

INDIAN CHRONICLE

25 May, 2024 | Saturday | Volume No:12 | Issue No:89

Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

Three killed in car-bus collision on Hyderabad-Srisailem highway

Hyderabad: In a tragic incident, three persons died after the car they were travelling crashed into a TGSRTC bus on the Hyderabad- Srisailem highway at Amangal in Ranga Reddy district on Friday.

All the victims belonged to Hyderabad and were returning from Kalwakurthy. The bus was proceeding from Hyderabad to Srisailem. On receiving information, the police reached the spot and with the help of other motorists and locals removed the bodies which were stuck in the car which was heavily damaged.

Special casual leave for State, Central govt employees on May 27

Hyderabad: In view of Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda Graduates constituency by-election on May 27, Chief Electoral Officer Vikas Raj issued orders to grant special casual leave on the polling day to Central and State government employees, who are bonafide voters in the election to cast their vote.

Orders to this effect were issued to District Collectors of Warangal, Hanamkonda, Mahabubabad, Jayashankar Bhupalpally, Jangaon, Mulugu, Siddipet, Khammam, Bhadradi Kothagudem, Nalgonda, Suryapet and Yadadri Bhongir.

SC refuses plea on uploading voter turnout data

GNS News Agency, May 24

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday refused an NGO's plea to issue the Election Commission (EC) directions to upload polling station-wise voter turnout data on its website during the Lok Sabha polls, saying it would be difficult for the poll panel to mobilise manpower. A vacation Bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma said it cannot issue any such directions at the moment as five phases of polling have concluded and two remain. The top court adjourned the interlocutory application filed by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) to be listed before the regular Bench after the elections and pointed out that prima facie it appears the prayers in the application are similar to the main petition pending since 2019 on the issue. The Bench said it would be difficult for the poll panel to mobilise manpower for uploading the voter turnout data on its website. "Granting any relief in IA will amount to granting relief in the main petition which is pending," the Bench said. On May 17, the top court had sought within a week a response from the EC on the NGO's plea seeking a di-



rection to upload polling station-wise voter turnout data on its website within 48 hours of the conclusion of polling for each phase of the Lok Sabha elections. The ADR has filed an interim application in its 2019 PIL seeking directions to the poll panel that "scanned legible copies of Form 17C Part-I (Account of Votes Recorded)" of all polling stations be uploaded immediately after the polls.

National Security Adviser Ajit Doval says undefined borders in west and north adversely affects country



GNS News Agency, May 24

National Security Adviser Ajit Doval said on May 24 that the undefined borders in the west and north have adversely affected the country and its weight on internal security in terms of terrorism, radicalism, drug trafficking is a liability for the nation. He said India's economic progress would have been much faster "if we had more secure borders." "If both our borders, in north and west had been defined and not in state of adversarial disposition, ...India's economic progress would have been much faster if we had more secure borders and in future I don't think that our borders are going to be as secure as we will require for our fast economic growth, so the responsibility of border guarding force becomes very very heavy. They have got to remain alert 24/7 alert and got to see that our national interests are protected," he said adding that in the next 10 years India will be a \$10 trillion economy and will become self-reliant in military power. "Borders are important because that is the limit which defines our sovereignty. Up to the last point where our border soldier is able to go and put his foot down, that is the limit of our sovereignty, zameen par jo kabja hai wo apna hai, baaki sab adalat aur kacheri ka kaam hai, usse fark nahin padta (what matters are the areas where we can establish our claim physically, else is paper work)." "We got to see whether the border on northern or western side, they not only determine the limits of our sovereignty, not only important for our territorial integrity, they also have an im-

pact on our internal security and stability," the NSA said.

He added, "border security also has a bearing on socio-economic security of the country such as the coming of radicalisation, we have large number of Rohingyas coming here, people from Arakan (Myanmar) area are coming and sometimes due to religious and travel affinity (in India) they have socio-political implications." "Stressing on the need for technological advancements in border management he said that mere increasing the strength of the force was not enough and technological advancement was required. Mr. Doval said that lesser the manpower, greater the opportunity for round the clock reliable systems. "If you are scattered on the ground, response capability is less, you have better quality sensors, remote sensing technology etc, you will be able to respond better," he said. Pointing out to the recent missile strike on Israel, the NSA said, "There was a series of missile attacks on Israel three days back from Iran. That is no news. Out of 1500 missiles, 99% were stopped, only 2-3 missiles that could hit, that is the strength of technology. Had they put large number of persons to prevent the strike through aircrafts etc, instead of radar, anti sabotage...they harnessed the technology and that is why they were so effective." He said that infrastructure development should be specific to theatres and roads, mobile tower should be built but every theatre has got its unique challenge. Tactical intelligence is the most important, he said. "Where did the Israelis fail on October 7 (2023). There cutting edge intelligence on the border was zero. They could not distinguish that thousands of Hamas people are going to infiltrate. They had all the high technology, we are fortunate that we have so many eyes and can monitor the border. We have got an interface with our villagers, they are the store-house of knowledge, security of the nation is not only writing analysis, it has to be translated on the ground. Get feedback from the ground....Please befriend the border population, as Chanakya said you can never defend the border where population is hostile to you. They should not feel that these people in uniform are there to police and control them," he said.

Asaduddin Owaisi accuses BJP of obstructing Muslim women voters

GNS News Agency, May 24

Hyderabad: After Bharatiya Janata Party's Delhi unit demanded "proper verification" of women voters wearing burqas, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) president Asaduddin Owaisi on Thursday said that BJP wants to target Muslim women and creates an obstacle for them in the voting process. In a post on X, Asaduddin Owaisi said, "The Delhi unit of the BJP has told the Election Commission that there should be a special checking of women in burqa. During the recent Lok Sabha elections in Telangana, their candidate publicly insulted and harassed Muslim women. In every election, the BJP finds some excuse or the other to harass and target Muslim women. The Election Commission has clear rules and regulations for women who do not observe purdah, whether they are in burqa or veil or mask, no one is allowed to vote without verification, so why did the BJP have to make such a special demand? Just target Muslim women, harass them and create obstacles in voting."

Earlier, a delegation of the Delhi BJP on Wednesday met the Chief Electoral officer (CEO) and demanded a proper verification of women voters wearing 'burqa' or face masks with the help of female officials during May 25 polling. Meanwhile, a case has been registered against BJP's candidate from Hyderabad Lok Sabha seat, Madhavi Latha after a video clip of her checking the voter



ID cards of Muslim women during her visit to a polling booth went viral. The case has been registered under sections 171C, 186, 505(1)(c) of IPC and Section 132 of the Representation of the People Act.

Delhi is undergoing voting in a single phase on all seven Lok Sabha seats on May 25, with a fierce contest between the Bharatiya Janata Party and the INDIA bloc, comprising the AAP and Congress. The counting of votes and declaration of results will be done on June 4. The Aam Aadmi Party and the Congress are fighting the elections in alliance in the national capital, with the AAP contesting four and the Congress three seats. The seven parliamentary constituencies in Delhi are Chandni Chowk, East Delhi, New Delhi, North East Delhi, North West Delhi, South Delhi, and West Delhi.

'Timid' Congress was afraid to even take Dalai Lama's name, says PM Modi at Mandi rally

GNS News Agency, May 24

Mandi: Revealing that he often talks to the Tibetan spiritual leader, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that the Congress party was so "timid" that it was afraid to even take the name of the Dalai Lama. "I often talk to the Dalai Lama," he said while addressing a public meeting in Himachal Pradesh's Mandi parliamentary constituency organised in support of the BJP candidate Kangana Ranaut. The actress-turned-politician has been pitted against Congress legislator Vikramaditya Singh, the scion of the erstwhile royal family and son of Virbhadra Singh. "India is the country of Buddha and the Modi government has vigorously promoted this heritage," the PM mentioned while highlighting places of Buddhism in the state. Interestingly, the Prime Minister's assertion comes just hours after state Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu had an audience with the 14th Dalai Lama at his residence in Dharamshala. The Buddhist spiritual leader's office later told IANS that the Chief Minister had paid a "courtesy call on His Holiness".

The sprawling Mandi parliamentary constituency is one of the toughest and covers almost two-thirds of the state. The seat includes Kullu, Mandi and some areas of Chamba and Shimla districts, besides the tribal-dominated Kinnaur and Lahaul and Spiti, which are dominated by the Buddhists. Political observers say that PM Modi's reference to Buddhism in his speech comes in the wake of this week's protest against Kangana Ranaut in the Buddhist-dominated Kaza (Lahaul-Spiti) over her recent purported tweet featuring the Dalai Lama. She had later apologised for it, saying that the action wasn't meant to hurt anyone. In his address, the Prime Minister said that it was the BJP which had ended the 500-year wait by building the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. This was possible only because of your one vote. It is the strength of your



one vote that ended the wait of 500 years," he said. Slamming the Congress leaders for their comments on Kangana Ranaut, PM Modi said that the party indulges in regressive policies and divisive politics. "The Congress has not yet arrived in the 21st century. While people progress, Congress moves in the opposite direction. It's heading back to the 20th century. The Congress royal family is staunchly against daughters. The entire Congress is vehemently anti-women and its leaders said such vile things about Kangana. Do you accept this disrespect?" PM Modi asked the crowd. He also gave an assurance of providing an open and safe environment to Himachal's women so that they can achieve bigger goals in life. PM Modi called upon the people to reject the Congress party's "outdated ideology" and support the BJP in the upcoming elections. "The Congress is ruining Himachal. It is necessary to stop it. I need your support to remove Himachal from the clutches of Congress," he said. Besides Mandi, Himachal Pradesh's other three parliamentary constituencies - Shimla (reserved), Kangra and Hamirpur - will go to the polls on June 1.

BRS questions authorities on filing false cases specifically targeting party cadre

GNS News Agency, May 24

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao questioned the officials on filing false cases specifically targeting the BRS cadre, ignoring the real culprits. He questioned why no action has been initiated against those who initially posted the alleged new logo of TGSRTC, but the BRS cadre were targeted for just sharing it and raising questions. "Why are you not filing cases against the Congress-affiliated handles and media houses like NTV, Big TV, and Velugu? They are the ones who started showing the new RTC logo," he asked Director General of Police Ravi Gupta and Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) chairman and managing director VC Sajjanar, emphasising that these outlets have been the primary sources of misinformation.

Taking to X on Friday, Rama Rao expressed anger over biased enforcement, warning that if the harassment continues under the influence of political leaders, legal action will be pursued. "If you guys continue this harassment under the direction of political bosses, we will drag you to the court of law and make sure justice is delivered," he asserted.

He also criticised Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for spreading false information and questioned why such a habitual fake news peddler should not be jailed. "Revanth manufactured a shameless lie that my relative got a Rs 10,000 crore Covid drug contract. The same joker created a fake narrative that I dug up Nizam's jewels which were under the Secretariat. Revanth circulated fake video of Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Being a Chief Minister, he posted a fake circular of Osmania University," he pointed out.

A fresh row was triggered between the ruling Congress and the opposition BRS after news about the changed logo of TGSRTC was shared on social media platforms on May 22. The picture of the logo change was



first tweeted by certain Congress-affiliated handles on Wednesday at 11 am. It was later picked up by several media houses which was then shared by the BRS leaders questioning the removal of Charminar and Kakatiya Thoranam from the logo. However, RTC CMD VC Sajjanar responded on Thursday, clarifying that the Corporation was yet to finalise any new logo and the logo being circulated on social media is fake. "As the organisation continues to work on designing a new logo, TGSRTC reassures the public that any official updates regarding logo changes will be communicated through proper official channels. Until then, the current logo of TGSRTC remains in place," he said.

Cyclone Remal to make landfall as severe cyclonic storm in West Bengal, Bangladesh on May 26: IMD

GNS News Agency, May 24

Cyclonic storm "Remal", originating in the central Bay of Bengal, is expected to escalate into a severe cyclonic storm by May 25 and according to the latest input of the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), it is very likely to cross Bangladesh and adjoining West Bengal coasts between Sagar Island and Khepupara around May 26 midnight as a severe cyclonic storm. The Indian Coast Guard said on May 24 that the cyclone is likely to make landfall at North/North-West Bay of Bengal near West Bengal Coast on the night of May 26 and the situation is being actively monitored and comprehensive preemptive measures to ensure minimal loss of life and property at sea have been initiated. India Coast Guard is closely monitoring Cyclonic Storm #Remal formed over the #BayofBengal, expected to intensify into a Severe Cyclonic Storm by 25 May. ...According to the IMD, the well-marked low pressure area over west central and adjoining south Bay of Bengal concentrated into a depression and lay centered at 5.30 a.m. on May 24 over central Bay of Bengal. "It is very likely to continue to move

northeastwards and intensify further into a cyclonic storm over east central Bay of Bengal by May 25 morning. Subsequently, it would move nearly northwards, intensify into a severe cyclonic storm by 25th night. "Coordination efforts are under way with State administrations and stakeholders to facilitate a synchronised response to potential contingencies arising from the cyclonic storm, ICG said in a statement and all pertinent information regarding the evolving situation has been disseminated to stakeholders to facilitate preparedness and coordinated action. To ensure the safety of maritime traffic, the ICG's remote operating stations at Haldia and Paradip are broadcasting regular and multilingual VHF alerts, advising transit merchant mariners to take necessary precautions, it said detailing the measures being taken. "Additionally, ICG ships and aircraft are conducting surveillance along the projected path of the cyclonic storm to provide timely assistance and support." Further, merchant vessels at anchorages have been alerted, and respective port authorities have been advised to take appropriate actions.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Trapped in Bishkek

THE plight of Indian students — largely medicos — trapped in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, highlights a crisis that demands immediate attention and action. Over 5,000 Indian students, including about 2,000 from Punjab and Haryana, find themselves in dire straits due to a recent surge in mob violence targeting foreigners. Reports of some youngsters surviving on tea and cucumbers and facing threats when attempting to procure food paint a grim picture. The fear is palpable and justified, given the physical assaults and harassment some students have endured in Bishkek. Their misery is compounded by landlords demanding exorbitant rents and an inability to safely access essential services. While the Indian Embassy and Kyrgyz authorities claim that the situation has normalised, these reassurances ring hollow in view of the experiences of the students. Videos and pleas on social media starkly contrast with official statements, indicating a disconnect between the ground reality and diplomatic communication. The response from New Delhi has been slow and inadequate. The Embassy's advice to the pupils to remain vigilant and assurances of normalcy do little to remove the immediate dangers faced by them. Meanwhile, the Kyrgyz universities' move to switch to online classes is a welcome step, but it does not address the physical threats and psychological trauma the students are facing. The onus is on the Indian government to prioritise the safe evacuation of its citizens by organising special flights and ensuring a secure passage to the airport, something that the medical students are currently unable to do on their own due to the hostile environment. The Indian authorities must engage in a diplomatic dialogue with Kyrgyzstan for the safety of foreign students and to prevent the recurrence of such incidents.

Bengal BJP's IT warrior who manages 2,068 WhatsApp groups says it all starts with 'namashkar' or 'good morning'

GNS News Agency, May 24

Forty-one-year-old Dipak Das can hardly keep his eye off his two cell phones, whether he is in his small medicine shop in Cooch Behar's Gopalpur village, in party offices or on visits to Kolkata. In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, he managed 1,114 WhatsApp groups. The number has jumped to 2,068 this time, for the 2024 elections. He is among those who are considered to be the backbone of the BJP's social media campaign in West Bengal.

Speaking to The Indian Express, the convener of the BJP's IT cell in Cooch Behar explained how his team reaches out to people through social media, makes party messages go viral, combats other political parties' messaging, influences "neutral" people and even sneaks up on opponents. The IT warriors now create messages and reels on social media. "After 2,068, now I seem not to be able to create more WhatsApp groups. I am the admin in around 1,200 groups and a member of around 800 such groups. However, it is not possible for me to personally run so many groups. We have a team here that helps me," he said. Das lives in Gopalpur village with his wife, a panchayat member elected last year, and his school-going daughter.

