic offers free surgeries, patients must pay for their medicines — something that Ms. Anthri, an analyst, says can be challenging for many transpersons from marginalised communities and low



socio-economic backgrounds. Mr. John, who had to take testosterone for several months both before and after his surgery, says: “I take testosterone injections every month, and each injection costs about ₹500. Not everyone can afford it.”With demand for surgeries on the rise, Ms. Jaya says there should be more gender clinics across Tamil Nadu, where trans people can access gender-affirming care. She adds that raising awareness about these clinics is equally important.According to the National Health Mission-Tamil Nadu, in addition to the clinics in Chennai and Madurai, 10 other gender clinics have been established in various districts across the State — including Salem, Coimbatore, Tiruchi, Villupuram, Vellore, Dharmapuri, and Thanjavur. Dr. Senthil says there is currently no overload of cases at the hospital. “There was a need for such clinics to be set up in government hospitals in peripheral areas, and the government is addressing that need. Earlier, transpersons from other districts had to travel to Chennai or Madurai for healthcare, but that is now changing,” he adds.

Shantaraman K., Dean of RGGGH, points out that the gender clinic at the hospital has made significant strides in improving access to healthcare for the transgender community. The hospital has also formulated comprehensive guidelines on how transpersons should be treated.“These guidelines, which apply to all government hospitals, focus on ethical and emotionally sensitive care. Access to gender-affirming treatment is a person’s right, so we ensure that decisions about gender are made by the individual — not their families,” he explains.The guidelines also address the physical and psychological aspects of care, and importantly, they clearly define surgical protocols, Dr. Shantaraman adds. “In India, the practice of transporting transpersons to multiple locations for illegal surgeries still persists. As a medical team, we do not support this practice. It is not only medically unsafe, but also demeaning to the individual,” he says.Doctors also note that some transgender people, due to a lack of access to proper healthcare, may resort to taking hormones and tablets in an unregulated manner. “This can lead to serious side effects. Hormones must always be taken under medical supervision,” cautions Dr. Sugumar.

OpenAI hits 3 million business users as ChatGPT adds connectors, record mode and research tools

New Delhi: OpenAI now supports 3 million paying business users of ChatGPT, up from 2 million announced in February earlier this year, it announced on Thursday.The milestone reflects increasing demand for ChatGPT products as more businesses seek AI that enables them to work more productively, efficiently, and strategically, said the company.To provide companies with even more sophisticated, AI-powered tools, an expansive set of new workplace products have arrived in ChatGPT.

While workers can currently use ChatGPT for quick answers, connectors (beta) are a set of integrations that empower every worker with instant access to their company’s collective insights, making them more productive, effective, and informed. Admins can also provision which connectors to enable at the workspace level.

Connectors are now available with Dropbox, Box, Sharepoint, OneDrive, and Google Drive and workers can use them to quickly find granular data from their third-party tools without leaving ChatGPT, said OpenAI.For example, a researcher could use the Box connector to quickly retrieve quarterly sales metrics from PDFs or spreadsheets stored in Box. ChatGPT will structure and clearly present the data — and respect your organisation’s existing permissions on the user level — from those documents, with citations.Additionally, deep research connectors (beta) are now available with HubSpot, Linear, as well as many popular Microsoft and Google tools.

Ricky Ponting bats for captain Shubman Gill to come in at No.4 spot for India in upcoming England Test tour



GNS News Agency, June 11

With Virat Kohli's retirement, the No.4 spot in the Indian Test team has a lot of speculations going around it on who could take the place of the star India batter. Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting feels that captain Shubman Gill will be the ideal candidate for the role due to the added responsibility of captaincy in the upcoming England tour. "...the reason I did that was if they go with (Yashasvi) Jaiswal, and if Sai Sudarshan is the other opener, they need someone a bit more experienced at number three. So that could be either, KL at three, or that could be a Karun Nair at three and Shubman at four....once you grow into it, then you can move yourself back up to that number three spot,"

Ponting said.

Last month, Gill, who played his first Test for India just five years ago, was selected as the candidate to lead the team into a new era after he was named the captain for the five-match series in England, starting June 20. In what ultimately proved to be a formality, Gill was named as Rohit Sharma's successor following a meeting of the selection committee at the cricket board headquarters at Wankhede Stadium. Gill will be India's 37th Test captain. His deputy for the England tour will be Rishabh Pant. Rohit announced his retirement from red-ball cricket last month. Weeks later, former captain Kohli, too, hung his whites. Both veterans have chosen to continue playing the 50-over format. Meanwhile, Ponting also said that it was the right time for Sai Sudharsan to make his debut in the Test team and open with Yashasvi Jaiswal against England. "I think the time's right for Sudarshan to come into the side, to be honest. There's a bit of a regeneration that's going to happen around this Indian team now, obviously with Rohit and Virat not there," he said. "Every team goes through that...seems to me like Sudarshan's ready. Lots of first class runs, his IPL form this year has been probably better than anybody else," he pointed out about the Orange Cap winner of the just-concluded season. Technically, seems fine. And, you know, KL down in the middle order somewhere probably just gives that bit more stability," he added.

