

## IN BRIEF

**Maoists kill munshi on Chhattisgarh-Jharkhand border, set fire to road construction vehicles**

Balrampur, May 1 (UNI) : Maoists killed a munshi (clerk) and set fire to vehicles engaged in road construction work on the Chhattisgarh-Jharkhand border on Thursday.

The incident occurred in the Mahuadand police station area, near Balrampur, where Maoists attempted to disrupt development work. According to sources, despite a major operation against Naxalites being underway on the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border and efforts towards peace talks, the Maoists brutally murdered the munshi on duty at the road construction site in the village of Or Sapath. They also set ablaze a JCB vehicle parked there. The Balrampur police have been put on high alert following the incident. Upon receiving information, the police registered a case, sent the deceased munshi's body for post-mortem, and launched an investigation into the matter.

**UP ST Commission to file case against insult of Dr Ambedkar**

Lucknow, May 1 (UNI) : Uttar Pradesh Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission Chairman, Bajinath Rawat, said on Thursday that the Commission has taken a suo motu cognisance of the insult of the architect of the Constitution Baba Saheb Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar and will file a case against the culprits.

The Chairman said that the Commission took suo motu cognisance of the matter and has asked the Lucknow Police Commissioner to register a case against the culprits.

It may be noted that the poster of Samajwadi Lohia Vahini displayed the picture of Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav on half of Dr Ambedkar's picture.

Rawat condemned this act and said that insulting great men and glorifying anti-national elements is the nature of SP.

## Telangana state to be on track by next year from financial crisis: CM



(Standard Post Bureau)

Hyderabad, May 1 : "Telangana state is slowly recovering from the financial crisis and it will be on the track by next year," said Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy here on Thursday.

Participating in May Day celebrations at Ravindra Bharathi here, Revanth Reddy said " the state witnessed destruction in the last 10 years as the previous BRS rulers left Rs 50,000 crore bills pending to contractors and Rs 1.20 lakh crore are pending in other departments. The last government is also responsible for long pending dues of Sarpanches, he alleged and said that the BRS previous government put Rs 8.29 lakh crore debt burden on the Congress government.

The Rs one lakh crore Kaleshwaram collapsed in just three years, he said financial exploitation has taken place in the state for the last ten years.

"Ministers and myself have been spending sleepless nights for the last 15 months", he said the state financial condition is on a positive trajectory and will recover by next year.

"The revolutionary movements embarked by the workers are always significant in the world", he said "The role of Singareni, RTC, Electricity employees and unorganized workers in the achievement of Telangana is noteworthy.

The People's government is moving forward by envisaging plans to support the workers in the state, the CM said and claiming that Telangana is at the forefront of the country in solving the unemployment problem with the support of all and the credit goes to the people's government for giving a share of the profits of Singareni and bonus to the workers. The power supply system collapsed due to negligence in the last 10 years. We are moving forward by preventing losses in a planned manner, he added.

## Police bust inter-state Ganja peddlers gang; five held

Hyderabad, May 1 (UNI) : Police busted an Inter-state Ganja racket by arresting five persons including two peddlers, who were involved in selling the narcotic substance, police said here on Thursday.

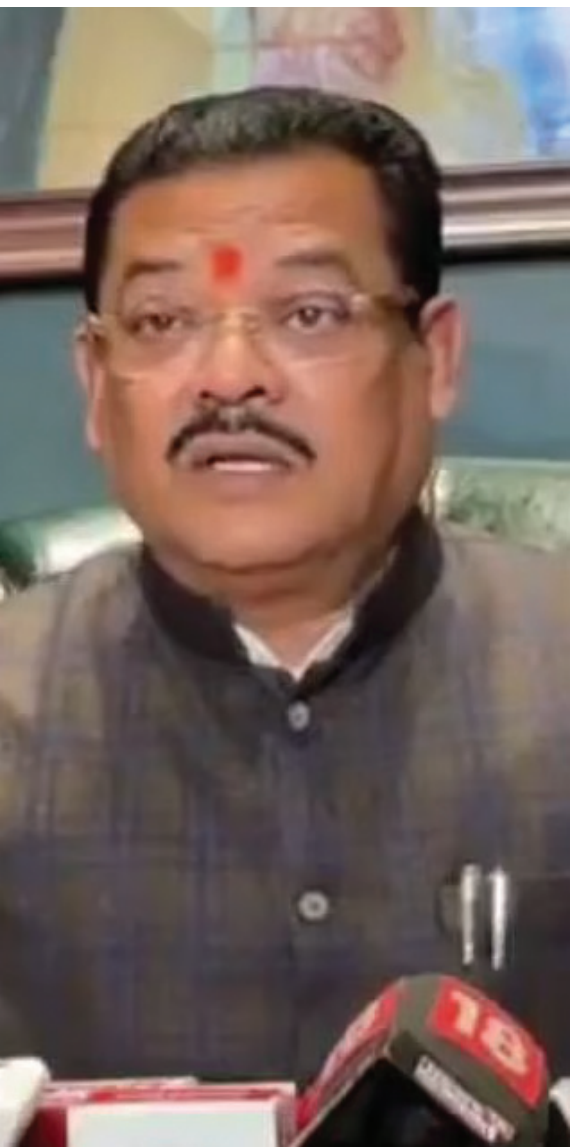
The Task force teams also arrested three Ganja consumers and seized 14 KGs of Ganja from their possession, said YVS Sudheendra, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Commissioners Task Force, in a release here.

In this regard, a case was registered in the Gachibowli Police station against the accused persons --

The West Zone Task Force apprehended a notorious ganja peddler, Gobin Boina, who had been absconding in connection with the Jubilee Hills NDPS case. At the time of arrest, around 14 kilograms of dry ganja was seized from his possession at his residence.

Upon interrogation, Gobin Boina revealed that he had procured the contraband from one Pita Ranjan Nayak, a resident of Odisha State. Both individuals are identified as habitual offenders with prior NDPS cases registered against them in Gachibowli and Madhapur Police Stations under the C y b e r a b a d Commissionerate.

In addition, three ganja consumers were also apprehended during the operation for purchasing and consuming the drug from Gobin Boina. In total, 14 kilograms of dry ganja were seized during the operation, the release added.



## CM's relief fund and charity hospital help desk inaugurated

State Social Justice Minister and Guardian Minister of the district, Sanjay Shirsat on Thursday inaugurated the district level help desk, which works to provide assistance to citizens through Chief Minister's Relief Fund and Charity Hospitals. The programme was held at the district collector's office. Legislative Council member Sanjay Kenekar, divisional commissioner Dilip Gawde, district collector Dilip Swami, resident deputy collector Vinod Khirolkar, among others, were present on the occasion.

(See on page 3)

## Iran says 4th round of indirect talks with US set for Rome



Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said on Wednesday that the fourth round of the Omani-mediated indirect nuclear talks between Iran and the United States will be held in Rome on Saturday, according to the official news agency IRNA.

( See on page 5)

## Indian Women's Hockey Team Falls 0-2 to Australia



The Indian Women's Hockey Team showed plenty of fight but went down 0-2 against Australia in the third game of their Australia tour, at the Perth Hockey Stadium here on Thursday. Courtney Schonell (9') opened the scoring for the hosts in the first quarter, before Grace Stewart (52') added a second in the final phase to seal the result.

(See on page 7)

## Anti-Naxal operation aims to free area from Maoist control ..



The Inspector General of Police (IG) for Bastar region in Chhattisgarh, Sundarraj P, has said that the ongoing anti-Naxal operation in the Karengutta hills for the past nine days aims to liberate the area from the control of the banned Maoist organisation and make the land safe for its original inhabitants.

(See on page 8)

## Electronic death registration data to be used for updation of electoral rolls

New Delhi, May 1 (UNI) : The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Thursday introduced new initiatives aimed at improving the accuracy of electoral rolls, making the voting process more convenient for citizens.

These measures include utilising electronic death registration records to review electoral rolls, issuing standardised photo ID cards to Booth Level Officers (BLOs), and improving the design and accessibility of voter slips, an official statement said.

These measures are in line with the initiatives as envisaged by the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India Gyanesh Kumar during the Conference of Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs), in the presence of Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi in March this year.

The Commission will now obtain death registration data electronically from the Registrar General of India in line with Rule 9 of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 and Section 3(5)(b) of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969 (as amended in 2023). This will ensure that the Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) receive timely information about registered deaths. This will also enable Booth Level Officers (BLOs) to re-verify the information through field visits, without waiting for a formal request under Form 7. To make Voter Information Slips (VIS) more voter-friendly, the Commission has also decided to modify its design. The serial number and part number of the voter will now be displayed more prominently, with increased font size, making it easier for voters to identify their polling station and for polling officials to locate their names in the electoral roll efficiently.

The Commission has also directed that all BLOs, who are appointed by the EROs under Section 13B(2) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, be issued standard photo identity cards to ensure that citizens can recognise and interact confidently with them during voter verification and registration drives. As the first interface between the voters and the ECI in performing election related duties, it is important that BLOs are easily identifiable to the public while conducting house-to-house visits.

## Salary of SHG Workers and Staff denied in NIRDPR on Labour Day

Hyderabad, May 1 (UNI) : When the entire world is celebrating Workers Day and taking resolve to improve their working conditions, National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Hyderabad has denied salary to SHG workers and staff here on Thursday.

Usually the salary of staff is transferred on the last working day.

When SHG Workers and Employees asked the registrar and the Director Finance the reason behind non-payment of their salaries, they replied that it was decided by the DG (Director General) not to pay salary before the executive council meeting which is scheduled on May 2 in Delhi. Interestingly, the only representative of employees in the executive council, Dr C Dheeraja has been denied permission to attend the meeting of the Executive Council. It may be noted that NIRDPR is facing a grant cut by the Government of India from April 2025 onwards.

Although, the institute has sufficient savings from last year and also interest income from the corpus fund created over the years, the Director General's decision to delay salary disbursement has caused shock and disbelief among the employees.

In a meeting held at the Institute premises here this afternoon, many staff shared their problems such as their inability to pay school fees, hospital charges, bank loan EMIs. They have also decided not cooperate with this Director General till he mends his ways.

