





# Indian Chronicle

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## Priyank-Lokesh tiff makes for a refreshing rivalry

For once, India's political discourse is witnessing a refreshing change—a clash not over caste, creed, or religion, but over investment and industrial growth. The recent exchange of words between Karnataka IT Minister Priyank Kharge and his Andhra Pradesh counterpart Nara Lokesh over Google's proposed \$15-billion AI data centre in Visakhapatnam is a case in point. While it may look like a typical political spat, it reveals something deeper—a healthy spirit of competition between states eager to attract high-value investments. Google's planned project, the company's largest investment outside the United States, is an unprecedented development. Spread over a five-year period (2026-30), it aims to create more than a lakh jobs and transform Vizag into a major artificial intelligence and data hub. Karnataka, home to India's tech capital Bengaluru, sees itself as the natural destination for such mega projects. That Andhra Pradesh managed to secure the deal has, therefore, stirred strong reactions from Bengaluru's corridors of power. Kharge, known for his outspoken nature, wasted no time in attacking the Chandrababu Naidu government. He accused Andhra Pradesh of luring Google with "massive subsidies and unsustainable concessions" going so far as to describe the move as an "economic disaster in waiting." His comments implied that AP's investment strategy was fiscally reckless—a populist move dressed up as economic reform. But his Andhra Pradesh counterpart Nara Lokesh chose not to respond with rancour. Instead, he hit back playfully on X: "They say Andhra food is spicy. Seems some of our investments are too. Some neighbours are already feeling the burn! (sic)" The quip, accompanied by chilli and fire emojis.

## PARAMESHWAR REDDY conveys Diwali greetings to State Government Advisor Vem Narender Reddy



“VADDEPALLI KISHORE, Uppal, October 21 (Indian Chronicle):“Uppal and Medchal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, along with Vajresh Yadav, former TPCC General Secretary Narsa Reddy, and Boopathi Reddy, conveyed Diwali greetings to State Government Advisor Vem Narender Reddy. “On Tuesday, Parameshwar Reddy, Vajresh Yadav, and Boopathi Reddy met Vem Narender Reddy in a cordial manner and honored him with shawls as a mark of respect.

## Uppal MLA Bandari Laxma Reddy Performs Special Pooja at Kala Bhairava Swamy Temple



“VADDEPALLI KISHORE, Uppal, October 21 (Indian Chronicle):“On the occasion of Amavasya (New Moon day), Uppal MLA Bandari Laxma Reddy performed special pujas at the Kala Bhairava Swamy Temple located in Uppal Baghayat on Tuesday. “Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bandari Laxma Reddy said that he prayed to Lord Kala Bhairava Swamy for the well-being and happiness of everyone. “Uppal Division leaders Pilli Nagaraju, Jetta Kishore, Niranjana Chari, temple committee member Vinod Reddy, party workers, and a large number of devotees participated in the event.

## SAS Crown Fireworks Touched the Sky, Lighting Up Hyderabad's Diwali Night



Hyderabad: The night sky over Hyderabad turned into a canvas of brilliance as SAS Infra once again stole the spotlight with a breathtaking Diwali celebration at SAS Crown—the tallest residential tower in South India. The

event, aptly described as “a crown thing,” featured a spectacular fireworks show that illuminated the city's skyline, creating a visual symphony of light, color, and celebration.

Bursting at an awe-inspiring height of 236 meters, the fireworks lit up Kokapet's Golden Mile Road, captivating residents and onlookers alike. The stunning visuals quickly took social media by storm, going viral within hours and earning admiration from viewers across the country. Founded by Dr. G. V. Rao, SAS Infra continues to redefine luxury and innovation in real estate through its visionary approach and flawless execution. The company's commitment to architectural excellence and experiential living has positioned it as a leading name in Hyderabad's urban transformation. With multiple landmark projects already delivered and many more in development, SAS Infra's future shines brighter than ever—illuminating not just the skyline, but also the aspirations of modern India. This Diwali, SAS Crown didn't just celebrate light; it became the light that defined Hyderabad's festive spirit.

## Do not fall for the deceitful tricks of BRS leaders..Make Jubilee Hills Congress candidate Naveen Yadav win with a large majority

Bhuvanagiri MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy

““Bhuvanagiri MP speaking at the Gandhi Bhavan press meet. Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy”“Mandava Srisailem..Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... (Indian Chronicle October 21):- Explaining to the people the development being done by the state Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Bhuvanagiri MP Chamakura Mallareddy said that Congress candidate Naveen Yadav should win with a large majority in the upcoming Jubilee Hills by-election. He said that the media has come forward to alert the people of Hyderabad and Jubilee Hills regarding the Jubilee Hills elections. On this occasion, Bhuvanagiri MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy explained various things at a media conference organized at Gandhi Bhavan on Tuesday. He said that two angry mobs are roaming in the Jubilee Hills constituency and are roaming around fearing that their deposit will be lost in the Jubilee Hills elections. “He reminded that the BRS situation is that it came third in the cantonment elections and zero in the parliamentary elections. He said that the people have thrown them out in the 2023 elections, and that the people have confined former TRS Chief Minister KCR and his son KTR to their farmhouse. He said that the BRS rule for 10 years was a poor rule and that they did not give anything to the people, which is why the people ignored them and defeated them in the last elections. Keeping the Jubilee Hills by-elections in mind, “who would not believe that the BRS leaders are coming to the Jubilee Hills voters?” Has KCR ever spoken on behalf of the people in the opposition capacity? He questioned whether he at least came to the assembly. “He said that the BRS leaders were heartbroken after seeing Naveen Yadav's nomination rally and that trains were running in the hearts of the TRS leaders. “He said that those who are involved in scams have become so united in this election, and they are the real Dandupalayam batch. He said that the BRS leaders should



tell why they have held key positions in the same family and filed nomination with Vishnu Vardhan Reddy. He said that they are misleading the people of Jubilee Hills and are roaming around the Basti hospital, which is not reasonable. “He said that it is a known fact that the BRS leaders planned to demolish Osmania under the BRS rule. The BRS is saying that it is vote theft and people should recognize who will be in power till 2023. “He said that they are talking like chameleons to appease the settlers, and they know the behavior of the TRS leaders. In response, Bonagiri MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy said that the people of Jubilee Hills should be vigilant and not listen to the deceptive words of the BRS and that Naveen Yadav, who is contesting as the Congress party candidate, should be made to win with a huge majority.

## The thugs who destroyed the statue of Mahatma Jyoti Ba Phule should be punished severely

: - National BC Welfare Association District Working President Gottipamula Baburao”“Mandava Srisailem..



Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... (Indian Chronicle.. October 21):- National BC Welfare Association Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Working President Gottipamula

Baburao, former Market Committee Chairman Potnak Pramod Kumar and Maturi Ashok have demanded strict action against the thugs who destroyed the statue of Mahatma Jyoti Ba Phule, the hope of the weaker sections of the community, near the auto stand at Karimabad Urs Dargah in Warangal district. Speaking on this occasion, they said that the PD Act should be registered against those who deface the statues of great people and on Tuesday, they held a protest program at the statue of Mahatma Jyothirao Phule in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district. They asked the officials to immediately install another statue of Phule and to take strict action against such incidents so that they do not repeat them. Otherwise, they warned that they will launch a large-scale Chalo Karimabad program together with the BCs. In this program, new Balaraj Devarakonda Narasimha Chari, Pittala Balaraj, AITC state leaders MD Imran, Sriram, Balaraju, Rachamala Ramesh, Shyamala, Gopi, Sanjeeva, etc. BC representatives participated and warned.

## Farmers should not be fooled by middlemen..



They should sell their grain only at the government-established purchase center: Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao”“Mandava Srisailem..Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... (Indian Chronicle October 21):- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao said that farmers should not be fooled by middlemen and should buy their grain only at the government-established purchase center. On Tuesday, the District Collector conducted a surprise inspection of the grain purchase center in Jai Kesaram and S Lingotam villages of Choutuppal mandal. The District Collector conducted a surprise inspection of the grain purchase center in the village. “Speaking on the occasion, the Collector inspected the grain stocks moved by the farmers. The details of the farmers should be recorded in the registers from time to time. In order to ensure that the farmers do not face any difficulties, the quality standards should

be checked and weighed immediately after bringing the grain to the centers. He said that no farmer should suffer any loss under any circumstances. The concerned officials participated in this program.

## BRS leaders expose poor condition of Basti Dawakhanas under Congress rule

Hyderabad: In a coordinated inspection drive led by BRS working president KT Rama Rao, senior BRS leaders on Tuesday visited several Basti Dawakhanas across Hyderabad and exposed the poor condition of the clinics including a lack of staff, medicines and diagnostic services. They accused the Congress government of large-scale neglect and administrative failure in providing basic healthcare services to the poor. Former Minister and MLA Vemula Prashanth Reddy, MLC Dasoju Sravan, and BRS leader Nandikanti Sridhar inspected the Basti Dawakhana at Shaikpet, expressing anger over its deteriorating condition. Prashanth Reddy said that the Congress regime had turned the once-efficient Basti Dawakhanas established by former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao to serve the urban poor, into neglected centres without service or accountability.

## The Sacrifices of Police Martyrs Are Invaluable

Rachakonda CP at Police Martyrs' Commemoration Day



Hyderabad: On the occasion of Police Martyrs' Commemoration Day, Rachakonda Commissioner of Police, Sudheer Babu, along with DCPs, paid rich floral tributes at the Police Martyrs' Memorial located at the Amberpet CAR Headquarters. Speaking on the occasion, he expressed deep condolences to the families of police personnel who lost their lives in the line of duty. He stated that the sacrifices made by police martyrs in maintaining law and order are priceless, and that society will forever remain indebted to them. He emphasized that remembering the brave officers who laid down their lives fighting anti-social and extremist forces, and recognizing the sacrifices of their families, is the moral responsibility of every citizen. As part of the event, the Rachakonda Police Commissionerate honored the families of 16 police martyrs who lost their lives fighting extremists. CP Sudheer Babu assured their families that the police department stands by them through all good and bad times. Participating in the program were Malkajgiri DCP Padmaja, LB Nagar DCP Anuradha, DCP Crimes Aravind Babu, DCP Admin Indira, DCP Women Safety Usha Rani, DCP Maheshwaram Sunitha Reddy, DCP Traffic-1 Srinivas, DCP Traffic-2 Srinivasulu, DCP Cyber Crimes Nagalakshmi, DCP Road Safety Manohar, DCP Headquarters Shyam Sunder, along with additional DCPs, ACPs, and other senior officers.

## Parameshwar Reddy conveys Diwali greetings to Telangana Congress Chief Mahesh Goud



“Vaddepalli Kishore, Uppal, October 21 (Indian Chronicle):“Uppal Constituency Congress Party in-charge Parameshwar Reddy conveyed Diwali greetings to Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) President Mahesh Goud. On the occasion of the Diwali festival, Parameshwar Reddy, along with Vajresh Yadav, Narsa Reddy, and Bhupathi Reddy, met Mahesh Goud at his residence on Tuesday and extended festive greetings. They also felicitated him on the occasion.

## The construction work of Indiramma houses under construction should be completed quickly



: - Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao”“Mandava Srisailem..Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... (Indian Chronicle.. October 21):- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao said that the construction work of Indiramma houses under construction should be completed quickly. On Tuesday, the District Collector inspected the construction work of Indiramma houses in Mandapur village, Ghaus Nagar, Valigonda mandal, Bhuvanagiri mandal. He found out how many Indiramma houses have been sanctioned to the village, how many houses are under construction in the village. He found out in which stages they are. He asked whether the money has been received in the account of the beneficiaries so far. Even though the slab stage has been completed, the house was inspected. They asked the beneficiaries whether all the bills have been received so far. They said that they should complete the remaining work and move in soon. The concerned officials participated in this program.



## Suparna Gomanthakam Gosala Website Launched



““DNV Srikanth“Manikonda”21 October “Indian Chronicle ““Suparna Suparna Gomanthakam is a Gosala run by group of Software Employees who have an aim to protect and serve the cows. In December 2021 six indegeniuos cows were protected from slaughter- it's the first step of the Gosala towards spiritual and agricultural journey. Though the Gosala members didn't have prior experience, they learnt how to care and serve these sacred beings, gradually the gosala became a house for multiple cow breeds - Ongolu Gitta, Kapila, Turpu, Rathi , Gir, Tharparkar & Sahiwal cow breeds. The members also constantly work towards purchasing indegenious breeds which are 98% pure desi cows from across the country and they are also using the scientific methodologies for reproduction of these breeds. The Gosala is located in Bondugula Village near Aleir, they also have taken around 20 acres of land on lease, aiming at natural farming with cow dung ac-

cumulated. Over a period of time they enriched the land with cow excretions like cow dung, cow urine, left over buttermilk after churning curd for butter and transposed the barren land into flourishing fertile land.“Gosala founders Mepperla Ramanuja Vamsi Krishna, Kranthi Kumar Kuchana, Sridhar Samanuri, Venkat Karlapalem, Nori Krishna Teja, Srikanth DNV along with friends and families have celebrated Diwali on 18 October by performing the puja Sudarsana Samputitha, Dhnavantari Homam, Lakshmi Puja & Trivikrama Vaibhavam and launched the gosala website <https://suparna-gomanthakam.org/> on the same day, and members placed the initial orders for cow ghee and sweets. The members also announced that the Gosala is now producing multiple products namely Snighdha A2 Desi cow ghee, which is extracted by traditional Bilona extraction process, cow ghee based sweets and natural fertilizers made from cow dung, buttermilk & gomutra that nourishes soil naturally.

## Special Poojas and Annadanam Held Grandly at Sri Shiva Shankara Mahamayi Temple, Uppal



““VADDEPALLI KISHORE, Uppal, October 21 (Indian Chronicle):““On the occasion of Ashwayuja Amavasya, special poojas and annaprasadam distribution were organized with great devotion at the Sri Shiva Shankara Mahamayi Temple in Uppal.“Temple members and devotees including Uppoji Balavantha Chary, Rajagopala Chary, Srinivas, Pavan, Cholletti Brahmachari, Sridhara Chary, Paleru Gopi, Satish, Srinivas, Srinivasa Sharma, Bazaar Jagannath Goud, Shameerpet Hanumanth Reddy, Krishna Reddy, Palakurthi Srinivas, Praveen, Krishna Reddy, Jagan, Yapuram Srinivas, Gundala Anil Reddy, Praveen Reddy, Narasimha Chary, Thiga Vittal Rao, Nursing Rao, Thurayi Das, Mahesh, Jagan, Bikshapathi, Ram Prakash, Gopi Chary, Pasupuleti Ramesh, Venkatayya, Kumar, Bhaskar, Chary, Sai Kumar Goud, Papayya Goud, Raju, Sandeep, Mahesh Kumar, Bhavani Shankar, Lakshman, Santosh Kumar, Banti, Srinu, Srinivas Goud, Ganesh Goud, Yadi Goud, Venkatesh and several other devotees took part in the event with great enthusiasm and devotion.

## Paddy should be purchased by following quality standards

Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao““Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... (Indian Chronicle..October 21):- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao said that paddy should be purchased by following quality standards.“On Tuesday, the District Collector conducted a surprise inspection of the paddy procurement centers set up in Valigonda mandal, namely Edulagudem, Mandapur, Natalla Gudem, and Redla Repaka Paddy Procurement Center. He inquired about how much paddy had been received so far and to what extent it had been purchased. The Collector examined the moisture content of the paddy brought by the farmers. He said that no farmer should lose money by trusting middlemen and selling the crop they have cultivated hard at a low price. The government has provided all facilities to the farmers. It has also provided a support price for paddy. He said that the government should sell grain only at the purchasing centers. The details of the purchased grain should be registered online. He said that the money would be deposited in the accounts of the farmers within 24 hours of purchasing the grain. “He asked the farmers at the purchasing centers if they were facing any difficulties. The collector examined the grain brought by the farmers. Under no circumstances should any farmer resort to middlemen and buy grain at a low price without incurring losses, and should take advantage of the purchasing centers set up by the government and get the support price. He said that the purchased grain should be transported to the mills. He advised



the concerned officials to record the details of the grain brought by the farmers from time to time and ensure that the farmers receive timely payments. Later, a surprise inspection was conducted at the Tahsildar's office in Valigonda mandal. On this occasion, the collector examined the applications received at the Bhu Bharathi Revenue Conference. He wanted the applications related to land issues to be thoroughly examined at the field level and resolved. He wanted the applications for caste income, birth and death certificates to be examined from time to time and resolved without being pending. The concerned officials participated in this program.

## Students should be provided with quality meals as per the menu



Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao““Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... (Indian Chronicle..October 21):- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao said that students should be provided with quality meals as per the menu. On Tues-



day, the District Collector inspected Sri Venkateswara ZPHS School in Valigonda mandal. He asked the headmaster how many students are there in the school. He asked the school principal to know how many students are currently studying in class 10. He asked the school principal to know how much the syllabus has been completed. The Collector listened to the class 10 social class with the students. A map of India was drawn by the students. He said that all the students should prepare for the annual exams from now on. He said that this year too, the school should achieve 100% pass rate and bring good name to the district. “He said that those who get high marks will be given bicycles as prizes. He also said that their parents will also be honored.

## Doctors should provide better treatment..

Farmers should sell the grain harvested at the purchase center itself:- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao ““Mandava Srisailam..Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... (Indian Chronicle.. October 21):- ““Doctors should provide better treatment, farmers should sell the grain harvested at the purchase center itself, and Indiramma House construction work should be completed quickly, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao “On Tuesday, the District Collector inspected the Munipampula Health Sub-Center in Thumma Lagudem village of Ramannapet mandal.. How many staff members attended the duty at the sub-center. The register was checked to see if they were coming every day. How many people came to the OPD every day. What diseases were they coming with. The concerned officials were asked whether all the medicines were available. How many EDDs were there in the past months. How many are there this month. They asked where all the deliveries had been made so far. Later, the District Collector made a surprise inspection of the grain purchase center in Bhogaram village of Ramannapet. The moisture content was checked. He said that the grain harvested by the farmers is being purchased down to the last grain. He said that farmers should not suffer any loss under any circumstances. He said that the grain received on any given day should be purchased immedi-



ately and its details should be recorded in the register and tab. Later, the District Collector inspected the construction work of Indiramma houses in Ramannapet mandal. He inspected the extent to which the construction work of Indiramma houses has been going on in the village so far. He said that the Indiramma houses under construction should be completed as soon as possible. The concerned officials participated in this program.

## Alphores Narendra Reddy paid tribute to police martyrs



“Chittimalla Mahendar, Karimnagar Bureau, October 21,INDIAN CHRONICLE “The services of the police are very special and through them they are helping the development of the society by maintaining religious harmony and maintaining peace and security at all times, Dr. V. Narender Reddy, Head of Alforce Educational Institutions, said while

participating in a special program organized on the occasion of Police Martyrs' Remembrance Day at the Police Headquarters in Karimnagar district center. Earlier they paid floral tributes at the Martyr Stupa of the Police in the premises and commemorated their services.They believe that because of the police there is progress in the society and all the people can lead a happy life. He praised the police department for their excellent and exemplary performance of office protection, supervision, law enforcement, law and order maintenance, and being guides to the society.Police plays a major role in protecting people and their property, controlling crimes, investigating them, helping people in times of calamity, providing traffic services, enforcing law, and devoting special time to law and order and helping the development of the society at all times.“said. Speaking on this occasion, they praised the services of the policemen and reminded them that it is very inspiring for the government to help the families of the martyred policemen in all kinds of ways. Everyone should support the precious police families and help their family members develop Suggested.Many members of VNR Foundation are accompanying them in this program.