‘He’s got a little bit of work to do, on his Test match batting’: Ricky Ponting on Shubman Gill

GNS News Agency, June 11

Ricky Ponting on Shubman Gill Shubman Gill of India celebrate his century during day three of the first test match between India and Bangladesh held at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, Chennai, India on the 21st September 2024. Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting said that new India Test skipper Shubman Gill will have to work on his Test batting before the upcoming England tour which won't be easy considering the added pressure that a Indian team captaincy brings. Gill was selected as the skipper for the longest format after Rohit Sharma retired last month. The new captain will also have to deal with the absence of veterans Virat Kohli and Ravichandran Ashwin who have also hung up their boots in Tests. "His white ball form has been incredibly good. He's got a little bit of work to do, on his Test match batting. And that's never easy when you're a new captain, to have to worry about your batting to the degree that he's going to have to, it won't be easy for him," Ponting told PTI on the sidelines of the IPL where he coached Punjab Kings to the final. "I actually named him as captain for the Sydney Test match last summer when Rohit didn't play that game and there was a bit of an injury cloud over Bumrah, or as that game went on, Bumrah actually broke down in that game. And look, I don't know Shubman that well. I've spoken to him six, eight, 10 times, maybe the last couple of years around different things and around batting and around leadership. He's done a great job with GT (Gujarat Titans), no doubt about that. But he just seemed the sort of guy that the extra responsibility wouldn't faze too much. It seems like he's got a really level head on his shoulders. He's some-



one that's going to be around in Indian cricket for another 10 years, Ponting added. Ponting also said that Gill has to take into account the mental side of batting in Tests.

"...it's a bit both, there's some of the great Test players that haven't had great defensive games, (Virender) Sehwag is probably a great example of that. But if you're in control of your stroke-play, you don't have to worry too much about your defence. I mean, obviously it's (defence) a big part of Test match cricket, but I think it's more his mental application," he explained. "(But) I think sometimes you might just get a little bit either ahead of himself or a little bit lazy in the middle of a test match innings. You can't afford to do that. You've got to be 100 per cent committed to every ball that you face through six or seven hours of every day... I think that's the challenge for Shubman....," he added.

‘I have to do two times better than what I have done’: Vaibhav Suryavanshi on his targets in next year’s IPL

GNS News Agency, June 11

14-year-old batting prodigy Vaibhav Suryavanshi, who became the second fastest centurion in IPL history in the recently concluded season, said that next year, he wants to contribute two times better for Rajasthan Royals. The 35-ball century also helped him become the youngest T20 centurion in men's T20 cricket at 14 years and 32 days. "Playing in the IPL is like a dream for everyone and I got a lot of positives from my first season and I also learnt a lot in terms of what I can do for the team in the next season," Suryavanshi said in a video shared by IPL's official website.

The youngster, who was one of the bright sparks in Rajasthan Royals season this year, was given the IPL Super Striker of the Season award after the final between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Punjab Kings. "My learning is that I have to do two times better than what I have done so that my team also plays in the final next year and how much I can contribute to my team, I will focus on that." Given his exploits, Suryavanshi was also named in the India Under-19 squad for a multi-format tour of England along with Mumbai's Ayush Mhatre, who made a successful debut



for Chennai Super Kings. "It is a new tournament. I am going to the UK for the first time so it will be a new experience. I will experience how the game goes on there," Suryavanshi said. "Ayush Mhatre, who played for Chennai Super Kings this time, is our captain.

The preparations are going well and it will be a good experience of playing in England and will try to return with the trophy," he added.

Former Sri Lankan cricketer Sachithra Senanayake indicted for match-fixing



"Senanayake is also alleged to have contacted two other cricketers participating in the inaugural LPL in 2020 via telephone from Dubai, attempting to persuade them to engage in match-fixing," a report in the Sri Lankan 'Daily Mirror' stated.

