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Passengers stranded as Hyderabad-Bengaluru route Air India Express flight gets delayed

Hyderabad: Air India Express flights between Hyderabad and Bengaluru faced significant delays on Thursday and Friday, causing inconvenience to passengers.

The Air India Express flight, identified as AIX Connect 15 1732, was originally scheduled to depart from Hyderabad at 10:40 pm on Thursday. However, due to a delay, it took off at 10:09 am on Friday. This delay caused the flight to land in Bengaluru at 11:31 am, which was significantly later than its scheduled arrival time of 11:55 pm on Thursday.

KCR to Kick Off Election Campaign under Palamuru Porubata in Mahbubnagar



GNS News Agency, April 26

The upcoming parliamentary elections are set to get even more intense with the arrival of key leaders from Congress, BRS, and BJP in the state. Former Chief Minister KCR is gearing up for a district visit today, where he will be launching the much-anticipated bus trip named Palamuru Porubata.

The bus tour is scheduled to kick off from Jadcharla in the evening, followed by a grand roadshow from Jadchara to Mahbubnagar. The highlight of the visit will be a corner meeting at the clock tower in the district center, where KCR is expected to address a massive gathering of supporters. After the event, the former minister will be staying overnight at Srinivas Goud's residence, where he will hold discussions with district leaders to strategize and mobilize support for the upcoming elections. The bus trip is set to continue its journey to Nagarkurnool tomorrow, where meetings will be held in support of the Nagar Kurnool and Mahabub Nagar candidates. The BRS ranks are actively working towards ensuring a strong turnout for the meetings and rallies, as the parties gear up for a fierce competition in the upcoming elections. The political atmosphere is heating up as the leaders intensify their campaign efforts to secure victory in the polls.

KTR urges support for Padma Rao Goud in Secunderabad Lok Sabha elections



GNS News Agency, April 26

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao appealed to voters of Secunderabad parliamentary constituency to vote for the Car symbol and elect the party candidate T Padma Rao Goud in the Lok Sabha elections on May 13. Presenting Padma Rao Goud as the people's leader, Rama Rao hailed his decades-long dedication to public service. Taking to X on Friday, the BRS working president said Padma Rao Goud, affectionately known as Pajjanna, has a political journey spanning over four decades, during which he devoted his life for public, striving for their welfare and progress.

Over 60 per cent polling recorded till 5 pm in 88 constituencies across 13 states

New Delhi, GNS News Agency, April 26

Over 60 per cent polling was reported till 5 pm in the second phase of Lok Sabha elections covering 88 seats across 13 states amid complaints of EVM glitches and bogus voting in some booths in Kerala and West Bengal. Voters in some villages of Uttar Pradesh's Mathura, Rajasthan's Banswara and Maharashtra's Parbhani boycotted polls over various issues but were persuaded by authorities to cast their franchise. Polling for the second stage of the seven-phase elections started at 7 am and will continue till 6 pm. Several states are experiencing intense heat conditions. Election officials said the highest voting percentage was recorded in Tripura which registered 77.53 per cent polling till 5 pm, while the lowest turnout was in Uttar Pradesh at 52.74 per cent. Polling is being held in all 20 seats of Kerala, 14 of the 28 seats in Karnataka, 13 seats in Rajasthan, eight seats each in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, six seats in Madhya Pradesh, five seats each in Assam and Bihar, three seats each in Chhattisgarh and West Bengal, and one seat each in Manipur, Tripura and Jammu and Kashmir.

Revanth Reddy counters Harish Rao's resignation episode, says it is not in speaker format

GNS News Agency, April 26

In a recent political development in Telangana, a fiery exchange emerged between Congress leader Revanth Reddy and TRS leader Harish Rao over the authenticity of a resignation letter. The confrontation took place during a social media conference where Revanth Reddy accused Harish Rao of staging a facade and questioned the legitimacy of the resignation



letter, pointing out that it did not adhere to the proper format and dismissing it as a mere ploy. Minister

Komati Reddy Venkat Reddy joined in the criticism, lambasting Harish Rao for what he deemed as

theatrical antics disguised as a resignation.

Komati Reddy highlighted the Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's recent announcement regarding the loan waiver for 2 lakh farmers before August 15 and dismissed the BRS accusations as baseless. Komati Reddy further questioned Harish Rao's credibility, suggesting that his resignation efforts were futile and stressing the importance of genuine actions over mere gestures.

Repeated and persistent doubts on EVMs can have contrarian impact of creating distrust: SC



GNS News Agency, April 26

New Delhi: Rejecting a batch of petitions seeking mandatory cross-verification of the votes cast with Voter-Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips, the Supreme Court on Friday said that raising repeated and persistent doubts on Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), even without supporting evidence, can have the contrarian impact of creating distrust and can reduce citizen participation and confidence in elections. In his verdict, Justice Sanjiv Khanna said, "The suspicion that the EVMs can be configured or manipulated for repeated or wrong recording of vote(s) to favour a particular candidate should be rejected." "We acknowledge the right of voters to question the working of EVMs, which are but an electronic device that has a direct impact on election results. However, it is also necessary to exercise care and caution when we raise aspersions on the integrity of the electoral process. "Repeated and persistent doubts and despair, even without supporting evidence, can have the contrarian impact of creating distrust. This can reduce citizen participation and confidence in elections, essential for a healthy and robust democracy."

We will implement UCC in entire country, it is 'Modi ki Guarantee': Amit Shah



GNS News Agency, April 26

Bhopal: Assuring that it is a 'Modi ki Guarantee' (PM Modi's guarantee), Home Minister Amit Shah said on Friday that the government led by the BJP will implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) across the country. Addressing an election rally in Madhya Pradesh's Guna, Amit Shah accused the Congress of playing appeasement politics by encouraging the reform of personal laws.

"Rahul Baba, do whatever you want for appeasement. As long as the BJP is there, we will not allow personal law to be brought in. This country will run on a Uniform Civil Code. This is the soul of our Constitution, we have just brought UCC in Uttarakhand. This is Modi ji's guarantee, we will implement UCC across the country," Amit Shah told the gathering. He also mentioned that the Congress used to threaten that there would be a bloodbath if Article 370 is removed, but not a single incident has taken place in Jammu and Kashmir since its abrogation. "It's been five years since Article 370 was removed... Forget about bloodshed, not a single stone was pelted. This is the Narendra Modi-led BJP government,

Fire Breaks Out at Alwyn Pharmacy Company in Shadnagar

A devastating fire engulfed the Alwyn Pharmacy Company located in Nandigama Mandal Center of Shadnagar Constituency in Rangareddy District, resulting in a harrowing situation for around 50 staff members trapped within the premises. The desperate employees were forced to resort to jumping out of windows in a bid to escape the ferocious blaze. Upon receiving the distressing news, firefighters swiftly mobilized to the scene to combat the inferno and rescue those trapped inside. Efforts are underway to evacuate the victims using ladders, with priority given to those in critical condition who require immediate medical attention.

Narendra Modi to visit AP on May 3,4.



GNS News Agency, April 26

Guntur : Prime Minister Narendra Modi likely to visit A.P. on May 3,4 in A.P. for election campaign, it is learnt. He will address the public meeting in Pileru on May 3. After that he will reach Vijayawada. He will participate in the road show from Benz Circle to Kanaka Durga temple in Vijayawada connecting Vijayawada east and Vijayawada West Assembly constituencies. BJP leader Sujana Chowdary is contesting Vijayawada East Assembly constituency in the coming elections. The BJP leaders are feeling that the road show by PM is useful for his victory. On May 4, he will conduct election in favour of BJP state president, Party candidate for Rajahmundry Lok Sabha constituency Daggubati Purandeswari. BJP leaders are making elaborate arrangements to make Narendra Modi visit to A.P. a success.

Board exams twice a year from 2025: Ministry of Education asks CBSE to work out logistics, no plan for semesters



GNS News Agency, April 26

A view of the Shiksha Sadan which houses the CBSE at Rouse Avenue in New Delhi. File | Photo Credit: The Hindu. The Ministry of Education has asked the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) to work out logistics for conducting board exams twice a year from the 2025-26 academic session, according to sources. The plan for introduction of a semester system has been ruled out, they said.

The Ministry and the CBSE will hold consultations with school principals next month for conducting board exams twice a year, the sources said. The CBSE is currently in the process of working out the modalities of how will the academic calendar be structured to accommodate another set of board exams without impacting the undergraduate admission schedule, they said. "The ministry has asked the CBSE to work on the logistics of how will board exams be conducted twice a year. The board is working out the modalities and a consultation will be organised next month with school principals," a source said. "The idea being explored is to conduct two editions of the board exams at the end of the year from the 2025-26 academic session but the modalities still need to be worked out. However, there is no plan to implement the semester system," the source added. According to the New Curriculum Framework (NCF) announced by the education ministry last year, board examinations will be held twice a year to ensure that students have enough time and opportunity to perform well and get an option to retain the best score.

Heatwave continues in AP, Telangana, warnings issued on Further Rise

GNS News Agency, April 26

The Telugu states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are experiencing an intense heatwave, with scorching temperatures persisting day and night, crossing 45 degrees Celsius in both regions. The oppressive heat has left people feeling suffocated and seeking relief from the relentless weather conditions.

In response to the ongoing heatwave, the weather department has issued cautionary alerts predicting a further increase in temperatures over the next three days. Additionally, they have warned of an uptick in rainfall activity, advising residents to stay vigilant and prepared for potential weather changes.

Over 600 tribal voters in Tripura boycott polls over bad road

GNS News Agency, April 26

More than 600 voters of a remote tribal village in Dhalai district, part of Tripura East Lok Sabha constituency, abstained from voting on Friday due to the unrepaired condition of a 7-km village road, an election official said. The villagers, numbering around 900, have been persistently demanding repairs for months, emphasising the road's critical importance to their community, the official added.

"As per schedule, the polling team reached Sadai Mohan Para polling station under Raima Valley Assembly constituency in Tripura East Lok Sabha seat," the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) of Gandacherra (Raima Valley), Arindam Das, told PTI over the phone. The villagers are standing outside the polling booth but not entering it to cast their votes as they are protesting against government apathy, the official said.

"We are hopeful the villagers will join the festival of democracy, and the administration will look into their demands seriously", he said.

The villagers have also complained about the drinking water problem, Das said, adding that after getting the report, a team of officials rushed to Sadai Mohan Para to persuade the voters to exercise their democratic rights.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Tech-savvy soldiers

In an era defined by rapid technological advancements and evolving security challenges, the Army's proactive shift towards technology absorption marks a pivotal moment in its modernisation journey. Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande's announcement on Wednesday underscores the imperative need for equipping soldiers with the skills to leverage emerging technologies effectively. The integration of simulation and virtual reality training modules into the Army's curriculum signifies a departure from traditional methodologies towards immersive, tech-driven learning experiences. This move not only enhances the technical acumen of soldiers but also cultivates a culture of innovation and adaptability within the ranks. Additionally, the incorporation of cyber specialists and linguists into the Territorial Army underscores the recognition of the multi-dimensional nature of modern warfare. As cyber threats become increasingly all-pervasive, empowering soldiers with expertise in this domain is crucial to safeguarding national security interests. Amidst geopolitical tensions, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, on the eve of Independence Day last year, asserted that world-class equipment and training would be provided to the armed forces. The emphasis on modernisation and innovation resonates with the Army's strategic goal of countering emerging threats. Significantly, the Army is embracing cutting-edge technologies which not only enhance operational efficiency but also enable it to counter hybrid threats and grey-zone aggression. However, this transition entails several challenges. Investment in training holds the key to a seamless integration of technology into the existing operational framework. Its success depends on the Army's ability to stay true to its core principles of courage, integrity and dedication to national defence even as it embraces modern warfare techniques.

School jobs scam: High Court asks Bengal to decide on granting sanction to prosecute accused by May 2



A division bench said that in the event the chief secretary fails to comply with this order, the court will be constrained to initiate appropriate proceedings against him

GNS News Agency, April 26

The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday directed the West Bengal chief secretary to decide by May 2 on grant of sanction for prosecution of former public servants arrested by CBI in the 2016 school jobs case, which saw the cancellation of over 25,500 appointments the day before. A division bench said that in the event the chief secretary fails to comply with this order, the court will be constrained to initiate appropriate proceedings against him. Another division bench of the high court on Monday cancelled 25,753 appointments of teaching and non-teaching staff in West Bengal government-sponsored and -aided schools, declaring null and void the recruitment process of the State Level Selection Test (SLST) 2016 by the School Service Commission.

Noting that the application by CBI for sanction of prosecution of these persons has been pending since 2022, a division bench presided by Justice Joymalya Bagchi directed the chief secretary to decide on sanction of prosecution of the accused persons, who were arrested two years back, by May two. Maintaining that grant of sanction is a stepping stone to the commencement of trial, the court said that it is the requirement of law that the sanctioning authority ought to take a prompt decision in the matter.

"While taking a decision, he should not be over-awed or influenced by the position, authority or power of the accused persons and take an independent decision on the matter," the division bench, also comprising Justice Gaurang Kanth, said. The court made the order during the hearing of bail prayers by the accused persons, who include Partha Chatterjee, a former education minister of the state. Stating that they have been in custody for almost two years but the case could not progress due to absence of sanction for prosecution of some of the then public servants, their lawyers prayed that they be released on bail owing to the delay. The CBI had stated before the court during the previous hearing of the matter that the governor of West Bengal had granted sanction to prosecute Chatterjee.

The division bench was hearing the bail prayers of Chatterjee, former secretary of West Bengal School Service Commission Ashok Saha, ex-SSC chairman Subires Bhattacharyya and former chairman of SSC's advisory committee Santi Prasad Sinha, who are in custody for about two years in connection with the case. The court questioned whether these accused persons are so important that they can stall the sanction process for one and half years. The bench on April 9 also expressed its displeasure over the delay in grant of sanction and directed the chief secretary to take a decision by April 23. On Monday, a division bench presided by Justice Debassu Basak, in its judgement on the school jobs matters had noted the delay in granting sanction for prosecution of the accused persons. The bench had said that it was refraining from issuing any directions to the chief secretary in this regard since a coordinate bench had issued orders for the expeditious disposal of the application for sanction.

Congress leader Binay Tamang seeks votes for BJP Darjeeling candidate Raju Bista, suspended



GNS News Agency, April 26

Just three days before the election in the Darjeeling Lok Sabha constituency, the Congress on Tuesday suspended for six years Binay Tamang, who had joined the party after leaving the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha five months ago, after he openly supported BJP candidate and MP Raju Bista. Congress sources said that Binay Tamang had joined the party hoping to get the poll ticket for Darjeeling, where the party has fielded Munish Tamang against Bista, the BJP's sitting MP, and TMC

candidate Gopal Lama.