"Some groups are the BJP's political groups. However, most are non-political. For instance, we have groups named 'Borovitar Boro Boro Kotha (Big talks of Borovita), Samparka Setu (communication bridge), which are examples of non-political groups," Das said. "It all starts with 'namashkar' or 'good morning'. Then we share some social issues with the person. If we get the right feedback, we add that person to a non-political group. We also slowly increase our messages and infuse political ones. If we get the right reactions or reciprocation, finally one is told about the national interest, why the BJP is important and about Narendra Modi as the prime minister. He may be or may not be added to our political group," he added. Later such people are also invited to rallies, meetings and seminars organised by the BJP.

"We classify people as our own, opponents and neutral. A list is made and sent to the booth level. Those whom we consider as our own and neutral are then approached by our workers. Those who are opponents are kept under watch. The communication happens throughout the year but we share the list some months before polls," Das said. "We also create non-political groups to maintain relations with some people. For example, we have a cooking group, jokes group, travel group etc." However, Das said this was just one part of his or his team's job. The stress is now on making reels, making party messages trending or going viral on social media and countering Opposition campaigns.

What has changed since 2019? The Indian Express had caught up with Das during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. He explained the change in his job since then. "Unlike in 2019, now we make our own reels from the district. This is apart from those shared by the state unit or from the Centre. Once a message comes from the Centre or the state, we have over 100 men and women ready in this district alone to make it 'viral or trending' on social media. It is not easy. Just sharing won't make it trend; one has to add to it or write something," he said. "Another major task we have these days is to counter Opposition narratives or allegations. For instance, when the Trinamool Congress started sharing lies about the CAA, we got local experts and teachers to share the right message. We have roped in some local intellectuals who have a good following on social media," he added.

Research team to track performance Das said that regular meetings are held with social media influencers and intellectuals who have a good following in the online world. He said, "We don't just make reels, memes or videos. We have a research group that regularly maps the messages we are circulating. They analyse which messages are mostly accepted and which messages are discarded by the receivers. For example, we found that our leaders like Dilip Ghosh and Suvendu Adhikari are among the most popular figures on social media despite the presence of other party leaders and stalwarts. So we try and release more of their videos online. We also found that videos on Ram mandir were mostly accepted. So we increased the number of videos on Ram mandir."

Delhi Police arrest man who attacked Kanhaiya Kumar outside AAP office



GNS News Agency, May 24

Days after Congress candidate Kanhaiya Kumar was attacked by two men following a meeting with an AAP councillor in Northeast Delhi, Delhi Police on Tuesday arrested one of them. Kumar was attacked on May 17 when he was leaving the Aam Aadmi Party's New Usmanpur office after meeting the AAP councillor from Brahmpuri, Chhaya Sharma. The purported videos of the

incident show a man, with a long beard and wearing a black shirt, shouting slogans of "Kanhaiya Bhaiya Zindabad" while holding a garland and a packet of rose petals.

He is seen approaching Kumar and then throwing ink on him even as another man slaps the Congress leader. Kumar's supporters quickly surrounded the attackers and retaliated. "Efforts are being made to round up the others," said Joy Tirkey, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Northeast). Sharma, the AAP councillor who hosted the meeting with Kumar, filed a complaint with Delhi Police the same day. She alleged that when she attempted to intervene in the scuffle, the men manhandled her and threatened to kill her husband.

On Tuesday, the police arrested Ajay Kumar, alias Ranbir Bhatti, a 41-year-old man from New Usmanpur. A case under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 341 (wrongful restraint), 354 (assault or criminal force against a woman with the intent to outrage her modesty), 506 (criminal intimidation) and 34 (multiple people committing a criminal act with a common intention) was filed against him in connection with Sharma's complaint. Kumar, the Congress party's Northeast Delhi constituency candidate, has alleged that the attackers were supported by sitting MP Manoj Tiwari, a charge denied by the BJP leader. Kumar is contesting against Tiwari, a two-time Bharatiya Janata Party MP from the Northeast Delhi constituency.

BJP MP Brij Bhushan pleads not guilty in sexual harassment case: 'Koi sawaal hi nahi hai'

GNS News Agency, May 24

While ordering the framing of charges against Singh, ACMM Rajpoot noted that abuse of dominant position, continued perception of threat to victims, premeditated design and sexual exploitation of vulnerable female subordinates formed part of a "pattern" in respect to the charges against the BJP MP. "... (Bhushan's) continuing position in the WFI, coupled with the victims' perception of a continuing threat, shows the acts of accused no. 1 (Bhushan) was not isolated but part of a broader pattern of behaviour whereby he exploited his position of power over an extended period. These alleged acts, committed in Delhi and outside Delhi/India, were executed under a 'single criminal enterprise' or 'single impulse' to sexually exploit and harass female wrestlers by abusing his dominant position," the ACMM noted. It was also observed by the court that there was a clear "unity of purpose" or "unity of thought" behind Singh's actions to "sexually exploit vulnerable female subordinates as much as possible".

"Even during wrestling events, they (the female wrestlers) used to avoid going out independently... Thus, it reflects their fear and persistent threat posed by the presence of the accused (Brij Bhushan)," the court observed while pointing out the hierarchy in the workforce between Singh, who was in power, and the female wrestlers who were his subordinates.

Whether or not the offences allegedly committed by Singh were "continuing" in nature was one of the main points to be decided by the court. It was advocate Rajiv Mohan's (representing Singh) case that the alleged offences were not continuous in nature and were in fact separate. Noting that the alleged offences reflected a "systematic and recurring pattern", the magistrate noted that they collectively formed a continuing offence and were not isolated incidents. ACMM Rajpoot also noted that the nature of the sexual misconduct was "strikingly similar" and involved "exploiting professional settings or events".

Another contention raised by advocate Mohan was that some of the alleged offences took place outside India and are therefore outside the "territorial jurisdiction"



of the Delhi court. He had also earlier argued that no sanction under Section 188 of the Criminal Procedure Code had been obtained from the central government. On the above grounds, he had sought Singh's discharge. The court, however, noted that the alleged offences suggested a "pre-meditated design" and that a joint trial can be conducted even if some offences had occurred outside Delhi since the offences were part of the "same transaction". It was observed by the court that a sanction from the central government was not needed as the alleged offences were continuous in nature and several of them had occurred in Delhi.

A delay of several years in filing some complaints was also flagged by advocate Mohan. However, in this respect, the court observed, "... it cannot be denied that it takes significant courage and camaraderie to speak out against such a powerful person", adding that the accused could not be discharged on the grounds of delay alone. The court had last Friday said there was sufficient material to frame charges against Singh under Sections 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty) and 354A (sexual harassment) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). It said for all allegations levelled against Singh by victim number 6, he has been discharged. Her charges dated back to 2012. Singh has not been charged with the offence of stalking under Section 354D of the IPC. In June last year, Delhi Police had filed a chargesheet against Bhushan for alleged sexual harassment, assault and stalking of six women wrestlers.

iCloud data likely to play key role in probe into MP Prajwal Revanna cases



GNS News Agency, May 24

The data stored on cloud servers by the phone users who leaked the alleged sex videos of Prajwal Revanna, the Janata Dal (Secular) MP from Karnataka's Hassan, is being viewed as key evidence in the investigation of cases of sexual assault registered against him. A Karnataka Police Special Investigation Team (SIT) that is investigating the sexual assault allegations against Revanna — three FIRs have been filed so far — and the leak of the alleged sex videos ahead of the April 26 Lok Sabha elections is looking for the digital trail of the videos as part of efforts to gather evidence in the two sets of cases, sources said.

The videos, including those involving alleged assault, are alleged to have been recorded on an iPhone belonging to the MP. As many as 2,967 clips of videos and images purportedly recorded by the MP emerged in the public domain on pen drives and CDs distributed around Hassan ahead of the elections where Revanna was the NDA candidate. The videos are alleged to have been stolen by a car driver N Karthik, who was trusted by the MP for 13 years before the duo had a falling out in early 2023. The videos and images are reported to have been transferred from Revanna's iPhone to Karthik's iPhone through the 'AirDrop' system that allows the transfer of files between two iOS devices using wireless communication technology.

Following the alleged theft of data from his phone by Karthik, Revanna had reported the loss of his phone in 2023 to local authorities and had filed a case against

Karthik and media outlets in June 2023 to prevent "the publication of publishing and circulating such fake news, morphed photographs/video".

In the absence of the iPhones used to allegedly record and share the videos, the data stored on iCloud accounts linked to the iPhones has emerged as a key source of information to establish the digital trail of the alleged sex videos, including their origin. Sources said investigations had established that some of the people linked to the Revanna cases, including a few arrested people, had access to the iCloud storage. According to Apple's legal process guidelines for law enforcement agencies, "All requests from government and law enforcement agencies outside of the United States for content, with the exception of emergency circumstances" must comply with the United States Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA). "A request under a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty or the Clarifying Lawful Overseas Use of Data Act ("CLOUD Act") is in compliance with ECPA," as per the Apple guidelines. The probe so far: 3 men arrested, 4 others named in police complaint Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections in Karnataka on April 26, Poornachandra Tejasvi, an election agent for Prajwal Revanna, filed a police complaint on April 23 against four people, including Karthik, alleging that they had been distributing morphed, obscene videos and images of the Hassan MP on pen drives, CDs and social media in Hassan. On April 27, Revanna is alleged to have fled to Germany. On May 8, a district court in Hassan rejected the anticipatory bail plea of the four people named in the April 23 police complaint. The court rejected the anticipatory bail pleas of Chetan C, 32, Naveen Gowda, 34, Karthik N, 40, and Pottaraju alias Putti, 50, on the grounds that the spread of the videos with the images of women amounted to a violation of privacy, dignity and caused embarrassment to the women. Karthik and three others are yet to be apprehended. Karthik released a video message earlier on April 30 claiming he had not leaked the sex videos of Revanna but had shared it with BJP leader G Devaraje Gowda, who was his advocate in a case against the Revannas. In the course of the anticipatory bail hearing, the Hassan sessions court was informed by a state prosecutor that police had written to the social media service provider Meta, through the state advocate general, for information regarding a fake Facebook account in the name of "Naveen Gowda" which revealed the release of the videos.

Tripura Congress focuses on organisational meetings ahead of panchayat polls



GNS News Agency, May 24

Ahead of the panchayat polls likely to be held next month, the Tripura unit of the Congress has started holding organisational meetings across the state to strengthen the party.

"As per the instruction of the high command, the state Congress is holding a series of organisational meetings. So far, the party has covered 38 blocks," said state Congress president Ashish Kumar Saha while addressing a press conference at the Congress Bhawan in Agartala on Monday. He also alleged that BJP activists attacked a few Congress workers while they were returning from one such meeting.

"We filed a complaint at Kamalpur Police Station on Saturday. Though the police arrested three accused, they were released on bail," he said. The Congress leader also informed that the party will launch a movement against the 'deterioration' in law and order in Tripura after the completion of the organisational meetings.

3 Bangladeshi women held in Tripura while trying to board train to Ahmedabad: Police

GNS News Agency, May 24

Tripura police arrest Bangladeshi nationals Das, GRP in-charge for the Agartala railway station, said the arrests were made after a team of plainclothes personnel from the GRP and the Railway Protection Force found a few people behaving suspiciously at the railway station. A day after four Bangladesh citizens and an Indian tout were held from Tripura's Agartala railway station, the Government Railway Police (GRP) Sunday arrested three women from the neighbouring country for allegedly entering Indian territory illegally. "We have arrested three Bangladeshi women who illegally crossed into Indian territory. We had a tip-off that a few Bangladeshi nationals would be trying to leave the state by train. We acted on it and arrested them," Tapas Das, GRP in-charge for the Agartala railway station, told reporters. The trio were identified as Rozina Akhter, 36, Parul Begum, 36, and Sultana Begum, 26. Das said the arrests were made after a team of plainclothes personnel from the GRP and the Railway Protection Force found a few people behaving suspiciously at the railway station. "They failed to produce valid documents and eventually admitted that they were Bangladeshi citizens," he added. As per preliminary investigation, the three women were planning to go to Ahmedabad in Gujarat by boarding an express train that would take them outside Tripura. The Bangladeshi women were produced before a local court on Monday with a plea for their police custody. In recent months, Tripura has witnessed a series of arrests of foreign nationals who were found to have illegally crossed the border. As many as 1,018 people—498 Bangladeshi citizens, 396 Indians and 124 Rohingya—were arrested between January 2023 and April 2024.

India to participate in G-7, Ukraine peace summits: PM

GNS News Agency, May 24

India will participate in all important summits that promote the agenda of global peace, security and development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said while referring to invitations to him to attend the G-7 meeting and the Ukraine peace summit next month. In an interview to PTI, the prime minister said India will "resonate the voice of the Global South" at these summits to shape the global discourse and advance the vision for human centric development and a prosperous and peaceful world. "The level of participation will be the factor of timing, logistics and parallel commitments," Modi said in response to a question on whether he will be attending the two multilateral gatherings. Italy is hosting the G-7 Summit meeting from June 13-15, while the Ukraine peace summit will be held in Switzerland from June 15-16. Modi said the invitations extended to India to attend the summits were an acknowledgment of its significance and contribution to international affairs. "These reflect the robust global engagement that we have in keeping with our philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family)," the prime minister said. "India will be participating in all important summits that promote the agenda of global peace, security and development," Modi said.

DPH issues health advisory ahead of rainy season in State

Hyderabad: Light to moderate rains or thundershowers, as forecast by IMD-Hyderabad for Telangana, might offer a reprieve from the summer heat, but the moderate temperatures and humidity could also be a breeding ground for various viral infections as well as mosquito, food and water borne diseases. The Director of Public Health and Family Welfare, Dr. B. Ravinder Nayak has issued an advisory enlisting health precautions during the rains. The tips to stay healthy during the rains include checking the mosquito menace to fight malaria, dengue and chikungunya. Observation of every Friday as Dry day to get rid of stagnant water around house, discard flower pots, cans, tyres, buckets, coolers, ditches and drains, will help eradicate mosquito breeding possibilities. Trim lawns as short as possible.

3,300 CISF contingent to take full charge of Parliament security from May 20; CRPF exits



GNS News Agency, May 24

More than 3,300 CISF personnel will take over the complete counterterrorism and anti-sabotage security duties at the Parliament complex from Monday following the withdrawal of over 1,400 CRPF staff from the country's most important symbol of democracy, official sources said. The parliament duty group (PDG) of the CRPF wound up its entire administrative and operational paraphernalia — vehicles, weapons and commandos — from the complex on Friday and its commander, a deputy inspector general (DIG)-rank officer, handed over all the security points in the complex to the incoming CISF group, the sources said.

A total of 3,317 Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel are being inducted for securing both the old and new Parliament buildings and the associated structures in this complex located in central Delhi after the government directed it to take over the task from the CRPF following the December 13 security breach incident of last year, a senior officer told. In a major security breach on the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament terror attack, two persons jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the public gallery during Zero Hour on December 13, 2023, released yellow smoke from canisters and shouted slogans before being overpowered by MPs. Outside the Parliament premises around the same time that day, two other persons sprayed coloured smoke from canisters while shouting slogans. Following this incident, a committee under the chairmanship of CRPF DG was setup to look into the overall security issues of the Parliament complex and make suitable recommendations. The CISF counterterrorism security unit will take over the full charge of the Parliament complex from 6 am on Monday, May 20, the officer said, requesting anonymity.

