

Telangana fee reimbursement: 72% of dues for three years remain unpaid

Hyderabad: Students from the Backward Class, Minorities and EBC communities are bearing the brunt due to an inordinate delay by the Telangana Congress government in releasing the fee reimbursement arrears.Since the Telangana Congress party came into power during the academic year 2023-24, the fee dues payment statistics show a widening gap between the demand and payments. While Rs 7,673.78 crore had to be released for the last three academic years, only 28 per cent (Rs.2,160.03 crore) was released so far, leaving 72 per cent (Rs 5,513.75 crore) dues.

BRICS adopts declaration despite divide on West Asia, calls for end to global turmoil

New Delhi, Sept 12

Despite deep differences over the West Asia conflict between members Iran and the UAE, the 10-member BRICS grouping on Friday managed to speak in one voice, adopting the New Delhi Declaration after tough, night-long negotiations that saw the bloc take a strong position on the conflict, Israel's violations of the Lebanon ceasefire, attacks on nuclear facilities, terrorism and global trade.

The leaders jointly called for maximum restraint in West Asia, protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, and greater efforts through dialogue and diplomacy to prevent further escalation. They also expressed serious concern over deliberate attacks on civilian infrastructure and peaceful nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, stressing that nuclear safety, security and safeguards must be upheld even during armed conflicts.

The consensus followed days of negotiations over language on West Asia. The declaration stressed respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and the need to maintain the smooth flow of global trade, supply chains and energy. The issue of secure sea lanes and the safety and well-being of seafarers also figured prominently during the summit amid growing risks to commercial shipping.

On Gaza, BRICS expressed deep concern over continued violence despite the October 2025 ceasefire and opposed policies aimed at the forced displacement of Palestinians and any geographic or demographic changes to the enclave. It reaffirmed support for a two-state solution, with a sovereign,

independent and viable Palestinian state within the internationally recognised 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The grouping demanded full humanitarian access to Gaza, condemned attacks on civilians and healthcare facilities and the use of starvation as a method of warfare, and reaffirmed support for UNRWA. On Lebanon, it condemned continued ceasefire violations and called on Israel to respect the agreement and withdraw its forces from Lebanese territory where they remain.

In a significant India-specific reference, BRICS strongly condemned the April 22, 2025, terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir in which 26 people were killed. It reiterated zero tolerance for terrorism, called for action against cross-border terrorism, its financing and safe havens, and urged concerted action against all UN-designated terrorists and entities.

The declaration also criticised unilateral tariffs and economic sanctions, warning that tariff and non-tariff barriers could disrupt trade and supply chains. It opposed unilateral coercive measures, including sanctions not authorised by the UN Security Council.

On global governance, BRICS backed greater representation of developing countries and reform of the UN Security Council. China and Russia reiterated support for the aspirations of India and Brazil to play a greater role in the UN, including the Security Council.

SC, ST Commission cautions BHEL against lapses in reservation rules

Sangareddy: SC, ST Commission Chairman Bakki Venkataiah told the BHEL management that the Commission would not tolerate any violation in implementation of rule of reservation and roster points in recruitment and promotion of staff. During a visit to the BHEL on Saturday, Venkataiah held a meeting with the management and also with the representatives of SC and ST employees association.After accepting a representation from the SC, ST Employees over the issues being faced by them, Venkataiah directed the management to take up the recruitment of backlog posts without any delay. He observed that the management should ensure that rights provided to the SC, ST employees by the Indian Constitution are implemented strictly.



Telangana Exposes How BRS Converted Govt Land into Private

Hyderabad, Sept 12

: The state government on Saturday placed documentary evidence before the Legislative Assembly stating that valuable government, assigned, Bhoodan, inam and defence lands around Hyderabad and in neighbouring districts were converted into private or patta lands during the previous BRS government through the Dharani portal.

Revenue minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy cited several instances to substantiate the government's charge and stated senior BRS leader T. Harish Rao's father-in-law Madhavaram Hanumantha Rao, BRS MLAs Palla Rajeshwar Reddy and Gangula Kamalakhar and others had benefited from such illegal land transfers.

Srinivas Reddy said the cases demonstrated how government lands were removed from the prohibited 22-A list or otherwise converted despite restrictions, court proceedings or earlier resumption orders. Here are some of such cases. Survey No. 271 of Velikatta, Kondapak mandal, Siddipet district had 327 acres and nine guntas of assigned government land.

Of this, Madhavaram Hanumantha Rao, father-in-law of Harish Rao, purchased 6 acres and 18 guntas of assigned land in 2010-11. He purchased 2 acres and 10 guntas (Survey No. 271/18) from Seenangari Srinivasa Chary, who was allotted land under the freedom fighters category, and four acres and eight guntas (Survey No. 271/98) from Pasi Satyanarayana, who was assigned land under the ex-servicemen category. After 1 acre and 26 guntas was acquired with ₹11.92 lakh compensation, the remaining 4 acres and 32 guntas was removed from the 22-A list on August 1, 2023, just before Assembly polls and converted into patta land.

In Sikindlapur, Shivampet mandal, Medak district, there were 569 acres and 5 guntas of inam land. Of this, 372 acres and 32 guntas were granted Occupancy Rights Certificate, which establishes the user's right over the land, shortly before the 2023 election notification; orders were later cancelled and the matter is now before the RDO.

In Survey Nos. 58 and 59 at Chippalthurthi, Narsapur mandal, Medak district, 112 acres and 21 guntas were removed from Section 22-A prohibited list in 2020, and the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) is investigating alleged irregularities and arrests of the then additional collector and RDO.

Vattinagulapally, Gandipet mandal, Ranga Reddy district, had 29 acres and 27 guntas of Bhoodan land

under Survey Nos. 186-189. However, revenue officials allegedly removed Bhoodan classification, despite the High Court ordering a status quo. This transaction involved BRS MLA Palla Rajeshwar Reddy and others.

Shankar Hills, Vattinagulapally, Gandipet mandal



has 460 acres under Survey Nos. 111-191. Despite court restrictions, 226 acres and 6 guntas came into the possession of influential persons including BRS MLA Gangula Kamalakhar through removal and restoration of POB status.