It may be known that he had withheld pensions of retired employees last year for more than a month and did not pay the salary of young fellows in the panchayati raj project for about 3 months.

There are around 220 permanent and 450 contractual employees in the NIRDPR.

The Director General and senior management has a plan to remove several contractual staff who are working with NIRDPR for a long time. Instructions have also been given to reduce the number of SHGs working in the NIRDPR. NIRDPR Employees Association and Academic Association had earlier approached the Union Minister for Rural Development for reinstatement of the grant in aid to the NIRDPR.

However, in the current situation and arbitrary decisions by the Director General of not paying salary to workers and staff, employees are contemplating to stage a peaceful dharna in future and to send representation to higher authorities against the functioning of the Director General.

Foods

Want to have Dinner at a stranger's home?



Part of the fun is not knowing who the host is, so here's one food party for which you won't be accused of gate crashing! Say hello to the new gastronomic experience, where people who have the talent to cook, open up their kitchens and residences to let folks savour authentic regional tastes and other fare. Already a big fad abroad, this home-meal enterprise is catching up in Mumbai too.

**WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?**  
Insia Lacewalla, who has been curating culinary pop-ups in the city, realised that somewhere, good, homestyle Indian food was simply not available. "I felt there was such a craving for it, so this September, we just got pals together and tried out the concept...it was a hit! Today, we have a mixed group — corporates, in art and fashion lovers and stand-alone couples, who like this mode of meeting people and sampling great food," she says.

Agrees Neeta Valecha, who also spun this thought into a similar food venture in 2013. She and husband Saket get together folks who want that 'authentic' taste of food that you may not get in restaurants. "We started out with a small Keralite breakfast in Pune and now, we have 150 hosts in India and abroad," says Neeta. People sign up with their site, choose an upcoming meal and pay for it online. "Anyone who's travelled, knows that the cuisine in a restaurant is just not the same as ghar ka khaana. For instance, you can dine at a Japanese restaurant in Mumbai, but enjoying sushi in a Japanese home with a Japanese family — well, that's a different experience altogether," she adds.

**AS AUTHENTIC AS IT GETS**  
Go with a hearty appetite as the food at these experiences, offers quite a variety. "Mumbai is simply loaded with culinary treasures from the original Pathare Prabhu community, to food-loving Gujaratis, Marwadis, Bengalis and the international community," informs Saket. "People relish the opportunity to eat all these traditional foods and

Lonely in Mumbai or just bored?  
This weekend, forget buying that movie ticket or dropping into your regular restaurant, and instead, try something new. A growing fad has been getting a group of food lovers in the city to head to a stranger's house to enjoy a delicious, home-cooked meal.

meet new, interesting people," he explains.

The experience offers community-specific meals. "We just had an Assamese spread, plus a Sindhi and a Mangalorean one," informs Insia. "Each meal had to be planned in advance as the aim is to make it as authentic as possible. For the Assamese one, we had to get the fish down all the way from Assam and for the Mangalorean dinner, we brought down the ghee, gunpowder masala and Mysore pak from Mangalore," she says. Saket adds, "At our last Bengali meal, for the sweet dish, Kheer Nolen Gurur, the rice had to be brought from Bengal as it only grows there and for an upcoming Keralite meal, we will be using special tamarind for the Meen (fish) curry." With so much on offer, get set for a feast!

**HOW IT WORKS**  
- The guest applies to the site (free).  
- His/her profile is scanned through social networking sites, etc.  
- The customer has to pay online so as to ensure that there is no wastage of food.  
- The host is reimbursed for the cost of putting the meal together — ingredients, ambience, etc.  
- The site takes a service fee.

Tea pairing for your party

No longer does tea go with just biscuits or sandwiches. Here's how to pair the cuppa with a variety of foods

There's nothing ordinary about a cup of tea. Each has a unique flavour and fragrance and like any other drink, it can be paired with different foods. In fact, pairing tea with foods can actually heighten the eating experience. Today, several establishments offer a list of teas that can be balanced with savouries. Though teas may vary from region to region, the basics remain constant. For instance, Japanese green teas go best with seafood and robust, darker oolongs go well with grilled foods. If all you have done so far is serve tea with digestive biscuits and other nibbles to your guests, here are new pairings to try...

**Quite the trend now**  
Tea expert Neetu Sarin says of late it has become more

fashionable to try unique tea pairings. "You can actually do what you like and get very creative. My favourite is to have white tea. This is very mild and goes well with basmati rice. Have it with a lightly-spiced pulao. In the Middle East and Turkey, people often have mint tea with a date or sweet dryfruit. Another popular variety is Oolong tea, which is available selectively; you get so many varieties of it today."

Adds tea stylist Radhika Batra Shah, "Tea is one of the most popular beverages and tea-food pairings have their own technique. The matching of tea and food isn't a simple task."



Get innovative with Ice creams

There's a line from a poem that goes: 'The only emperor is the emperor of ice cream.' With temperatures in the city soaring each day, it's natural to crave ice cream.



And, if you're the kind of person who wishes to dig into a bucket of ice cream on a regular basis, it's advisable that you spend on the ingredients and make it at home rather than pick up expensive ones off the shelf. Here is a list of five unusual and interesting flavours you could try making at home:

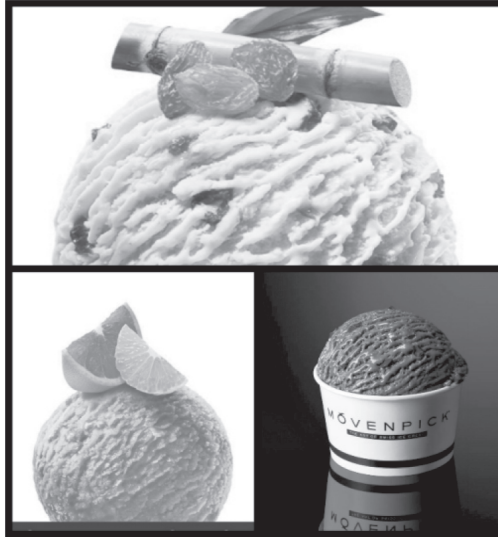
**Basic method to make ice cream**  
- Prepare your mixture, then chill over an ice bath. Meanwhile, freeze a shallow stainless steel container.  
- Pour the cold mixture into the frozen pan.  
- Chill for 20 minutes and check the ice cream. As the edges start to freeze, stir the mixture vigorously with a spatula or a whisk to make it smooth and creamy. Continue to freeze after whisking.  
- Stir the ice cream vigorously every half an

sugar and eggs. Place your mixture in a pan and cook over low heat, whisking it until it thickens.

- 4 egg yolks
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cup gingerale
- 1 cup heavy cream

**Lime and chilli ice cream**  
If you and your family don't like eggs, here's the perfect recipe. Heat coconut milk until it comes to a simmer. Place it aside and whisk in the sugar until it dissolves. Add the lime leaves, lemon grass and chillies and keep aside for 10 minutes. Remove the lime leaves and lemongrass and whisk in the heavy cream and vanilla custard.

- 2 cups coconut milk
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 red chillies chopped
- 8-10 lime leaves
- 1 lemon grass
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 2 cups vanilla custard



**Khatta Meetha ice cream**  
For a mix of two bold flavours, sweet and spicy, heat the cream, milk, mint leaves, coriander power, paprika, turmeric and salt till it comes to a simmer. Let it cool for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, whisk the sugar and eggs until pale. Add the heated and cooled mixture gradually to the sugar and eggs and whisk slowly. Pour this final mixture into a pan and heat until it thickens.

- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 cup milk
- ½ cup mint leaves

- 1/2 tsp coriander powder
- ½ tsp paprika
- ½ tsp turmeric
- A pinch of salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 egg yolks

**Dark Chocolate and walnut ice cream**

Even if you try and avoid, you can never escape the ever-preferred chocolate ice cream. First, mix the custard, cocoa and sugar in half a cup of milk. Meanwhile, heat the remaining milk till it comes to a boil. Then, blend the cocoa mixture to the boiled milk and let it cool for a bit. After that, whisk in the cream and vanilla essence till

the mixture thickens. Once your ice cream is ready, top it with walnuts for crunch.

- 2 ½ cups milk
- 1 tbsp custard powder
- 2 tbsp dark cocoa powder u 1 cup sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla essence
- 1 ½ cups heavy cream
- 1 cup crushed walnuts

**Kaafir lime ice cream**  
If you can't stay away from oriental

cuisine, here's a cool adaptation of it. Mix the milk, cream, sugar, kaffir lime zest, sea salt, egg yolks and strips of kaffir lime leaves in a bowl. Whisk the mixture thoroughly and freeze for an hour. Then, pour the mixture into a saucepan and cook the custard over a medium heat, stirring constantly until it reaches a simmer. Strain the mixture into a bowl to discard the strips and zest.

- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2/3rd cup sugar
- ½ tsp fresh kaafir lime zest
- 1/4th tsp sea salt
- 4 egg yolks
- 4 fresh kaafir lime leaves
- Sliced kaafir lime for garnish
- Strips for lime zest for garnish

hour, about four to five times, until it's firmly frozen. If the ice cream becomes too hard to stir, let it sit out till it's soft enough to stir before freezing it again.

- In three hours, your ice cream should be ready to serve

**Gingerale ice cream**  
Can't stay away from fizzy drinks this summer? Don't. Just give it an interesting form to beat the heat. In a bowl, whisk the eggs and sugar until it is pale. Meanwhile, mix the gingerale and cream and heat it in a heavy-bottom saucepan until it comes to a simmer. Slowly blend it into the bowl of

DRI officials seize smuggled gold at Hyderabad airport; 3 held

Hyderabad, May 1 (UNI) : Directorate Of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officials on Thursday seized 3.5 kg smuggled gold of foreign origin worth Rs 3.45 crore at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) here and arrested three persons, including two ground handling staff and a passenger, officials said.On specific intelligence, DRI officials from Hyderabad Zonal Unit, intercepted an Indian passenger who had travelled from Dubai to Hyderabad via Muscat, along with a ground handling staff working at the airport near the Aero Bridge at the RGIA.The smuggled gold was being handed over to the ground handling staff by the passenger when the DRI team arrested the accused.