India's peak power demand hovering near projected 235 GW in May amid severe heat wave

GNS News Agency, May 24

India's peak power demand is hovering near the projected 235 GW level in May, following excessive use of cooling appliances like air conditioners and desert coolers amid severe heat waves in the country. According to the power ministry data, the peak power demand met or the highest supply in the day has already reached 233 GW on May 6 compared to 221.42 GW recorded a year ago. Earlier in the month, the power ministry estimated that the power demand would peak at 235 GW during the daytime, and 225 GW during evening hours in May; and 240 GW during daytime and 235 GW during evening hours in June 2024. The peak supply was 229.77 GW on May 4, and interestingly the highest supply in a day crossed the 221.42 GW, recorded in May last year, on May 2 this year.

The industry experts opined that power demand would increase further due to the increase in the intensity of heat in May, as the Southwest Monsoon, which brings relief from the scorching heat in summer, is likely to hit the Kerala coast on June 1 every year.

Moreover, the Southwest Monsoon covers almost the entire country and reaches Delhi by the end of June, experts said, adding that therefore, power demand would remain steady and high next month also. Earlier in March this year, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) had projected that India is likely to experience a warmer summer and more heatwave days this year, with El Nino conditions predicted to continue at least until May.

From March to May, the above-normal number of heatwave days is likely over most parts of the country,

It has deployed its staff to guard all the flap entry gates of the complex, posted canine squads, fire fighting personnel along with fire tenders, manpower at CCTV monitoring control room and communication centre apart from the pass section, watch towers apart from specialists to undertake anti-sabotage checks and other operations at the Parliament complex, he said. With this, the CRPF PDG, Delhi Police (about 150 personnel) and the parliament security staff (PSS) who jointly secured the Parliament till now, stand withdrawn, a senior CISF officer said. He said the CISF personnel have been undertaking familiarisation exercise of the complex for the last 10 days and the men and women personnel of the force who will man reception areas have been given light blue full sleeved shirts and brown pants apart from safari suits as their new uniform. The first officer quoted above added that the PDG unit is expected to be merged with the six battalion strong VIP security wing of the CRPF, while the PSS staff could be tasked afresh for rendering security and protocol duties at other central government installations. Some PSS staff could be retained for manning the lobbies of the house for marshal duties but a final decision is yet to be taken, he said.

The CISF contingent, according to sources, has been deployed on a temporary manner called the 'internal security duty pattern' and it is expected that it will be granted a full-fledged sanction as new government assumes office after the ongoing general elections, sources said. The CISF personnel have been imparted refresher training in baggage screening, personal frisking, bomb detection and disposal, quick reaction terrorist counter, sniper task and public interaction and courtesy before being sent for the Parliament duty. They have also trained recently with the 'black cat' commandos of the National Security Guard (NSG) who were air-dropped from an IAF helicopter on the new Parliament complex to simulate a terrorist attack, the sources said. A CRPF officer said PDG troops who left the Parliament complex on May 17 clicked selfies and took photographs as a token of remembrance of 'efficiently' guarding the country's highest temple of democracy. "During the 2001 terrorist attack, CRPF personnel showed extreme bravery alongwith personnel from other agencies to defeat the dastardly assault with one personnel laying down her life in the line of duty while some others receiving gallantry medals and in 2023 they were not responsible for the breach that took place." "The PDG personnel felt sad that they had to surrender this duty despite giving their best," the CRPF officer said.



except northeast India, the western Himalayan region, the southwest peninsula and the west coast, it stated. According to the IMD report on Monday, the maximum temperatures were in the range of 43 to 47 degrees Celsius in most places in Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Rajasthan and in many parts of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, West Madhya Pradesh; in some parts of East Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

The temperature varied in the range of 40 to 42 degrees Celsius in many parts of Vidarbha, in isolated pockets of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Maharashtra and plains of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. The IMD, in its bulletin, said that heat wave to severe heat wave conditions is very likely in many/most pockets of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, West Rajasthan; in some parts of West Uttar Pradesh, East Rajasthan and North-west Madhya Pradesh during May 20 to 24.

Supreme Court dismisses plea challenging new criminal laws



GNS News Agency, May 24

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) challenging three new laws — Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Bill — enacted by Parliament. A bench of Justices Bela M Trivedi and Pankaj Mishra told the petitioner, Advocate Vishal Tiwari, that the laws were yet to come into operation and also took exception to the "casual manner" in which the petition had been drafted. "The law has not come into force," pointed out Justice Trivedi.

Tiwari said he would withdraw the plea and urged the court to grant him liberty to approach the government and make a representation but the court refused. The bench told him that it would have imposed costs if he had argued the matter any further. In February this year, a bench presided by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud dismissed a PIL by a Chennai resident challenging the three new laws questioning his locus standi.

The three laws, which will come into effect on July 1,

were enacted to overhaul the country's criminal justice system and will replace the colonial-era Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860, the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973, and the Indian Evidence Act of 1872. During an event in April, Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud said the enactment of the new laws signified a watershed moment for our society and "have transitioned India's legal framework on criminal justice into the new age".

US Consulate in Hyderabad extends student visa season by two weeks

Hyderabad: The US Consulate in Hyderabad has extended the student visa season by two weeks, ensuring that students with later interview dates can arrive in the US in time for their programs. As a result, student visa interviews will now continue until the end of August 2024.

To assist applicants, EducationUSA India is organizing Student Visa Information Sessions 2024. These sessions will feature a Consular Officer from the U.S. Embassy or Consulates, who will provide detailed guidance on the student visa application process.

The consulate began conducting student visa interviews on Monday, following the release of the first set of appointment slots. Over the next few weeks, additional appointment slots for June, July, and August will be made available.

'Kerala blocking water to Tamil Nadu farms': EPS writes to Stalin as a check dam becomes political flashpoint



GNS News Agency, May 24

Construction of a new check dam in Vattavada near Kerala's Munnar town has triggered fears that it could lead to water shortage for farmers in Tamil Nadu. On Monday, AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami demanded that Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin take decisive legal action against the Kerala government's construction plans. Palaniswami also accused the "Communist government in Kerala" of attempting to obstruct the flow of water to the Amaravathi dam in Tamil Nadu by building a check dam across the Silandhi river at Peruguda in Idukki district. He alleged the ruling DMK government in Tamil Nadu was "compromising the state's water rights for the sake of maintaining electoral alliances".

"The Kerala government is blocking the flow of water to the Amaravathi dam, which is crucial for irrigation in Tamil Nadu. The DMK government is being a mute spectator, failing to protect the state interests in water disputes," Palaniswami said, drawing parallels to other on-

going inter-state water conflicts, including the contested Karnataka project of constructing a dam across the Cauvery river at Mekedatu, and Andhra Pradesh's construction of multiple check dams across the Palar river. The Silandhi river is a major tributary of the Amaravathi River, which in turn feeds into the Cauvery river. Farmers in Tirupur and Karur districts, who rely on the Amaravathi dam for irrigating over 55,000 acres of farmland, have earlier expressed concerns about the impact of Kerala's construction on their water supply. A team of the Tamil Nadu Water Resources Department who visited the dam site in Vattavada to conduct an inspection also raised concerns about the project and sent a report to the Tamil Nadu government. A top officer said, "It is about 40 meters in length and 2 meters in height, across the Silandhi river. There were a few similar projects in recent years at Pambaru river at Pattiseri in Kerala's Kandalur panchayat. We estimate the project will have an impact on the water flow of Amaravathi river. The government is studying the report." P R Pandian, chairman of the coordination committee of Tamil Nadu farmers' organisations, said, "The DMK government has been largely indifferent to dam and check dam projects of Kerala and Karnataka, even though they are detrimental to our farmers. Even as the dam across the Siruvani river was prevented by the Centre a few years ago, Kerala completed construction in the last two years. In the Mekedatu dam issue, there were recent instances of Tamil Nadu failing to intervene. Now, Andhra is building a dam across the Palar. The Siruvani dam should be demolished, Kerala's latest check dam project should be stopped, and Andhra's project should not be allowed to start."

My wife and son starved me, tore my clothes, forced me out of my home: Ex-Rajasthan minister Vishvendra Singh in court

GNS News Agency, May 24

Alleging that his wife and son assaulted him, didn't give him enough food, and drove him out of his own house, forcing him to lead a "nomadic" life, Vishvendra Singh, a Cabinet minister in the previous Ashok Gehlot government, has sought a maintenance amount of Rs 5 lakh per month from them. He has also demanded that they be removed from his properties. Singh's wife Divya Singh and son Anirudh Singh, however, termed the allegations false and said Vishvendra has sold off everything and that only Moti Mahal remains. Vishvendra, 62, has filed a petition before a Sub Divisional Magistrate under the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007. In the petition, he said he is a heart patient with two stents and can't handle any "tension".

As per the petition, he contracted Covid twice in 2021 and 2022 and that Divya and Anirudh allegedly "neglected him" and did not help him physically, mentally or financially. Singh said he owns several properties, endowed to him by his father Maharaja colonel Sawai Brijendra Singh through a will. These include Moti Mahal, spread in an area of about 100 acres; Kothi Ijlas Khas in Bharatpur (87,145 square feet); Suraj Mahal in Bharatpur, and a kothi in Delhi's Hauz Khas enclave.

He claimed that for the last few years, the two have adopted a "bagawat ka ravaiya (rebellious attitude)" towards him. "On many occasions, the clothes the applicant used to wear were torn and thrown in a well or burnt. Many useful papers, records, files, etc were also thrown in the well, and useful items from the applicant's room were also thrown out or broken," he claimed. He claimed his glasses were forcibly removed and broken, food wasn't given on time or was insufficient, and they also stopped the cook staff from giving "chai-paani" to him. Moreover, the guards were instructed to stop people of the region from meeting him. The main gate was locked and guarded and he wasn't allowed to leave or enter without their permission, he alleged.

He claimed they also started manhandling him and



confined him to a single room, and that their intention was to make him end his life so they could grab his property. Eventually, he claimed, he was forcibly driven out of his home and forced to live as a "khanabdosh (nomad)". Addressing a press conference with Anirudh, Divya Singh said, "If I open my mouth about what has happened to me in the past 30 years, then maybe the case will reach the Supreme Court." She said that a son protecting her mother is a good son: "After all, he has seen injustice being done to me in every way." "We have to protect our ancestral property. The entire issue began when Moti Mahal was being sold and we tried to save it — everything has been sold by him and only Moti Mahal is left. I will save Moti Mahal and its compound till the day I die," she said. Taking to X, Anirudh said, "We will not let Moti Mahal be sold off." "My mother and I have the highest faith in the SDM Court and on the Hon'ble Judge to handle the matter with alacrity and fairness," he said. The friction in the Singh family, which traces its lineage from the erstwhile Bharatpur royal family, is not new. In May 2021, too, Anirudh had posted on X, "I have not been in touch with my father for six weeks now. He has turned violent toward my mother, collected debt, turned (to) alcohol, and destroyed the businesses of friends who are supporting me. It is not just a difference of political ideologies."

40 flamingoes killed in plane hit in Mumbai, construction near wetlands blamed

GNS News Agency, May 24

At least 40 flamingoes were found dead in Mumbai's Ghatkopar after being hit by an incoming Emirates aircraft on Monday. However, the flight, EK 508, coming from Dubai landed safely. The incident took place near the Laxmi Nagar area of Pantnagar in Mumbai. The return flight, bound for Dubai, was cancelled late on Monday night as the aircraft was grounded for a full-scale inspection. The development left several passengers stranded at Mumbai airport. The Emirates flight 509 to Dubai will now depart on Tuesday at 9 pm. The passengers have been provided accommodation by the airline as per procedure. The Maharashtra forest department has launched an investigation into the incident and officials collected samples from the site where the carcasses were found. Another team from the forest department will record the statement of the pilot flying the Emirates



aircraft. "Our team is on the ground and a full-scale investigation has been launched to find out the cause of death of the flamingoes. We will also record the statement of the pilot who informed about the bird hit," SV Ramarao, additional chief conservator of forest, said. Ramarao said such an accident around the airport was unheard of. It is believed that the flock of flamingoes was flying towards the Thane flamingo sanctuary when it was hit

by the aircraft. Activists said that the flamingoes could have changed their flight path due to construction or pollution. Environmentalist D Stalin of NGO Vanshakti flagged construction around water bodies in Navi Mumbai and sought a "criminal investigation" into the incident. "NRI wetlands, TS Chanakya lakes are home to flamingo flocks. If someone or some people chased the birds out at night, the flocks might have attempted to fly towards

Thane creek and in the process met with the accident," D Stalin said. "As a wetlands' committee member, I have repeatedly asked the government to remove all disturbances near the wetlands of Navi Mumbai... agents of builders disguised or masquerading as fishermen keep chasing the birds away. There should be a criminal investigation into this incident... it just doesn't look like a freak accident to me," Stalin further said.

Risk it all or stay away? What Indian students did amid US university protests



GNS News Agency, May 24

India Today Digital spoke to Indian students in US universities as the institutes go on a summer break, a crucial time for the pro-Palestinian protests. They reveal why most Indian students have stayed away from the protests but also how a small number who joined the demonstrations faced greater risks than American students. Among India's top gifts to the world is non-violent resistance. Mahatma Gandhi, became the face of non-violent resistance, and his powerful idea spread across the world and was used by ordinary people to resist the mighty and powerful. So, are Indian students in the US participating in the non-violent pro-Palestine protests that have gripped top American universities?

Students are using Gandhi's non-violent resistance and demanding that their universities cut all their links to Israeli companies that are any way linked to Israel's attacks in Gaza. As the protests continued, the police emerged on the scene to clamp down on the pro-Gaza protesters at Columbia University, the Ground Zero of such protests, reported the Associated Press. The crackdown on April 17 spread the protests to other university campuses across the US. With each passing day, the protests gained momentum like wildfire, unaffected by police arrests of students just before they go away for their summer breaks. But what about the Indian students on these campuses? Are they participating in the protests? If yes, what are they putting at stake? If not, then why aren't they getting involved in the protests? India Today spoke to some of the Indian students in the US, and tried to understand their quandary. They spoke on condition of anonymity, scared that any focus on them could jeopardise their studies and career. A 26-year-old Indian student at Ohio State University told India Today. In how he has been participating in the protests but taken care that he stays away from police action and legal troubles.

"I am active in the protests but am careful in my participation. This means that I ensure that the chances of my arrest remain remote. Since Indians are one of the largest demographics of international students in America, our solidarity with the cause can contribute to the building pressure on the universities to divest," said the person. Edom of speech on this campus," he added. Families in India whose children are studying in the US have been anxious about their well-being since the protests started. The police crackdown on protesters has also got them worried over their safety.

An Indian student from the University of Virginia told India Today. In that Indians did participate in the protests at his university but he wasn't sure what percentage of Indian students that would be. "I cannot say. Some Indian students have been involved, but I have no sense of what sort of rate of involvement that might be," the 28-year-old Indian student said. While the threat of being deported remains, some Indian students are still seen protesting on campus. "The protests on The Ohio State campus have been happening ever since Israel's attacks on Gaza began. However, the protests have become more intense in the last month across the US campuses," said the Indian student at Ohio State University. Visuals are abundant on social media on the encampments by protesting students or of police crackdown after the protesters didn't heed to deadlines and didn't move out of the

campuses. "Indian students, those who are politically aware and willing to take personal risks, are very active in the protests at different universities," the student from India at Ohio State University said. However, he said that students are wary of police cases as they could even get them deported back to India. "Others are vocal about the cause but are careful. However, a great majority of people remain aloof from the issue due to legal concerns," he said. "The protests at my university haven't been particularly intense. There have been academic events, and till recently protests were limited to these. There was a Gaza encampment in an unobtrusive area of the University Campus recently," the University of Virginia student told India Today. In. When asked about the crackdown on protests and if their friends and colleagues have been arrested, they said no matter what the intensity of the protests was, the police did try to remove the encampments and even arrested many students.