Munaganur, Abdullapurmet mandal, Ranga Reddy district had 40 acres and 10 guntas under Survey No. 44. About 22 acres of the assigned land were resumed and converted into patta land in 2022. Subsequently, the land was registered in the name of Kambalapalli Sulochana, who is linked to former BRS councillor and realtor Palle Gopal Goud.

Pothireddypally, Sangareddy mandal, had 77 acres of government-assigned land in Survey Nos. 152-155. Following Dharani applications, 31.23 acres were removed from 22-A and converted into patta land in July 2023. The land was later converted for non-agricultural use and registered in the names of TJR Infra & Developers and others. HMDA permissions were given based on a no-objection certificate from the revenue department. The matter is pending before the High Court, which has ordered status quo.

Eighteen acres and 22 guntas in Survey No. 44 of Adibatla, Ibrahimpatnam mandal of Ranga Reddy district. Of this, 13 acres and 16 guntas of ceiling surplus land were assigned to four landless poor persons.

Hyderabad:, Sept 12

Telangana government has decided to increase property tax by 10 per cent with the passage of the Core Urban Region (Integrated Governance) Bill, 2026 in the Legislative Assembly on Saturday.

The bill had initially proposed a 20 per cent increase, but "with the permission of the Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, the provision had been amended to cap the increase at 10 per cent", Legislative Affairs minister D Sridhar Babu told the Assembly during the prolonged discussion on the bill.

The minister sought to allay the apprehension of the steep property tax hike, assuring that people need not worry as the property tax would not increase substantially. Defending the proposed rates, he said around 20 per cent was levied in Mumbai and 17 per cent in Chennai.

The House saw an intense discussion on the issue for over four hours with Opposition members expressing concerns over the proposed increase in property tax. Cutting across party lines, several MLAs expressed concern over the initially proposed annual 20 per cent increase in property tax. The main Opposition party BRS MLAs were not present in the House, as they were suspended en masse for the rest of the session.

Sridhar Babu maintained that the apprehension over an abnormal rise in property tax was unfounded, explaining that hitherto annual rental value method was being followed to calculate property tax within GHMC limits, while the capital value method was followed in the districts. The new Bill proposed a uniform method of calculating property tax on capital value method, he said.

Under the proposed system, property tax would be calculated at 0.15 per cent of the capital value for residential buildings and 0.75 per cent for non-residential buildings. If a structure measured 375 sq ft, the annual property tax for poor people would be Rs 101, he said. "Cannot we collect Rs 101 per year?" he asked. He informed the House that the initial 20 per cent proposed hike was slashed to 10 per cent with CM's intervention and this would not be an annual feature, Sridhar Babu added.

Earlier, AIMIM floor leader Akbaruddin Owaisi pointed out that Clause 78 of the Bill proposed a 20 per cent annual increase in property tax. Describing it as unfair, he urged the government to reconsider the provision.

fraudsters demanded extra payment citing a low credit score, exposing the fraud.

Goel warned citizens to be cautious when strangers met through dating or social media platforms quickly develop emotional ties and introduce investment opportunities. Fraudsters often use fake identities, fabricated success stories, and artificial profit displays to trap victims.

The bureau advised against investing based solely on online acquaintances or downloading apps from unknown links. Suspected victims should immediately call 1930 or report through the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal. Early reporting during the "Golden Hour" improves chances of stopping losses and recovering funds.

sion. He said the new Bill provided for an annual increase in property tax. While the previous GHMC Act provided for property tax based on annual rental value, the new Bill proposed calculating it based on the capital value of a property, linked to the market value of the land and building.

Akbaruddin also questioned the need to hold elections if elected public representatives had no powers and most powers were vested in officials in the apex governing council and executive committee. "There is a possibility of people challenging this clause in the court," he



said.

He further pointed out that the Bill did not mention the distribution of assets among the three proposed corporations. There had already been a delay in the distribution of assets between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh after bifurcation, he said. Similarly, there was no clarity on the staff strength required for the three corporations or how the staff would be arranged, he said.Download Interactive Maps

Taking a dig at the government, Akbaruddin alleged that one company continued to secure all contracts, including the underground cabling work worth Rs 1,400 crore. While the government was delaying fee reimbursement and benefits to farmers, the contractor's bills were being cleared promptly, he charged.

Harish Rao counters Ponguleti, questions Congress claims on 22A lands

Hyderabad:, SEpt 12

The Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) on Saturday mounted a point-by-point rebuttal of Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy's claims on 22-A prohibited lands, accusing him of misleading the Assembly and attempting to shift the blame for the controversy to the previous BRS government. The party demanded that the Minister spell out a clear time frame to resolve the issue rather than indulging in a blame game.Book Walking Tours



Speaking to media persons at Telangana Bhavan here on Saturday, the party deputy floor leader T Harish Rao opined that Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy failed to answer the questions raised by the BRS on how many acres were added to the prohibited list after the Congress came to power and instead spoke about the extent already in the list.

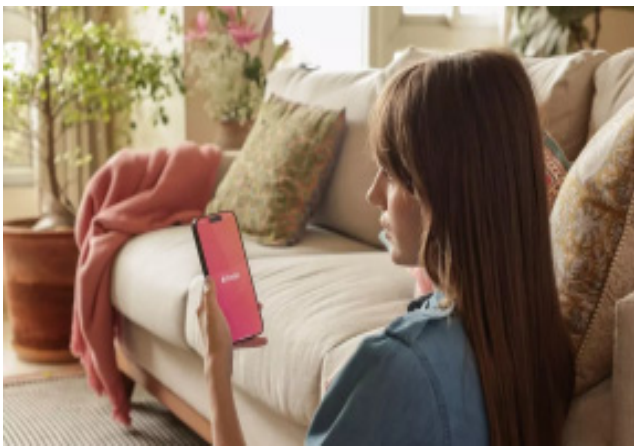
Tinder Fraudster Dupes Man of Rs 3.35 Cr

HYDERABAD, Sept 12

A Tinder user lost ₹3.35 crore after a fraudster developed an emotional relationship with him and lured him into a fake investment scheme, prompting the Telangana Cyber Security Bureau (TGCSB) to caution citizens against dating-app-based fraud.

TGCSB director Shikha Goel said the fraudster posed as a foreign national, befriended the victim through WhatsApp, and gradually gained his trust by discussing personal matters. She later claimed to earn substantial income through a Meta-related advertising programme and persuaded him to invest via an application link.