Investigation revealed that the smuggled gold was supposed to have been delivered to another ground staff waiting near the parking area at RGIA. The second staff member would later return the said gold outside the airport to the same passenger after he exited the customs area.

A total of 30 gold bars (10 tola each), concealed in three packets, were recovered from the passenger.The accused were arrested under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 & have been remanded in judicial custody, police said. Further investigation is in progress, police sources added

AirAsia introduces Auto Visa Check feature for seamless online check-in

Hyderabad, May 1 (UNI) : AirAsia on Thursday announced that it has introduced a new Auto Visa Check (AVC) feature on the AirAsia MOVE app and airasia.com, enabling seamless online check-in for international routes that require a visa and Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA).

This path-breaking innovation is part of the airline’s pioneering efforts to simplify the journey for millions of guests across the region by avoiding wait times and easing congestion at airport check-in counters, the airlines said in a release.Until now, travellers flying to countries with visa requirements were required to check in or re-check in at the airport for manual visa verification.

With this innovative AVC feature, guests can verify their visa in real time during online check in, up to 14 days and until one (1) hour before scheduled departure time, from the comfort of their home or while on the go.For guests travelling with hand-carry luggage only, they may proceed directly to the boarding gate using their e-boarding pass (where applicable) or reprint their boarding pass at the self-service kiosk if needed. Guests with checked baggage may print their bag tags at the kiosk and drop their bags at the designated baggage drop counter.



Porters carry luggage at the New Delhi railway station, on International Workers' Day, also known as May Day, in New Delhi on Thursday.

CM appeals RTC workers to withdraw proposed strike from May 7

Hyderabad, May 1 (UNI) :Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Thursday appealed to RTC workers to withdraw the strike from May 7 and hold talks with the Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar. The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) workers' union had recently announced a statewide strike starting May 7, citing the state government’s failure to address their longstanding demands.

Participating in the May Day celebrations at Ravindra Bharati here, Revanth Reddy said the RTC has been earning profits and the responsibility to protect the Corporation lies with the workers.

The previous BRS government put Rs 8.29 lakh

crore debt burden on the Congress government, he said“ Financial exploitation has taken place in the state for the last ten years.

The workers should discuss their problems with Transport Minister, Reddy said that we will put all the income in your hands and RTC workers should suggest how to spend it.

Compassionate appointments have been made in RTC and the government is constantly working for the welfare of the workers, the CM said that the government's policy is to do good for the workers.Gig workers policy for unorganized workers will be introduced soon, he said the government will hold talks on the RTC workers strike soon.“I will not take a single rupee and spend it only for RTC

workers welfare”, he said the current state's financial situation is not good and the RTC workers should think about it once.

Even if it is difficult, it is my responsibility to disclose every detail, the Chief Minister said the" strike call will badly affect the state."

“The State is slowly recovering from the financial crisis and “it will be on the track by next year”, he said and asked RTC workers “to not fall into the trap of BRS leaders, who did nothing for the state in 10 years”.Reddy also appealed to RTC workers to repose faith in the government and said he will stand with them. Gig workers policy will be a role model for the country. No one can stop Telangana Rising, he added.

Cyber Crime offender from Andhra Pradesh held for missing SIM cards registered with fake addresses

Hyderabad, May 1 (UNI) : The Banjara Hills Police on Thursday arrested a cyber crime offender Shaik Munwar Basha, a SIM promoter and Field Sales Executive (FSE), for allegedly misusing SIM cards registered with fake addresses and utilizing demo SIMs allocated to him.

The accused, a resident of Tadepalligudem ( Andhra Pradesh state), was arrested by Banjara Hills Police with Assistance from Zonal Cyber Cell – West Zone, a police release said here.Shaik Munwar was actively involved in cybercrime activities, in collusion with other cyber criminals.These individuals used mule SIM cards to perpetrate various cyber frauds, particularly targeting OLX users.The accused would search for genuine advertisements related to iPhone mobiles, copy the content, and repost it as his own.When potential buyers responded to his fraudulent advertisement, Munwar and his associates would coordinate over the phone, directing both the buyer and the actual seller to a common location.

Govt ready to share its experience with Centre in conducting caste census: CM

Hyderabad, May 1 (UNI) : The Telangana Government which conducted a caste census in the state and became a role model for the country, is ready to share the government's experience with the Centre in conducting a caste census, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said on Thursday.

Addressing a press conference at his residence here, Revanth Reddy said that “we are ready to work with anyone to implement Rahul Gandhi’s ideas. The State Government conducted caste census like nowhere else in the country, he claimed.

It is a ‘political compulsion’ the BJP led NDA government took the decision on the caste census, he said.

'We are welcoming the union government's decision', Reddy said “On the instructions of Senior Congress leader Rahul

Gandhi, Telangana Government conducted a caste census in Telangana and became a role model for the country. We are extending gratitude to Rahul Gandhi on this occasion, he said.

The government adopted two resolutions – to conduct the caste census in the national census and to remove the 50 percent limit in reservations - in the Assembly and sent to the Union Government for approval, the CM said .

The Congress staged a big dharna along with BC groups at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, he said, adding Prime Minister Narendra Modi bowed to the Congress pressure and took a decision on the caste census.

Besides discussing the policies to be followed to conduct a caste census with all political parties, the Prime Minister should announce the deadline for

the completion of the caste census along with the national census, Reddy said for this, a committee consisting of Group of Ministers (GoM) and another committee consisting of officials should be constituted by the Centre.The Telangana government prepared the procedures and put them before the people in the process of conducting the caste census. It collected 8 pages of information with 57 questions, made all political parties as participants in the caste census, he informed.

The caste census was conducted in the state as a government program and not a party event, the CM said.The government completed the caste census by involving everyone and it could be the main reason that Telangana stood at the forefront and also a role model for the country in the caste census, he claimed.

Asking the BJP leaders, who criticised the state government on the caste census, why the party ruled states didn't conduct the caste census despite being in power for 10 years, Reddy said that the state BJP leaders criticised the state government for political gains.

BJP leaders are jealous and frustrated as they worry that Modi is following Revanth Reddy's policies, he said.

BJP spoke against the caste census till recently but the Union Government came forward to conduct caste census only under our pressure, the CM claimed and said that the BJP led government has to conduct the caste census to save its ‘coalition government’at the Centre.

"We welcome the Centre's decision to implement Rahul Gandhi's idea of conducting caste census," he added.

Guv attends Maharashtra & Gujarat Foundation Day celebrations at Raj Bhavan

Hyderabad, May 1 (UNI) : Governor Jishnu Dev Varma, attended the Maharashtra and Gujarat Foundation Day celebrations as the Chief Guest at the Durbar Hall in Raj Bhavan here on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor extended warm greetings to the people of both states and praised Maharashtra and Gujarat for their vital roles in India’s economic progress and cultural legacy.

He highlighted the importance of the “Ek Bharat – Shreshtha Bharat” initiative in promoting national unity and harmony.

The Governor described Maharashtra as a hub of financial resilience and spiritual richness, and Gujarat as a land known for strong leadership, enterprise, and devotion.

Varma noted that though the two states were created on linguistic grounds in 1960, their shared contributions continue to strengthen the spirit of national integration.

The event also featured video messages from Maharashtra Governor C.P Radhakrishnan, and the Governor of Gujarat, Acharya Devvrat. Cultural performances showcasing the traditions of both states added colour and vibrancy to the celebration.

Among the attendees were M. Dana Kishore, Principal Secretary to the Governor; G Pallavi, Deputy Secretary to Governor, Mahesh Muralidhar Bhagwat, Rajendra Nimje, Sunitha Bhagawat, IFS; Patil Sangram Singh Ganpat Rao, Additional Director General, Centre for Good Governance; senior Raj Bhavan officials, and distinguished guests from Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Three-day training-cum-exposure for GP Presidents from Bihar begins at NIRDPR

Hyderabad, May 1 (UNI) : Hyderabad-based National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), launched a three-day Training-cum-Exposure Visit programme here on Thursday for 149 Mukhiyas (Gram Panchayat Presidents) and three young professionals from the Bihar Institute of Public Administration and Rural Development (BIPARD).

In his keynote address at the inaugural programme at Institute here, Dr Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Associate Professor & Head, CPRDP&SSD, NIRD&PR, highlighted NIRD&PR’s leadership in strengthening Gram Panchayats across India through its School of Excellence in Panchayati Raj (SoEPR).He emphasized the institute’s transformative initiatives, including continuous training and e-enablement, development

of training modules, eGram Prashikshan, Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) guidelines, and capacity-building programmes for ward members as catalysts for change.

Dr Bhanja underscored the pivotal role of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through innovative practices such as watershed management, afforestation, renewable energy adoption, and decentralized planning via GPDPs.

In his welcome address at the event, faculty member Dr Rajesh Sinha urged participants to adopt best practices observed during the programme to enhance governance and service delivery in their Gram Panchayats.

He emphasized the critical role of PRIs in

Congress leader Keshava Rao urges Centre to hold peace talks with Maoists

Hyderabad, May 1 (IANS) : Senior Congress leader and Telangana government advisor K. Keshava Rao has urged the Centre to stop ‘Operation Kagar’ and hold peace talks with Maoists.

The former MP strongly resented the anti-Maoist operation launched by the Union Home Ministry.

He said that while violence has no place in democracy, the state must handle Maoist violence tactfully. He admitted that police and armed forces cannot remain silent to violence by the extremists.

Keshava Rao appealed to the Union Government to respond favourably to the offer of extremist groups to open a dialogue for peace. He said such talks precede the extremists giving up their weapons and violence as an ideology. “A meaningful dialogue is the best way to stop violence,” he added.

The senior leader reminded the Centre of the fruitful experience of Andhra Pradesh holding

such talks in 2005, which resulted in a drastic decline in Maoist violence.

“It is today restricted to a few areas bordering Chhattisgarh in Telangana. The violence must stop and must be stopped,” he added. Meanwhile, responding to a query at a press conference, Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said his government and the Congress party are against violence. “We are against all forms of violence, whether it is by the state, the common man or groups. There should be no violence,” he said.

