

Hyderabad citizens campaign on social media to boost voter turnout

Hyderabad: In an effort to enhance voter engagement and boost participation in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections scheduled for May 13 in the State, citizens of Hyderabad have actively taken to social media platforms, launching vigorous campaigns and initiatives.Taking the lead, Vinay Vangala, a city-based socio-political activist, has updated his 'X' handle with the message: "Let's add 'I Vote For Sure on May 13, 2024'." "Hello Active Citizens on "X" in #GHMC jurisdiction, Telangana. Let's add "I Vote For Sure on 13th May'24" til this date n tag othrs 2 ensure Hyderabadis r top in voting % chart this time! (sic)," read the activist's tweet.

Super Saturday at Hyderabad's U.S. Consulate: 1,500 visa interviews conducted

Hyderabad: The US Consulate Team in Hyderabad marked a bustling "Super Saturday" as they swung open their doors over the weekend to address the surge in demand for visitor visas. A whopping 1,500 applicants underwent visa interviews on Saturday, all geared up to journey to the United States for purposes ranging from business ventures to tourism or reuniting with family.The U.S. Consul General in Hyderabad, Jennifer Larson, personally joined the team to lend a hand in the verification process. The "Super Saturday" initiative has been a recurrent event since 2022,

INDIA alliance only believes in vote bank politics: Modi in Nanded



GNS News Agency, April 20

Ahead of the General Election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a public meeting in Maharashtra's Nanded on Friday amid overwhelming support from supporters of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Nanded votes in the Phase 2 of the election on April 26."We have the popular support of first-time voters with us. The INDIA alliance has come together to save and protect their corruption and the people have thoroughly rejected them in the first phase of polling. The country is voting for the BJP-NDA for a 'Viksit Bharat'. The INDIA alliance is not able to tell the citizens of India who their combine's leader will be," Mr. Modi said.Mr. Modi attacked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, calling him shehzada (prince). "Congress' shehzada now has no choice but to contest from Wayanad, but like he ran away from the Amethi seat in 2019, he may run away the same way from Wayanad. Congress may make big claims but in reality, Congress leaders had already accepted defeat before the announcement of the election dates," he said.

The PM blamed the Congress for stalling development. "Congress is the wall between the development of Dalits, poor and deprived. Congress even today opposes any developmental work that our government intends to

carry out. One can never expect them to resolve any issues and people cannot expect robust developmental prospects from them," he said.Mr. Modi also accused the Congress of preventing development in Marathwada and Vidarbha. "For decades, the Congress stalled the development of Vidarbha and Marathwada. It is because of the policies of the Congress that both Marathwada and Vidarbha are water deficient, their farmers are poor, and there are no prospects for industrial growth. Our government has enabled 'Nal se Jal' (tap water) for 80% of the households in Nanded. Our constant endeavour has been to facilitate the empowerment of our farmers through a record rise in MSPs (minimum support prices), income support through PM-KISAN (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi), and the promotion of 'Sree Anna'," Mr. Modi said."To treat every wound given by Congress is Modi's guarantee. The Shaktipeeth highway and Latur Rail Coach Factory is our commitment to robust infrastructure. We aim to foster the development of the Marathwada region in the next five years," Mr. Modi said.

The land of Nanded reflected the purity of the Sikh gurus, Mr. Modi said. "We are guided by the principles of Guru Gobind Singh-ji. Over the years, we have celebrated the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev-ji, the 400th birth anniversary of Guru Teg Bahadur-ji, and the 350th birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh-ji. Whereas the Congress has always opposed the Sikh community and is taking revenge for 1984. It is due to this that they oppose the CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) that aims to bring Sikh brothers and sisters to India, granting them citizenship. It was our government that brought back the Guru Granth Sahib from Afghanistan and facilitated the Kartarpur Corridor. Various other decisions, including the abrogation of Article 370 and the abolition of triple talaq have greatly benefitted our Muslim sisters and brothers," he said."The INDIA alliance only believes in vote bank politics. For this, they have left no stone unturned to criticise and disrespect 'Sanatana'.

GNS News Agency, April 20

Mahabubabad : "M a n u k o t a (Mahabubabad) has always been a bastion for the Congress," Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said. Addressing a public meeting, christened as Jana Jatar here on Friday, he said that the Congress along with Communists, TJS and other likeminded social fora are working together to end the BJP rule at the Centre that remained a threat to democracy. Stating that the BRS and the BJP have ignored the development of the Mahabubabad constituency, he said that both parties made no effort to establish a steel plant in Bayyaram.Stating that Modi and KCR have a strong bond, Revanth said that both the leaders helped each other. BRS supported Farm Laws, GST, Demonetisation etc. on the other hand, BJP feigned unawareness when KCR looted the State in the name of Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project.



"Centre snubbed Kazipet and gave away the rail coach factory to Latur. The Centre delayed the establishment of a tribal university at Mulugu until recently. Both these assurances are in the AP Reorganisation Act-2014," Revanth said. Modi hurt the sentiments of people in Telangana by commenting its bifurcation from Andhra Pradesh was 'unscientific and hasty,' he added.

"The Centre which

organises Kumbh Mela on a grandeur note is unwilling to give the national status to the Medaram jatara," Revanth said."KCR had a deal with Modi to save his daughter K Kavitha who indulged in the Delhi liquor scam. As per the deal, the BRS will help the BJP in Mahbubnagar, Bhongir, Chevella, Malkajgiri and Zaheerabad in the Lok Sabha elections," he alleged.Revanth said that KCR is daydreaming of dethroning the Congress

government in Telangana, but it's not possible at all for him. He said that the government will fill 30,000 vacancies within three months and write off the crop loan by August 15. Appealing to people to vote for Porika Balam Naik, he said that both the BRS and BJP have no moral right to seek a mandate.Agriculture Minister Tummal Nageswara Rao, and Advisor to Chief Minister Vem Narender Reddy were among others present.

BJP will not cross more than 150 seats, says Rahul Gandhi

GNS News Agency, April 20

In his first poll campaign in Bihar, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi while addressing a public meeting took a dig at the claims of BJP of winning more than 400 seats in the Lok Sabha election. He said that BJP will not cross more than 150 seats. He said this on April 20 while speaking in a rally in favour of Congress candidate Ajit Sharma who is locked in a direct contest against sitting Janata Dal-(United) MP Ajay Kumar Mandal.

"The BJP leaders are continuously claiming that they will be winning more than 400 seats this election. Let me say this that BJP will not get more than 150 seats. Let them say anything, they will not get even a single seat above 150," Mr. Gandhi said while addressing the crowd at Sandis Ground of Bhagalpur.He further said, "Today there is an election in the country to save democracy and the constitution. — On one side there is Congress Party and INDIA alliance, which is engaged in saving the constitution and democracy — On the other side are RSS-BJP, who are destroying the constitution and democracy. Whatever the poor people of India have got till date, they have got it from the constitution and if the constitution is abolished, everything will be taken away from the poor."

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav, Bihar Congress Chief Akhilesh Prasad Singh and Bihar Congress in-charge Mohan Prakash were present on the stage.Mr. Gandhi attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and accused him of handing over the country's wealth to a few industrialists.He alleged that there are 22 people in the country having the wealth equal to 70 crore Indians. He also claimed that 70 crore people in the country have income less than ₹100 and the country's wealth is given to Ambani and Adani."Narendra Modi ji has waived-off the loan of ₹16 lakh crore to 20 to 25 people. This amount



is equal to waiving-off the loans of farmers 25 times which we did in our period. INDIA alliance of Congress and RJD have decided that the amount which Narendra Modi ji gave to the industrialists, the same amount we will give to the poor," Mr. Gandhi said.The Congress leader also held Mr. Modi responsible for unemployment in the country claiming that he has made India as the centre of unemployment.

New criminal justice laws signify watershed moment for our society, says Chief Justice of India Chandrachud

GNS News Agency, April 20

Hailing the enactment of the new criminal justice laws as a watershed moment for society, Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud on April 20 said India is set for a significant overhaul of its criminal justice system.Speaking at a conference in New Delhi on 'India's Progressive Path in the Administration of Criminal Justice System', he said the new laws would be successful if those, who are in charge of implementing them, adapt to them.These new laws have transitioned India's legal framework on criminal justice into a new age, the CJI said.He also said much-needed improvements have been introduced to protect the interests of victims and carry out investigation and prosecution of offences efficiently."India is set for a significant overhaul of its criminal justice system with the upcoming implementation of three new criminal laws... These laws signify a watershed moment for our society because no law affects the day-to-day conduct of our society like the criminal law."India is set for a significant overhaul of its criminal justice system with the upcoming implementation of three new criminal laws...These laws signify a watershed moment for our society because no law affects the day-to-day conduct of our society like the criminal law," he said."The enactment of these laws by Parliament is a clear indication that India is changing and on the move, and needs new legal instruments to deal with the current challenges," the CJI said.Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, Attorney General R Venkataramani and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta were



also present at the conference.

The new laws — the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Act — to completely overhaul the country's criminal justice system will come into effect from July 1.However, the provision related to cases of hit-and-run by vehicle drivers would not be implemented immediately.The three laws got Parliament's approval on December 21 last year and President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent on December 25.Referring to 248th Report of the Standing Committee of the Rajya Sabha on the Bharatiya Sakshya Samhita, the CJI said Indian criminal justice system has struggled to keep pace with the profound technological changes our socio-economic milieu that have radically re-imagined the way in which crimes manifest in the society.

Harish Rao slams Govt for deteriorating conditions in hostels

GNS News Agency, April 20

Hyderabad: Voicing concern over the conditions prevailing in the residential schools in the State, BRS leader and former Minister T Harish Rao on Saturday pointed out that close on the heels of the death of Prashant, a student in Bhongir Gurukul school due to food contamination, another instance of food poisoning had come to light in the State.

Eleven girl students of KGV School in Narsapur mandal of Nirmal district were admitted to hospital on Friday as they took ill after consuming the food served in the hostel.



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ing to X, he held the Congress government squarely responsible for the state of affairs on the hostels and demanded the government to initiate mea-

sures to avoid recurrence of such instances. He also demanded the government help provide better treatment to students who were hospitalized.

Several electric poles, trees uprooted due to rain, strong winds in Hyd

GNS News Agency, April 20

Hyderabad: A sudden downpour and strong winds in the city on Saturday cut power to many areas and caused damages to electric polls. Several areas were plunged into darkness as power went off due to falling on tree branches on power lines.According to power officials, several trees were uprooted and about 22 electric poles were damaged in the rain that was

accompanied by heavy winds in the city. In Kondapur, Rajendranagar, Kandukur, Sarooranagar, Saifabad, Azamabad and Charminar areas, tree branches fell on the lines causing power disruptions for sometime. Minor disruption also occurred in 11 KV feeders due to strong winds and rain.The power officials immediately took restoration work and within an hour restored power supply in most of the places where power went off due

to falling of tree branches on power lines. Preventive shutdowns in waterlogged localities were carried out by the power officials. The roads were littered with uprooted trees and hoardings in several parts of the city due to strong winds."This morning due to rains in many parts of Greater Hyderabad city, there was minor disruption to consumers as branches of trees fell on lines, remnants of banners/moths fell, twisted power lines, and broke poles.

11 students of KGBV school fall ill due to food poison in Nirmal

GNS News Agency, April 20.Nirmal: Eleven students belonging to a Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) fell ill, allegedly after consuming stale food during dinner at their hostel in Narsapur mandal centre on Friday. This is the second such incident reported in the institution in a gap of three weeks.

Delhi Rouse Avenue Court reserves verdict on Manish Sisodia's Bail Petition

GNS News Agency, April 20The Rouse Avenue Court in Delhi has reserved its judgment on the bail petition filed by Manish Sisodia in the Liquor Policy CBI and ED cases. The court is set to announce its decision on the 30th of this month.

Sisodia, who is currently in custody, has sought permission to participate in the election campaign. The court will consider his request along with the bail petition in the upcoming hearing.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Cut sugar & salt

THE renewed spotlight on significantly high sugar, salt and fat content in food has sparked a debate about public health and transparency. Some major business houses — Cadbury, Nestlé and IndiGo — find themselves at the forefront of this discourse, facing scrutiny and accountability. This affords an opportunity for the stakeholders to reaffirm their commitment to consumer wellbeing. Nestlé's responsive approach to reducing added sugars, sodium and saturated fats in its products and aligning with global dietary guidelines over the years reflects the market risk faced by a company failing to recognise the importance of providing healthy options. From revising sodium levels in Maggi Masala Noodles to cutting sucrose content in infant cereals, the FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) giant has been trying to foster healthier lifestyles to remain on top of the business. However, the latest allegations about higher sugar content in its baby food in developing countries like India are worrisome and warrant an investigation. Adherence to regulations is crucial to rebuilding trust and nutritional integrity. Similarly, IndiGo's response to concerns about the sodium levels in on-board meals emphasises the need for transparency. Consumer awareness is pivotal in shaping food choices and driving industry practices. As people become more informed about the health implications of their dietary decisions, companies face pressure to prioritise nutritious alternatives and provide accurate information about the ingredients. The food industry must reassess its practices and the food regulators strengthen their enforcement strategies. This need is particularly significant in India, where the burden of nutrition-related non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular ailments, is rapidly escalating.

Hoshiarpur Lok Sabha seat: As ticket goes to Som Parkash wife, Sampla sheds 'Modi ka parivar' tag



GNS News Agency, April 20

Nepotism and dynasty politics: the words that the BJP has often used as an ammunition against its political opponents were hurled at it, by people from within the party, as it named Anita Som Parkash as its candidate from the Hoshiarpur Lok Sabha seat. Anita, who will make both her political and electoral debut, is the wife of BJP's Hoshiarpur MP and Union Minister Som Parkash who has been dropped by the party, apparently citing his poor health.

The announcement by the BJP in its second list of three names for Punjab saw an angry reaction from supporters of former Union minister Vijay Sampla, who had won from Hoshiarpur in 2014. Sampla's supporters were quick in labelling the ticket to Anita as a "nepotism" and "dynasty politics" and questioned what happens to party's stance on the same issue. Sampla, who headed the National Commission for Scheduled Castes from 2021 to 2023 and remained a Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment from 2014 to 2019, claims to have a huge following in Hoshiarpur, an SC reserved constituency.