Initially shown apparent profits, the victim continued investing larger sums over 55 days, transferring a total of ₹3.35 crore. When he attempted to withdraw, the



Indian Chronicle

English Daily

India should stop judging it like software

For over a decade, software-as-a-Service (SaaS) and consumer internet companies have shaped how people invest in India. SaaS, simply put, means businesses that provide software to customers through subscriptions or online platforms. We know this model well. Companies can build software relatively quickly, add customers without having to manufacture a new physical product for each one, and scale rapidly.

Thus, investors measure success with metrics such as Annual Recurring Revenue (ARR), Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC), profitability and how quickly a company can recoup the money spent on each new customer. They look at these numbers to decide where to put their money. However, using the same rules for the new generation of DeepTech companies in India is a mistake. DeepTech firms need different metrics and a longer view. It is more than a problem with numbers, and could affect how the country builds its most important technologies.

These companies are not simply writing software. Their innovations come from fields like physics, chemistry, biology, advanced materials and mechanical engineering. Whether a company is developing a space launch vehicle, a robot or a semiconductor, it can face years of research and development, expensive prototypes and complex supply chains before it earns its first significant commercial revenue. Expecting SaaS-like quarterly growth from them misunderstands the nature of DeepTech itself. To understand why DeepTech needs a different approach, we need to look at how major economies around the world view technology. The United States and China do not treat technologies such as semiconductors, robotics, aerospace and biotechnology only as investment opportunities.

CM Relief Fund Cheques Distributed to 32 Families in Uppal Worth Rs.18.64 Lakh

“CM Relief Fund Supports Poor and Middle-Class Families: MANDUMULA PARAMESWAR REDDY”UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) cheques sanctioned to poor and middle-class families in the Uppal constituency were distributed by Congress party constituency in-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy on Friday. Cheques worth a total of Rs.18,64,400 were handed over to 32 families from various divisions. “Speaking on the occasion, Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy said the Chief Minister's Relief Fund was providing much-needed support to poor and middle-class families undergoing medical treatment. He said the government was assuring families who were unable to afford medical expenses due to financial difficulties through the CMRF. He assured that steps would be taken to ensure that eligible beneficiaries receive government welfare schemes. “The beneficiaries expressed their special gratitude to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy for standing by them during difficult times and working to resolve the problems of people in the constituency. “Congress party leaders, division presidents, senior leaders, party workers, CMRF beneficiaries and their family members attended the programme. “Beneficiary Details”The following beneficiaries received CMRF cheques from Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy: “S.No. “Beneficiary Name “Address “Amount” “1 “Boja Santosh Kumar “Meerpet Kailasagiri, HB Colony “Rs.47,500” “2 “Lakkakula Swapna “New Ramnagar Colony, Uppal “Rs.60,000” “3 “Muthayya “New Vijayapuri Colony, Uppal “Rs.60,000” “4 “Narson Padmarani “Kurumanagar, Uppal “Rs.46,000” “5 “Chintala Y ad a g i r i “ B a l a j i n a g a r , Ramanthapur “Rs.60,000” “6 “Gouse “Balajinagar, Ramanthapur “Rs.60,000” “7 “Boyini Sai “Chilkanagar, Uppal “Rs.60,000” “8 “Pinninti Balamani “Kummaribasti, Uppal “Rs.35,000” “9 “MD Akram Hussain “Bharatnagar, Uppal “Rs.60,000” “10 “Jeevan Kumar “Chukka Gandhinagar, Uppal “Rs.12,000” “11 “Kesaram Srinivas “Kushaiguda, U p p a l “ R s . 6 0 , 0 0 0 “ “ 1 2 “ K a n c h i b h o t l a Nagasudha “Marutinagar, Kapra “Rs.60,000” “13 “Tejaswi Shakha “Bharatnagar, Uppal “Rs.37,000” “14 “Salla Vikas “Chilkanagar, Uppal “Rs.18,000” “15 “Marubutla Venkataramana “Jai Jawan Colony, Kapra “Rs.42,500” “16 “Kota Dhanraj “Raghavendranagar, Uppal “Rs.1,22,400” “17 “Darpaneni Brahma Prakash “Akula Narayan Colony, Sainikpuri “Rs.1,40,000” “18 “Jetta Mounika “Vasavinagar, Ramanthapur “Rs.60,000” “19 “Vatte Rajaprasad Reddy “Bapunagar, Amberpet “Rs.60,000” “20 “Bayikadi Mamatha “Gandhinagar, Kapra “Rs.25,000” “21 “Chirakulla Suresh Goud “Venkat Reddy Nagar, Ramanthapur “Rs.60,000” “22 “Methukupalli Kondal Reddy “Chegunta, Medak “Rs.15,000” “23 “Chintala Naveen Kumar “Venkat Reddy Nagar, Ramanthapur “Rs.60,000” “24 “Mohammed Rasheed Khan “Annapurna Colony, Uppal “Rs.60,000” “25 “CH M a d h a v i “ B a l a j i n a g a r , Ramanthapur “Rs.47,500” “26 “Mohammed Abdul Sameer “Ravindranagar, Habsiguda “Rs.29,000” “27 “Maram Sugunamma “Beerappagadda, Uppal “Rs.47,500” “28 “Kuntla Adireddy “Vijayapuri Colony, Uppal “Rs.1,80,000” “29 “Gajwelly Ram Reddy “Kishtareddy Colony, Uppal “Rs.60,000” “30 “Doma Aruna “Ganeshnagar, Uppal “Rs.60,000” “31 “Srikanth P “Shantinagar, Uppal “Rs.60,000” “32 “P. Maheshwarao “Kapra, Uppal “Rs.60,000” “Beneficiaries and their families conveyed their special thanks to Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy for his support”.

Cab driver missing from Hyderabad found murdered in Sangareddy

Sangareddy: A cab driver, who went mysteriously missing from Hyderabad, was found murdered at Rudram under Patancheru police station limits on Saturday. The victim was Rajshekhar (35), a native of Begumpet in Hyderabad. Rajashekhar, who was offering his cab services to the employees of a software company, was reported missing on September 10 at Begumpet police station by his family members. Interestingly, his cab was located some 50-km away from his dead body and closer to NH-65 at Budhera in Sangareddy district.