CM Revanth Reddy said that the Congress party believes that any issue, however big it may be, can be addressed through talks.

He reiterated that the government would make a decision after consultation with the party’s central leadership. He was asked about the request by the Peace Dialogue Committee to take the initiative to convince the Centre to stop

the operation and hold talks with the Maoists.

The Peace Dialogue Committee, headed by retired high court judge Justice Chandra Kumar, met the Chief Minister on April 27 and requested him to take the initiative to ensure that the Centre holds peace talks with the Maoists.

The Committee members urged the Chief Minister to persuade the Centre to agree to a ceasefire.CM Reddy told them that he would consult former home minister and senior leader K. Jana Reddy, who has experience in conducting talks with Maoists.The Chief Minister told the Peace Committee leaders that his government views Naxalism purely from a social perspective, not as a law and order issue.

The next day (April 28), he discussed the issue with Jana Reddy and Keshava Rao and later told media persons that a decision would be taken after consultation with the party’s central leadership.

STANDARD POST

Stage set for relaunch of Amaravati capital works by PM Modi

The stage is set for the re-launch of Andhra Pradesh state capital works by Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Friday, nearly a decade after he laid the foundation stone.

After years of uncertainty, legal tangles and political turmoil, the Prime Minister is set to re-launch the capital works in the presence of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and leaders of the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

The Prime Minister will reach Amaravati at 3.20 p.m. to lay the foundation for Rs 49,040 crore worth of works in Amaravati. These include five towers of the Amaravati Government Complex, the High Court, the Legislative Assembly building, etc.

He will also lay the foundation stone for some works and inaugurate some other projects, worth Rs 57,962 crore, relating to the DRDO, the DPIIT, the NHAI, and the Railways.

Elaborate arrangements have been made by the state government for the public meeting, which is expected to be attended by lakhs of people.

A group of ministers visited the venue near the state Secretariat on Thursday to review the arrangements for the much-awaited event.

Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav said that all arrangements have been made for the public meeting.

As people from all Assembly constituencies are expected for the meeting, the Chief Minister have asked authorities to make sure that they do not face any inconvenience.

Minister for Municipal Administration P. Narayana said farmers of 29 villages who have given 34,000 acres of land for the state capital were being partnered in the programme. He exuded confidence that with the development of state capital, people's financial position would improve.

He reiterated that the government aimed to complete the construction of the capital city as per the master plan in three years.

Chief Secretary K. Vijayanand also reviewed the arrangements at the venue of the public meeting, Amaravti pylon and the parking area.

He said that in view of the summer, all arrangements have been made to provide drinking water, snacks, lunch, and dinner for the people coming from various parts of the state by buses.

Chief Minister Naidu asked all the TDP, Jana Sena and BJP leaders from across the state to attend the event. He claimed that the earlier TDP government had created a record of sorts by successfully pooling the land. The farmers came forward to give their lands with the hope of a good future, but the previous government of YSR Congress destroyed Amaravati in the name of three capitals.

Naidu said that the agitation taken up by the people and the farmers in the capital region ultimately proved fruitful. With the active cooperation from the Centre, both the ADB and the World Bank have sanctioned loans for the capital, the Chief Minister said.

It was on October 22, 2015 that the Prime Minister had laid foundation stone for Amaravati at a ceremony held at Uddandarayunipalem.

Few development works were undertaken by the then TDP government. However, the works came to a halt after it lost power in 2019 as the YSR Congress Part government headed by Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy decided to develop three state capitals. After the TDP-led NDA stormed to power in June last year, Naidu decided to resume work on his dream project.

The CRDA on March 11 approved tenders for 59 development projects worth Rs 37,702 crore. The CRDA had earlier called tenders for 73 projects worth Rs 48,012 crore. The state government plans to spend Rs 64,721 crore under the first phase to undertake development works and provide basic amenities.

Jharkhand's Loss, Andhra Pradesh's Gain: ArcelorMittal's Rs. 1.4 Lakh Crore Steel Plant to Rise in Anakapalli

Andhra Pradesh Secures India's Largest Foreign-Backed Industrial Investment in Two Decades



(RAVIKUMAR BOPANA)

In a major industrial coup, Andhra Pradesh has secured the long-delayed mega steel plant project of ArcelorMittal, the world's second-largest steel manufacturer. Originally intended for Jharkhand in 2005, the Rs. 1.4 lakh crore project—stalled for nearly two decades—will now be developed near Nakkapalli in the Anakapalli district of Andhra Pradesh. This marks a defining moment in the state's industrial history and a turning point for the North Andhra region.

A Project That Wandered for 20 Years

The journey of this steel plant has been long and turbulent. ArcelorMittal had first signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Jharkhand government in 2005 to set up a massive integrated steel plant. However, bureaucratic hurdles, land acquisition issues, and challenges in securing iron ore linkages prevented the project from taking shape.

Subsequent attempts to move the project to Odisha and later to Karnataka also met with the same fate. The company's insistence on guaranteed raw material supply, coupled with regulatory delays, kept pushing the project into uncertainty.

Andhra Pradesh Steps In — A Strategic Move

Under the leadership of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Andhra Pradesh moved

swiftly to seize the opportunity. The state government facilitated land acquisition for the first phase—2,200 acres at Nakkapalli—by ensuring speedy clearances and offering a transparent compensation package. ArcelorMittal has already paid Rs. 50 lakh per acre to the AP government, signaling a strong commitment to the project.

The breakthrough, however, came through political negotiation. ArcelorMittal had put forth a critical condition: the plant could be built only if it secured a minimum of 12 million tonnes of iron ore annually. The central government, at first, approved only 6 million tonnes. It was only after Naidu personally intervened and lobbied with the Union government that the allocation was enhanced enough to make the project viable.

A Game-Changer for North Andhra

This steel plant, once operational, is expected to generate over 1,00,000 direct and indirect jobs, transforming the economic landscape of North Andhra. The region, often overlooked in industrial planning, is now emerging as a hub of large-scale investments thanks to its strategic coastal location, deep-water port access, and supportive state policy.

In addition to the steel plant, ArcelorMittal is planning to build a dedicated private port to handle raw materials and finished goods. The company also owns the slurry pipeline previously built by Essar Steel from the Bailadila mines in Chhattisgarh to near Visakhapatnam. ArcelorMittal acquired this pipeline through its takeover of Essar Steel in 2019. With minimal extensions, the pipeline will



now be used to transport iron ore slurry directly to the new steel facility, significantly reducing logistics costs and environmental impact.

The ore will be transported mixed with water through the pipeline; once it reaches the plant, the water will be separated and recycled, while the mineral will feed into the production units.

Lessons from Past Failures

This isn't the first time Andhra Pradesh has attempted to host a second major steel plant after Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. Previous efforts under various governments failed to take off:

- Kadapa Steel Plant: Promised during Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy's tenure and later championed by Gali Janardhana Reddy, the project was allocated 20,000 acres (including land for an

airport), but never moved beyond announcements. Even multiple foundation stone ceremonies couldn't translate into actual development due to lack of iron ore linkages.

- Bayyaram Steel Plant (Khammam): Public pressure pushed for a plant at Bayyaram, but the inferior quality of local iron ore made the project unviable, eventually leading to its quiet abandonment.

“The Anakapalli project is different—backed by a global industrial leader, with clear logistics, confirmed mineral linkages, and strong administrative support from the state.”

Strategic Implications

The ArcelorMittal project will make Andhra Pradesh a major player in India's steel production landscape. It aligns with the Centre's National Steel Policy 2017, which aims to increase the country's steel

Bulldozer action initiated in Nainital following minor rape case

Nainital, May 1 (UNI) In response to alleged rape of a minor in Nainital, Uttarakhand, the administration has initiated bulldozer action on Thursday against encroachments in the area.

The administration identified 150 encroachments in Rukut Compound.

Under the leadership of Joint Magistrate Varuna Agarwal, a joint operation was conducted by the revenue department, municipal corporation, and district development authority to identify encroachments. During the operation, 100 notices were issued by the municipal corporation and 50 notices were issued by the development authority to encroachers. The notices were primarily issued for non-compliance with building bylaws, encroachments on roads, and drains. A notice has also been pasted on the property of the accused in the minor's sexual exploitation case.



production capacity to 300 million tonnes by 2030. The Andhra project alone will contribute a significant share toward that goal.

Additionally, the project is expected to have a multiplier effect on the local economy—boosting demand for services, construction, infrastructure, and transport. Educational institutions and skill development centers in North Andhra are likely to benefit from industry-academia linkages.

Coastal Corridor Vision Taking Shape

The Anakapalli steel plant also fits neatly into the broader vision of developing the Visakhapatnam–Chennai Industrial Corridor (VICIC), a key infrastructure initiative supported by the Asian Development Bank. The corridor aims to transform coastal Andhra Pradesh into a globally

competitive industrial zone. With port connectivity, rail links, and improved logistics, AP's coastline is emerging as a new industrial lifeline for the state.

The relocation of ArcelorMittal's mega steel project to Andhra Pradesh is not just a stroke of luck—it is a result of political will, strategic thinking, and persistent follow-through. For Andhra Pradesh, especially the underdeveloped northern districts, this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity that could redefine the region's industrial destiny.

(The author is a senior journalist, columnist and information analyst, who previously served as the Chief Public Relations Officer to Hon'ble governor at the Andhra Pradesh Raj Bhavan and media liaison officer to Hon'ble speaker at the AP Legislative Assembly.)

Victims of Naxal violence meet CM Sai

Raipur, May 1 (UNI) : A delegation of victims of violence perpetrated by the Naxals in Bastar region called on Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Dev Sai here on Thursday and submitted a memorandum demanding the ongoing operation against the Left Wing extremists in Kuregutta hills be taken to a decisive phase..

The delegation comprised victims from various areas of Bastar division, including Sukma, Bijapur, and Kanker, who had lost loved ones, suffered physical torture, or faced displacement due to Naxal violence.

Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma was present on the occasion. The delegation stated that thousands of families in Bastar have been facing Maoist terror for four decades, with the unrest deeply damaging the region's social, educational and economic foundations.