"I am still with the Congress. But the BJP will win here. We can sense it here. We do not support Munish Tamang as none of the Congress leaders here were consulted on his candidature," Binay Tamang said. "I extend my sincere support to BJP Darjeeling constituency candidate Raju Bista for ensuring constitutional security and justice for the people of Darjeeling Hills, Siliguri Terai and Dooars. I humbly request all my respected fellow citizens of Darjeeling Hills, Siliguri Terai, my associates, supporters, well-wishers, friends, relatives and families to cast their precious votes for the BJP candidate Raju Bista on the lotus symbol." After his statement, the Congress suspended him for six years. "For anti-party activity, he was suspended for six years," Congress spokesperson Soumya Roy said.

BJP leader Amit Malviya criticised the Congress over the decision. "The Congress has expelled West Bengal Congress State General Secretary Binoy Tamang for six years, after he extended support to Raju Bista, BJP Darjeeling LS candidate, instead of the official INC candidate. How many people will Congress expel for supporting Prime Minister Modi?" he said.

Judges must act with dignity, shouldn't indulge in behaviour affecting image of judiciary: Bombay HC

GNS News Agency, April 26

Bombay High court The bench added, "Judges while discharging their functions exercise the sovereign judicial power of the state and hence standards expected to be maintained are of the highest nature. The Bombay High Court on Tuesday observed that judges and judicial officers must act with dignity and should not indulge in a behaviour affecting the image of the judiciary. With the observation, the court dismissed a plea by a civil judge junior division, challenging the January 2022 order of the state law and judiciary department, directing his removal from judicial service. The petitioner had sought his reinstatement in the service with consequent benefits. The department had passed an order after a report was submitted by the principal district and sessions judge of Nandurbar.

A division bench of Justices Atul S Chandurkar and Jitendra S Jain passed a judgement in a plea by Aniruddha Ganesh Pathak (22) who was removed from the post citing alleged improper behaviour and coming to court in an inebriated state on several occasions. The bench held that "the impugned order cannot be said to be perverse or without any independent application of mind". "It is a universally accepted norm that judges and judicial officers must act with dignity and must not indulge in a conduct or behaviour which is likely to affect the image of judiciary or which is unbecoming of a judicial officer. If members of the judiciary indulge in a behaviour that is blameworthy or which is unbecoming of a judicial officer, the Writ Courts are not expected to intervene and grant relief to such a judicial officer," the bench observed. The bench referred to a past judgement of the Supreme Court in Nawal Singh vs State of Uttar Pradesh case, which held that judicial service cannot be treated as a service in the sense of employment. The bench added, "Judges



while discharging their functions exercise the sovereign judicial power of the state and hence standards expected to be maintained are of the highest nature. Pathak was appointed as a civil judge junior division on March 19, 2010. During his tenure, he was posted at various districts till the date of his removal. Allegations were made against him for improper behaviour while presiding court, not following court timings and arriving in court in an inebriated state.

On February 17, 2017, the principal district and sessions judge, Nandurbar, filed a report to the Registrar General of the Bombay High Court on Pathak's behaviour. In May 2017, the Jalgaon district judge, filed a discreet enquiry report in respect of complaints against the petitioner. In 2018, the officials of Maharashtra Judicial Academy also filed a report on Pathak's alleged inappropriate behaviour. Pathak was in January, 2022 informed about an impugned order directing his removal from the service under Maharashtra Civil Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, which prompted him to approach HC challenging the same.

'BJP tried to kill Abhishek': Mamata Banerjee's big claim in Birbhum and Burdwan rally



GNS News Agency, April 26

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday claimed that the BJP tried to kill her nephew and Trinamool Congress's second-in-command Abhishek Banerjee. During an election campaign at Birbhum's Tarapith, Banerjee said, "One of the gaddars (traitors) in the BJP said a bomb will explode. If you have a grudge against me, you can kill me with a bomb. You even tried to kill Abhishek but we came to know in advance. They even conducted a recce of his house, called him on Facetime and sought an appointment." She added, "Had Abhishek given him (the alleged perpetrator) time, he would have shot and fled." On Monday, Kolkata Police said they have arrested a person from Mumbai for allegedly conducting a recce of Abhishek Banerjee's residence and offices and was "planning something big" against him.

The police said the accused, identified as Rajaram Rege, was linked to the 26/11 attack in Mumbai. He has been brought to Kolkata and booked under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, including criminal conspiracy and criminal intimidation. Continuing her salvo on the BJP, Mamata Banerjee said, "These people want to kill everyone or put them behind bars for speaking against them. If you are confident that you will get votes, then what is the need to terrorise people?"

Banerjee also said, "They used to keep Kesto (Anubrata Mondol) in house arrest every time during the elections but could they stop people from voting? The people of Birbhum will always cast their votes." The Chief Minister also reacted to the Calcutta High Court order on the teachers' recruitment scam and said, "If all teachers are terminated, then who will take classes in the schools?" She added, "Will you take responsibility if a candidate commits suicide? Don't worry, I will fight the case as best as I can. Teachers, who worked for eight years, have they not developed social respect? From where will we recruit so many teachers? Will the children come to school (if there are no teachers)? Will the BJP, RSS people go and teach?" On Monday, Banerjee had criticised the High Court order and had termed it "illegal" during her election campaign rally at Raiganj. "The court

verdict cancelling all recruitments is illegal. We stand by those who lost jobs. We will ensure you get justice, and challenge the order in a higher court," she had said. A division bench of the Calcutta High Court on Monday cancelled the illegal recruitment of 25,753 teachers and non-teaching staff by the 2016 School Service Commission (SSC), ordering them to return their salaries with interest. The court also ordered fresh recruitment against the posts within 15 days. The bench led by Justice Debansu Basak observed that the OMR sheets of Group C, Group D, Class IX and X were manipulated in 2016, making all the recruitments illegal. It added that the names of those who were recruited were included in the panel illegally. "We have no other way but to cancel the whole recruitment panel," Justice Basak said.

BJP complains against Assembly Speaker with ECI



GNS News Agency, April 26

Hyderabad: The BJP on Tuesday lodged a complaint against Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Rao with the Election Commission of India (ECI) for violating the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). In its complaint, BJP State general secretary G. Premender Reddy stated that the Speaker campaigned for Chevella Congress candidate G. Ranjith Reddy on April 20 in violation of the MCC. The office of the Speaker of the State Assembly was a constitutional post and was under obligation to maintain a neutral stance and decorum between parties. By campaigning for the Congress candidate, the Speaker had violated the MCC, he said. As per Para-II of Chapter-IX of Parliamentary Traditions and Procedures Part-1, the moment a person becomes Speaker, he becomes completely detached from political activities and he does not belong to any political party, he pointed out, urging the ECI to take action against the Speaker and to restrain him from further campaigning.

Dombivli man arrested while smuggling gold worth Rs 1.45 crore



GNS News Agency, April 26

Mumbai customs gold When the passenger was checked, small gold bars were found concealed under the clothes he was wearing. (X/ airnewsalerts) The air intelligence unit (AIU) of Mumbai Customs Tuesday arrested a 49-year-old man at the Mumbai Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport while he was allegedly trying to smuggle gold worth Rs 1.45 crore from Malaysia to India.

According to the sources, the AIU officials on suspicion of smuggling intercepted a passenger, Jayesh Shah. When the passenger was checked, small gold bars were found concealed under the clothes he was wearing. The AIU officials said they have recovered gold bars weighing around 2.22 kg from Shah, a Dombivli resident. The seized gold is worth Rs 1.45 crore. Shah was subsequently placed under arrest under relevant sections of the Customs Act. During questioning, Shah admitted that he was smuggling gold from Malaysia to India, another source said. Officials are trying to extract information from him about his associates and are also checking if Shah had smuggled gold in the past as well. The city airport customs recently stated that it seized over 6.815 kg gold valued at Rs 4.44 crore and Diamonds valued at Rs 2.02 crore between April 19 and 21 in 13 cases.

Amit Shah to Bengal voters: You gave us 18 seats, we gave you Ram mandir; now give us 35, we will drive away infiltrators



Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Tuesday in West Bengal that if the BJP got 35 Lok Sabha seats in the state, it would drive away "all infiltrators".

GNS News Agency, April 26

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Tuesday in West Bengal that if the BJP got 35 Lok Sabha seats in the state, it would drive away "all infiltrators". "Aap ne humein 18 seats di or humne udhar Ram mandir ki shapna ki; aap humein 35 seats dijiye, Ram Bangla se sare ghuspathiyon ko hata denge (You gave us 18 seats and we gave you Ram mandir, you give us 35 seats this time and Ram will drive away all the infiltrators from Bengal)," Shah said while campaigning for Kartik Chandra Pal, the BJP's candidate in Uttar Dinajpur district's Raiganj constituency.

Shah said the BJP has set a target of winning 35 seats for the party's Bengal leaders. He appealed to the voters of Raiganj to help meet the target. "Didi (TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee), keep your ears open and listen: the people of Bengal have become alert and we will win 30-35 seats from here," he said. Shah said the TMC supremo did not want the infiltration issue to be solved. "On one hand you are letting in infiltrators and on the other hand you are opposing the CAA, which is about giving citizenship to Hindu, Jain and Sikh refugees," he lashed out at Banerjee.

Shah accused Banerjee's government of depriving people of development. He said the central government wanted to build an All India Institute of Medical Sciences in north Bengal but "Didi did not let it happen". Towards the end of the speech that lasted about 20 minutes, he said, "The AIIMS was planned for Raiganj. Mamata didi stopped the BJP. There is no AIIMS in the whole of north Bengal. If Narendra Modi wins 30 seats, a separate AIIMS will be built for north Bengal." The AIIMS was to be built in Raiganj. Later it was shifted to Kalyani in Nadia district.

Shah said that if Modi becomes prime minister for a third time, infiltration-related problems will be solved permanently. The Union minister also took a dig at the chief minister over the Calcutta High Court's cancellation of the recruitment of more than 25,000 candidates following corruption charges. "Corruption is evident in Bengal. The TMC leaders who had kutcha houses and cycles now own four- or five-storey buildings. It is under Mamata Banerjee's rule where jobseekers are paying Rs 15 lakh and central agencies recover Rs 50 crore from a minister like Partha Chatterjee. Do you expect Mamata Banerjee's government to give you jobs? All corruption will be stopped if the BJP comes to power. Can Mamata Banerjee stop all this?" he said. Shah also criticised Banerjee over the violence and allegations of sexual harassment and land grabbing in Sandeshkhali. He said, "If you want to stop infiltrators and corruption, there is no alternative to the BJP." In the second phase of the Lok Sabha elections, three constituencies in the state—Darjeeling, Raiganj and Balurghat—will vote on Friday (April 26). The BJP won the Raiganj seat for the first time in 2019, when Deboshree Chowdhury was the candidate.

Why Himanta Biswa Sarma says 'I love you' to Muslim voters



GNS News Agency, April 26

It's around 11 am in Rupahi, a small rural block in Assam's Nagaon district. With an estimated 95 per cent Muslim population, the village is buzzing with unprecedented energy. Most, young and old, men and women, are rushing to the rally spot where Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma is supposed to address them. Some overtly enthusiastic ones have surrounded the chopper in which Sarma lands. For a BJP Chief Minister, electorally, this is a hostile territory, particularly two days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi criticised his predecessor Manmohan Singh for allegedly saying Muslims had the first right over the country's resources. But not for Sarma.

He hops out of the chopper and runs to the barricade separating him from the nearly 10,000 people assembled there to cheer for him and the BJP Lok Sabha candidate from Nagaon Suresh Bora. The 53-year-old Chief Minister, who had returned from a campaign in Kerala around midnight, springs from his groggy mood, jumps the barricade, and starts mingling with the crowd, who get into a frenzy. They hug him, touch him, shake hands with him, and in the process, leave many scars on his arms. The mood is already upbeat, showing no sign of the "silent election" indicated by the low turnout in the first phase of the election held on April 19. The party's campaign song, "Akou Ebar Modi Sarkar" (once again Modi government), is playing at full blast. After the security entourage persuade Sarma to come out of the "public embrace", the Chief Minister takes the center stage, flanked by two huge Modi cutouts, and starts dancing and singing like a rockstar. The crowd erupts in joy, claps, dances, and sings along. The visuals are incredible. Amid talks of widening communal rift between Hindus and Muslims under the Modi government, here is Sarma, known for

his diabolic statements against the Muslim immigrants in Assam, engaging with Bangla-speaking Muslim voters as if they both belonged to each other for ages. There is no "Jai Shri Ram" slogan but with Sarma, the crowd chants "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" and "Modi Zindabad".

The same scene is repeated in neighbouring Samaguri, another Muslim-majority area, where the assembly has been with the Congress party. In 2016, Sarma could not campaign here as his vehicle was attacked by the crowd and he had to make a retreat. This time the crowd literally greeted him with flowers, as if he was their long-lost beloved returning home. It's because they are with their 'Mama', as Sarma is known across the state, who has delivered them jobs, roads, and a sense of freedom from local corruption. The Chief Minister engages in a conversation asking them if he has delivered the goodies promised by the Modi government, and hears a resounding 'yes'.

He promises more -- a cold storage, a hospital, and a stadium. Come September, after the monsoon, he will take a bike ride to inspect the village roads, he announced. And then the last promise: he will free them from the corruption of local politicians as he would monitor the geo-tagging of PM Awas Yojana himself from now on.

The people trust these promises as he has a delivery track record in Assam -- most of them have got the benefits of welfare schemes without greasing the palms of middlemen. That's why, in Rupahi, they are happy when he asks them to start physical training to prepare for the Assam police recruitment test to be held in July. "The stadium will help you train," says Sarma adding a local context to his promise. That's then they break barricades again, reaching near the fragile stage, and the Chief Minister obliges, shaking hands with them, at times throwing flying kisses and says, "I love you." His close aides say there is no need to rake up any religious or communal issue or even make any conciliatory statements to these Muslim voters. It's an experiment based on the confidence of Sarma's performance as CM in the last three years. "In the last three years, most of these poor Muslims have got benefits from welfare schemes that they never got during previous regimes. The middlemen cornered those," says one of Sarma's aides. That's a surprisingly new experiment coming from a politician who has, in the past, declared that he did not need Miya (Bangla-speaking Muslim immigrants) in Assam. If it succeeds, it may provide a healthy campaign paradigm for the rest of India.