School Sweepers Seek Release of Pending Salaries and Arrears

“Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, Kumram Bheem Asifabad Dist, September 12: A school sweeper working in a government school has appealed to the media and concerned officials to ensure the timely payment of salaries and pending arrears to sweepers working in government schools across Kumram Bheem Asifabad district. “Addressing the media, Mohammed Rafi, a government school sweeper, said that around 28 sweepers were working in the district earlier, but the number has now come down to 18 due to various reasons, including the deaths of some workers. “He said the sweepers are not receiving their salaries regularly and that the monthly salary is only ₹5,200, which is also not being paid consistently. He stated that some of the workers approached the court seeking better wages and that they subsequently received a favourable court order. According to him, a Government Order (GO) providing for a monthly salary of ₹13,000 was also issued, and those covered by the court proceedings have been re-

ceiving the revised amount regularly. “However, Rafi alleged that he is currently the only worker in Kumram Bheem Asifabad district who has not received the revised salary and that approximately 18 months of salary arrears are pending. “He said he has repeatedly approached the concerned authorities regarding the pending payments, but has allegedly been told that the amount has been written and sent for release, but has not yet been received. He further stated that sweepers in neighbouring Karimnagar district are receiving ₹5,200 every month, whereas payments have not been made regularly to workers in Kumram Bheem Asifabad district. “Rafi appealed to the media and concerned officials to intervene in the matter and ensure the immediate release of his pending salary and arrears. He also urged the concerned Chief Officer (CO) to look into the issue and take necessary steps to resolve the problem. “He expressed gratitude to the media and others for supporting their demand for timely payment of salaries.

Ganesh Chaturthi Celebrations Held with Devotion and Grandeur at Deccan Springs Global School



“Nacharam, September 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): “Deccan Springs Global School celebrated Ganesh Chaturthi with great devotion, enthusiasm and cultural fervour. The school premises reverberated with spiritual energy as students, teachers and members of the school management came together to celebrate the festival dedicated to Lord Ganesha, the remover of obstacles and the symbol of wisdom, prosperity and new beginnings. “The celebrations commenced with the traditional installation of the idol of Lord Ganesha, followed by a special prayer and Ganesh Vandana. The rituals were performed with devotion, seeking the blessings of Lord Ganesha for the well-being, happiness, prosperity and success of the entire school community. “The programme was graced by Chairman Shri K. Navaneetha Rao, Managing Director Shri Naveen Kumar, Director Dr. Kamala Manohar Rao, Core Head of Operations Shri Kishore Kumar Reddy, Principal Ms. Swarna Akkineni, along with teachers, staff members and students. “Students and teachers actively participated in the celebrations and presented a variety of devotional songs, graceful dances and colourful cultural performances. The



performances reflected the rich cultural traditions associated with Ganesh Chaturthi and created an atmosphere of joy, devotion and togetherness on the school campus. “The celebrations also highlighted the importance of eco-friendly Ganesh Chaturthi. Students were encouraged to understand the need to protect nature and maintain cleanliness while celebrating festivals. The programme conveyed the message that cultural traditions can be preserved while also fulfilling our responsibility towards the environment. “Speaking on the occasion, Principal Ms. Swarna Akkineni appreciated the enthusiastic participation of students and teachers. She urged students to celebrate festivals with devotion and responsibility and emphasized the importance of respecting nature, maintaining cleanliness and preserving cultural values. She said that festivals provide an excellent opportunity for children to learn about Indian traditions while developing a sense of unity, discipline and social responsibility. “The vibrant performances and devotional activities created an atmosphere filled with happiness and spiritual fervour. The celebrations also provided students with an opportunity to showcase their creativity, confidence and cultural talents. “The school management appreciated the efforts of the teachers and students in making the programme meaningful and memorable. The event concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to the management, teachers, students and staff members for their support and participation. “The Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations at Deccan Springs Global School concluded on a joyful and spiritual note, leaving the school community with cherished memories of faith, culture, unity and collective happiness, along with a strong message to celebrate festivals in an environmentally responsible manner.

MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Participates in Clay Ganesha Idol Distribution Programme in Uppal



“UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A clay Ganesha idol distribution programme was organised in Uppal under the leadership of BRS party leader Kalpana

Reddy, promoting environmental protection on the occasion of Vinayaka Chavithi. Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy attended the programme as the chief guest and distributed clay Ganesha idols to devotees. “Speaking on the occasion, the MLA urged everyone to install and worship clay Ganesha idols during Vinayaka Chavithi and contribute to environmental conservation. He stated that Plaster of Paris idols could pollute water bodies and emphasised the need to encourage the use of eco-friendly clay idols. He called upon people to adopt environmentally friendly practices to protect nature and provide a clean environment for future generations. He appealed to devotees to welcome Lord Ganesha with devotion, worship clay idols and protect the environment. The programme helped raise awareness among the public about environmental protection. Local BRS leaders, party workers, women, devotees and youth participated in the event.

Organisers, Public Must Ensure Safe and Peaceful Ganesh Festivities:



CP Sajjanar “Hyderabad Correspondent, September 12 (Indian Chronicle): Hyderabad City Police Commissioner V.C. Sajjanar on Friday called for active cooperation from Ganesh festival organisers and the public to ensure that the city's celebrations and immersion processions remain peaceful, safe and orderly. Sajjanar made the appeal at a coordination meeting with Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi representatives and members of various festival committees at Visvesvaraya Bhavan. He said the Ganesh festival had earned international recognition and that its peaceful conduct over the years had been possible largely due to cooperation from citizens and organisers. He said the police had put in place security and operational plans for this year's festivities. The CP stressed the need to prevent accidents and traffic disruption during idol arrival processions, particularly those involving speeding, overcrowding and people dancing on moving vehicles. Organisers



were asked to inform police about arrival schedules and preferably move idols during low-traffic hours. He also asked organisers to deploy four to five responsible volunteers at every pandal, register their details on the Police App and provide them with identification badges or colour-coded uniforms. Police have coordinated with GHMC and TGSPDCL on overhead power lines, tree branches and road repairs along procession routes.

Sajjanar also urged committees to keep sound levels under control, citing complaints from elderly residents and hospital patients. With prolonged immersion processions affecting traffic and public movement, organisers were advised to begin them early on immersion day. Special bandobast will be deployed at Khairatabad and Balapur, while route inspections and public-awareness measures will be taken up ahead of the festivities.