However, in recent years, effective actions by security forces and the government's inclusive development policy have rekindled hope for peace and development in Bastar. The villagers cited events like Bastar Olympics and Bastar Pandum as symbols of the new awareness and confidence.

CM Sai listened to the delegation's concerns and assured that the Chhattisgarh government was fully committed to eradicating Naxalism. He stated that the security operation in Kuregutta is in its decisive phase, and the government will complete the Naxal elimination campaign at any cost to accelerate Bastar's development.

The Chief Minister emphasised that Naxalism is not just a violent movement but also a threat to the culture based on coexistence.

He assured that the government stood with every family which suffered in the hands of Naxals and would not tolerate any attempt to break the morale of security forces or hinder the campaign.

CM Sai expressed the hope that with people's participation and confidence, the government would succeed in the anti-Naxal struggle and propel Bastar towards permanent peace and development.

Delhi HC pulls up Baba Ramdev Over 'Sharbat Jihad' Remark

New Delhi, May 1 (UNI) : The Delhi High Court on Thursday came down heavily on yoga guru Baba Ramdev for once again making objectionable remarks against Hamdard's popular Rooh Afza product, despite a previous restraint order.

Justice Amit Bansal observed that Ramdev “lives in his own world and is not in anyone's control,” as the Court took strong exception to a fresh video allegedly violating its earlier directions. The controversy arose from Ramdev's “Sharbat Jihad” remark, made earlier this month during a promotion for Patanjali's rose sharbat, where he allegedly claimed that proceeds from Rooh Afza sales were being used to fund madrasas and mosques.

Though Ramdev later claimed he hadn't named any specific brand or community, the Court had

restrained him from issuing any statements, advertisements, or social media posts targeting Hamdard.

On Thursday morning, when informed of the latest video, Justice Bansal noted that Ramdev appeared to be prima facie in contempt of court.

“In view of the last order, his affidavit as well as this video are prima facie in contempt. I will issue a contempt notice now. We are just calling him here...,” Justice Bansal remarked, posting the matter for a post-lunch hearing at 2:15 PM.

Following the court's sharp observations, Senior Advocate Rajiv Nayar appeared for Ramdev and Patanjali in the afternoon session.

Nayar informed the bench that the offending portion of the video would be removed from all social media

platforms and other media channels within 24 hours.

Accepting this submission, the Court directed immediate compliance and listed Hamdard's application seeking an interim injunction for further hearing on Friday.

The suit, filed by Hamdard National Foundation (India), sought the removal of all objectionable videos from social media and restraining Ramdev from making any further disparaging remarks against its flagship Rooh Afza product. Previously, Justice Bansal had strongly criticised Ramdev's statements, calling them “indefensible” and stating they had “shocked the conscience of the Court.” Justice Bansal showed his displeasure with Ramdev's repeated defiance of judicial restraint and his tendency to act beyond legal bounds.

## 9 Afghan inmates released from Oman's jail to join their families

Kabul, May 1 (UNI) : A total of nine Afghan nationals who were set free from prison in the Sultanate of Oman recently would soon reunite with their families in Afghanistan, reported the state-run Bakhtar news agency on Thursday.

Six out of the nine former detainees have already returned to their homeland and the remaining three are on the way back to their home country, the state-owned media outlet added without providing more details.

Welcoming the step as a sign of good gesture, the state-run media outlet hoped for further expanding brotherly relations between the Afghan interim government and the Arabian state.

Hundreds of Afghan nationals have already been released from jails in Pakistan and Iran and returned to their homeland over the past months.

## Pak PM appoints Lt Gen Asim Malik as NSA

Islamabad, May 1 (UNI) : Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has assigned the additional portfolio of National Security Adviser (NSA) to Director General of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Lieutenant General Asim Malik, an official said.

According to a notification dated April 29, Lt Gen Asim Malik will now serve as the Prime Minister's National Security Adviser in addition to his current role as DG ISI.

The appointment comes amid rising tensions between Pakistan and India, and conveys the message that the country's civil and military leadership are aligned on key national security matters, Pakistan media reports said. The NSA position had remained vacant since April 2022, when the PTI government was ousted after former Prime Minister Imran Khan lost a vote of confidence. At the time, Moeed Yusuf was serving as the NSA. The NSA holds the status of a federal minister and serves as the principal adviser to the Prime Minister on matters of national security, foreign policy, and strategic affairs. The adviser also heads the National Security Division, based at the Prime Minister's Secretariat in Islamabad.

## Russia-Ukraine talks can happen 'quite soon' : Russian Mission to UN

United Nations, May 1 (UNI) : The ceasefire negotiations between Moscow and Kiev can happen "quite soon" if Ukraine makes efforts to resolve root causes of the conflict, Russian Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations Dmitry Polyanskiy told RIA Novosti. "The ball is in the court of [Ukrainian President Volodymyr] Zelenskyy, whether to accept it or not, and if there is a serious, meaningful effort to bring about the resolution of the problems that led to this crisis. I think that this can happen quite soon," Polyanskiy said when asked when the ceasefire could be achieved. Moscow has called for diplomatic solutions for a long time, including at the UN Security Council, he added.

Polyanskiy also highlighted that Moscow made its 'final effort' in 2021, when draft security treaties were proposed to the United States and NATO. However, Russia's "preference for diplomatic ways of resolving crisis did not change," the diplomat noted.

## Canadian PM Carney, Zelensky agree to meet at G7 summit

Ottawa, May 1 (UNI) : Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Wednesday agreed to meet at the G7 Summit in Canada's Kananaskis, Alberta, in June.

According to a readout issued by the prime minister's office, Carney spoke with Zelensky after the former Bank of Canada governor secured victory in Monday's parliamentary elections. Carney underscored Canada's commitment to supporting Ukraine in achieving lasting peace and security. The two leaders agreed that a durable peace can only be achieved with Ukraine at the table, said the readout.

## Israel strikes town near Damascus amid sectarian unrest

Damascus, May 1 (UNI) : Israel strikes the town of Ashrafiyat Sahnaya southwest of Damascus on Wednesday, as Syrian forces regained control of the area following days of intense sectarian clashes, according to state media and a monitoring group.

Loud explosions echoed through the town amid Israeli aerial bombardment, coinciding with the presence of Israeli warplanes and drones, local sources reported. The strikes came after Israel had warned it would act to protect the Druze community in Syria, following widespread violence that has left dozens dead. Syrian forces, supported by allied paramilitary units, launched a large-scale operation to secure Ashrafiyat Sahnaya, conducting door-to-door searches for wanted individuals and seizing weapons.

The town's entrances and exits were sealed, from the al-Maamel area to the Daraa highway and the Tayarah checkpoint, effectively isolating it from its surroundings. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a war monitor, the total number of people killed in the recent sectarian unrest across Jaramana, Ashrafiyat Sahnaya, and along the Damascus-Suwayda highway has climbed to 42. The victims include Druze gunmen and civilians, members of the General Security Directorate, and pro-government militia. The violence was initially triggered by the circulation of an audio recording, purportedly from a Druze individual, whose remarks were considered offensive to Islam, igniting sectarian tensions and triggering retaliatory attacks in several towns south of Damascus.

# Taliban reinforces media ban on broadcasting of living images in Afghanistan's Faryab province

Kabul, May 1 (UNI) : The Afghan Taliban, in line with their hardline Islamic fundamentalist teachings, have reinforced their media ban on the broadcasting of images and representations of living beings, extending its ban to the country's Faryab province.

According to Amu TV, the decision was announced during a meeting on Tuesday, April 29, led by provincial officials after a review of Article 17 of the Taliban's 'Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice' law. Officials reportedly instructed local media outlets to cease publishing or broadcasting images of living creatures.

The ban has reportedly been extended to at least 17 provinces, with the Taliban-run National Television limiting its broadcasts to audio reports only. Local sources also reported that private television channels in these provinces have been barred from airing visual images.

The prohibition stems from a law signed by Taliban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada in September 2024, which explicitly bans the broadcast of images depicting living beings.

The law, implemented by Khalid Hanafi, the



Taliban's acting Minister for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, has already been enforced in provinces largely under the influence of Taliban leadership. As per Amu's findings, National Television in provinces such as Kandahar, Takhar, Badghis, Helmand, Nangarhar, Nuristan, Farah, Nimroz, Baghlan, Badakhshan, Jawzjan, Zabul, Parwan, Kunduz, Panjshir, Bamyán, and most recently Faryab, has restricted its content to audio broadcasts. According to Taliban-controlled media, the enforcement of the ban has sharply accelerated over the past month, with restrictions newly imposed in eight provinces during that period. Article 17 of the

Taliban's 'Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice' law details the restrictions on the media, including a ban on publishing or broadcasting images of living people and animals, which the Taliban regards as un-Islamic. Other sections order women to cover their bodies and faces and travel with a male guardian, while men are not allowed to shave their beards. The punishment for breaking the law is up to three days in prison or a penalty "considered appropriate by the public prosecutor." According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, since taking power in Afghanistan on August 15, 2021, the Taliban have employed a gradual strategy to suppress media activity in

the country, with the General Directorate of Intelligence forcing compliance with stringent regulations. These include bans on music and soap operas, bans on women's voices in the media, the imposition of mask-wearing for female presenters, a ban on live broadcasts of political shows, the closure of television stations, and the jamming or boycotting of independent international networks broadcasting to Afghanistan. To enforce these policies, the Taliban have detained, assaulted, and threatened journalists and media workers throughout the country. Elevision and pictures of living things were banned across the country under the previous Taliban rule from 1996 to 2001.

# UN chief renews call for immediate cessation of hostilities in Sudan

United Nations, May 1 (UNI) : UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Wednesday renewed his call for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Sudan and urged the international community to act with urgency to help bring an end to the relentless suffering and destruction in the country.