"A major police crackdown happened on the 24th of March where around 40 protesters were beaten up and arrested. The administration also turned the campus into a barricaded, heavily policed area not conducive to studies. All the buildings were locked last week and no one could access their departments," said the Indian student at Ohio State University. Did Indian students face any kind of threat from the pro-Palestinian protesters? "The only safety issue has been the violent police action orchestrated by the university, which saw students (as well as some innocent bystanders) injured by indiscriminate pepper spray," said the University of Virginia student.

DID INDIANS FACE PEER PRESSURE TO JOIN PROTESTS IN US? With their friends and batchmates actively participating in the anti-Israel protests, was there any kind of peer pressure on the Indian students in the US to join the demonstrations? "No, there is no peer pressure. The organisers like Students for Justice in Palestine and Jewish Voice for Peace have been very clear that people know the risks and judge for themselves what kinds of risks they are willing to take. International students have also been advised by peers to ensure their own safety as their first priority," the India student at Ohio State University told India Today. In. This is important as some recent research has revealed that students participate in protests as they feel a need to belong to a group. But this is not the case with the university campus protests in the US, it seems. "None that I've experienced or any of my colleagues or students have experienced," reiterated the University of Virginia student on the question of pressure to join the protests. In the day and age when brutal visuals play live on the smartphone, families back home in India of students in the US are a worried lot. They have seen police march in and remove tents by force, throw protesters to the ground and cuff them. It is but natural for them to be concerned. The Indian students saw their classmates getting arrested. But this was not their only concern. Their parents were also worried about their participation, which could lead to them being arrested and deported to India.

"My family is definitely concerned. While they do support the cause, they have advised me to stay away from the protests and be extremely careful if I do go there. The videos of police beating up unarmed students in the US have made them very scared," said the Ohio State University student. For others, Palestine isn't a burning issue that concerns them, and they are more focused on the politics and elections back home in India.

"They're aware, but for the most part, they are focused on the political situation in India given the election. We've discussed the Palestine issue, but they don't have strong opinions on the subject, similar to me," said the University of Virginia student. For now, there is a sense of calm on top US university campuses as colleges go on summer break. This is a critical juncture as the protests will pause for around two months and students are expected to return home. Will the protests begin when the students return to the US, and will the Indian students remain in the same role is something to be seen.

Gaza attack 'not genocide', Joe Biden reaffirms 'ironclad' support for Israel

GNS News Agency, May 24

US President Joe Biden strongly defended Israel on Monday, saying Israeli forces are not committing genocide in their military campaign against Hamas militants in Gaza in a rejection of criticism from pro-Palestinian protesters. "What's happening in Gaza is not genocide. We reject that," Biden said at a Jewish American Heritage Month event at the White House.

Biden has faced protests at many of his events around the country from pro-Palestinian advocates who have labelled him "Genocide Joe" for his steadfast support for Israel. In remarks at the White House event, Biden stressed his belief that Israel was the victim dating back to the October 7 attack on southern Israel by Hamas militants who killed 1,200 people and took hundreds of hostages. He said US support for the safety and security of Israelis is "ironclad." "We stand with Israel to take out (Hamas leader Yahya) Sinwar and the rest of the butchers of Hamas. We want Hamas defeated. We're working with Israel to make that happen," he said. Negotiations have stalled between Israel and Hamas in trying to gain the freedom of sick, elderly and wounded hostages still held by the militants, but Biden vowed not to give up trying to gain their release. "We're going to get them home, we're going to get 'em home, come hell or high water," Biden said. Biden has also called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, something that he reiterated in his



commencement speech at Morehouse College on Sunday. Biden also rejected the International Criminal Court's prosecutor for saying he had requested arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his defence chief over alleged war crimes. The ICC prosecutor on Monday also said he requested arrest warrants for Hamas chief Sinwar and two other Hamas leaders. Biden in recent months has faced growing political pressure from his own party over his handling of the Gaza conflict, as the Palestinian death toll climbed to more than 35,000 people, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, and Israel's siege has created dire humanitarian conditions in the territory.

Places of Worship Act only applicable in 'undisputed' structures, petitioners tell HC

GNS News Agency, May 24

Places of Worship Act, undisputed' structures, Places of Worship Act norms, Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute, Mathura shahi eidgah dispute, undisputed structures in Indian, Indian express news The Krishna Janmabhoomi and Shahi Idgah mosque in Mathura. Petitioners in the Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute in Mathura on Monday submitted that the Places of Worship Act, 1991, applies only in the case of undisputed structure and not in the case of a disputed struc-

ture, as is the case in present suit. In the present case, the character of the structure is still to be decided and it is to be decided only by evidence, it said. "An illegal construction on a temple cannot bar the institution of suit. All this to be decided in suit itself on merit. Application under Order 7 Rule 11 (regarding maintainability of suits) can only be decided after framing issues and offering evidence from parties," the counsel for the Hindu petitioners submitted. On the question of a compromise entered into 1968, it was submitted that it cannot be seen at the stage of deciding application on maintainability of suit.

ED flags Rs 7-crore AAP foreign funds to MHA, party says old issue rehashed



GNS News Agency, May 24

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has written to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, alleging that the Aam Aadmi Party, which rules Delhi and Punjab, has received more than Rs 7 crore foreign funds in contravention of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), sources The AAP said the matter is an old issue and that it has already responded to the authorities on the charges. It said the allegations were a conspiracy to defame the party and blamed the BJP.

The central probe agency's first communication to the MHA was sent on October 27, 2022 by the then ED Director S K Mishra after it recovered some documents and emails during a drug case-related money laundering probe against former Punjab AAP MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira and some others. Khaira was arrested by the ED in 2021 on charges of money laundering linked to the 2015 drugs case, but was granted bail in 2022. In February 2023, the Supreme Court quashed the summoning order against Khaira in the 2015 case. He is now with the Congress party. On August 4 last year, ED Joint Director Jitendra Kumar Gogia sent a detailed communication to one of the directors of the FCRA division in the MHA, flagging alleged violations by the AAP and categorising these instances as contravention of the FCRA and the Representation of the People Act. "It has been learnt that the ED recently shared some fresh inputs in this case with the MHA," a source said. Donations to political parties can only be made by Indian citizens or companies. Foreign contributions to political parties are not allowed as per Section 29B of the Representation of the People Act 1951 and Section 3 of the FCRA.

The ED's communication to the MHA has emerged two weeks after Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena recommended a probe by the NIA against Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for allegedly receiving political funding for the AAP from the banned extremist organisation Sikhs for Justice (SFJ). The recommendation was based on a complaint by one Ashoo Mongia of the World Hindu Federation, wherein it was alleged that SFJ leader Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, in a video following Kejriwal's arrest, had claimed that AAP had received \$16 million from Khalistani groups between 2014 and 2022.

Responding to the ED's allegations on Monday, AAP

Delhi minister Atishi said, "I want to tell the BJP that ever since the AAP was formed, it has taken every single rupee donation with complete transparency and has given the account of every single rupee donation with complete transparency to the Election Commission, Income Tax Department, to every institution in the country... The allegations that are being made today are long-forgotten... AAP has already replied to ED, CBI, MHA, Election Commission. "Accusing BJP of raking up an old issue, AAP national general secretary (organisation) Sandeep Pathak said that the MHA in an affidavit submitted in the Delhi High Court in 2015 said there was nothing wrong with AAP's funding. "This issue is old and over, the question arises why this issue is being raised by the BJP again today," he said.

In its first communication to the MHA in 2022, the ED had said that it was probing a case against an international drugs cartel involved in smuggling of heroin from Pakistan. "...During investigation, searches were conducted at Khaira's premises and his associates from where we have recovered incriminating documents, containing details of foreign donations and eight hand-written pages of diary," the ED communication said. "Khaira in his statement has disclosed that the foreign funding was raised during an overseas fund-raising campaign in the USA organised by AAP in April-May 2016 - just before the upcoming Punjab assembly elections... He claimed that he also participated in the fund-raising campaign, but foreign funds as recorded in the seized documents were used by AAP and not by him," it stated.

In the communication, Mishra claimed that AAP national secretary Pankaj Gupta was summoned and he admitted that AAP had been receiving foreign donations either through cheque or through the online portal. "Several discrepancies were found from the data of foreign donations submitted by Gupta and it shows that multiple donors have used the same passport numbers for donation, 155 persons residing abroad have made donations of around Rs 1.2 crore on 404 occasions while using 55 passport numbers. Probe has also revealed that AAP had intentionally concealed the identity and nationality of the real donors, even multiple donors used same email IDs, used same mobile numbers and also used the same credit card for donation on 148 occasions," Mishra alleged in his letter. The ED alleged that the AAP has received overseas donations of about Rs 7.08 crore until now and allegedly mis-declared and manipulated identities and nationalities of the foreign donors apart from some other details. It also alleged that donations were received from 19 Canadian nationals but their names and nationality were concealed in AAP records. "...It is amply clear from investigation under the PMLA that AAP is collecting foreign donations in violation of provisions of FCRA and the Representation of the People Act, 1951, by concealing, mis-declaring and manipulating the identities of foreign donors," Mishra alleged. A senior official said FCRA violations cases are probed by the CBI and the MHA can write to it seeking a probe into the ED allegations.

ED opposes Hemant Soren bail in Supreme Court: 'Trying to subvert probe'

GNS News Agency, May 24

A day before the Supreme Court is set to take up former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren's plea for interim bail to campaign for the Lok Sabha polls, the Enforcement Directorate on Monday "vehemently opposed" any "special treatment" to him. In its response to Soren's bail plea, the probe agency said he is "highly influential" and "there is an active attempt on the part of the petitioner to subvert the investigation by misusing state machinery and to project the proceeds of crime as untainted".

In a counter-affidavit filed in Soren's plea against his arrest and seeking interim bail for electioneering, the ED said, "There is an active attempt on the part of the petitioner (Soren) to subvert the investigation by misusing state machinery and to project the proceeds of crime as untainted through his stooges." While Soren had said he was not in possession of properties alleged by the ED, the agency said that materials on record "establish" that he "is involved in the acquisition of properties, which are proceeds of crime, illegally".

Opposing his prayer for interim bail, the ED said, "Under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) alone, presently, there are many politicians who are in judicial custody and their cases are examined by competent courts upholding their custody" and "there is no rea-



son why a special prayer for a special treatment by the petitioner be acceded to". "Various statements recorded under section 50 of PMLA, 2002, which establish that property admeasuring 8.86 acres, situated at Shanti Nagar, Near Lalu Khatal, Bariyatu (in Ranchi) is under illegal acquisition and use of Hemant Soren and the same has been done in a camouflaged and concealed manner," the agency said. He ED said there is no fundamental or legal right to campaign for an election. It pointed out that the Jharkhand HC had upheld Soren's arrest and his bail plea had been rejected by the trial court.

Did not make any statement on Kashmir: Sonam Wangchuk on claims he sought referendum

GNS News Agency, May 24

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk said on Monday a small clip from his recent interaction was "twisted" and "taken out of context" in a way to show that he was talking about Kashmir and giving an anti-national statement. "Twisting statements is not right. I have said nothing on Kashmir," Wangchuk told PTI here, adding, "It is sad when statements are twisted and small clips circulated..." The activist also alleged that his statement was twisted and he was quoted out of context. "A politician from Kargil said Ladakh should be re-merged with Kashmir. I objected to that and said it was ok if this was his personal view, but if all people of Kargil feel this way, they can do that. But Ladakh will continue to be a UT," he said. "We are not interested in re-merging with Kashmir. That was the context. A small clip from that (interview) was shown in a way that it appeared I was talking about Kashmir and giving an anti-national statement," Wangchuk added. He was referring to a video clip that surfaced on Sunday showing him tell some leaders who had suggested merging with Kashmir in case statehood was not awarded that a referendum should be done in Kargil if it was the popular opinion.

The purported clip was shared on 'X' by several users with the claim that Wangchuk sought a referendum in Kashmir. "It is sad some groups are trying to make a patriot sound anti-national. If someone is anti-national, they should be converted into a nationalist. On the contrary, here a patriot is being portrayed as an anti-national," Wangchuk said.



"India can't benefit from such things, maybe it serves the interest of some small groups. Ladakh is a sensitive border region. If they do so, people will get tired of such tricks," he added. In a recent interview with PTI, responding to a question on views expressed by some leaders in Kargil on re-merging with Jammu and Kashmir if statehood is not granted, Wangchuk had said, "It may be the personal opinion of some people. But if someone feels that they want to go back to J&K, the government can look at it." Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated in August 2019 after the abrogation of Article 370 and carved into two Union territories - Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Being a separate Union territory was primarily a demand of Leh, where celebrations were witnessed after the bifurcation. However, concerns over employment and safeguards for the region dominated by a tribal population took centre stage, spiralling into protests demanding safeguards under the 6th Schedule of the Constitution.

Donald Trump invokes Nazi Germany in social media video, calls for 'unified reich'



at a time when the presumptive Republican nominee for president, while seeking to portray President Joe Biden as soft on antisemitism, has himself repeatedly faced criticism for using language and rhetoric associated with Nazi Germany. It was posted and shared on the former president's Truth Social account while he was on a lunch break from his Manhattan hush money trial. "This was not a campaign video, it was created by a random account online and reposted by a staffer who clearly did not see the word, while the President was in court," Karoline Leavitt, the campaign press secretary, said in a statement. Earlier this month, Trump said at a fundraiser that Biden is running a "Gestapo administration," referring to the secret Nazi police force.

Trump previously used rhetoric echoing Adolf Hitler when he said immigrants entering the U.S. illegally are "poisoning the blood of our country," and called his opponents "vermin." The former president has also drawn wide backlash for having dined with a Holocaust-denying white nationalist in 2022 and for downplaying the 2017 rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, where white nationalists chanted "Jews will not replace us!" At least one of the headlines flashing in the video appears to be text that is copied verbatim from a Wikipedia entry on World War I: "German industrial strength and production had significantly increased after 1871, driven by the creation of a unified Reich." In one image, the headlines "Border Is Closed" and "15 Million Illegal Aliens Deported" appear above smaller text with the start and end dates of World War I.

Donald Trump's social media video, allegedly hinting at a 2024 election run, has stirred controversy due to its 'unified Reich' reference. The term is often associated with Nazi Germany. A video posted to Donald Trump's account on his social media network Monday included references to a "unified Reich" among hypothetical news headlines if he wins the election in November.

The headline appears among messages flashing across the screen such as "Trump wins!!" and "Economy booms!" Other headlines appear to be references to World War I. The word "Reich" is often largely associated with Nazi Germany's Third Reich, though the references in the video Trump shared appear to be a reference to the formation of the modern pan-German nation, unifying smaller states into a single Reich, or empire, in 1871.

The 30-second video appeared on Trump's account

Yale university graduates stage walkout to protest Gaza war

GNS News Agency, May 24

Graduating students from Yale University staged a walkout from their commencement exercises, protesting against the Israeli war in Gaza and Yale's financial ties to weapons makers. The protest began as the university president started announcing degrees, with at least 150 students standing up, turning their backs, and leaving the ceremony. Yale University graduates stage walkout protest over Israeli war and university's financial ties (Photo: Reuters) Scores of graduating students staged a walkout from Yale University's commencement exercises on Monday, protesting the Israeli war in Gaza, Yale's financial ties to weapons makers and its response to pro-Palestinian demonstrations on the Ivy League campus.

The walkout began as Yale President Peter Salovey started to announce the traditional college-by-college presentation of candidates for degrees on the grounds of Yale's Old Campus, filled with thousands of graduates in their caps and gowns. At least 150 students seated near the front of the audience stood up together, turned their backs to the stage and paraded out of the ceremony through Phelps Gate, retracing their steps during the procession into the yard.