ICICI Prudential Launches New Term Plan for Women



“Hyderabad, September 12 (Indian Chronicle) : ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has launched ‘ICICI Pru iProtect Smart Her’, a term insurance plan designed specifically for women, ICICI Prudential Life Chief Product Officer Vikas Gupta said in a statement released in the city on Saturday. The plan offers women a 15% lifetime premium discount, pregnancy break, women-specific health and wellness services, and health benefits worth up to 25,000. It also provides a child education income payout option that increases by 10% annually for 10 years. The overall benefits are valued at up to 92,100. Gupta said the plan was designed to address women's evolving financial and healthcare needs. Services include teleconsultations, annual health check-ups, risk assessments, and pharmacy and diagnostic discounts. The company reported a 99.3% claim settlement ratio in Q1 FY2027 and said non-investigative individual death claims are settled in an average of one day.

25th CII Energy Efficiency Summit from September 16

“Hyderabad, September 12 (Indian Chronicle) : The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) will organise the 25th Energy Efficiency Summit from September 16 to 18 at the Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC). CII representatives said in a statement on Saturday. The summit, organised by the CII - Soharbji Godrej Green Business Centre (CII-GBC), will bring together over 3,500 delegates and 150 speakers. Discussions will cover more than 20 industry sectors under the theme, Accelerating the Transition to a Net-Zero Economy through Energy Efficiency, Clean Technologies and Sustainable Practices. The event will also feature the 22nd CII Power Plant Conference, 20th CII PaperTech and 1st CII-GEC Cleantech Nexus. The 27th CII National Energy Management Excellence Awards will recognise over 300 companies and individuals for their achievements in sustainable energy practices. More than 110 exhibitors will showcase advanced technologies and solutions.

New Cable Wires Installed at Ganesh Mandapams by Akarapu Arun Patel



“RAMANTHAPUR , SEPTEMBER 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): In view of the upcoming Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations, Uppal Youth Congress President Akarapu Arun Patel has resolved the issue of dangerously placed electrical main wires near Ganesh mandapams in Venkat Reddy Nagar Colony. Residents of the colony brought the issue to Arun Patel's attention after noticing that the electrical wires near the Ganesh mandapams posed a safety hazard. Recognizing the seriousness of the problem, he immediately contacted the concerned electricity officials. “Subsequently, the dangerous wires were repaired and new cable wires were installed at the affected locations. The timely action taken by Arun Patel to ensure a safe environment for the Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations was appreciated by colony residents and Ganesh mandapam organizers, who expressed their special thanks to him.

Thummala Sandeep Bhushan Congratulates Madhu Yashki Goud on Appointment as AIPC National Chairman



“HYDERABAD , SEPTEMBER 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Thummala Sandeep Bhushan, AIPC Telangana State Head for Civil Society and Policy Research, met and congratulated Madhu Yashki Goud on his appointment as the new National Chairman of the All India Professional Congress (AIPC). “On this occasion, Thummala Sandeep Bhushan presented a bouquet to Madhu Yashki Goud and extended his best wishes. He expressed his happiness over the appointment and hoped that AIPC would play a more significant role in bringing professionals, intellectuals, and policy researchers across the country together and contributing to the formulation of public policies. “Madhu Yashki Goud thanked Thummala Sandeep Bhushan for his congratulations and good wishes.

CM Relief Fund Cheques Distributed to Five Families in Venkat Reddy Nagar

CM Relief Fund Supports Poor Families During Difficult Times: Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy*



“VENKAT REDDY NAGAR, SEPTEMBER 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): CM Relief Fund cheques were distributed to five families in Venkat Reddy Nagar under the Uppal Assembly constituency on Friday. The cheques were handed over to beneficiaries with the support of Uppal Congress party in-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy and Youth Congress president Akarapu Arun Patel. A total of Rs. 3.53 lakh worth of CM Relief Fund cheques were dis-

tributed to five families from Venkat Reddy Nagar Colony and Vasavi Nagar. The beneficiaries included Ragi Venkat Reddy of Venkat Reddy Nagar Colony, who received Rs. 1,13,000; Jetta Mounika of Vasavi Nagar, Venkat Reddy Nagar Division, who received Rs. 60,000; Chirakulla Suresh Goud of Venkat Reddy Nagar Colony, Ramanthapur, who received Rs. 60,000; and Chintala Naveen Kumar of Venkat Reddy Nagar Colony, Ramanthapur, who received Rs. 60,000. Cheques were also distributed to other beneficiaries. “Speaking on the occasion, Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy said the Chief Minister’s Relief Fund provides vital support to poor and middle-class families during difficult times. He assured that efforts would continue to resolve public issues and extend assistance to those in need. “The beneficiaries expressed their special gratitude to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for standing by them during their difficult times and to Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy for his efforts to resolve public problems and remain accessible to the people. “Venkat Reddy Nagar Division president Naam Raj Reddy, Medchal district general secretary Jaleel Pasha, Congress leaders and activists, CM Relief Fund beneficiaries and their family members attended the programme.”

Zila Parishad Member's Husband Shot Dead

On Saturday Morning unidentified Motorcycle borne criminals shot dead the husband of a Zila Parishad Member of Sita Madhi district of Bihar. As the deceased Baidyanath Mahto dweller of Kathariya village under Dumra PS of SitaMadhi district was on morning walk the criminals pumped 8 bullets in his body who died on the spot and they fled away. After that a surging crowd assembled on the spot and demonstrated against the police administration. They also burnt fire, paralysed road services and expressed their anger. The SP SitaMadhi Amit Ranjan rushed to the spot with a heavy police team. The angry mob also attacked the police team and began pelting stones on police in which a policeman injured and half dozen police vehicles were damaged even the vehicle of the SP was also torched. In this connection the SHO of Dumra PS -Mukesh Kumar and I O- Aditya Kumar were suspended. As the villagers alleged that the illegal alcohol flow would be reason behind this incident. As some anti social elements of the village locality were active in illegal trade of alcohol and the deceased man always opposed this illegal trade in the village area. As on his complain the police arrested a man in this connection yesterday but the police released him. After that the people of the village expressed their annoince and today the incident occurred. As in Bihar liquor is banned to manufacture, consume and its transpoting. Bur in several areas of Bihar this illegal trade is on under the nose of the police and other government agencies. As on the name of drive against liquor raids were conducted and at some places the illegal manufacturing units were demolished and some persons were arrested who connected with such illegal trade. As several persons were died to consume spurious liquor in Bihar in previous years. The liquor ban in Bihar was implemented in April 2016 by the former Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to curb domestic violence on the demand of women in Bihar.***