Why RJD's Tejashwi is seeking votes for NDA in Purnia



GNS News Agency, April 26

Politics is volatile, where opponents can morph into allies and allies into opponents. While Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has allied with the opposition NDA, the electoral battle in Bihar's Purnia is a testimony of friends who turned foes. Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav, at a public rally in Bihar's Purnia, urged the crowd to support his party's candidate, yet in a twist, he sought votes for the Bharatiya Janta Party-led NDA candidate too. "Choose NDA (bloc), and if you do not choose INDIA's Bima Bharti, then choose the NDA. Saaf baat! Saaf baat!" urged the former Deputy CM, at a rally in Gerabari (Katihar) on Monday.

While he sought votes for RJD candidate Bima Bharti, Tejashwi asked the voters to vote for the Janta Dal United candidate, Santosh Kushwaha, in case they didn't vote for his party's candidate. The sole reason for Tejashwi's unusual request was Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav. East Bihar's Purnia will witness a three-cornered clash with RJD's Bima Bharti pitted against Janata Dal (United) incumbent MP Santosh Kushwaha and the independent candidate Pappu Yadav, who locals say, has a good chance of emerging victorious on June 4.

Pappu Yadav, once an RJD leader, returned to the Purnia seat and made the contest one of the hot seats of the Lok Sabha elections of 2024. While Tejashwi did not take the name of the JDU candidate, Santosh Kushwaha and Pappu Yadav, his call was loud and clear. That the target was Pappu Yadav was anyone's guess. It was obvious that the desperation to make things difficult for Pappu Yadav is what prompted Tejashwi Yadav to seek votes for the NDA. Tejashwi Yadav also alerted the voters to not be deceived by anyone, as the election was not about "one person", but ideologies, of "INDIA and NDA". Purnia, the Seemanchal seat, otherwise a politi-

cally quiet constituency, is now one of India's hottest seats.

JD(U) Santosh Kumar Kushwaha, a two-time MP, is facing a wave of anti-incumbency for several unfulfilled promises and allegations of inaccessibility in Purnia. RJD's Bima Bharti from the Extremely Backward Classes (EBC) is the INDIA bloc candidate pitted against Kushwaha. However, the focus isn't on the two as Pappu Yadav made a dramatic entry after being denied an RJD and a Congress ticket. A rebellious Pappu Yadav filed his nomination as an Independent.

Pappu Yadav, the former Purnia MP from the 1990s, is back in the poll fray after almost 20 years and the locals are seen supporting him, owing to his proactive relief work carried out during the Covid pandemic and the Bihar floods. Reacting to the Tejashwi Yadav statement, Pappu Yadav said, "This is not just an MP election. The people of Purnia will write history this time." Pappu Yadav, who was eyeing a Congress ticket from Purnia, had earlier blamed RJD Supremo Lalu Prasad for the rift in the 'Grand Alliance' and alleged, "I never wanted the constituents of the 'INDIA' bloc to unite in Purnia, West Bengal and Kerala." Pappu Yadav had also alleged injustice to him and said, "Whenever I contested elections, he opposed me. I have been unable to understand his hatred towards me. They created obstacles." Pappu Yadav, who has been to the Lok Sabha for various seats, in various affiliations, like Samajwadi Party, Lok Janata Party, RJD candidate, and as a candidate, has had a complex relationship with Lalu Prasad Yadav. However, his political career has been marked by several controversies, including his involvement in the 1998 murder of CPI(M) firebrand leader and Purnia MLA Ajit Sarkar. From saving the Lalu Yadav government from losing the majority in the Bihar Assembly to now, the RJD staking it all to defeat him at Purnia, the relationship has gone downhill, from that of cooperation and conflict. Pappu Yadav was with Lalu's RJD till 2014, but he was expelled from the party due to anti-party activities. After his expulsion, he formed the Jan Adhikar Party in 2015, with an agenda against the alliance of Nitish Kumar and Lalu Prasad Yadav. Sidelined, Pappu Yadav joined the Congress party and merged his Jan Adhikar Party with the Grand Old Party. Ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, Pappu, whose wife Ranjeeta Ranjan is a Congress MP, also tried to get a Congress ticket. The RJD, instead, gave the ticket to Bima Bharti, a JD(U) turncoat, who held the sugarcane ministry in the Nitish Kumar cabinet. Pappu Yadav has also sought the blessings of Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi, and he expressed his support for the Congress and the RJD, stating that together, they would win the 2024 and 2025 Bihar elections.

Karnataka man hires goons to kill family, plan goes wrong

GNS News Agency, April 26

A man in Karnataka's Gadag area hired goons to kill his father, stepmother and stepbrother. However, the plan went wrong as the goons mistakenly killed his relatives instead. Vinayak Bakale, 31, a real-estate agent, had made a deal of Rs 65 lakh with seven people to murder his father Prakash Bakale, stepmother Sunanda, and half-brother Karthik Bakale. Vinayak and the seven goons have been arrested. The killers planned to barge inside their home and murder the trio. While they managed to kill Karthik, they also ended up killing some guests at the home, who had come after attending a wedding.

The deceased have been identified as Karthik (27), Parashuram Hadimani (55), Lakshmi Hadimani (45), and Akanksha Hadimani (16). According to the police, Vinayak and his father had frequent fights over property-related issues.

Prakash had named many of his properties after Vinayak in the past. But in the last five or six months, Vinayak sold the properties without consulting his father. This led to their relationship taking a downturn. Also, Karthik, Vinayak's step-brother, was an equal stakeholder in Prakash Bakale's properties, which could also have been a trigger behind Vinayak's action, the police said. The goons hired by Vinayak have been identified as Fairoz (29), Jishan (24), Sahil (19), Sohail (19), Sultan Sheikh



(23), Mahesh Salunke (21), and Waheed Bepari (21). Vikas Kumar, Inspector General of Police of Northern Range, said, "According to their deal, Rs 65 lakh was promised to the contract killers through Fairoz. We secured them (accused) in 2-3 days."

Siddaramaiah tells Congress corporator 'very sorry' over daughter's murder



GNS News Agency, April 26

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday spoke to Niranjan Hiremath, a Congress corporator whose 23-year-old daughter was stabbed to death by a former classmate inside her college campus in Hubballi, saying that he was "sorry" and assured "we will be on your side". On April 18, the accused Fayaz attacked Neha, a Masters of Computer Applications (MCA)

student, inside the premises of the BVB College campus. CCTV footage of the incident captured Fayaz stabbing Neha multiple times before fleeing the spot.

Fayaz, also 23, has been arrested. The college authorities and other students rushed Neha to the hospital, but she was declared brought dead. While the state's Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil visited Niranjan Hiremath at his residence

in Hubballi on Tuesday, the Chief Minister told the latter on the phone, "Niranjan...very sorry. We will be on your side." Siddaramaiah also informed the Congress councillor of Hubballi-Dharwad Municipal Corporation about a CID probe into the case and setting up a special court, the PTI news agency reported.

"It is a serious offence... by setting up a special court we will ensure punishment for the accused

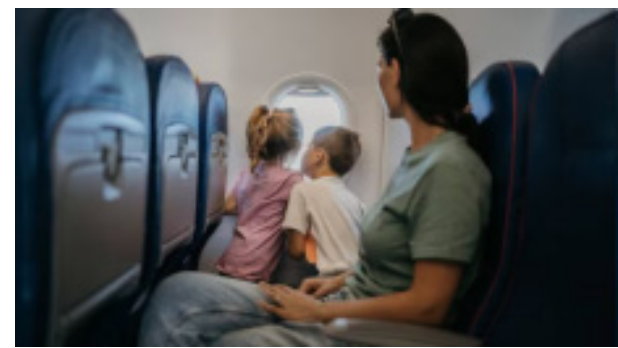
person." On behalf of his family, Hiremath thanked Siddaramaiah for handing over the case and asked him to "ensure there is an order at the earliest and provide us with justice". In response, the Chief Minister said, "We will ensure it at the earliest." Siddaramaiah's call with Niranjan Hiremath came a day after BJP national president JP Nadda visited the grieving family. "I came to console the family. This is a shocking incident, and we condemn it. The statements made by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Home Minister G Parameshwara are objectionable. Their statements undermine the investigation. The people of Karnataka will not forgive the current government for its appeasement politics," he told reporters on Monday. "If the Karnataka Police is incapable of conducting the investigation, then the state government should hand over the case to the CBI. Hiremath has also demanded a CBI enquiry into the incident because he has less trust in police."

Children upto 12 years must be seated with parents in flight: Aviation body

GNS News Agency, April 26

Aviation body has asked all airlines to ensure that children up to the age of 12 years are allocated seats with at least one of their parents or guardians on a flight. Aviation body, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), has asked all airlines to ensure that children up to the age of 12 years are allocated seats with at least one of their parents or guardians on a flight.

The directive comes against the backdrop of instances of children below the age of 12 years not being seated with their parents or guardians during the flight. "Airlines shall ensure that children up to the age of 12 years are allocated seats with at least one of their parents/guardians, who are travelling on the same PNR and a record of the same shall be maintained," the DGCA's press note read. In this regard, the regulator has revised the air transport circular titled, 'unbundle of services and fees by scheduled airlines' as per which some services like zero baggage, preferential seating, meals/ snack/ drink charges and charges for carriage of musical instru-



ments are permitted. The aviation body said that such unbundled services are provided on an "opt-in" basis by airlines and are not mandatory in nature. There is also a provision for auto seat assignment to the passengers who have not selected any seat for web check-in before scheduled departure," the press note stated.

US human rights report mentions abuses in Manipur, Hardeep Nijjar killing



GNS News Agency, April 26

The United States, in its 2023 Human Rights Report, highlighted "significant" abuses in Manipur following the outbreak of ethnic conflict in May 2023. Released by the US State Department, the report also mentioned the raids by tax authorities on UK-based broadcaster BBC and cases of transnational repression like the killing of Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada. While India has not yet responded, the External Affairs Ministry has previously said such reports by the US were based on "misinformation and flawed understanding". Last year, the MEA said the report was based on "motivated and biased commentary by some US officials".

On Manipur, the report mentioned that at least 175 persons were killed and more than 60,000 displaced due to ongoing conflict. Since May last year, Manipur has been rocked by ethnic violence between the majority Meiteis, who live in the Imphal Valley, and the Kuki-Zo tribal community. "Activists and journalists reported armed conflict, rapes, and assaults in addition to the destruction of homes, businesses, and places of worship. The government deployed security forces, implemented daily curfews, and internet shutdowns in response to the violence," the report said. The report also mentioned that the Indian government's response had been criticised for its "ineffectiveness", with the Supreme Court pointing out the failure to halt the violence. The report also highlighted a "worrying trend" of violence against journalists, unjustified arrests, and the application of criminal libel laws to

suppress dissent. On the searches at BBC offices, the report said tax officials also seized equipment from journalists who were not involved in the organisation's financial processes. Last year, in February, the Income Tax department carried out surveys at the premises of the BBC in Delhi and Mumbai. The development came weeks after the British broadcaster released a documentary on the 2002 Gujarat riots titled "India: The Modi Question". In January 2023, the Centre ordered YouTube and Twitter to take down links sharing the documentary, sparking a huge political row.

"Although tax authorities described the search as motivated by irregularities in the BBC's tax payments and ownership structure, officials also searched and seized equipment from journalists who were not involved in the organisation's financial processes," the US report said. "The government invoked emergency powers to ban screening of the documentary, forced media companies to remove links to the video, and detained student protesters who organised viewing parties," it further said.

Human rights abuses committed in regions plagued by terrorism, including Jammu and Kashmir, and areas affected by the Maoist insurgency also figured in the US report. The report also mentioned the killing of Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada, saying it indicated a "pattern of extrajudicial actions by state agents". Interestingly, while the Nijjar case is mentioned in detail, there is no mention of Gurpatwant Singh Pannun's "murder for hire" case against India. This, even as the Nijjar case took place in Canada and the latter directly deals with America. Last year, the United States accused an Indian intelligence official of planning to allegedly kill Khalistani separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun in New York.

"The government was alleged by other governments, diaspora communities, and human rights groups to have killed persons, or used violence or threats of violence against individuals in other countries, for reprisal," the report said. In response to these findings, Robert Gilchrist, senior bureau official at the US State Department, urged India to uphold its human rights commitments. "We strongly encourage, urge India to uphold its human rights obligations and commitments," he said.

Judges must act with dignity, not indulge in behaviour that would affect image of judiciary: Bombay HC



GNS News Agency, April 26

Bombay HC judge dignity "Judges, while discharging their functions, exercise the sovereign judicial power of the State and hence standards are expected to be maintained are of the highest nature," the bench said in its order. Judges must act with dignity and not indulge in a conduct or behaviour that would affect the judiciary's image, the Bombay High Court said on Tuesday, while refusing to reinstate a civil judge accused of coming to court in an inebriated state. Aniruddha Pathak (52) had filed a petition in the high court challenging his removal from the post of civil judge junior division due to alleged improper behaviour and for coming to court in an inebriated state on several occasions. Pathak challenged an order passed by the Maharashtra government's Law and Judiciary department in January 2022, removing him from judicial service. The order was passed after a report was

submitted by the principal district and sessions judge of Nandurbar.

A division bench of Justices A S Chandurkar and J S Jain dismissed the petition, noting that it did not find the removal order perverse or passed without any application of mind. "It is a universally accepted norm that judges and judicial officers must act with dignity and must not indulge in a conduct or behaviour which is likely to affect the image of the judiciary or which is unbecoming of a judicial officer," the court said. If members of the judiciary indulge in a behaviour which is blameworthy or unbecoming of a judicial officer, then courts cannot grant any relief, it said.

"Judges, while discharging their functions, exercise the sovereign judicial power of the State and hence standards are expected to be maintained are of the highest nature," the bench said in its order. Pathak was appointed as a civil judge junior division in March 2010, and he was posted in various districts till his removal. The allegations against Pathak were of improper behaviour on the dais while presiding court, not following court timings, and arriving in court under the influence of liquor. He was a judge at the Shahada court in Nandurbar district at the time. "We find no reason to interfere with the impugned order, more so because the petitioner was occupying a post which is looked upon with high respect, and if the disciplinary committee has come to a conclusion of removal of service, then it cannot be said to be perverse," the court observed.

Delhi HC restrains Lokpal from taking steps till May 10 in JMM plea against order on CBI probe into properties



GNS News Agency, April 26

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday restrained the Lokpal of India from taking any further steps till May 10 while hearing a Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) plea against the anti-corruption body's order directing the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to probe two properties allegedly linked to party president Shibu Soren. The JMM had approached the high court challenging a March 4 Lokpal order that had directed the CBI to investigate within six months if the two properties allegedly linked to Soren "belong to the public servant or the political party", under The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act. A single-judge bench of Justice Subramonium Prasad on Tuesday issued notice to the respondent, BJP MP Nishikant Dubey, who was the complainant before the Lokpal. The high court said that the CBI is permitted to give its progress report to the Lokpal in a "sealed cover" but "no further steps be taken by the Lokpal till next date of hearing". The matter is listed on May 10.