GNS News Agency, June 11

Former Sri Lankan off-spinner Sachithra Senanayake has attempted to lure fellow cricketers for match-fixing in the 2020 Lanka Premier League (LPL). The 40-year-old has been indicted by the Hambantota High Court for his attempts. According to some of the news outlets in Senanayake made the approach to Tharindu Ratnayake, who was playing for the Colombo Kings at that time. "Senanayake is also alleged to have contacted two other cricketers participating in the inaugural LPL in 2020

via telephone from Dubai, attempting to persuade them to engage in match-fixing," a report in the Sri Lankan 'Daily Mirror' stated. The Attorney General's Department said this becomes the first such indictment of a national level cricketer for match-fixing under the country's recently-introduced anti-corruption law. He was arrested and released on bail in 2023. At the Colombo Chief Magistrate's Court had ordered the Controller General of Immigration and Emigration to impose a travel ban which will be effective for a three-month period. The 40-year-old played one Test, 49 ODIs and 24 T20 Internationals for Sri Lanka between 2012 and 2016 for a combined haul of 78 wickets. He was a member of Sri Lanka's 2014 T20 World Cup-winning squad. Illegal bowling action Off-spinner Sachithra Senanayake has been banned by the ICC for illegal bowling action during Sri Lanka's tour of England in May in 2014.

Senanayake's ban has come with immediate effect, Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) said. SLC said it had received the ICC Bowling Action Legality Assessment Report pertaining to Senanayake. It was conducted by the Cardiff Metropolitan University – Cardiff School of Sport in England. The Standard ICC Illegal Action Testing Protocol was used to assess the degree of elbow extension from the point of upper arm horizontal to ball release within the bowling action," the report said. "15-degree elbow extension threshold was exceeded in the four deliveries considered to be suspect in the 4th ODI played at Lords."

Round the head smash error drags Sindhu down as Indonesia Open campaign ends with narrow loss to Chochuwong



GNS News Agency, June 11

PV Sindhu's choice of the round-the-head smashes and drops, as against the backhand in the deep corner, sputtered her momentum as she went down 22-20, 10-21, 18-21 against Pompaewee Chochuwong in the second round of the Indonesia Open. Sindhu had done well to deploy her offense – both power and speed – into overcoming a 10-16 trailing score in the opener, and led 15-11 in the decider. The momentum seemed to be on her side, as there was no let-up in intensity or hand speed, and she was even stomping confidently at the net. But Chochuwong, who couldn't quite pierce Sindhu's flank defense (which was rather solid on the day), had a better plan lined up.

Sindhu was crackling open the Thai's game with her wide expansive cross court smashes, but when forced into quick repartees or a slightly flatter game on her backhand, her agility was severely tested and she came a cropper on the turn. Much worse, she chose the round the head option and, given the fast conditions, Sindhu struggled to control that shot – both the quicker smash and the attempted drop. From 15-11 and 16-13 up, she lost 5 points in a row, four of those to that shot selection of the round the head. Interestingly, Sindhu had been mired in a three-setter against Nozomi Okuhara too owing to that round the head error. Against Chochuwong, two of those exerted arching smashes and one drop were dumped into the net from 16-14 to 16-16. When the Thai took the lead, Sindhu finally went for a half-hearted backhand on the same length – but was clearly under pressure as she botched that again to trail 16-18. She hacked at a short drop next, and got a net chord, and had levelled at 18-18 when Chochuwong sent one long going for the corners. But as happens with Sindhu – a bunch of points that challenge her lead, bring her down psychologically in the endgame. She had fought bravely in the opening set from 19-20 down to 22-20. But at the absolute crunch, the 5five points she gave away on a streak had once more deflated her fight.

Chochuwong picked a looping winner at the net –

something that minutes ago, Sindhu was sending off quite nicely. And then the final point was the clearest indication of why Sindhu's confidence dips in the end. The problem isn't with her overall game and intensity. But the inability to finish. A long rally at 18-20 down ensued, and Sindhu was defending gamely, running, anticipating, and even nailing some blinders to hustle Chochuwong. But all that insane defense came to nought when after the final rally – perhaps the longest of the match – Sindhu allowed an error to peek in. Earlier, her attacking levels revealed she was capable of fast-paced exchanges, but only in patches, which meant she was putting her endurance under constant scrutiny in decoders, with a stamina-sucking second game. Sindhu is still capable of crisp and unretreivable smashing attacks, but sustaining that over longer periods can prove tough.

She acknowledged that converting close games was getting tough. "I should've converted it... was leading 16-13 in decider, but it was faster so I had to control a lot more and from there she took the lead. I made it equal 18-18. It was anybody's game at that point," she said.