Alcohol recovered in Darbhanga***On Saturday the Excise Department conducted raid on a loaded truck in Darbhanga, Bihar and recovered huge quantity of liquor which hide under the loaded goods. As the raid team began to search the container the contraband item was found. The driver and the cleaner of of the truck were arrested and further interrogation was on in this connection. As in these days the liquor mafias have adopted this technique to transact their illegal trade. As in West Champaran and East Champaran as well as in several districts of Bihar the police have already recovered such contraband items from

loaded truck and other vehicles.***

Police Constables arrest***On Saturday two police constables were arrested from Motihari the District Headquarters of East Champaran when they were involved in collection of illegal money from the loaded trucks and other vehicles on their duty hour. They took the amount on their pay phone. As the senior officer got information about such incident, he formed a team to watch the reality and the probe team found the reality and both the constables were arrested and on the order of the SP East Champaran, (Motihari) they would be sent to jail. As after this type of action would bring a fear among the corrupt mentality police personnel who were on duty. In previous several police personnel were trapped by the senior police officers on the National Highway during duty hour to collect illegal amount from truck drivers in Bihar.***

The DM reviewed a meeting***On Saturday the District Magistrate West Champaran Taranjot Singh reviewed a meeting with the officers of the Agriculture Department regarding the welfare schemes of the government for the peasants of the district. As the DM reviewed the development work of farmers’ registration, seed distribution, availability of fertilizer, PM Samman Yojna etc.”

As the DM directed the District Agriculture Officer to monitor the stock register and the stock of fertilizer in the godowns of the stockist as well as the position of fertilizer in the shops of retailer. The black marketing of fertilizer could not be tolerated. The smugglers are active to smuggle fertilizer in the area and markets of Nepal and await opportunity so their activity must be curbed. After the GI Tag of Marcha Chuda of West Champaran the peasants should get the benefit of the GI Tag. In this monsoon season the Agriculture work is on peak point and in this season the peasants should be aware of snake bite and all the Block Agriculture officers should be aware of the stock of Anti Snake Venom in the Health Centres and hospitals of their respective areas. “For the success of farmer’s registration he directed all the Block Agriculture Officers to make Coordination with the CO of the Anchal and complete this work. As on everyday in every Block/Anchal area 100 farmer’s registration should be completed. The Hectculture Officer of the district should try to aware the peasants to show their interest in Hectculture. As a show cause notice was issued against the Pashupalan Padadhikari West Champaran because he was absent from the meeting.”

Bright High School Spearheads Eco-Friendly Ganesh Chaturthi by Distributing 1,000 Clay Ganesh Idols.



“HYDERABAD, September 12: “As part of a major initiative to promote environmental awareness and spread sustainable celebration practices, Bright High School distributed around 1,000 eco-friendly clay Ganesh idols to students and parents on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi. Organized under the aegis of the Lions Club, the event was conducted with the noble objective of making the younger generation and the general public aware of the vital need for environmental protection. “The event aimed to convey a strong message that devotion and environmental commitment can go hand in hand. By promoting the use of traditional clay idols, the organizers inspired students and parents to celebrate the festival with spiritual fervor without forgetting their responsibility toward nature. “Speaking at the ceremony, Vinod Yadav, Principal of Bright High School, along with key representatives of the Lions Club, emphasized the importance of environmental conservation and maintaining ecological equilibrium. They pointed out that societal well-being is intrinsically linked to the health of nature, emphasizing that protecting the environment is not merely a social obligation, but a shared responsibility for everyone. “The speakers expressed concern over the increasing use of plastic decorative items, non-biodegradable materials, toxic chemicals, and artificial colors during festive occasions. They clarified that immersing these materials along with idols in water bodies after celebrations causes severe environmental damage. “They noted that dumping chemicals and other pollutants into water bodies adversely affects aquatic ecosystems, birds, animals, and human health. Water pollution and the degradation of air



quality lead to severe health issues and disrupt the ecological balance. “Therefore, representatives of the Lions Club urged the public to abandon plastic items and chemical-laden idols in favor of simple, traditionally crafted clay Ganesh idols. They highlighted that clay idols are eco-friendly and significantly reduce the pollution burden on water bodies. “They stressed that environmental protection should not be confined to slogans or campaigns alone, but must become an integral part of daily life. Small decisions made by individuals and families can drive substantial positive changes for the environment. “Instilling these values in students at an early age was the primary goal of this initiative. Speakers highlighted that educational institutions play a crucial role in molding responsible citizens by integrating environmental consciousness with cultural and social values. “As part of its commitment to environmental conservation, the Lions Club has been distributing clay Ganesh idols every year. Beyond merely handing out idols, the initiative aims to spread a broader message regarding sustainability, pollution prevention, and respect for nature. “They called upon devotees to celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi with environmental consciousness, ensuring no harm is caused to nature or future generations. “School authorities and students actively participated in the distribution event. Vinod Yadav, Principal and Correspondent of the school, along with Lions Club officials, teachers, students, and parents, attended the program and expressed their support. “The event concluded with an appeal to reduce plastic usage, avoid chemicals, and opt for natural clay idols to ensure a clean and healthy environment for future generations.

RAJ JETHENDER NATH LEADS GREEN INITIATIVE AT VIJAY VIHAR ENCLAVE“



“Plantation Drive Held to Promote Greenery and a Healthier Environment”“Alwal, September 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE)““A plantation programme was organised at Vijay Vihar Enclave in Division 190, Turkapally, on Saturday in collaboration with the Residents Welfare Association (RWA) and the Congress team. The programme was aimed at promoting greenery, protecting the environment and creating a cleaner and healthier atmosphere for the residents. “Ex-Corporator Raj Jethender Nath, Machabollaram MMC, participated in the programme and led the plantation initiative. He emphasised the importance of increasing green cover in residential areas and urged residents to take responsibility for nurturing and protecting

the saplings planted in their surroundings. RWA members Naresh Reddy, Ravindar, Prasad, Nagaraju, Navaneeth, Cenanteswarlu, Krishna Rao, Bharath and others participated in the programme. Senior Congress leaders Surendar Reddy, Laddu Reddy, Anand Reddy, Bal Reddy, Rajashekar Reddy, Sampath Yadav, Srinivas, Alok Reddy, Sai Kiran, Sandeep, Venkatesh, Raghu, Deva and others also took part in the plantation drive.