Many of the protesters carried small banners with such slogans as "Books not bombs" and "Divest from war." Some wore red-colored latex gloves symbolizing bloodied hands. Other signs read: "Drop the charges" and "Protect free speech" in reference to 45 people arrested in a police crackdown last month on demonstrations in and around the New Haven, Connecticut, campus. The walkout drew a chorus of cheers from fellow students in the crowd, but the protest was otherwise peaceful, without disruption. No mention of it was made from the stage. Yale is one of dozens of U.S. campuses roiled by protests over the mounting Palestinian humanitarian crisis stemming from Israel's offensive in the Gaza Strip following the bloody Oct. 7 cross-border attack on Jewish settlements by Hamas militants. The University of Southern California canceled its main graduation ceremony altogether, and dozens of students walked out of Duke University's commencement last week to protest its guest speaker, comedian Jerry Seinfeld, who has supported Israel throughout the war in Gaza.

Fallout from a violent attack weeks ago on pro-Palestinian activists encamped at the University of California, Los Angeles, reverberated on the UC Santa Cruz campus on Monday as academic workers there staged a protest strike organized by their union. Also on Monday, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Dartmouth College, an Ivy League university in New Hampshire, narrowly voted to censure president Sian Beilock, according to a college spokesperson, for her decision to call in police to dismantle a pro-Palestinian encampment on May 1. The censure vote does not directly endanger Beilock's job. The police action resulted in the arrest of 89 people and some



injuries. Much of the student activism has been aimed at academic institutions' financial ties with Israel and U.S. military programs benefiting the Jewish state. Protests in sympathy with Palestinians have in turn been branded by pro-Israel supporters as antisemitic, testing the boundaries between freedom of expression and hate speech. Many schools have called in police to quell the demonstrations.

At UC Santa Cruz on Monday, hundreds of unionized academic researchers, graduate teaching assistants and post-doctoral scholars went on strike to protest what they said were the university's unfair labor practices in its handling of pro-Palestinian demonstrations. The strikers are members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 4811, which represents some 2,000 grad students and other academic workers at UC Santa Cruz, and about 48,000 total across all 10 University of California campuses and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

Last week, the UAW 4811 rank-and-file voted to authorize union leaders to organize a series of "standup" strikes through the end of June on individual or groups of UC campuses rather than across the entire university. The Santa Cruz strike marked the first union-backed protest in solidarity with the recent wave of pro-Palestinian student activists, whose numbers, according to the UAW, include graduate students arrested at several University of California Union leaders said a major impetus for the strike was the arrest of 210 people at the scene of a pro-Palestinian protest camp torn down by police at UCLA on May 2. The night before, a group of pro-Israel supporters physically attacked the encampment and its occupiers in a melee that went on for at least three hours before police moved in to quell the disturbance. The university has since opened an investigation of the incident. The strikers also are demanding amnesty for grad students who were arrested or face discipline for their involvement in the protests. UC Santa Cruz issued a statement saying campus entrances were briefly blocked in the morning by demonstrators, prompting the school to switch to remote instruction for the day. The University of California has filed its own unfair labor practice complaint with the state Public Employee Relations Board asking the state to order a halt to the strike.

Australia, New Zealand to evacuate nationals from violence-hit new Caledonia

GNS News Agency, May 24

Amid violent unrest in New Caledonia, the Australian and New Zealand governments are evacuating their citizens. The violence has been triggered by controversial electoral reforms passed in Paris. The Australian and New Zealand governments announced Tuesday they were sending planes to evacuate their nationals from violence-wracked New Caledonia.

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong confirmed Australia had received clearance from French authorities for two flights to evacuate citizens and other tourists from New Caledonia amid violent unrest that has beset the French Pacific archipelago where indigenous people have long sought independence from France. "We continue to work on further flights," Wong wrote on the social media platform X on Tuesday. The Department of Foreign Affairs said 300 Australians were in New Caledonia. New Zealand also announced it was sending a plane Tuesday to evacuate 50 of its nationals from Noumea, the Pacific island's capital, in the first in a series of proposed flights to bring its citizens home. "New Zealanders in New Caledonia have faced a challenging few days — and bringing them home has been an urgent priority for the government," Foreign Affairs Minister Winston Peters said. "In co-operation with France and Australia, we are working on subsequent flights in coming days."

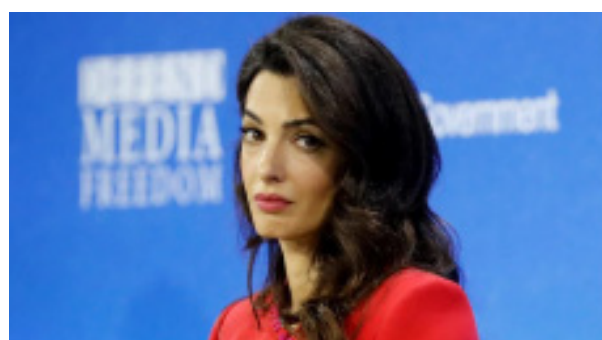
At least six people have died and hundreds more



have been injured in New Caledonia since violence erupted last week following controversial electoral reforms passed in Paris. Some 270 rioters had been arrested as of Tuesday, and a 6 p.m.-6 a.m. curfew was in effect for the archipelago of about 270,000 people. France has sent in over a thousand security personnel, with hundreds more due to arrive Tuesday, as it tries to quell the unrest and restore control.

Armed clashes, looting, arson and other mayhem turned parts of the capital, Noumea, into no-go zones. With columns of smoke billowing into the sky, hulks of burned cars littered roads, businesses and shops were ransacked and buildings became smoking ruins. There have been decades of tensions between indigenous Kanaks seeking independence and descendants of colonizers who want to remain part of France.

Israel-Hamas war: Amal Clooney played key role in decision on war crimes charges



GNS News Agency, May 24

Amal Clooney, a human rights lawyer, is one of the legal experts who recommended that the International Criminal Court seek arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and leaders of Hamas, accusing them of war crimes. Amal Clooney is one of the legal experts who recommended that the chief prosecutor of the world's top war crimes court seek arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and leaders of the militant Hamas group. The human rights lawyer and wife of actor George Clooney wrote of her participation in a letter posted Monday on the website of the couple's Clooney Foundation for Justice. She said she and other experts in international law unanimously agreed to recommend that International Criminal Court chief prosecutor Karim Khan seek the warrants.

Khan announced his intention to do so on Monday, saying that actions taken by both Israeli leaders and Hamas in the seven-month war in Gaza amounted to war crimes. "I served on this Panel because I believe in the rule of law and the need to protect civilian lives," Clooney wrote. "The law that protects civilians in war was developed more than 100 years ago and it applies in every country in the world regardless of the reasons for a conflict."

The panel comprised experts in international humanitarian law and international criminal law, and two of its members are former judges at criminal tribunals in The Hague, where the ICC is based, Clooney wrote. She added that their decision was unanimous. The panel also published an op-ed about its recommendation in the Financial Times on Monday. A panel of three judges at the ICC will decide whether to issue the arrest warrants and allow a case to proceed. The judges typically take two months to make such decisions.

In his announcement Monday, Khan accused Netanyahu, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and three Hamas leaders — Yehia Sinwar, Mohammed Deif and Ismail Haniyeh — of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip and Israel. Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders condemned the move as disgraceful and antisemitic. U.S. President Joe Biden also lambasted the prosecutor and supported Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas. Israel is not a member of the court, so even if the arrest warrants are issued, Netanyahu and Gallant do not face any immediate risk of prosecution. But the threat of arrest could make it difficult for the Israeli leaders to travel abroad. Hamas is already considered an international terrorist group by the West.

The latest war between Israel and Hamas began on Oct. 7, when militants from Gaza crossed into Israel and killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took 250 others hostage. Since then, Israel has waged a brutal campaign to dismantle Hamas in Gaza. More than 35,000 Palestinians have been killed in the fighting, at least half of them women and children, according to the latest estimates by Gaza health officials, who do not distinguish between civilians and Hamas militants. The war has triggered a humanitarian crisis in Gaza, displacing roughly 80% of the population and leaving hundreds of thousands of people on the brink of starvation, according to U.N. officials.

3 Indian-American students killed, 2 injured in Georgia as car overturns

GNS News Agency, May 24

Three Indian-American students, including two women, were killed as their car overturned in Alpharetta, Georgia. Two other Indian-Americans were injured in the car crash. Initial data suggests that the driver of the vehicle lost control and the car hit a tree line. Sriya Avasarala, Aryan Joshi and Anvi Sharma were killed in a car crash in Georgia, US. (Photo: Instagram/ahs_cricket, ugakalakaar and uga_shikaari) Three Indian-American students were killed while two others were injured as their speeding car turned turtle in Alpharetta, Georgia. All of them were 18 years old and two of those killed were women. Speeding might have been the primary factor in the deadly car crash, according to Alpharetta Police. The five Indian-American teens studied at Alpharetta High School and the University of Georgia.

The deceased students were identified as Aryan Joshi, a senior at Alpharetta High School, Sriya Avasarala and Anvi Sharma, both first-year students at the University of Georgia. The injured students are Rithwak Somepalli, a Georgia State University student and the driver of the Honda Accord, and Mohammed Liyakath, a senior at Alpharetta High School. According to police, the driver lost control of the vehicle, which ended up upside down in a tree line. Aryan Joshi and Sriya Avasarala



were found dead at the scene. Anvi Sharma, a rear passenger, later succumbed to her injuries at North Fulton Hospital. Police are investigating the reason behind the crash, but initial data suggests that speed might have been the factor. Avasarala was a member of the UGA Shikaari dance team, and Sharma sang with the UGA Kalakaar a cappella group, according to Instagram posts from the organisation, as reported by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Joshi was a senior at Alpharetta High School and a member of the school's cricket team. The accident took place on May 14 on Westside Parkway, just north of Maxwell Road in Alpharetta, Georgia.

Trump's lawyers seek dismissal of hush money case, prosecution concludes arguments

GNS News Agency, May 24

Donald Trump's lawyers asked the judge overseeing his criminal hush money trial on Monday to dismiss the case before it reaches the jury, arguing the testimony of star witness Michael Cohen was not credible given his criminal record and history of lying. Justice Juan Merchan did not immediately rule on the request, which is routine in criminal trials and rarely granted. But he suggested that savvy jurors would be able to assess the credibility of Trump's ex-fixer's testimony for themselves.

"You said that his lies are irrefutable, but do you think he's going to fool 12 New Yorkers?" Merchan asked Trump lawyer Todd Blanche, who had sought the dismissal. The exchange came at the end of a day in which questions about Cohen's character were front and centre. At the outset on Monday, Merchan said he expected the two sides to make their closing arguments next week followed by jury deliberations.

The first former president to face a criminal trial, Trump has pleaded not guilty to 34 counts of falsifying business records to cover up a \$130,000 (Approximately Rs 1 crore) payment to silence porn star Stormy Daniels, who had threatened to go public before the 2016 presidential election with her account of an alleged sexual encounter - a liaison Trump denies. Trump, 77, has blasted the trial as a politically motivated effort to hobble his Republican Party campaign to take back the White House from Democratic President Joe Biden in the Nov. 5 election. Cohen, Trump's estranged former fixer and lawyer, testified that he spoke repeatedly with Trump about the payment to Daniels in the final stretch of the 2016 presidential campaign - a pillar of the prosecution's case. But Trump's lawyers also got Cohen to admit that he stole money from his former boss because he was angry that his annual bonus fell short of his expectations after he handed the payment to Daniels.

He said he paid roughly \$20,000 in cash in a paper bag to a tech company out of the \$50,000 (Approximately Rs 41.6 lakh) that it was owed and kept the rest. The Trump Organization later reimbursed him \$100,000 (Approximately Rs 83.2 lakh) in total to account for the taxes Cohen would owe. "I just felt it was almost like self-help," Cohen said on the witness stand. As a convicted felon and admitted liar, Cohen, 57, carries baggage as a witness. Formerly a zealous defender of Trump, he has become a fierce and frequently foul-mouthed critic. Blanche said the case should be dismissed because Cohen was not credible. "There is no way that the court should let this case go to the jury relying on Cohen's testimony," Blanche



said outside the presence of the jury, adding that without Cohen's testimony "there is no case."

Prosecutor Christopher Conroy countered that Cohen's testimony was backed up by documents and other evidence. "The trial evidence overwhelmingly supports each element of the offence," Conroy said. The judge could rule at any time on the motion to dismiss. Earlier, with the prosecution having rested, Trump's lawyers began calling witnesses of their own. One of those witnesses drew a reprimand from Merchan after he expressed dissatisfaction. "If you don't like my ruling, you don't give me side eye and you don't roll your eyes," Justice Juan Merchan told Robert Costello, a lawyer. Costello testified that Cohen told him after a 2018 FBI raid that he did not have any dirt on Trump to offer prosecutors. "He said, 'I swear to God, Bob, I don't have anything on Donald Trump,'" Costello said, citing Cohen. Costello also said Cohen told him numerous times that Trump knew nothing about the payment to Daniels. Cohen has previously testified that he lied to Costello because he was worried he would relay to Trump any indications that he might cooperate with prosecutors. It was as yet unclear whether Trump would testify when the trial resumes on Tuesday. One of his lawyers said that "as of now" they did not plan to call a witness other than Costello. But after speaking to reporters afterwards outside the courtroom, Trump walked away when they shouted questions asking whether he would testify. The hush money trial is widely seen as the least consequential of the four criminal prosecutions Trump faces, but it is likely the only one to go to trial before the election. Trump faces charges in Washington and Georgia of trying to overturn his 2020 loss to Biden and charges in Florida of mishandling classified documents after leaving the White House in 2021. He has pleaded not guilty in all three cases.

Spices Board inspecting MDH, Everest plants; efforts on to improve compliance



if aeration is done properly, EtO goes out of the system and does not pose a problem. But if it is not aerated properly, it interacts with the chlorine in food particles to become 2-Chloroethanol, the official added. "If you look at the majority of food, there is a CODEX committee under WTO which provides minimum residue levels. We treat it as international standards. Now, developed countries are improving the MRL levels. If CODEX says it should be 1, developed countries make it 0.1. India is largely aligned to CODEX," the official stated.

Officials also pointed out that every country arrives at a different residue level as it depends on the dietary choices. "We should not believe that if a product breaches MRL levels in one country, it cannot be consumed. Some other country might be consuming it. There is no standard on EtO in CODEX. A number of countries have not defined MRL for 2-Chloroethanol," an official said.

Government officials explained that regulations around EtO are still evolving and the test methods globally are also not harmonised. "The way EtO is tested, it varies from country to country. There is no unanimity among experts to measure EtO. During Covid-19, there were different tests but there were false positives too. The European food safety agency has still not concluded that 2-Chloroethanol has toxicity," the official added. Explaining why regulations cannot be undertaken in a widespread manner, an official said that regulation has a cost involved and impacts the ease of doing business and cost of doing business too. "Regulation may not be required for various countries. Lot of my destinations may not impose such requirements. EtO requirement is varying from 0.1 to 7 ppm. There is a 70 fold difference. Regulations are taken up where there is settlement of benchmark, where we feel that there are predominant exports, and there is a need to give some sort of trust. For EtO also we are doing only for the EU," the official added. In 2023-24, India's spice exports totalled \$4.25 billion against 3.7 billion in 2022-23. India's exports account for a 12 per cent share of the global spice exports. The major spices exported from India include chilli powder, which topped the list with \$1.3 billion in exports, followed by cumin at \$550 million, turmeric at \$220 million, cardamom at \$130 million, mixed spices at \$110 million, and spice oils and oleoresins at \$1 billion.