The drift on that side was indeed tricky and even Treesa-Gayatri who lost 21-13, 24-22 to Fukushima-Matsumoto struggled with the looping drops, dumping them into the net. But Sindhu had looked in good form, until an old weakness was exploited. "I'm happy with my performance but I would've liked to have converted it to a win. Lot to learn from this match and the tournament and will now prepare for next one," she told BWF. Speaking to reporters in Jakarta, Sindhu also acknowledged the challenges that come with age. She's 29 now. "Being realistic about age is important. I need to make sure I'm injury free. Maintain my condition. I'm not a junior anymore. It's important to make sure everything is going the right way. Overtraining can lead to injuries too. But if you train less, you need to keep up with youngsters. It's not gonna be easy," she said. The changing game style also made things tough. "Game has changed. In 2016, it was a more attacking game. But now it's more of long rallies, clears and drops. Defense has become strong. We should be prepared for long rallies and long games. Compared to that now it's more rally based," she said. Yet, she was happy that things were looking up after starting to train with Indonesian coach Irwansyah. "Now I have a new coach. We started playing since January. It took some time to actually come together and accordingly work. When you get a new coach, it takes time to strike an understanding as coach and player. But things are going well. There's scope to improve. But I'm on the right track," she said. She was confident she could regain old levels. "Playing like this I'm positive it's not far away. But again it's just one tournament at a time, and important to go back, learn from mistakes. And every tournament is fresh, every tournament new. It's not far away. I can see that, I'm positive," she told BWF.

England squad announced for 1st Test vs India: Jamie Overton earns surprise recall, wait for Jofra Archer continues

GNS News Agency, June 11

Jamie Overton has received a surprise call-up as England on Thursday announced their 14-man squad for the first Test against India. The 31-year-old played the only Test of his career in June 2022 and now returns to replace the injured Gus Atkinson. Meanwhile, Jacob Bethell, Chris Woakes and Brydon Carse are all back in the squad after missing England's one-off Test against Zimbabwe last month.

Fast bowlers Mark Wood and Jofra Archer are the notable names missing from the squad which will be led by Ben Stokes. Archer was expected to return to Test cricket for the first time in since February 2021 in this series but a thumb injury that he sustained while playing for Rajasthan Royals in the 2025 season of the Indian Premier League has put doubts on that. Archer was supposed to play in England's recently concluded ODI series against the West Indies and potentially return to red-ball action in the second of England Lions' unofficial Tests against India A. He ended up having to sit out both matches. Wood, meanwhile, could return for the final Test of the series if he has a seamless recovering from a surgery on his left knee that was done in March. Bethell had missed the Zimbabwe Test due to his commitments in the IPL. His return poses a potential selection headache for England at the top of the order. While his three half-centuries at No.3 in his debut series in New



Zealand put Zak Crawley and Ollie Pope's under doubt, both went on to score tons against Zimbabwe. India's five-Test tour of England starts on June 20 at Headingley after which the second match will be played at Edgbaston from July 2. Lord's will host the third Test from July 10 after which the fourth Test will be played at Old Trafford from July 23. It is a quick turnover after that with the fifth Test scheduled to be played at the Oval from July 31.

England squad for first Test vs India: Shoaib Bashir, Jacob Bethell, Harry Brook, Brydon Carse, Sam Cook, Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Jamie Overton, Ollie Pope, Joe Root, Jamie Smith (wk), Ben Stokes (capt), Josh Tongue, Chris Woakes.

Cheteshwar Pujara on Virat Kohli's ability to evolve: ‘People have been criticizing him in the past that he wasn’t batting at a strike rate of 140-150...he has answered that’



GNS News Agency, June 11

Virat Kohli has been part of the Indian Premier League since its inception. He has been part of the Royal Challengers Bengaluru and has been the most productive in terms of run scoring over the years for the franchise. Even as the times have transitioned in terms of strike rates in the league, one of the standout features of Kohli has been his ability to keep up with the modern demands of the game. "It's not easy, but the good part about Virat is that he is one of the fittest cricketers, and he is open to adapting to a new challenge or something different. He is always open to learning new things," Pujara said, speaking on Star Sports, pointing to Kohli's ability to evolve over the years.

"People have been criticizing him in the past that he wasn't batting at a strike rate of 140-150. Now, if you look at his batting this season, he has answered that question. He has batted at a strike rate of 140-150 and above. So he has evolved as a batter," he added. "It doesn't come naturally.

You need to work on it, and even to work on it at this age, when he is 36 and has played the game for such a long time, if you are still willing to learn and make a difference to the team, that shows how big a player he is," Pujara observed. Shows how much it matters Kohli won his first IPL title on Tuesday, earlier this week, after RCB beat Punjab Kings by six runs in the IPL final. "It's a massive moment in his career. He has achieved a lot in his career, but the one thing he couldn't achieve in his career for so many years was an IPL title. It shows how much it mattered to him because he was working hard to win this title for many years. He was looking very emotional and the tears coming from his eyes show the importance of an IPL title for a cricketer," Pujara said.