Appearing for the petitioner party, senior advocate Kapil Sibal said that the order is "beyond the jurisdiction" conferred on the Lokpal under The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act because the inquiry under the Act can only be against a person and not against a political party. Sibal said that the CBI had in its report said that the two properties in question do not belong to Soren but to JMM. "Once the CBI has come to a conclusion in its report

that the property belongs to a political party it goes outside the ambit of the Lokpal Act and therefore order to investigate is beyond the jurisdiction of the Lokpal," Sibal said.

The Lokpal's direction in its March order had come while disposing of a complaint filed on August 5, 2020, by Dubey, who had urged the Lokpal to investigate 57 properties in Ranchi, Dhanbad, Dumka, and other places allegedly belonging to Soren. The Lokpal had asked the CBI to conduct a preliminary enquiry (PE) after which the agency mentioned 82 properties, allegedly linked to the Sorens.

Since all other properties, barring two, were acquired beyond the period of limitation of seven years i.e. after the expiry of seven years from the date on which the alleged offence had been committed, the Lokpal had ordered to investigate only two properties. However, the Lokpal ordered that the CBI is at liberty to take "necessary action" at its level. It also ordered: "...we make it clear that regarding the 80-odd properties, acquired by the RPS (Respondent Public Servant Shibu Soren) and his family members prior to 7 years from the date of complaint...and not covered by this order by virtue of limitation imposed under Section 53 of the Act, but admittedly coming within the purview of PC Act, the complainant is at liberty to pursue his complaint with the competent authority."

The JMM, in its plea before the high court, has said that no notice was issued to it before passing of the order and no opportunity was granted for it to be heard. The Lokpal in its order has further said, "To us (it) appears to be an anomalous and ironical situation, where in spite of the fact that the RPS (Shibu) and his family members have indulged in acquiring a plethora of prime properties in different parts of Jharkhand, often at unreasonably low prices, he escapes scrutiny of the Lokpal due to this legal position. Be that as it may, we focus on the two properties...because these are not hit by the period of limitation of seven years." The Lokpal has asked for progress reports to be filed monthly, and the first before April 30.

MLAs Nitesh Rane, Geeta Jain booked for 'hate' speeches made during & after Mira Road clashes : police to Bombay HC

GNS News Agency, April 26

The Maharashtra government on Tuesday informed the Bombay High Court that FIRs had been registered over speeches made by two MLAs, Nitesh Rane and Geeta Jain, during and after communal clashes that broke out in the Naya Nagar area of Mira Road in Thane district in January. The Mira-Bhayander Vasai-Virar police last month booked Telangana BJP MLA T Raja Singh and Naresh Nile for allegedly making hate speech on Mira Road on February 25.

The court had asked the police commissioners of Mumbai and Mira-Bhayander Vasai-Virar to decide whether FIRs for hate speech could be registered against the leaders concerned. The state lawyer submitted that the police commissioners were convinced that offences were made out against the leaders. A bench of Justices Revati Mohite-Dere and Manjusha A Deshpande was hearing a plea that sought registration of FIRs against the three MLAs for alleged hate speech. Five petitioners, including two victims of the violence, said they were prompted to approach the court as the police had failed to register cases against the leaders on their own despite Supreme Court directions.

Appearing for the petitioners, senior advocate Gayatri Singh as well as advocates Vijay Hiremth and Hamza Lakdawala had argued that the MLAs' speeches clearly showed that an offence of hate speech was made out. The petitioners sought registration of FIRs under sections 153 (provocation with intent to cause riots), 153A (promoting enmity between groups), 295A (defiling place of worship), 504 and 505 (statements breaking public peace, causing mischief) of the Indian Penal Code.

On April 15, the bench said that while it could not stop a public rally from being held on Ram Navami (April 17) in the Malwani area of the city, it had asked police to



take appropriate action if there was any breach, irrespective of which political party the speaker belonged to. Public Prosecutor Hiten Venegaonkar informed the bench on Tuesday that the police commissioners had perused the content of the political leaders' speeches and that four FIRs under sections 153A and 153B and other IPC provisions had been registered over speeches made by the leaders in the Mira Bhayander, Mankhurd-Govandi, Ghatkopar and Malwani areas. Venegaonkar submitted that an FIR was registered at the Mankhurd police station against Nitesh Rane under IPC section 153, while the Ghatkopar police booked him and one Subhash Ahir under sections 153A and 506. The Mira Bhayander police registered a case against Rane and Geeta Jain under IPC sections 153A, 153B, 504 and 506. He added that the Malwani police had booked Rane and one Bhagwan Thakur under similar IPC provisions. After the petitioners argued that section 295A (defiling place of worship) was not invoked against the leaders, Venegaonkar said the police commissioners would take a call on it and file an affidavit. He noted that the police had also registered 13 complaints in relation to the violence in Mira Road in January.

High court directs Karnataka to act against autorickshaw drivers who attack Rapido bike taxis



GNS News Agency, April 26

Rapido auto rickshaws Karnataka The Bike Taxi Welfare Association filed a petition against certain autorickshaw unions and their members, seeking relief from unlawful interference in the operations of bike taxis. (File/Express)

In a relief to Bengaluru's Rapido bike captains (drivers), the Karnataka High Court recently directed the state government to crack down on autorickshaw drivers who attack, intimidate and harass them. The Bike Taxi Welfare Association filed a petition against certain autorickshaw unions and their members, seeking relief from unlawful interference in the operations of bike taxis. Rapido bike drivers' safety was a major concern after multiple incidents of harassment and physical harm against them were reported. Autorickshaw drivers argue that bike taxis are operating illegally in the city. The matter is still under judicial review. They also argue that the bike taxis' low-cost model has "devastated" several autorickshaw drivers' livelihoods. In fact, some autorickshaw drivers also book Rapido rides to warn the captains against using the app. The order passed by a single-judge bench of Justice Hemant Chandangoudar on March 28 directed the state government to take prompt and decisive action against any individual or entity found unlawfully obstructing bike taxis from carrying out their services. The high court also emphasised that it was the state's obligation to ensure the safety of the bike taxi operators, given that the court had in another case directed the government not to take any coercive action against the operators until the next date of hearing. The court also stated that the govern-

ment had to recognise the duty of organisations to act on complaints lodged by bike taxi operators, ensuring accountability and justice.

Two wellness centres at Madhapur and Raidurgam fail inspections, notices served

GNS News Agency, April 26

Hyderabad: District Health Authorities at Rangareddy on Sunday and Monday conducted inspections and served notices on two wellness clinics including V Spark'el Wellness Clinic at Madhapur and Deepthi Nadimenti Permanent Makeup and Cosmetic Clinic at Raidurgam, Gachibowli.

Notices were served to both the facilities. In the notice, the health authorities said that V Spark'el Wellness Clinic was running without any registration or permission from authorized District Registration Authority. The Wellness Clinic was also being operated with unqualified Dermatologist, which is a violation under Rules and Registration Act 2010. "On inspection of the premises of V Spark'el, there were many patients seen taking treatment. There was no qualified doctor in the Wellness Centre. Therefore you are directed to submit your eligibilities and qualified documents regarding your medical profession. If you failed to submit your documents then you are liable for criminal action as per the rules," the notice served on the owner of the Wellness Clinic said.

Following inspections of the premises of Deepthi Nadimenti Permanent Makeup and Cosmetic Clinic, the district health authorities said that the facility was also being run without a qualified dermatologist. "There were many patients in the clinic but no qualified doctor. Owner of the clinic must submit eligibilities and qualified documents regarding their medical profession. Criminal action will be taken if they failed to submit the documents," the notice said.

Army tribunal restores Honorary Lieutenant rank to subedar after post was withdrawn over hypertension condition

GNS News Agency, April 26

The rank was withdrawn after it came to be known that his medical fitness category was downgraded while he was deployed at a super high altitude area in the Galwan valley of Eastern Ladakh. The subedar was diagnosed with 'Primary Hypertension'. The AFT bench has directed the Army to grant the honorary rank of Lieutenant to Subedar Ram Chandra Prasad of the Army Medical Corps (AMC). It also asked the Army to consider Prasad for grant of the honorary rank of Captain, as per the existing policy with all consequential benefits. "The applicant's Honorary Commission rank of Lieutenant granted on 15.08.2022 should not have been kept in abeyance, instead he should have been promoted to the rank of Honorary Lieutenant with effect from 25.11.2022 (date of upgradation of his medical category to acceptable medical category for grant of Honorary Commission)," noted the AFT bench. The deployment and what led to 'Primary Hypertension' The Indian Army had deployed several troops in Eastern Ladakh after the face off with Chinese troops in Galwan in June 2020. Subedar Prasad was posted with an AMC unit in the area.

The counsel for the subedar submitted that in June 2021, the applicant was posted to a super high altitude area, Leh (Jammu and Kashmir) where he stayed for about four months and thereafter in September 2021, he was transferred to Galwan valley, another Super High Altitude Area. Here, due to climatic conditions, the applicant suffered from a disease called 'Primary Hypertension'. Downgrading the subedar's medical fitness category

After examination and treatment, the applicant was placed in medical category P-2 (Temp) from June 11, 2022 and thereafter, upon review, in medical category P-2(P) on November 25. The counsel argued that the disability suffered by the applicant was due to his posting in the super high altitude area and, therefore, it is attributable to military service. He further submitted that due to the applicant's excellent record of service, he was granted an honorary rank of Lieutenant on the occasion of Independence Day, 2022, and the same was published in a Gazette Notification. However, the Army headquarters in a message dated August 14, 2022 had directed that Junior Commissioned Officers, granted Honorary Commission on Republic and Independence Day, who are in low



medical category SHAPE 3 (T-24), or whose discipline proceedings are under progress, the Honorary Commission in such cases will be held in abeyance.

Accordingly, the Army Medical Record Office verified the data related to the medical category of the applicant and found that he was in low medical category 1H1A1P3(T-24) E1 with effect from June 11, 2022 for Essential Primary Hypertension. The counsel told the AFT that despite grant of the rank, he was not promoted due to a low medical category. The applicant approached all authorities for his promotion but he was not promoted, the counsel added. "Due to said policy Honorary Commission granted to him on the occasion of Independence Day 2022 was held in abeyance. When the applicant's medical category was upgraded, his Recommendation Form and Data Sheet was again sent to the authorities as a last chance for grant of Honorary Commission but the applicant could not make it being low in merit," the AFT was told by the counsel of the Subedar. The AFT bench found that the Army headquarters' policy states that "in case the JCO remains in unacceptable medical category upto six months from the occasion or till his retirement (whichever is earlier), then the Honorary Commission will be withdrawn". However, in the present case, the category was upgraded before six months and well before the retirement and therefore he was eligible to be promoted to Honorary Lieutenant. The subedar was enrolled in the Army on February 28, 1993 and was released from service on February 28, 2023 on completion of his terms of engagement in the rank of Subedar.

Mayawati promises to work for separate state comprising districts of western UP

GNS News Agency, April 26

Addressing an election rally in support of her party nominee from the Meerut Lok Sabha seat, the BSP chief attacked the Congress and BJP and also targeted the Samajwadi Party (SP) on the issue of reservation, alleging the SP does not want the people belonging to SC/ST communities to get quota benefits. She also said that her party, if voted to power, will work to fulfill the demands and address problems of the region. "We will take positive steps with regards to your longstanding demand of a Allahabad High Court bench here in Meerut like that in Lucknow," she said. "The central government has not been paying attention to it but when we come to power at the Centre, we will take positive steps in this regard," Mayawati said. Referring to how her government in Uttar Pradesh had passed a resolution for a separate state, which was sent to the Centre, she said, "Since the beginning, our party has been of the view that the western region should be made a separate state for better development of the region. "We had got a resolution passed by the state assembly and sent to the central government but they did not act on it. When our party comes to power at the Centre, your western UP will be made a separate state," she said. The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister alleged that the quota facility meant for the Dalits, adivasis

(STs) and OBCs in government jobs has not been filled up in the country for years and the quota in promotions for the SCs/STs has also been made ineffective. "I want to remind the members of the SCs/STs that when the SP was in power in Uttar Pradesh, it had ended reservation in promotions. Will the members of these sections give even a single vote to them and waste it on a party which is bent upon finishing their reservation. The SP does not want SC/ST people to get full benefits of reservation," she said. She also alleged that when an amendment bill for reservation in promotions was presented in the Rajya Sabha, the SP MPs had torn it. "Will such Samajwadi Party do good for the Dalits and shoshits (exploited class). Not only this, the districts, parks, universities that we (BSP government) had made in the name of great men belonging to these sections of society were mostly changed by the subsequent Samajwadi Party government." She also alleged that like the Congress, the BJP's casteist and pro-capitalist thinking and policies have not helped in ensuring the real development and uplift of the poor, Dalits, adivasis, backward, Muslims and other religious minorities among the "sarv samaj". Telling her voters that in these Lok Sabha elections, the Congress, BJP and their supporting parties have to be stopped from coming to power, she alleged their wrong policies and working style has been tried by all.

Indian-American comic ejects breastfeeding mom from show, sparks row



GNS News Agency, April 26

Arj Barker, a prominent Indian-American comedian, stirred controversy after he ejected a breastfeeding mother and her 7-month-old baby from his show in Australia. Barker defended his decision, pointing out that the baby's noises disrupted the audience's experience and had nothing to do with the breastfeeding mom. An Indian-American comedian caused a controversy after asking a mother to leave his show with her 7-month-old baby. The incident in Melbourne, Australia, has ignited a heated debate about mothers' rights and disruptions during performances. During a show in Australia on Saturday night at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, Barker, known for his funny and sharp comments, asked the breastfeeding mother and her seven-month-old baby to leave the event. Some people left with the mother to support her, while others teased her as she left.

Barker, a comedian from California who often performs internationally, was entertaining hundreds of people at the Athenaeum Theatre when the baby's sounds interrupted his thoughts, he told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). "On behalf of the other 700 people

there who had paid to see the gig, I politely told her the baby couldn't stay," he explained to the national broadcaster. Barker clarified that he couldn't see if the mother was breastfeeding due to the bright stage lights and dismissed claims that his decision was related to anything other than the noise. "I have nothing against babies. The breastfeeding thing is not the issue; it should be irrelevant. I had no idea if she was breastfeeding or not because I was on a brightly lit stage," he told CNN affiliate Nine News. "It was purely an audio issue, it had nothing to do with her being a mom - I have nothing against moms," he said. Barker defended his decision, stating it was a difficult choice made to ensure an uninterrupted experience for paying attendees.