Having worked as a daily wage labourer and a plumber before making it big in the political arena — he started off by being elected the sarpanch of his native village Sofi in Jalandhar — Sampla was a strong contender for the BJP ticket in 2019 too, but faced stiff competition from Som Parkash, a retired IAS officer. Som Parkash had contested from Hoshiarpur in 2009 but lost to Congress' Santosh Chaudhary by a razor-thin margin of 366 votes. While he had reacted strongly in 2019, this time he made his displeasure known by dropping 'Modi ka parivar' from his name on the social media profiles. In a cryptic post on X, he said, "Humne to khoon pasina baha diya, ab baarishen likhengi muqaddar zamin ka (I have shed blood and sweat, now the rains will write the destiny of the land)". He also thanked his supporters, acknowledging that "ek rasta bandh hota hai, Bhagwan aur kair raaste khol deta hai (If one door is closed, God opens many others)". BJP's vice president for Hoshiarpur district unit Bharat Bhushan Verma, who is also in charge of Chabbawal Assembly segment, questioned the party decision. "We workers do not see any reason why cutting the party has denied ticket to Vijay Sampla, who remained active in the constituency for the past five years despite not being the MP. One can, however, question the sitting MP on mthe same. Why was Sampla, a dedicated party worker, overlooked for the ticket in favor of the sitting MP's wife? Is this not nepotism," asked Verma.

Party's district media in charge Kamal Verma, however, defended the decision, saying that the tickets were decided in Delhi, but added that the "basis for the decision is unknown". Shivam Ohri, BJP youth president, Hoshiarpur, emphasized his allegiance to the party symbol, saying he would support whoever contests under it. Sampla's supporters continued to voice their grievances on social media platforms, questioning the rationale behind denying him the ticket.

The rivalry between Sampla and Som Parkash is old. Sampla's supporters highlight his efforts to bring the Ravidassia community, an SC community in the Doaba region with both reserved Lok Sabha seats, into the BJP fold. With 37% Dalit votes in Doaba, Sampla's role as the first Dalit MP of BJP from Punjab earned him a ministerial position in 2014, despite being a first timer. BJP insiders said that the state and the central leadership now has to pacify Sampla's supporters, considering it is the first time since 1996 that the BJP is contesting the Lok Sabha polls on its own in Punjab. Hoshiarpur is one of the three seats which BJP had been fighting when it was in an alliance with the Shiromani Akali Dal, with the Panthic party contesting the remaining 10 seats.

Delhi High Court refuses to quash FIR against man who 'tried to deceive public, take donations' in PM Modi's name



GNS News Agency, April 20

A single judge bench of Justice Amit Mahajan in its March 13 order observed that there were "specific allegations" that the petitioner was "collecting donations/funds by using the surname" of the Prime Minister. (File Photo) A single judge bench of Justice Amit Mahajan in its March 13 order observed that there were "specific allegations" that the petitioner was "collecting donations/funds by using the surname" of the Prime Minister.

The Delhi High Court has recently refused to quash a First Information Report (FIR) registered against a man, alleging that he had "dishonestly induced the public at large" by running an NGO — 'Modi Charitable Trust', which reflects the usage of the surname of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The FIR was lodged by the special cell of the Delhi Police in September 2023 against the petitioner, Pawan Pandey, on the complaint of deputy secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs alleging that the petitioner was running an NGO "misrepresenting" the PM's name and gaining donations/funds using the surname and picture of the PM. It was alleged that Pandey used the pic-

ture of PM Modi along with his own on national news channels for "deceiving the public at large" as featured in an advertisement that broadcast the picture of the petitioner along with PM Modi with the name of the Trust run by the petitioner.

A single judge bench of Justice Amit Mahajan in its March 13 order observed that there were "specific allegations" that the petitioner was "collecting donations/funds by using the surname" of the Prime Minister. "The picture of the Hon'ble Prime Minister has also been used whereas admittedly, the petitioner's surname is not 'MODI'. The advertisements have been broadcast on YouTube and other national news channels with the picture of the Hon'ble Prime Minister. The allegations, therefore, are that the petitioner is dishonestly inducing people to deliver the property in the form of donations. The FIR, therefore, discloses commission of cognizable offences," the HC said.

The HC said that the police have a "statutory right and duty" to investigate into all aspects of an alleged cognizable offence. It said the investigation is at a nascent stage and the court, while exercising power under Section 482 of the CrPC, ought not to thwart an investigation. "When the allegations as noted in the FIR, discloses the commission of cognizable offence, the court is not required to consider on merits, whether the allegations make out a cognizable offence or not at the initial stage and the court has to permit the investigating agency to investigate. In view of the above facts and discussions and the material placed on record, this court does not find it a fit case for quashing of the FIR," Justice Mahajan said. The case was lodged against Pandey for the alleged offences of cheating for personation and cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property under the IPC.

Kapil Dev unveils advanced robotic technology for orthopedic treatment at Manipal Hospital

GNS News Agency, April 20

Legendary cricketer Kapil Dev on Tuesday emphasized the importance of voting during the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and urged citizens to exercise their franchise. Vote dete nahi lekin gyaan dete hain (Those who abstain from voting however are eager to offer advice. They should refrain from even mentioning the 'P' of politics)," said Dev who was in Pune at an event organised by Manipal Hospital, Kharadi, to unveil the new and advanced robotic technology for joint replacement.

On the occasion, Kapil Dev responded to various queries on players who enter politics, IPL game funds and mental health issues which at one point of time were unheard of. On sports persons wanting to enter politics, he said that each player has his/her own thought process. "If politicians can enter the sports arena, then so can players," he said. The renowned player however said he was happy and content with the life he led presently. "My life mantra is that I can learn more everyday. I had a passion to play and people enjoyed it. I am grateful for that," he added. Kapil Dev said he had moved on beyond cricket and now likes to travel, meet people and engage in learning opportunities. On the question whether the amount of funds involved in IPL games positively or negatively impact the growth of players, the cricketer said it is a reason to celebrate when people gain financial stability. "What is essential to understand is that it should be used wisely. Players should not be misled. This responsibility lies with the Cricket Board of India," he added. Meanwhile, he stressed that the learning process should never stop. In cricket, it is teamwork that prevails where players refrain from using 'I' and instead emphasize a collective effort centred around 'we'. Meanwhile, the ace sportsperson went down the memory lane and



pointed out that at one point of time, they were not aware what the term depression meant. "We did not have knowledge about depression. But there is a lot of conversation about mental health issues these days. So what I would say is talk to people, stop playing on your mobiles and go play on the ground. Sweat it out," he added.

On the occasion, authorities at Manipal hospital spoke about robotic-assisted surgeries that are advanced medical procedures performed using robotic devices guided by a surgery. "Robotic assisted surgeries aims to improve knee replacement and joint treatment by minimizing the risks and improving patient outcomes," Dr Sinukumar Bhaskaran, adult joint replacement and reconstruction and robotic arthroplasty (hip and knee), Manipal Hospital, said. "The new system allows personalized 3D CT scans, delivering sub-millimetre accuracy and enhanced safety with real-time bone movement monitoring for more precise implant surgery and reduced risk of infection," said Parmeshwar Das, director of Manipal Hospital.

In Sangrur, dissent brews as Dalvir Singh Goldy calls out Congress 'betrayal'; Sukhpal Singh Khaira reaches out

GNS News Agency, April 20

Marred by defections and dissent, the Congress in Punjab found another problem in their hand with former Dhuri MLA Dalvir Singh Goldy Tuesday going public with his displeasure over denial of the party ticket from Sangrur Lok Sabha seat for the general elections and asked the party high command not to "betray anyone". He said the leaders whom the party rewarded with tickets in the past later jumped ship and those who have remained loyal were being denied the ticket. Congress has fielded three-time MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira from the Sangrur seat. Goldy said he bows before the Congress' decision but added that the party had made a "commitment" with him during the 2022 Sangrur bypoll that he would be fielded in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

"What disturbed me the most was (that) what is a big and a small leader. Whether a big leader fits the criteria of having money or the one who is loyal," he asked. He said that he had sought the party ticket during the 2012 Assembly polls as well but was denied. He further said that his wife was preparing to fight the 2019 Lok Sabha polls but she was also denied a ticket by the party. "I want to ask the party high command whether the person whom the ticket was given at that time is part of our party today. But Goldy stands by the party," he said. The Congress had fielded Arvind Khanna from Dhuri in 2012 Assembly polls and Kewal Singh Dhillon in 2019 Sangrur Lok Sabha polls. Both Khanna and Dhillon are now with the BJP. In 2015, party had fielded Simar Partap Singh Barnala, the grandson of former CM Surjit Singh Barnala, for bypoll to Dhuri Assembly seat. He too later quit the Congress. Talking about the 2022 Sangrur Lok Sabha bypoll, Goldy asked whether the need for a big face was required then or now.

He said the party made a "commitment" with him during the 2022 Sangrur Lok Sabha bypoll that he would be fielded again in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. "We worked hard day and night. But I was denied the ticket



again. I am a faithful worker of the party. But I want to say that when parties take such decisions, one should not be kept in the dark. It is my request to our high command and high command of all parties that go with clarity, do not make fun of anyone and do not betray," he added. Khaira, meanwhile, said that he respected Goldy's sentiments and sought his support in the electoral contest.

"I respect your sentiments... You're like my son Mehtab. I will ensure your well being. Although I never asked for the ticket from Sangrur, but since the party has nominated me, I will fight this battle with utmost dedication, sincerity and fearlessness for a better Sangrur and better Punjab," Khaira commented on the Facebook page of Goldy. "I seek your support in this crucial fight. I will be coming to your home tomorrow 12 noon along with senior party leaders to begin our campaign," he wrote. The Sangrur seat is considered as the AAP's citadel. The AAP has fielded Cabinet Minister Gurmeet Singh Mehtab Hayer from this seat, currently represented by Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) MP Simranjit Singh Mann. Meanwhile, Congress is facing trouble from within in Bathinda too where some party leaders are upset over Jeet Mohinder Singh Sidhu being named the Lok Sabha candidate. Sidhu had done a gharvapsi from Shiromani Akali Dal to the Congress a few months ago.

Opposition leaders read fatiha for criminals but don't condole death of Hindus, says Adityanath



GNS News Agency, April 20

Launching a scathing attack on the Opposition, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday said the Samajwadi Party, Congress and BSP were sunk in a "quagmire and hate righteousness". Referring to the recent visit of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav to Ghazipur to offer condolences to the family of gangster-politician Mukhtar Ansari, who died in prison, Adityanath said the Opposition leaders "read the fatiha for dead criminals but don't condole the death of Hindus".

"Your single vote to these parties will give you an identity crisis because these people roam openly with mafia elements and even go to their places at the time of their death to recite the fatiha. They are the same people who never speak a word when a Hindu dies," Adityanath said, while campaigning for BJP in the Nathaur area of the Bijnor Lok Sabha constituency.

Claiming that his government has acted strongly against mafia and criminals, the chief minister said: "We greet Ram-Ram to the common citizens and Ram Naam Satya to the mafia-criminals." In Shamli, which falls under the Kairana Lok Sabha constituency, Adityanath said: "Your single vote to a better party and the government has empowered our farmers to greet people with the Ram-Ram and to the criminals with Ram Naam Satya hai. Your vote to the wrong party in the past led to criminals and mafia being felicitated at the CM's Lucknow residence. Hamari sarkar ne aise logo ko jahan pahuchana tha, wahan pahuncha diya (Our government has dispatched such elements to the place where they belonged to)."

Invoking the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya on the eve of Ram Navami festival, Adityanath said that it was the first time in 500 years that Ram Lalla would celebrate Ram Navami at his temple. "India is the only country where 'aaradhy' (God) had to give proof for his birthplace. This situation was caused by the Congress and Samajwadi Party. They tried to jeopardise our faith, but Sanatan Samaj did not agree. It was determined to build a grand temple on the birthplace of Lord Ram," Adityanath said. "We achieved success because of Prime Minister Prime Minister Modi," he said, according to a release issued in Lucknow. At Shamli, the CM also warned BJP supporters not to be complacent about the party's victory in the elections "because the Opposition parties are ready to burgle into your confidence for victory". "We have to be vigilant and put our democratic right of voting in choosing the right party because those in opposition have nothing to do with your concerns and if voted, they will lead to another term of anarchy and dacoity," he added.

Odisha bus accident: Bengal govt deploys rescue teams, relief materials for injured passengers



GNS News Agency, April 20

A day after five persons were killed and several others were injured in a bus accident in Odisha's Jajpur district, the West Bengal government on Tuesday deployed teams of administrative officials along with relief materials for the injured passengers from the state. At least five people, including a woman, died and around 35 others were injured after a bus fell from a bridge in Odisha's Jajpur district on Monday evening. The injured included around 24 passengers from Bengal — 12 from Purba Medinipur, one from Uttar Dinajpur and the remaining 11 are Kolkata and Howrah districts. Taking to X, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee condoled the deaths and said the families of the victims will be granted compensation.... Bengal has been sending officials, materials, ambulances etc. to the site in Odisha for rescue assistance. ... Beds have been reserved in Medinipur medical college. Compensation will be paid to the next of kin of the dead and the injured as per rules," Banerjee wrote on X.

Congress bluffing on reopening Nizam Sugar Factory: Bajireddy

GNS News Agency, April 20

Jagtial: BRS candidate for Nizamabad Lok Sabha segment, Bajireddy Goverdhan on Tuesday said the Congress party was bluffing by promising to reopen the Nizam Sugar Factory. Participating in an election rally along with ZP chairperson Dava Vasantha, BRS district president K Vidhyasagar Rao and others in Mallapur on Tuesday, he said the previous BRS government had set up a committee to look into the sugar factory issue. While former minister J Ratnakar Rao was the chairman, he and Vidhyasagar were members of the committee. The committee had already passed a resolution to privatize the sugar factory.

Singareni solar plants to be completed by August



GNS News Agency, April 20

Hyderabad: The Singareni Collieries Company (SCCL), which is preparing to take up 232 MW solar plants in the second phase, is facing a tough task in completing the pending 55.5 MW of the proposed capacity of 300 MW of the first phase of the project, which has been delayed due to various reasons.

The project has missed a few deadlines set by the company in the past and it is learnt that the first phase would be completed by August this year. The company had taken up the construction of solar plants with a combined capacity of 300 MW in the first phase, out of which 224 MW including 5 MW floating solar plants have been completed last year and the remaining 76 MW was supposed to be completed by December 2023, but due to various reasons it could not be completed.

In February, the company managed to complete a 10.5 MW solar plant at Ramavaram in Kothagudem town and the remaining 55.5 MW was under various stages. According to SCCL chief (E&M) Power Projects NVK Viswanadha Raju, the pending plants would be completed by August. The 76 MW projects comprise a 22 MW plant on an overburden dump in the Ramagundam-3 area, a 22.5 MW plant and a 10.5 MW solar plant in the Kothagudem area, an 11 MW plant in Chennur, and a 22 MW plant on an open cast-1 site.

Meanwhile, the company has handed over the 67.5 MW solar power project in the Mandamarri area to Bondada Engineering, an infrastructure engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) company. According to Singareni officials, the scope of the contract includes the design, engineering, supply, construction, erection, testing, and commissioning of the project, along with setting up the 220 KV transmission system. Bondada will also be responsible for the project's operation and maintenance for ten years. As part of the 232 MW second phase solar project, the company has proposed to set up a 67.5 MW plant in 240 acres in Mandamarri, 37 MW plant on 166 acres overburden dump in Ramagundam area and a 27.5 MW plant in 96 acres in Srirampur area.