Andhra Premier League runs into rough weather

GNS News Agency, June 11

Hyderabad: The existing franchise owners of the Andhra Premier League questioned the decision of the Andhra Cricket Association top brass to issue a fresh Expression of Interest (EOI) inviting new franchises—effectively ignoring and undermining the six original teams that have built the league from scratch over the past three years.

In a joint statement on Wednesday, these owners said they were instrumental in launching the league in 2022 and have accused the ACA of violating every assurance and resolution previously given to them.

Thug Life Movie Review: Kamal Haasan, Mani Ratnam’s ‘game of thrones’ is a cinematic endurance test



Thug Life Movie Review & Rating: “You either die a hero or live long enough to see yourself become the villain,” Harvey Dent (Aaron Eckhart, The Dark Knight) warned the world, particularly those so-called saviours who never seem to vacate the throne, nor evolve enough to remain worthy of it over time. However, not everyone seems to have received the memo or grasped the implications of that line. Illustrating its meaning loud and clear, Mani Ratnam has delivered what is arguably his weakest film to date, the Kamal Haasan-starrer Thug Life. Worse still, the only way one could even identify it as a Mani Ratnam film is the grandiosity of its visuals and the occasional brilliance of its long shots. If not for these, Thug Life would have felt like an unending gangster drama, crafted by an overambitious filmmaker (anyone, really) whose only asset was ambition and nothing more.

After opening with a visually well-crafted scene that introduces Rangaraya Sakthivel's (Kamal Haasan) lifelong 'tryst' with death, dating back to the moment of his birth, Thug Life cuts to a flashback set in Old Delhi, 1994. A gangster based in the capital, Sakthivel is steadily expanding his horizons and is set to dethrone his supposed crime guru Sadanand (Mahesh Manjrekar). Following a tense meeting in an old residential building occupied by tens of middle-class families, Sadanand snitches on Sakthivel and his gang to the police, who quickly surround the area. As a shootout ensues, Sakthivel, his elder brother Manickam (Nassar) and others attempt to flee. Amid the chaos, Sakthivel finds a young boy, Amaran, orphaned in the crossfire. Guilt-ridden, he adopts the boy and raises him as his own brother/son/protegé.

Cut to 2016: Sakthivel remains a powerful force, and Amaran (Silambarasan, with one of his career-worst intros) is now his trusted lieutenant. When Sakthivel is imprisoned for murder, he entrusts his empire and the safety of his wife Jeeva (Abhirami) and daughter Mangai (Sanjana Krishnamoorthy) to Amaran. Though this irks Manickam and others in the gang, they are powerless to object. Meanwhile, Amaran rises. Once he returns, Sakthivel realises the power dynamics have shifted and that Amaran is now the kingpin. Seeking to gain control, Manickam schemes with other like-minded gang members and manages to poison Amaran's mind too. Together, they decide to eliminate Sakthivel. But can they? Thug Life is essentially a game of thrones; a battle for all-consuming power. While this core idea has been adapted in countless forms over the centuries, with traces even in ancient epics, it still hasn't lost its appeal. Particularly because it exposes the moral grey in people who believe that “all is fair in war (and love).” However, the Mani Ratnam directorial is plagued by extremely subpar writing that not only fails to make the most of its premise but also falls short in delivering an engaging experience. Filled with uninspired and undercooked moments that lead nowhere, Thug Life ends up as a cinematic endurance test. Although the film opens with a visual and narrative metaphor that captures the essence of Thug Life, it soon falters. While the black-and-white shootout sequence that follows had the potential to serve as a microcosm of the film, blending action and drama, it ultimately acts as a warning sign of what's to come: unimpressive action and unimpactful drama.

We're soon introduced to a slew of characters who dominate much of the screentime, yet none of them leave a lasting impression due to weak development and even weaker character arcs. Take Sakthivel himself, for instance. Though he's introduced as a “criminal, thug, Yakuza” with a humane side and relatable vulnerabilities, the film never gives us impactful moments to fully grasp or feel any of these facets. Instead, Thug Life drifts from one half-cooked scene to another, never offering the audience enough substance to connect with him. At the same time, Amaran, intended to be a layered character who goes through significant emotional dilemmas and setbacks, also suffers from shallow writing. His arc is riddled with glaring gaps, the result of a script that prioritises the unnecessary over the meaningful. Unlike Nayakan, where Sakthivel “Velu”

Nayakkar (Kamal) assumed a lone-wolf persona, Thug Life unfolds through bonds, both familial and chosen. Yet even these dynamics remain underexplored, mainly due to poor characterisation. Though Mani and Kamal, credited as screenwriters, attempt to bridge the gaps through ‘heavy’ (read as, shoddy) and long dialogues, the substandard quality of the writing prevents the film from establishing the bonds, particularly the emotional lock between Sakthivel and Amaran.