He expressed sympathy for the mother's discomfort, acknowledging the challenging nature of the situation. "I can understand that it was difficult and embarrassing for her, and I do feel bad about that," Barker told Melbourne radio station 3AW, reported CNN. The incident sparked a debate in Australia about the rights of mothers to attend public events with their babies and the expectations of performers during live shows.

The mother involved, Trish Faranda, shared her perspective on the incident, expressing her initial disbelief when Barker asked her to leave. "I didn't want to ruin anyone's night, it was never my intention to go and disrupt people or create a scene," Faranda stated. Faranda's experience prompted sympathy from many, with some arguing that mothers should be allowed to participate in public activities without facing humiliation. Australian politician Ellen Sandell condemned Barker's actions, stating, "It's hard enough for new mums to participate in society with all the barriers put in front of them - to be humiliated like this, for just trying to enjoy the comedy festival, is awful."

Former K-pop star's plans to build mosque in Korea faces local resistance

GNS News Agency, April 26

South Korean YouTuber and former K-pop star Daud Kim's attempt to build a mosque in Incheon faces resistance from locals and allegations of fraud. This is the second attempt of Jay Kim to build a mosque after he converted to Islam in 2020 and changed his name to Daud Kim. South Korean YouTuber and former K-pop star Daud Kim's plan to build a mosque in Incheon is facing resistance from locals and allegations of fraud. Daud Kim was known as K-pop star Jay Kim before he converted to Islam in 2020. Daud Kim, who has over 5.55 million YouTube subscribers, shared on Instagram that he wanted to build more places for Muslims to pray in South Korea. He had also asked his fans to help him out monetarily for the project, according to The Korea Herald. However, Daud Kim's ambitious plan to build the mosque in Incheon, which is part of Seoul Capital Area, is facing multiple hurdles, including termination of land contract, administrative roadblocks, allegations of fraud and resistance from locals. Of South Korea's 5 crore population, around 56% are irreligious, Protestants are 19%, followed by Korean Buddhists (15.5%) and Catholics (8%), according to the 2015 census data. The country is home to approximately 1,50,000 Muslims. Among them, about 1,20,000 are labourers, primarily from Uzbekistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Pakistan, while 30,000 are students and businesspersons. Daud Kim publicly proclaimed to have purchased land in Incheon for the mosque, the previous owner of the land had requested a contract termination. This came after residents of the area voiced their opposition to the mosque plan, fearing their property would get devalued due to the place of worship.

"I told the real estate agent to terminate the contract," the previous owner told Yonhap NewsTV, a Korea-based media outlet. Non-Muslim Korean residents near Kim's proposed mosque site were strongly against the plan, according to The Korea Herald. Some objections were posted on an online forum for Yeongjong residents, saying the mosque plan "will lower housing prices in the



area". As if the local opposition was not enough, administrative hurdles have posed problems too. The pre-requisite permit to build a religious meeting place was not obtained, the report said. Citing local officials, the report said that the denial of the permit was due to the conditions of the roads leading to the mosque site. Daud Kim's plan for the mosque in Incheon isn't his first. The K-pop star is said to have started on this plan after his initial project for a mosque in Daegu had to be abandoned due to objections from locals. It's not only about resistance from locals. Allegations of financial fraud have also surfaced against Daud Kim.

JTBC, a Korean outlet and several internet users, accused Kim of misappropriation of funds from a previous mosque project in Daegu. Previously, the K-pop singer came under fire for allegedly exploiting his conversion to Islam in 2020 for personal gains and collecting donations through unauthorised channels. He had posted about his plan to build a mosque and had shared his account details for donations, to which many social media users said that the funds collected through a private account weren't allowed for construction of a public place of worship in South Korea. Mia shared photos of bruises she alleged Kim inflicted on her and accused him of running away to avoid divorce proceedings.

Justin Trudeau's ex-wife says life post-separation gets messy

GNS News Agency, April 26

Sophie Gregoire Trudeau, former wife of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, discusses life post-separation ahead of the launch of her book 'Closer Together: Knowing Ourselves, Loving Each Other'. Sophie and Justin Trudeau split in August 2023 after 18 years of marriage.

Sophie became the spouse of a world leader when Justin Trudeau's Liberals were elected to lead Canada in 2015. (Sophie Gregoire Trudeau, the former wife of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, has opened up about her life after their separation. Sophie and Justin Trudeau split in August 2023 after 18 years of being married. Sophie Gregoire Trudeau, whose book -- Closer Together: Knowing Ourselves, Loving Each Other -- is going to hit the stands, spoke to Canadian media outlets about her post-split life.

"We are still bound by



respect and love, and we have each other's backs and minds and hearts," Sophie Trudeau told CBC Radio's The Current. "Sometimes it gets messy, like, you know, in all family life. And it should be, because it kind of makes us appreciate the better times," she said, explaining the post-split problems. Sophie became the spouse of a world leader when Justin Trudeau's Liberals were elected to lead Canada in

2015. "People were asking me, 'How is it to be the wife of a prime minister?' And I was like, 'What are you talking about?' Like, I'm just Sophie G. in the house. I'm staying the same person," she said. Sophie Trudeau says she never defined herself in her life as "someone's partner".

"I am reticent to see people through their titles and roles. I think when we go down that path we create bigger spaces between human beings. That is un-

necessary," she told The Star. Sophie and Justin Trudeau were married in May 2005 and have three children together. In August 2023, Justin Trudeau's office issued a statement saying that he and Sophie were separating and had signed a legal agreement. "They have worked to ensure that all legal and ethical steps with regards to their decision to separate have been taken, and will continue to do so moving forward," it said.

Judge tells Trump lawyer in hush money trial he is 'losing all credibility'



NEW YORK, GNS News Agency, April 26 The judge overseeing Donald Trump's criminal hush money trial on Tuesday told Trump's lawyer he is "losing all credibility" as he considered whether the former president should be punished for violating a gag order that prevents him from publicly criticizing witnesses and others involved in the case. Prosecutors asked Justice Juan Merchan to fine Trump \$10,000 for violating the order. Defense lawyer Todd Blanche argued that Trump should not be punished for responding to political attacks. Merchan said he would not immediately rule on the prosecution's request.

At a hearing to consider the issue, Merchan appeared to grow frustrated after Blanche did not provide specific examples of the attacks to which Trump was said to be responding. The judge said Blanche had neither case law nor evidence to back up his argument. "You've presented nothing," Merchan said. "I've asked you eight or nine times, show me the exact post he was responding to. You've not even been able to do that once." "Mr. Blanche, you're losing all credibility. I have to tell you right now, you're losing all credibility with the court," the judge added. The judge's gag order prevents Trump from publicly criticizing witnesses, court officials and their relatives. Trump has said it is a violation of his constitutional free speech rights. New York prosecutor Christopher Conroy said Trump has run afoul of the order with posts on his Truth Social platform.

"Defendant has violated this order repeatedly and hasn't stopped," Conroy told Merchan. "The court should now hold him in contempt." Conroy pointed to an April 10 post that called porn star Stormy Daniels and his former lawyer Michael Cohen "sleazebags." Both are expected to testify in the first criminal trial of a former U.S. president. Conroy said other posts led to media coverage that prompted a juror last week to withdraw over privacy concerns. "He knows what he's not allowed to do and he

Migrants drown in English Channel hours after UK passes Rwanda policy

WIMEREUX, France/DOVER, England, -GNS News Agency, April 26, Five migrants, including a child, died in an attempt to cross the English Channel from France to Britain in an overcrowded small boat on Tuesday, hours after Britain passed a bill to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda in a move to deter the dangerous journeys. The deaths occurred when a boat carrying 112 people set out to cross one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world and panic took hold among the passengers not far from the shore. Rescuers picked up 49 people, with four taken to hospital, but others stayed on the boat, determined to get to Britain.

The French coastguard was still searching for any survivors. "A tragedy occurred on a boat overloaded with migrants early this morning. We deplore the deaths of five people, a seven-year-old girl, a woman and three men," local prefect Jacques Billant told reporters.

"The engine stopped a few hundred meters away from the shore and several people fell into the water," Billant said. The coastguard said 58 people had stayed on board. "They did not want to be rescued, they managed to restart the engine and headed towards Britain," Billant said. The boat had left from Wimereux, about 32 km (20 miles) southwest of the French port of Calais. More than 6,000 people have arrived in Britain this year via small, overloaded boats - usually flimsy inflatable dinghies - that risk being lashed by the waves as they try to reach British shores. Tens of thousands have made the journey since 2018, and Britain has responded by spending two years trying to overcome opposition to a divisive policy to send asylum seekers to Rwanda which it hopes will deter people from making the crossings. The British parliament finally passed legislation overnight to allow the deportations and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has said he expects the first flights to take off in 10 to 12 weeks, giving time for further legal challenges from charities, campaigners and unions.

Human rights groups and other critics say the policy is inhumane but Sunak told reporters on Tuesday that the government was acting out of compassion, wanting to prevent people smugglers from pushing vulnerable people out to sea. "They are packing more and more people into these unseaworthy dinghies, you've seen an enormous increase in the numbers over the past few years," he said. "This is what tragically happens." Several British border force boats were seen arriving in Dover, southern England, on Tuesday, carrying large groups of migrants.

A Reuters witness estimated that around 200 people believed to be migrants disembarked at Dover - about 42 km (26 miles) across the water from Calais - on Tuesday.

It was not clear if the migrants on the boat involved in the Wimereux incident were among them. Under the Rwanda scheme, anyone arriving illegally in Britain after Jan. 1, 2022 will be sent to Rwanda, some 6,400 km (4,000 miles) away. More than 50,000 people have arrived since that date, according to official figures. Campaigners said deterrence policies simply would not work. "I know that when you're running for your life, not even the risk of death can stop you trying to reach safety," said Kolbassia Haoussou from the British-based Freedom from Torture group. The mayor of Wimereux, Jean-Luc Dubaele, said migrants could still get jobs in Britain, which made it an attractive destination regardless. "The English are responsible for the situation," he said. The first deportation flight to Rwanda in June 2022 was blocked by European judges. Britain's Supreme Court then upheld a ruling that the scheme was unlawful because migrants were at risk of being sent back to their homelands or to other countries where they would be at risk of mistreatment. Coming soon: Get the latest news and expert analysis about the state of the global economy

does it anyway," Conroy said of Trump. "His disobedience of the order is willful. It's intentional." The \$10,000 fine sought by Conroy would be a relatively small penalty for Trump, who has posted \$266.6 million in bonds as he appeals civil judgments in two other cases. Conroy said he was not at this point asking Merchan to send Trump to jail for up to 30 days, as New York law allows.

"The defendant seems to be angling for that," Conroy said. Blanche said his posts were responses to political attacks by Cohen and not related to his former lawyer's expected testimony. Trump was charged by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg with falsifying business records to cover up a \$130,000 payment shortly before the 2016 U.S. election to buy the silence of Daniels about a sexual encounter she has said they had in 2006. Trump has pleaded not guilty and denies such an encounter took place. Prosecutors have said it was part of a wider conspiracy to hide unflattering information from voters at a time when he was facing multiple accusations of sexual misbehavior. Trump went on to win the 2016 election narrowly.

In his opening statement on Monday, defense lawyer Todd Blanche said Trump did not commit any crimes. Blanche said Trump acted to protect his family and his reputation and accused Daniels of trying to profit from a false accusation that they had sex. On Tuesday, jurors are expected to hear more testimony from former National Enquirer publisher David Pecker, who prosecutors say participated in a "catch and kill" scheme to suppress unflattering stories about Trump and help him get elected. Pecker, 72, testified on Monday that his company paid for stories - an unusual practice in journalism. American Media, which published the National Enquirer, admitted in 2018 that it paid \$150,000 to former Playboy magazine model Karen McDougal for her story about a months-long affair with Trump in 2006 and 2007. American Media said it worked "in concert" with Trump's campaign, and it never published a story.

The tabloid reached a similar deal to pay \$30,000 to a doorman who was seeking to sell a story about Trump allegedly fathering a child out of wedlock, which turned out to be false, according to prosecutors. Trump has said the payments were personal and did not violate election law. He has also denied an affair with McDougal. The case may be the only one of the Republican Trump's four criminal prosecutions to go to trial before his Nov. 5 election rematch with Democratic President Joe Biden. A guilty verdict would not bar Trump from taking office but it could hurt his candidacy. Reuters/Ipsos polling shows that half of independent voters and one in four Republicans say they would not vote for Trump if he is convicted of a crime.



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JNU-like azadi slogans as pro-Palestine protests engulf US universities

GNS News Agency, April 26

Pro-Palestine protests that started at Columbia University have now spread to a dozen top universities across five states in the US. Most campuses are witnessing 'liberated zones' set up by students and a clip of 'Hum kya mange, azadi' slogan, once heard in Delhi's JNU, emerged from a university in New York. "Arey hum kya chahte, Azadi... Palestine ki Azadi... arey chheen ke lenge, Azadi... Hai haq hamara, Azadi... (what do we want... freedom... Palestine's freedom... we will snatch this freedom which is our right...)", chanted a woman protester, standing at the centre of a group of students.

The video of 'azadi' sloganeering isn't from India, but from Columbia University in New York and comes as the fire of pro-Palestinian protests engulfs top American universities. The fire has actually spread across five states and a dozen top American universities where students pitched tents and set up "liberated zones" on campuses.

These pro-Palestine students are protesting against the war on Gaza by Israel after the Hamas carnage on October 7. The protests started at Columbia University and spread to other campuses as students started protesting in solidarity after the university called in cops. The New York Police Department cracked down on student protesters on April 18 and arrested over 100 students. On April 22, Yale University too called in the police and around 40 people were arrested. With tensions and security concerns mounting, Columbia University was forced to shift classes online. Following the NYPD action at Columbia and Barnard College and the arrests at Connecticut's Yale University, several campuses, including Ivy League colleges, saw protests. Tensions mounted due to incidents of violence and anti-semitic remarks at the protest sites on several campuses along the East Coast. The protestors held US President Joe Biden responsible for the war in Gaza, which has killed around 33,000 Palestinians so far. The US government has backed Israel's offensive against Hamas in Gaza, which saw a huge civilian toll. Around 108 demonstrators were arrested at Columbia University, including Isra Hirs, the daughter of Democrat Congresswoman, Ilhan Omar.