The Spices Board of India is carrying out inspections in several MDH and Everest processing plants in the country to ensure that spice exports meet the requirement in the respective export destination, senior government officials said on Monday, adding that corrective actions such as use of steam sterilisation technology and tracking of the food supply chain is being looked at to prevent future rejections.

This comes after Hong Kong on April 5 asked its citizens not to consume four products of Indian manufacturers MDH and Everest Food Products citing the presence of pesticide, ethylene oxide (EtO). Later on April 18, Singapore Food Agency (SFA) ordered the recall of Everest's fish curry masala stating that it had ethylene oxide at a level which is "not fit for human consumption".

Data shared by the Commerce and Industry Ministry on Monday showed that Maximum Residue Levels (MRL) levels for EtO in Singapore was 50 mg/kg, while it stood at 0.02 to 0.01 mg/kg in the European Union and 0.01 in Japan. The comparable number for the US and Canada was 7 mg/kg. EtO is prohibited to be used in food products in Hong Kong. "In 2023-24, 99.8 per cent of around 1.4 million tonnes of spices have met quality requirements of different countries, and only 0.2 per cent of all consignments were non-compliant. On the other hand, 0.73 per cent of imported food consignments were non-compliant. There is a drastic decline in alerts on Indian food commodities exports to the European Union on account of EtO," a senior official said.

Another official clarified that EtO is a very normal fumigant which is used in food and pharma products and

Barriers to entry, platform neutrality, and algorithmic collusion among key concerns in digital markets, says CCI chairperson

The control of digital platforms over large datasets can create barriers to entry for new players, compromise platform neutrality, and lead to algorithmic collusion, Ravneet Kaur, Chairperson of the Competition Commission of India (CCI), said Monday at the regulatory body's annual day celebrations. During his special address, the Attorney-General for India R Venkataramani also highlighted that the monopoly of e-commerce platforms over user data "can be an area for scrutiny" and that the new government could include the e-Commerce Policy in its 100-day agenda.

At the 15th annual day celebrations of CCI, Kaur stressed upon the tendency of digital markets towards market concentration as "many digital platforms benefit from network effects where the value of the service increases as more users join". "This can quickly lead to a winner-takes-all scenario where one or two companies may dominate the market in the digital economy," Kaur said.

Kaur identified three key problems that could arise with control over large datasets by digital platforms — barriers to entry, issues with platform neutrality, and algorithmic collusion. "Data is a very important resource. Companies that can collect, analyse, and leverage vast amounts of data can gain significant competitive advantages. This raises concern about data dominance where control over large datasets can create insurmountable barriers to entry," she said. "Many digital markets are characterised by... data-based business models where a single entity controls access to a wide range of services. This raises issues of platform neutrality, especially when the platforms also compete with the businesses that rely on their infrastructure. There's a growing concern that platforms potentially favour their own services or products," Kaur said. "Algorithms play an important role in digital markets from shaping user experiences to making pricing and product placement decisions. However, the opacity of algorithms can make it challenging to assess their impact on competition issues. [For example] algorithmic collusion, where algorithms might implicitly coordinate prices or market strategies without explicit human direction pose novel challenges for us," she added.

During his special address as chief guest, Venkataramani cited consumer electronics and jewellery retailers, agriculture equipment distributors, and the packaging industry as "examples of distribution channels that exert a strong influence on end customers". "The e-commerce platform and its monopoly is another example. [An e-commerce platform] that controls and uses user-inclination generated by them, zealously created by these giants, can be an area for scrutiny and, fittingly, the e-commerce policy as one among the 100-day agenda of the government to come in," Venkataramani said.

India's draft National E-Commerce Policy was shared for public consultation in 2019 by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and the final policy is yet to be released. In its initial iteration, the draft policy sought to bring in stricter consumer protections against unsolicited phone calls and emails. It also sought to enforce data localisation rules that place restrictions on cross-border data flow and to give the government authority to demand disclosure of a company's source code and algorithms. Since the release of the first draft, DPIIT has held numerous stakeholder meetings to discuss suggestions and clarify queries on the policy. However, it has not yet released any updated drafts. "While the policy has been long awaited by industry, consumers and other stakeholders, it is notable that the last draft of the e-commerce policy was made public four years ago, prior to the pandemic. However, no draft has been shared with the public, including industry, of the current version of the policy," Lalit Bhasin, National President of the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC), said in September last year. "To be sure, it was also noted in reports that a final consultation was held on the e-commerce policy between government officials and industry



players as well as industry bodies. According to reports, the government has also mentioned that a broad level of consensus had emerged among concerned stakeholders on the policy. However, without a draft, it may be difficult for industry and stakeholders alike to comment on the provisions the proposed policy aims to put in place to unlock growth in this key sunrise sector," Bhasin said in a press release.

During the event, Kaur also said that CCI is working on a market study on artificial intelligence (AI). "The transformative capabilities of AI have significant pro-competitive potential, but at the same time, there will be competition concerns emanating from the use of AI. The study will be a knowledge-building exercise to develop an in-depth understanding of the emerging competitive landscape, the development of ecosystems, and implications of AI applications for competition, efficiency, and innovation in key user industries," she said.

OpenAI's GPT-4o and Google's Project Astra make real-life strides

"Well, you seem like a person, but you're just a voice in a computer." "I can understand how the limited perspective of an un-artificial mind would perceive it that way. You'll get used to it." Theodore Twombly fell in love with a digital assistant Samantha in the 2013 hit 'Her'. The lifelike assistant, voiced by Scarlett Johansson, displayed a sense of humour, intelligence, and empathy that made her seem human to Theodore. But last week, when OpenAI showcased the new strides it took with its new GPT-4o (the o standing for 'omni'), it signalled that such artificial intelligence (AI)-based assistants are no longer merely the stuff of science fiction films and literature. And a day later, when Google showed the progress it has made on its virtual assistant, it marked a tangible direction that AI could take for end users — to create lifelike assistants that can be helpful for a number of real-life scenarios, from giving suggestions on how one can comb their hair by looking at their picture, to empathising with them. Siri and Alexa never really managed to cement their place as useful digital assistants, primarily due to their inability to pick up on the nuances of conversation. But Google and OpenAI's new announcements could change what it means to be a virtual help altogether. For a large part of the population which is facing a loneliness crisis, it remains to be seen the shape and place such assistants occupy in people's lives. And of course, questions about the lens with which they're made, with the assistants' voicings in demos being that of women (lending to the idea of how technologies developed in patriarchal societies are likely to view women) are some things which would need to be contended with as such assistants reach the phones and computers of more people in the coming years.

Nails can signal a lot about your health, including your chances of getting cancer



According to a press release by NIH, scientists have discovered that it "increases the risk of developing cancerous tumours of the skin, eyes, kidneys and the tissue that lines the chest and abdomen. It adds, "The condition causes a coloured band (usually white or red) along the length of the nail, along with thickening of the nail underlying the colour change and thickening at the end of the nail. It typically only affects one nail."

This condition, it states, called BAP1 tumour predisposition syndrome, stems from mutations in the BAP1 gene, which normally helps prevent tumours. During a study at the NIH Clinical Center, scientists noticed nail changes in participants enrolled in genetic screenings, leading them to explore further. This unexpected connection could aid in earlier detection and management of the syndrome, potentially improving outcomes for those affected. Dr Palleeti Siva Karthik Reddy, MBBS MD, General Medicine and consultant physician Bengaluru, explains, "The BAP1 gene, short for BRCA1-associated protein 1, is crucial for controlling cell growth and ensuring DNA remains stable. When this gene mutates, it can lead to BAP1 tumour predisposition syndrome, a genetic condition that increases cancer risk."

These mutations interfere with the BAP1 protein's job of fixing DNA damage and managing cell division. As a result, she says that the damaged cells can multiply unchecked, forming tumours. This syndrome raises the likelihood of developing various cancers, such as melanocytic tumours, mesothelioma, and renal cell carcinoma, underscoring the gene's vital role in preventing

cancer. Significance of the discovery of onychopapilloma as a potential indicator of BAP1 tumour predisposition syndrome. Onychopapillomas are benign nail tumours that may signal BAP1 tumour predisposition syndrome. Dr Reddy agrees that this finding is important because while onychopapillomas are uncommon in the general population, they are more frequent in those with BAP1 mutations.

Early detection of onychopapillomas through nail checks can greatly affect the prognosis and treatment for individuals with BAP1 tumour predisposition syndrome. "Recognising these nail tumours as markers for the syndrome helps improve our understanding and offers a non-invasive early detection method. Spotting these nail changes can alert doctors to a possible genetic cancer risk, allowing for earlier and more personalised care," she says. Diagnostic challenges clinicians can encounter when identifying these nail abnormalities

Even though onychopapillomas can indicate BAP1 tumour predisposition syndrome, Dr Reddy adds, they are rare and often overlooked or misdiagnosed, especially if there is no known family history of related cancers. She admits, "Their rarity means doctors might not link these benign nail issues to a significant cancer risk." Additionally, onychopapillomas can present subtly, making diagnosis tricky. It's essential for doctors to consider genetic testing for BAP1 mutations when they encounter onychopapillomas, especially in patients with other risk factors or unusual symptoms. Early detection of onychopapillomas through nail checks can greatly affect the prognosis and treatment for individuals with BAP1 tumour predisposition syndrome. "Finding these benign tumours early allows for timely genetic testing and cancer monitoring programs. Regular check-ups and early interventions can catch cancers at a more treatable stage, improving outcomes," says Dr Reddy. Suggested monitoring includes regular skin exams, imaging for internal cancers, and educating patients on early cancer signs. This proactive approach can improve patient care, lowering the illness and death rates associated with BAP1 tumour predisposition syndrome.

What is badam pisin or almond gum, and how is it effective against summer heat?

Summertime calls for adequate hydration. And if you are bored of regular water, juices, and drinks, Dr Shri Vidhya Prashanth, has a healthy alternative for you. Taking to Instagram, the naturopath shared that badam pisin or almond gum helps relieve body heat issues, and stomach ulcers, and is good for skin and hair, body weakness, and weight management. "Badam pisin is one of the most effective home remedies against body heat. You can include almond gum in any of your juices, milk, or any dessert," shared Dr Prashanth.

She listed the following benefits

*Badam pisin is widely used to treat ulcers, acidity, bloating, stomach burns, constipation, and diarrhea.

*Badam pisin possesses cooling properties, hence it is used as a home remedy to reduce body heat.

*It has more than 90 per cent of the carbohydrates required. Hence, badam pisin helps gain weight when consumed with milk.

*Badam pisin helps decrease the levels of LDL cholesterol while regulating the level of insulin in the blood. "Regular intake of badam pisin not only helps keep in check the cholesterol but also helps maintain the blood level in the body," said Dr Prashanth.

*Badam pisin protects the skin against free radicals that are responsible for premature ageing. "Also, it helps the skin wounds heal quickly and is an effective solution against skin inflammation, rashes, pimples, and infections," shared Dr Prashanth. "It strengthens the central nervous system and boosts the immune system naturally against many diseases.

*Badam pisin is good for pregnant women as it strengthens the body and bones while playing an important role in the growth of a fetus in the womb," said Dr Prashanth. Dr Vinoda Kumari, deputy chief medical officer, Jindal Naturecure Institute told indianexpress.com



that during the summer months, badam pisin, also called gong katira, is believed to provide relief from heat due to its cooling nature. "When combined with cold milk, rose milk, or coconut milk, it may help reduce acidity, ulcers, and stomach burns. It has outstanding antioxidant, antibacterial, and antimicrobial benefits," said Dr Kumari. Additionally, badam pisin is rich in dietary fibre and contains various nutrients such as proteins, calcium, and antioxidants. "It is also believed to aid digestion and promote good health. Overall, incorporating badam pisin into your diet during the summer can be a refreshing and nutritious way to beat the heat and stay healthy," said Dr Kumari.

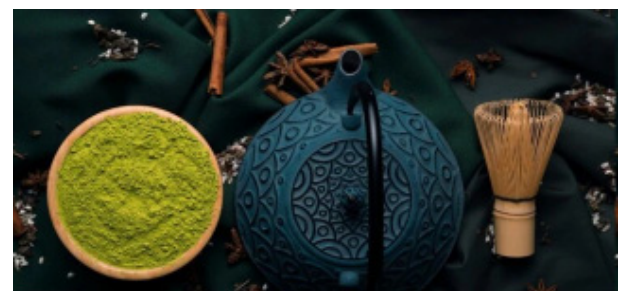
When soaked in water, it forms a gel-like substance, which can be added to various beverages like lemonade, sherbets, or even milkshakes. "This gel helps in hydrating the body and replenishing lost fluids, making it a popular choice for combating dehydration during hot weather," shared Dr Kumari.

You must never use a metal spoon with matcha powder; here's why

When making matcha, many people might not realise that the type of spoon they use can affect the quality of their tea. This is highlighted in a reel posted by digital creator Mona Vand. She discourages people from using metal spoons with matcha, and advocates using a wooden spoon instead. "I love embracing the beauty of using wooden spoons with matcha. It really enhances the whole experience — adds elegance and a sense of calm and connection with nature, and improves taste," she captions the post.

Alok Singh, founder at Diga Organics and expert in Food Science, Agriculture, says, "Using a metal spoon with matcha powder can lead to potential chemical reactions due to the reactive nature of certain metals and the sensitive compounds in matcha. Matcha contains catechins and chlorophyll, he adds, which can be affected by trace metal ions. Oxidation is one example of how dietary antioxidants react with metals, such as reactive ones like aluminum or non-stainless steel. This reaction can alter the unique characteristics of matcha, making it taste metallic or even bitter. Advantages of using a wooden spoon over a metal one "Using a wooden spoon for matcha is both a traditional practice and a scientifically sound choice," Singh stresses. Unlike matcha powder, which is chemically active, wood does not react, ensuring that the subtle and beneficial taste and healthful compounds in matcha remain intact.

In the Japanese tea ceremony, he explains that a bamboo ladle called 'chashaku' is one of the earliest implements used. This highlights the importance of using materials that do not affect the tea's flavour. Wooden utensils prevent the over-extraction of matcha's natural umami and sweetness, allowing the customer to enjoy a more natural and original taste. "Using a wooden spoon over a metal one offers several sustainability and envi-



Alok Singh, founder at Diga Organics and expert in Food Science, Agriculture, says, "Using a metal spoon with matcha powder can lead to potential chemical reactions due to the reactive nature of certain metals and the sensitive compounds in matcha."

ronmental benefits as well," he says. Drawbacks of using a metal spoon for matcha There are some health concerns if one uses a metal spoon while making matcha drinks or food. These are:

Leaching of harmful metals: If the coatings on metal spoons (e.g., compounds with acids or reactive substances) are not properly controlled, they may become contaminated with metals during the activation process. Besides leaching safe metals, harmful metals might also leach into the tea if consumed regularly. Taste and quality: Heavy metals present in metal spoons can react with matcha, diminishing its antioxidant properties and introducing a metallic taste. The benefits of matcha, such as its high antioxidant content, are best preserved with proper utensils.

Naga Chaitanya adds brand new Porsche 911 GT3 RS worth Rs 3.5 crore to his garage.



delivered to him his 911 GT3 RS. We wish him many memorable experiences on and off the race track."

According to Financial Express, the GT3 RS costs Rs 3.50 crore (ex-showroom) and is powered by a naturally-aspirated 4-litre six-cylinder engine that makes 518bhp and 468Nm of torque, with the help of a 7-speed DCT. The car can reach a speed of 296 km/h.