## \* ASTHRA 2025 National Level Final Potties at BVRIT“



Narsapur,“Date:21/10/2025.““The last day of ASTHRA 2025" National Level Engineering Talent Competition was organized by the Department of Chemical Engineering at BVRIT College of Engineering.“The Chief Guest of the event was Prof. A.B. Pandit, Vice Chancellor, ICT Mumbai, gave a wonderful speech on Sustainability Management. He said that environmental protection is of utmost importance, that renewable energies like solar energy and wind energy should be used efficiently and that everyone should be made aware of the importance of the environment. After his speech, the “React-O-Car” competition was successfully organized. The teams participated with great enthusiasm and made the competition a success.“On the last day of the event, Ravinath Shetty, President, Apitoria Pharma, was the Guest of Honour and explained the importance of Chemical Engineering and other core engineering branches. He assured that Chemical Engineering students will have great opportunities in the future. VNIT Nagpur Professor Shriram Sonavane said that organizing such competitions will increase the in-depth understanding of the subjects and make

it easier to understand their application. Principal Sanjay Dubey said that the use of modern technologies AI and ML in core engineering is very useful for the society. Vice Chairman Ravichandran Rajagopal said that through such competitions, everyone learns from each other. He especially congratulated the SV University team for the Sulfuric Acid Production Model in the Model Marvels competition and the BVRIT EEE team for their performance in the Tech-O-Car competition.“Shri Vishnu Vidya Sansthan Chairman K.V. Vishnu Raju in his speech explained the importance of application-based learning over classroom teaching. He said that chemical engineering can be understood only by doing it with his hands. Professor A.B. Pandit and other guests of honour were thanked for coming to this program. He congratulated the teams that participated in this competition. Chairman K.V. Vishnu Raju and the guests personally met and congratulated all the teams.“The program was attended by Director Dr. Lakshmi Prasad, Heads of Departments and Deans, faculty members of other departments and students. The program was organized under the supervision of College Manager Sri Bapiraju, TLN. Suresh, AO.

Prizes, while the SV University Chemical Engineering Department team won the Third Prize.

## Harish Rao Calls for Mass Plantation to Promote Green Environment

““NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, October 21, (Indian chronicle): Bairi Srinivas Goud, President of Green Peace Environment & Water Harvesting Foundation, met BRS senior leader and Siddipet MLA T. Harish Rao on the occasion of the Diwali festival. During the meeting, Srinivas Goud presented a flower plant to Harish Rao on behalf of the Foundation.

On this occasion, Harish Rao urged everyone to take part in plantation drives and contribute towards environmental protection and greenery promotion.



# Kushaiguda power officials conduct Basthi Baata to address electricity issues



\*\*\*\*\*NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, Kushaiguda, October 21, (Indian chronicle): Kushaiguda electricity transmission officials interacted with residents as part of the Basthi Baata program to resolve local power-related problems. Residents and members of the Kushaiguda Welfare Association informed AE Ramakrishna about tree branches touching live power lines along the northern gate road leading to the Venkateshwara Swamy Temple Industrial Area. Responding immediately, the AE assured that the branches would be completely cleared soon and requested residents to report any remaining unsafe areas or branches still in contact with electric wires.

# Police Martyrs' Memorial Day Observed Grandly in Karimnagar: Flag Day Celebrated with Honour

\*\*\*Chittimalla Mahendar, October 21, Karimnagar Bureau,INDIAN CHRONICLE \*\*\*The Police Martyrs' Memorial Day was observed with great respect and solemnity at the Police Martyrs' Memorial located at the Karimnagar Police Commissionerate headquarters on Tuesday. District Collector Smt. Pamela Satpathy, IAS attended the event as the chief guest, while Commissioner of Police, Shri Gaush Alam, IPS, presided over the ceremony.Speaking on the occasion, Collector Pamela Satpathy said that the sacrifices of police personnel can never be forgotten. "While citizens across the country celebrate festivals with their families, our police officers remain on duty, ensuring the safety and security of society," she said. She paid homage to all the police martyrs who laid down their lives in the line of duty, stating that such sacrifices are invaluable to the nation.Commissioner of Police Gaush Alam, IPS, recalled that the erstwhile Karimnagar district in united Andhra Pradesh was once heavily affected by Naxalite activity. "We are able to live in peace today only because of the supreme sacrifices made by many brave officers," he said. He noted that 47 police officers from the erstwhile Karimnagar district had sacrificed their lives in the line of duty.He further mentioned that across the country, more than 191 police personnel from various departments were martyred, and their sacrifices would never go in vain. "Inspired by their dedication, we will continue to work tirelessly to ensure peace and security in society," the Commissioner said. He assured that the Police Department would always stand by the families of the martyrs and extend all possible support to them.He also announced that as part of the Police Com-



memoration Day observances, several programs would be organized for ten days, up to October 31, to honor the martyrs."Later, the armed police battalion offered a ceremonial guard of honour at the Martyrs' Memorial. The Commissioner of Police, other senior officers, and the family members of police martyrs paid floral tributes to the departed souls and observed a two-minute silence in their memory."Commissioner Gaush Alam interacted with the families of the martyrs, appreciated their service to the nation, and inquired about their concerns. He instructed officials to take appropriate steps to address their issues."Deputy Commissioners of Police Venkataramana and Bhim Rao, along with several other police officers and families of martyrs from the Commissionerate, participated in the event.

# Amavasya Anna Prasadam Distribution at Kushaiguda



\*\*\*\*\*NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, Kushaiguda, October 21, (Indian

chronicle): The Maruthi Mitra Mandali of Kushaiguda organized the regular Anna Prasadam distribution program on the occasion of Amavasya on Tuesday at the Sri Pochamma Temple premises in Kushaiguda. The members of the mandali first performed special prayers at the temple and later conducted the food distribution program in a grand manner. Mitra Mandali president Gurumanchi Ashok Chari, general secretary Varuganti Anjaneyulu (Hanumantu), treasurer Machha Babu Goud, and members Kasula Suresh Goud, Gunti Anjaneyulu Yadav, Gurumanchi Venu Chari, Paramesh, Panjala Sanjay Goud, and Gopala Krishna Chari participated in the program.

# Government Whip Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah participated in the Police Martyrs' Memorial Meeting



\*\*\*Mandava Srisailam..Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... (Indian Chronicle October 21):- Police Martyrs' Me-

morial Day was celebrated grandly under the auspices of Sriram Villas in Yadagirigutta town. Telangana State Government Whip Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah and ACP Srinivas Naidu participated in this program."

On this occasion, a rally was organized from the police station and a meeting was organized in the premises of the municipal office and a grand tribute was paid to the police martyrs. Speaking on the occasion, Beerla Ayilaiah said that the sacrifices of the police martyrs who laid down their lives in the performance of their duties for the maintenance of peace and security are unforgettable. He congratulated Sriram Villas for organizing this program.

# Collector Urges Citizens to Participate in “Telangana Rising – 2047” Survey



\*\*\*\*\*Bhukya RanjithNaik,Bhadradi kothagudem District Bureau, October 21,Indian Chronicle:"District Collector Jitesh V. Patil has appealed to all citizens of Telangana to actively participate in the ongoing "Telangana Rising – 2047" Citizen Survey, aimed at shaping the future vision of the state."The survey, launched by the Government of Telangana, seeks valuable suggestions and feedback from people across the state on how Telangana should progress by the year 2047 — when India will celebrate 100 years of independence."The Collector said that the survey has already received an overwhelming response from citizens across various districts of Telangana. He urged everyone to contribute their ideas and insights to help the government frame long-term developmental policies that reflect the aspirations of the people."He reminded that the survey will conclude on October 25, and citizens can take part by

visiting the official website [www.telangana.gov.in/telanganarising](http://www.telangana.gov.in/telanganarising) to submit their suggestions and opinions."The initiative, he said, provides an opportunity for every individual to be a part of Telangana's roadmap toward sustainable growth, innovation, and inclusive development by 2047.

# Water Supply Issue Inspected by GHMC Water Board Officials in Charlapally

\*\*\*\*\*NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, Cherlapally, October 21, (Indian chronicle): Following last week's public agitation organized by the Charlapally Colony Federation (CCS) over drinking water problems, GHMC Water Board senior officials responded and conducted a field inspection on Tuesday. The team, led by DGM Satish, visited Shiva Sai Nagar in Charlapally Division to assess the low water pressure issue. Officials examined the water quality and discussed measures to ensure consistent supply to local residents.



# Peaceful Society is the Goal of Police; Martyrs' Sacrifices Inspire Future Generations



\*\*\*\*\*Bhukya RanjithNaik,Bhadradi kothagudem District Bureau,October 21,Indian Chronicle:"The Police Commemoration Day (Flag Day) was observed with great reverence at the District Police Headquarters parade grounds in Hemachandrapuram on Monday. The solemn ceremony was held to honour the valiant police personnel who laid down their lives in the line of duty to safeguard the nation and its citizens."District Collector Jitesh V. Patil attended as the chief guest and was received by Superintendent of Police Rohit Raju. The Collector inspected the guard of honour presented by the armed police contingent under the command of Parade Commander Lal Babu."Addressing the gathering, the Collector said that the sacrifices of police personnel who fought anti-social and anti-national elements will always remain an inspiration for future generations. He noted that the police force works relentlessly for public safety, national security, and protection of government property while swiftly responding to any untoward incidents. A strong law and order system, he emphasized, is essential for the state's growth, and Telangana's steady development reflects the strength and efficiency of its police department."Speaking on the occasion, SP Rohit Raju said that Police Commemoration Day is observed every year on October 21 in memory of the brave police martyrs who laid down their lives in the line of duty. He recalled that this



day commemorates the 1959 incident at Hot Springs in Ladakh, where ten CRPF jawans were martyred while defending the nation against Chinese aggression. Since then, the day has been observed across the country to pay homage to all police personnel who sacrificed their lives while serving the nation."The police stand guard while the world sleeps," the SP remarked, adding that officers often sacrifice time with their families, even during festivals, to ensure public safety and peace. From combating terrorism to protecting citizens and eradicating social evils, he said, the police continue to serve with dedication, discipline, and a spirit of sacrifice."He further stated that the sacrifices of police martyrs are priceless and that remembrance programmes will be held from October 21 to October 31, marking the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, observed as National Unity Day."During the ceremony, Additional SP Narendra read out the names of 191 police personnel who attained martyrdom across the country during the past year. The Collector, SP, and other officers paid floral tributes at the Martyrs' Memorial."Among those present were DSPs Chandrabhanu, Rehman, Mallayya Swamy, Ravinder Reddy, Satish Kumar, AR DSP Satyanarayana, Cls, Rls, Sls, police headquarters staff, and members of the Special Party, who offered their respects to the fallen heroes.

# Government Whip Beerla Ailaiah to participate in Giri Pradakshina to be held in Yadadri today

\*\*\*Mandava Srisailam..Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... (Indian Chronicle..October"21):- "Telangana State Government Whip Aleru MLA Beerla Ailaiah will participate in the Giri Pradakshina to be held today at the Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy shrine in Yadagiri Gutta. Today, Wednesday at 5:30 am, Telangana State Government Whip Aleru MLA Beerla Ailaiah will participate in the Giri Pradakshina to be held in Yadagiri Gutta on the occasion of Swami's Swathi Nakshatra. The residents of Gutta and devotees from other places are requesting to participate in this Giri Pradakshina and be eligible for the grace of the Lord.



# Integrated Farming Can Drive Farmers' Economic Growth: Collector Jitesh V. Patil



\*\*\*\*\*Bhukya RanjithNaik,Bhadradi Kothagudem District Bureau , October 21,Indian Chronicle:"Integrated farming systems can significantly enhance the economic growth of farmers, said District Collector Jitesh V. Patil, during his extensive field visit to several villages in Mulakalapalli mandal on Tuesday."As part of the visit, the Collector inspected a quail farming unit run by farmer Chintakayala Nageswara Rao and his wife Kumari at Rajupeta village. The couple, who received financial assistance through the mandal federation, are engaged in integrated farming by raising quails, country chickens, and goats. The farmer informed the Collector that he is currently rearing 300 quails and is earning an average monthly income of ₹15,000."The Collector appreciated the initiative and said that the district administration is planning to establish 500 fish farming units in the coming year. He explained that by adopting integrated models—combining fish culture with quail, country chicken, and goat rearing—farmers can generate monthly income even before their aquaculture yield is realized. This, he said, would help them repay their loans more easily and reduce financial stress. He also advised farmers cultivating oil palm to grow drumstick (moringa) as an intercrop to maximize land utilization and profitability."Later, the Collector visited the dumping shed at Pooasagudem village, where panchayat workers demonstrated the process of making biochar (organic charcoal) from dried branches and organic waste. The Collector observed the production process and appreciated the innovative waste management approach."He said that biochar, when soaked in cow dung and cow urine for a few days, dried and powdered, serves as an excellent organic fertilizer that improves soil fertility and boosts crop yields. He instructed panchayats to ensure segregation of wet and dry waste during collection and to utilize compost produced from vegetable waste at dumping yards as organic manure."The Collector also inspected the Poshan



Vatika (nutrition garden) set up at the Anganwadi centre in Patha Gangaram village. Interacting with the children, he enquired about the meals being provided. Staff members explained that each Anganwadi centre is cultivating organic leafy vegetables and vegetables to supply nutritious food free of cost to children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers."The Collector expressed satisfaction with the six varieties of leafy greens grown at the centre and advised that different varieties should be supplied weekly to ensure dietary diversity. He also suggested growing moringa, neem, tamarind, amla, and curry leaf plants within the premises."He emphasized that developing special nutrition gardens for pregnant women would help ensure a balanced and nutritious diet. He directed officials to conduct widespread awareness programmes in Anganwadi centres to promote healthy lifestyles among children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers."During the visit, the Collector was accompanied by Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Vidya Chandana, Tahsildar Gannya Naik, and other officials from related departments

# Retail pioneer Chandana Mohan Rao passes away at 82

Hyderabad: Chandana Mohan Rao, who is credited with introducing the concept of shopping mall for the first time in the Telugu States, passed away on Monday.

Born in 1943 in Rajamahendravaram, East Godavari District, Chandana Mohan Rao started as a small employee, and interested in the business sector since childhood, started his first wholesale textile business in 1972. In 1976, he started Ramachandra Cloth Showroom and later started another business in Rajamahendravaram under the name Chandana Kanchi Sarees. He was the first to start a new textile business in Visakhapatnam in 1984 under the name Chandana Brothers and introduced a new system of retail sales at wholesale rates.



# Children making a splash during Diwali celebrations.



“Indian Chronicle October 21: Diwali celebrations were held on a grand scale at Pallavi Kids School in Tarnaka on Saturday. On this occasion, teachers and students performed special pujas to Goddess Lakshmi. Later, the children made a noise by lighting kakara vattu, switch buds and crackers. The teachers explained the importance of the Diwali festival to the students. School Principal Paromitha Roy Chowdhury, Sushil Kumar Managing Director, Pallavi Group of Educational Institutions Chairman M Komuriah and staff participated” in these celebrations

# Teacher Felicitation Ceremony Organized Grandly under the Leadership of Uppal TRSMA President Banala Vijeyander Reddy



“VADDEPALLI KIISHORE, Uppal, October 21 (Indian Chronicle): “The Best Teacher Awards Ceremony organized by the Uppal Mandal unit of TRSMA (Telangana Recognized Schools Management Association) was held grandly. Around 110 outstanding teachers from Uppal Mandal were honored with mementos for their dedicated service.” The event was graced by Mohan Reddy, Chairman of Mega and Omega Groups of Institutions, and Malathi Reddy, Vice Chairperson, who attended as chief guests.

They praised the tireless efforts of teachers, saying that “those who believe in their teachers reach great heights in life; whatever we are today is because of our teachers.” Addressing the gathering, Uppal TRSMA President Banala Vijeyander Reddy said that teachers, who shape the nation’s future, must be healthy for a better tomorrow. He noted that many private school teachers hesitate to seek medical help due to high hospital expenses and lack of proper health insurance. He assured that TRSMA will stand as a support system for such teachers, ensuring that even serious health issues can be treated at minimal cost. Dr. Kishore, CEO of TX Hospitals, also promised complete medical assistance to teachers in need.”

The event was attended by TRSMA State Working President Shivaratri Yadagiri, TRSMA Medchal-Malkajgiri District President Nagaraju, Uppal Mandal MEO P. Rama Rao, Uppal TRSMA Working President Srinivas, Uppal TRSMA General Secretary Lakshmi Devamma, TRSMA State Joint Secretary Sheikh Madar, District Vice President Satish, former Uppal TRSMA President Dan Sagar, Raju L, Chandana, Raju K, Ismail, Althaf, several school correspondents, and a large number of teachers, making the program a grand success.

# Martyrs’ Sacrifices Are Priceless: Rachakonda Commissioner Sudheer Babu at Police Commemoration Day



“VADDEPALLI KISHORE, Uppal, October 21 (Indian Chronicle): “On the occasion of Police Martyrs’ Commemoration Day, Rachakonda Commissioner of Police Sudheer Babu, IPS, along with DCPs, paid floral tributes at the Police Martyrs’ Memorial located at Amberpet CAR Headquarters. “Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner Sudheer Babu expressed deep condolences to the families of the police personnel who lost their lives in the line of duty. He stated that the sacrifices made by police martyrs in safeguarding peace and security are invaluable and society will forever remain indebted to them.” He emphasized that remembering the brave officers who laid down their lives while fighting anti-social and extremist forces and acknowledging the sacrifices of their families is the moral duty of every citizen. “As part of the commemoration, the Commissioner honored the families of 16 police martyrs who lost their lives in extremist attacks within the Rachakonda Police Commissionerate limits, assuring them that the de-



partment stands firmly with them and will continue to support them.” Blood Donation Camp Held in Memory of Martyrs “A blood donation camp was also organized at the Amberpet CAR Headquarters in memory of the martyrs. Hundreds of police officers from the Rachakonda Commissionerate actively participated and donated blood.” Speaking at the event, Commissioner Sudheer Babu reiterated that the sacrifices of police martyrs can never be forgotten, and the blood donation camp was conducted to honor their memory. “The event saw participation from several senior officials including: DCP Malkajgiri Padmaja, IPS, DCP LB Nagar Anuradha, IPS, DCP Crimes Aravind Babu, DCP Admin Indira, DCP Women Safety Usha Rani, DCP Maheshwaram Sunitha Reddy, DCP Traffic-I Srinivas, DCP Traffic-II Srinivasulu, DCP Cyber Crimes Naga Lakshmi, DCP Road Safety Manohar, DCP Headquarters Shyam Sunder, along with Additional DCPs, ACPs, and other police officers.

# Nemali Anil Kumar attends Mallapur Sadar Sammelan



“Indian Chornicale, October 21: “On the occasion of the Diwali festival, Greater Congress senior leader Nemali Anil Kumar took part in the Sadar Sammelan program organized by the Mallapur Yadava Association. During the event, he extended his warm Diwali greetings to the Yadava community members, appreciating their unity, cultural traditions, and active participation in social service.” Speaking on the occasion, Anil Kumar highlighted the importance of preserving traditional festivals like Sadar, which reflect the rich heritage and cultural pride of the Yadava community.

He also emphasized that such gatherings strengthen harmony and brotherhood among different sections of society.”

He further assured that the Congress Party will continue to support community development programs and work towards the welfare of all communities without any discrimination. “Prominent village elders of Mallapur, members of the Mallapur Yadava Association, Congress leaders, and several local residents participated enthusiastically, making the event a grand success.



Mandava Srisailam..Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... (Indian Chronicle..October 21):- “A scene of MLA Beerla Alaiiah, who participated in the police rally in Yadagiri Gutta on the occasion of Police Martyrs’ Day, paying trib-

ute to the families of the martyrs.. saying that the sacrifices of the police will never be forgotten.. that everyone should cooperate with them.... Government Vippu Aleru MLA Beerla Alaiiah explains.

# Rowdy-Sheeteer Sheikh Riyaz Killed in Hospital Encounter While Attempting Escape. “BABU Nambyar” Media Today

“Nizambad, October 20: “Sheikh Riyaz, a notorious rowdy-sheeteer and the prime accused in the brutal murder of Constable Prasad, was fatally shot in an encounter earlier today inside a hospital in Nizamabad. “Riyaz had been apprehended on the previous day and was undergoing treatment for minor injuries under police custody. According to official sources, he attempted to escape from custody by forcibly snatching a service weapon from one of the accompanying constables.” In response to the immediate threat posed by Riyaz, the escorting security personnel acted swiftly, neutralizing him within the hospital premises. Senior police officials have confirmed that all protocols were followed, and an internal inquiry has been initiated as per standard operating procedure in encounter cases. “Riyaz had a long history of criminal activity and was under surveillance for his alleged involvement in multiple violent offenses. The incident has stirred public attention and reignited discussions on the handling of high-risk detainees in medical facilities.