‘Focusing on our seats’: On ground, no sign of AAP-Congress joint Lok Sabha campaign in Delhi

GNS News Agency, April 20

Aam Aadmi Party AAP, Congress, INDIA bloc, AAP-Congress joint Lok Sabha campaign, delhi news, India news, Indian express, Indian express India news, Indian express India AAP organised a sankalp sabha in East Delhi's Vishwas Nagar Assembly constituency. Despite declarations of a combined, supportive campaign and a joint strategy for the Lok Sabha polls in the national capital, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Congress are far apart on the ground. As part of the INDIA bloc, AAP has fielded four candidates out of seven in Delhi and Congress has fielded three. AAP MLAs, however, have only been asked to campaign for their own party members. While AAP announced its candidates in February and the Congress list came out on Sunday, the former announced the second phase of campaigning on Monday, focusing only on the four seats it is contesting.

Besides the INDIA rally held on March 31, the AAP and the Congress are yet to come together for joint campaigning on the ground. The Congress has fielded J P Agarwal from Chandni Chowk, Udit Raj from Northwest Delhi and Kanahiya Kumar from Northeast Delhi. The AAP has fielded Somnath Bharti from New Delhi, Kuldeep Kumar from East Delhi, Mahabal Mishra from West Delhi and Sahi Ram Pehalwan from South Delhi.

AAP MLAs whose assembly constituencies fall under the parliamentary constituencies that have Congress candidates have been assigned tasks in other areas. Kirari MLA, (Northwest Delhi) Ritu Raj, for instance, has been made in-charge of South Delhi Lok Sabha seat for its candidate, Sahi Ram Pehalwan. "We are currently working and focusing on our seats... they (Congress) will plan and accordingly, we will go participate in their meeting; if their candidates need us... to accompany them to rallies... we will definitely go... But our focus is winning our four seats," said an AAP MLA from Northwest



Delhi. Akhilesh Pati Tripathi, MLA from Model Town, said: "... As of now, we have been given different tasks such as working on door-to-door campaigning... There are no directions from the party but at the local level, we are working... I spoke to (Congress leader) J P Agarwal and held a meeting... He also met other MLAs and called them for coordination..."

In an interview with The Indian Express earlier this month, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh had said that alliance partners will have to work for each other on the ground to ensure a win. AAP Delhi convener Gopal Rai had also said earlier that party leaders would participate in Congress campaigns "wherever required". Reiterating the leaders, former social welfare minister and AAP MLA from Seemapuri, Rajendra Pal Gautam, said, "We have to make a strategy and start campaigning together in the next couple of days... it is very important for both parties... I will participate in the INDIA bloc campaign... if Rahul Gandhi gives me a call to work for them, I will do it."

Sources in the Congress, meanwhile, said that meetings to finalise the campaign details will be held soon. The Lok Sabha polls are scheduled to be held in seven phases, starting April 19. Delhi votes on May 25.

Woman, relative killed by family members in Northeast Delhi; 2 arrested

GNS News Agency, April 20

Northeast Delhi murder, Delhi murder, Delhi crime murder, Delhi Police, delhi news, India news, Indian express, Indian express India news, Indian express India Police said the accused worked as fruit vendors — Kudush had finished a course on graphic designing and was helping his father run his fruit stall. A 22-year-old woman and her relative were murdered, allegedly by the former's father and brother, over "suspicion" that they were in a relationship, said police. The duo — Mohd. Shahid (46) and his son Kudush (20) — were arrested, said police. The incident took place in Northeast Delhi on Tuesday. Police sources said the accused allegedly killed the relative, Danish, with a fruit knife before moving on to the woman, Shaina. "After killing both of them, Kudush called the Police Control Room and admitted to having killed his sister and uncle," said DCP (Northeast) Joy Tirkey. The bodies bore deep incision wounds on their necks, while the woman's limbs were tied up using a chunni and a lungi. DCP Tirkey said the family discovered the relationship three-four days ago and tried to break it off. When it didn't work, they decided to allegedly



kill them. A senior police officer said other family members fled the spot when the accused allegedly slit the victims' throats. The accused men tied up Shaina and hid the body in a corner of a room, the officer said. Police said the accused worked as fruit vendors — Kudush had finished a course on graphic designing and was helping his father run his fruit stall. The two belonged to a family of 10. Shaina, who was unmarried, was the second child and Kudush the fourth of six siblings.

IIT-KGP's new rule: Rs 5,000 fine on students found drinking on, outside campus

GNS News Agency, April 20

A notice issued by the Indian Institute of Technology-Kharagpur (IIT-KGP) on Monday stated that it would impose a fine on students if they are found drinking "in or outside the campus". The notice, signed by IIT-KGP registrar Amit Jain, states that a student found drinking on the campus for the first time will be fined Rs 5,000.

"If a student is found guilty of the same offence for the second time, then the fine will be enhanced to Rs 10,000. In both cases, the parents would be warned by the warden," said the notice. "If a student is found to be engaged in alcohol consumption more than twice, then

the case will be directly dealt with by the DC (disciplinary committee) and then the DC will recommend appropriate measures," it added. According to the institute, fines will also be imposed on students if they are found drinking outside the campus or engaged in scuffles with outsiders. In this category, a student will be fined Rs 25,000 for the first offence. "If the student is still found to be engaged in a similar acts, then the case would be directly referred to the DC. The DC will recommend appropriate punishment, which may include academic punishment and a minimum financial penalty of Rs 50,000," the notice said.

MCD mayoral polls next week, AAP has its task cut out to pick nominee



GNS News Agency, April 20

MCD mayoral polls, mayoral polls, delhi mayoral polls, Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), delhi news, India news, Indian express, Indian express India news, Indian express India The race is down to two candidates — Sarika Chaudhary (left) from the Daryaganj ward and Prem Chauhan from Dakshinpur Extension. Express With polls to elect a new mayor to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) scheduled for April 26, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) sources said two councillors are at the top of its list — Sarika Chaudhary from the Daryaganj ward and Prem Chauhan from Dakshinpur Extension. According to party sources, a fine balance is needed to pick one as the decision comes down to choosing a candidate who enjoys popularity among councillors and someone who is considered close to the party leadership. The nomination has to be filed by Thursday. This year, the Mayor's seat is reserved for individuals from the Scheduled Caste (SC) category. The AAP has 32 SC councillors among a total of 134.

Going by the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, during the five-year tenure of the MCD House, a woman candidate will be appointed as mayor in the first year, a general candidate in the second year, candidates from a scheduled caste in the third year, and a general candidate for the fourth and fifth years. In the first and second tenures of the MCD House, the AAP — which won the MCD polls in December 2022 — had nominated Shelly Oberoi as Mayor, who bagged the post both times. Sources said both Chaudhary and Chauhan have long-standing affiliations with AAP. Earlier, Mohini Jeenwal from Sunder Nagri and Vikas Tonk from Civil Lines were also in the

Chauhan, currently in his second term as an MCD councillor, previously served as the Leader of Opposition in the erstwhile South Delhi Municipal Corporation. Chaudhary, on the other hand, has been the president of the party's state women's wing and was a member of the Delhi Commission for Women. Both have been active in MCD council meetings. Party sources had earlier claimed that the party is looking to field a male candidate for the mayor's post this year, giving Chauhan an advantage. However, Chaudhary is not out of the running yet. "A meeting with the senior leadership and councillors was held on Monday to discuss the final candidates for the post of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor... a majority of the councillors are in support of Chauhan for the Mayor's post," a party leader said. In the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) camp, there is no decision yet. "Discussions have taken place... we are likely to announce the candidates on Wednesday. We will give a tough fight," a source from the BJP said.

Dues for drugs worth Rs 90 crore pending for six months: Delhi suppliers

GNS News Agency, April 20

Suppliers of pharmaceutical drugs in the national capital claimed that they have not received the payment for medicines worth Rs 90 crore from the Delhi government's Central Procurement Agency (CPA) — responsible for supplying medicines to state hospitals — for over six months. According to the manufacturers and suppliers, they have been supplying pharmaceutical drugs to Delhi government hospitals, CDMO (contract development and manufacturing organisation) stores, and consignees — designated by the CPA — on orders placed against rate contracts approved in their favour, and despite this, they have not received payment for months. The suppliers' association, meanwhile, wrote a letter to the CPA, highlighting the concerns. "During these six months, orders worth over Rs 90 crore were placed twice — on 27/09/2023 and 12/12/2023. The supplies were completed, and bills submitted to the goods office, however, no payment has yet been made.

Another round of orders was placed on 15/03/2024, on the running rate contracts," read the letter, adding that due to this, the last order — created on March 15 — has not yet been delivered. According to the letter, the non-payment of the bills has put the suppliers in great distress, who are left with no funds to cater to new orders now. Further delay in payment would cause irreparable financial damages, claimed the suppliers.

According to an official CPA source, payments worth Rs 80-90 crore are still pending. "Nearly Rs 84 crore of CPA budget has lapsed, and the suppliers have not been paid yet. Non-payment has its spiraling effect, and supply of medicines (to public healthcare facilities) will be affected further," said the official. Despite several attempts, Director General Health Services (DGHS) Director Dr Vandana Bagga was not unavailable for comment.

Meanwhile, an official statement from the Delhi government stated: "The Health Minister has persistently been writing and communicating to the Chief Secretary as well as the Secretary (Health) for the past two months, regarding the "severe shortage" of essential medicines and medical consumables at hospitals, however, the lat-



ter have maintained that there was "no scarcity of the products/ items". Even during the Legislative Assembly discussion in April, many MLAs contradicted the Chief Secretary's claims.

"The Health Minister has taken all requisite steps, including writing directly to the Delhi L-G (V K Saxena), to immediately alert him that the Chief Secretary and the Secretary (Health) have deliberately been plunging Delhi towards a catastrophic 'man-made' health crisis. This event — the legitimate payment to medicine suppliers being not made by the officers concerned — unequivocally proves that the Chief Secretary and the Secretary (Health) have been conspiring, and actively colluding to orchestrate a 'man-made' health crisis in Delhi," read the Delhi government statement. The move came after a report that an eight-year-old boy, with a broken arm, was allegedly turned away by Dr Hedgewar Aarogya Sansthan and Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalaya on April 1, while stating that they "did not have cotton as well as no orthopedic doctor was available to treat him" at the moment. This triggered a back-and-forth war of words between the L-G and Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj. While the L-G wanted to hold a meeting with the Health Minister, Bharadwaj invited him to visit a few Delhi government hospitals, stating that the majority of patients there are from BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

Water shortage in Delhi: L-G says Atishi's letter 'insensitive'; she says his response shows apathy

GNS News Agency, April 20

Calling A letter from Delhi Minister Atishi over water shortage in parts of Delhi "insensitive", Lieutenant Governor (L-G) V K Saxena, in an open letter to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, said that she was using the murder of a woman in Shahdara for "narrow political goals". Reacting to this, Atishi called Saxena's open letter "unfortunate", as he had "shown apathy towards the city's water woes". In a letter to Saxena a day after a woman was stabbed to death in Shahdara following a quarrel over using water from a community tap, Atishi has demanded that the Delhi Jal Board CEO be suspended and an enquiry be set up to look into the actions of the chief secretary, among other officers.

Saxena's Tuesday letter was addressed to Kejriwal, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the Delhi excise policy case. The ED has alleged that bribes were paid to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and its leaders in exchange for a policy that favoured certain liquor businessmen. Pointing out that direct communication with Kejriwal was not possible, Saxena wrote: "I was deeply distressed at the insensitive communication from Water Minister Atishi on Sunday... She has chosen to use the unfortunate death of a woman in East Delhi for narrow, partisan political goals." Atishi, meanwhile, said she was also "disappointed" at the missive from the L-G as it was written after she requested him to "suspend an officer who has repeatedly refused, failed to carry out his duties, which, if he had undertaken on time, would have averted the crisis that the national capital is facing this summer".

Saxena, calling Atishi's note an "admission of guilt" of "inaction and inefficiency over the past 10 years", said that similar incidents took place in Delhi over the years. "Your minister's hasty missive to me is an admission of these failures and defaults of performance of your government, and amount to facile attempts at shrugging responsibility off, a complex problem," Saxena said, adding that while Delhi's population had increased by 15 per cent over the past decade, the water treatment capacity grew from 906 to 946 million gallons daily. He also said that the percentage of unaccounted for water — attrib-



In a letter to Delhi L-G VK Saxena a day after a woman was stabbed to death in Shahdara following a quarrel over using water from a community tap, Atishi has demanded the suspension of Delhi Jal Board CEO

uted to leakages, theft, and non-payment of bills — increased from 45% in 2015 to 58% in 2022-2023. "It simply shows that there has been no efforts, whatsoever, have been made in the past 10 years for plugging the leaks; we seem to be spending thousands of crores in pumping water into a leaking bucket," the L-G wrote.

Atishi, meanwhile, said that the Delhi government had requested Saxena's intervention in matters of "elementary governance functions", which has been "brought to a standstill due to acts and omissions of the officers". "In this long period, you have maintained stoic silence and complete apathy towards the water-related woes of people of Delhi. But when the actual culprit of this criminal negligence and misfeasance was brought before you, that was when you decided to speak in his defence, which the whole of Delhi knows, is legally and morally indefensible," she added. She further said that Kejriwal had issued directions in May 2023, asking officers to prepare borewells and rainwater wells, and held several review meetings regarding water issues, but work had been stalled after funds were not released.

Gujarat sees new record with 25 candidates clearing UPSC



GNS News Agency, April 20

Union Public Service Commission, UPSC, Sardardham schemes, UPSC dream, Ahmedabad news, Gujarat news, India news, Indian express, Indian express India news, Indian express IndiaSince its establishment in 1992, the UPSC Study Center at SPIPA has seen a total of 285 candidates qualify for the UPSC Civil Services Examination.Gujarat saw a new record on Tuesday as 25 aspirants from the state cleared the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) examination. Congratulating the candidates, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel sent out his best wishes for their bright future as the state's apex training institute — the Sardar Patel Institute of Public Administration (SPIPA) — in Ahmedabad registered a fresh milestone.

All the candidates were taking coaching from the UPSC Study Center at the SPIPA in Ahmedabad. "With 25 candidates, this year saw the highest number of selections ever in SPIPA's history. Three of them will cer-

tainly get into the IAS (Indian Administrative Service), two into the IPS (Indian Police Service) and perhaps more in other top services," said Mohammad Shahid, Director General, SPIPA.Among these 25 candidates, Vishnu Sasikumar from Vapi in Valsad secured the top rank AIR (All India Rank) at 31. Hailing from Vapi in Valsad, he cracked the competitive exam in the third attempt. Speaking with The Indian Express, Vishnu said, "I have always dreamt of foreign services and chose IFS (Indian Foreign Services) over IAS. He is a graduate in political science and economics from St Stephens College in Delhi. His father is an electrical engineer and mother is a school teacher.Anjali Thakur, 23, hails from Surat. She was born in Muzaffarpur in Bihar and along with her family, she came to Surat in 2012. Her father works as an LIC (Life Insurance Corporation) agent and her mother is a housewife. She nurtured ambitions of getting into the IAS ever since she was in school.