Chaitanya also owns, as mentioned in the FE report, a black Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG worth Rs 4 crore (ex-showroom), a black Range Rover Vogue starting at Rs 2.38 crore (ex-showroom), a Porsche 911 and a Ferrari 488 GTB, which costs Rs 4.88 crore. Chaitanya, who was last seen in the horror mystery streaming series Dhootha, is currently working on the patriotic action film Thandel, directed by Chandoo Mondeti. The film also stars Sai Pallavi in a key role. "It's based on some true incidents that happened in 2018 involving these fishermen from Srikakulam. Usually, they go to Gujarat, take the boats from there and then go fishing. During one of their trips, they drifted off into Pakistan's borders and got caught. Their journey being in jail for a year and a half and how they come out is what the film is about. It's an inspiring story," he said during a chat with ZigWheels earlier this year.

Telugu star Akkineni Naga Chaitanya is a vocal motorhead with an impressive collection of luxury vehicles. His garage boasts a range of exotic cars, including a black Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG and a red Ferrari 488 GTB. Recently, he added another stunning vehicle to his collection, a Porsche 911 GT3 RS, further elevating the allure of his already remarkable assortment of cars.

Taking to social media to welcome their new star customer, Porsche Centre Chennai announced that they have successfully delivered the car to Chaitanya. Sharing a couple of photos of him with the car, Porsche noted, "We are ecstatic to welcome back Mr Akkineni Naga Chaitanya to the Porsche family and are happy to have

Yellowstone filming begins for final season

After a prolonged hiatus, the acclaimed drama series, Yellowstone, has finally recommenced production on its highly anticipated final season. Paramount Network confirmed the exciting news on Monday, marking a significant milestone for fans eagerly awaiting the conclusion of the Dutton family saga.

Filming for the remaining episodes of season five has commenced in the picturesque landscapes of Montana, breathing new life into the beloved series, as per The Hollywood Reporter. Despite a delayed start, both MTV Entertainment Studios and 101 Studios remain steadfast in their commitment to delivering the drama's conclusion as previously promised, with a tentative return slated for November, reaffirming expectations set forth last year. Amidst the renewed excitement, questions linger regarding the involvement of key cast members, particularly the iconic portrayal of John Dutton by veteran actor Kevin Costner. While hopes persisted for Costner's return to finalize his character's arc, recent developments cast doubt on his participation, signalling a potential departure from the series' conclusion. The series' hiatus left viewers hanging on a gripping cliffhanger, with tensions escalating within the Dutton family as Jamie Dutton challenged his sister Beth and father John, setting the stage for an impending showdown. As filming progresses, an-



icipation mounts for resolutions to long-standing conflicts and the fate of fan-favorite characters. Furthermore, the official episode count for the final season remains undisclosed, leaving room for speculation regarding the series' duration. As per The Hollywood Reporter, creator Taylor Sheridan hinted at a possible extension beyond the initially reported six episodes.

vision's most gripping dramas, eager to witness the culmination of years of storytelling and character development. With filming underway, the countdown to one of the most-watched western dramas' farewell begins.

Studio Ghibli takes a bow at Cannes with an honorary Palme d'Or



Miyazaki (son of Hayao) and Kenichi Yoda — was nevertheless among the most thunderous receptions at the festival. Thierry Fremaux, Cannes' artistic director, walked across the stage of the Grand Théâtre Lumière filming the long ovation, he said, for a video to send to Miyazaki. "With this Palme d'Or, we'd like to thank you for all the magic you've brought to cinema," said Iris Knobloch, the president of the festival, presenting the award.

The occasion wasn't marked by any new Ghibli film but four earlier shorts that hadn't previously been shown outside Japan. Mei and the Baby Cat Bus, a brief follow-up to Miyazaki's 1989 My Neighbor Totoro, expands the Cat Bus of that classic to a whole fleet of cat conveyances, most notably the mini Baby Cat Bus. The shorts, all of which were made for the Studio Ghibli Museum outside Tokyo, included Mr. Dough and the Egg Princess, a culinary-themed desert for Miyazaki's 2001 film Spirited Away. The other two — House Hunting and Boro the Caterpillar — make musical mini-adventures for forest creatures. The Studio Ghibli celebration came on the heels of Miyazaki's long-awaited The Boy and the Heron winning the Academy Award in March for best animated film. (A documentary on its making, Hayao Miyazaki and the Heron, also played in Cannes.)

Miyazaki sat out that ceremony, too. Goro Miyazaki, whose own films include From Up on Poppy Hill and Tales From Earthsea, said they had to use a hotel towel to wrap the Oscar to bring home to his father. On Monday, he was relieved by the portability of the Cannes prize. "I'm reassured seeing the Palme d'Or was in a box," he said, grinning.

Studio Ghibli, the Japanese anime factory of surreal ecological wonders that has for 39 years spirited away moviegoers with tales of Totoros, magical jellyfish and floating castles, was celebrated Monday by the Cannes Film Festival with an honorary Palme d'Or.

In the 22 years that Cannes has been handing out honorary Palmes, the award for Ghibli was the first for anything but an individual filmmaker or actor. (This year's other recipients are George Lucas and Meryl Streep.) Hayao Miyazaki, the 83-year-old animation master who founded Studio Ghibli in 1985 with Isao Takahata and Toshio Suzuki, didn't attend the ceremony, but he spoke in a video message taped in Japan. "I don't understand any of this," said Miyazaki. "But thank you."

At Cannes, where standing ovations can stretch on end, the fervor that greeted Ghibli's emissaries — Goro

Gautam Gambhir says Shah Rukh Khan hasn't spoken '70 seconds of cricket' with him in 7 years: 'He says I don't like anyone telling me how to act...'

After the recent viral video of Sanjiv Goenka, the owner of the Lucknow Super Giants Indian Premier League franchise, apparently lecturing player KL Rahul, there has been a heated debate on social media about the boundaries that corporate executives should maintain with athletes. In a recent interview, Kolkata Knight Riders mentor Gautam Gambhir said that team co-owner Shah Rukh Khan maintains a hands-off approach to managing the performance side of the business. Shah Rukh is a fixture at nearly every KKR match, especially those that take place on the team's home turf of Eden Gardens in West Bengal, but according to Gambhir, he doesn't meddle in the team's strategies. Appearing on cricketer Ravichandran Ashwin's YouTube channel, Gambhir said that SRK is the "best owner" that he has ever worked with. "In the seven years of me captaining, we had not spoken 70 seconds about cricket. He had never asked me a single question on cricket in those seven years. Can you imagine?" he said. Gambhir recalled an anecdote from 2011, which remains one of the few times that he spoke cricket with SRK. He said, "Since I have come, 20 days we haven't spoken about cricket. We don't talk about cricket. The first thing he told me in



2011 when I met him for the first time he said, 'I don't like anybody telling me how acting needs to be done. I am sure you will not like someone telling you how cricket needs to be played'. I said, 'Absolutely'. And that was the only conversation I had with him. In the last 20 days, he has not asked me what team are we playing or what is the strategy." After Gambhir's return this season, KKR bounced back after a dismal run last year. KKR has advanced to the play-off stage this year, after topping the group for the first time ever.

Kapil Sharma sweats nervously while speaking in English with Ed Sheeran in BTS clip: 'My English is over'



While it's not easy to laugh at oneself, let alone make it a central theme on an OTT show, comedian Kapil Sharma does so with remarkable ease. In a behind-the-scenes video from The Great Indian Kapil Show, Kapil is seen struggling with his English during his interaction with Ed Sheeran. Despite wrestling with the language, he managed to keep Ed and the audience laughing with his broken English.

In the BTS clip, while speaking to Archana Puran Singh, Kapil complained about how he learns 100-150 words of English in a year, but Oxford adds 4,000 words every year to the dictionary. He said, "We are not able to

finish the first syllabus and they are feeding us the next one." He then takes out chits from his pockets and reveals how he has memorised his lines to introduce Ed Sheeran to the stage.

Kapil was seen searching for chits in his pocket with English lines written on them as he interacts with Ed on the stage. While the audience laughed at his method, he shut them down and told them he is already very nervous as he has to speak in English to the singer. He then asked his team to lower the AC temperature as he was sweating due to nervousness. "English bolke body mein garmi badi aati hai (You feel hot while speaking English)... My English is over," he said. This made Ed Sheeran and the audience burst out in laughter. Ed Sheeran, who was in India in March for a concert in Mumbai, had a blast with Kapil and his team on the show. The singer also shared his experience of meeting Shah Rukh Khan during his previous visit to India. During the interaction on the show, he shared how SRK's family jammed with him and taught him some desi dance moves. He said, "The last time I came here in 2017 we met, but this time it was just wonderful. He is such a nice guy, for how big he is, he is just lovely. I had a lot of fun; I met his family, and we jammed out some songs. They taught me how to dance a little bit."

Sridevi forbid Janhvi Kapoor from becoming an actor, said she wouldn't wish comparisons 'on worst enemy': 'Why can't you become a doctor?'

Actor Janhvi Kapoor said that her late mother, the screen icon Sridevi, expressly forbid her from becoming an actor. In a new interview, Janhvi said that her mother told her that she worked so hard to provide her children a comfortable life, and that acting was certainly not going to be a cake-walk. Sridevi told her that she wouldn't wish the life of an actor on her worst enemy, and that she would've wanted Janhvi to become a doctor instead.

Sridevi died in 2018, just a few months before Janhvi made her acting debut in the film Dhadak. Janhvi's younger sister, Khushi Kapoor, debuted as an actor in 2023, with the ensemble film The Archies, directed by Zoya Akhtar. Chatting with her mentor Karan Johar in a video posted on the Dharma Productions YouTube channel, Janhvi was asked if her parents were happy with her choice of profession.

She said, "Mom actually never wanted me to become an actor. We're a result of our parents' ambitions, but also their insecurities. She had spent so much time in front of the camera, seen all of it, done all of it... She would keep telling me, 'I've toiled away so that I can give my girls an easy life. This is not an easy life. It is not as glamorous as you think it is. I really just want you to have a comfortable life. This is not it'. And she told me, Karan. She said, 'The comparisons that are going to come with you becoming an actor being my daughter, I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy'. She said that repeatedly, and



she said, 'Why can't you just become a doctor?'

Janhvi said that along with the privileges that she inherited being the daughter of successful film industry personalities, she also inherited a mad passion for films and acting. "It's all I knew, it's all I've seen, it's everything that I've loved. Every positive memory that I've had growing up, the associations I've made spending time with my family, all have something to do with films. The love that I feel for movies and acting is in my blood."

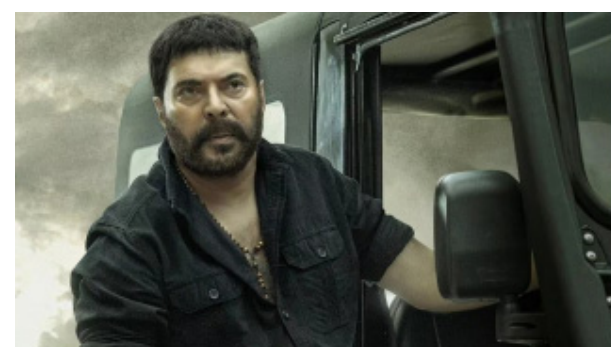
Janhvi debuted with Dhadak in 2018, and has since appeared in several projects that were either designed for streaming or ended up gaining traction online. Her upcoming film, Mr & Mrs Mahi, is only her fourth-ever theatrical release. The film will be released on May 31.

Mammootty on Malayalam cinema's success as Hindi, Tamil, Telugu film industries struggle: 'They are failing because...'

After sending shockwaves across the nation with his chilling performance in director Rahul Sadasivan's folk horror film Bramayugam, Malayalam megastar Mammootty is currently gearing up for the release of his action comedy Turbo. As the movie marks Mammootty's first full-fledged mass entertainer since Bheeshma Parvam (2022), anticipation is at an all-time high. At the same time, as one of the few major Malayalam stars with an impeccable recent box office track record, all eyes are on Mammootty to see if he can deliver another hit in an already thriving industry. Cinema Anatomy | 34 films, first State Award, exceptional performances and superstardom: How Mohanlal, at 26, altered the course of his journey in just one year

Meanwhile, the megastar recently shared his thoughts on Hollywood's winning streak and the struggles of other film industries, attributing this to the evolving tastes and sensibilities of the audience. While addressing the media and promoting Turbo in Dubai, Mammootty stated that good movies emerge only when audiences are discerning and supportive. "The audience controls cinema and it undergoes change only if the former does. When people consistently ignore bad films and watch only the good ones, movies naturally improve," he said. Cue Studio reported. "We are currently experiencing a good phase with the arrival of consecutive quality films because our audiences support and watch good cinema. Look at other languages/industries; they are failing because they don't understand their audience. The audience completely controls cinema," he emphasised.

It needs to be mentioned here that, Turbo arrives



while Mammootty is embroiled in a controversy over his 2022 anti-caste film Puzhu, which recently faced criticism from right-wing sympathisers who claimed it was anti-Brahmanical. The row erupted following an interview given by the movie's director Ratheena's estranged partner to an online channel, in which he claimed that Puzhu was against a particular community and criticised Mammootty for doing the film. However, Malayalees from all walks of life, including various political parties, rallied behind the megastar and extended solidarity with him, underscoring that such attempts to target him won't be tolerated. Helmed by Vysakh and penned by Midhun Manuel Thomas, Turbo, bankrolled by Mammootty himself under the banner of his Mammootty Kampany, will hit the screens on May 23. The film also stars ex-Kannada filmmaker-actor Raj B. Shetty, Sunil, Anjana Jayaprakash, Kabir Duhan Singh, and Bindu Panicker in key roles.

Scarlett Johansson accuses OpenAI, says chatbot voice 'eerily similar' to hers

Scarlett Johansson on Monday accused OpenAI of creating a voice for the ChatGPT system that sounded "eerily similar" to the actress after she declined to voice the chatbot herself. Johansson made the comments in a statement released hours after the artificial intelligence company said it was taking down the voice, called 'Sky.'

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman said in a statement emailed to Reuters on Monday that Sky's voice was not an imitation of Johansson, but belonged to a different professional actress. "The voice of Sky is not Scarlett Johansson's, and it was never intended to resemble hers. We cast the voice actor behind Sky's voice before any outreach to Ms. Johansson," Altman said. "Out of respect

for Ms. Johansson, we have paused using Sky's voice in our products. We are sorry to Ms. Johansson that we didn't communicate better." The fight over rights to actors' voices and images has become a focus in Hollywood as studios consider how to use AI to create new entertainment and as the computer-produced images and sounds become difficult to distinguish from those of humans. Johansson in the statement said Altman had approached her last September and offered to hire her to voice a ChatGPT voice — an offer she declined. "Nine months later, my friends, family and the general public all noted how much the newest system named 'Sky' sounded like me," she said. "When I heard the released demo,

KKR vs SRH IPL 2024 Qualifier 1 tip-off XI: Gurbaz set to open for KKR, Tripathi to bat at 3 for SRH, powerplay to decide match result



GNS News Agency, May 24

Kolkata Knight Riders vs Sunrisers Hyderabad IPL 2024 Qualifier 1 Playing 11: The template of both Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) have been quite similar in this year's Indian Premier League (IPL). Both teams have made their way to the playoffs by outmuscling their opponents. The winner of the match will qualify directly to the final, while the loser will have to play Qualifier 2. KKR and SRH will get only a day's time to traverse thousands of kilometres and get here for the first half of the playoffs as they both featured on the final day of the league round on Sunday.

The washed-out contest against Rajasthan Royals in particular robbed KKR of an opportunity to give expected replacement Rahmanullah Gurbaz a go at the top with Sunil Narine, something that would have settled a few concerns certainly. He will be replacing Phil Salt at the top, who has left the KKR camp for national duties with England ahead of the T20 World Cup. Salt (435 runs) had forged a devastating partnership with Sunil Narine

(461) at the top and KKR immensely benefited from their ultra-aggressive approach with the bat. Rahul Tripathi has played only three games in this year's competition. However, right before the playoffs in their last league match against Punjab Kings, the 33-year-old scored a nonchalant 18-ball 33. SRH lost Travis Head in the first ball and it provided Rahul Tripathi the chance and he grabbed it with both hands. He scored a brisk cameo but perhaps after having made the No. 3 spot his own for the playoffs, ahead of Mayank Agarwal.