# Ola shares tumble after CEO Bhavish Aggarwal booked in employee suicide case

New Delhi: Shares of Bhavish Aggarwal-led Ola Electric Mobility came under heavy pressure on Tuesday during the special Muhurat Day trading session, following news that the company’s top executives have been booked in connection with the suicide of an employee. Ola Electric’s stock fell as much as 4.16 per cent, touching an intra-day low of Rs 52.65 per share on the National Stock Exchange (NSE). At the closing bell, the stock was at Rs 53.43, down by Rs 1.51 or 2.75 per cent.

Nearly 45 million equity shares, worth Rs 24.08 crore, were exchanged on both the NSE and the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) during the session. The sharp decline in share price followed reports that Bhavish Aggarwal, the CEO and founder of Ola, along with senior executive Subrath Kumar Das, has been named in an FIR filed by Bengaluru police. The case relates to the alleged suicide of a 38-year-old employee, K Aravind, who reportedly left behind a detailed 28-page death note accusing his seniors of workplace harassment. Aravind, who worked in the company’s homologation division, allegedly consumed poison at his resi-

dence on September 28.

Despite being rushed to a private hospital, he did not survive. The police registered a case of abetment to suicide under Section 108 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), based on a complaint filed by Aravind’s brother. The complaint also raised concerns about financial irregularities amounting to Rs 17.46 lakh and accused Ola’s HR department of failing to explain suspicious money transfers to Aravind’s account. A senior police officer confirmed that notices had been issued to all individuals named in the FIR and that written explanations had been submitted. The investigation is ongoing. Ola’s spokesperson earlier said they were deeply saddened by Aravind’s death and extended condolences to his family. The company claimed that Aravind had not raised any complaints or grievances during his 3.5-year tenure at Ola Electric, nor did he have direct contact with senior leadership, including the CEO. Ola also stated that it has challenged the FIR in the Karnataka High Court, where protective orders have been passed in favour of the company and its officials.



# Limbda torn apart after death of 12-year-old Dalit boy



GNS News Agency, Oct 21

An uneasy calm grips Limbda, a remote hamlet in the Chirgaon valley of Rohru, 121 km from Shimla, where caste faultlines have split the community wide open. On September 16, a 12-year-old Dalit boy was allegedly locked in a cowshed and scolded by an upper-caste woman for “polluting” her house. Hours later, he consumed a poisonous substance; the next day, he died in Shimla’s Indira Gandhi Medical College and Hospital. Since then, the air in Limbda has been heavy with suspicion. Villagers keep constant watch on who enters and leaves. Outsiders are questioned sharply, their motives doubted. The quiet presence of CID personnel in plain clothes has deepened the tension. What began as a tragedy has now fractured Limbda and nearly a dozen neighbouring villages, splitting them along caste lines.

Though Limbda is an SC-dominated settlement, 18 of its 21 houses belong to Scheduled Caste families, three Rajput households, including that of widow Pushpa Devi, have long lived here. It was Devi who allegedly confined the boy in her cowshed before he escaped. In response to her arrest under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, Rajput-dominated neighbouring villages like Kutra, Shagli, Gumna and Jangla came together to form the Swaran Samaj on September 28, two days after the Act was invoked.

Pushpa Devi was first booked only under abetment to suicide (Section 107) and wrongful confinement (Section 127(2), BNS 2023). On September 26, Sections 3(2)(v) and 3(2)(va) of the SC/ST Act were added to the FIR. By then, she had already obtained interim bail from the Himachal Pradesh High Court on September 25. On Monday, police submitted a status report to the court of Justice Rakesh Kainthla, acknowledging that “untouchability and casteism are still being practiced” in Limbda. Justice Kainthla has reserved his order on Devi’s bail plea.

“Limbda village originally belonged to the Koli community. The Chauhan family of Pushpa Devi shifted here three

decades ago from Kutra,” said Guddu Ram, a distant relative of the victim boy, speaking from the family’s kutcha house perched atop a steep hill with no motorable road. “Since the day we cremated our child, many people, including the accused woman, came to plead for forgiveness. Members of the Gram Panchayat also accompanied her. We did not speak much to them.” Guddu Ram added, “We heard that upper-caste villagers have formed a group to counter us. Four days ago, when ex-MLA and CPI(M) leader Rakesh Singha visited our house, he was intercepted at Jangla by members of this group. We are not scared, but there is an uneasy calm. We are very cautious about who comes to us.” His caution was visible: one woman relative admitted she had initially mistaken this correspondent for a “spy.” At the victim’s home, his mother and two uncles were present; his father and another uncle had gone to Shimla. The boy’s mother said, “Pushpa Devi came twice to seek forgiveness. I told her: bring my child back. My son had dropped out of school a few months ago.” One of the uncles countered rumours that the boy was a habitual thief: “These stories are being spread to cover up casteism. We belong to the Koli community, among the lowest in the hierarchy even within SCs. Our deities are different too—Kilbalu Devta and Mahasu Devta—unlike the upper castes who worship Khantu Maharaj and Devidhar Ghantu.” He added that divisions exist even within Scheduled Castes. “Some castes can enter upper-caste homes, except kitchens and shrines. But not us. When Pushpa Devi’s husband died mysteriously years ago, it was the victim’s father who carried his body to the hospital. Now, her house is ‘polluted’ because his son entered it.”

On the other side, Swaran Samaj leaders reject the allegations. “The boy’s death is tragic, but it is being given a different colour,” said Pawan Negi, a founding member. “Claims about a goat being demanded to ‘purify’ a house are unbelievable. If outsiders keep disturbing the atmosphere, we will protest aggressively.” Meanwhile, Mohit Chauhan, 24, Pushpa Devi’s son, told The Indian Express: “My mother never locked the boy in the cowshed or demanded a goat. Just two weeks earlier, we hosted a religious function at our home where 45 lower-caste villagers ate with us. We even gave police a video recording. Why would we then treat a boy like this?” The Himachal Pradesh police status report paints a different picture. In its 14-page submission, police said forensic evidence indicated the boy broke out of the cowshed through an iron mesh window. The report confirmed caste-based divisions, citing testimony of local priest Chain Ram, who said Kolis and some other sub-castes were still treated as untouchables.

# Pune Porsche crash case exposed systemic corruption: Police Commissioner Amitesh Kumar

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

Pune Police Commissioner Amitesh Kumar addresses students during a special public awareness program under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan at Modern College on Wednesday. Express photographs by Arul Horizon Pune Police Commissioner Amitesh Kumar addresses students during a special public awareness program under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan at Modern College on Wednesday. Express photographs by Arul Horizon The Pune Porsche crash case in May 2024 exposed systemic corruption in the city, said Amitesh Kumar, Commissioner of Police, Wednesday.

Speaking at an awareness event organised by Modern College of Arts, Science, and Commerce under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, Kumar said, “The Porsche case happened in the previous year, we all know about it. Many things were said: Pune’s culture has been ruined, Pune police and society are corrupt, etc. But in all this criticism, one good thing emerged. Whatever systemic corruption was present there, it got exposed.” On May 19, 2024, a 17-year-old boy, allegedly under the influence of alcohol, crashed a Porsche while driving at high speed in Pune, resulting in the deaths of two IT professionals on a motorcycle. The investigation that followed revealed attempts to tamper with evidence, including the swapping of blood samples. Kumar said the police investigation exposed the “complete racket” that had changed the blood samples. The blood samples of the minor, collected at Sassoon General Hospital, were allegedly swapped with his mother’s to show that he was not drunk. The police arrested the minor’s parents, two doctors, and a hospital staff member for their involvement in the sample swapping. While it is true that the probe brought to light alleged cover-ups in the case, the police also not covered themselves in glory in the case. In fact, the conduct of police officers at the Yerwada police station, where the accused was taken after the accident, had also come under heavy fire at the time. The police initially invoked Indian Penal Code Section 304A (causing death by negligence), a “weaker section”, and later changed



it to IPC 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder).

The late collection of blood samples for alcohol testing, along with the involvement of then MLA Sunil Tingre, raised allegations of “VIP treatment”. As a result, two police officers were suspended. ‘Say no to alcohol and tobacco’

Highlighting the danger of alcohol usage in minors and how it can uproot whole families, Kumar said, “The boy who allegedly caused the accident was 17 years old, and he got relief and is out. But his mother was in jail for 14 months. His father has been in jail for the last 17-18 months. The doctors and staff of the Sassoon Hospital have also been in jail for 18 months.” “Due to that boy’s fault, and because the parents tried to help him, they all went to jail. Due to one mistake, the whole family has been destroyed,” he added. Kumar spoke out against tobacco and drug addiction, saying that student support is crucial for reducing addictive substances. He said no tobacco shops are allowed to operate within 100 yards of educational institutions. “If there are any such shops within 100 yards of your institute, please get in touch with the police, and they will help in removing them. And I give you the right to stage a protest at the commissioner’s office and refuse to go to college until it is removed if the police do not remove it. With such a positive pressure group, a revolution is required.”

# Mohali gets Rs 728-crore power outage reduction plan; MLA Kulwant Singh hails it as ‘a transformative step’

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

The initiative includes 14 new grid substations and upgraded transformers to ensure stable, high-quality power supply. Mohali MLA Kulwant Singh launched a ₹728-crore project aimed at reducing power outages and improving electricity infrastructure across SAS Nagar. MLA Kulwant Singh launched the Rs 728-crore power outage reduction plan for SAS Nagar district on Wednesday at the 66 KV grid substation in IT City, Mohali, where a 31.5 MVA power transformer was also inaugurated under Punjab’s Rs 5,000-crore power infrastructure reform. Speaking at the launch, the SAS Nagar MLA said the investment “marks a transformative step towards uninterrupted, high-quality power supply” for domestic, commercial, and industrial consumers in Mohali. “This project will not only enhance voltage stability but also improve service delivery across the district,” Kulwant Singh added. The district-level works under the plan include feeder de-loading worth Rs 172.2 crore, installation of new distribution transformers worth Rs 35.5 crore, augmentation of existing transformers costing Rs 32.6 crore, and the construction of new 66 KV and 220 KV substations worth Rs 354.2 crore. Power transformer upgrades of Rs 62.9 crore and line strengthening works costing Rs 70.6 crore are also underway, according to officials. The statewide virtual launch of the initiative was led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Arvind Kejriwal, convener of the ruling



AAP. Kulwant Singh said that under the project, several new 11 KV feeders, including Jubilee Clio, TDI-2, Civil Hospital, Punjab Officers Society, and Aerovista, have been commissioned, easing load on existing feeders and improving supply quality. Fourteen new grid substations are being established across Mohali, including at Sector 62, Sector 110, Sector 119, Medicity, Aerocity-2, Eco City-1, Sector 123, and Mubarakpur, among others, the MLA said. He expressed confidence that these works “will redefine Mohali’s power infrastructure with reliable, efficient, and future-ready energy systems”. Meanwhile, Mohali has been designated as the east zone headquarters of Punjab State Power Corporation Limited, with a chief engineer now overseeing operations from Nangal to Lalru, ensuring better supervision and timely project execution.

# As Bihar prepares for new govt, take a look at how the Assembly performed since last polls



GNS News Agency, Oct 21

As Bihar readies itself for polls – on November 6 and 11– take a look at the Assembly sessions held between Nov 2020 and July 2025, the period of the 17th Assembly term. Between these years, data sourced by PRS Legislative Research shows that the Assembly met for a total of 146 days, the lowest of all its five-year terms. The Election Commission (EC) announced the much-awaited schedule on Oct 6, continuing its recent practice of shorter polling durations. The Assembly election next month will be the shortest in 20 years for the state.

It met for an average of 29 days a year, and on the days the House met, it functioned for an average of three hours. In 2024, Assemblies across all states had met for an average of five hours on sitting days. In the above chart, FS refers to First Session, BS is Budget Session, MS is Monsoon Session and WS is Winter Session. The most time spent was during the Budget session of 2023, where the house convened for 4.1 hours. During this session, education and rural development department got top priority as

Bihar Finance Minister Vijay Kumar Choudhary presented Rs 2,61,855.40 crore Budget for financial year 2023-2024. Of the total proposed budget expenditure of Rs 2.6 lakh crore, Rs 1 lakh crore has been earmarked for the ongoing and new schemes of various departments. Presenting the Budget in the State Assembly, the finance minister had thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for “emulating several Bihar schemes”, including ones on tap water and electricity. Three of the five major dips in session timings occurred during monsoon sessions. The 17th Assembly passed 78 Bills, all on the same day as their introduction, and none were referred to committees for further deliberation. What did these Bills focus on? Data shows that a majority of the Bills related to education, followed by finance and taxation, and administration (see chart). Key examples include the the Bihar Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024, the Bihar Control of Crimes Bill, 2024, and the Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration, Safety and Welfare) Bill, 2025.

Apart from general discussions on the Budget, in the past five years, the Bihar Assembly discussed ministry expenditure for an average of nine days. Over the past few Assembly elections, Bihar’s polling schedule has gradually become shorter. In 2005, voting took place over four phases, which increased to six phases in 2010. However, this was followed by a reduction to five phases in 2015 and then to just three phases in 2020. Whatever the results, it will be the end of an era for Bihar as the elections are widely expected to be the last for Nitish Kumar, the JD(U) supremo who has been the state’s Chief Minister for over 19 years now. Nitish’s RJD counterpart Lalu Prasad has already handed over the reins of his party to son Tejashwi Prasad Yadav, who will be hoping to improve on the party’s surprise 2020 performance and win the CM chair for himself.

# Where can you feed stray dogs? Can you adopt one? Gurgaon’s new policy answers your questions

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

The Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) on Wednesday issued directions to regulate the feeding and management of stray dogs, following recent directions from the Supreme Court. The move comes after an apex court order in August in this regard. Here’s what the order issued by MCG Joint Commissioner (Swachh Bharat Mission) Preetpal Singh says: Designated feeding spots and timings: Under the new rules, it will be the responsibility of Residents’ Welfare Associations (RWAs), Apartment Owner Associations (AOAs), or relevant local body representatives to arrange food for stray dogs in their area. These organisations must designate mutual-agreement feeding spots, which must be away from children’s play areas, staircases, and places frequented by children or senior citizens. Feeding times, too, are to be set with children and elderly residents’ routines in mind. Feeders are charged with keeping the area clean and following association guidelines, and may volunteer in vaccination and Animal Birth Control (ABC) efforts.

In case of disputes between RWAs and animal caregivers, an Animal Welfare Committee will be constituted. This will comprise veterinary officers, police, animal welfare representatives, a complainant, and representatives from the local RWA or apartment association. The committee’s decision regarding feeding points is final; appeals may be made to the State Board, whose decision will be binding. Notice boards will be placed at feeding areas, explicitly stating that feeding stray dogs is permitted only at these locations. Ban on street feeding and enforcement: Feeding stray dogs directly on the streets is strictly prohibited. Violators will face prosecution under relevant legal provisions. No individual or organisation may obstruct or hinder the implementation of these orders; those who do risk prosecution for interfering with public servants in their duties, the order notes. A dedicated helpline (1800-180-1817) is being set up for residents to report any issues related to stray dogs or violations of the feeding norms. Dog



relocation, adoption, and registration rules: Stray dogs picked up for sterilisation, vaccination, and deworming must be returned to their original locations — except those infected or suspected of having rabies, or displaying aggressive behaviour; these dogs will be kept in special shelters. Residents wishing to adopt stray dogs can apply to the MCG; once adopted, the dog must not return to the streets.

Additionally, pet dog owners are required to register their animals with the MCG’s authorised agency (Pet Pulse). The Supreme Court’s order in August had reversed an earlier direction mandating the relocation of all stray dogs in Delhi-NCR to shelters, recognising the impracticality of confining all strays and emphasising rehabilitation in accordance with the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023. The Court had directed all municipalities to set up dedicated feeding spaces ward-wise and warned that those found feeding dogs outside these designated areas would be prosecuted. It has called for a nationwide, balanced and enforceable policy, transferring all stray dog related matters from high courts to the apex court for a unified approach. The MCG does not have dog shelters of its own; rather, through a tie-up with two NGOs, it supervises work at two animal birth control centres in the city, at Baliawas and Kherki Majra.

# Bengal bucks India’s cyber crime spike, with a steady three-year decline — lower than smaller states

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

West Bengal has bucked a national trend in cyber crime registrations over three years — recording a steady decline even as the rest of the country saw a rise. According to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, published in the first week of October this year, registered cyber crime cases in West Bengal fell from 513 in 2021 to 401 in 2022, and further down to 309 in 2023. This contrasts sharply with the national figures, which rose from 52,430 in 2021 to 64,907 in 2022 and then to 85,603 in 2023.

Despite its large population, West Bengal remains among the states with the lowest cyber crime rates. The 513 cases registered in 2021 accounted for less than 1% of the total cases in India that year (86,420). In comparison, Karnataka (21,889 cases in 2023) and Telangana (18,236) reported far higher volumes. NCRB data also shows particularly low counts for critical fraud-related offences in 2021 — only 61 cases under the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, fewer than smaller states such as Goa (75) and Assam (847). Cases of Identity Theft (Section 66C) and Tampering with Computer Source Documents (Section 65) numbered just 5 and 1 respectively, which are fractions of what is seen in many other states where such sections dominate the cyber crime profile. Kolkata has also shown relatively high prosecutorial efficiency. The chargesheet rate for cyber crimes stands at about 80.7%, which is significantly higher than many other regions. However, there remains another challenge — 1,457 cases are pending trial from previous years, while 296 were sent for trial in the latest reporting year. The state has a dedicated Public Prosecutor for cyber law and electronic evidence cases. Speaking to The Indian Express, Special Public Prosecutor in Cyber Laws and Electronic Evidence cases Bivas Chatterjee, said, “The first conviction in a digital arrest was in Bengal. The state has secured conviction in different types of cyber crime. The cyber wing is also on their toes. Many cases are disposed of at a very early stage. Even conviction is higher in our state when it comes to cyber crime.” A cyber expert and advocate noted that “under-reporting and reluctance to lodge FIRs in some categories (especially fraud, identity theft, sextortion) may still persist.” “That could also be a reason why cases are fewer in the state. Despite improvements, the numbers for some high-impact fraud categories are extremely low, suggesting either under-detection or under-reporting. More outreach and citizen aware-



National Crime Records Bureau data shows cyber crimes fell from 513 in 2021 to 309 two years later in the state

ness may help,” said the expert. He added, “The police recorded crime data under the IT Act is disproportionately low for a state of its size, especially in categories like online fraud (Section 66D) and identity theft (Section 66C), which are the national drivers of cyber crime. Cases pending trial from previous years are 1,457, and cases sent for trial during the year are 296.”

In recent years, West Bengal has significantly expanded its cyber crime policing infrastructure and streamlined administrative oversight. The state now has 34 Cyber Crime Police stations (Cyber PS) functioning under respective Police Commissionerates or Superintendents, along with one Cyber PS under the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for areas outside Kolkata. These 34 stations were formally brought under the newly constituted West Bengal Cyber Crime Wing (WB-CCW) as per a notification dated October 17, 2023. The WB-CCW now supervises all such units while integrating existing specialised bodies like the Cyber Patrol Cell and Cyber Crime Cell, along with associated labs. The state has also created 188 positions, including both permanent and IT-specialist roles, under the WB-CCW, with many posts transferred from the CID and other departments to centralise cyber policing capabilities. Every police district in West Bengal has at least one Cyber Crime police station. At the local station level, officers are also being trained to handle cyber fraud complaints and assist citizens in filing cases and conducting preliminary investigations, officials said.



# Cautious optimism at Gaza talks as Hamas hands over lists of names for swap deal

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

SHARM EL-SHEIKH,- Hamas handed over lists on Wednesday of hostages and Palestinian prisoners to be exchanged in a swap, and said it was optimistic about negotiations to end the war in Gaza, while U.S. President Donald Trump's son-in-law and envoy were due to join the talks.