The UN chief "is appalled by the increasingly catastrophic situation in Sudan's North Darfur State, as deadly attacks continue on its capital Al Fasher," just two weeks after an assault on the

famine-stricken Zamzam and Abu Shouk displacement camps which reportedly killed hundreds of civilians, including humanitarian workers, Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for the secretary-general, said in a statement. With more than 400,000 people estimated to have been forced to flee the Zamzam camp alone earlier this month, Guterres is

## IDF says reservist wounded

Jerusalem, May 1 (UNI) : An Israeli reservist was seriously wounded when an explosive device went off in the West Bank, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said in a statement. "Earlier today (Wednesday), a reservist in the 9221st Battalion of the Ephraim Brigade, was severely injured by an explosive during operational activity in the area of Beita in the Samaria Regional Brigade," the IDF said on Telegram. According to the statement, the reservist was evacuated to a hospital to receive medical treatment, and IDF soldiers encircled the area of Beita to locate the perpetrators.

deeply concerned by reports of harassment, intimidation and arbitrary detention of displaced people at checkpoints, he said. Despite continuing insecurity and severe funding shortfalls, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners are doing what they can to urgently scale up emergency support in the Tawila area of North Darfur, which is hosting a majority of those displaced from Zamzam, said Dujarric.

Violence against civilians also continues in other parts of Sudan, with reports of mass killings in Omdurman in Khartoum State in recent days.

With the conflict now in its third year and increasingly destabilizing the broader region, the UN chief reiterates his call for the facilitation of safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all areas of need by all necessary routes, as well as for the protection of civilians, in line with the parties' clear obligations

under international humanitarian law. Perpetrators of serious violations must be held accountable, said the spokesman.

Meanwhile, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said on Wednesday that more humanitarian supplies are being dispatched to Tawila, where more than 300,000 people fleeing recent attacks in the Zamzam camp have sought safety.

OCHA said an inter-agency aid convoy led by the deputy humanitarian coordinator in Sudan, Antoine Gerard, crossed into the Darfur region from Chad on Tuesday via the Adre border crossing, on its way to Tawila, carrying life-saving supplies, including dignity kits, nutrition and medical supplies and other essential items.

Another convoy of 19 trucks carrying nutrition supplies is expected to depart Chad for Tawila on Wednesday, the office said.

# Large wildfire near Jerusalem forces evacuations, closes major highway

Jerusalem, May 1 (UNI) : Israel has raised its emergency alert to the highest level and appealed for international assistance as fast-spreading wildfires erupted in the hills west of Jerusalem on Wednesday.

Footage shared on social media showed drivers fleeing on foot as flames and thick black smoke loomed in the distance.

The Fire and Rescue Services said about 120 teams from across the country, supported by firefighting planes and helicopters, were deployed

to contain the flames, and another 22 teams were on their way. Five communities were evacuated, and others were instructed to prepare for possible evacuation. A section of the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway was closed by the police.

The Magen David Adom medical emergency service said in a statement that medics were treating 12 people for mild smoke inhalation, including two babies.

Fire and Rescue Authority Commissioner Eyal Caspi said he had activated the fire service's

national emergency plans and raised the alert level to its highest. "Following a situational assessment, firefighting teams were being mobilized from all districts nationwide," he said. Eyal Cohen, deputy commander of the Jerusalem District of the Fire and Rescue Authority, said Israel had requested firefighting assistance from regional neighbors. State-owned Kan TV reported that the countries include Greece, Cyprus, Croatia, and Italy. The Israel Defense Forces said the military has sent forces to

# BRICS countries urged to become reliable force in safeguarding legitimate rights of developing

Brasilia, May 1 (UNI) : Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Wednesday called on BRICS countries to strengthen unity and cooperation to act as the most reliable force in safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, made the remarks at the 15th Meeting of BRICS National Security Advisers and High Representatives on National Security in the Brazilian capital of Brasilia.

Wang said that under the new global circumstances, more and more countries are willing to listen to the voice of BRICS and hope to enter the door of BRICS.

He noted that a transactional approach in international politics and

weaponizing global trade will only aggravate the trust crisis among countries and jeopardize global security. Concession leads nowhere and unity is where the hope lies, Wang added.

Wang called on BRICS countries to work to defend the right to development, take the lead in unity and cooperation, and safeguard multilateralism, noting they should unequivocally stand out against a wayward power and safeguard the right and space to development for developing countries.

Other parties at the meeting agreed that BRICS countries should build consensus and make joint efforts to oppose all forms of bullying, interventionism and abusing tariffs, adhere to multilateralism, defend the common interests of the Global South, and work together to build a multipolar world of peace, security, fairness and justice.

## 3 policemen killed, 2 injured in operation in NW Pakistan

Islamabad, May 1 (UNI) : Three police personnel were killed and two others injured late Wednesday night during a gunfight between terrorists and the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in Pakistan's northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said on Thursday.

According to a police spokesperson, the exchange of fire occurred in the Chashma area of Bannu district, when CTD forces launched an operation targeting terrorists.

"Three CTD personnel were killed and two others sustained injuries during the encounter," the spokesperson said, adding that the injured were shifted to a nearby hospital for medical treatment, Pakistani media reported.

At least two terrorists were believed to have been killed or wounded in the shootout, but their bodies were taken away by their accomplices as they fled the scene, the spokesperson added.

Security forces recovered weapons, ammunition, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and hand grenades from the site.

The spokesperson said the area has been cordoned off, and an operation is underway to apprehend the fleeing suspects, Xinhua news reported.

Regional Police Officer Bannu Sajjad Khan vowed to bring the perpetrators to justice, stating that law enforcement would deal with the attackers with full force.



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# Indian Women's Hockey Team Falls 0-2 to Australia

Perth, May 1 (UNI) : The Indian Women's Hockey Team showed plenty of fight but went down 0-2 against Australia in the third game of their Australia tour, at the Perth Hockey Stadium here on Thursday.

Courtney Schonell (9') opened the scoring for the hosts in the first quarter, before Grace Stewart (52') added a second in the final phase to seal the result. Following two encounters with Australia A, this was India's first clash against the Australian team.

Australia winning an early penalty corner but the scoreline remained unchanged. Australia eventually broke the deadlock in the ninth minute when Courtney Schonell found the back of the net, to give her team the lead.

The hosts threatened to double their lead with another penalty corner but could not secure their second goal of the quarter.

The second quarter saw India come out eager to show their intent. Two penalty corners came India's way in quick succession, but the equaliser eluded them. However, despite their growing impact on the game, India went into half-time break trailing by a goal.

The third quarter was another goalless affair. Both teams were unable to convert their chances, including a penalty corner apiece, setting up a crucial fourth quarter for the Indian Women's Hockey Team.

In pursuit of a goal in the fourth quarter, India conceded for the second time in the night when Grace Steward slotted it into the net from open play at the 52nd minute mark, to make it 2-0 and seal their victory.

The Indian Women's Hockey Team will be in action again on Saturday, when they take on Australia at the Perth Hockey Stadium.

# One of the weirdest matches I've ever played: Iga Swiatek

Madrid, May 1 (UNI) Defending champion Iga Swiatek recovered from losing the first set without winning a game to beat Madison Keys 0-6 6-3 6-2 in their Madrid Open quarter-final match.

American Keys, who won the Australian Open for her first Grand Slam victory earlier this year, took the first set in 24 minutes before four-time French Open champion Swiatek recovered to secure a semi-final spot on Wednesday.

"Honestly, it was one of the weirdest matches I've ever played," said Poland's Swiatek.

"I didn't feel like the first set was that bad. I felt the ball well - it just went super long.

I tried to play a bit shorter and with some mistakes by Maddy, the momentum changed in the end. I'm happy that I did it," she said.

Swiatek will face Coco Gauff in the last four after the American beat Mirra Andreeva 7-5 6-1, the BBC reported.

Gauff faced two set points in the first set before taking control and securing victory.

Ukraine's Elina Svitolina is also into the semi-finals courtesy of a 6-2 6-1 win against Japan's

Moyuka Uchijima and will play world number one Aryna Sabalenka, who earned a hard-fought 7-6 (7-4) 7-6 (9-7) win against Marta Kostyuk.

Play was briefly halted in the second-set tie-break, before Sabalenka saved three set points on the way to registering her victory.

"Honestly, that was a battle and conditions were incredibly tough," said the 26-year-old. "It wasn't about tennis, it was about the way you handled your emotions.

"I think I did really well and I'm super proud I was able to handle myself in such a difficult situation."

# Tiredness, injuries big factors as title race continues in Spain

Madrid, May 1 (UNI) : The 34th round of games in La Liga sees FC Barcelona and Real Madrid struggling with injuries and tired legs as they battle it out for this season's title, while the race for Europe and to avoid relegation increases in intensity elsewhere.

Barcelona played one of the most exciting UEFA Champions League ties in recent years on Wednesday with a 3-3 draw at home to Inter Milan, but the match saw Jules Kounde suffer a muscle injury and the games are mounting up fast as Barcelona looks to defend a four-point lead over Real Madrid at the top of La Liga. Hansi Flick's outfit

visits bottom side Real Valladolid, already condemned to relegation with just four wins all season and the worst defensive record in La Liga, so Flick should be able to make some squad rotations without too many problems. It has been a painful week for Real Madrid after losing the Copa del Rey final to Barcelona, with Carlo Ancelotti seemingly on the verge of leaving the club for Brazil's national team, and the fallout from the disgraceful behavior of some of players at the end of last weekend's defeat.

Ancelotti will struggle to put out a solid defense at home to an in-form Celta Vigo, with Antonio Rudiger

# James unsure of future after Lakers play-off loss

Los Angeles, May 1 (UNI) : LeBron James says he is unsure if he will continue his NBA career next season after the Los Angeles Lakers were knocked out of the first round of the play-offs by the Minnesota Timberwolves.

The 40-year-old, in his 22nd season as a professional, was unable to prevent the Timberwolves completing a 4-1 series victory with a 103-96 win in game five at the Crypto.com Arena.

James, the NBA's all-time leading scorer, had been hoping to win a fifth championship this season. James, who signed a two-year deal with the Lakers in 2024, says he will take time in the off-season to consider his future, the BBC reported.

Asked how many more years he will continue to play, James said: "I don't know.

"It's something that I will sit down with my family, my wife, and my support group and kind of just talk through and see what happens, and just have a conversation with myself on how long I want to continue to play."