Europe's Digital Markets Act is forcing tech giants to make changes; Here's what that will look like



Europeans scrolling their phones and computers this week will get new choices for default browsers and search engines, where to download iPhone apps and how their personal online data is used. They're a part of changes required under the Digital Markets Act, a set of European Union regulations that six tech companies classed as "gatekeepers" — Amazon, Apple, Google parent Alphabet, Meta, Microsoft and TikTok owner ByteDance — will have to start following by midnight Wednesday. The DMA is the latest in a series of regulations that Europe has passed as a global leader in reining in the dominance of large tech firms. Tech giants have responded by changing some of their long-held ways of doing business — such as Apple allowing people to install smartphone apps outside of its App Store. The rules have broad but vague goals of making digital markets "fairer" and "more contestable." They are kicking in as efforts around the world to crack down on the tech industry are picking up pace.

Some 22 services, from operating systems to messenger apps and social media platforms, will be in the DMA's crosshairs. They include Google services like Maps, YouTube, the Chrome browser and Android operating system, plus Amazon's Marketplace and Apple's Safari Browser and iOS. Meta's Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp are included as well as Microsoft's Windows and LinkedIn. The companies face the threat of hefty fines worth up to 20% of their annual global revenue for repeated violations — which could amount to billions of dollars — or even a breakup of their businesses for "systematic infringements."

The DMA is a fresh milestone for the 27-nation European Union in its longstanding role as a worldwide trendsetter in clamping down on the tech industry. The bloc has previously hit Google with whopping fines in antitrust cases, rolled out tough rules to clean up social media and is bringing in world-first artificial intelligence regulations. Now, places like Japan, Britain, Mexico, South Korea, Australia, Brazil and India are drawing up their own versions of DMA-like rules aimed at preventing tech

companies from dominating digital markets. "We're seeing copycats around the world already," said Bill Echkson, senior fellow at the Center for European Policy Analysis, a Washington-based think tank. The DMA "will become the defacto standard" for digital regulation in the democratic world. "Officials will be looking to Brussels for guidance," said Zach Meyers, Assistant director at the Center for European Reform, a think tank in London.

"If it works, many Western countries will probably try to follow the DMA to avoid fragmentation and the risk of taking a different approach that fails." In one of the biggest changes, Apple said it will let European iPhone users download apps outside its App Store, which comes installed on its mobile devices. The firm long resisted such a move, with a big chunk of its revenue coming from the 30% fee it charges for payments — such as for Disney+ subscriptions — made via iOS apps. Apple warned "sideloading" apps will come with added security risks. Now, Apple is cutting those fees it collects from app developers in Europe that opt to stay within the company's payment-processing system. But it's adding a 50-euro cent fee for each iOS app installed through third-party app stores, which critics say will deter the many existing free apps — whose developers currently don't pay any fee — from jumping ship. "Why would they possibly opt into a world where they have to pay a 50 cent per-user fee?" said Avery Gardiner, Spotify's Global Director of competition policy. "So those alternative app stores will never get traction, because they'll be missing this huge chunk of apps that would need to be there in order for customers to find the store attractive." "That is utterly at odds with the very purpose of the DMA," Ms. Gardiner added. Brussels will be closely scrutinising whether tech firms are complying. EU competition chief Margrethe Vestager said after 10 years in the job, "I have seen quite a number of antitrust cases and quite a lot of creativity built into how to work around the rules that we have." Consumers won't be forced into default choices for key services. Android users can pick which search engine to use by default, while iPhone users will get to choose which browser will be their go-to. Europeans will see choice screens on their devices. Microsoft, meanwhile, will stop forcing people to use its Edge browser.

The idea is to stop people from being nudged into using Apple's Safari browser or Google's Search app. But smaller players still worry that they might end up worse off than before. Users might just stick with what they recognise because they don't know anything about the other options, said Christian Kroll, CEO of Berlin-based search engine Ecosia. Ecosia has been pushing for Apple and Google to include more information about rival services in the choice screens. "If people don't know what the alternatives are, it's unlikely many of them will select an alternative," Mr. Kroll said.

This variety of millets is nutrient-rich and offers several health benefits



The United Nations declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets — all thanks to its health and nutritional benefits. These tiny cereals — powerhouse of fibre, protein, vitamins, and minerals — are indigenous to India. In India, there are five types of millets that are considered staples — Jowar or Sorghum, Ragi or Finger millet, Korra or Foxtail millet, Sama or Little millet, and Kodo or Arke millet. Among all millets available, Kodo millets are well-known for the highest drought resistance and for producing high yields in a short duration thus are of great economic value. Additionally, India is the world leader in the production of Kodo millets. "Kodo millet is rich in vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals containing sulfur, so it is called 'nutria-cereals'". It is also a great source of essential amino acids, like lysine, threonine, valine, sulphur containing amino acids. Kodo millet grain contains 8.3 per cent protein of which the major protein is glutelin. It contains a high amount of crude fibre (9%) as compared to wheat (1.2%), and also has 66.6% carbohydrate, 2.4% minerals, and 1.4% fat." Aishwarya Vichare, Dietician, Bhatia Hospital, Mumbai told indianexpress.com. Recently, nutritionist Lovneet Batra took to Instagram to share the various benefits of Kodo millets. "Kodo Millet, also known as Varagu or Arikelu, is a nutrient-rich grain that offers several health benefits," she wrote in the caption.

Have a look. "Millets contain phenolics such as alpha-glucosidase, and pancreatic amylase by partly inhibiting the enzymatic hydrolysis of complicated carbohydrates that reduces postprandial hyperglycemia. "Millets are rich in phenolic acids, tannins, and phytates that behave as "anti-nutrients." These anti-nutrients, however, decrease the risk of colon and breast cancer. Millet contains phenolics that have been shown to be efficient in preventing cancer initiation. "Obesity, smoking, unhealthy nutrition, and physical inactivity boost the risk of heart attack and stroke. Most nations in the globe are facing elevated and rising cardiovascular disease rates. Millets have a higher amount of free radical scavenging activity which decreases the risk of cardiovascular diseases. "Kodo millets contain a high amount of lecithin and are excellent for strengthening the nervous system. "Kodo millet is abundant in antioxidants, such as phenolic compounds and flavonoids. These antioxidants help combat free radicals in the body, reducing oxidative stress and protecting cells from damage. "Kodo millet is naturally gluten-free, making it an excellent choice for individuals with celiac disease or gluten sensitivities. It is also relatively easy to digest compared to some other grains, making it gentle on the digestive system. Adding to this, N Lakshmi, Senior Dietician, Kamineni Hospitals, Hyderabad said, "Kodo millets have low glycemic index — making them ideal for managing diabetes as they cause a slower rise in blood sugar levels. Additionally, the high fibre content in Kodo millets promotes heart health by reducing cholesterol levels. They also aid in weight management by increasing satiety due to their fibre and protein content. Lastly, the fibre in Kodo millets supports digestive health and helps prevent constipation. "However, Vichare noted that Kodo millets contain goitrogens, which interfere with thyroid hormones and can result in an enlarged thyroid gland (goitre), hence people who are suffering from thyroid should avoid its consumption in the diet. "Kodo millets can be ground into flour and blended with other cereal flour to prepare bakery items like biscuits, cakes, muffins, or pasta. It can also be used to make chapattis or fermented foods like dosa or idli. It can also be used to

Starting out with gardening? 4 plants you can grow if you don't have a green thumb

Have all those reels on Instagram finally convinced you to build yourself a garden? If yes, you have come to the right place. Now only if building a garden was as easy as scrolling reels. Plants can act as natural air purifiers, filtering out pollutants and toxins from the air. Moreover, having plants around can enhance your mood and overall well-being. "Research suggests that being in the presence of plants can reduce stress, improve concentration, and increase productivity," Jannat Gill and Sharon Sethi, Founders of interior design brand Daera, tell indianexpress.com

For those who are first starting out in their gardening journey, things can get overwhelming if your plants keep dying on you. And if you're having a particularly bad day, your mind doesn't just make you a bad gardener — but also an incompetent person. Well, worry not, for we're here to make things a little easier. According to Gill and Sethi, you must start small and gradually expand your collection. "Observe and learn from your plants, adjusting care based on their responses," they say. If your green thumb is more black, here are some low-maintenance, resilient plants you can start out with. Daera's founders say snake plants are hard-to-kill hence can be taken care of, even by a beginner. They thrive in low light so if your house doesn't get a lot of sunlight, they should still be okay. If you're someone who keeps forgetting to water their plants, snake plants are the best pick for you as they can store water in their leaves, and tolerate infrequent watering. Pothos is an easy-to-grow plant as it can simply be propagated from cuttings, they say. They're also forgiving with watering as snake plants and can even adapt to different light conditions. This plants not only stores water



in its leaves like the first two, but is also resistant to pests and diseases, making them perfect for those especially forgetful plant-parents. They thrive particularly well in low light and dry conditions, Gill and Sethi add. Succulents Drought-tolerant with water-storing leaves or stems, succulents come in various appealing varieties like Echeveria and jade plants. "These plants require less water, withstand neglect, and adapt to arid environments," Gill and Sethi say. While succulents are hardy, providing proper care is still essential for their long-term health and vitality, so those who are a little bit ahead on the learning curve can pick them. You need to understand each plant's needs, including lighting, watering, and temperature and avoid overwatering them. Ensure that you're using pots that drain well.

Seek guidance from online resources, local communities, or gardening experts. With time, patience, and a willingness to learn, you can develop your green thumb and enjoy the fulfillment of nurturing thriving plants.

6 nutritional deficiencies that can cause weight gain

We often associate weight gain with overeating and a lack of exercise. However, there's another surprising culprit lurking in the shadows: nutritional deficiencies. Our bodies rely on a complex interplay of vitamins and minerals to function optimally, and imbalances can lead to unintended consequences, including weight gain. Here's how some key nutrient deficiencies, as explained by Bharathi Kumar, dietician at Fortis Hospital, Nagarbhavi, Bangalore, can contribute to packing on the pounds:

1. Vitamin D Deficiency: This "sunshine vitamin" plays a crucial role in regulating metabolism and insulin sensitivity. When Vitamin D levels are low, the body may struggle to burn fat efficiently, leading to weight gain. According to Kumar, limited sun exposure is a common culprit for Vitamin D deficiency.

2. Omega-3 Fatty Acid Deficiency: Low levels of omega-3 fatty acids, abundant in fatty fish, can disrupt hormones that control hunger, making you crave calorie-rich foods. This can lead to overeating and weight gain.

3. Protein Deficiency: Protein is a key building block for muscle tissue, and adequate intake helps regulate satiety hormones that control feelings of fullness. Low protein intake can lead to increased cravings and overeating, ultimately contributing to weight gain. Kumar highlighted this as a particular concern for vegetarians who may need to find alternative protein sources.

4. B Vitamin Deficiencies: B vitamins like B12 and B6 play a vital role in energy metabolism and converting food into usable energy. When these B vitamins are deficient, fatigue and cravings for sugary foods can take hold, leading to weight gain.

5. Iodine Deficiency: Iodine deficiency can lead to hypothyroidism, a condition marked by a sluggish metabolism and weight gain.

6. Iron Deficiency: While often associated with fatigue, iron deficiency can also disrupt your metabolism. Iron is essential for transporting oxygen throughout the



body, and when levels are low, the body may compensate by storing more fat for energy. Kumar pointed out that iron deficiency can paradoxically cause weight gain due to hormonal imbalances and lower activity levels.

It's important to note that weight gain isn't the only consequence of these deficiencies. They can also manifest as fatigue, low mood, difficulty concentrating, and weakened immunity.

So, what can you do?

1. Consult a Doctor: If you suspect you might have a nutritional deficiency, a doctor can perform a blood test to confirm and recommend appropriate supplements or dietary changes.

2. Prioritise a Balanced Diet: Focus on consuming whole, unprocessed foods rich in essential vitamins and minerals. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats should form the foundation of your diet, incorporating the suggestions from Kumar: Sunshine exposure: Aim for some regular sun exposure to boost Vitamin D levels Fatty fish: Include salmon, tuna, and sardines in your diet for omega-3 fatty acids Lentils, nuts, and whole grains: These are excellent plant-based protein sources for vegetarians Dairy products: Milk, cheese, and yogurt can contribute protein, Vitamin D, and calcium.

China investors rush abroad



Chinese money is pouring into funds invested in offshore assets at breakneck speed, butting up against outbound investment limits and complicating Beijing's efforts to revive domestic markets and stabilise the yuan.

The rush to invest offshore reflects low confidence at home and is evident in sales of funds issued under the Qualified Domestic Institutional Investor (QDII) programme, a key outbound investment channel that allows Chinese to buy overseas securities under Beijing's

strict capital controls. QDII fund units sold in January jumped 50% year-on-year to a record high while those of domestic equity mutual funds dropped 35%, data from the Asset Management Association of China shows. Assets under management for QDII funds were up 19% year-on-year.

Exchange-traded funds (ETFs) tracking Nikkei 225 and Nasdaq-listed stocks flagged price premium risks in recent weeks as buyers bid well above the value of the underlying assets to grab a share. The outbound scramble illustrates the pressure on China's capital account and currency and the challenges in rebuilding domestic investors confidence in their home market. Chinese stocks are wallowing near a five-year nadir while yields on the country's 30-year treasury bonds have plumbed record lows. "We feel a pressing need from our wealthy clients to diversify asset allocation," said Le Rong, founding partner of Shanghai-based FR Harvest Asset Management. After 20 years of high growth and high returns, the Chinese economy faces a slowdown in the foreseeable future," he said.

OYO says it terminated contract with Noida hotel after allegations of flesh trade

The police, in collaboration with the anti-human trafficking unit, had carried out a raid on the hotel at Behlulpur in Noida earlier this month and apprehended several people. The police also rescued four women and three minors from the hotel. (Representative image) Hospitality technology company OYO on Tuesday said it has terminated its contract with Sheelta Hotel in Noida following allegations that the premises was used for flesh trade.



OYO said it is also planning to pursue legal actions against the hotel and individuals involved to ensure accountability. The police in collaboration with the anti-human trafficking unit had carried out a raid on the hotel at Behlulpur in Noida earlier this month and apprehended several people for their involvement in running a flesh trade racket from the hotel, OYO said in a statement.

Also rescued four women and three minors from the hotel during the raid. "The allegations prompted OYO to conduct a thorough investigation into the matter. After careful review and consideration, OYO found out that the hotel was already inconsistent in its business with OYO before the allegations came to light," the company said.

"However, OYO has decided to terminate its contract with the hotel. This decision aligns with OYO's ongoing programme to promote safe and secure hospitality," it said. OYO also appreciated those who

brought the allegations to light and encouraged anyone with information regarding similar incidents to come forward.