Indirect negotiations are focused on the mechanisms to halt the conflict, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and the swap deal, the Palestinian militant group added, in a seemingly upbeat assessment of the talks over a plan put forward by Trump, the closest diplomats have come to silencing the guns.The Reuters Gulf Currents newsletter brings you the latest on geopolitics, energy and finance in the region. Sign up here.One of the big sticking points will be pressure on Hamas to disarm, an issue it has been unwilling to discuss at the talks which began on Monday in the Egyptian resort town of Sharm el-Sheikh, a Palestinian source close to the negotiations said.The timing of the implementation of the first phase of Trump's 20-point initiative has not yet been agreed, the source said.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio is expected to attend a ministerial meeting on Thursday in Paris with European, Arab and other states to discuss Gaza's post-war transition, three diplomatic sources said on Wednesday.The meeting, which will be held in parallel with the negotiations in Egypt, is intended to discuss how to implement Trump's plan and assess countries' collective commitments.Many Gazans have been displaced repeatedly as they face hunger and shortages of fuel, water and medical supplies."Winter is coming ... the water is going through (my tent), the rats are coming after us, the mosquitoes and flies," said displaced Gazan Raed Shahine.TRUMP OPTIMISTIC, WITKOFF AND KUSHNER DUE TO JOIN TALKS

Trump expressed optimism about progress toward a deal on Tuesday, the second anniversary of the Hamas attack on Israel that triggered the Israeli military assault on Gaza.He is sending a team that includes his special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law who served as Middle East envoy during the president's first term.But officials on all sides have so far urged caution over the prospects for a rapid agreement.

Other senior figures were also expected to join the talks on Wednesday, including Israeli Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer - Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's close confidant - and Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, a longstanding mediator.[1/4]Destroyed buildings following explosions in Gaza, as seen from southern Israel, October 7, 2025. REUTERS/Ammar Awad Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tabAnother participant will be Turkish spymaster Ibrahim Kalin, pointing to a growing role for Turkey, a powerful NATO member which has close contacts with Hamas but which Israel has not previously viewed as a mediator.Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said Trump had

# Rubio to attend Paris meeting on Gaza transition, sources say

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio speaks during a joint press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (not pictured) at the Prime Minister's Office, during his visit, in Jerusalem, Nathan Howard/Pool Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tabPARIS, Oct 8 (Reuters) - U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio is expected to attend a ministerial meeting to be held on Thursday in Paris with European, Arab and other states to discuss Gaza's post-war transition, three diplomatic sources said on Wednesday.The meeting, to be held in parallel with indirect talks between Israel and Hamas in Egypt on U.S. President Donald Trump's plan for Gaza, is intended to discuss how the plan would be implemented and assess countries' collective commitments to the process.The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here.

According to a note sent to delegates, the meeting will

# UNICEF official says Gaza babies forced to share oxygen masks, Israel challenges UN data



GENEVA, GNS News Agency, Oct 221 Israel has repeatedly denied permission to transfer incubators from an evacuated hospital in North Gaza, a U.N. children's agency official said on Tuesday, adding to strain on overcrowded hospitals further south where newborn babies are now sharing oxygen masks.Israel disputed the assertion and said it was allowing the transfer of medical equipment from the north of the enclave to its south.

Keep up with the latest medical breakthroughs and healthcare trends with the Reuters Health Rounds newsletter. Sign up here.Two years of war between Israel and Hamas has increased stress and malnourishment among pregnant mothers, leading to a rise in premature and underweight babies who the World Health Organization says now account for a fifth of all Gaza newborns.Over the past month an Israeli assault on Gaza City in northern Gaza has shut hospitals in that area, worsening overcrowding in hospitals that remain open in the south.James Elder, UNICEF spokesperson, described mothers and babies lining the corridor floors of Nasser Hospital in southern Gaza, and said that premature babies were being forced to share oxygen masks and beds. Meanwhile, vital equipment is stranded in hospitals that have been shut in the north.

"We've been trying to recover incubators from a hospital that was evacuated in the north, and we've had four missions denied simply to get those incubators," he told



asked Turkey to help persuade Hamas to accept the deal. But he said it was important to apply pressure to Israel, which he called the main obstacle to peace."Peace is not a bird with a single wing. Putting the entire burden of peace on Hamas and Palestinians is not a fair, correct or realistic approach," he said.Trump's plan calls for an international body led by Trump himself and including former British Prime Minister Tony Blair to play a role in Gaza's post-war administration. Arab countries which back the plan say it must lead to eventual independence for a Palestinian state, which Netanyahu says will never happen.Islamic Jihad, a smaller group than Hamas that also holds Israeli hostages, was also joining the talks on Wednesday.Hamas wants a permanent, comprehensive ceasefire, a complete pullout of Israeli forces and the immediate start of a comprehensive reconstruction process under the supervision of a Palestinian "national technocratic body".Israel wants Hamas to disarm, which the group rejects. Hamas has said it will not hand over its weapons until a Palestinian state has been established.U.S. officials suggest they want to initially focus talks on a halt to the fighting and the logistics of how the Israeli hostages in Gaza and Palestinian detainees in Israel would be freed.

In the absence of a ceasefire, Israel has pressed on with its offensive in Gaza, although it has scaled back an assault on Gaza City in recent days at Trump's urging.The Gaza health ministry said Israeli fire had killed at least eight people across the enclave in the past 24 hours, the lowest death toll it has reported in the past week.Even if a major breakthrough is reached, there is no clear indication who will rule Gaza when the war ends. Netanyahu, Trump, Western and Arab states have ruled out a role for Hamas.Global outrage has mounted against Israel's assault. Multiple rights experts, scholars and a U.N. inquiry say it amounts to genocide. Israel calls its actions self-defence after the 2023 Hamas attack.Gaza authorities say over 67,000 people have been killed in Israel's offensive. It followed the October 7, 2023 attack by Hamas, when 1,200 people were killed and 251 taken to Gaza as hostages, according to Israel's tallies.

follow up a conference on a "two-state solution" at the United Nations and is intended to agree on joint actions to make a contribution to the U.S. plan for Gaza. The two-state solution would involve an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel.Countries attending on Thursday will include France, Britain, Germany, Italy, Spain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Turkey and Canada.The note had said Washington's participation would depend on advances in the negotiations in Egypt.A European diplomatic source said it was vital to have the United States present. An Italian diplomatic source underlined the importance of supporting Trump's plan, which was "the only one possible".A French diplomatic source said the United States and Israel had been kept up to date with plans for the meeting and the agenda would include humanitarian aid for Gaza and the enclave's reconstruction, disarmament of Hamas and support for the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian security forces.The U.S. Embassy in Paris was not immediately available for comment.

Reuters by video link from Gaza, referring to supplies now stuck at the damaged Al-Rantissi Children's Hospital in Gaza City.At a hospital Elder visited in the south, meanwhile, "in one of the paediatric rooms, there were three babies and three mums on a single bed, one source of oxygen, and the mothers would rotate the oxygen 20 minutes to each child," he said. "This is the level of desperation mums have now got to."COGAT CHALLENGES U.N. DATACOGAT, the arm of the Israeli military that oversees aid flows into Gaza, said the U.N.'s data was wrong and that hundreds of coordination requests for humanitarian convoys, including the transfer of food, medical equipment, fuel and teams were being approved.

"The transfer of medical equipment from hospitals in the north to those in the south is being facilitated in accordance with hospital requests," COGAT said.The U.N. humanitarian office said on Tuesday that Israel had either denied or impeded 45% of its 8,000 requested humanitarian missions within Gaza since UNICEF has called for the evacuation of ill and premature babies remaining in northern Gaza hospitals. The WHO transferred three of them last week to a hospital further south, but said one died before the mission. Only 14 of Gaza's 36 hospitals are currently even partially functional, the WHO says.

# Turning point in India-Afghan engagement

The upcoming visit by Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi may well mark a turning point in diplomatic relations with India, with the potential to redraw power equations in South Asia. The growing diplomatic engagement with the Taliban reflects India's pragmatic approach. Though New Delhi has not officially recognised the ultra-orthodox regime, it has progressively stepped up cooperation on economic development and humanitarian assistance. This calculated and measured diplomatic engagement reflects the acknowledgement of the basic geopolitical reality of the subcontinent.

# France's caretaker PM Lecornu: Hopeful on budget, chance of snap election less likely

PARIS, GNS News Agency, Oct 21 French caretaker Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu said on Wednesday a deal could eventually be reached on a 2026 budget despite the country's political crisis, striking a cautiously optimistic tone as he held talks with various parties.Lecornu, France's fifth prime minister in two years, tendered his and his government's resignation on Monday, just hours after announcing the cabinet line-up, making it the shortest-lived administration in modern France.The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.But at President Emmanuel Macron's request, Lecornu is now holding last-ditch consultations with key political party leaders in an effort to defuse France's worst political crisis in decades and avoid snap parliamentary elections."There is a willingness to have a budget for France before December 31 of this year," Lecornu told reporters on Wednesday, speaking after talks on Tuesday with conservatives and centre-right parties and before meeting the Socialist Party and Greens."And this willingness creates momentum and convergence, obviously, which reduces the prospects of dissolution (of parliament)," he said.Lecornu said he hoped a deal could be reached on bringing France's budget deficit down to between 4.7% and 5%, from a target of 5.4% in 2025.Markets have taken fright at the political paralysis in the euro zone's second biggest economy, with investors already jittery over the country's yawning budget deficit.However, French assets staged a modest improvement on Wednesday after Lecornu's cautiously optimistic comments, with Paris' CAC 40 indexLecornu, a Macron loyalist, said he would meet the president later on Wednesday, as planned, to discuss the results of his meetings with party leaders and see whether a deal was possible.

It was unclear when Macron, who is under heavy pressure from opposition parties to call snap parliamentary elections or resign, would announce any decisions. Many options are possible, including an extension of the consultations with the parties.Far-right leader Marine Le Pen, who refused to take part in this round of talks with Lecornu, made clear on Wednesday she would not be part of any deal."I'll



censure everything. Enough now — the joke has gone on long enough," she told reporters, reiterating her demand for snap parliamentary elections.After meeting with Lecornu, Socialist Party chief Olivier Faure said he wanted to help find a way out of the crisis but that the left wanted to run the next government.The Socialists want a 2% wealth tax on France's richest 0.01% in the 2026 budget, making Lecornu's political survival contingent on a measure that has strong public support but alienates conservatives.

They also want France to row back on an unpopular reform that will make people work longer to qualify for a pension. Faure said Lecornu had given him no guarantees on the pension demand.Acting education minister Elisabeth Borne said she was open to suspending the pension reform she herself steered through parliament in 2023, but others, including acting finance minister Roland Lescure, warned against such a costly move.Greens leader Marine Tondelier, whose party is allied with the Socialists, said after her talks with Lecornu on Wednesday that France had "never been closer" to having a new left-wing prime minister."Appointing yet again a prime minister from the president's (centrist) camp would be a final provocation, they wouldn't last a minute," she told reporters.

# Germany to allow police to shoot down drones



BERLIN, GNS News Agency, Oct 21Germany will grant police the power to shoot down rogue drones like those that have disrupted airports across Europe and that some European leaders have attributed to a hybrid war being waged by Russia.The new law, agreed by the cabinet on Wednesday and awaiting parliamentary approval, explicitly authorises the police to down drones violating Germany's airspace, including shooting them down in cases of acute threat or serious harm.Other techniques available to down drones include using lasers or jamming signals to sever control and navigation links."Drone incidents threaten our security," Chancellor Friedrich Merz said in a post on social media platform X.

"We will not permit that. We are strengthening the Federal Police's powers so that drones can be detected and countered more quickly in future."The new law comes after dozens of flights were diverted or cancelled last Friday at Munich Airport, Germany's second largest, leaving more than 10,000 passengers stranded, after rogue drone

sightings.Merz has said he assumed Russia was behind many of the drones flying over Germany last weekend, but none had been armed and were rather on reconnaissance flights.EU leaders have come to view Russia as a major threat to their continent's security following Moscow's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine and their support of Kyiv.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen called last month for what she described as a drone wall - a network of sensors and weapons to detect, track and neutralise intruding unmanned aircraft - to protect Europe's eastern flank.But some say the drones involved in recent incidents could also have been launched from within the EU.KEEPING PACE WITH FAST DRONE INNOVATIONWith the new law, Germany joins European countries that have recently given security forces powers to down drones violating their airspace, including Britain, France, Lithuania and Romania.A dedicated counter-drone unit will be created within the federal police, Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt said, and researchers would consult with Israel and Ukraine as they were more advanced in drone technology.Police would deal with drones flying at around tree-level, whereas more powerful drones should be tackled by the military, Dobrindt said.Germany recorded 172 drone-related disruptions to air traffic between January and the end of September 2025, up from 129 in the same period last year and 121 in 2023, according to data from Deutsche Flugsicherung (DFS).German military drills last month in the northern port city of Hamburg demonstrated how like a spider, a large military drone shot a net at a smaller one in mid-flight, entangling its propellers and forcing it to the ground, where a robotic dog trotted over to seek possible explosives.Shooting down drones could be unsafe in densely populated urban areas, however, and airports do not necessarily have detection systems that can immediately report sightings.

# Indian-origin brothers jailed for serious child sex offences in U.K.

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

An Indian-origin man who had pleaded guilty to child rape offences was on Tuesday (October 7, 2025) sentenced to 22 years' imprisonment at an east London court, where his brother was also sentenced to 15 months in jail for possession of indecent images of children.Vruij Patel, 26, and his brother Kishan Patel were sentenced at Snaresbrook Crown Court after an investigation by the Metropolitan Police, which is appealing for other potential victims to come forward.Detectives believe there may be other victim-survivors who were targeted by the Patels, whose offending is thought to date back to 2018."(Vruij) Patel is a cowardly, opportunistic offender who has preyed on vulnerable victims for his own sexual gratification," said Detective Sergeant Rob Blant, who led the Met Police's investigation."The threat he poses to women and children has been reflected in his sentence and his future management under the terms of the Sexual Harm Prevention Order and sex offender notification requirements for the remainder of his life," said DS Blant."This is a fantastic example of a thorough and detailed investigation by Met detectives working to support victims of the most serious offending and safeguard the wider public from a dangerous offender," he said.According to the police statement, Vruij Patel had pleaded guilty to rape of a child under 13, assault of a child under 13 by penetration, and four counts of causing a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity in relation to one victim.Additionally, he pleaded guilty to rape of a woman over 16 and sexual assault by penetration relating to a second victim.Besides, he was also found in possession of indecent images of children and guilty of voyeurism, leading to a lifelong entry into the U.K.'s sex offenders' register.Kishan Patel was sentenced for making and possessing indecent images of children and will serve a 10-year sexual harm prevention order in addition to the jail term.The court heard that Vruij Patel was arrested on February 1 after Greater Manchester Police alerted the Met Police to a third-party report of videos of child sexual offending being present on a device which had been sent for repair.

The device belonged to Kishan Patel and some initial



videos found depicted child sexual offences being committed against a young girl who was known to the brothers."Officers worked quickly to seize Kishan's devices; however, it became apparent that Vruij Patel was the one appearing in the videos. Detectives were able to identify him after his face was briefly visible at the end of one of the videos showing abuse of the child," the Met Police said in a statement.Further images and videos were uncovered by detectives, which showed Vruij Patel committing a rape against a young woman following a university night out, and voyeurism against a young girl.Police detectives pieced together that he had filmed himself committing multiple offences against the victims and was identifiable from clothing comparisons and his distinctive jewellery."Although each incident of contact offending is thought to have happened in 2018, the voyeurism precedes this and officers are concerned that Vruij's offending has continued until more recently," the Met Police said."Following Patel's sentencing today, detectives are appealing for any further victim-survivors to come forward. There may be other instances where children visiting his home, or the homes of those around him, had been placed under his care. Detectives are interested to speak to anyone who believes this may have been true," the police force said in its appeal.According to officers, the victim-survivors involved in this case have been given specialist support and guidance by officers throughout the investigation and court process.



# Crimes against children surge in Assam, Rajasthan, and Kerala: NCRB data



In 2023, cases of crimes against children recorded the sharpest rise in three States — Assam, Rajasthan and Kerala, according to the latest data from the National Crimes Records Bureau. In Assam, recorded cases of crimes against children surged by nearly 100% — from an average of around 5,100 cases between 2018 and 2022 to more than 10,000 in 2023. In Kerala, the number increased by 106% — from an average of more than 2,800 cases between 2018 and 2022 to more than 5,900 cases in 2023. In Rajasthan, the number increased by 70% — from an average of 6,200 cases between 2018 and 2022 to more than 10,500 cases in 2023. In comparison, overall recorded cases of crimes against children in India increased by 25% in that period. The below map shows the percentage change in cases of crimes against children in 2023 compared with the average number of cases recorded between 2018 and 2022. While these three States stand out, the reasons for the rise in each of them vary considerably.

In Assam, a record crackdown on child marriage led to a sharp rise in the number of cases filed under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. In fact, a close look at Assam's crime data against children shows that the spike was driven almost entirely by this State-led intervention. Between 2020 and 2022, about 150 cases were recorded annually in Assam under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act; this increased to 5,267 in 2023. That year, cases re-

lated to child marriage accounted for nearly 52% of all crimes against children in the State, a dramatic jump from 3-4% in the preceding years, as shown in the chart below. In Rajasthan, two key factors appear to have driven the rise. The first is the sudden shift in the way offences against children were categorised — from only non-POCSO sections to specific POCSO provisions. POCSO refers to the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012. In 2021 and 2022, over 2,700 cases were filed separately under the rape provision (Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code). However, in 2022 and 2023, no cases were filed independently under this section; instead, there was a corresponding rise in cases registered under the relevant POCSO provision. Cases filed under Sections 4 and 6 of the POCSO Act read with Section 376 of the IPC increased from just three in 2021 and 2022 to more than 3,500 in 2022 and 2023, as shown in the chart below. This shift — from filing cases solely under IPC provisions to invoking relevant sections of the POCSO Act — was seen across the country, but was most pronounced in Rajasthan.

It should be noted that the more accurate classification of child rape cases occurred alongside an actual increase in such offences in Rajasthan — from about 2,700 to 3,500 cases. However, whether this rise is primarily due to proper classification or an actual increase in offences is an open question. The second is that there was a sharp spike in cases related to the kidnapping and abduction of children. In Rajasthan, cases filed under various sections related to the kidnapping and abduction of children rose sharply, with their share in total crimes against children climbing to over 54% in 2023 — a steep increase., as shown in the chart below. There was a surge in POCSO cases in Kerala too. The increase appears partly linked to more accurate classification of offences under specific POCSO sections, accompanied by an increase in the reported cases., as shown in the chart below. It is important to note that the rise in cases, particularly those involving crimes against children, may indicate improved reporting, rather than a genuine increase in the incidence of such crimes. The data for the charts were sourced from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) from 2020 to 2023

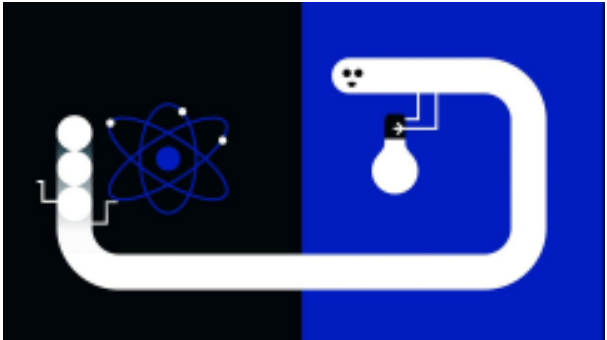
# The curious history of how quantum mechanics came to be ‘seen’ in an electrical circuit

Quantum mechanics is usually described as the science of the very small — of electrons, atoms, and photons that behave in ways that defy the rules of everyday experience. Yet one of the most striking results of modern physics is that this quantum behaviour doesn't vanish abruptly when systems become large. Instead, it continues to show itself in the behaviour of groups of particles doing something together. Over the years, physicists have learnt how to engineer these groups, measure them, and even control them to perform specific tasks.