After a 74-game campaign, James said the opportunity to play alongside side Bronny - becoming the first father-son duo in NBA history - was the highlight of his season.

"Number one, for sure," said James.

"That's not even close. To be able to play the game that I love and to be able to be alongside my son, this whole year has been one of the most gratifying, satisfying journeys I've ever been on."

Rudy Gobert registered 27 points and 24 rebounds for the Timberwolves.

"It feels great," he said. "We had a season with ups and downs so to come here and play the way we did means a lot.

"We just have a bunch of guys that want to win, and a lot of guys who have been through adversity throughout their career and their life, and we love each other." All the things we went through throughout the season prepared us for this moment."

# Meghalaya Chief Minister's Sports Scholarship Scheme awarded 44 athletes

Shillong, May 1 (UNI) Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma on Thursday handed over Chief Minister's Sports Scholarship Scheme to 44 athletes across 10 disciplines at a send-off ceremony for Team Meghalaya.

The team will be participating at Khelo India Games 2025 to be held in Bihar from May 4 to May 15. The scheme aims to support and nurture sporting talents in the state. In the last six years, the government has made investment in sports infrastructure, policy interventions to promote the sporting ecosystem. The new scheme will further facilitate athletes for national excellence and also lay groundwork for the state to host National Games in 2027.

Speaking on the occasion, the chief minister said, "These scholarships recognize the hard work and dedication of our



athletes, encouraging them to strive for greater achievements and bring pride to Meghalaya and the nation."

Reminding the gathering of the scenario, when MDA government took over the reins in 2018, he stated that the state's sporting scenario was marred by a lack of policy, inadequate infrastructure, and minimal financial support. "... the government took bold steps, including the revival

of the Meghalaya Games - held only twice in 48 years until 2019. The games are now being conducted on a rotational basis across districts, fostering inclusive participation and discovering grassroots talent", the chief minister added.

Sangma also said that the government has embarked on a mission mode to build and upgrade sports infrastructure in urban and rural areas, with dedicated efforts to

develop training facilities, stadiums, and community-level sports hubs.

Terming that the Chief Minister's Sports Scholarship Scheme is aimed at acknowledging outstanding sporting talent and easing the financial burden on athletes, he acknowledged that the financial support is not large but even modest support can make a big difference when used wisely. "The scholarship is not just about money, it is

about recognition," he added. "It's a message to every athlete that your hard work matters, and we stand with you."

The Chief Minister also took the opportunity to inform the gathering on the preparation which is underway for hosting the National Games in 2027.

"Meghalaya is working rigorously to ensure a world-class event. The state has committed to a comprehensive timeline for urban renewal, beautification, and environmental clean-up. Key initiatives include the rejuvenation of Wah Umkhrah and Umshyrpi Rivers, symbolic of the broader effort to beautify the cities of Shillong, Tura, and Jowai, which are expected to play central roles during the Games", he said. This is not just about sports. It is about showcasing the spirit, talent, and beauty of Meghalaya to the rest of the country and the world," Sangma added.

# Messi's Miami thrashed in Champions Cup semi-final

Miami, May 1 (UNI) : Lionel Messi's hopes of leading Inter Miami to their first Concacaf Champions Cup title are over this season after a comprehensive semi-final defeat by Vancouver Whitecaps.

Trailing 2-0 from the first leg, Miami were beaten 3-1 at home in Fort Lauderdale as the Canadian side ran out 5-1 aggregate winners.

Argentina legend Messi and Uruguay striker Luis Suarez were both involved in the build-up as their former Barcelona team-mate Jordi Alba opened the scoring on the night for Miami with a low shot in the ninth minute.

But a comeback by Miami, who are coached by another ex-Barcelona star in Javier Mascherano, failed to materialise with 37-year-old Messi shooting high and wide with his best chance of the first half.

The Whitecaps hit the outside of the post before half-time, while American striker Brian White and Ecuador's Pedro Vite both tested Miami goalkeeper Oscar Ustari, the BBC reported. The visitors regained their two-goal cushion in the 51st minute through White's clever flick into the bottom corner from 10 yards, and when a shot from the edge

of the box by Vite deflected up over Ustari two minutes later the tie was effectively settled.

Another deflected strike from Sebastian Berhalter, after the Whitecaps had again cut through Miami's ragged defence, added the visitors' fifth on aggregate in the 71st minute.

They will play Cruz Azul or Tigres UANL - the two Mexican sides meet in Thursday's second semi-final (03:00 BST on Friday) - in the final, bidding to become the first Canadian side to win the regional competition.

Miami, currently fifth in the MLS Eastern Conference, have seven domestic matches before the league breaks for the Club World Cup in June.

"Although it was the first time the club had advanced to the semi-finals, the defeat hurts us a lot because we imagined reaching the final," said Mascherano. "But we have to accept that our opponents outplayed us.

"Now we have to focus on MLS.

"I'm not thinking about the Club World Cup. There's a month and a half to go and it would be a mistake to focus on that."

Miami are in a group with Egyptian side Al Ahly, Portugal's Porto and Palmeiras of Brazil in the Club World Cup.

# Rei Tachikawa strike takes Jamshedpur FC into maiden Kalinga Super Cup final

Bhubaneswar, May 1 (UNI) : Jamshedpur FC made it to the final of the Kalinga Super Cup for the first time, after defeating Mumbai City FC 1-0 at the Kalinga Stadium here.

Japanese midfielder Rei Tachikawa scored the all-important goal in the 87th minute to win it for the Red Miners on Wednesday night.

Jamshedpur FC will take on FC Goa at 7.30 PM IST at the Kalinga Stadium here in the final on Saturday.

Jamshedpur had more say in attacks from the beginning and breached the rival defence twice early in the match. While the Mumbai averted danger at the expense of a corner at the start, goalkeeper Rehenesh Thumbirumbu was quick to thwart the set-piece a couple of minutes later.

Rehenesh came to his team's rescue once again in the 31st minute when Jordan Murray's header from inside the six-yard box

had a goal written all over it. But Rehenesh displayed remarkable reflexes to rise to the occasion and punch away the ball.

Mumbai, who had earlier registered two convincing wins in the tournament, found it difficult to find their rhythm. Except for a fine Lallianzuala Chhangte cross from the left that had the potential to fetch a goal, the islanders couldn't stretch the Jamshedpur defence much.

Things didn't improve in the second half, with the teams creating fewer chances. While Mumbai continued to struggle up front, Jamshedpur were distinctly unlucky not to find the target at least twice after the hour mark.

On both occasions, the post came to Mumbai's rescue, though goalkeeper Rehenesh was beaten hands down. After Stephen Eze rued his luck for the post to stand in his way,

seasoned midfielder Pronay Halder's low drive met with a similar fate a couple of minutes later.

The constant pounding at the rival goal finally bore fruit for Jamshedpur FC in the 87th minute. After a combined move from Khalid Jamil's men was cleared by the Mumbai defenders in a rather clumsy manner, Tachikawa picked up the ball outside the box and unleashed a left-footer that deflected off a defender before going in.

For the rest of the period, including the six minutes of injury time, Mumbai tried their best to retrieve the situation. But Jamshedpur, expectedly, put more men in defence to keep their lead intact. Rei Tachikawa was presented the Kalinga Player of the Match award by Himanshu Sekhar Sahoo, MLA, Dharماسala, Odisha.

In the first semi-final played earlier in the day, FC Goa defeated Mohun Bagan SG 3-1. While FC

# McIlroy to play Scottish Open before Portrush bid

Edinburgh, May 1 (UNI) : Rory McIlroy will play the Scottish Open at the Renaissance Club as part of his preparations for the Open Championship in his native Northern Ireland this summer.

The Masters champion will aim to win a second Open title at Royal Portrush from July 17-20.

The Scottish Open is the final event before golf's fourth and final major of the year and McIlroy will return to the Renaissance Club in North Berwick, where he won the title in 2023 by beating

Scotland's Bob MacIntyre by one shot, the BBC reported. "Winning a national open is always special, and I'm pleased to have the chance to compete for another Genesis Scottish Open title," McIlroy, 35, said.

"It has certainly been a memorable year so far, and I'm looking forward to carrying on the momentum to the home of golf this summer."

McIlroy became only the sixth man to complete the career Grand Slam of major wins when he beat Justin Rose in a play-off at Augusta earlier this month.

The next big target for the world number two is the US PGA Championship at Quail Hollow - a course he has won at four times - from 15-18 May.

Rose, MacIntyre, Matt Fitzpatrick, Collin Morikawa and Justin Thomas are some of the other names who have already committed to playing the Scottish Open.

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# 50 excellent technical employees of Kalyan Circle honored with awards

## Maharashtra Day celebrated with enthusiasm



(Standard Post Bureau)

Kalyan/Vasai/Palghar, May 1 : Maharashtra Day was celebrated with enthusiasm at the Kalyan Circle office of Mahavitaran on Thursday. The flag was hoisted by Dilip Jagdale, Joint Managing Director of Konkan Regional Division. On the occasion of World Workers' Day, 50 excellent technical employees who performed outstandingly during the year were honored by dignitaries.

Employees who did excellent work in the year 2024-25 were honored with certificates and mementos. Joint Managing Director Dilip Jagdale stated that

technical employees are the architects of Mahavitaran's progress and appealed to the employees to constantly cultivate their ability to prove themselves. He also wished the employees for working with more vigor and scaling new heights of success. On this occasion, Superintendent Engineer Deepak Patil, Mahesh Achinmane, Mohan Kaloge, Assistant General Manager Sushil Pawaskar, Executive Engineer Nitin Kale, Milind Chaudhary, Sunil Vanmore, award-winning employees along with engineers, officers, and employees were present in large numbers.

The program was coordinated by Deputy Executive Engineer Smita Kale. While Senior Manager Nilesh Bhawar proposed the vote of thanks.

### Award-winning employees

**Kalyan Mandal One** – Pooja Mohere, Santosh Navale, Dattu Bhawari, Vitthal Bhiwate, Sunil Bodke, Mukesh Patil, Tarasingh Pawar, Babu Chaure, Sudhir Sonawale, Jagdish Dhamke, Vilas Bhoir, Sheshpal Chavan, Yogesh Gaygole.