Despite the friction between them being crucial to the later part of the narrative, Mani Ratnam never manages to build this dynamic cohesively, rendering even their eventual tension flat and uninspiring. In fact, the confrontation and subsequent fight scene between Sakthivel and his friend-turned-foe Pathros (Joju George) is far more gripping and exhilarating than the cumulative impact of all the other moments in the film. Also, how long will filmmakers keep thinking that a hero falling off a cliff is still a good narrative device? Even though Amaran and the others are gangsters, wouldn't they have watched some movies to have the basic common sense to check for Sakthivel's body and make sure that the dude is actually dead before starting to celebrate? Seriously. While Thug Life tries, again, only through dialogues, to establish that Sakthivel loves his wife Jeeva, it fails to convincingly convey the depth of that love, which is supposedly the motivation for his dramatic return from the dead. Strangely enough, Sakthivel is also shown to have a mistress, Indrani (Trisha Krishnan), for whom he supposedly harbours quite some affection. Yet this relationship, too, is never developed beyond superficial physicality. Instead of meaningful moments that illuminate their bond (if any exists), we're left with the occasional make-out scenes. In fact, throughout the movie, Mani and Kamal have bluntly attempted to establish emotional depth through forced dialogues, rather than letting these relationships unfold organically. If the male characters are underwritten, the women fare even worse. Their presence, particularly in the cases of Jeeva and Indrani, is largely limited to being felt up by Sakthivel. And the other few women, well, they don't matter even that much to the makers. They contribute little to nothing of substance to the narrative. While the film briefly hints at Amaran's interest in Indrani and later shows him forcibly taking her away after dethroning Sakthivel, this track is clumsily and carelessly handled. “You turned the beast in me into a human being,” he tells her towards the end. But how? Mani and Kamal leave it to the already-confused and tired audience to fill in the blanks. Interestingly, while Rangaraya Sakthivel is stripped of the Nayakkar surname (as seen in the initial promos), Mani and Kamal still ensure that the character's dominant caste identity is not invisibilised. This is underscored in a moment when Mangai expresses to Amaran her fear that her father might not approve of her romantic relationship due to caste differences. As the narrative moves along one trajectory, Kamal Haasan's performance seems to run on an entirely different track, rarely intersecting. There are multiple instances in Thug Life where it feels like Kamal is unsure of which film he's in, as his performance is out of sync with the tone of the movie. While Kamal resorts to his typical theatrics, the rest of the cast — though none of them, including Silambarasan, did anything exceptional — at least attempt to stay true to the film's mood. The result is a visible gap between Kamal's performance and those of his co-stars. Thug Life, in a way, feels like a car ride that Mani Ratnam, Kamal Haasan, AR Rahman and cinematographer Ravi K Chandran embarked upon. But midway through, everyone, including Mani at the wheel, somehow dozed off, leaving Ravi, from the back seat, to somehow take over and steer the vehicle to safety before it crashed. From start to finish, Ravi does an exceptional job with the visuals, richly capturing the ethos of the city and the characters. Sreekar Prasad's editing, while salvaging these visuals to a great extent, never manages to rescue the film from its dull and disjointed storytelling. Another major disappointment in Thug Life is Rahman's music, especially the jarring and often senseless background score. At several points, the BGM feels so tonally off that it makes the viewers feel like they are watching a gangster spoof. While “Vinveli Nayaga” is good in its entirety, its fragmented odd placements in various parts of the film end up detracting from the overall experience. If there's anything as bad as AR Rahman's music on the technical front, it's Anbariv's action choreography. In short, Thug Life is a lot like watching a never-ending Kamal Haasan interview, where he keeps delivering long-winded lectures on things he already knows, without ever bothering to listen to the actual question. Thug Life movie cast: Kamal Haasan, Silambarasan TR, Trisha Krishnan,

Aishwarya Lekshmi, Ashok Selvan, Abhirami, Joju George
Thug Life movie director: Mani Ratnam
Thug Life movie rating: 1.5 stars

When Hema Malini almost rejected Baghban, saying, ‘Char itne bade bade ladkon ke maa ka role kaun karega?’