The 2025 physics Nobel Prize has been awarded to John Clarke, Michel Devoret, and John Martinis for showing in their experiments that quantum tunnelling — a phenomenon in which a particle passes through an energy barrier instead of having to climb over it — can occur not only in the subatomic realm but also in an electrical circuit big enough to see with the naked eye. Their achievement came at the end of one particular chain of ideas stretching back to Brian Josephson, a British physicist who first described how pairs of electrons could tunnel through an insulating barrier between two superconductors, and Anthony Leggett, who later proposed that an entire circuit's collective state could itself behave as a quantum object. Together, these ideas created a bridge from the quantum world of particles to the macroscopic world of devices. In 1962, when Josephson was a 22-year-old graduate student at the University of Cambridge, the Bardeen-Cooper-Schrieffer (BCS) theory had explained superconductivity. In a superconductor, electrons move in pairs known as Cooper pairs, forming a collective state that flows without resistance. Josephson wondered what would happen if two superconductors were separated by a very thin insulating barrier. Would the paired electrons simply stop at the wall or would they tunnel through (since that's something quantum physics allows)? Using the maths of quantum physics, he showed that it was possible for a supercurrent, i.e. a superconducted current, to pass through even if there was no voltage across the barrier. The result was revolutionary: a current could flow indefinitely across an insulator purely because of the particular relationship between the two superconductors. Josephson derived a simple formula linking the current to the phase difference.

In a superconductor, all the electrons that form Cooper pairs act together as a single quantum wave. And like any wave, this collective quantum state has a phase, which you can think of as a measure of how far along the wave's cycle (crest to trough) it is at a given point. When you place two superconductors next to each other with a thin insulating barrier between them, each one has its own quantum wave and its own phase. The phase difference is simply the difference between those two phases — i.e. how much one wave leads or lags behind the other. This difference isn't just mathematical; it's also physically real and it controls how electrons tunnel between the superconductors. In fact, the current that flows across the junction depends directly on the sine of that phase difference, which is what Josephson expressed in his formula:  $I = I_c \sin(f)$ , where  $f$  is the angle expressing the phase difference. Imagine two synchronised dancers performing the same steps. If they move perfectly in sync (no phase difference), they look like one. If one dancer is slightly ahead of the other, that offset (their phase difference) creates visible interference in their motion. Similarly, when the superconductors' phases differ, that offset drives a beat between them, producing a current even when no voltage is applied. Josephson also predicted that if a voltage were applied, the current would oscillate at a specific frequency proportional to that voltage. He also said that if the setup were illuminated with microwaves of that frequency, there should be a measurable voltage across the barrier. When other researchers quickly confirmed these predictions, this Josephson effect became a cornerstone of quantum electronics. In 1972, the BCS theory won the Nobel Prize for physics, and Josephson followed the next year with the prize for his work.

To visualise the Josephson effect, imagine two reservoirs of water separated by a thin glass wall. Classically, no water should cross it. But in the quantum world, waves associated with the molecules on either side can interfere and create a small but steady leak through the wall. The Josephson junction — which is a sandwich of two superconductors and an insulator — is the electrical version of this improbable leak. The supercurrent doesn't arise from a push, or voltage, but from the coherence of the quantum waves themselves. 'Coherence' here means the ability of the system to maintain its quantum character. And because of this coherence, a Josephson junction can behave like a



single quantum entity, even though it consists of trillions of electrons. In the quantum world, waves associated with the molecules on either side of this reservoir can interfere and create a small but steady leak through the wall.

In the quantum world, waves associated with the molecules on either side of this reservoir can interfere and create a small but steady leak through the wall. | Photo Credit: Image created with ChatGPT 5 The next great leap on this chain was that of the British-American physicist Anthony Leggett. By the late 1970s, physicists knew Josephson junctions behaved in ways consistent with quantum theory, but there also remained a deeper conceptual question: could an entire macroscopic variable, such as the current flowing in a circuit, obey the laws of quantum mechanics as if it were a microscopic particle?

Leggett, then a young theorist with a background in superfluid helium, recognised that the Josephson junction offered the ideal testing ground. He proposed treating the phase difference between the two superconductors (remember: a collective property involving trillions of electrons) as a single parameter moving in an energy landscape. In his model, the system resembled a marble trapped in a valley between two hills. The marble represented the phase difference; the hills represented energy barriers determined by the junction's current and capacitance. If the marble had enough energy, it could roll over the hill, corresponding to the junction switching from a zero-voltage state to one with a finite voltage. But even without enough energy, quantum mechanics allows the marble to tunnel through the hill, appearing on the other side without having to go over the top. Leggett predicted that at a sufficiently low temperature, when there wasn't enough heat in the system to push it over the energy barrier, a macroscopic variable of the system could tunnel through — and that this could be observed as a small current that's independent of the temperature. His work did more than propose a radical idea: it set down specific conditions in which macroscopic quantum effects could survive the destructive influence of the environment. He analysed how frictional losses and electromagnetic noise (together known as dissipation and decoherence) would discourage quantum tunnelling, and showed how to design circuits that would minimise effects. In other words, his theory showed a way to use the Josephson junction to test the limits of quantum mechanics. Among those who took up the challenge were Clarke, Devoret, and Martinis. They developed exquisitely clean Josephson junctions and cooled them to fractions of a degree above absolute zero. By biasing the junction with a steadily increasing current, they could watch for the point at which it switched into a finite voltage state. At high temperatures, the switch occurred at random currents determined by thermal fluctuations: i.e. the hotter the sample, the more easily it could jump over the barrier, instead of opting to tunnel through. But as they lowered the temperature, something remarkable happened. Below a certain point, the temperature no longer mattered: the junction continued to switch with a small but steady probability, exactly as Leggett's model predicted. This escape rate also stopped following the classical thermal pattern and instead settled into a pattern only quantum mechanics could explain. In effect, the trio had caught a macroscopic system tunnelling through an energy barrier. To strengthen their case, the three then turned to spectroscopy. If the phase variable truly behaved like a quantum particle, it would have to have discrete energy levels. They followed Josephson's prediction and shone microwaves of specific frequencies on the circuit, and found that it absorbed energy only when the frequency matched the gap between energy levels. This was clear evidence of energy quantisation in a macroscopic object. In two papers in 1981 and 1985, they described the observation of macroscopic quantum tunnelling and quantised energy levels, both in a single Josephson junction — a result that built directly on J

# ‘H-1B move could be a win-win as more talent might return to India’



Amid evolving India-US relations, and growing concerns among students reconsidering plans for higher education in the US, Geoffrey Garrett, Dean of the USC Marshall School of Business and Jared Grusd, Adjunct Professor of Entrepreneurship at the institute told The Indian Express that despite the uncertainties, USC has seen a record number of Indian students enrolling across various programmes. They said while recent announcements around the H-1B visa may seem worrying at first, but once the details were fully understood, it became far less intimidating. Edited excerpts:

In recent times, changes to the H-1B visa have become a crucial factor for Indian students considering higher education in the US. How do you view the current regulatory environment around the H-1B visa?

Geoffrey Garrett (GG): One important clarification for students is they do not need the H-1B visa right away. There is a different system called Optional Practical Training (OPT), which allows students to work after graduation. If it's a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) degree — as all degrees from the Marshall Business School are — students can get up to three years of work experience through OPT. What we're really concerned about, from a firm's perspective, is the increasing hassle of getting an Indian student into the US workforce. That challenge has been growing for a while. However, I suspect that the bigger American companies, where most students aim to work, will absorb the cost. For them, the \$100,000 or so is spread over six years, which makes it manageable.

I understand why Indian students are so concerned. But in practical terms, two things matter. First, the job pathways into big firms likely won't be affected much. Second, several of the major users of H-1B visas were Indian companies operating in the US, so this shift could be a win-win — as more talent might now return to India. The signal these new regulations send is powerful and concerning. At universities like USC, where international students are our lifeblood, we have to take this seriously. One-third of our entire student body consists of first-generation migrants to the US. But when you unpack the details, the reality is less intimidating than it first appears. We will need to break this down clearly for people — otherwise, it will be a very big change to our business model.

If you can elaborate on this and also did you see any impact on the number of admissions from India this year? GG: At the business school, we had a record number of Indian students coming in, and I believe that was true across USC, at the UG level as well. We were initially concerned — not just about students from India, but about international students in general — because of visa-related hassles. We feared we might lose a significant number. But that actually didn't happen. What I think is really happening is that at top-quality institutions, international students have a global outlook, understand the value of the education they are getting. It's probably the second-tier American universities that will suffer, at least in the short term. That said, the recent news about H-1B visas is a big deal. From a business model perspective, I am less concerned about the UG programmes, because they are longer — the experience stretches over four years, and you can amortize the uncertainty over time.

The part of our educational system that's a bit more transactional is the one-year master's programmes. For those students, this new environment makes the decision much harder: Do I pursue this degree with so much uncertainty around my employment prospects afterward? That's a real concern, and we'll need to think carefully about it. It's also another reason to seriously consider offering graduate education outside the US — not just as a strategic move, but because it might become a practical necessity.

There's a growing cultural fear among Indian students they may no longer be as welcomed in the US as before. In your view, what is the one real fear and the one imagined fear they should keep in mind about the American campus? GG: I have two reactions to that. First, California is demographically different. If you walk down Trousdale Parkway in the middle of the day at USC, you don't feel like you're in some mythical version of white America from the 1950s. Southern California is even more cosmopolitan than the Bay Area.

Second, Indian Americans are incredibly influential today — not just as corporate CEOs, but also through the growing power of the Indian caucus in Congress. That should give people a sense of comfort. The success of In-

dian-Americans is remarkable... I think the real fear is not uniquely American — it's global. I never imagined we would see such de-globalization, that the global economy would begin to fracture. I also never expected skilled migration to become such a politically charged issue in so many countries.

The imagined fear, I believe, is around physical safety. The LA riots over the summer were a global news story. People reached out to ask if we were okay. In reality, it was happening in just two blocks of downtown LA. It was the same with the fires in January — tragic, yes — but they were confined to small areas like the Palisades and Altadena. LA wasn't burning down. Jared Grusd (JG): At USC, on a day-to-day basis, these fears aren't what dominate conversations. What students are actually talking about is exactly what you would expect from any time in the past three to five years — learning, developing skills, pursuing interests, and shaping their career trajectories.

In the past decade, more Indian students have been choosing the US for UG education. However, in recent months, growing uncertainty has led many students to consider newer private Indian universities that offer high-quality, flexible education at much affordable rate. How real or significant is this shift, and what should students keep in mind when making their decision? GG: You are absolutely right about the growing trend of students pursuing UG education abroad — we've seen the same shift at USC. This year, international students made up 21% of USC's incoming UG class overall. At the business school, where I serve as dean, that number was 24%. In fact, the number of Indian undergraduates at USC has doubled over the past five years — and the number of graduate students has increased as well.

Now, however, we are entering a different phase. With India's New Education Policy (NEP), there is a lot of domestic momentum, particularly with the emergence of high-quality private universities. At the same time, there's a new opportunity for institutions like ours: foreign universities are now allowed to operate independently in India. That's a big deal when you start thinking about offshore operations. My view — especially for USC and our business school — is that we want to continue attracting a global student body, as much as possible. But we will also need to think globally in a broader sense. Not just about offshore operations, but also about creating career opportunities outside the US. It can't just be one-way traffic into American jobs. This marks a significant shift for US higher education at a time when both our reliance on international students and on government research funding is being challenged. And I don't believe we will return to the old status quo.

On the research side, this means building more partnerships with the private sector, rather than depending primarily on government support. On the education side, it means adopting a more expansive global outlook. We can't be expecting an endless supply of super-talented students from India coming to LA. You mentioned the NEP. Does it actually make it easier for foreign universities to set up operations in India? GG: Yes. And it's interesting, maybe not surprising, that the two countries that have taken first advantage of that are my home country, Australia, and the UK. I think the reason for that is the financial position of those universities is much weaker than the big, strong American institutions. I suspect the US will be next. It will likely be institutions like NYU and USC, which already have large international footprints and student numbers, including Indians. I do think we'll just be the leading edge of a change that has to happen, because the underlying model of higher education is being challenged today in unprecedented ways. There's a clear supply-demand mismatch in India, and I think that's something everyone recognises. That's also where the opportunity lies. It's why we're seeing the rise of so many impressive private universities, and why international institutions view India as a compelling market.

Several foreign universities are setting up campuses in India — five in Mumbai alone. But for many students, studying abroad is about gaining international exposure and cultural exchange. Can campuses in India provide that same experience? And will it be a challenge to attract international students to these campuses? GG: I think the implicit American model for a long time was that everyone in the world wanted, if they could, to get to the US and become as American as possible. That's clearly outmoded today. So, I think both culturally and economically, we need to go to the world more. Having more balance, rather than this one-way traffic, is the right way to go. There's a cultural dimension to that. At the business school at USC, we send a remarkable proportion of our degree students on international experiences. They all want to go to Western Europe because they are familiar with it — they vacation there, they know the culture and history, etc. What I would like to do is proactively get them into leading emerging markets. And India is the obvious place to focus on now. But the challenges are real. If you haven't been here, the first impression is often that it's different, it's halfway around the world — all of that can feel like a barrier. But I think the opportunity here is so great that if we can grease the wheels by having better access to more things here it will become more feasible.

# Your depression isn't in your head; it is linked to immunity

Hyderabad: Management of mental health ailments is usually centered around addressing issues with our brains. However, in the last few years, there has been growing evidence linking the role of body immunity and its influence on various kinds of mental health ailments. Studies by psychiatrists and neuroscientists in the last few years have indicated that Regulatory T Cells (Tregs), which are body's peacekeeping immune cells, have a direct link to our mental health. The drop in Tregs in our body is directly linked to chronic neuroinflammation, an inflammatory response that occurs within the central nervous system (CNS), which includes the brain and spinal cord, driving conditions such as major depressive disorders, anxiety and schizophrenia. "Tregs prevent the immune system from overreacting. When these cells decrease or become dysfunctional, inflammation increases, thus affecting brain chemistry, mood regulation, and emotional stability," explains senior psychiatrist and national director council member of the Indian Psychiatric Society, Dr Vishal Akula.

Research shows that individuals with depression have reduced Regulatory T Cells (Treg) levels, leading to higher inflammatory markers like IL-6, TNF-a, and IL-1β, which contribute to chronic stress and mood disturbances. The Regulatory T Cells have links to schizophrenia, Dr Vishal explains, "Imbalance in Treg cells increases neuroinflammation and worsens psychotic symptoms. This immune dysregulation is now being studied as a possible



biological factor in schizophrenia. Chronic substance abuse, such as alcohol, nicotine, and opioids, suppresses Treg activity, causing increased brain inflammation and higher relapse rates". The senior psychiatrist points out that improving or enhancing immunity has a lot of potential to address the treatment outcomes of various kinds of mental health ailments. "Recent cutting-edge studies have suggested that antidepressants (SSRIs) may enhance Treg function. Yoga, meditation, vitamin D, omega-3 fatty acids, and a balanced diet can help regulate immune balance and improve mood stability," he added. People in general should not be under the impression that mental health is only related to the brain, as it also depends on our body's immunity. "



# As the lights stay on, birds are staying up past their bedtime



These days, an inky, sightless night is a rare sight in much of the world. From the harsh glare of streetlamps that make us squint to the gaudy flicker of neon billboards that force sunglass shields, artificial light is blurring the line between day and night. This has meant birds stay active for almost an hour longer after sundown in brightly lit areas, according to a global study of 583 species and more than 60 million bird vocalisations, drawn from 181 million raw detections. “I know how I feel when I lose an hour of sleep,” said Brent Pease, the lead author of the study. Dr. Pease is an assistant professor at the School of Forestry and Horticulture at Southern Illinois University Carbondale in the US. “This can’t be a great situation. But the picture is complex.” Scientists warn this shift disrupts birds’ natural rhythms, altering migration, feeding, and breeding. This in turn unsettles food chains and ecosystems.

For Dr. Pease, this project began as a teaching idea to introduce students to birds via their songs. He set up a simple sound recorder and a small computer to capture bird calls. That’s when he noticed a prompt asking if he wanted to link to a platform where volunteers shared bird sounds identified using artificial intelligence (AI). “I couldn’t believe what I was seeing,” Dr. Pease said. “There were thousands of sound recorders, all across the globe.” He likened the discovery of this source to an earlier revolution in wildlife science: trail cameras. Motion- and heat-triggered cameras transformed mammal studies, revealing behaviours once invisible to researchers, from leopards prowling at night to deer grazing at dawn. BirdWeather, a volunteer-powered acoustic network analysed with an AI model called BirdNET, has done something similar for birds by automatically logging and identifying their songs across continents. Twilight chorus “Light pollution in particular has been interesting to me,” said Neil Gilbert, a co-author of the study and a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Biology, Oklahoma State University in the US. “I’ve thought a lot about how animals are responding to stressors and especially behaviour timing.” Dr. Pease looped in Gilbert to study how artificial light at night affected bird behaviour. They tapped into this worldwide system of microphones and sensors placed by volunteers in backyards and forests that built a real-time map of bird activity. The scientists focused on two daily markers: the first song at sunrise and the last at sunset. They also looked at eye size, nest type, migration patterns, and habitats to understand which species were most vulnerable. Then they compared recordings from brightly lit areas with those from darker places.

Dr. Pease and Gilbert thus found that light pollution was stretching the hours for which birds remained active. By combining millions of recordings from hundreds of species — most from the U.S., Europe, and Australia, with fewer from the Global South — they found that artificial light was

nudging birds to stay awake longer by nearly an hour. “We were pretty surprised by the size of the effect,” Gilbert said. “Fifty minutes as an average across species was quite a bit more than what we were expecting.” Not all birds were reacting to artificial light to the same degree, however. Those with large, watchful eyes shifted the most, singing 35 minutes earlier at dawn and 56 minutes later at dusk in bright areas. Small-eyed species barely stirred from their routine. Open-nesters exposed to the sky felt the glow more than cavity nesters sheltered in tree holes. Migratory birds were also more unsettled than stay-at-home species. The changes were sharpest in the breeding season. Some species were active two hours longer, others by just a few minutes. But the signal was consistent: where nights were brighter, days stretched unnaturally longer. “If they’re spending an extra hour of time... they’re going to need more additional caloric intake for all this extra activity that they’re doing,” Dr. Pease said. “But this additional extra hour of activity can also result in an increased foraging time and potentially even increased reproductive output. ‘Darkness disrupted’

Anusha Shankar at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Hyderabad, is an integrative biologist who combines insights from across biology to study organisms. She explained why this study matters. “Every organism that we know of on earth, every animal, even many plants, and phytoplankton — they all have some sort of sense of time,” Dr. Shankar said. “And a lot of that comes from light cues.” Artificial light breaks these natural cycles. For instance, across Indian cities, birds are dying after colliding with brightly lit glass facades, turning shiny office buildings into deadly traps. “So if you disrupt these ancient rhythms, everything gets messed up,” she said. These mismatches can be devastating for migratory birds. Birds time their movements to food sources that also depend on seasonal light cues. If plants flower earlier or insects hatch later, journeys that evolved over time may suddenly become perilous. Filmmaker Sriram Murali supports keeping the night dark for people, animals, and stars. Through his research and films on fireflies, Murali has campaigned to raise awareness of light pollution. He calls these beetles the “flagship species of the night”. Fireflies use flashes of bioluminescent light to attract mates. In southern Indian forests and villages, their hypnotic synchronised twinkling can be seen for a brief spell in May and June, just after sunset. On peak nights, entire groves shimmer with their green-gold pulses, like fairy lights strung across the trees. But artificial lighting hacks this communication, making it harder for them to survive. We know that exposure to lighting affects the circadian rhythm,” said Mr. Murali of our bodies’ natural clock that controls sleep and wakefulness. “Doctors know it and we are careful about it for our own children. So then the question is, how do we teach people empathy and bring about change?” Whether stretching a bird’s day is a blessing or a burden is still uncertain. More time to feed and to mate may help; less time to rest may hurt. The good news is that unlike many other human pressures, light pollution is reversible. Streetlamps can be shielded, billboards dimmed, and lights switched off when not needed. Dr. Pease pointed out that unlike climate change or habitat destruction, reducing light pollution doesn’t require massive investments or decades of restoration. “If light pollution turns out to be a negative thing for bird populations, we can do a behaviour change across the globe to turn out the lights and make the night dark again,” Dr. Pease said. “We’re just a light switch away here.”

## Strengthening Kerala’s secular legacy

As one of the largest annual pilgrimage sites in the world, Sabarimala has long symbolised devotion, discipline and fraternity. The Global Ayyappa Sangamam — an initiative by the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) as part of its platinum jubilee celebrations — on September 20, 2025 is a step towards recognising this universal appeal, and strengthening Kerala’s secular legacy. Sabarimala is more than just a temple. It is a symbol of Kerala’s social and cultural synthesis. Pilgrims from across caste-based and religious boundaries, climb the sacred hill after weeks of penance and self-discipline, reaffirming equality and collective spiritual pursuit. The presence of Vavar Nada, dedicated to a Muslim companion of Lord Ayyappa, is a reminder of interfaith harmony. The pilgrim routes also connect with Arthunkal Church, a Christian pilgrim centre of historical significance.