She started looking for guidance to prepare for the UPSC examination when she was in first year of college. She completed her BSc in Mathematics from Surat. "In my first attempt in 2021 I went till interview round; and in the second attempt in 2022, I got through Indian Post and Telecommunication Accounts and Finance Service (IP&TAFS) reserved list. Currently I am undergoing training at AJNIFM-Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management- in Faridabad since the last five months," she asserted.Since its establishment in 1992, the UPSC Study Center at SPIPA has seen a total of 285 candidates qualify for the UPSC Civil Services Examination. The SPIPA "aims to help Gujarat's youth to excel in All India Services Examinations like IAS, IPS, and IFS conducted by the UPSC," as per the administration.

Consider policy for mobile hawkers to sell goods in designated areas, hours: HC to BMC

GNS News Agency, April 20

BMC, Bombay High Court, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation BMC, Mumbai news, Mumbai, Maharashtra news, Indian express newsThe bench will hear the plea next on June 24.The Bombay High Court on Tuesday asked the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to consider framing of policy for itinerant or mobile vendors with no fixed pitch assigned to them to allow vending in designated locations for certain time periods on certain days of the week.The bench noted that cities all over the world have adopted variants of such schemes and certain roads are pedestrianised.

The bench noted that as per the Street Vendors (Protection Of Livelihood And Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, 'mobile vendors' are those who carry out vending activities in designated areas by moving from one place to another place and certificate of vending is issued to them by authorities."Inclusion of such vendors raises a possibility which is unexplored in the city of Mumbai. There is a possibility of framing a policy to allow itinerant vendors with no fixed pitch with licence to allow vending in designated locations but for highly regulated time periods and it could be for specific hours," it said.It went on to observe, "Sometimes it takes the form of a pop up market or a market for a particular day of the week. Advantage of this is that none can claim a right to that space. There may be a right to vend under licence during those times. It rotates from area to area. This is a form of licensing contemplated by the 2014 Act but does not translate in present policy."

The bench also clarified that not all such itinerant street vendors are equal and it was entirely up to the BMC to identify their classes based on goods and services."The protocols for designating hours can be as per need of the locality and class of goods. Residential neighbourhoods may require focus on household items and consumables. In a commercial zone, considerations may be somewhat different. This might serve a dual purpose. It will keep the area clear on most other days. Most modern cities around the world including London, New York, cities in South America and Europe have variants of such schemes," the bench noted.

It added that the BMC can identify where and how long such vending can be permitted. "Many of our public



spaces including Marine drive on weekends are used for common public purposes for a regulated period. There is no logical reason that such a protocol or system cannot be applied to mobile and temporary vending. It will require policy and what is suitable for south Mumbai won't be for other parts of Mumbai. The BMC can decide it ward by ward and locality basis," the bench noted.A division bench of Justices Gautam S Patel and Kamal R Khata passed an order while hearing a suo motu plea, initiated by the HC in February, last year, after two shop owners from Borivali (East) complained that several unauthorised stalls had come up in front of their shop.

Senior advocate S U Kamdar for BMC enumerated a 'constant struggle' faced by the civic body in taking action against large numbers of unlicensed vendors occupying public spaces."What we are advocating here for BMC to frame policy is some form of command and control approach within the frame of statute but distinct from creation of designated hawking zones. Hawking zones may have permanency for utilisation of space and for demarcation of areas. The mobile vendors zone has no such permanency. It is by definition temporary," the bench noted."Public footpaths and public roads cannot be allowed to be taken over by unlicensed vendors on a permanent basis," the bench said, adding that the same was 'inconceivable' as it will impact fundamental rights of pedestrians and other users of the public spaces. It said that due to unlicensed occupation of the footpaths, the pedestrians have to walk on the motorway, risking their lives.

Why is only some parts of Pune receiving rain?

GNS News Agency, April 20

Pune rainfall, Pune rains, Pune summer rains, Pune weather, Pune news, Pune news, Maharashtra news, Indian express newsThe present rains and thunder showers, Kashyapi said, are summer rains but due to the lack of moisture, there is not much downpour.Since the last two days, parts of Pune experienced rainfall accompanied with thunder and lightning.

On Monday, parts of Baner received good rainfall while Pimpri Chinchwad remained completely dry. Anupam Kashyapi, former head of weather forecasting at the India Meteorological Department (IMD), said such incidents are mostly due to local disturbance resulting from high daytime heat load, which causes the formation of clouds. The rains did little to lower the mercury levels with most parts of Pune recording above 40 degrees Celsius on Monday.For the second consecutive day, Shivajinagar's central observatory recorded a maximum temperature of 40.7 degrees Celsius while Koregaon Park was sizzling at 43.2 degrees Celsius, which was the highest temperature in Pune district, according to the IMD. Even Pashan, which is normally cooler than Shivajinagar, recorded a maximum temperature of 40.4 degrees Celsius.While Shivajinagar recorded 5mm rain, Lohegaon recorded 10mm on Tuesday.According to officials from the fire brigade control room, at least seven incidents of tree felling were reported from Baner, Aundh and Pashan areas. No casualties or major damages to property were reported in these incidents.

This high temperature, coupled with some moisture in the air, led to the formation of dark clouds associated with thunder and lightning. "However, there is not enough moisture to cause heavy showers. So, some parts of the city reported rain while others have not," he said.The present rains and thunder showers, Kashyapi said, are summer rains but due to the lack of moisture, there is not



According to officials from the fire brigade control room, at least seven incidents of tree felling were reported from Baner, Aundh and Pashan areas. No casualties or major damages to property were reported in these incidents.

much downpour. Temperature would continue to be high in the daytime and nights would be hot and humid. Slight rains would not bring any relief at night also. If anything, it has added to the discomfort of citizens.

Kashyapi said the hot and humid condition, which is almost akin to a heat wave, would continue to hover over Pune. "If one is not careful and has prolonged exposure to the sun, chances of heat stroke can't be ruled out," he said.Also, the lightning activities in the evening is something one has to be careful about. "The usual warning like not standing under a tree, not to be in an open space etc has to be followed," he said.

Student denied from practising law in Canada after confusion over BCI approval of law college



GNS News Agency, April 20

National Committee of Accreditation (NCA), nca, Mahatma Gandhi Mission (MGM) Law College, Canada, Indian express news, current affairsPrincipal of the college, Sheela Hosnani, said, "We have been paying the renewal fee without fail. But BCI never came for inspection. And now this information has surfaced. Submitting a compliance report will now be our priority." Hosnani also said that she took over as principal only a year ago and was not aware of this issue.Garima Randhawa, who completed her law degree from Mahatma Gandhi Mission (MGM) Law College in Navi Mumbai in the year 2015 and also holds certificate of practice from Bar Council of India (BCI) was in for a shock when she was told she would be unable to practise law in Canada, because technically her college lacks BCI approval.This shocking revelation came to light when Randhawa was denied Certificate of Qualification from National Committee of Accreditation (NCA), which assesses the legal education and professional experience of individuals who obtained their credentials outside of Canada."I completed my law degree in 2015 and subsequently obtained my certificate of practice from BCI in the same year. For some personal reasons I shifted to Canada with the confidence that I can continue working here by obtaining a required certificate from an equivalent local authority," said

Randhawa who was surprised her application was denied.

It stated, "You commenced your studies in 2010 and according to the publicly available list of approved programs provided by the BCI, approval of the University of Mumbai, MGM Law College expired with intake 2008/2009. While you graduated with a Bachelor of Laws, you were not awarded a Qualifying Law Degree recognized by the BCI."After receiving this letter in February, Randhawa approached BCI. "I did not receive a response from BCI. But MGM Law college is missing from the list of approved colleges by BCI. When I approached college, I was told that it is impossible because they have been paying the approval renewal fee, regularly," she said, adding that this is a serious concern for all who graduated from MGM College during that period.

Unaware of the fact that their name is not under the list of approved colleges by BCI, the college administration has now swung into action. According to BCI, the college's last approval was subject to submission of a compliance report on recommendations by the inspection committee from the year 2013, including the requirement of a separate building for the law college.Principal of the college, Sheela Hosnani, said, "We have been paying the renewal fee without fail. But BCI never came for inspection. And now this information has surfaced. Submitting a compliance report will now be our priority." Hosnani also said that she took over as principal only a year ago and was not aware of this issue.Meanwhile, BCI has reasoned that Randhawa was awarded certificate of practice even as the college was not in the list of approved institutions, because BCI Maharashtra awards certificates on the basis of university and not college. Member of BCI Maharashtra, Ashish Deshmukh said, "The certificate of practice was on the basis of the degree from Mumbai University, which is a recognised body. This demands further streamlining of the process and now we will also ask for names of colleges from respective applicants."

After much delay, RTE admissions begin in Maharashtra

GNS News Agency, April 20

After much delay, admissions to over 75,000 schools in Maharashtra for 2024-25 under the Right to Education Act (2009) began on Tuesday. Applications can be submitted until April 30.Under the RTE, 25 per cent seats in all schools are reserved for students from economically and socially challenged backgrounds and applications for the same are invited at the beginning of the year. This time, over 9,72,823 seats are vacant in 75,974 schools in the state.

The government recently amended the RTE rules and regulations in order to exempt private schools from such admissions if there is a government or aided school within a 1-km radius of the student. Though this amendment caused much uproar and speculation about registrations at private schools falling, the drop has been relatively small with around 50 less registrations."All schools except minority institutions and residential schools are supposed to register such students. However, it is the government and aided schools that will be preferred while



allotting seats," said an official from the education department. "Only when there is no government or aided school in the vicinity will a private school be considered."Parents need to keep ready documents like birth certificate, valid address proof, caste or disability certificate, income certificate and Aadhaar card. The process will be entirely online on the official website of the School Education and Sports Department, Maharashtra.

Four-year-old girl gets separated from Dharavi family at rly station, reunited



GNS News Agency, April 20

The girl, Ayat Shaikh, meanwhile, had got separated from the family at Sion railway station from where the railway police located her Saturday.When the police could not find her parents, the girl was lodged with an NGO in Mahalaxmi by the end of the day. The police said that the girl was reunited with her family on Monday."As it was a sensitive matter, we immediately registered a case of kidnapping and started looking for the girl," said senior police inspector Raju Bidkar, adding that the family initially thought that the girl had gone out to play and not returned.The family had gone for an overnight trip to the dargah on Friday. "I returned home with eight children at 1.30 pm on Saturday and because we were all tired, we went to sleep after having our lunch," Shaikh told police."When I woke up in the evening, Ayat went to play outside. However at 1 am on Sunday, my eldest son Yala noticed that Ayat was missing," Shaikh told the police.

The family subsequently looked for the girl at Machchi Galli, 90 feet road and Sion station but she was nowhere to be found.They reported the matter to the police claiming that their daughter might have been abducted. Simultaneously, a team was deployed at their residential area and started scrutinising the CCTV footages.

"We checked the footage of the cameras installed in and around the area, but we could not spot the girl stepping out of the house or the area," an investigator said.With no clue on the girl's location, the police then started inquiring about their return journey from Haji Malang Dargah and in a hope of finding her, they put her picture on different WhatsApp groups that consists of personnel from different police stations, units and branches."After I posted her picture in one such group, which is meant to help trace missing persons, a personnel from Dadar GRP responded that Ayat is with them," a police officer said.Ayat was found by the government railway police personnel at Sion railway station on Saturday afternoon and during the course of the investigation, the Dharavi police learnt that the girl never reached home on Saturday.She got

separated from the rest of the family and was lost at Sion railway station while they were returning home from Haji Malang dargah.The girl's father Saheb Ali said, "They alighted the train at Sion station on platform number 2 and while they were walking towards home, Ayat wanted to drink water. So she went to platform number 1 without telling anyone and nobody realised her absence till late night."A police officer said, "Apart from her name, the girl could not reveal any details about her parents and her address. So they looked for them around the station area and waited for her parents to report but as none of it happened, they took her to an NGO and lodged her there."The father added, "My wife and children were accompanied by other families from the neighbourhood too. We came to know that she was located on Sunday itself, but she was handed over to us on Monday."

SP advises tribals to give importance to education to achieve growth

GNS News Agency, April 20

Adilabad: Superintendent of Police Gaush Alam advised the tribals to focus on studies in order to achieve growth of their families. He along with District Forest Officer Prasanth Patil participated in an Athmeeya Sammelanam programme held by the police department at remote Chimmangudi village in Sirikonda mandal on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Alam underlined the need to have education among the tribal youngsters. He opined that the tribals could achieve development only with the help of education. He told them to avail government schemes meant for STs and to reach higher goals.He asked them to shun bad habits such as consumption of Gudumba or illicitly distilled liquor and banned ganja.

The Superintendent further urged the tribals not to farm wildlife. He said that stern action would be taken against those who set up electrified snares by stealing power from electricity lines. He requested them to utilise their right to vote. Prasanth Patil also spoke. He stated that illegal transportation of timber and felling of trees were culpable offences.

Utnoor DSP Ch Nagender, Echoda Inspector E Bheemesh, Sirikonda Sub-Inspector B Naveen, his counterparts from Neradigonda and Echoda Srikanth and G Naresh respectively attended the programme.

Security tightened after miscreants fire on fleet of trucks in Manipur



GNS News Agency, April 20

The incident took place at around 10.30 am on Tuesday along NH 37, between Shanti Khunou and Kaimai in Tamenglong district, around 160 km away from Imphal. Security measures have been tightened in Manipur after armed miscreants opened fired on a fleet of trucks, including oil tankers, on the Imphal - Jiribam Highway in Manipur on Tuesday. The incident took place

at around 10.30 am on Tuesday along NH 37, between Shanti Khunou and Kaimai in Tamenglong district, around 160 km away from Imphal, police said. Armed miscreants fired at the convoy of goods-laden trucks and oil tankers, and four fuel trucks, including one LPG truck, were hit. The driver of one of the vehicles, Tularam Magar from Irang Part-II village in Tamenglong, sustained bullet injuries to his leg and is currently undergoing treatment at a nearby hospital. Police said that Magar was airlifted from Khongsang helipad. The Manipur government has been bringing goods-laden vehicles and oil tankers via the 'safer', but less-used NH-37 for the past 10 months after ethnic violence erupted in the state. An investigation is underway to identify and apprehend the miscreants behind the ambush, police said.

Meanwhile, after the incident, people could be seen queuing in front of petrol pumps across the state with their vehicles, to stock up fuel. This surge in demand is due to fear of a possible cease-work strike by transporters, although there has been no official confirmation of such strike at the timing of filing this report.