Baghban is a beloved film in Indian middle-class households, known for its messaging and the powerful performances delivered by Amitabh Bachchan and Hema Malini. However, not many are aware that Hema initially considered turning down the film. In an old interview with Lehren Retro, the veteran actress shared the reason behind her hesitation. She recalled an incident when director Ravi Chopra came to narrate the story at her home, where her mother was also present.

She said, “I remember when I was hearing the story from Ravi Chopra, my mother was sitting. After he left, I told her, ‘Char itne bade bade ladkon ke maa ka role karne ko bol raha hai... how can I do all this? (He's asking me to play the mother of four grown-up sons... how can I do all this?)’ Then she turned around and said, ‘No, no you must do the film.’ And I asked her why. She said, ‘The story is very good, you must do it.’ And she was really after me. So I was like, okay, I'll do it.” The actress added, “Because first I felt that before this, I was not doing many films, so after a long gap I was working. So I felt, why should I do this? But she said, ‘You must do this, this role will be very nice.’”

Interestingly, Hema Malini wasn't the only one who needed convincing. Few know that the role of Pooja Malhotra was initially offered to Tabu. While she appreci-



ated the script and the character, Tabu declined the role as she was hesitant to portray the mother of four children at the age of 36. She later appeared opposite Amitabh Bachchan in R. Balki's critically acclaimed romantic comedy Cheeni Kum.

Even Amitabh Bachchan wasn't the filmmakers' first choice. The role was initially offered to legendary actor Dilip Kumar, who eventually turned it down.

Sitaare Zameen Par title song: Aamir Khan, Genelia D'Souza track will melt your heart.



The makers of Sitaare Zameen Par released the title song of Aamir Khan and Genelia D'Souza's upcoming film on Thursday. In the peppy track, the actors can be seen motivating and training the specially-abled basketball team together, with a mix of fun and discipline. The video also shows heartwarming romantic moments between Aamir and Genelia, which will bring a smile on your face. The Sitaare Zameen Par title track is composed by Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy, sung by Shankar, and written by Amitabh Bhattacharya. In the song's video, the team keeps winning matches and prove that they aren't lesser than anyone. The track is refreshing, uplifting, and sets

the right tone for the film, capturing the beautiful growing connection of Aamir and the children. While sharing the title song, the makers wrote, “Zor lagaake, jaan ladhaake, bolna... #SitaareZameenPar Title track is out now! #SitaareZameenPar Song out now.”

Several fans praised the track in the comments section and expressed their excitement for the film. “Sports anthem of the year. Good job,” a user wrote. Another fan commented, “Classic Vibes! The OG Aamir Khan is here!” A person wrote, “This song is giving so much positive vibes.” “Dil jeet lia maja agayaa. Refreshing song. Sitaare hai aisi ke (The song has won my heart. Real stars are here),” another comment read. One of the fans appreciated the lyrics and said, “Hukum ke ikke. Jubaa ke pakke. Reverberate in my mind.”

The song “Sar Aankhen Pe Mere” and “Good For Nothing” (a revamped version of Aamir Khan's “Papa Kehte Hain” from his 1988 film Qayamat Se Qayamat), were released by the makers earlier. Alongside Aamir Khan and Genelia D'Souza, Sitaare Zameen Par introduces 10 debutant young faces – Aroush Datta, Gopi Krishna Varma, Samvit Desai, Vedant Sharma, Ayush Bhansali, Ashish Pendse, Rishi Shahani, Rishabh Jain, Naman Mishra, and Simran Mangeshkar. Directed by R. S. Prasanna, the movie is a spiritual sequel of Aamir's 2007 hit film Taare Zameen Par. Produced by Aamir Khan Productions, it is set to hit theatres on June 20.

When Amitabh Bachchan recalled Aishwarya Rai Bachchan's endurance during Aaradhya Bachchan's birth: ‘She had to struggle...’



Few may remember, but soon after Aaradhya Bachchan's birth in November 2011, Amitabh Bachchan and Abhishek Bachchan stepped out of their Mumbai residence, Jalsa, to meet the waiting media and share the joyful news. During that brief yet heartfelt interaction, Amitabh spoke about the baby's features. “It seems to me that she looks like Aishwarya. But as you all know, children's faces change daily. I still believe she looks like Aishwarya. Some people in the family think she resembles Jaya or Abhishek a little,” he said. In that same exchange with the media, Amitabh Bachchan revealed he was taking time off from work. “I am free now. Kaun Banega Crorepati is over and I don't have any films at the moment. So I'm free, and I will now stay at home.” Abhishek, standing beside him, added that his father would now be spending more time at home to help care for his granddaughter. One of the most emotional parts of the day came when Amitabh opened up about Aishwarya Rai Bachchan's strength during child-