Equally symbolic is the rendering of the devotional song ‘Harivarasanam’, played as a lullaby to Ayyappa and his devotees at the temple every day. The song was composed by the late G. Devarajan, also a committed atheist and communist, and immortalised in the voice of K.J. Yesudas, an iconic singer and a Christian by birth. Together, these elements highlight Sabarimala’s secular, harmonious, and inclusive legacy — a space where devotion is never reduced to communal identity.

The TDB is celebrating and reaffirming this long-standing secular tradition. It signals a recognition that Sabarimala belongs to the world, which is reflected in the words that greet one at the shrine, ‘thatwam asi



Equally symbolic is the rendering of the devotional song ‘Harivarasanam’, played as a lullaby to Ayyappa and his devotees at the temple every day.

(thou art that’), indicating that the same spirit sprouts in everyone, or no one is alien. Yet, Opposition parties have opposed this progressive step. Adding to this, the Sabarimala Karma Samithi, dominated by communal forces, has announced its plan to hold a so-called ‘Viswasa Sangamam’ (Faith Congregation) at Pandalam on September 22. It is a calculated attempt to inject a communal narrative into what has historically been a unifying space. It is crucial to recognise the distinction between believers and communal forces. The first draws from faith a sense of discipline, moral strength, and fraternity. The second manipulates religious sentiments for narrow political gain. Kerala’s history has shown that believers have often stood on the side of reform and progress. The struggles led by Sree Narayana Guru, Ayyankali, and other reformers emerged from within society and religious traditions, and yet they pointed towards lib-

eration, equality, and social transformation. It is in this reformist tradition that the Global Ayyappa Sangamam must be located. The secular character of Sabarimala is the outcome of centuries of reform, negotiation, and the struggles of ordinary devotees. Reforms at Sabarimala and other temples came from within society itself. The Left has always held that such internal reform movements are essential to weaken caste hierarchies and communal divisions. This is also why the attempts to communalise the Sangamam must be resisted. The BJP and its affiliates have long sought to weaponise Sabarimala for political gain, portraying progressive reform as an attack on faith. Sabarimala has never belonged to communal forces. Its inclusivity, its connections across communities and its history of reforms, stand in opposition to sectarian narratives. Efforts are on to portray the event as an effort by the

CPI(M) to interfere in a religious gathering as communists are critics of religion. Communists study and critique all aspects of the society so that a better future can be ensured. So, quite naturally, religion also falls within their radar, as it is part and parcel of the society. Marx said, “Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature... It is the opium of the people.” He was highlighting the fact that religion helps the oppressed to forget their sufferings. Back then, opium was used by practitioners of medicine as a pain reliever. The Global Ayyappa Sangamam is also a platform to discuss developmental projects — the Sabarimala Master Plan, the proposed airport and other initiatives. It is a political statement, which asserts that Kerala’s public sphere will not be surrendered to divisive forces. It also declares that secularism is not an abstract constitutional principle, but a living practice embodied in our pilgrim traditions.

## Court’s nod to mental health as right



In July 2025, the Supreme Court of India pronounced a verdict which has been called a constitutional landmark. The case, Sukdeb Saha vs The State Of Andhra Pradesh, was anchored in the anguish of a father who had lost his 17-year-old daughter, a NEET candidate, in a Visakhapatnam hostel. Dissatisfied with what he believed was the failure of the local police to make a full investigation of the cause, he demanded a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) inquiry. His petitions were rejected by the Andhra Pradesh High Court, which then saw him approach the Supreme Court. The result was not only an order shifting the investigation to the CBI but also a much-needed acknowledgment of mental health being an integral part of the right to life, under Article 21 of the Constitution.

The top court’s argument transcended the specific case and revolved around a crucial social issue: India’s runaway epidemic of student suicides. From a criminological perspective, the case highlights what can be termed structural victimisation. Student suicides are rarely framed in these terms. Yet, systemic neglect of mental health combined with the exploitative culture of coaching centres and the indifference of schools and universities, produce an environment where young people become vulnerable to harm. By failing to provide safeguards, the state and institutions become complicit. When institutions create or ignore conditions that drive individuals to the brink, the line between personal tragedy and institutional culpability becomes blurred. The gaze of victimology, which has long examined the dynamics between victims and perpetrators, can be extended to state institutions as de facto perpetrators. Students are not just “victims” of internal psychological battles. They are the victims of an education system that treats them shabbily. It is also about social values that link self-esteem to hierarchy and of a governance collapse that subordinates mental health as a secondary concern. By recognising mental health as an inherent right, the Court was recognising the structural aspect of victimisation. It recast the problem not as a personal bereavement but as a public injustice.

Legally, the verdict fills a vital gap. The Mental Healthcare Act 2017 already enshrines the right to receive mental health care. But it has not been implemented consistently, and enforcement mechanisms are still poor. By entrenching mental health in the Constitution, the Court has

established an elevated normative benchmark. Citizens can insist on safeguarding their psychic health as a fundamental right, not just a statutory right. To ensure that this did not become mere rhetoric, the Court ordered a package of binding interim orders — now referred to as the “Saha Guidelines”. Here, schools, colleges, hostels and coaching institutes are required to proactively develop support systems to address the issue of mental health. They instruct States and Union Territories to bring the rules into force in two months and obligate the setting up of district-level monitoring committees. Until Parliament passes a full code, these guidelines will have legislative force. The ruling also poses significant criminological questions regarding state responsibility. If suicides among students are partially an outcome of institutional neglect, can this form of neglect be regarded as structural violence? Johan Galtung’s theory of structural violence posits that societal structures causing systematic harm to individuals by depriving them of basic needs are equally blameworthy as direct violence. By not creating a safe environment, the state and educational institutions indirectly perpetuate harmful circumstances. This perspective changes student suicides from being viewed as “individual failures” to a result of systemic injustice. As a victimology case, it is a point where hidden victims become visible. Students, frequently silenced by stigma or system competitiveness, are seldom heard as rights holders when it comes to mental health. Placing psychological integrity in Article 21 means that the Court has opened up room for these victims to be heard and safeguarded. It leaves the door ajar for restorative measures — counselling, reform in institutions, mechanisms of accountability that go beyond retribution to prevention. The way the judgment has been received by mental health activists and professionals highlights its revolutionary potential. But along with optimism there must be caution. Powerful judicial pronouncements cannot, by themselves, uproot established cultural and institutional norms. The challenge is whether schools, universities, and State governments will meaningfully apply the guidelines, invest in resources, and train personnel to deliver real mental health care. Ultimately, Sukdeb Saha represents a convergence of law, criminology and victimology. It recognises that harm can be produced not just by individuals but also by institutions and systems. It acknowledges that students, often treated as passive subjects of education, are rights holders whose mental well-being deserves constitutional protection. And, it challenges society to confront an uncomfortable truth — that neglect, indifference and structural pressures can be as deadly as acts of direct violence. In affirming that the right to life must include a healthy mind, the Court has given voice to a generation of students who have too often been silenced by despair. Whether this voice translates into meaningful change will determine whether the judgment remains a beacon of hope or a missed opportunity. Shabin O.S. is Assistant Professor, Rashtriya Raksha University, Puducherry campus. Nabeela Siddiqui is Assistant Professor, Vinayaka Mission’s Law School, Vinayaka Missions Research Foundation – Deemed to be University, Chennai

## Conduct of social media companies during political unrest merits more scrutiny

While the insurrection in Nepal — which ousted the K.P. Sharma ‘Oli’ government after two days and descended into widespread violence and mob behaviour — raises important questions about the country’s political future, it should also raise concerns about the conduct of social media (SM) companies. In the immediate sense, the protests began after the Sharma government banned access to 26 SM platforms, but a zoomed-out view reveals a new instance of a more familiar pattern.

Specifically, the companies whose services became the spark offered little more than boilerplate statements about respecting digital rights and calls for dialogue. For the millions of people suddenly finding themselves cut off, that passivity could have heightened the abandonment they were already experiencing at the hands of their government. This ‘strategy’ isn’t unique to Nepal, however. In Russia in 2018, Telegram fought its ban through technical evasions but offered little political solidarity to users who faced arrest for circumventing state orders. During the 2021 coup in Myanmar, a Facebook ban severed access to news and organising tools for protestors. In Nigeria in the same year, Twitter (now X.com) remained largely silent when the government suspended its operations for months, costing the economy roughly \$26 million a day and pushing many businesses to alternative platforms. In Iran in 2022, Instagram and WhatsApp issued generic appeals while millions of small businesses that depended on them collapsed. All these instances recall the fact that platforms are multinational corporations whose interests are commercial, not civic. They fear government reprisal in profitable markets, yet they trade on the image of empowering free expression. When confronted with authoritarian restrictions, they have attempted to split the difference, issuing statements while avoiding meaningful confrontation. Ultimately, however, the users have borne the risk while the platforms have continued to profit. Technological solutions

The reluctance to act is only partly explained by jurisdiction. These companies operate at the pleasure of host states and their executives may face legal or even personal jeopardy if they openly encourage citizens to defy local law. However, there’s an equally (if not more) pressing moral stake: when governments impose sweeping shutdowns or demand opaque surveillance, they’re not enforcing neutral regulations but attacking the basic infrastructure of civic life. And when platforms stay passive, they can become complicit in that attack. International norms already recognise access to digital spaces as a right rather than a privilege. In 2016, the UN Human Rights Council declared internet shutdowns to be violations of international law. Civil society groups have since advanced the Santa Clara Principles on Transparency and Accountability in Content Moderation, which call for companies to disclose government demands and justify their responses. Big Social firms like Meta and Google often sign on to these frameworks in principle, yet their actual conduct in markets facing repression has maintained a gulf between rhetoric and compliance. There’s an important technological dimension here. Companies have the capacity to provide workarounds in the form of decentralised infrastructure, redundancy across services, and active support for circumvention tools — yet rarely deploy them for fear of provoking government retaliation. Even when a company offers them, they tend to be limited and the company withdraws them quietly once the relevant crisis has passed.

Most of the Big Social platforms are designed as centralised services in which requests are routed through data centres under company control. As a result, they’re vulnerable to blunt government orders to, say, block a handful of IP ranges. These companies can make a technical as well as political choice by switching to a decentralised architecture that will make it difficult to enforce bans. For



example, Tor and I2P networks route traffic across volunteer nodes. Mastodon uses federated servers rather than a single server that also becomes a choke point in the event of a blocking order. Signal has experimented with proxy relays that allow volunteers to keep traffic moving even when direct access has been blocked. Mainstream companies like Meta or Google could, in principle, design fallback modes that lean on decentralisation. Google does have its Outline VPN toolkit and YouTube has content delivery networks that can disguise traffic — but these are exceptions. Generally, decentralisation and redundancy have been underdeveloped because companies don’t want to be seen as actively undermining sovereign regulation and governments. Fortunes of Big Social Big Social’s selective restraint is also stark in comparison with other industries. Telecom companies are often compelled to shut down networks immediately after a government order, yet unlike them, SM firms market themselves as defenders of voice and participation. Financial companies have also shown more willingness to take explicit political stands. PayPal and Visa curtailed services in Russia after the Ukraine invasion, citing ethical concerns. Even Wikipedia fought a multi-year legal battle against Turkey’s ban (and Indian litigants’ attempts to do so), eventually winning out. These examples suggest neutrality is not preordained but a corporate choice. Many Big Social firms also own multiple platforms — e.g., Meta operates Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp and Google operates YouTube, Gmail, and so on. Technologies exist to allow them to fail-over messages from one app to another or to automatically route traffic through less visible protocols when one channel is blocked. For example, WhatsApp could piggyback on HTTPS traffic in ways that are harder to filter. SM bans in recent history have all tended to fail because they always lead to less, not more, state control. When a ban kicks in, many users respond by shopping for workarounds and almost always succeed, using circumvention tools like VPNs and proxies like Psiphon or Snowflake. But instead of letting them fend for themselves, platforms could integrate such tools directly — e.g., by offering an in-app VPN or proxy mode — or subsidise the use of such services in affected regions. Signal’s partnership with volunteers to host proxies in Iran in 2022 is one precedent. The under-deployment of circumvention tools is also about profit. Decentralised or proxy-based systems complicate moderation, reduce the precision of data collection, and thus cut into advertising revenue. Federated networks such as Mastodon and volunteer relay models like Tor thrive because they aren’t beholden to ad-driven monetisation. Mainstream platforms avoid such architectures not because they’re technically infeasible but because they disrupt the business model of targeted advertising and centralised control. The technological debate is thus inseparable from the economic logic of surveillance capitalism. The passivity of Big Social is also striking in another dimension: some of these firms command annual revenues larger than the GDP of the very states that move to restrict them. In 2023, Meta’s revenues exceeded \$134 billion — more than the entire national budgets of countries like Nepal or Nigeria.



## WTO cuts 2026 global goods trade growth forecast but sees AI-related products as bright spot



The World Trade Organisation on Tuesday revised its global goods trade volume growth projection to 0.5 per cent in 2026, down from 2.4 per cent in 2025, due to rising tariff rates and heightened trade policy uncertainty. However, it said that trade in artificial AI-related products, such as semi-conductors, processors, computers, servers, and telecom equipment, has been particularly strong, emerging as the key driver of global trade growth in the first half of 2025.

Driven by increased global spending on AI-related products, the 2025 merchandise trade growth forecast was revised upwards to 2.4 per cent from 0.9 per cent in August. But the 2026 projection has been lowered to 0.5 per cent from the earlier 1.8 per cent, the WTO said in a statement. The top trade body also said that global services export growth is also expected to slow from 6.8 per cent in 2024 to 4.6 per cent in 2025 and 4.4 per cent in 2026.

“Countries’ measured response to tariff changes in general, the growth potential of AI, as well as increased trade among the rest of the world — particularly among emerg-

ing economies — helped ease trade setbacks in 2025. Trade resilience in 2025 is thanks in no small part to the stability provided by the rules-based multilateral trading system. Yet complacency is not an option,” WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said. The World Trade Outlook report said that based on around 100 AI-related product lines, from semi-conductors and processors to finished computers, servers and telecommunications equipment, trade in this group expanded by more than 20 per cent year-on-year to \$1.92 trillion in the first half of 2025, compared to \$1.61 trillion in the same period of 2024.

By contrast, trade in non-AI goods in the first half of 2025 grew by less than 4 per cent to \$10.9 trillion compared to \$10.5 trillion. Although AI-related products account for less than one-tenth of world merchandise trade, they contributed nearly half of overall trade growth during this period, constituting 15 per cent of global imports and exports and 43 per cent of total trade growth, the WTO said. “These figures reflect economies’ restructuring activities around artificial intelligence. The growth covers every layer of the digital value chain — from raw silicon and speciality gases to the machines that produce semiconductors, and the computers and servers powering cloud platforms and AI applications worldwide,” the report said. The WTO said that projections indicate current tariff increases have altered the global trade outlook by less than 0.1 percentage points for 2025 and 2026 combined, compared to the April forecast. “At the same time, the WTO’s assessment is that trade policy uncertainty has diminished, cushioning the trade fallout from tariff policies. The reason for this is that no economy has announced or introduced higher tariffs on imports from the United States in response to the US tariff increases, except for China,” the report said.

## India must ramp up electronics manufacturing as global firms seek reliable suppliers: PM Modi

Stating that India’s production of electronic goods has increased sixfold over the past decade, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said that manufacturing of items such as chipsets, batteries, displays and sensors in the country should grow further as global companies are looking for reliable partners. He added that by focusing on data centres and cloud infrastructure, India could become a global data hub.

“In the electronics manufacturing sector, global companies are looking for trusted partners who can deliver at scale and with reliability. Can Indian companies not become reliable global suppliers and design partners? Domestic production in the sector, from chipsets to batteries, from displays to sensors, should pick up. The world is generating more data than ever before, and so data security, storage and sovereignty will become important. By strengthening data centres and cloud infrastructure, India can become a global data hub,” Modi said at the India Mobile Congress. Modi said India must identify bottlenecks in global supply chains and offer solutions to the world. “For instance, we identified semiconductor manufacturing capacity. It was limited to a few countries. The world wanted diversification. India took an important step in this sector. Today, work is underway in 10 semiconductor manufacturing units,” he said.

The Prime Minister said that mobile phone manufacturing has risen 28 times, and exports have risen 127 times since 2014. “About 45 Indian firms are connected to the supply chain of one major mobile phone company. This has resulted in 3.5 lakh jobs. And this is not just one company



— many firms are now manufacturing on a large scale,” he said. “India recently launched its Made in India 4G stack. It is a big step towards the country’s technological independence. India is now among the five countries with this capability. Through indigenous 4G and 5G, we will ensure seamless connectivity for citizens. The day we launched the 4G stack, we activated 1 lakh 4G towers. This enabled 2 crore people to become part of the digital movement,” Modi said. He added that the enactment of the Telecommunications Act, which replaced the outdated Indian Telegraph Act and Indian Wireless Telegraph Act, has helped establish a new framework aligned with 21st-century needs, with the new law functioning not as a regulator but as a facilitator. India is now the world’s second-largest telecom market and the second-largest 5G market. Modi said that India also ranks among the leading nations in per-user data consumption, signifying that digital connectivity is no longer a privilege or a luxury but an integral part of everyday life.

## Did a single generation ruin modern music for everyone else?



If you speak with casual fans of classical music, whether at a concert or a party, you tend to hear something similar: They love this art form, but they don’t really like “the new stuff.” Ask them to explain what they mean, and the answers will vary. But it’s common to hear that contemporary music lacks melody or sounds atonal. Listeners can feel that there isn’t an easy way in, or anything to hold onto. That description may fit some pieces composed today, but it more accurately describes much older music, like Pierre Boulez’s “Le Marteau Sans Maître,” a masterpiece of musical modernism that premiered 70 years ago. It’s not to everyone’s taste, and it doesn’t have to be. But if there’s any point to agree on, it’s that works from the time of “Le Marteau” aren’t contemporary enough to qualify as “the new stuff.”

So why, in the popular imagination, does this style of iconoclastic avant-gardism endure as contemporary music writ large? Especially when the music of today has no definitive sound?

We live in an age with no musical orthodoxy or hegemony. There may be trends, such as explorations of identity through sound, but there is no governing style, or any all-powerful gatekeepers. Missy Mazzoli’s “Dark With Excessive Bright,” an acoustic score influenced by centuries of music history, is just as broadly “contemporary” as Annea Lockwood’s “A Sound Map of the Danube,” a collage made of field recordings. “There are so many simultaneously existing musical languages,” said Matías Tarnopolsky, president and CEO of the New York Philharmonic, which is presenting two weeks of Boulez programming this month to celebrate his centennial. “Some composers are writing in a way that’s super familiar to classical and Romantic music. Others are very modernist, and others bring in jazz, narrative and elements from their own musical traditions.”

Contemporary music is far from a monolith. But if its reputation is sometimes that of a vegetable to be endured before a 19th-century dessert, that might have something to do with Boulez’s peers, who reigned for decades with a sound that, depending on whom you ask, was either an acquired taste or the stuff to spoil your appetite. “There is still a lingering knee-jerk reaction to modernism,” said Ara Guzelimian, a former provost and dean of the Juilliard School, who now runs the Ojai Music Festival in California. “But it was self-inflicted by that generation.” He was describing the generation that, beyond Boulez, also includes Luigi Nono and Karlheinz Stockhausen, who wrote with a style that emerged from the ruins of World War II. Already in thrall to Arnold Schoenberg’s tradition-shattering system of composing in the early 20th century, they now also rejected the Romantic spirit appropriated by the Third Reich. It’s telling that Darmstadt, the city in Germany that would become a hotbed of musical modernism, was mostly destroyed in the war. It needed to be rebuilt, and in these composers’ eyes, so did music. Each major artist from that generation had a personal style, but there were common traits: serialism, a

focus on structure over emotional appeal, an electronic infusion. New extended techniques were introduced. Composition began to thrive in academic spaces.