If PM Modi comes to power again, country will go back by 200 years: Stalin

GNS News Agency, April 20

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK leader MK Stalin said on Tuesday that if Prime Minister Narendra Modi comes to power again, the country would "go back by 200 years". Addressing a rally in Sriperumbudur in the state in support of DMK candidate TR Baalu, he said, "If PM Modi comes to power again, the country will go back by 200 years, history will be rewritten. Similarly, science will be pushed back, and superstitious stories will be given prominence. Dr BR Ambedkar's constitution will be replaced by the RSS rules." The DMK leader said that voting is the "only weapon against this".

"A vote for the BJP is a vote for the enemy of Tamil Nadu, a vote for the AIADMK is a vote for the betrayers of the state," he said. Hitting out at the AIADMK, Stalin said that voting for the AIADMK was equivalent to voting for the BJP. "The AIADMK and the BJP were called natural allies, but are now acting as if they are separated. When being asked if the party would support the BJP in case they need majority, Edappadi K Palaniswami did not say that the AIADMK would not support the BJP. 'Wait and see' was his answer," he said. "The AIADMK can never go against the BJP. A vote for the AIADMK is equivalent to a vote for the BJP," the Chief Minister said.

Responding to former chief minister and AIADMK general secretary Palaniswami's claim that he had got several awards from the centre, Stalin said that Palaniswami had got the awards for "being the best of



slaves". "While we are carefully implementing schemes for the development of Tamil Nadu, Palaniswami claims that he has got awards from the Centre. You got the award for being the best of slaves, but we got the award from the people and we will get another award on June 4," he said.

He further said that someone is "cheating PM Modi" by saying that the BJP will win in Tamil Nadu. "In yesterday's interview, PM Modi said that there is an anti-DMK wave in Tamil Nadu. The BJP can never grow in Tamil Nadu, no matter how many years it tries. Tamil people didn't vote for you in 2014 and 2019. Why would they vote for you now? While you are cheating people, someone is cheating you that the BJP will win in Tamil Nadu," Stalin said.

Snake on Japanese bullet train causes 17-minute delay



GNS News Agency, April 20

a passenger alerted security to a 40-centimetre (nearly 16-inch) serpent lurking on a train between Nagoya and Tokyo, resulting in a 17-minute hold-up. Even small delays on Japan's much-vaunted bullet trains are rare, and more unusual still are snakes on board holding up the speedy "shinkansen" services. On Tuesday evening, a passenger alerted security to a 40-centimetre (nearly 16-inch) serpent lurking on a train between Nagoya and Tokyo, resulting in a 17-minute hold-up.

It was unclear whether the cold-blooded commuter was venomous or how it ended up on the train, and there was no injury or panic among passengers, a spokesman for Central Japan Railway Company told AFP. Shinkansen customers can bring small dogs, cats and other animals, including pigeons on board -- but not snakes. "It's difficult to imagine wild snakes somehow climbing onto the train at one of the stations. We have rules against bringing snakes into the shinkansen," the spokesman told AFP. "But we don't check passengers' baggage," he said.

The train was originally scheduled to go on to Osaka, but the company decided to use a different train for the trip, causing a delay of about 17 minutes, he said. Patrols by uniformed security guards onboard bullet trains were scaled up after a fatal stabbing in 2018 on a shinkansen that shocked normally ultra-safe Japan. Additional security was added for the Summer Olympics in 2021 and Group of Seven meetings last year. First launched in 1964, the shinkansen network has never suffered an accident resulting in any passenger fatalities or injuries, according to Japan Railways. The trains can travel at 285 kilometres (177 miles) per hour, with an average delay of 0.2 minutes.

Jailed Myanmar leader Suu Kyi moved to house arrest: Report

GNS News Agency, April 20

Myanmar's junta has moved jailed democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi from prison to house arrest, a source told AFP on Wednesday. The 78-year-old Nobel laureate is serving a 27-year sentence for a host of criminal convictions ranging from corruption to breaching Covid-19 rules. Suu Kyi has largely been hidden from view since the military detained her as they seized power in a 2021 coup, and she has reportedly suffered health problems. A military source speaking on condition of anonymity said Suu Kyi and former president Win Myint had been moved from prison to house arrest. The junta also announced on Wednesday that 3,300 prisoners would be freed as part of a regular amnesty to mark the country's new year festival. It was not immediately clear whether Suu Kyi's move was temporary or represented an official reduction in her sentence. Junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun said that a spell of hot weather had prompted authorities to take measures to protect vulnerable detainees.

Local media reported that during her months-long trial, Suu Kyi had suffered dizzy spells, vomiting and at times had been unable to eat because of a tooth infection. Her son Kim Aris told AFP in February that she was still being held at a specially constructed compound in the military-built capital Naypyidaw.

The compound had no air conditioning in the searing heat and the concrete cells leaked during the monsoon, according to Australian economist Sean Turnell, a former advisor to Suu Kyi's government who was detained there for months. Suu Kyi spent about 15 years under



house arrest at her family's colonial-era lakeside mansion in the commercial hub Yangon after she shot to fame during huge demonstrations against the then-junta in 1988. Wednesday's prisoner amnesty includes 13 Indonesians and 15 Sri Lankans who will be deported, the junta said. Remaining prisoners will have their sentences cut by one-sixth, the junta said in a statement, except for those convicted of serious offences, including murder, terrorism and drugs charges. Myanmar's military ousted Suu Kyi's civilian government in a lightning coup in February 2021, ending the country's 10-year experiment with democracy after decades of army rule. The coup triggered a huge outpouring of public opposition, which the military attempted to crush with force, unleashing a spiralling conflict that has left more than 4,800 civilians dead. The army is now struggling to maintain its grip on the country in the face of resistance from civilian anti-junta fighters and long-established ethnic minority armed groups.

First 7 jurors chosen for Trump's hush money criminal trial



GNS News Agency, April 20

The first seven jurors were selected on Tuesday to serve on Donald Trump's hush-money criminal trial, as the selection process continues to choose a panel of 12 members and six alternates who can be fair to the former US president. The judge also warned lawyers that he would not tolerate any efforts to intimidate prospective jurors after saying Trump, the Republican candidate for president in the November 5 election, was audibly muttering while one of the possible members of the panel was questioned. Trump faces 34 felony counts of falsifying business records to cover up a hush money payment to porn star Stormy Daniels shortly before the 2016 election. Daniels says she had a sexual encounter with Trump about a decade beforehand. Trump has pleaded not guilty and denies an encounter took place. He has called the case, brought by Democratic Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, a partisan "witch hunt" meant to interfere with his campaign to unseat Democratic President Joe Biden.

The hush money case is one of four criminal prosecutions Trump faces, which also stem from trying to overturn his 2020 loss and alleged mishandling of classified information. He has also pleaded not guilty to those charges, though the other three cases may not go to trial before the election. The seven jurors selected on Tuesday included a man originally from Ireland who enjoys doing "anything outdoorsy" and watches both MSNBC and Fox News, a woman who works as an oncology nurse and enjoys taking her dog to the park, and a corporate lawyer who said he does not follow the news that closely. During questioning by Trump's lawyer Todd Blanche earlier on Tuesday, the nurse said she did not

have a strong opinion about Trump. But, she said, "No one is above the law." Jury selection began on Monday, and is set to resume on Thursday after a day off on Wednesday. Justice Juan Merchan said opening statements could take place next Monday but warned that could be delayed.

The process so far has highlighted the challenges of choosing a group of impartial jurors from heavily Democratic Manhattan. More than half the initial pool of 96 jurors called were dismissed on Monday after saying they did not believe they could be fair. In questioning some who remained on Tuesday, Blanche said he did not care about jurors' politics but wanted to get a sense of whether they could be fair to Trump as an individual. "It's extraordinarily important to President Trump that we know that we're going to get a fair shake," the attorney said. The jurors are anonymous except to Trump and lawyers for both sides. Several prospective jurors said they did not have strong opinions about Trump, or said their opinions were not relevant to the case. "If we were sitting in a bar, I'd be happy to tell you," said one jury candidate, a man who works at a bookstore and enjoys going to Broadway shows. "But, in this room, what I feel about President Trump is not important."

In questioning jurors earlier on Tuesday, Manhattan Assistant District Attorney Joshua Steinglass said the case was not a referendum on Trump's presidency. "This case is really not about whether you like Donald Trump," Steinglass said. "This case is about the rule of law and whether Donald Trump broke it."

With jurors outside the courtroom, Merchan told lawyers for both sides that Trump had been audibly muttering and gesturing while one prospective juror was being questioned. The judge told Trump lawyer Blanche to speak to his client about his behaviour. "I won't tolerate that," the judge said. "I will not have any jurors intimidated in the courtroom." Trump has routinely tested judges' tolerance during his recent legal woes, and is currently subject to a gag order imposed by Merchan. It bars Trump from making statements about witnesses, court staff and family members that are meant to interfere with the case. On Monday, prosecutors asked Merchan to fine Trump \$1,000 for each of three social media posts this month that criticised Daniels and Michael Cohen, Trump's former fixer who is expected to be a prominent witness in the trial.

Israel finalises Iran revenge plan, US set to tighten sanctions noose

GNS News Agency, April 20

Israel has finalised its revenge plan to launch a counterstrike on Iran in response to Tehran's direct attack on the Jewish nation, but a suitable timing is yet to be ascertained, according to reports. Meanwhile, the US has announced its decision to impose sanctions on Iran, including on the country's missile and drone program. National Security Adviser (NSA) Jake Sullivan said the US would "not hesitate to continue to take action to hold the Iranian government accountable for its malicious and destabilising actions". "In the coming days, the US will impose new sanctions targeting Iran, including its missile and drone program, as well as new sanctions against entities supporting the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Iran's Defence Ministry," he said on Tuesday. He said the sanctions were aimed to "contain and degrade Iran's military capacity and effectiveness and confront the full range of its problematic behaviours". Here are the latest developments:

US NSA Jake Sullivan also said that Washington hopes that its "allies and partners will soon be following with their own sanctions" on Iran in the wake of the Israel attack. Israeli military chief Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi said the timing of the counter-strike on Iran was not very imminent. "We are enabling a home front policy to at least give citizens this Passover week to live almost like normal,"



he said on Tuesday. Without giving a reason, Israeli government source said a third meeting of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's war cabinet set for Tuesday to decide on a response to Iran's was postponed until Wednesday. Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz said he wrote to 32 countries as part of a "diplomatic attack" asking them to impose sanctions on Iran's missile programme and designating the Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist group. Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani has denied Israeli claims that some of Iran's missiles were launched from his country. "Our position is clear; we do not allow any non-governmental body to use Iraq to bring it back into the battle," he told CNN.

US committee finds China's role in fueling American fentanyl crisis

GNS News Agency, April 20

The US House Committee on China has said that the Chinese government is seeking to fuel the fentanyl epidemic in the United States by subsidizing precursors, or substances necessary to make the drug and other synthetic opioids. China is directly subsidising the production of illicit fentanyl precursors for sale abroad and fueling the US opioid crisis, a US congressional committee said on Tuesday, releasing findings from an investigation it said unveiled Beijing's incentives for the deadly chemicals. China continues to provide subsidies in the form of value-added tax rebates to its companies that manufacture fentanyl analogues, precursors and other synthetic narcotics, so long as they sell them outside of China, the House of Representatives' select committee on China said in a report.

"The PRC (People's Republic of China) scheduled all fentanyl analogues as controlled substances in 2019, meaning that it currently subsidizes the export of drugs that are illegal under both US and PRC law," the report said, adding that some of the substances "have no known legal use worldwide." The report cited data from the Chinese government's State Taxation Administration website, which listed certain chemicals for rebates up to 13%. It additionally currently subsidizes two fentanyl precursors used by drug cartels - NPP and ANPP, it said. According to the Chinese government website, the subsidies remain in place as of April, the report said.

China's embassy in Washington said China was sincere in drug control cooperation with US authorities and had a special campaign underway to control fentanyl and precursor chemicals and crack down on illegal smuggling, manufacturing, and trafficking activities. "It is very clear that there is no fentanyl problem in China, and the fentanyl crisis in the United States is not caused by the Chinese side, and blindly blaming China cannot solve the US' own problem," embassy spokesperson Liu Pengyu said in an email. The U.S. State Department did not respond to a request for comment.

Mike Gallagher, the Republican chair of the bipartisan select committee, told a hearing on the issue on Tuesday that China's incentives suggest Beijing wants more



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fentanyl entering the US. "It wants the chaos and devastation that has resulted from this epidemic," Gallagher said. Fentanyl is a leading cause of drug overdoses in the United States. The US has said that China is the primary source of the precursor chemicals synthesized into fentanyl by drug cartels in Mexico. Mexico's government also has asked China to do more to control shipments of fentanyl.

China denies the allegation, and says the US government must do more to reduce domestic demand. The US and China launched a joint counter-narcotics working group in January, following an agreement between US President Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping in November to work to curb fentanyl production and export. US officials have described the initial talks as substantive, but have said much more needs to be done to stem the flow of the chemicals. The committee also said in its report that it found no evidence of new criminal enforcement actions by Beijing. Ray Donovan, a former senior Drug Enforcement Administration official, told the hearing that the November agreement had not changed China's support for the illicit chemical industry's supply to the Western hemisphere.

Why is India’s affordable housing market shrinking?



Affordable housing, once considered a sunrise segment of the real estate sector following the Union Government’s promise of “Housing for All” in 2015 and subsequent subsidies under the Prime Minister Awas Yojana has witnessed one of the starkest declines in demand and supply over the past three years mainly in India’s urban areas. According to developers the present definition of affordable housing make it unviable for them to supply such homes. The government defines affordable housing as residential units that are 60 square metres at, or under ₹45 lakhs in “metro areas”. Metro areas are, Mumbai, Delhi National Capital Region (NCR), Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Kochi, Pune and Ahmedabad. All other urban agglomerations are categorised as “non-metro markets,” distinguishing them from rural real estate. The size of an affordable housing unit is up to 90 square metres in non-metro markets, yet must be priced at, or under ₹45 lakhs.

Developers cite steep increases in land value, direct and indirect taxes, construction materials and other input costs for their inability to supply affordable housing. “As a result, almost none of the projects in the metros can take the benefit of provisions of affordable housing such as Section 80IBA,” said Kapil Gandhi, Managing Director, Sigma One Universal, a Pune-based real estate company. “Of every ₹100 invested in real estate, 35% to 45% goes directly to the government, which includes heavy premiums, direct and indirect taxes, and GST. Sometimes these do not come with a set-off and other costs. So a good property can not cost less than ₹65-75 lakh in any metro,” Mr Gandhi said. While factors like consumer enthusiasm for home ownership, rising incomes and an urban housing shortage of approximately 3 crore has led to the strong housing sales momentum that India is witnessing today, Vivek Rathi, National Director Research, at Knight Frank India, another builder said a majority of this demand lies in the affordable housing segment, but the supply has been declining over the past two years, he said.