"OYO has a zero-tolerance policy towards illegal or immoral activities on its hotel premises. We are already working in close partnership with Noida police to ensure safe and secure hospitality in the city," OYO's north India head Pawas Kumar said. "We are implementing enhanced monitoring and auditing procedures to prevent such incidents in the future. We remain committed to working closely with law en-

forcement agencies and local communities to create a safe environment for our guests," he added. In November 2023, the company had launched a national programme to promote safe and secure hospitality in partnership with law enforcement agencies. As part of the initiative, it has conducted joint seminars with police in several cities such as Noida, Lucknow, Chandigarh, Kolkata, Meerut and Bangalore, which brought together key stakeholders from the hospitality industry, law enforcement agencies, and OYO's hotel partners.

Karan Johar says meeting Aditya Chopra and Shah Rukh Khan was part of his destiny: 'Two pillars, two reasons why I sit here today'



Filmmaker Karan Johar on Tuesday said producer Aditya Chopra and superstar Shah Rukh Khan are the 'two pillars' in his life to whom he owes his 25-year career in cinema.

Johar assisted and featured in a brief role in Chopra's hit directorial debut *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, the 1995 musical romance film starring Khan and Kajol. Three years later, both the actors fronted *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* which marked Johar's beginning as a director. "It was also part of my destiny to have met Aditya Chopra and Shah Rukh Khan. Two pillars, two reasons why I sit here today. They acknowledged something about me that I didn't see in myself. I will always be grateful to them for that. The rest was a lot of just passion... I may have been as sincere as I was. But what happens when you don't have people who are in powerful positions like that?"

"You can make it entirely on your own still because your belief system can be strong enough to combat all odds. But I was fortunate that my struggles came later. My first step was because two people who were not related to me by blood or family believed in me strongly. It has a lot to do with destiny, but nothing happens without hard work," the filmmaker said. Karan Johar was in the national capital to attend the All India Management Association's ninth National Leadership Conclave, where he was honoured with the 'Director of the year' award for 2023's *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani*. The 51-year-old, who sat down for a fireside chat at the event, looked back at his career, mistakes, failures, and the role of cinema in society. Not just Shah Rukh Khan and Aditya Chopra, Johar — son of late producer Yash Johar — said it's not easy to maintain a professional outlook when one is working with actors one looked up to while growing up like Amitabh Bachchan, who starred in his home banner Dharma Productions films such as *Dostana* (1980) and *Agneepath* (1990).

Imtiaz Ali says Amar Singh Chamkila was not sexist, didn't always objectify women: 'Women teased and poked fun at men'

The Imtiaz Ali directorial *Amar Singh Chamkila*, starring Diljit Dosanjh and Parineeti Chopra, opened to rave reviews. Based on the life of legendary Punjabi singer Amar Singh Chamkila, who was killed at the age of 27, along with his wife Amarjot Kaur, the Netflix film traces the life and journey of the artiste who was accused of singing double-meaning songs with 'lewd' and 'vulgar' lyrics. In a recent interview, Imtiaz opened up about Chamkila's songs being 'sexist' and the lyrics 'objectifying' women.

"For hundreds of years, not only in Punjab but also across different states of India, shaadi and sangeet songs have always been vulgar. Women are naughtier than men and their naughtiness comes through music and song which they enjoy," the Rockstar director told *Mid-Day India*, stressing that it is for the audience to decide what they like and don't. Drawing reference from the film, Imtiaz highlighted that women in Punjab who listened to Chamkila's songs were not 'dumb' or 'submissive' and often teased men. "I would like to say that his women were not dumb and they were smarter and equally participative. In the film, they're seen teasing the men and poking fun at them," he added.

Citing the example of the song "Patt Deon Chugath Ni" which features in the biopic, he said, "When an old man says he is young and virile, the woman takes a jibe at him. It is not like the women were always being objectified. They're equal in relationship. He (Chamkila) might be saying things that were not acceptable to society but he was not a sexist kind of a person. He was quite liberal



in his way. You must have noticed that even during the performances, it was the woman who was teasing the man first. His and Amarjot's songs were more of play-acting." Following the release of *Amar Singh Chamkila*, the makers unveiled a powerful clip from the film depicting a journalist confronting Chamkila for his sexist songs that objectify women. The scene begins with Chamkila avoiding eye contact with a female journalist because of her Western attire. After learning about Chamkila's discomfort, the journalist calls out his hypocrisy, highlighting how his songs portray women in a derogatory manner. Chamkila, however, defends himself and his songs and says, "I have only seen all this and heard all of these things growing up. Not everyone can afford to think right and wrong. Some people just have to survive. I am a very ordinary man. I have to make the songs that people will like otherwise my career will be over."

Vidya Malavade recalls working with Shah Rukh Khan in *Chak De India*: 'We were all like little fangirls'

Actor Vidya Malavade has some memorable roles to her credit. Now as she gears up to star in Aayush Sharma's *Ruslaan*, Vidya revisited working with Shah Rukh Khan in *Chak De India*. Talking to *Bollywood Bubble*, Vidya shared, "I did not think that *Chak De India* would become like this and that my part would become so popular. I read the script and liked it. I wanted to be a part of the film. But we all knew it was a *Yashraj* film and had Mr Shah Rukh Khan in it, that was a big deal for all of us. We were all like little fangirls. We never worked with the mindset that the film would do very well."

Vidya Malavade also shared how while working on an ad film with Shah Rukh Khan, she wished to do a film with him and then *Chak De India* happened.



Adhyayan Suman says Sanjay Leela Bhansali realised he was not how he was projected: 'He held my hand when everyone else closed their doors on me'

Adhyayan Suman and Shekhar Suman will be seen in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Heermandi: The Diamond Bazaar*. Adhyayan Suman and Shekhar Suman will be seen in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Heermandi: The Diamond Bazaar*. Shekhar Suman's son and actor-singer Adhyayan Suman, who debuted with *Haal-e-Dil* in 2008, hasn't had a smooth journey in his decade-long career. Adhyayan, who will be seen in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Heermandi: The Diamond Bazaar*, which also features his father Shekhar, says there were a lot of misconceptions about him in the industry. While speaking with Siddharth Kannan on his podcast, the actor opened up about how he has been misunderstood by a lot of people in Bollywood which might have been a deterrent in his career growth. He said, "People thought I am a star kid and the whole nepotism debate painted me in a certain way which was completely different from who I am as a person."

Speaking about the lull in his career, *The Raaz: The Mystery Continues* actor said that he refrains from speaking about his hardships because he isn't successful and people won't listen to his story. "If I told anyone about what all I have gone through in the past 15 years, I don't think anyone would care. There will come a time when I will be able to tell my story and the hardships that I have endured. What life has taught me, no school can," he narrated.

Adhyayan Suman also spoke about people's perception of him which changed after they got to know him in person. "Now those who started working with me realised that they had misconceptions about me and told me, 'We thought of you a certain way but you aren't like how we perceived you.' Even Sanjay Leela Bhansali ji was told things about me and his perception also changed after working with me. People spoke negatively about me and projected that I was not serious about what I did. I was not serious about acting or my craft. They also said



that I wasn't punctual on sets and all this is very unfortunate," he stressed.

Adhyayan feels grateful for the opportunity which Bhansali gave him in *Heermandi*. "Sanjay Leela Bhansali ne mera haath tab thamaa jab kisi ne mere liye darwaza nahin khola (Sanjay Leela Bhansali held my hand when others closed doors on me). So when he opened his doors for me, it meant so much." Shekhar Suman, who will be seen playing Zulfikar in *Heermandi*, talking about the struggles his son has faced in his personal life and career, called Bhansali 'godsent'. "Adhyayan lagged behind 12-13 years in his career. He went through the worst phase in his life. He was into a deep abyss where you are despondent and almost on the verge of giving up. He became suicidal but at the end of it, he had faith and hung onto the last vestige of faith ki mera kuch hoga (something will happen)," Shekhar said.

He added that despite him being an actor, he can't help his son overcome the challenges that life throws at him. "He has to fend for himself and fight his own battle and make an identity for himself. I cried when Sanjay Leela Bhansali praised Adhyayan. I thought it was long overdue and his validation means a lot."

After Shah Rukh Khan praises Mohanlal for dancing on *Zinda Banda*, the *Company* actor says, 'Why not groove to some *Zinda Banda* over breakfast?'

Superstars Shah Rukh Khan and Mohanlal have left fans elated with their super sweet banter on X (formerly known as Twitter) on Tuesday. For the uninitiated, a video of the Malayalam superstar dancing to Shah Rukh's song "Zinda Banda" from *Jawan* went viral. Reacting to the video, SRK lauded Mohanlal and called him the "OG Zinda Banda". Responding to this sweet gesture from Shah Rukh, Mohanlal also showered praise on the Bollywood superstar. After SRK's fan club shared the video of Mohanlal dancing to the *Jawan* song at an event, Shah Rukh shared the video and wrote, "Thank you Mohanlal sir for making this song the most special for me now. Wish I had done it half as good as you. Love you sir and waiting for dinner at home as and when. You are the OG Zinda Banda!!" Replying to SRK on X, Mohanlal wrote, "Dear Shah Rukh Khan, nobody can do it like you! You are and always will be the OG Zinda Banda in your classic, imitable style. Thanks for your kind words. Also, just dinner? Why not groove to some Zinda Banda over breakfast, too?"

A lot of fans have been drooling over this bromance between the two superstars. While one fan wrote, "Leg-



end praising legend," another one commented, "two kings together finally." One of the fans also asked if they could get to see both Mohanlal and Shah Rukh Khan in a single film now. On the work front, Shah Rukh is reported to star with daughter Suhana Khan in the movie *King*. The film will be directed by Sujoy Ghosh. As for Mohanlal, he has *Barroz*, *L2: Empuraan*, *Ram: Part 1*, and *Vrushabha* in the pipeline.

Vidya Malavade says she was approached to play Sidharth Malhotra's mother, found it 'weird': 'How is the brain working?'

Vidya Malavade, who is still remembered for playing Vidya Sharma in Shah Rukh Khan-starrer *Chak De India*, recently opened up about her experience with regards to getting rejected for various kinds of roles and said that she has been rejected on the grounds of "too young, too old, too pretty, not-so-pretty, too glamorous, not glamorous". In the same conversation, Vidya, who is 51, recalled the time when she was called to play the role of Sidharth Malhotra's mother. She is only 12 years older than the actor.

Talking to *Bollywood Bubble*, Vidya said, "I remember I got this call for... This is really weird... Some casting people who were casting for Sidharth Malhotra's mother in some... I am not going to say where but in something and they called me and I was just... Really? Do you have no clue about what you must do? Some casting person, she was probably a new assistant or whatever. But I am like, 'How? What is it? How is the brain working?'"

Recently, Richa Chadha, in an interview with *ABPLive*, had revealed that she was offered the role of Hrithik Roshan's mother



Vidya Malavade recalled that she was once offered the role of Sidharth Malhotra's mother. She is only 12 years older than the actor and found this really "weird".

by a casting director when she was only 21 years old. She said, "Not only are you doing a disservice to a young actor, you are also taking away an older actor's part which is already shrinking."

Vidya Malavade said that she has been rejected on multiple grounds and

while she takes it on her chin almost every time, it has started to irritate her now. In the same chat, Vidya also recalled how Imtiaz Ali found her to be "too glamorous" when he was finalising the casting for *Sony LIV's Dr Arora*. Vidya said that they wanted someone who looks like a

"middle class housewife from the heartland of the country". The actor said that she sent in her photos and even those didn't work. She shared that she called her house help and borrowed her saree and clicked some photos, which eventually helped her in landing the part.

Ruturaj Gaikwad scores his second IPL century in match against Lucknow Super Giants



GNS News Agency, April 26

Ruturaj Gaikwad century Ruturaj Gaikwad (c) of Chennai Super Kings celebrating his half century during match 39 of the Indian Premier League season 17 (IPL 2024) between Chennai Super Kings and Lucknow Super Giants held at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, Chennai on the 23rd April 2024. (Photo by Saikat Das / Sportpics for IPL)

Chennai Super Kings skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad brought up his second Indian Premier League (IPL) cen-

tury in the match against Lucknow Super Giants on Tuesday. Gaikwad took 56 balls to reach his ton in an innings peppered with 11 fours and 3 sixes. On the other end, Shivam Dube gave his captain ample support as CSK raced towards a formidable target. Gaikwad was announced as CSK's captain for this IPL season after MS Dhoni stepped aside.

Talking about that, Gaikwad had revealed how he was shadow captaining CSK right through the title winning campaign in 2023, a year after MS Dhoni told him to be ready for the role. And having taken the hot seat, Gaikwad had said he wants "keep the CSK culture intact" as it has given them five titles, including three in the last six years. "I remember in 2022 was when he told me that, 'you know, probably not next year but after that you might get a chance to lead, so be ready for it'. So obviously after that, I was always preparing for it. It (the captaincy) didn't come as news to me or was I bit surprised or shocked," Gaikwad had said a few weeks back. Earlier on Tuesday, Lucknow Super Giants skipper KL Rahul won the toss and elected to bowl against Chennai Super Kings. The Chennai side made one change to their eleven, bringing in Daryll Mitchell for fellow Kiwi Rachin Ravindra, who has been out of form.

Sometimes, I feel I never got the credit I deserved: Mumbai demolisher Sandeep Sharma



GNS News Agency, April 26

Sandeep Sharma, the Rajasthan Royals seamer, operates in anonymity. He doesn't own the strapping built of a pace bowler, he has often turned up for unglamorous sides like Punjab Kings, Sunrisers Hyderabad and now Rajasthan Royals. But more often than not he has punched above his weight. Every time he does well the pundits and fan calls him underrated. "I don't know. I have never thought about it," he tells The Indian Express. After a long pause, he adds: "Kabhi kabhi lagta hai mujhe mera due nahi mila jo milna chahiye tha (Sometimes I feel like I never got the credit I deserved)." He is not tearing his hair over it: "But it's fine. I am not 23-24 anymore. By the end of this tournament, I will turn 31. Few things are just not in your hands," Sandeep, who has played two T20Is in 2015, adds.

Over the years, he has consumed some of the finest batsmen in the world. The honours board reads thus: Virat Kohli (7), Rohit Sharma (5), and Chris Gayle (four). The Jamaican's strike rate was a modest 103 versus him. His tally of 57 wickets in powerplay is joint-second with Deepak Chahar and Umesh Yadav. Only Bhuvneshwar Kumar (65) has more. On Monday, he captured his maiden five-for too, which included Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan. It was a sweet moment of triumph as he had gone unsold in 2023 before Royals picked him as a replacement for the injured Prasad Krishna. "When I went unsold, it broke me. But at the same time helped me grow as a person. Now I am taking every game as a bonus. I am not taking anything for granted. I am enjoying my game more now," he says. A swing bowler touted the next Praveen Kumar after his exploits in the 2012 U-19 World Cup in Australia, the 30-year-old from Patiala kept evolving. At the Sunrisers, he picked up the knuckleball from Bhuvneshwar Kumar; at Royals, he evolved into a death-overs specialist, a role he is really enjoying. "I was decent at the death but now I feel I have become better," he points out. He swears by the word evolution. "Cricket is a journey, you keep on evolving and learning. You will have to see the patterns, where batters are more comfortable. They are now reading knuckle balls, anticipates well to the wide yorkers and heel yorkers. Itne saare video analysts hai (There are so many video analysts these days). You need to up your game to make the batsman uncomfortable," he says. "As a bowler, you will have to explore the unexplored areas. You need to look at

which area of the ground he has a lower strike rate. You have to keep thinking," he adds.