Boulez was perhaps the most prominent avant-gardist during those years. At the very least, he was one of the most outspoken. He was severe and often damning, which is one thing for an ordinary musician and another for someone who also built institutions like IRCAM and Cité de la Musique in Paris. His opinions, while full of contradictions over time, mattered. That’s part of what makes his legacy so complicated. As a conductor, Boulez could bring remarkable clarity to the challenging works like those of Second Viennese School composer Anton Webern. But he was uninterested in vast swaths of the repertoire, like Brahms symphonies, at a time when younger musicians were looking up to him and paying close attention. Composer and conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen, who is leading the Boulez performances at the Philharmonic, said in an interview that early in his career, Boulez offered an “attractive” vision of right and wrong, “an ethics of contemporary music.” “Boulez was like a moral beacon,” he said. “So, in a way, you felt that if you followed him, you would be safe.”

Salonen once conducted a performance of Igor Stravinsky’s “The Rake’s Progress” that led Boulez to comment wryly, “You almost convinced me about this music.” But Salonen also witnessed Boulez “effectively end” the career of a young composer whose work he didn’t like. There were, of course, other styles that gained ground in the second half of the 20th century. In the United States especially, Philip Glass was elevating minimalism to the realm of pop culture. By the 1980s, John Adams was emerging as a torchbearer of the orchestral tradition. But with that diversity came a sense that musicians had to pick a side, with Boulez’s cohort or against it, and they were encouraged by avant-gardists who were in the habit of making aesthetics seem like a moral choice. Few of Boulez’s disciples actually emulated his sound. But they might have carried on his pick-a-side approach to education. Mazzoli said that when she was finishing school two decades ago, academies were still “under the hold” of that mentality, even though the reality was freer, and rich with variety. The composers who write in the shadow of Boulez’s generation are mostly in Europe. They include Olga Neuwirth and Matthias Pinscher, two artists capable of brilliance; a work like Neuwirth’s decade-old “Masaot/Clocks Without Hands” is a lot to take in casually but rewards repeated listening, even study. Remarkably, the clichés of the postwar avant-garde’s sound have endured while that sound itself hasn’t. The works of Boulez and his peers are still programmed, but they are hardly repertory staples, and each performance has the air of a special occasion like the Philharmonic’s concerts. In schools, idioms of that time have been assimilated into education, such that students are as capable of playing “Le Marteau” as Boulez’s contemporaries. And when they perform it, they probably don’t feel like they are making a major statement. “For them,” Salonen said, “Boulez is just like any historical figure.” If there is a guiding principle now, it’s that music is music. Tarnopolsky, influenced by his college-age children, doesn’t think about genre; Mazzoli, who now teaches, encourages her students to listen to pop hits alongside Elliott Carter and Messiaen. Boulez, who died in 2016, composed into the new millennium, but the heart of his catalog is a thing of the past. And it’s good for his generation to be treated as history. Now, their works can be presented like any other movement, enriched by context yet standing on their own: Nono’s “Il Canto Sospeso” made better by understanding the politics of resistance, just as Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony is entwined with the writings of Friedrich Schiller, while both can be appreciated on purely musical terms. With that, maybe there could be more room in audience’s minds for music that really is of today, which is almost always more welcoming than its reputation. Mazzoli said she thinks constantly when writing music about “how to bring someone in” with a balance of familiarity and surprise. She, gloriously, is just one example of many composers whose works are proof that contemporary music is something to be enjoyed, not endured.

## ‘I am so happy maine woh decision liya...’: Raghu Ram on why he chose to shave his head and go bald instead of hiding hair loss

Hair loss is often tied to shame, anxiety, or desperate attempts to cover it up. But what if, instead of hiding it, one simply chose to embrace it? In a recent interview, Raghu Ram opened up about his own journey with hair fall and why he decided to go bald rather than stress over it.

In an interview with Digital Commentary, he recalled, “Actually mere baal jhad rahe the. Mere paas do option the. Ya toh kisi tareeke se dhakho aur chhupao. Mere ko woh nahi chahiye tha. Baal ja rahe na, udaate hain. Khatam karte hain tanta. Razor use kara aur saaf kar diya (Actually, my hair was falling out. I had two options: either hide it somehow or cover it up. I didn’t want that. If the hair is going, let it go. End the fuss. I used a razor and cleaned it off).”

He even joked about how he first realised the role hair plays in protecting us from the cold, “December tha Dilli mein. Aap agar fridge khuloge aur apna sar freezer mein doge, jo aapko thand lagegi, woh mereko bahar aate hi lagi (It was December in Delhi. If you open the fridge and put your head in the freezer, the cold you would feel, I felt that as soon as I stepped outside).” Raghu added, “Tab mujhe samajh mein aaya ki baal bane hain sardi se bachane ke liye. That was tough (That’s when I realised hair exists to protect you from the cold).”

But for Raghu, going bald wasn’t just about comfort; it was also about confronting stereotypes. He shared in Hindi, “But I’m so happy I made that decision because I don’t think if I had hair, there would have been so much fascination about me. We have certain perceptions... we see fat people as comedians, bald people as villains, and girls wearing less clothes as vamps... It’s a stereotype. I had to break that stereotype. But not like this, if I had stayed, I would have just been the villain anyway. People had never seen a bald guy like this before. Because of me, I even made Rajiv shave his head.” Many people feel pressure to hide or treat hair loss; what psychological impact can embracing baldness have compared to trying to conceal it?

Counselling psychologist Athul Raj notes, “Hiding hair loss is tiring. Every mirror, every photo, every conversation can feel like a reminder that you’re being judged—or judging yourself. Covering it up feeds stress, self-doubt, and the constant fear of not measuring up. Choosing to embrace baldness, like Raghu did, is freeing. It’s a statement: ‘This is me, take it or leave it.’” He adds that people who make this shift often feel lighter, more present, and less trapped by how they look. Confidence stops being about



“Actually mere baal jhad rahe the. Mere paas do option the...” noted Raghu Ram

hair and starts being about how you carry yourself, what you say, and how you show up. In short, you reclaim the energy you spent hiding and put it into living.

Why do such appearance-based stereotypes persist?

Raj notes that these stereotypes stick because society loves simple visual shortcuts. Bald men in films and ads are often villains, tough guys, or authority figures. Seeing this repeatedly sends a subtle message that baldness equals threat or unlikability. “For someone losing hair, it can feel like a social stigma added on top of a personal challenge. Self-esteem suffers because you worry about being judged unfairly before you even speak. Public perception can reflect this bias, shaping how people are treated or what’s assumed about them,” states the expert.

Steps that can help transition from shame or anxiety to acceptance and confidence Start by noticing the thoughts you tell yourself and challenge the negative ones. Experiment with what feels authentic—short hair, shaved head, or a style you own. Surround yourself with people or communities who accept it. Reframe baldness: it’s hair, not identity. “Therapy can help if anxiety runs deep. Confidence grows when hair stops defining your worth. Focus on presence, energy, and personality. Slowly, shame fades, and acceptance becomes a choice you make for yourself, not one imposed by society,” concludes Raj.

## NPCI may allow Aadhaar-based face authentication for high-value financial transactions

Mumbai: The National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) may soon allow an Aadhaar-based face authentication mechanism for high-value financial transactions, a senior UIDAI official said on Tuesday.

UIDAI is the foundational infrastructure. It’s the only way to surely know who is who? We have the world’s largest biometric database. We advocate very strongly the use of face authentication as a modality in the multi-factor assessment,” Abhishek Kumar Singh, Deputy Director General at UIDAI, said during a panel discussion at the Global Fintech Fest 2025 here. Singh said that the NPCI is already on board with this thought process and approach and is

expected to make an announcement to this effect in the coming days. He urged other bankers also to come on board on such a mechanism, adding that it’s the easiest and quickest way to actually authenticate yourself. Noting that the authentication infrastructure and framework is tied to devices, he said one needs specialised devices to authenticate oneself, except for the OTP part if the authentication is being done through a biometric process. According to a report three months ago, there are over 64 crore smartphones in India while the total device ecosystem is around 4 million, he said, and added that the moment we talk of face authentication, your smartphone is your device and thus the device ecosystem suddenly jumps to over 640 million.



# Ravi Shastri ‘in no hurry’ to judge Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli’s ability to stay in running for 2027 World Cup



GNS News Agency, Oct 21

Ravi Shastri has worked closely with both Rohit and Kohli during his long and fruitful stints as the Indian team's director and later head coach (AP Photo)Ravi Shastri has worked closely with both Rohit and Kohli during his long and fruitful stints as the Indian team's director and later head coach Sunil Gavaskar had said that he wasn't surprised by Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli failing to make an impact with the bat in India's first ODI against Australia in Perth and his longtime India teammate Ravi Shastri seemed to echo that sentiment. Shastri, who has worked closely with both India veterans during his long and fruitful stints as the team's director and later head coach, said that it is better to give Rohit, 38, and Kohli, 36, some time before judging whether they can stay in contention to make it to the squad that plays the 2027 World Cup in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

When you come back from a long layoff, you are obvi-

ously going to be rusty," said Shastri on ICC Review. "It's not easy for any overseas team to land in Australia, say, two days prior to a game in Perth and adjust to those conditions straight away, especially when you have that extra bounce, and against quality fast bowlers." "It's about how much you are enjoying the sport" Both Rohit and Kohli retired from T20Is and Tests around the same time last year and this year respectively. Kohli first announced the end of his T20I career after powering India to the 2024 T20 World Cup title with a player of the match performance in the final. Just hours later, Rohit, who was captain of the team, also said that the thriller of a final against South Africa was his last T20I. Both players then endured a forgettable Test series in Australia. Rohit in particular scored a meagre 31 runs across five innings. Kohli, meanwhile, scored a century early in the series, an unbeaten 100 not out in Perth, but then scored just 90 more runs across eight innings he played apart from that. Rohit first announced his retirement from Test cricket on May 7 as captain of the team, after which Shubman Gill took over the mantle. Kohli then announced the end of his Test career on May 12. The retirements meant that both Rohit and Kohli are now active only in ODIs, a format that is not played as often as the other two these days in international cricket. Shastri said that he wants to wait and see how much the pair are still enjoying their cricket. "But I think only time will tell... I'm in no hurry to judge... it's about how much you're enjoying the sport and how much hunger is there and passion is left in you to play the game. "So if you tick the boxes in two out of those three, especially the enjoyment part of it, then you can give them both time because they've got class, they've got experience... I'd rather wait than jump and judge immediately," he said,

# Rishabh Pant set for international comeback, to lead India A vs South Africa A in red-ball series; Ayush Mhatre gets maiden call-up

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

Star Indian wicket-keeper batter Rishabh Pant is set to make his return for the national side after being away from action due to injury as the Senior Men's Selection Committee of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Tuesday announced India A's squad for the two four-day matches to be played against South Africa at the BCCI Centre of Excellence, Bengaluru. Pant missed out on the two-match Test series against the West Indies as he was recovering from a fractured left foot, which he had suffered during India's fourth Test against England in July this year in Manchester. Dhruv Jurel kept wickets in his place.

Pant had been advised six weeks' rest after suffering the blow from a delivery from fast bowler Chris Woakes while batting on Day 1 of the fourth Test of the rather epic tour, which ended in a 2-2 draw. The Old Trafford Test itself was drawn and Pant had gone off retired hurt but then returned to bat the next day. He ended up scoring 54 runs in 75 balls before falling to Jofra Archer. Pant returned home after the match. He has been appointed the captain of India A for two four-day games, while Sai Sudharsan has been named his deputy. India U-19 star and Mumbai batter Ayush Mhatre has also been fast-tracked as he finds a place in the first four-day match. India regulars, KL Rahul, Prasidh Krishna and Mohammed Siraj will feature in the second match after returning from the Australia tour. The first match



will start on October 30, while the second match is scheduled to begin on November 6.

INDIA A SQUAD VS SOUTH AFRICA A India A squad for the 1st four-day match: Rishabh Pant (C) (WK), Ayush Mhatre, N Jagdeesan (WK), Sai Sudharsan (VC), Devdutt Padikkal, Rajat Patidar, Harsh Dubey, Tanush Kotian, Manav Suthar, Anshul Kamboj, Yash Thakur, Ayush Badoni, Saransh Jain. India A squad for the 2nd four-day match: Rishabh Pant (C) (WK), KL Rahul, Dhruv Jurel (WK), Sai Sudharsan (VC), Devdutt Padikkal, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Harsh Dubey, Tanush Kotian, Manav Suthar, Khaleel Ahmed, Gurnoor Brar, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Prasidh Krishna, Mohammed Siraj, Akash Deep.

# Scott Boland brushes off Mike Atherton’s criticism: ‘They can say what they want’

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

Days after former England captain Mike Atherton wrote that "Boland holds no fear" for England team that "took him for almost five runs an over" in 2023 series, Scott Boland has responded. "I saw it," a smiling Boland said. "My cousin sent it to me, taking the piss. I'm sure there's going to be so much banter between former players between now and the first Test. They can say what they want. "I've got my own internal motivations for what I want to do during the summer. I'm never going into a game just muddling along. There's always some motivation for me to try and either come into the team and try to put in a really good performance to try and keep my spot. There's so many good fast bowlers in Australia that just don't want to give anyone an inch." Boland was speaking at the MCG on Tuesday after it was learnt that the MCC Foundation will deliver the National Indigenous Cricket Championships and a training camp at the ground for three more years.

Boland talked about the Ashes and the chance that he might not be in the playing XI if Pat Cummins recovers in time to play with Josh Hazlewood and Mitch Starc. "I'd be lying if I said I wasn't excited by what's coming up this summer. Every summer that comes up, I want to be in the team and playing a part. I'm still happy being 12th man if I do miss out, because I know I'm next in line if something does



happen, or if they want a change of change of bowler, or if they want to play four quicks, which probably won't happen in Australia. But there's nothing better than being in the Australian squad for a test something like this." Boland said he was "stressing" a bit about his form ahead of Ashes, but he has been amongst wickets now. "I was probably stressing about it a bit too much from what I usually do," Boland said of his struggles at times with the ball this week. Sometimes that just happens. I just want to find my rhythm as quick as I can in a game. Sometimes that happens in half a spell, sometimes it takes a bit longer. I felt like I was able to hang in enough to bowl some spells and get some wickets for the team."

# Why Steve Smith plays less cricket: ‘I’m pretty cooked mentally ... when I play a lot at start of season’

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

Steve Smith has explained his reasons for delaying the start of his cricketing summer ahead of Ashes to his fears of mental fatigue. Smith has not played a professional game since August in The Hundred tournament in UK. Smith only plays Test cricket these days, having retired from white-ball cricket. "I certainly get drained mentally quicker than I probably used to. Ten years ago I loved to come back and play every single game that I could. Now obviously my Test cricket has taken a huge priority," Smith said. "I know that when I play a lot at the start, by the end of the summer I'm pretty cooked mentally and probably can't produce the same performances. Last year I was probably batting my best at the back end of the summer against India, coming off not too much cricket at the start," he added. On Tuesday, he faced the bowlers for the first time in a net session, though he said he has been working on his fitness in the off time. I've been training quite hard. I've been doing a lot of lifting, trying to get a bit stronger. I did all my strength tests yesterday and they're as good as they've ever been. I feel

like I'm ready for a big summer." Smith is set to play two Sheffield Shield matches before the first Test against England. "Honestly, it takes me two hits to get sorted. I feel like I'm ready to go now. There's obviously a balance, but I don't think it takes me much now to get up to game speed and I want to try and stay as mentally fresh. Technically I feel in a good place, it's about being mentally fresh. I'm not hitting as many balls as I used to. It's to try and get the most out of myself mentally when I'm out in the middle and be able to concentrate for long periods of time. It's interesting how the brain works. I feel like I kind of go to another level and try to set a standard, I suppose," he added. Smith also took time out to praise Marnus Labuschagne for his efforts to get back into the Test team by scoring runs. Labuschagne was dropped from the West Indies Tests earlier this year, but has been among the runs in domestic cricket. "He said to me at the start of the summer, 'I'll be in that Test team, come the first Test'. He's backed up his words," Smith said. "I sent him a message a couple of days ago, saying how proud I was of him.

# Cristiano Ronaldo’s son selected for U-16 Portugal team for first time



GNS News Agency, Oct 21

Cristiano Ronaldo Jr., the eldest son of Cristiano Ronaldo, has been selected for the under-16 Portugal national team for the first time. He is set to play a tournament in Turkey that takes place between October 30 and November 4. He represents the club Sporting who have had seven of their players called up for the U-16 national squad. They will play the Federations Cup0, for which the coach Filipe Ramos has called up 22 players. Known in Portugal

as "Cristianinho," he has already made five appearances with the U-15 side, debuting last May at the Vlatko Markovic Tournament, where he starred with two goals in the final against the hosts Croatia. Like his father, he plays the junior circuit for the Saudi club Al Nassr. In the past, Cristiano Ronaldo has spoken about his son. "We'll see if he'll be a great player. He's not yet. Sometimes he drinks coke, he eats fries and he knows I get mad. I tell him to treadmill and then dive into cold water to recover, and he says: "Dad, but it's so cold." It's normal because he's young. He has potential. He is fast, he dribbles well, but that's not enough. It takes a lot of hard work and dedication. I'm not going to pressure him to be a player. However, I especially want him to be the best, whether he's a footballer or a doctor." Couple of years ago, at the Global Soccer Awards, he had revealed why he gets angry with his son on occasions. "I'm hard with him sometimes because he drinks Coca-Cola and Fanta sometimes and I'm pissed with him. I fight with him when he eats chips and fries and everything, he knows I don't like it. Even my small kids, when they eat chocolate they always look to me and, you know, we have to be strong."

# Vladimir Kramnik, who accused Daniel Naroditsky of cheating, says his shock death at 29 needs ‘proper investigation’

GNS News Agency, Oct 21

Former World Champion and Russian Grandmaster Vladimir Kramnik has raised suspicion over the shocking death of American Grandmaster Daniel Naroditsky. Shortly after the tragic news was announced, Kramnik, who had previously accused Naroditsky of cheating in online chess, posted a series of explosive tweets questioning the circumstances of Naroditsky's sudden passing. Kramnik hinted at potential substance abuse and deteriorating mental health. He first made a cryptic post on his X account that read, "Don't Do Drugs." He then referenced a "strange recent stream" by Naroditsky, alleging the American had been hastily removing his recent content from Twitch.

"Weird, noticed yesterday morning some people talking about strange recent stream of Naroditsky, but checking again in few hours, many things erased (ALL videos from his twitch, a thread about it, recognizable working style :) ) Anyone, what happened, that forced them act in a rush?" Kramnik posted on X. "All in all, typical nowadays world of chess, the only thing everyone cares about is "looking great" and pretending there are no issues. Even if it's about long term major problems. Stop this doublefaced hypocrisies for once, and try helping to solve them. Image is NOT everything," he added. Kramnik continued, "Normally they don't "clean" in such a rush (although erasing materials from internet is "their" trademark, not on web means never happened), must be something quite interesting I think." What exactly happened? Because I received this two days ago from a friend of mine chess fan, and at least did what I could to warn people to do something urgently in my posts. To those who prefer blaming and shaming instead of helping. Awful tragedy, hope properly investigated pic.twitter.com/12xz9oZnNx

He also mentioned how Naroditsky was "kicked out" of his commentator roles for Chess.com and the Freestyle Chess tournament. Based on the American's recent streams, Kramnik again hinted at potential substance abuse. "Seemingly, conflicts with @chesscom, @freestylechess1, both kicking him out from commentator role, had a big impact lately on @GmNaroditsky. Got the stream episodes. Not a doctor but looks like something "very else" than sleeping pills. Hope, if any, real friends of



him will care," he wrote. Kramnik called the shocking demise an awful tragedy and called for a "proper investigation" for the same. He shared a screenshot on X, raising concerns after Naroditsky's sudden death. Normally they don't "clean" in such a rush (although erasing materials from internet is "their" trademark, not on web means never happened ??), must be something quite interesting I think

"What exactly happened? Because I received this two days ago from a friend of mine chess fan, and at least did what I could to warn people to do something urgently in my posts. To those who prefer blaming and shaming instead of helping. Awful tragedy, hope properly investigated," his post read. Naroditsky passed away at the age of 29. The news of his demise was announced from the X account of the Charlotte Chess Center on Monday, which posted: "The Naroditsky family shares the sad news of Daniel's unexpected passing. Daniel was a talented chess player, educator, and beloved member of the chess community. We ask for privacy as the family grieves." "Worse than dirt" During the World Rapid and Blitz Championship in October 2024, Naroditsky called Kramnik "worse than dirt" after the cheating accusation by the latter and opened up on how the allegations and social media chatter about him affected him every time he plays online chess. Naroditsky became a Grandmaster at the age of 18 in 2013 and has consistently ranked in the top 200 in the world and top 15 in the US in classical chess. He was also in the top 75 in Rapid and top 25 in Blitz. Last year, he crossed 2700 FIDE Blitz for the first time.