“The increase in home loan interest rate during this period has shrunk house purchase affordability by 15% across all consumer segments. To fund the same house it requires enhanced financial contribution from the con-

sumer. However, the consumer in the lower income segment finds it particularly challenging to increase their initial contribution or downpayment to fund the enhanced mortgage requirements,” said, Mr. Rathi. While the Reserve Bank of India has not increased its basis points in the past four months, bank home loan interest rates have gone up from 7% to almost 9% in under a year. “Besides, increase in housing prices across the country, the lower income segment is both price sensitive and heavily mortgage dependent. The share of upto ₹50 lakh value houses in sales across the top 8 cities shrunk from 54% in 2018 to 32% in H1 2023,” Mr. Rathi pointed out.

Sector stakeholders suggest measures like subsidies, public private partnerships, timely completion of transit housing projects and enhanced credit flow to rekindle demand in this segment. Anuj Puri, Chairman, Anarock Group said, “The demand for affordable housing remained lacklustre in H1 2023 and this trend may continue in H2 2023 as well... The fact remains that affordable housing suffered the greatest impact of the Covid-19 pandemic - and unlike the other segments, it has not recovered in the last two years. With buyers of this segment postponing purchase decisions, affordable housing sales are languishing, and developers have accordingly curtailed its supply,” Mr. Puri said. According to ANAROCK Research, the supply share of affordable housing came down even further to approximately 18% in Q3 2023, against 24% in the corresponding period in 2021.

“If we look further back to the pre-covid period, this segment’s supply share in Q3 2019 was 41%. This decline in the share of supply is largely due to its demand shrinking post pandemic,” Mr. Puri said. During the last Union Budget an association of real estate suggested that the price cap of this segment be raised to ₹75 lakh for non-metro cities and ₹1.50 crore for metros. They also sought to increase the ‘unit with carpet area’ size for this housing segment under Real Estate Regulation Act to 90 square metres in the metros and 120 square meter in non-metros, an increase of 30 square metres across the board. “In 80% of non-metro cities the price of the house for carpet area is about ₹5,000 per sq ft. This puts the price of a home at ₹48 lakh, thereby disqualifying it from the benefits of affordable housing,” Mr. Gandhi of Sigma One Universal said. “Even in the peripheral areas in metros the price is about ₹7,500 per sq ft, which again exceeds the ₹45 lakh mark of ‘affordable housing,” he added. While mass housing supplied by the various government-run state housing boards through the lottery system has declined significantly over the past three decades, they are still sought after by low income families in their attempts to own modest homes. But with the exponential rise of private property developers in the past two decades, who focus on “gated community projects”, mixed housing under housing boards like the Delhi Development Authority, which would have included “affordability”, has taken a beating.

Japan’s Nikkei settles below 38,000 points for first time since February



Japan’s Nikkei share average dropped for a third straight day on Wednesday to end below 38,000 points for the first time in two months as tensions in the Middle East weighed on sentiment and investors took profit before the earnings season heats up.

The Nikkei finished down 1.3% at 37,961.80, its lowest closing level since Feb. 14, and was on track for its biggest weekly loss since December 2022. The broader Topix declined 1.3% to 2663.15.

The benchmark index opened higher but failed to

hold on to its gains as caution reigned, like it has through the week, due to the uncertainty over how the situation in the Middle East will unfold. At the same time, investors appeared to be trading carefully as Japan’s earnings season kicks into gear, analysts said, with key companies such as chip-testing equipment maker Advantest due to report next week. “We see some market weakness this season” as companies publish guidance for the new fiscal year, leading to some profit-taking ahead of earnings, said Kenji Abe, an analyst at Daiwa Securities. U.S. stocks were mixed overnight as Treasury yields continued to climb, giving the Nikkei little support. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said on Tuesday that monetary policy needs to be restrictive for longer, further dashing hopes of significant interest rate cuts this year. The Nikkei bled deep, with only 32 of its 225 constituents climbing, while chip-related companies led the declines. Advantest slid 4.5%, while Lasertec slumped 7.9% and Tokyo Electron fell 1% to become the biggest laggards on the index. Fanuc Corp, which makes factory automation machinery, fell 3.3%, while AI-focused startup investor SoftBank Group declined 1.3%. The few gainers included Resonac Holdings, which jumped 12% after the chemical company raised its revenue forecast for 2024.

Domestic finished steel consumption grows 13% to 136 MT in FY24: SteelMint

Domestic finished steel consumption has registered a growth of 13 per cent to 136 million tonnes during 2023-24, supported by increased demand from automotive and infrastructure sectors, SteelMint India said. The country consumed 120 million tonne (MT) finished steel in the preceding 2022-23 financial year, the research firm said in a report.

“Demand from the automotive industry improved in FY24, along with focus increasing towards the EVs. Infrastructure and construction sectors also showed resilience with investments, mostly supported by government-funded development projects,” SteelMint said. The production of crude steel in the country rose 12.6 per cent to 143 MT over 127 MT in the previous fiscal.

The development assumes significance as under the National Steel Policy, the government is aiming to increase India’s annual steel manufacturing capacity to 300 MT and per capita steel consumption to 160 kg by



2030. As per the SteelMint data, the consumption of finished steel rose 6 per cent to 33 MT in the January-March period of FY24 from 31 MT in the year-ago period. The production of crude steel was 37 MT during the quarter, 12.1 per cent more than 33 MT in the year-ago quarter.

(RBI) ordered the company to stop sanctioning, disbursing and selling gold loans due to “material supervisory concerns” in its portfolio. Since then IIFL’s stock has sunk 30 per cent through its closing price on Tuesday.

The company will sell shares at 300 rupees each, a 29 per cent discount to the last close. IIFL said shareholders will get one rights share for every nine shares they hold.

Fatty liver may up risk of personality disorders by 3x: Study

London: People with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) are around three times more likely to have a personality disorder than those without the disease, a new study has revealed. NAFLD is a global health problem and multi-faceted disease, with the main risk factors being obesity and insulin resistance.

Whilst in its early stages there may be few symptoms, the disease can progress to cirrhosis and liver failure in at risk individuals such as diabetics. Scientists at the University of Birmingham in the UK call for NAFLD patients to be screened for personality disorders. If identified, these mental health disorders should be treated before the patients begin trying to control their diet and exercise more, they said. “Finding an increased prevalence of personality disorders in NAFLD patients is particularly striking — signifying that it’s not an issue associated with all liver disease, but just those with NAFLD,” said Jonathan Catling, co-author of the study.

“Importantly, it appears not to be a general mental health issue, as neither anxiety nor depression were found to be significantly different between the groups — despite both psychiatric disorders often being associated with chronic liver disease,” Catling added. The study, published in the journal BMC Gastroenterology, also notes



that, although simple measures such as changes in diet and increased exercise are proven to prevent disease progression in NAFLD, it is often difficult to persuade patients to follow dietary and exercise programmes. “Our findings suggest an urgent need to examine attitudes towards diet and exercise so that we can better understand how to motivate NAFLD patients and deliver more effective treatment — preventing disease recurrence after liver transplantation,” said Catling. Researchers suggest necessary changes to diet and exercise regime that prevent disease progression into the more serious, irreversible stages of the disease.

Actor Satyadeep Misra shows how his eating habits, cravings have changed; what can you learn?

Over the years, we all have made changes to our diet and how we consume our meals and even satiate our cravings. That applies to even actor Satyadeep Misra, who gave us a glimpse into a tempting breakfast platter while on a Maldivian vacation recently with his wife and fashion designer Masaba Gupta. “10 years ago, I would have dived into this tray at breakfast!” shared Misra on an Instagram Stories picture of croissants and muffins. He then posted another story on what he has evolved to stick to for his breakfast. “Older and wiser now,” shared Misra, alongside a picture showing some fruits, nuts, cheese cubes, and lean protein.



Can we also learn something from this habit change?

Considering many of us tend to forgo our diet when we eat from a buffet, especially an English kind that includes a variety of croissants, muffins, waffles, cream rolls, and pancakes, to name a few, experts urge that there are several “disadvantages” when it comes to starting your day with a calorie-dense breakfast. “On top of it, more sugary dressings or fillings are added to them such as chocolate syrup, maple syrup, honey, jam, etc. Also, consuming calorie-dense side dishes such as sweetened juice or hash brown potatoes further adds to the calories. Those aiming for weight loss should especially refrain from having such types of breakfast,” said clinical dietitian Garima Goyal. Such bakery items, made with butter, also increase sodium in the diet. “Consuming high amounts of sodium is not good for the health and especially for those who have the issue of high blood pressure. Also, this predisposes an individual to the risk of cardiovascular diseases,” mentioned Goyal.

Additionally, most of these foods are made from refined ingredients such as refined wheat flour or maida, refined sugar, etc. because of which they “provide poor satiety value and also cause a sudden spike in blood sugar levels”. Therefore, such foods are not an ideal breakfast option as they will give hunger pangs to you soon after you have eaten them.

So, what is an ideal breakfast?

It should be something nutritious and wholesome as you have to break an 8-10 hour long fast, something that energises your body immediately and also fulfills your appetite. “The plate shown here is an ideal breakfast plate that includes a mix of nuts such as pistachios, walnuts, cheese slices, and lean protein meat sources,” mentioned Goyal.

Why have these?

Nuts — Nuts add extra protein and fibre to the diet and having them in breakfast is an excellent option to provide satiety value to the body. “Having a handful of nuts will stop cravings and hunger pangs and keep you full for a longer period. Also, nuts are loaded with heart-healthy fats such as monounsaturated fats which lower the levels of bad cholesterol in the body. Nuts contain some of the most important vitamins and minerals we eat. Other minerals that nuts contain are the B vitamins, vitamins A, C, and E, calcium, iron, manganese, zinc, copper, phosphate, potassium, and selenium,” mentioned Goyal. satyadeep misra Satyadeep Misra’s diet nowadays

Lean protein — Have lean protein food options for breakfast such as chicken wings, poultry, eggs, etc. Vegetarians can have sprouts salad or fenugreek seeds salad for breakfast too. “Dairy is another protein-packed option you can find in various delicious forms such as Greek yoghurt, kefir, skyr, cottage cheese, and filtered high-protein milk. Dairy also provides vital nutrients such as calcium, magnesium, vitamin D, and probiotics that contribute to a healthy gut microbiome, weight management, muscle maintenance, and heart health. Protein helps in body cell growth and repair and gives high satiety value,” said Goyal. Cheese slice — If consumed within limits, cheese is not bad rather, it is a great option to add protein and calcium to a meal. According to Goyal, the high amounts of antioxidant nutrients in cheese help prevent free radical damage and cell mutations, thus helping retard the ageing process of the cells. “Several studies have also shown that conjugated linoleic acid, a compound found in cheese may help prevent the formation of tumour cells and metastasis of cancer cells,” mentioned Goyal.

‘I hate remakes, especially when they have no purpose’: Salim Merchant

One-half of the singer-composer duo of siblings Salim–Sulaiman, Salim Merchant is not only a well-known name in the Bollywood music industry but has also created waves with his independent creations. Most recently, he collaborated with playback singer Sunidhi Chauhan and others to create a melodious anthem dedicated to caregivers. An initiative by CareGiveShare, ‘a platform dedicated to building a compassionate caregiver ecosystem’, the track is a “musical tribute to recognise and celebrate the spirit of caregiving and our gratitude to the selfless spirit of caregivers around the world.” In an email interaction with indianexpress.com, Salim Merchant opened up about the collaborative song, his creative process, his journey of over three decades, and the burgeoning non-film independent music industry in India. Read the edited excerpts below.



When Nikhil Arora (founder, CareGiveShare) approached me about the project, I immediately connected with it. Caregivers selflessly devote their lives to looking after others, and our collaboration embodies the idea that they also deserve profound care and support. We believe there should be greater dialogue within the caregiving community, and hence we came up with the song Khayaal Rakhna, which literally translates to ‘take care’.

What approach do you adopt when composing a non-film song? How different is the creative process?

Quite honestly, I never look at composing a song differently. The creative process and the love put into any song are pretty much the same. When composing for a film, you have a storyline and characters; similarly, composing an anthem for a topic that is a rare subject requires an equal amount of attention and emotion, in fact, a little more. I realised this even more strongly during the latest project.

Coming to your film-oriented work, how would you describe your journey? Have you reached the bar you had set for yourself?

The day you feel that you have reached that bar will probably become the end of your career! I’ve never looked at music as a profession; it’s been my passion. I’ve never

looked at music as a task. I’ve always looked at it as a form of art. You have fantastic chemistry with your brother, but working with someone can often lead to a clash of ideas — how have you both managed to overcome such challenges?

It’s been 32 years now in the industry. We figured out our roles as composers and as partners. A lot of people know that I handle the melodic side of things and he does the rhythmic side. So, when rhythm and melody meet — it’s music to everyone. Having said that, there are differences, and it is those differences that help us make better music.

A lot has changed since you started in the industry. How easy/difficult is it for musicians today vis-à-vis your time?

Change is the only constant and we’ve always focused on making good music rather than hit music because I firmly believe that when you make a good song, there is a big chance for the song to become a hit! It’s fun to see the changes that happen in the music industry, every two years. It’s great to witness all this and embrace it!

These days, the independent music scene is huge. Though you are a part of it now, did you ever perceive it to be a threat?

The realm of independent music empowers us, as creators, to come together and collaborate for causes that hold deep meaning to us. It’s truly liberating.

Janhvi Kapoor steps out of her comfort zone, but isn’t ready to bow down to ‘dangerous’ personal conspiracy



Ulajh teaser: The patriotic thriller stars Janhvi Kapoor Gulshan Devaiah, Roshan Mathew and Meiyang Chang in key roles. Janhvi Kapoor’s Ulajh follows a young diplomat who gets embroiled in a dangerous personal conspiracy while far from her home turf, at a career-defining post.

“The cost of betrayal is life. Give your own, or take someone else’s,” says the diplomat Suhana (Janhvi Kapoor), before screaming at the top of her lungs and launching an attack on someone with her hairpin. The official teaser for Ulajh is here, highlighting that the movie focuses on a high-stakes geopolitical conflict. The 56-second promo video begins with a tune similar to “Sare Jahan se Accha” playing in the background. We see a foreign country’s skyline, and Suhana enters the screen, engaging in chats with fellow diplomats from other nations. “Suhana, do you really believe that everything you have done has been for your country?” someone asks her ominously.

A voiceover says, “Betrayal, loyalty, etc., are just words designed to trap people like us. These nations, borders, etc., are just lines drawn in the sand. They are not worth anything.” The teaser showcases visuals with heightened tension, where Suhana can be seen unravelling certain mysteries, despite the shock it brings her. But she is not ready to bow down and is determined

to take vengeance for betrayal. Ulajh follows the journey of a young diplomat, belonging to a prominent family of patriots, who gets embroiled in a dangerous personal conspiracy while far from her home turf.