The organisers stated that environmental protection and greenery would continue to remain a priority and that more such community-oriented programmes would be undertaken in the future for the welfare of residents.

Uppal Police Raid Gambling Den, Eight Arrested

Rs.15,100 Cash, 120 Playing Cards and Seven Mobile Phones Seized”“UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal police raided a gambling den in the Old Ramanthapur area under Uppal Police Station limits and arrested eight persons. Police seized Rs.15,100 in cash, 120 playing cards and seven mobile phones from the accused. “According to police, on September 11 at around 9:30 p.m., they received credible information that gambling was being conducted for money at a house in Old Ramanthapur. Acting on the information, Uppal Police Station officials, Ramanthapur area patrolling staff, Mobile-1 and Blue Colts personnel jointly reached the location and conducted a raid. “During the raid, police apprehended eight persons who were allegedly gambling for money at the house of Jellalarapu Venkatappa Rao. A search of the accused resulted in the seizure of Rs.10,100 in cash and seven mobile phones. Police also seized Rs.5,000 in table cash and 120 playing cards from the gambling den. “The arrested persons were identified as Jellalarapu Venkatappa



Rao (44), S. Hanumanayudu (61), Pola Venkata Ramana, Bhoomi Tirupati, Muniponi Naidu, Gorli Harinath, Tirupati Satish and Manapati Anjaneyulu. “Uppal police registered a case and initiated legal action against the accused.”

Eco-Friendly Ganesha Idol Making Competition Held Grandly



Students Create Ganesha Idols Using Clay and Turmeric”“Hyderabad, LB Nagar: “With the objective of encouraging creativity among students and creating aware-

ness about environmental protection, an Eco-Friendly Ganesha Idol Making Competition was organized at Aditya Degree College, LB Nagar, under the auspices of Aditya Educational Institutions, on September 12, 2026. The programme was coordinated by R. Nagendra Babu in the college campus. “Students from various classes participated enthusiastically in the competition. They showcased their creativity by making eco-friendly Ganesha idols using clay and turmeric. The idols were beautifully decorated with natural materials such as leaves and flowers. “Students of Sri Venkateswara Degree College of Commerce, under the auspices of Aditya Educational Institutions, Winners Pavani, Gayathri, vishnavi, Kalyan also actively participated in the competition. Along with displaying their artistic talents, they conveyed a strong message about protecting the environment. The best Ganesha idols were selected and the students were honoured with prizes. “Green Ganesha – A Cleaner Future”“The programme was conducted V Sunny, Siddhartha with the message “A Green Ganesha for a Cleaner, Greener Planet.” The Nss programme officers Kavya sri initiative created awareness among students about celebrating festivals in an eco-friendly manner. “College representative R. Nagendra Babu stated that using clay Ganesha idols can help reduce water pollution and emphasized that everyone has a responsibility to protect nature and preserve the environment for future generations. “The programme concluded successfully with the inspiring message: “Let us make Ganesha idols with clay, protect nature, and create a clean and healthy environment for future generations.”“— Sri Venkateswara Degree College of Commerce, LB Nagar, Hyderabad, under the auspices of Aditya Educational Institutions[

Environmental Protection Is Everyone’s Responsibility

BRS STATE LEADER BANNALA PRAVEEN MUDIRAJ***Distribution of Clay Ganesh Idols in Jahid



Nagar Colony”“UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A clay Ganesh idol distribution programme was organised by the Jahid Nagar Welfare Association in Jahid Nagar Colony of Beerappa Gadda Division. BRS party state leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj attended the programme as the chief guest and distributed clay Ganesh

idols to colony residents. “Speaking on the occasion, Bannala Praveen Mudiraj said that environmental protection and pollution prevention are the responsibility of every individual. He urged people to install and worship eco-friendly clay Ganesh idols and called upon everyone to participate in environmental conservation efforts. “He said that immersion of Plaster of Paris idols could pollute water bodies, while the use of clay idols would help protect the environment. He appealed to people to promote clay Ganesh idols to preserve tradition while safeguarding nature. “He also urged youth, women, Ganesha festival committees and colony welfare associations to actively participate in eco-friendly Ganesh celebrations. Jahid Nagar Welfare Association members Sunil Kumar, Farooq, Srikanth Reddy, Tirupati Reddy, Narender Naik, Meenesh, Srikanth Goud, Mubeeb Meeraj, Raj Kumar, Padmaja, Prasannalakshmi and Santoshi, along with Ganesh festival organisers, BRS party leaders, colony residents and devotees, participated in the programme in large numbers.

The story of Mahatta, one of Delhi’s oldest surviving studios



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

From studio portraits to selfies, glass plate negatives to generative artificial intelligence, one of Delhi’s oldest surviving photo studios has witnessed a revolution in photography and retained its penchant for freezing memories for more than seven decades. ‘Mahatta & Co.’ says the sign outside the studio on the first floor in M Block of Connaught Place. The studio opened in 1948, even though the family started the business, now in its fourth generation, in Jammu and Kashmir in 1915. There’s a black-and-white picture in the studio of some Europeans standing in line. “It was taken near our shop in Srinagar in the early 1940s during World War II when we sold only one roll [of film] per person in order to prevent hoarding and black marketing,” 67-year-old Pavan Mehta, grandson of the studio’s founder Amar Nath Mehta, said.