# Pakistan grind to 259-5 against scrappy South Africa in the second test

Captain Shan Masood and Abdullah Shafique survived four dropped catches to hit half centuries as Pakistan grinded to 259 for five against world champion South Africa on the opening day of the second and final test on Monday. Masood, put down on 71, scored bulk of his runs in singles before falling for 87 off 176 balls in the final session on a dry wicket that is expected to favor the spinners more and more.

Kagiso Rabada should have dismissed Shafique off his fourth ball of the test match, but had to wait for his first wicket until late on the first day when he trapped Mohammad Rizwan (19) plumb lbw on the backfoot. Left-hander Saud Shakeel was batting on 42 and Salman Ali Agha was not out on 10 at stumps as South Africa could get just one wicket with the second new ball late on Day 1. Surprisingly South Africa used its best bowler in the first test – Senuran Muthusamy – for only two brief spells of two overs each. Keshav Maharaj (2-63) and Simon Harmer (2-75) kept the scoring rate under control by sharing 54 overs in between them. Muthusamy had bagged career-best 11-wicket haul at Lahore on a spin wicket. Shafique's (57) luck finally ran out after getting dropped on 0, 15 and 41 when he feathered a catch down the legside to wicketkeeper Kyle Verreynne, but South Africa had to review the not out on-field decision as ultra edge showed a clear spike when the ball passed Shafique's bat. South Africa's scrappy fielding allowed Masood and Shafique to add 111 runs for the second wicket stand after spinners created several chances in the first two sessions but got little support from the fielders.

Maharaj, who missed South Africa's 93-run defeat in the first test last week, had to wait until his 20th over for his first wicket when he dismissed Babar Azam for 16 in the most productive second session for the visitors in which they got two wickets for 82 runs. Babar, who hasn't scored an international century since his hundred against Nepal in an ODI in August 2023, hit three boundaries against the spinners in his brief 19-minute stay at the wicket before he was caught one-handed by a diving Tony de Zorzi at forward short leg. Earlier, Shafique had three reprieves after Masood won the all-important toss and Pakistan reached 95-1 at lunch. Shafique was dropped by Tristan Stubbs at third slip off Rabada's fourth ball, before he'd scored. Then Marco Jansen's sharp delivery beat the inside edge of Shafique's bat, but the balls didn't fall after the ball grazed the off stump. Maharaj could have made an early impact but failed to grab a return catch to his left in his first over after inducing an outside edge off Shafique's bat. And luck continued to go Shafique's way when he was adjudged leg before wicket against Maharaj but went for a successful television review as replays suggested the ball had hit his bat first. Amongst all those nervy moments for Shafique,

Masood smashed two sixes against Harmer's off-spin and welcomed Muthusamy with another big hit over the long-on boundary before the left-armer was taken out of the attack. Shafique and Imam-ul-Haq survived Rabada and Jansen's opening spell before South Africa captain Aiden Markram turned to his spinners inside the first hour.

Harmer provided the breakthrough when he bowled Imam for 17 with a ball that spun sharply away from the left-hander and hit the top of off-stump. "Bit frustrating, but no one means to drop chances," Maharaj said. "It was nice to see the guys bounce back and take the catches that they did. It was an even-stevens day, I felt if we got one more wicket at night we'd probably have had a little bit of an upper hand." Maharaj was available only for the second test because he was recovering from groin injury. He replaced off-spinner Prenelan Subrayen in one of the two changes the World Test Championship winners made to their XI. Seaming all-rounder Jansen returned in place of Wiaan Mulder, who bowled only two overs in the first test and struggled against spinners in both innings while batting at No. 3. Pakistan also beefed up its spin department and included a third specialist slow bowler by awarding a test debut to 38-year-old left-arm spinner Asif Afridi, who replaced Hasan Ali. Captain Shan Masood and Abdullah Shafique survived four dropped catches to hit half centuries as Pakistan grinded to 259 for five against world champion South Africa on the opening day of the second and final test on Monday. Masood, put down on 71, scored bulk of his runs in singles before falling for 87 off 176 balls in the final session on a dry wicket that is expected to favor the spinners more and more. Kagiso Rabada should have dismissed Shafique off his fourth ball of the test match, but had to wait for his first wicket until late on the first day when he trapped Mohammad Rizwan (19) plumb lbw on the backfoot. Left-hander Saud Shakeel was batting on 42 and Salman Ali Agha was not out on 10 at stumps as South Africa could get just one wicket with the second new ball late on Day 1. Surprisingly South Africa used its best bowler in the first test – Senuran Muthusamy – for only two brief spells of two overs each. Keshav Maharaj (2-63) and Simon Harmer (2-75) kept the scoring rate under control by sharing 54 overs in between them. Muthusamy had bagged career-best 11-wicket haul at Lahore on a spin wicket. Shafique's (57) luck finally ran out after getting dropped on 0, 15 and 41 when he feathered a catch down the legside to wicketkeeper Kyle Verreynne, but South Africa had to review the not out on-field decision as ultra edge showed a clear spike when the ball passed Shafique's bat. South Africa's scrappy fielding allowed Masood and Shafique to add 111 runs for the second wicket stand after spinners created several chances in the first two sessions but got little support from the fielders.



## Amidst online backlash, Anurag Kashyap says Bandar has nothing to do with MeToo: ‘When a film is about a false rape accusation case...’



Anurag Kashyap's next film is called Bandar. Anurag Kashyap has collaborated with Bobby Deol for the first time in Bandar. Even as Anurag Kashyap's latest film Nishaanchi plays in theatres across India, the filmmaker is already making international headlines with his upcoming project Bandar, which recently had its world premiere at the 2025 Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

The premiere saw the presence of the film's principal cast and crew, including Bobby Deol, who is working with Kashyap for the first time. Early reviews from the festival have described Bandar as a highly provocative film, with some critics interpreting its narrative as controversial, particularly in relation to the #MeToo movement. In fact, a few have even gone so far as to suggest that the movie might be read as "anti-MeToo." This has led to some backlash online, with several netizens questioning the merit of the film and calling it "pro-men." However, in an exclusive conversation with SCREEN, Anurag Kashyap addressed the speculation head-on and clarified the film's intent and themes. "It has nothing to do with MeToo. See when a film is about a false rape accusation case, those conversations happen. But MeToo is about power, somebody using a position of power, to do something. This film has nothing to do with that kind of a powerplay, or that kind of sexual angle, so it has nothing to do with MeToo."

Kashyap also shared insights into how the screenplay came to life, revealing that acclaimed screenwriter Sudip Sharma, known for Uda Punjab, Sonchiriya, Paatal Lok, and Kohrra, was his first and only choice for the complex subject matter. "So I didn't have the time to write the script. And, I was of the opinion it's a very complex subject, very difficult, but only if Sudip Sharma agrees to write it is only when I'll direct it. And he fortunately agreed and that's how it happened." While there is currently no official word on when Bandar will release in India, Anurag Kashyap isn't slowing down. He's already preparing for the release of Nishaanchi Part 2, the sequel to his current theatrical release. The film stars Aishwarya Thackeray, Vedika Pinto, Monika Panwar, Kumud Mishra, and Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub in leading roles.

## ‘Mohanlal became a superstar because he never acted in your films’: Baiju Santhosh slams Adoor Gopalakrishnan for ‘disrespectful’ comment about actor

Despite the passage of a few days since the Kerala government's "Malayalam Vaanalam, Lal Salaam" event, organised to felicitate Malayalam superstar Mohanlal for winning the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the controversy that erupted during it, due to certain remarks made by veteran filmmaker Adoor Gopalakrishnan, has yet to subside. It may be recalled that many had felt Adoor unnecessarily disparaged Mohanlal in a veiled manner during his address. Meanwhile, renowned actor Baiju Santhosh recently tore into the filmmaker for a purportedly disrespectful comment he once made about the superstar.

Reacting to a clip featuring one of Adoor's old remarks regarding Mohanlal and the latter's response to the filmmaker's speech at the government event, Baiju commented on social media, "Ingharude padathil abinaikathath kond mohanlal superstar ayi (Mohanlal became a superstar because he never acted in his films)." Mohanlal has image of good rowdy. During an interview, Adoor was asked why he had never made a movie with Mohanlal to date. In response, he said, "Mohanlal has a strong image, that of a good-hearted rowdy. I cannot make a film with that. I do not believe in the concept of a 'good rowdy.' A rowdy is a rowdy. How can a rowdy be good?"

At the "Malayalam Vaanalam, Lal Salaam" event, Adoor — the only other Malayali film personality besides Mohanlal to have won the Dadasaheb Phalke Award — remarked that no similar ceremony had been organised to felicitate him when he was conferred with the honour over two decades ago. "There were no celebrations or expressions of public appreciation like this when I received the award twenty years ago. Today, the Honourable Chief Minister and the government have taken a special interest in recognising Mohanlal, and I share in your joy and pride," Mathrubhumi quoted him as saying. Although Mohanlal is known for his ability to dodge such arrows that come his way, many claimed that his acceptance speech contained a fitting reply to Adoor. "[This is] the first time Adoor sir spoke about me... or no, maybe he has spoken about me at many gatherings. To him, I express my deepest thanks from the bottom of my heart," the superstar said, which has since been dubbed by his fans as a sarcastic jibe at the filmmaker



for attacking him frequently. While Mohanlal won the Dadasaheb Phalke Award at the 71st National Film Awards, Adoor was conferred with it at the 52nd edition of the event. In the subsequent part of his address at the event, Adoor had also said, "I've not yet had the opportunity to work with Mohanlal, unfortunately. But I have always deeply respected and admired his talent. It was under my chairmanship that Mohanlal received his first National Award (at the 39th edition when he bagged the Best Actor trophy for his performance in Bharatham). That's where his journey of national recognition began, and I take immense pride and happiness in that." He added, "Every Malayali has seen a reflection of themselves in Mohanlal. That's why, wherever Malayalis live, he has become beloved by all. I wish him continued success and a long, enduring career in cinema."

## Dulquer Salmaan refuses to comment amid raids on his, father Mammootty's premises by ED in luxury car smuggling case

Actor Dulquer Salmaan refused comment as he was spotted at the Kochi airport on Wednesday amid Enforcement Directorate raids on premises linked with him and his father Mammootty. As per reports, Dulquer has been summoned by ED but the actor refused to answer any of the reporter's questions. A fortnight after the Customs and Central Excise Department in Kerala conducted searches on their premises, actors Prithviraj Sukumaran and Dulquer again faced official heat as the ED raided locations linked to them on Wednesday, October 8, in connection with an ongoing investigation against an alleged luxury car smuggling racket. The raids were carried out at about 17 locations across Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Besides Dulquer's residences on Grems Road in Chennai and Kadavanthra in Kochi, his father Mammootty's long-time home, popularly known as "Mammootty House" in Panampilly Nagar, was also raided by officials during the day. Among the premises searched were also those linked to actor Amit Chakkalackal, whose name had cropped up last time.

The latest development comes a day after Dulquer received relief from the Kerala High Court, which allowed him to file an application for the provisional release of his 2004 Land Rover Defender that was seized by Customs last month as part of "Operation Numkhor." The court also directed the raids to decide on the plea within one week.

During the hearing, the actor claimed that Customs officials refused to examine the vehicle's documents provided to them and carried out the seizure in a "hasty" and

"arbitrary" manner. Questioning the agency's "reason to believe" for the seizure, the HC noted the lack of concrete evidence and the vehicle's long-standing legal registration and use in India for its ruling. Meanwhile, in a press release on Wednesday, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) stated they have found out that a Coimbatore-based network was behind the smuggling operation. The network is suspected of using forged documents, falsely attributed to the Indian Army, the US Embassy, and the Ministry of External Affairs, to fraudulently register vehicles with Regional Transport Offices (RTOs) in remote states like Arunachal Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. The vehicles — which included models such as Land Cruisers, Defenders and Maseratis — were then sold below market value to affluent buyers, including film celebrities. The ED has identified apparent violations of Sections 3, 4, and 8 of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), related to illegal foreign exchange dealings and transactions routed through hawala networks.

The actors have yet to respond to the matter. Both Prithviraj Sukumaran and Dulquer Salmaan are major automobile enthusiasts and boast extensive collections of cars that include both vintage and high-end models. In an old interview, Prithviraj had revealed that Dulquer "has around 50 to 60 cars." While Prithviraj was last seen in the Bollywood action thriller Sarazameen, Dulquer's most recent lead role appearance was in the Telugu crime drama Lucky Baskhar. Both actors will next be seen in Vilayath Buddha and Kaantha, respectively.

## Arbaaz Khan-Sshura Khan name their daughter Sipaara; here's what it means in Hindi, Arabic and Persian



After videos of Arbaaz Khan taking his newborn daughter home with wife Sshura Khan went viral on social media, the couple, who had so far refrained from announcing the birth of their daughter publicly, have finally confirmed the news and also revealed the name of their bundle of joy. The couple welcomed their daughter on October 5.

Sshura and Arbaaz shared a joint Instagram post that read, "Welcome baby girl, Sipaara Khan. Love Arbaaz and Shura." The caption of the post read, "Alhamdulillah ??." Sipaara means "a beautiful woman" in Arabic, while in Persian it translates to "a flower." In Hindi, Sipaara refers to one of the 30 parts into which the Quran is divided. Earlier today, a video of Arbaaz holding his little munchkin in his arms and bringing her home was circulated on social media. He was seen leaving the hospital, with Sshura accompanying him. The video showed Arbaaz happily waving at the paparazzi, while Sshura quietly stayed inside the car wearing a mask.

During their hospital stay, Sshura was joined by Arbaaz's brothers, Sohail Khan and Salman Khan, who came to see her and the baby. Arbaaz's son from his first marriage with Malaika Arora, Arhaan Khan, was also spotted at the hospital multiple times. Arbaaz married makeup artist Sshura in 2023. They had kept the news of her pregnancy under wraps, but he recently confirmed it while speaking with The Delhi Times. He also shared his excitement about becoming a father again after 22 years, saying, "It's a very exciting time in both our lives. We are happy and excited. We're going to welcome this new life into our lives."

## Small-town Amitabh Bachchan fan, who came to Mumbai to catch his glimpse, is 5x richer than him today with Rs 8,660 net worth

Producer Anand Kamalnayan Pandit is widely known for bankrolling and distributing films like Pyaar Ka PUNCHAMA 2, Total Dhamaal, Missing, Sarkar 3, and Great Grand Masti. However, apart from his film ventures under his production house — Anand Pandit Motion Pictures, Anand is also a successful real-estate developer, with top Bollywood stars like Shah Rukh Khan and Amitabh Bachchan having invested in his company. Anand recently made headlines not for his films but for his real-estate business, as he was ranked the 10th richest real-estate tycoon in India on the Hurun India 2025 list, with his wealth estimated at Rs 8,660 crore, thanks to the value of his company Sri Lotus Developers and Realty Limited. Shah Rukh, Amitabh, and Hrithik invested in Anand's company.

According to a report in India Today, both SRK and Big B reportedly invested Rs 10.1 crore and Rs 10 crore, respectively, in Anand's real-estate company in July this year. They aren't alone. As per The Economic Times, other celebrities including Hrithik Roshan, Ajay Devgn, Ekta Kapoor, Sara Ali Khan, Tiger Shroff and Rajkumar Rao have also invested in his firm. Anand's company, which incorporated in 2015, specialises in redevelopment projects, mainly in the ultra-luxury and luxury segments across Mumbai's western suburbs. Anand Pandit's special connection with Amitabh Bachchan

Both superstars, Big B and SRK, share a special connection with Anand. In an old interview with SCREEN, Anand recalled how Amitabh Bachchan's Trishul inspired him to leave the comforts of his small-town Ahmedabad and try his luck in Mumbai. In the film, Amitabh also comes from a small town and eventually becomes the owner of a construction company. He said, "I have grown up watching Amitabh Bachchan's films. His film, Trishul, really inspired me and motivated me to leave Ahmedabad and move to Mumbai. And I also wanted to have my own Shanti Construction Company, and fortunately today I have made Lotus Developers. His character Vijay inspired me to be where I am today. It is all because of Bachchan sahab." A year after coming to Mumbai, Anand became successful and even managed to buy a house behind Big B's iconic bungalow, Jalsa. "I feel so privileged to know him so closely. He treats me like his family. He always stands by me whenever I need him," he said. Anand eventually sold the same bungalow to Big B for Rs 50 crore in 2013. "I had a bungalow next to him and he wanted to expand his bungalow. He requested me to sell him my property and I did," he



admitted. Anand also shares a film connection with Amitabh and his son Abhishek Bachchan. He has bankrolled Amitabh's 2017 film Sarkar 3, his 2021 release Chehre, and Abhishek's 2021 film The Big Bull.

Anand and Shah Rukh Khan share a deep bond. During an interaction, SRK referred to him as his spiritual guru, highlighting Anand's expertise in Vaastu and how he often guides the superstar to correct energy imbalances. During the interaction, Anand had accepted providing Vaastu tips to SRK before the release of his blockbusters Jawan and Pathaan. SRK termed him his spiritual guru. "When we became close, I started guiding him — there is a special Vaastu Shastra based on energy, which I practise. We adjusted the energy that was required at his place. And it worked for him. He is such a humble man and a great guy that he publicly acknowledged it, and I am grateful for that," he said. On Anand's 60th birthday, Shah Rukh spoke about their bond and how they would go for night drives together and how Anand to refrain from boasting about his real-estate empire. "In the night, at 12-1 am, he comes visits me and we roam around Juhu. He doesn't tell me, 'This is my building, that is my building.' Instead, in the two-kilometre drive, he tells me barring two to three buildings, all buildings are his. Our journey becomes easy," he had said. Coincidentally, Shah Rukh Khan has emerged as Bollywood's first billionaire with Rs 12,490 net worth. Amitabh Bachchan and family is on the 5th spot among Bollywood celebs of Hurun Rich list with Rs 1,630 net worth. Anand began his journey as a producer in 2015 with Pyaar Ka PUNCHAMA 2. He went on to bankroll films like Great Grand Masti, Guest in London, Total Dhamaal, and PM Narendra Modi. One of his most successful films has been Ajay Devgn-starrer Drishyam 2, which released in 2022.

## Soha Ali Khan opens up on her 'biggest fear' of 'untimely death of loved one' as she recalls mom Sharmila Tagore's cancer journey: 'Miraculously early stage'



Fans of actor Sharmila Tagore were shocked when she revealed that she had battled lung cancer during the pandemic. During a recent chat, her daughter Soha Ali Khan reflected on that period as she opened up about her fears and said that "untimely death" was the biggest one for her. Soha lost her father Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi in 2011. He was 70.

In a chat with Nayandeep Rakshit on his YouTube channel, Soha was asked if she was more worried for her mother since she had already experienced the loss of one parent. "My biggest fear is untimely death and the loss of loved ones because you can handle everything else but those are things that affect me more and I think about that all the time. I am grateful for the fact that at least when it comes to cancer or when it comes to things like lung cancer, the most important thing is prevention and detection and that happened at a miraculously early stage," she said.

In an earlier chat with the same channel, Soha had revealed that Sharmila did not have to go through chemotherapy after her diagnosis. "With my mother, she was one of the very few people to be diagnosed with lung cancer at stage zero, and no chemotherapy, nothing. It was cut out of her and she is, touchwood, fine," she said.

Previously, on Koffee with Karan, director Karan Johar had shared that he wanted Sharmila to be a part of Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani. He had offered her the part that was ultimately played by Shabana Azmi. Sharmila revealed, "It was at the height of COVID. They hadn't really grappled with COVID at that time, we were not vaccinated. After my cancer... They didn't want me to take that risk."

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