After wrapping up filming for Ulajh, Janhvi penned a long note on Instagram, narrating her experiences and what the movie means to her. “Still having dreams of the world we tried to create. Each film has been a lesson, and it’s story deeply and coincidentally intertwined with things happening in my life. And through Suhana’s journey, and the journey of making this film – my biggest learning has been to allow yourself to love what you do, to identify if you’re doing it for the right reasons, to let go of baggage and external pressures and opinions,” she wrote while sharing a couple of pictures from the film’s set.

“To get off a hamster wheel that leads to nowhere and let yourself walk to your own pace, as long as you believe in where you’re going. Sudhanshu, you have made me believe in myself in a way that I didn’t even know I needed. You made me feel heard, and seen and made me want to fight battles that I never knew I had a right to even be a part of. To see you smile in the face of each obstacle and embrace each challenge with enthusiasm is beyond inspiring.” Shreya Dev Dube (cinematographer), I am so grateful that I was baring my soul to a lense that was being held by you, I felt protected, inspired and sooo much love. You made each moment feel intimate and bigger than any of us at the same time. Everything about this journey has been so healing, and that’s only because of our amazing team!!! I hope you guys feel as passionately as we did, about what we’ve tried so hard to create ??,” Janhvi added. Helmed by Loev director Sudhanshu Saria, Ulajh also stars Gulshan Devaiah, Roshan Mathew, Meiyang Chng, Rajesh Tailang, and Adil Hussain in key roles. Scripted by Parveez Shaikh and Sudhanshu Saria, with dialogues penned by Atika Chauhan, the film will hit the screens on July 5, 2024.

AR Rahman shut down ‘angry’ Subhash Ghai for yelling at him: ‘Sir, you are paying for my name, not my music’

Filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma recently opened up about the time when AR Rahman shut down an angry Subhash Ghai during the making of the film Yuvvraaj. RGV, while discussing how Rahman is “notorious for delaying in giving music,” said that Ghai once lost his patience with the Oscar-winning composer, and sent him a ‘nasty’ letter demanding that he turn in the music that he had been paid ‘crores’ for.

RGV shared with Film Companion, “Subhash Ghai was making a film called Yuvvraaj. Now, Yuvvraaj is Salman (Khan) and Katrina (Kaif). Rahman is notorious for delaying in giving the music. Subhash Ghai was upset about it, and at a certain point, he wrote a nasty, stinging letter to Rahman, saying, ‘How can you delay, my dates are here, Salman’s dates are here, and you are not giving the songs’. Rahman responded (to him) but saying that ‘I am in London, I’ll come to Bombay (Mumbai) on my way to Chennai and we’ll meet at Sukhvinder Singh’s studio and I’ll make the songs for you there.’”

RGV added, “On that day, he (Ghai) went to Sukhvinder, and Rahman was on his way from the airport, and Sukhvinder was making some tune. Subhash Ghai asked him what he was doing, and he said that Rahman called him and asked him to make a song. Subhash Ghai was so angry. He thought because he was putting pressure on Rahman, Rahman was making someone else do the song. He thought that Sukhvinder had told him this by mistake, and then Rahman came and asked Sukhvinder if he had made something. In front of Subhash Ghai only he asked him. Sukhvinder said yes, and made them listen to the tune. Rahman said he liked it and asked Subhash Ghai if he liked it.”

Ghai and Rahman go back a long way. Before Yuvvraaj, they’d collaborated on films such as Taal (1999) and Kiska (2005), among others. RGV revealed



that Ghai was fuming in anger and began yelling at Rahman. He shared, “Subhash Ghai blew up the thing, he told Rahman, ‘I am paying you crores of rupees as my music director and you are making Sukhvinder make a tune for me. You have the guts to say that in front of me? If I want Sukhvinder, I’ll sign him, who are you to take my money and make Sukhvinder do the music for me?’” RGV said that Rahman’s response to Ghai was remarkable. He shared, “Rahman’s answer is one of the greatest I have heard in my life. Rahman said, ‘Sir, you are paying for my name, not my music. If I am endorsing it, it becomes mine. Now you happen to be here, how do you know where I took Taal music from? How do you know whichever music... My driver could have done it, maybe someone else, whatever else.’”

And then RGV revealed the clincher. He said that Rahman ultimately sold the song to another filmmaker, and the song in question was “Jai Ho” from the Oscar-winning film Slumdog Millionaire. Earlier this year, filmmaker Subhash Ghai had said that “Jai Ho” was originally made for Yuvvraaj, but he felt that the song would not fit the Salman Khan-starrer.

Ram Gopal Varma recalls the only disagreement he’s ever had with Amitabh Bachchan: ‘He called me at night and said I was right’

Filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma and megastar Amitabh Bachchan have had a long-standing professional relationship, but the director said that they’ve only ever had one real disagreement in the decades that they’ve worked together. It was during the making of his 2005 political drama Sarkar that RGV and Bachchan see eye to eye regarding a scene.



While shooting for the acclaimed film, which also starred Abhishek Bachchan, Kay Kay Menon and Katrina Kaif, Ram Gopal Varma said that he presented an interpretation of a scene to the screen icon, who didn’t quite agree with him. “In all my years, only once I had a certain thing with Mr Bachchan, where we had a disagreement in interpreting a certain emotion. In Sarkar, when he asks his

son to get out, I had told him that he was upset with him before, that he shouted at him at the dining table and other places. “A man gets angry only when he still has hope, but I think this was the situation where he lost hope in his son. So, it is a clinical decision, you should not have any emotions. He disagreed with me and said, ‘No matter what, a father trying to get

his son away is too...’ the filmmaker told Film Companion. Varma said he “obviously” couldn’t keep arguing with Bachchan beyond a point, so he agreed to shoot it the way the actor deemed fit, but was surprised to get a call from him late night at 11 PM. “He said, ‘Ramu I have been thinking about what you said. I think you are right, let’s please reshoot it.’

Parineeti Chopra addresses ‘pregnancy and plastic surgery rumours’; says she lost work, avoided being seen in public



When director Imtiaz Ali offered Parineeti Chopra the role of Amarjot Kaur in Amar Singh Chamkila’s biopic, starring Diljit Dosanjh, little did she know that the film would be a turning point in her career. While the Netflix film opened to rave reviews, garnering praise for the actors’ performances, Parineeti’s journey to becoming Amarjot, Chamkila’s wife, was far from easy. During the film’s promotions, the actor candidly spoke about how the role demanded her to gain 15 kilos of weight. “Imtiaz sir told me to gain 15 kgs and said there would be no makeup on my face. I had to look my worst in Chamkila and I said, ‘I will do it,’” she told Bollywood Hungama in a recent interview.

While her peers from the industry warned her against gaining weight for the role, stating that the transformation would put an “end to her career,” Parineeti said that she took inspiration from Vidya Balan. “Vidya Balan inspired me to take up the challenge because she did it for The Dirty Picture,” said Parineeti adding, “As I was shooting for Chamkila for over two years, I lost out on a lot of work. I looked my worst and there were pregnancy and plastic surgery rumours, too.”

After Parineeti was seen wearing a loose kaftan at the trailer launch event of Amar Singh Chamkila, several

speculative articles about her pregnancy started circulating. The actor took a jib at the speculations and media and shared a video on Instagram, in which she can be seen wearing fitted clothes. She jokingly wrote, “Entering my fitted clothes era”. The video begins with her sporting a white bodysuit, trousers and a blazer, with the words “Wearing well-fitted clothes today, because when I tried a kaftan dress...” appearing on the screen.

Ahead of the film’s release, the Hasee Toh Phasee actor took to social media to give a peek into her workout routine, revealing that she has been sweating it out at the gym to lose those extra kilos. “I spent 6 months last year singing in Rahman sir’s studio, and going back home to eat as much junk as I possibly could to put on 15 KILOS for Chamkila! (Coming soon on Netflix). Music and Food. That was my routine. Now that the film is done, the story is the opposite. I miss the studio and work in the gym trying to look like myself again. And not like Amarjot ji! It’s been hard. But anything for you Imtiaz sir! And this role. Many more inches to go. #Chamkila #ImtiazAli #Netflix (sic),” she captioned a clip.

The actor also opened up about not making enough public appearances during the time, owing to her increased weight and “not looking like herself.” “I was hardly seen on any red carpet. I wasn’t even papped. Fashion had taken a back seat because I didn’t look like myself. I don’t look like myself even now. But I would still prefer 10 Chamkilas over a red carpet appearance,” said Parineeti. Amar Singh Chamkila, which premiered on April 12 on Netflix, was produced while Parineeti got married to politician Raghav Chadha. “I got married with all the weight that I had gained so whenever I look at my wedding pictures, I will only be reminded of Chamkila.” Recently, Parineeti also received praise from her cousin Priyanka Chopra Jonas, who shared a still from the film and wrote, “Congratulations Imtiaz sir, Diljit, Tisha, and the team. Looks so good.”

Parineeti Chopra says she had ‘no idea’ who Raghav Chadha was when they first met, shares her biggest complaint about him: ‘He knows nothing about films’

Actor Parineeti Chopra has opened up about her marriage with politician Raghav Chadha, giving an insight into what the couple life is like when they are not involved in their respective fields of work. Parineeti tied the knot with the Aam Aadmi Party MP last year, and has never previously talked about her equation with him.

In an interview with Bollywood Hungama, Parineeti quipped that she has become more invested in the world of politics only after marriage, but is still not fully informed. “Ab toh karna padta hai (I’ve got to follow politics now). But my complaint is that he doesn’t follow entertainment. God only knows (what he watched on screen last). And only he knows. I have to cue him. He knows nothing about films. He knows a little about music, but he won’t know if it’s my film song. “So, I have to continuously nudge him, ‘Just pretend like you know’ (laughs). So it’s sweet. But the best thing is that I actually don’t know anything about politics, he doesn’t know anything about entertainment, so our conversations are about life. That’s perfect for me.”

The actor revealed the first time she met Raghav, she had “no idea of who he was, what he was.” Parineeti said that those who follow politics often exclaimed that she was getting married to Raghav, but she would reply, “Yeah, what’s the story here?”

“But now that I know him and his work, who he is and what he does, he’s one of the most impressive people. To be the youngest Member of Parliament. At 35, be part of this party and do the work he’s doing. I feel like,



‘How do you do it? You’re just a baby! How’s this happening?’”

“So it’s nice to be married to someone who’s not from the industry. I’m too much of a Sufi soul. I have a life outside of the film industry. So if my husband had also been from this industry, I’d have gone mad. He’s made my life even more normal. I always want normalcy, and he’s made my life even more normal. So I’m married to the most wonderful man,” Parineeti added. The actor is currently elated with the appreciation coming her way for her performance in Imtiaz Ali’s Amar Singh Chamkila. In the Netflix film, Parineeti is seen as Amarjot, singer wife of the titular musician portrayed by Diljit Dosanjh. The couple was shot dead in 1988.

‘Rajkummar Rao borrowed shirts off others’ backs, Kay Kay Menon didn’t ask for any money’: Hansal Mehta on making Shahid in Rs 35 lakh

After drawing acclaim for his back-to-back streaming series Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story and Scoop, renowned filmmaker Hansal Mehta is now gearing up for the release of his much-anticipated crime thriller The Buckingham Murders, starring Kareena Kapoor Khan in the lead role. Mehta’s foray into showbiz began with TV shows, followed by his film debut in 2000 with Dil Pe Mat Le Yaar!! While subsequent projects like Yeh Kya Ho Raha Hai? and Woodstock Villa sustained him, it was the 2012 biographical drama Shahid that propelled him to success, and more importantly, critical appreciation.

Based on the life of slain lawyer and activist Shahid Azmi, the film, starring Rajkummar Rao, Tigraanshu Dhulia and Kay Kay Menon, earned critical acclaim and National Film Awards for Best Direction and Best Actor for Mehta and Rao, respectively. Mehta recently recalled shooting the movie on a frugal budget. “I was sure I could make this film without spending much. We devised a fresh way to shoot, with the sole aim being that we would complete it no matter what. With a crew of 10 people, including Jai (Mehta’s son), my cinematographer Anuj (Rakesh Dhawan) and his focus puller, Rajkummar (Rao), and one person to help with makeup continuity, we set out. There wasn’t even light equipment,” he said during a chat with Siddharth Kannan.

“We took care of the costumes ourselves. There was a person named Irfan who helped us make 3-4 lawyer suits with Rajkummar’s measurements. In the remaining times, Rajkummar used to come and borrow shirts from people on set. He used to make people remove the shirts they were wearing, give his t-shirt in return, and then wear their clothes for the shoot. All the shirts he wore in the film belonged to someone else. Though I told him that I had enough money to buy shirts for him, Rajkummar insisted on doing this, saying that they would look worn

and aged and would complement the character well. That was some other level of dedication, thanks to which we managed to make the film at a budget of Rs 35 lakh,” he stated. Mehta further mentioned that it took them 11 months to finish shooting Shahid as co-producer Sunil Bohra had been facing some financial issues after investing in many big movies. “He gave whatever he could, sometimes Rs 5 lakh, Rs 1 lakh, or Rs 2 lakh in instalments.”

“We had to shoot in a place called Rakchham, Himachal Pradesh, which was 16 hours away from Shimla. There was only one hotel there where nine people stayed, and the village’s entire population was just 1,200; yet, it was a beautiful place. We first took a train to Ambala and from there took a bus. So, it took us almost 24 hours to get there. Amusingly, we only had a budget of Rs 6 lakh for the 7-day schedule. Now that I think of it, I don’t know how we managed to complete that schedule with that money, with which we had to meet food and accommodation expenses too. But we did. The young activists and members of local parties there were persuaded into doing the roles of supporting characters,” he mentioned. He also spoke highly of the actors who worked in the movie at his request, without expecting anything in return. Mehta praised veteran actor Kay Kay Menon, who played a key role in the movie. The filmmaker recalled that Menon showed up on a day’s notice and didn’t ask for any payment. “I phoned him and explained my situation and told him there was this character in the movie and that it would take only three days to finish that portion. He asked when he should join, and I just casually told him that the shoot was starting tomorrow. Then I cautioned him that I don’t have any money, to which he responded, ‘Did I ask for any?’ He showed up the very next day.”

Not El Clasico or Manchester derby, here’s how City vs Real Madrid has become the new big rivalry in European football



GNS News Agency, April 20

One can’t think of the Champions League over the past five years without thinking of Real Madrid against Manchester City. Such is the nature of sport that big-ticket contests seldom live up to their billing. However, drawn four times during the past five seasons over two-legged knockout ties, this one surely has.Laced with tons of goals – an average of 4.3 per game – and iconic subplots, it’s been the showcase of some of the finest talents in modern football, on the pitch and the sideline.“They have always been spectacular games. Tomorrow will be the same, a spectacular game and very entertaining,” Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti proclaimed on the eve of their latest meeting in Manchester.