**Kalyan Mandal Two** – Pralhad Mhatre, Arun Isame, Rajendra Patil, Sunil Khoje, Amit Sonkusare, Dnyaneshwar Phodse,

Krishna Gade, Sachin Ghagas, Dinesh Mohape, Pritilal Pandav, Vijay Lokhande, Yogesh Chimte, Tulshidas Patil, Dattu Kengala, Kanya Gavit, Shekhar Dahatonde.

**Vasai Mandal** – Vivek Mhatre, Ravindra Pardhi, Vishnu Kalange, Sunil Gaikwad, Ashok Marathe, Sachin Chougale, Umesh Patil, Rahul Gharat, Krishna Sali, Milind Jadhav, Manohar Mahale, Anil Nikam.

**Palghar Mandal** – Sandesh Churi, Subhash Kusmude, Anil Girane, Nayan Sankhe, Santosh Shanwar, Ladkya Baswat, Kishore Wadhane, Rajaram Gode, Ramesh Mukne.

## Temporary augmentation of trains with additional coaches : ECoR

(Standard Post Bureau)

Visakhapatnam, May 1 : In order to clear extra rush of passengers, Indian Railways has decided to augment the following trains with additional coaches as detailed below:-

1. The train No. 08581 Visakhapatnam - SMV Bengaluru Special Express train will be augmented with one (01) 3AC-Ecomany Coach from 04.05.2025 to 25.05.2025.

2. The train No. 08582 SMV Bengaluru - Visakhapatnam Special Express train will be augmented with one (01) 3AC-Ecomany Coach from 05.05.2025 to 26.05.2025.

3. The train No. 08545 Visakhapatnam – Kurnool City Special Express train will be augmented with one (01) 3AC-Ecomany Coach from 06.05.2025 to 27.05.2025.

4. The train No. 08546 Kurnool City - Visakhapatnam Special Express train will be augmented with one (01) 3AC-Ecomany Coach from 07.05.2025 to 28.05.2025.

5. The train no. 08579 Visakhapatnam – Charlapalli Special Express train will be augmented with one (01) 3AC-Ecomany Coach from 02.05.2025 to 30.05.2025.

6. The train no.08580 Charlapalli - Visakhapatnam Special Express train will be augmented with one (01) 3AC-Ecomany Coach from 03.05.2025 to 31.05.2025.

## Anti-Naxal operation aims to free area from Maoist control: IG Bastar Sundarraj

Jagdalpur, May 1 (UNI)

The Inspector General of Police (IG) for Bastar region in Chhattisgarh, Sundarraj P, has said that the ongoing anti-Naxal operation in the Karengutta hills for the past nine days aims to liberate the area from the control of the banned Maoist organisation and make the land safe for its original inhabitants.

He revealed that the outcome of these operations is not limited to the number of Maoists killed or arms recovered. The objective of the operation is to free the area from the Maoist organisation's control and restore safety for the native residents. The Maoists have planted several IEDs along the hills, rivers, and valleys in the sacred land of Bastar, warning the local tribal population not to enter their own land.

Sundarraj questioned who gave the Maoists the right to indulge in such heinous acts and harm innocent civilians, animals, and other living beings. The martyrdom of innocent tribal woman Sushila Sodi, who was killed in a Maoist IED explosion while grazing cattle in the Usur area of Bijapur district on March 30, 2025, and the sacrifices of many children, women, men, and security personnel who have fallen victim to Maoist violence, have strengthened our resolve, he said.

Passout students from this School are employed in various corporate Hospitals and some of the students have secured jobs in Govt. sector as Paramedics also.

Online application form along with prospectus is available on the university website [www.manuu.edu.in/](http://www.manuu.edu.in/) RegularAdmissions. For more information and guidance, contact on 040-23006612 EXTN- 1801 or email at [admissionsregular@manuu.edu.in](mailto:admissionsregular@manuu.edu.in).

# Admissions in Paramedical courses at MANUU

(Standard Post Bureau)

Hyderabad, May 1 : Maulana Azad National Urdu University under School of Sciences has been offering Bachelor of Vocation in MLT & MIT since 2019. Considering the demand & requirement, the university has started Master of Vocation in Medical Lab Technology & Medical Imaging Technology in the year 2023-2024. MANUU happens to be the only Central University in the Telangana State imparting

PG courses in Paramedical Sciences. From this year the University is introducing a PhD programme in Allied Health Sciences (MLT).

According to Prof. S Maqbool Ahmed, Nodal Officer, these courses are employment oriented for the students with Urdu as a subject or medium of instruction, who are desirous to pursue their career in Allied Health Sciences.

Currently, admission process is in progress for M. Voc (MLT & MIT)

on merit basis for which the last date for submission of application forms is June 04, 2025. For admission in PhD Allied Health Sciences (MLT) application forms can be submitted upto May 13, 2025.

Students from Urdu background can avail this opportunity. MANUU has an excellent educational environment and separate hostels for male and female students with all facilities.

# Design a Digital Clock for Indian Railways - Win Rs 5 Lakh!

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, May 1 : Indian Railways has announced a nationwide competition to design new digital clocks, which are to be installed across all railway stations in the country. Railway has invited entries from the creative people. This competition aims to standardize the digital clocks used on platforms and stations and will be open to three categories of participants: professionals, college/university students, and school students.

One grand winner,

whose design gets selected for use across Indian Railways, will receive a first prize of ₹5 lakh. Additionally, each of the three categories will have five consolation prizes of Rs 50,000 each.

Participants must submit their designs online between May 1 and May 31. According to Mr. Dilip Kumar, Executive Director (Information & Publicity), Railway Board, entries must be submitted in high resolution without any watermark or logo, along with a certificate of originality. Participants are allowed to submit multiple

designs, and each entry must be accompanied by a brief concept note explaining the theme and idea behind the design. It is essential that all submitted designs are original and do not violate any intellectual property rights or copyrights.

In the school category, students up to class 12 are eligible and must upload a valid school ID card. The college category includes individuals currently enrolled in any recognized university or college. All others will fall under the professional category.

## Grand Cartoon Festival in Mumbai

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, May 1 : Cartoonists Combine is an organization of all-India Marathi cartoonists founded by Shiv Sena chief Balasaheb Thackeray at Shiv Sena Bhavan in 1983. The organization organizes grand cartoonist conventions in various cities every year. This year, on the occasion of World Cartoonist Day, this cartoon convention will be held at Ola Vakola Hall, Santacruz East on 5th and 6th May 2025. Shiv Sena leader Subhash Desai will be the special guest at the convention. The program is organized by Cartoonists Combine President Sanjay Mistry, Shiv Sena MLA Sanjay Potnis, and Sandesh Chavan of Ola Vakola.

This cartoon exhibition is open to the public free of charge from 10 am to 8 pm every day. The specialty of this convention is the



cartoon exhibition, cartoon competition, lectures and seminars along with demonstrations by renowned cartoonists providing training on cartooning. Fans will also

get the opportunity to draw their own cartoons in this convention.

Fans will get the opportunity to see rare cartoons from a hundred years ago in the cartoon exhibition.

## SCR registers record 12.363 million tonnes freight loading in April 2025

(Standard Post Bureau)

Hyderabad, May 1 : The South Central Railway (SCR) Zone has recorded 12.363 million tonnes (MTs) of freight loading in April 2025 which is the highest ever for the last month in any year. The incremental loading was mainly possible due to the robust increase in loading of Iron Ore and Cement commodities, SCR said in a release here on Thursday.

The freight loading has witnessed 6 percent growth when compared to the last year (11.640 MT).

The Cement loading registered at 3.243 MTs which is 18 percent more when compared to 2.740 MTs registered last year.

Similarly, Iron ore loading registered at 0.765 MTs which is 39 percent more when compared to 0.550 MTs registered last year. Coal, the major loading commodity of the Zone contributed its best with 6.100 MTs loading during the month (Last year 6.150 MTs).

Other significant commodities which have contributed towards overall freight loading of SCR include: Food grains (0.502MTs vs 0.420 MTs), Fertilizers (0.507 MTs vs

0.560 MTs), Raw materials for steel plants (0.430 MTs vs 0.410 MTs), Containers (0.185 MTs vs 0.210 MTs) and Other Goods (0.631 MTs vs 0.600 MTs).

The Zone has been giving special thrust towards strengthening its freight traffic by implementing a wide variety of initiatives and special measures.

The Zone has been moving in a proactive manner to streamline the supply of wagons and monitoring the movement of freight trains.

Lauding the efforts of all the departments for excellent coordination for this remarkable achievement, SCR General Manager Arun Kumar Jain, stated that in spite of the Zone carrying out major infrastructure works and operating special trains, meticulous planning of both Passenger and freight operations has led to this stupendous achievement.

He commended the efforts of all team members who have contributed to this significant achievement and advised to maintain the same tempo to achieve record annual performance in the freight segment during the current financial year.

## Punjab Govt overhauls legal team

New Delhi, May 1 (UNI) : In a significant administrative move, the Punjab Government on Wednesday announced the continuation and appointment of multiple law officers in the office of the Advocate General (AG), tasked with handling the State's litigation before Punjab and Haryana High Court and the Supreme Court of India.

The comprehensive reshuffle and extension order includes 111 law officers across various designations, Additional Advocate Generals (AAGs), Senior Deputy AGs, Deputy AGs, Assistant AGs, and Advocates-on-Record, in both Chandigarh and Delhi.

Among those granted an extension is Senior Advocate Shadan Farasat, who has been serving as an AAG for Punjab in the Supreme Court.

Advocates Gaurav Dhama, Rajat Bhardwaj, and Rajesh Mahajan will also continue as AAGs in Delhi, while Advocate Vivek Jain has been newly appointed to the same rank. Other key extensions in Delhi include Talha Abdul Rehman, Rishikesh Kumar, and Bhakti Pasrija, who will continue as Deputy Advocate Generals (DAGs). Prateek Krishan Chada and Tushar Sannu Dahiya have joined the legal team as new DAGs.