Bairstow Kolkata: Kolkata Knight Riders batter Sunil Naraine and Phil Salt during Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 cricket match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Punjab Kings, at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata, Friday, April 26, 2024. (PTI Photo/Swapan Mahapatra) The IPL 2024 Qualifier 1 match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Sunrisers Hyderabad could be decided by the might of the openers and the Powerplay batting. With the scoring rates surging to a record high this season, KKR and SRH have stood at the forefront of the batting revolution led by their deadly opening pairs during the league stage. While Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma bludgeoned the opposition bowlers up top for Hyderabad, Sunil Narine and Phil Salt formed a successful attacking pair for Kolkata.

KKR predicted XI: Sunil Narine, Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Shreyas Iyer (c), Venkatesh Iyer, Nitish Rana, Rinku Singh, Andre Russell, Ramandeep Singh, Mitchell Starc, Anukul Roy, Harshit Rana SRH predicted XI: Travis Head, Abhishek Sharma, Rahul Tripathi, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Heinrich Klaasen (wk), Shahbaz Ahmed, Abdul Samad, Sanvir Singh, Pat Cummins (c), Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Vijaykannth Vijaykannth,

Gautam Gambhir on hugging Virat Kohli at Chinnaswamy: 'I believed we will be at the top of the Fairplay table'



GNS News Agency, May 24

Speaking to R Ashwin on his YouTube channel, Gautam Gambhir in a cheeky has taken a hot against the "Fairplay awards" given in the Indian Premier League (IPL), saying no matter which team he is in, that franchise will always be at the bottom of the table. The Fairplay award is given to the team for their on-field conduct in the ground during the season and currently, Kolkata Knight Riders are lying at ninth. "At the end of the IPL season, you're going to have an IPL trophy in your hand. Would you prefer that or would you be a popular cricket and not have that trophy?" Gambhir asked Ashwin. "Someone sent me a message a couple of days ago. KKR is where KKR is at the moment. I said yeah. At the top. 'In fair play?' I said number 10. 'Is there a trophy?' I said, No," said Gambhir.

Gautam Gambhir lauded MS Dhoni as India's most successful captain ever ahead of their IPL 2024 meeting on Monday. (Sportspics) Gautam Gambhir lauded MS Dhoni as India's most successful captain ever ahead of their IPL 2024 meeting on Monday. (Sportspics) "I still don't

understand. What have we done wrong in the last five games? Probably it's just because I was sitting in the dugout," he added.

Citing an example of the Indian school system, Ashwin said the best students always used to get such certificates. He said: "I am sure you would have seen this when we used to go to school like the favourite children in the class would get these incentive cards. Yeah. Like the merit cards, well-behaved cards." Gambhir came with another witty reply: Unfortunately, even then I was a backbencher. I was made to sit on the last bench. It's been going with me since I was a young kid and has continued like that." Gambhir feels no matter in what team he is in that respective franchise will never win the Fairplay award and it is something he has failed to understand over the years.

"The moment I am there with any franchise to Fairplay award, we are either number nine or 10. Last year LSG was number nine and KKR is number 10. So if you want a Fairplay Award, stay away from me," said Gambhir. Gambhir even touched upon the recent warm hug he shared with Virat Kohli at the Chinnaswamy Stadium and even that didn't help the team's cause. "Honestly, I believed we will be at the top of the table because of what has happened at Chinnaswamy. I thought, there is no competition, irrespective of where we are on the points table but we got to be at the top of the fair play table. We are still at the bottom of the fair play award," Gambhir said. "Probably you need someone else in the dugout because you will never have that Fairplay award till I am there. I have done the best I could, to the best of my ability. Still we are number 10 in the Fairplay award," he said. Gautam Gambhir's KKR will lock horns against Sunrisers Hyderabad in the first Qualifier on Tuesday at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

Story behind Magnus Carlsen beating Vishy Anand in 10 moves at Casablanca

GNS News Agency, May 24

Magnus Carlsen Crushes Viswanathan Anand in 10 Moves at Casablanca Chess Magnus Carlsen and Viswanathan Anand study the position of the game (IN-SET) before the start of their battle at the Casablanca Chess tournament. Magnus Carlsen defeated Viswanathan Anand in just 10 moves in their first clash at the Casablanca chess event over the weekend. The event was debuting the unique Casablanca chess variant. Carlsen won the exhibition event while USA's World No 3 Hikaru Nakamura ended second and GM Viswanathan Anand finished third. The fourth player in the event, Africa's Bassem Amin, ended last in the four-player contest.

Before we get to how Anand lost in 10 moves, we must first understand how Casablanca chess variant works. The Casablanca chess variant format has been designed in a way to honour the rich history of chess, by picking up a historical game at a mid-way point. Basically, players are transported back into history and have to rely on their memory and instincts to find their way out through the maze. In the Casablanca chess variant, over two days, the four grandmasters had to battle their way out from the middlegame of six such games in the rapid time control. Players only learnt the positions that they would be starting from minutes before the game started. While the repository of historical games had been hand-picked by Grandmasters Hicham Hamdouchi and Laurent Fressinet, the games that the GMs would play in a round would be picked by different people.

For example, the opening round clash where Anand lost to Carlsen was selected by the broadcast commentators, grandmasters Jan Gustafsson and Daniel Naroditsky. They had been given three options to pick from: the Chigorin-Steinitz game from 1889, a Lasker vs Tarrasch clash from 1908, and Rubtsova vs Bykova encounter in 1958. Here are the three options that could have been picked for the Carlsen vs Anand game. 1. Gustafsson and Naroditsky picked the 1889 clash between Wilhelm Steinitz and Mikhail Chigorin as they clashed in Havana for the World Chess Championship. It must be noted that Carlsen and Anand started the 1889 World Chess Championship game from the 11th move as per the Casablanca chess variant format. Carlsen chose 11. Na3 instead of the move Steinitz originally played: 11. dxe5. Remarkably, the world no 1 said that he knew the historical game that was being played. "I was just thinking this smells of Steinitz to high heaven," Carlsen remarked afterwards. The Norwegian started to smile broadly as soon as he glanced at the sheet informing him



the first 10 moves of the game. Meanwhile, five-time world champion Anand's queen chose a bold path. But found itself trapped. Carlsen, playing with white, claimed victory in 10 moves.

While the game is deemed to be equal when it starts, Bassem lent some context: "The starting position may appear equal, but as black, you're on the defensive side, and one wrong move can destroy everything." Anand summed up his first impression of the variant by pointing out that having just a handful of minutes to learn the position and then to play in rapid format was tricky. "I liked the idea [of the Casablanca chess variant], but I haven't given it much thought. It just seemed like something fun. The position from the first game is challenging to grasp in rapid play. And having only two minutes before the start is very little to think of anything. It feels like being thrown into the deep end every time. Let's see if it gets better!" The world champion duo then again met for another game on the second day of the event on Sunday. This time the game ended in a draw after a spectacular rook sacrifice from Carlsen. The rook sacrifice from Carlsen against Anand which led to a draw at Casablanca Chess. The position for this game between Anand and Carlsen was selected by Women Grandmasters Dana Reizniece-Ozola (Deputy Chair of the FIDE Management Board) and Anna Burtasova (Casablanca Chess Press Officer). Their three options were Botvinnik-Tal 1960, Alekhine-Euwe 1935, and Ju-Goryachkina 2020. Dana and Anna chose a second position, describing it as "dynamic with chances for both sides, perfect for spectators." The original game, Game 3 from the 1935 World Championship match, was won by Alekhine in 41 moves. It derived from the double-edged Winawer Variation in the French Defense. The game continued 9.Ne2 Nb7 10.Ng3 Rg6. Anand and Carlsen followed the original game for two moves before Carlsen deviated with 10...Qa5. Despite an initial advantage for White, the game soon balanced out. Carlsen then forced a draw by sacrificing his rook on g2.

Jake Fraser-McGurk joins Australia's T20 World Cup 2024 squad as travelling reserve

GNS News Agency, May 24

Jake Fraser-McGurk was without any doubt the batsman to watch in this year's Indian Premier League (IPL). The 22-year-old McGurk has been in blazing form for Delhi Capitals in the IPL and the youngster has amassed 330 runs in nine innings with a strike rate of 234.04.

The big-hitting Jake Fraser-McGurk and Matthew Short have been included in Australia's travelling reserves for the T20 World Cup which starts on June 1. The duo will link up with the squad as potential injury cover, with Cricket Australia saying the team will travel to the West Indies in stages so some players and staff can have some time at home after the IPL. "Matt and Jake made compelling cases for initial selection with their respective performances for Australia last summer and, in Jake's case, more recently in the IPL," chair of selectors George Bailey said in a statement. Jake IPL DC Delhi Capitals batter Jake Fraser-McGurk plays a shot during the Indian Premier League (IPL) T20 cricket match between Delhi Capitals and Mumbai Indians, at Arun Jaitley Cricket Stadium in New Delhi, Saturday, April 27, 2024. "As the tournament proceeds, the short turnaround between fixtures

makes it challenging to get players in at short notice in the event of injury.

"Matt provides the squad with an all-round skill set option, while Jake provides further batting cover. "Both players have exciting talents that can add to the squad if needed. If not, the experience will still be valuable in their respective development journeys at international level." Travis Head, Cameron Green, Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Glenn Maxwell, who are all locked to play in the IPL playoffs, will join the squad later. Players like Marsh, Warner, Agar, Josh Hazlewood, Adam Zampa, Matthew Wade, Nathan Ellis and Josh Inglis have played little cricket since the end of the Australian domestic summer in March. The Australian World Cup squad will fly to the Caribbean on Thursday for a training camp in Trinidad that will include two practice matches against Namibia and West Indies on May 28 and 30 respectively. Australia squad: Mitchell Marsh (c), Ashton Agar, Pat Cummins, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Glenn Maxwell, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, Matthew Wade, David Warner, Adam Zampa

Mixed 4x400m relay: Record-breaking at Asian Championships run not enough for Paris Olympics ticket

GNS News Agency, May 24

Paris 2024: India mixed relay 4x400m The Asian Championship record-breaking quartet of Muhammed Ajmal, Jyothika Sri Dandi, Ajoy Jacob and Subha Venkatesan were unable to book a spot for Paris Olympics. Even though the Indian mixed 4x400m team ran a 3:14.12s race to set a new national record and bag the gold at the Asian Relay Championships in Bangkok on Monday, the quartet of Muhammed Ajmal, Jyothika Sri Dandi, Ajoy Jacob and Subha Venkatesan weren't too elated. The reason was obvious - failure to run below Italy's 3:13.56s that would have given India the 16th spot on the rankings for the Road to Paris. Sri Lanka finished behind the Indians, clocking 3:17.00 while Vietnam (3:18.45) finished third.

India has already booked Olympic spots in the men's and women's 400m at the World Relay Championships in Bahamas, and are still not out of the reckoning in the mixed category either. With 14 spots already sealed in the Bahamas, two spots remain with Italy in 16th place. After the Bangkok race, the mixed relay team moved up to the 21st spot from 23rd. "We have broken the national record but are not satisfied since our target was Paris qualification. You must have noticed that even after the win, the athletes didn't seem that happy," Premanand Jayakumar, the assistant coach for the men's team, said.

The mixed relay team was confident of usurping Italy's spot in the Road to Paris rankings but now find themselves in a tight spot with the qualification window closing on June 30. The coaching staff and Athletics Federation of India will now have to assess the future course of action. "Had we qualified in the Bahamas itself, we wouldn't be under so much pressure now. We need a few more competitions now, we will discuss with the fed-



eration and see if we can take part in more international meets," says Jayakumar, who believes the team is capable of running 3:13.43s. Even though it was a disappointing day for the team, the significance of a national record cannot be undermined. The current team, whose core has been largely unchanged, rewrote the national mark first at the Asian Championships in July 2023, clocking 3:14.70s. At the Hangzhou Asian Games, they improved upon the record, clocking 3:14.34s. Ajmal and Subha were part of that squad.

"The team overall is in good shape and they execute plans well. That's why we were able to break the national record three times in 12 months. Individually, there are a lot of grey areas but I can't pinpoint anything right now. We will sit and analyse today's race first," says Jayakumar. The Indians will also compete in the men's and women's 400m relays in Bangkok. Having already qualified for Paris in these events, the team will not push too hard as they would like to avoid any injuries. In the Bahamas, Rajesh Ramesh had to pull out mid-race due to cramps in the fourth heat.

Taunted for her features as a child, Deepthi Jeevanji, backed by Gopichand, strikes gold at World Athletics Para Championship

GNS News Agency, May 24

Deepthi Jeevanji set a world record timing of 55.07 seconds in the women's T20 400m final in Kobe, Japan on Monday, also qualifying for the Paris Paralympics. Deepthi Jeevanji set a world record timing of 55.07 seconds in the women's T20 400m final in Kobe, Japan on Monday, also qualifying for the Paris Paralympics. When Deepthi Jeevanji won India's first gold medal at the World Athletics Para Championship in Kobe, Japan, her parents recalled how her unusual features at birth had prompted relatives and acquaintances to advise her parents to give up the child. It was only later that Jeevanji Yadhagiri and Jeevanji Dhanalaxmi found out that their eldest child was born with intellectual disability, a cognitive disease hampering communication as well as adaptive skills. But there was only a feeling of pride on Monday morning, when the 20-year-old set a world record timing of 55.07 seconds in the women's T20 400m final, also qualifying for the Paris Paralympics.

Deepthi broke the earlier world record of 55.12 seconds set by USA's Breanna Clark. Aysel Onder of Turkey won the silver (55.19) while Lizanshela Angulo of Ecuador (56.68) won the bronze.

"She was born during the solar eclipse and her head was very small at birth along with the lips and nose being a bit unusual. Every villager who saw her and some of our relatives would call Deepthi pichi (mental) and kothi (monkey) and tell us to send her to an orphanage. Today, seeing her become the world champion in a far-off country proves that she is indeed a special girl," an emotional Dhanalaxmi told The Indian Express from village Kalleda in Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh. With the village's population of 5,000 mostly relying on cotton and mango

farming, Yadhagiri relied on the family's half acre land apart from working as a labourer on other farms. It was on the death of his father Ramachandria that Yadhagiri had to sell his land.

Festive offer Deepthi Jeevanji crosses the finish line to win the gold medal with a new world record timing of 55.07 seconds in the women's T20 400m final in the World Para Athletics Championships in Kobe, Japan. (Paralympic Committee of India) Deepthi Jeevanji crosses the finish line to win the gold medal with a new world record timing of 55.07 seconds in the women's T20 400m final in the World Para Athletics Championships in Kobe, Japan. (Paralympic Committee of India)

"When my husband's father died, we had to sell the farm to make ends meet. My husband would earn Rs 100 or Rs 150 a day so there were days when I had to work to support our family, including Deepthi's younger sister Amulya. Deepthi was always a calm child and spoke very little. But when the village kids would tease her, she would come home and cry. So I would make her sweet rice or, on some days, chicken and that's what made her happy," remembers the mother. It was in 2010 that Deepthi's talent as a runner was spotted by PT coach Biyani Venkateshwaralu at the Rural Development Foundation (RDF) School in the village. She would often outrace able-bodied students which prompted the coach to get her enrolled for 100m and 200m training. "When I first saw Deepthi, I was impressed by her strength and ability to run naturally. I had to run with her on the track to make her understand the idea of the running track. But she would not talk with anybody. She won the 100m at the state level but was disqualified for lane infringement. So we often had to have other kids running with her," Venkateshwaralu told