birth. His account offered a rare and deeply respectful glimpse into a personal moment. “She had to struggle but I commend her that she was in acute labour for a long time, almost 2–3 hours. But she persisted and said she wanted a normal delivery. She did not use any epidural or painkiller.” What many are also unaware of is that Aishwarya was originally cast as the lead in Madhur Bhandarkar's much-anticipated film Heroine. Aishwarya had signed on to play the role of Mahi Arora, a complex and troubled Bollywood star. However, her pregnancy led to an abrupt change in plans. Once the news of her pregnancy reached the producers, the decision was made to replace her with Kareena Kapoor Khan. Bhandarkar later addressed the situation on his personal blog, explaining his reasons for letting go of the actress. He wrote about being caught off guard by the development, stating he was “in a state of total shock and depression.” With 65 days of filming still left, the director said the timeline meant Aishwarya would be “6–7 months pregnant,” a reality that would alter the on-screen image of the glamorous protagonist and “seriously jeopardise the plot.” “The entire crisis would have taken a humongous shape had the truth not being unveiled when it was,” he wrote, reflecting on the impact her continued participation could have had on the production. At the time, the situation stirred significant debate in the industry. Speaking to the media, Amitabh Bachchan weighed in on the controversy, defending his daughter-in-law's decision. “Everybody knew that Aishwarya was married when she signed the film. So you mean to say that actors can't get married or have children? I don't think this can be a part of any contract—that you cannot get married or have children if you are working on a project,” he had said. Ultimately, Amitabh confirmed that the matter had been resolved privately between Aishwarya and the director.

007 First Light announcement trailer: James Bond is a bullet looking for a target in the new game



In one of the most exciting pieces of gaming news in recent times, IO Interactive has finally released the announcement trailer for the James Bond game. It's titled 007 First Light, and the game was revealed to fans during the Sony State of Play showcase, and the trailer was later dropped on YouTube. According to the trailer, the game seems to pay homage to the films by including several interesting details which help differentiate 007 from any other agent with a licence to kill. While an exact release date hasn't been communicated by the Danish game developers, the game is all set to release in 2026 for Microsoft Xbox, Windows PC, Sony PlayStation 5, and the upcoming Nintendo Switch 2.

The game will focus on the early years of Bond, before he earned his credentials as MI6's most lethal weapon, and even the tagline for the game is “Earn Your Number”. While this is just a sneak peek and games have a way of turning out to be very different from the trailer, it does look promising. To be clear, 007 isn't winning any realism awards and going up in the upper echelons with projects like Red Dead Redemption, but the graphics do seem to hold themselves together. The trailer opens up with the director of MI6 (presumably M) talking to her subordinate about recruiting a young Bond. As portrayed in the books and the films, he is a talented, intelligent and efficient troublemaker who, if honed correctly, could become an asset.

We see some clips from the gameplay as Bond trains in the MI6 developmental programme in order to qualify for field duty. The first proper shout-out to the existing literature comes when he goes into the workshop to prepare for his

first mission. Omega watches, dangerous gadgets and vehicles with over-the-top engine power – it's all there. The game will also feature the forever iconic Aston Martin, and the trailer features what looks like the special edition DBS from 2019, which was built to commemorate 50 years of the film On Her Majesty's Secret Service.

IO Interactive has made it clear that the narrative of the game itself is completely original and has not been picked up from any of the books or the films. With GTA 6 also slated for a 2026 launch, it will be interesting to see how this game competes with the most anticipated project of all time in gaming history.

Ravi Teja's 'RT76' set for Sankranti release, officially launched with pooja ceremony

Hyderabad: Ravi Teja's much-awaited 76th film, RT76, has been officially launched with a grand pooja ceremony, kicking off what promises to be a major festive release. Directed by Kishore Tirumala and produced by Sudhakar Cherukuri under SLV Cinemas, the film is confirmed to hit theatres during the Sankranti season in January next year.

The makers unveiled a striking announcement poster featuring Ravi Teja in a checked designer suit, giving fans a glimpse of the stylish vibe of the film. RT76 is said to be a complete family entertainer packed with Ravi Teja's trademark comedy and mass appeal. The project has already caught the industry's attention not only for its star power but also for its Sankranti box-office clash with Megastar Chiranjeevi's upcoming comedy film directed by Anil Ravipudi. While the female leads are yet to be finalised, buzz suggests that several trending young actresses are being considered. The film boasts a strong technical crew, including music by Sankrantiki Vastunnam fame Bheems Cecireleo, editing by National Award winner Sreekar Prasad, cinematography by Prasad Murella, and production design by AS Prakash.