For starters, it feeds off the much relatable ‘old vs new’ storyline. Real have been the traditional power-houses of Europe. City are modern-day behemoths, having only emerged as serious title contenders during the aforementioned timeline. There’s also the history and ownership background that differentiates the two. Madrid were nominally linked to the Spanish monarchy in the early 20th century, a nation-state team. City have been vilified for their UAE ownership, benefitting from ‘oil money’. In a more-or-less closed football ecosystem at the top club level, it’s unique among the more traditional rivalries in football.

The two teams don’t play that often but when they do, stakes are high. That the rivalry has blossomed at a time when the two clubs have faced little opposition at home amps up its stature. In Spain, Madrid’s El Clasicos with Barcelona have turned out to be bleak affairs in recent times. In England, City’s success has given them bragging rights over Manchester United, a club with a trophy-laden past.

The two managers are the ones who must be credited with upping the ante the most. One of the best man-managers and problem-solver in Carlo Ancelotti has found his match in nerdy tinkerman Pep Guardiola. It’s how the two have evolved against each other, learning from their mistakes, cancelling each other’s tactics, that has shaped this blockbuster affair over the years.

City started the first leg without a striker before going 1-0 down off an Isco strike. Guardiola then changed tactics and brought on Raheem Sterling from the bench and deployed him as a forward, reverting to a more familiar set-up which ended up paying dividends as Gabriel Jesus and Kevin de Bruyne went on to score in the second half to hand City a win and a slim advantage. In the second leg, which was played behind closed doors at the Etihad due to Covid restrictions, City would again get the better of the transitioning Real Madrid with a 2-1 victory that sealed their place in the quarterfinals. The two errors from Raphael Varane inside his own half that led to goals for City furthermore solidified the belief that this Madrid side needed an overhaul.Under Ancelotti, Madrid had become a reformed team with players like Vinicius Junior and Rodrygo having more experience of playing under the bright lights, in addition to a certain Karim Benzema in imperious form across two legs. The French striker found the target three times in the first leg at the Etihad but City still held a 4-3 advantage going into the

second leg. At Bernabeu, a round of speed chess ensued. Ancelotti used Fede Valverde to accompany Luka Modric as a second number 10. The Italian had benefited from the move all through the season, but Guardiola had done his homework. City countered on the central advantage by offering Madrid’s double pivot too little space to operate in, their far side winger dropping in to curb Madrid’s far side number 10. It seemed like a done deal when Riyad Mahrez scored for City in the 73rd minute. But then, to many a raised eyebrow, City took the foot off the pedal in the closing stages and withdrew Mahrez to bring in Fernandinho as a defensive reinforcement. This, against a team that had already mounted two late come-backs in the knockouts.

Real threw in more attacking numbers, Rodrygo came off the bench and spread the game down the wings as City’s backline grew tired and jittery. The goals conceded were inevitable goals and came in a breeze – two from Rodrygo in the 90th and 91st minute before Benzema sealed the deal with a penalty in the early minutes of extra time.No wonder Pep Guardiola said what he did after the 3-3 draw last week in Madrid. “It’s the Bernabeu, my friend. This game in the first one, two or three seasons, we would have lost 4-1 or 5-1. We were not stable emotionally. In these games, one of the key points is being stable emotionally. It’s fundamental.”

City were definitely stable over the course of the two legs. More familiar with the history of Madrid that Ancelotti had stressed on. Holding a slender advantage after the first leg away, Guardiola and Co went all in at home, blowing away Real 4-0 at the Etihad.Madrid’s wide forays had played a big hand in securing the title last season. It’s a trait some of the best Madrid teams have boasted. City gave a taste of their own medicine to the 14-time Champions League winners. Both Jack Grealish and Bernardo Silva looked extremely comfortable in holding the shape on both flanks. When they did cut inside, the two number eights on respective sides – De Bruyne and Ilkay Gundogan – were open to making overlapping runs. As a result, the Madrid full-backs were, more often than not, in a two-vs-one situation. As for Madrid’s own wide options, the Vinicius outlet was closed down effectively by John Stones and Kyle Walker.

Noticeably, off the little plays of possession they had, Madrid didn’t switch play to the right when City bombarded numbers down the left side. Even a year later, Ancelotti didn’t hesitate in conceding, “We played without courage, without personality.”

The lack of courage and the personality their coach rued was accounted for last week. Real went behind twice, and came back twice. It was a night of breathtaking goals, four of which were scored from outside the box. Here’s the kicker though: the foundation of this year’s first leg contest between the two may have been sown last year, at Bernabeu. The draw in the first leg featured two sweet outside-the-box strikes, as was the case in their first leg meet last year. Speaking to The Indian Express, UEFA A Licensed Coach David Garcia had termed it as a teaser into the future of football. One that’ll require players who can score goals in less space and time.“I believe that both teams and individual players will have to improve their ability to score from farther distances. This will mean that teams cannot simply sit in with eight or nine players in the penalty area because they will have to step out to defend long shots,” he said.“This is only logical. The teams have got better at defending spaces. Not to mention, how well prepared players are to cover larger spaces in a shorter time. All of this leads to teams defending the ‘golden zone’, the area of high percentage Expected Goals in the penalty area, more heavily,” Garcia elaborated.It’s a dynamic cycle. “The more they step out to defend, the more spaces there will be in the penalty area which means different scoring options. A cat-and-mouse game.” And no two European behemoths play it better than City and Madrid.



heartened after the loss. “GG you don’t feel down. We would all be bouncing back. It’s god’s plan for today as Rinku says I think this is what we would like them. We’ll be back with more and better god’s plans.”Buttler notched up his second century of this edition of the IPL and grabbed the headlines from Sunil Narine to help the Royals win by two wickets off the final ball. Earlier in the tournament he did a similar feat against the Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Virat Kohli in the first week of April. Kohli’s unbeaten century was countered by Buttler’s. Tonight Narine’s ton went in vain as Buttler remained unconquered on 107.

time it is more difficult and especially when you are at an advanced age, it makes things even tougher,” Nadal said of his return as quoted by ATP tour.“

I’m going through tough moments but at the same time, when I’m able to be on Tour for a few days and practise with the guys and then be able to compete a little bit, it means a lot to me. Still enjoyable enough to keep going. I’m happy to start with a victory without a doubt,” he added.

Jos Buttler once again shows why he is the master of the chase



GNS News Agency, April 20

Buttler notched up his second century of this edition of the IPL and grabbed the headlines from Sunil Narine, just as he had done against Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Virat Kohli in the first week of April. Kohli’s unbeaten century was countered by Buttler’s. Tonight Narine’s ton went in vain as Buttler remained unconquered on 107.Buttler had gone 15 balls without a boundary at one point but made up for it with a flurry of big shots towards the end. With nine needed in the last over,Buttler refused to take a single off two consecutive balls after hitting the first ball from Varun Chakravarthy for a six. He tried a reverse slog in the fourth ball but it went to the fielder at short-third man. Was there a twist in the taleThree off two needed for a win and two of those runs came as a tired Buttler and non-striker Avesh Khan ran like hares. A single off the last ball, with the entire field in with the exception of long-off, sealed a remarkable win — the joint highest successful chase in the IPL.

Kolkata might have thought they had this in the bag with Narine, Varun Chakravarthy and Harshit Rana taking two wickets apiece but some shrewd hitting from Buttler and the ballistic batting of Rovman Powell — 26 off 13 — kept Royals in the game.Earlier, Harshit had stopped Riyan Parag’s rampage just as the 22-year-old was threatening to take the match away from the home team with his blistering 34 off 14 balls. But as long as Buttler was in the middle, hope remained for the RR faithful.Yashasvi Jaiswal started off proceedings for Rajasthan by minning 11 runs from the first over by Mitchell Starc. But his lack of form would come into the fore soon. A wild swing resulted in a nick to Venkatesh Iyer in the slips as Vaibhav Arora gave Kolkata a much-needed early wicket. Captain Sanju Samson threatened for a bit but was then dismissed by Harshit for 12.“Whenever he comes in, he is hard to read and he’s got that poker face all throughout, we want him to perform the way he has,”

GNS News Agency, April 20

A few mishits turned the tide as Jos Buttler got a few away off Varun Chakravarthy with the asking rate touching 16 runs an over. The ball was sticking in the pitch and the spinners were hard to get away. Conventional shots were not reaping dividends, and it was a leading edge to the boundary that started the turnaround. A reverse-pull and a sweep were followed by another thick edge as 17 came off the 15th over. Still a lot needed to be done, and against the great Knight Riders Andre Russell and Sunil Narine. Rovman Powell took on his fellow Caribbean superstars, in Buttler’s company. The two bowlers went for 33 in the next two overs, and though Powell departed with virtually no batting ability left, Buttler took the team home. He hogged the strike for the last three overs – Trent Boult faced one ball and Avesh Khan none – as Mitchell Starc, Harshit Rana and Chakravarthy went for 18, 19 and 9 runs to seal the highest successful chase in IPL history.

R Ashwin had laid the snare against Sunil Narine. He stationed a point and backward point inside the ring, a long-off and sweep at cover. He would then toss the ball wide on off-side, tempting the Trinidadian, who has a tendency to throw his hands at the ball, with bat far from the body. Narine did exactly that, only that he sweet-spotted the ball so sweetly that it bisected the long-off and sweeper. Ashwin didn’t surrender. The next ball was similar, a touch fuller, slower and not as wide. The response was the same. But this time, Narine lost his shape. But there still was adequate impetus and fortune to pierce the space between point and backward point whose dive ended futilely. It’s the secret of Narine, he

captain Shreyas Iyer had said during the toss about Sunil Narine.

On a humid Wednesday night under the bright lights, Rajasthan bowlers could not rein in KKR’s destructor-in-chief. Narine smashed them all around the field, scoring his maiden IPL century in 49 balls. The third-ever centurion for Kolkata would ultimately fall to Trent Boult in the 18th over after scoring 109 runs.Sunil Narine smashed his maiden T20 century for KKR vs RR in Kolkata on Tuesday. (Sportzpics) Sunil Narine smashed his maiden T20 century for KKR vs RR in Kolkata on Tuesday. (Sportzpics)Early in the match, Yuzvendra Chahal and Ravichandran Ashwin both were pounded by the West Indies allrounder. Chahal was smashed for two fours and two sixes in the 16th over as Narine brought up his ton. Even before that, Narine had signaled his intent, reaching 50 with a six in an innings filled with 13 fours and four sixes.Narine, who after an uncharacteristically quiet start, settled into a groove thanks to the support provided by Angkrish Raghuvanshi. They shared an 85-run partnership and it helped settle the Knights’ nerves. To provide more context to Raghuvanshi’s impact, KKR were 21/1 in the 4th over when Phil Salt departed and ended the powerplay at 56/1.

Raghuvanshi, who scored 278 runs in 2022 U-19 World Cup, has quickly made the KKR No.3 slot his own after an injury to Nitish Rana. The Delhi lad, who had scored a blistering half century against Delhi Capitals, helped the Knights find their way into the match after a glacial start, smashing three fours in the fifth over by Trent Boult and then following it up with another boundary off Kuldeep Sen. The carnage was halted after the youngster was caught by Kuldeep Sen off an Ashwin delivery for 30.Even as Narine single-handedly took Kolkata to a dominant total, a worry for Kolkata will be the lack of consistency from their other batsman with captain Iyer continuing to blow hot and cold this season. He was dismissed for just 11 runs. This takes Iyer’s tally in this season’s IPL to just 140 runs with his highest being 39”. He has scored 0, 39, 18, 34, 39* and 11 with a strike rate of just 125.26, which is far from optimum.Meanwhile, Phil Salt, who had scored 89 in the last match against Lucknow here, could not make an impact. He could have gone for a duck but Parag dropped a dolly. Avesh Khan snapped the dangerous Englishman in the 4th over.Andre Russell scored 13 runs from 10 balls with Rinku Singh and Venkatesh Iyer getting just the last two overs to flex their muscles. But Narine had done enough damage, or so thought KKR till Buttler changed the script.

KKR vs RR, What caught our eye: Sunil Narine gets better of Ashwin, Raghuvanshi flicks stylishly and Ashwin bowls seam-up



The penultimate ball of his last over, R Ashwin, at his wits’ end having toiled fruitlessly, slipped in a seam-up ball. It would have made any good seamer proud

trusts his percentage strokes, not bothering about the outcome. A visibly irritated Ashwin flung the next ball flat, which Narine tried to reverse-sweep but failed to connect.

The young Indian batsman Angkrish Suryavanshi, is getting the raves and he presented two more moments to savour from the ongoing game. Both came against Yuzvendra Chahal, but both were contrasting. In the 7th over, Chahal had ripped a leg break on a length around middle stump and the tall Raghuvanshi stretched forward and almost a la VVS Laxman wristed it to wide long-on. It didn’t look as if there was much power behind it, but the ball travelled far too quickly for Riyan Parag in the deep. Next moment came in Chahal’s next over and this time he flicked a quickish delivery on the off stump line and Raghuvanshi played it very late, almost off the stumps, and forcefully at that with a deft late cut/chop through backward point boundary. He would fall to the fast bowler Kuldeep Sen, slashing a short ball outside off to third man.The

penultimate ball of his last over, R Ashwin, at his wits’ end having toiled fruitlessly, slipped in a seam-up ball. It would have made any good seamer proud. The seam was vertical and bolt upright, from the master of square-seam, and swung in the air and seamed in sharply after landing a trifle wide outside the off-stump on hard length. A bemused Andre Russell coiled to late cut, but the ball hurried him and cramped him for room. All he managed was a bottom edge that hit his pad and fell under the keeper’s boot. The next ball was similar, an inswinger that Russell blocked, as though it were a Mohammed Shami nip-backer.

For the first couple of balls of Riyan Parag’s innings, he tried to move towards the leg-side and flay at the ball. Maybe, he was finding the pace generated by Harshit Rana a bit disconcerting. It was not in keeping with the version of him one has been accustomed to seeing in this IPL, when Parag has shown impeccable class, maturity and hitting power to be one of the mainstays of the Rajasthan Royals middle order. But it didn’t take him

long to revert to the methods that have brought him so much success in the competition. After the first two shots betrayed anxiety with the head and feet all over the place, the youngster soon got himself together and focused on staying still, watching the ball, and trusting his talent and technique to do the rest. His first boundary came via a leading edge past short third, but he was soon finding the middle of the bat. Vaibhav Arora’s pace was used to deflect one to long leg for four before an extraordinary pick-up shot over deep midwicket left a few jaws on the floor. On the last ball of the over, a picture perfect cover-drive provided some tough competition. When Rana came on, he was given the same treatment as Parag first whipped him over the deep square-leg boundary, and then a short and wide one was guided to the point boundary. But chasing a tall total allows no chance to take a breath. Parag had to keep going, and an un-gainly heave brought about his downfall on 34 off 14, but not before providing some more evidence of what he is capable of.