Not just from the pacers, he says he learns from the spin trio of R Ashwin, Yuzvendra Chahal and Keshav Maharaj. "I continuously talk to Ash anna and he helps me all the time. Chahal is again the same. I will take another name, Maharaj. He too is a superb thinker of the game. The inputs I receive are amazing. We play 14 games, and if the ideas or tips they share work out in four games, I am helping my team garner eight points," he says. He also plans a lot by himself. Like the Suryakumar dismissal. "Flick shot is his strength. I planned to bowl a keg-cutter on the middle and leg stump. He saw the bowl and his natural instinct forced him to flick (but) there was no pace on the ball and he got caught at the long-on. It was my plan luckily it worked."

The world of bowlers is getting harder by the season. The Impact Player rule has muscled the batsmen, and several big names like Kuldeep Yadav has severely criticised it. But Sandeep looks at it differently. "T20 was always a spectator sport, right? It was always a batsman's game. You will have to make the tournament exciting. The crowd wants big sixes, they are not spending money to see good bowling (laughs). They want high-scoring games, fours and sixes. 140 wala game kisi ko maja nahi aata (nobody wants to watch the low-scoring matches)," he says. He dwells on the importance of viewership. "They watch our game and we get sponsorship because of it. Viewership is important. If batsmen and bowlers are evolving then rules will also evolve. Different challenges will be thrown upon us. The more you crib about it the more it will affect your game. Making rules is not in our control. As a bowler we must stick to our execution," he says.

Power-hitting, emblazoned by the likes of Travis Head, Abhishek Sharma, Jos Buttler, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shivam Dube, is another big challenge. "Hitting ability has gone above the roof. Big reasons are bowling machines and side-arm throw specialists. In our team there are three side arm specialists, who bowls at 150kph. As a batsman, they are facing 150 at the nets and then they will see 130-140kph balls as big as a football," he says. He reproduces a Mohammed Siraj line to sum up their toil. "In a recent interview, he had said the bowlers must focus on bowling the good balls. I also feel the same," he says. "One must stick to their strength and plan and hope that the batsman will make a mistake or the mishit will not go beyond the boundary ropes. The most important thing is to take care of the controllable stuff. If I am bowling at Head and Abhishek, I will rather focus on my game plan rather than theirs. I will try to bowl good balls. Even after that if you are hit, then accept it as your your fate. In T20, you need to have a big heart," he says, laughs. Unlike the popular opinion, he doesn't think the pitches have gone flat. "They have always been the same. Now the six-hitting abilities have improved and then there is impact player rule, it has given the batsmen an extra amount of freedom," he details. "If the likes of Gayle, Suresh Raina, Virender Sehwag, and AB de Villers were still playing, their teams would have crossed the 250-run mark most of the time. For me, Raina was the most difficult batsman to bowl," he says.

Can Manchester United sink any further?

GNS News Agency, April 26

Hours before Manchester United hatched an implosion of the most epic nature, new co-owner Jim Ratcliffe had run 26.2 miles at a personal best of 4:30.52 in the London Marathon. He squeezed into the Wembley in time for the second half—missing arguably the most emphatic first-half performance by his team this month—to behold an hour of the most catastrophic performance. His team whipped up an annus horribilis of ages—squandering a three-zero lead against Coventry, a side eighth in the Championship table, and saved narrowly by technology—that reflected the steepness of the task he has inherited to restore its long lost glory. It was a match, even their staunch tragic, wished they had lost, in that it would have truly captured their disillusionment, embodied the depths they had plummeted, and presumably catalyzed another endless chain of changes. Ratcliffe, himself, seemed exasperated. He would tell the BBC in a short interview, drawing parallels from the marathon. "Always in the marathon, after 30km, it gets quite difficult. I don't think we're quite at 30km with the football yet," he paused, and then summed up his club's stasis: "No, we're not really there yet. The first 10km. It's a long journey really."

Since his partial buying of stakes, the billionaire has initiated a slew of fast measures to fix a club, which according to former caretaker manager Ralf Ragnick requires an open heart surgery, like acquiring a CEO with indisputable credentials like Omar Berrada and a technical director as sharp Jason Wilcox. Newcastle's Dan Ashworth too could take charge as the new sporting director. Ratcliffe's football vision to revive the club is in its nascence, but he seems keener to adopt a Manchester City-like cultural overhaul rather than seeking a Roman Abramovich-like money can buy you all riches route. Abramovich's riches brought instant glory to Chelsea, but City's success was more sustained, and probably more enduring. Ratcliffe himself had emphasised in past interviews that he was under no illusion to reverse the flailing fortunes of his club overnight. "It's not a light switch. It's not one of these things that changes overnight." The wage bill is vast, the inability to get rid of players chronic and the debts are upwards of one billion pounds.

When he underlined his football-first mentality, there was hope and optimism, even a sudden lift in performance. But as the year has unfolded, they have descended into chaos, their displays swinging wildly like the sails of a ship in a thunderstorm, tossing and sputtering. More than their position in the league—seventh and 24 points of leaders Arsenal (as on Thursday)—their negative goal difference and their maddening meltdowns (best exemplified by two stoppage time goals in as many minutes against Chelsea), it's their fragility that has disjoined their fans. In the post-Ferguson era, United have waded along several tough years under different managers. The fans crooned: David Moyes never had the stature; Louis van Gaal was turgid, Jose Mourinho boring, and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer directionless. But never had they been utterly hopeless as they had been in the



last six months. They have been drab, dreary, and often anarchic, a group of strangers wearing the same pale red shirt.

Not all blame can be thrust on Erik Ten Hag's shoulders. Injuries have been cruel on him. He was forced to use 12 different centre-back pairs; he was forced to fast-track maiden caps to teenage academy products, he had both his left-backs injured for much of the campaign. All but four players have been on the treatment table at least for once. He had to deal with untimely loss of forms; especially of veterans Marcus Rashford and Casemiro. He had off-field distractions in the form of Jadon Sancho and Antony. His team, he says, was at the rough end of multiple refereeing errors. He thinks they are grossly unfortunate. "A lot went against us this season. You see, all the penalties we conceded last week (against Chelsea and Liverpool) could also have been going in another way. You think over the course of a season sometimes you will get one, sometimes you will concede one. This season it feels like we only concede," he brooded after the Coventry scare.

While the medical department had indeed been re-structured at the start of the year, a section of senior players, as reported by The Guardian last year, had blamed Ten Hag for overworking them in the pre-season. Several of his substitutions had proved counter-productive to put it mildly. The Dutchman, under excruciating scrutiny, has begun to become snappy in press conferences, his reactions on the touchline filled more with rage than joy. A manager who sold the promise of playing a positive brand of football is admittedly happy that he's somehow getting the points. Even a draw against Brentford felt like a semi-salvation after the Bees' absolute domination in the game. The lone streak of silver-lining is the golden promise of youngsters such as Kobbie Mainoo and Alejandro Garnacho. But can they build on it? Perhaps, United are really unfortunate, perhaps the injuries are a rude coincidence than the incompetency of their medical staff, perhaps the core of players are content with Ten Hag, perhaps the Dutchman could still save the job and take them back to the glory days. But United, as Ratcliffe would have realised when watching them, is a machine of ill-fitting parts, that creaks and cracks. A full marathon of change beckons so that they could be ready for at least a half-marathon. Or even a 10k race.

T20 World Cup ladder: Jaiswal back in top 5, Hardik struggles in week 5 of our rankings

GNS News Agency, April 26

It has been a mixed week for the Indian stars as the composition of the World Cup-bound remains inconclusive on the T20 World Cup Ladder standings as we head into week 5. Names at the top of The Indian Express' previous T20 World Cup Ladder standings – Jasprit Bumrah and Rohit Sharma – maintain their lead in the bid to catch the plane to the T20 World Cup in the USA and the Caribbean. However, the top 15 is still found wanting with the misfiring run of key all-rounders and fast bowlers. This is why sports team will run the T20 World Cup Ladder, a daily form tracker of sorts where we try to slip into the shoes of the Indian think tank and try to work out what Team India will look like for the World Cup 2024. Here's how the T20 World Cup Ladder works and how you can participate as well: Player positions on the T20 World Cup Ladder will be updated every week by The Indian Express sports team.

But if you think Virat Kohli should make the cut into the Indian team, or if you think India should gamble on Rishabh Pant in the T20 World Cup, we'd like to know your thoughts on our T20 World Cup Ladder. Write to us: sports@indianexpress.com

Despite a wicketless outing against Rajasthan and a string of defeats for his side, Bumrah has nailed down his position at the top of the ladder while being the most menacing bowler in the league. He tops the charts with 13 wickets and has made run-scoring difficult with his economy reading below 7. Bumrah's prowess remains far superior to his peers and will prove even more crucial for India, with other pacers wearing an inconsistent look in the lead-up to the World Cup. While he may have gotten that long-awaited century last week, Rohit's intent to go hard early on has not paid its dividends. Rohit's had a mixed week where he found a start against Punjab Kings but struggled to keep up the pace and also fell to his nemesis in Trent Boult in the first over on Monday.

Not a lot of Kohli action last week, but the dismissal after a solid start at the Eden Gardens did have its share of controversy and spotlight. Kohli's start had a glimpse of positive shotmaking, as he cracked a stunning pull for six off Harshit Rana while nonchalantly pumping Mitchell Starc over long-on for another maximum. It was a treacherous night to be a fast bowler at the Arun Jaitley Stadium when the marauding Sunrisers batters smashed at unprecedented speed in the PowerPlay. Though he received a few lashings, Kuldeep was crucial in slowing down the gung-ho SRH batters with his attacking lengths. He walked away with four wickets, and that may well be the reading to establish that he should be India's lead spinner at the World Cup. It was always going to be just a matter of time before the dashing left-hander found his mojo back. And he did with trademark flair in Jaipur, dismissing the Mumbai Indians bowlers to all sides of the park with a streak of 15 boundaries for his second IPL hundred. Jaiswal's form will be crucial to keep the selectors and the management on their toes in tossing up variety and aggression on the drawing board even as the build-up leads towards a Kohli-Rohit combination. The left-armed

continues to play the holding part to good effect even as he would like a chunk of more wickets to his name. Axar's equation and conjoined effort with Kuldeep has been the rare positive in a struggling Delhi Capitals outfit, even as the left-hander has lost his positive touch with the bat. It would be harsh to judge Rinku Singh's campaign by mere numbers this time, with the KKR top-order continuing from strength to strength. A couple of twenties this week has shown that the left-hander is not out of striking form, and that would be enough for the management to validate their faith in him. With the weight of an entire batting order on his shoulders, things have not nearly gone Shubman Gill's way. Jaiswal's hundred may have just put him back up ahead, and Gill may have a lot of catch-up to do after underwhelming returns in his last two matches. The climb towards the top has not exactly been leaps and bounds but gentler. In another week of hits and misses, Suryakumar's half-century was crucial in a slender win over the Punjab Kings. However, he failed to fire during another top-order wobble against Rajasthan, but none of that will exactly deter India's premier T20 batter in the lead-up to the World Cup. While he had five wickets to his name last week, Arshdeep returned a solitary scalp this week while not exactly leaking runs. His mercurial returns continue to pose problems for India's pace composition besides Bumrah. However, the left-armed is expected to hold his ground over his past success and skillful repertoire as the deadline for the selection narrows down. With just a solitary outing, there is not much to peek into Dube's performances this week. However, with a stuttering Hardik Pandya putting India's hopes on a knife's edge, Dube's form in the upcoming days will be crucial as he hopes to become more than just a mere back-up for the World Cup. Wickets have been hard to come by for Ravi Bishnoi, and the young leggie is heading into a stiffer one-on-one clash with the veteran Yuvendra Chahal. While Chahal has shown a tendency to leak runs on middling days, Bishnoi has not been on the expensive side, not nearly until this week.

There is still room for consistency, but Sanju Samson's mature outlook with the bat has displayed a sense of refinement in his game. While he gave away a start in the previous outing, Samson remained unbeaten in a nine-wicket win over Mumbai. With Rishabh Pant and other wicketkeepers gaining momentum, Samson may want to keep this lead alive with a couple of solid outings in the upcoming week. Ravindra Jadeja's lack of wickets is a lingering concern over his recent white-ball form. That may just put him on the fringes of the World Cup side after another unsuccessful week. Even as he may have struck a stoic half-century, Jadeja's hitting capabilities do not bode well for India's finisher slot, making him an investment on only experience at the moment. 15. Rishabh Pant: (Last week rank: 15) Pant signalled a return to his best behind the stumps with a match-winning effort of four dismissals against Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad. However, a sluggish 44 in a 267-run chase against Sunrisers did not necessarily impose the faith in his batting.

'They must have partied hard': Suresh Raina's take on why RCB, PBKS and DC have not won IPL title

GNS News Agency, April 26

Taking a sly dig on Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals (DC), former India cricketer Suresh Raina said these teams never won the IPL because they used to party a lot in the formative years of the tournament. "Chennai never partied. That's why they have been the most successful," Raina said on Lallantop. "Two-three teams who partied have not won the IPL yet," he said. The host asked: "Do you mean RCB?" Raina replied: "No, there are a few teams who haven't won, they must have partied hard." "We (CSK) didn't do it. That's why we have 5 IPL trophies and 2 Champions League trophies. MI also have won 5 trophies," he added.

"If you party late into the night, how will you play in the morning? In May-June's heat, how will you play afternoon games if you have partied all night?" Raina said. "The entire team was particular about not partying late into the night. We are also playing for India, keep in mind. If I don't play well, why will my captain select me? Now, I am free, I have retired. We can party," Raina he said.

Suresh Raina also revealed that MS Dhoni was much more relaxed while captaining Chennai Super Kings than what he used to be as Team India captain. "Dhoni was much more relaxed while leading the franchise than when captaining India. He had a lot of pressure while leading



Suresh Raina also revealed that MS Dhoni used to be more relaxed while captaining Chennai Super Kings than Team India.

the nation on the global stage," said Raina. He further added that Dhoni was very tactically strong.