His grandfather, Pavan Mehta said, fled the family’s home in Gurdaspur as a young man after a property dispute led to the deaths of his parents. Amar Nath landed up in Dalhousie, in today’s Chamba district, where some Army personnel introduced him to photography. “The British could not pronounce ‘Mehta’, and our family name got corrupted to ‘Mahatta,’” Pavan said. In 1915, Amar Nath opened a first-of-its-kind shop in Srinagar on a houseboat on the Jhelum river. The business expanded rapidly to Gulmarg and Pahalgam in Kashmir, and then to Rawalpindi and Murree, which are now part of Pakistan. In 1921, the Mehtas became the only sales agents of Kodak, the American photography and photographic film company, in the region. Pavan recalled that one of their outlets in J&K had a board

that said “Opticians”. His younger brother Pankaj (62) explained that “a lot of photo studios at the time also dealt in lenses, and thus acted as opticians”. Before Partition, the Mehtas were also the official photographers to Hari Singh, the last Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. After India became independent, the family shut down their studios in Pakistan. In 1948, Amar Nath opened the Mahattas’ studio and store in Connaught Place. The business has remained in the Capital ever since, bearing witness to and chronicling the immense changes that the city has gone through over the last many decades. Much of the story they captured in their cameras evolved organically; the pictures were never commissioned. “It was a question of being alert and capturing what was exciting to the eye,” Pavan said. So when he shot a picture of a public phone booth in CP, “I did not know that it was going to vanish one day.” And when Madan Mahatta, Pavan’s father, took a photograph of a flooded CP in 1970 from the window of his shop, he could not have imagined how the shopping district would look more than a half century later. Indeed, the studio has seen photography move from black-and-white to colour, from slide-film processing to digital pictures. It is home to vintage wooden and glass plate cameras that were used in the 1950s.

Pavan has a personal collection of almost 900 cameras. Each has a story, and a story of the way it came to him. Pavan recalled especially his long, determined, and sometimes frustrating wait for a pocket watch-shaped antique “Expo Watch Camera” that had taken him more than two years and two attempts to procure from the United States. This [passion for seeking out vintage cameras] runs in the family,” Arjun, Pavan’s 37-year-old son who too is a photographer, said. “Two years ago, while on a visit to Thailand, we visited this camera warehouse, which we had found on Instagram. We spent six hours there looking for cameras,” Arjun said. The Mehtas believe that patience, commitment, and the willingness to adapt to technological changes without sacrificing the fundamentals of the business has helped the studio negotiate a century of changes. “Photography is about being at the right place at the right time,” Pankaj said. “When we started out with taking photos, we had to create a frame in our head before capturing a shot...unlike today.”

Iran President Masoud Pezeshkian arrives in Delhi for BRICS Summit

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

New Delhi: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian arrived in New Delhi on Friday to attend the 18th BRICS Summit. He was warmly received at the airport by Union Minister of State Shantanu Thakur. Extending a warm welcome to the Iranian President, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) took to X and posted: “India and Iran share civilizational ties, marked by robust cultural and people-to-people bonds. As BRICS partners, the two countries are working to contribute to shared progress and prosperity.” As BRICS chair in 2026, India will host the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi on September 12-13, bringing together leaders of BRICS member countries, partner countries and outreach invitees. BRICS comprises Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates. BRICS partner countries are Belarus, Cuba, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. Earlier this week, confirming Pezeshkian’s visit, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Bageai said that India and Iran share a “long-standing, historic and civilisational relationship”.

He stressed that Tehran would use the BRICS Summit to pursue further discussions with New Delhi on areas of mutual interest. “India is a member of both the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and BRICS. It is also one of the countries with which we have good relations in various areas, particularly trade and economic cooperation,” the Iranian semi-official Mehr news agency quoted Bageai as saying. “Various issues are usually discussed during consultations between Iran and India, including the Chabahar Port, which is important to both countries,” he said.



emphasising that Iran’s ties with India “continue to develop”. Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said leaders from across the world would gather in New Delhi over the next few days for the BRICS Summit, expressing confidence that the high-level meeting would witness positive and meaningful discussions on various issues with the welfare of the world in mind. “Over the next few days, leaders from around the world will gather for the BRICS Summit. I am confident that the Summit will see positive and meaningful discussions on various issues with the welfare of the world in mind,” PM Modi said in a post on X. Last month, Prime Minister Modi and Pezeshkian held a meeting on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Kyrgyzstan’s Bishkek, reiterating their commitment to strengthening bilateral ties across various sectors. The two leaders reviewed recent developments in the West Asia region, with PM Modi reiterating India’s stance that all issues must be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy, according to the MEA.

Sensex, Nifty rebound in early trade after 3-day slide; bank stocks lead recovery



EMS News Agency, Sept 4

Mumbai: Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded in early trade on Thursday after three sessions of losses, helped by buying in blue-chip bank stocks and a firm trend in global markets. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 334.16 points, or 0.44 per cent, to 76,904.51 in morning trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty advanced 95.45 points to 24,009.90. Tata Steel, Adani Ports, Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, HDFC Bank, Power Grid, Eternal, Larsen & Toubro, Bharti Airtel and UltraTech Cement were among the major gainers from the Sensex pack. Tech Mahindra, HCL Technologies, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finance, Titan, IndiGo, Sun Pharmaceuticals and ITC were among the laggards. Analysts said market sentiment was also supported by easing US bond yields and record foreign-currency deposit inflows under a special RBI programme aimed at strengthening foreign-exchange liquidity. “The market sentiment is likely to look up on Thursday following the slight easing of the US bond yields. A big positive from the rupee perspective is the huge mobilisation of USD 136 billion under concessional swap facility. “The USD 127 billion mobilised under the FCNR(B) scheme has come way above the consensus estimates. The implication of this from the market perspective is that the rupee will stabilise, imparting confidence to FIIs,” said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments Ltd. India mobilised a record USD 127.23 billion

through foreign-currency deposits under a special central-bank programme aimed at bolstering the country’s foreign-exchange liquidity, underscoring the growing role of its overseas diaspora as a buffer during periods of market stress. Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank), or FCNR(B) deposits accounted for USD 127.226 billion in inflows as of August 31, the Reserve Bank of India said on Wednesday. Meanwhile, Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 6,688.37 crore on Wednesday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) also purchased shares worth Rs 2,812.98 crore, according to exchange data. Vijayakumar noted that an interesting feature of Wednesday’s market decline is that the 141-point dip in Nifty happened despite Rs 9,500 crore of institutional buying, with FIIs buy figure of Rs 6,688 crore and DII buy figure of Rs 2,812 crore. “So, it is obvious that the brunt of the selling came from retail investors, proprietary traders and bears who used the market weakness to hammer the stocks down. This is likely to reverse on Thursday,” he added. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, slipped 0.17 per cent at USD 95.47 a barrel. In Asian markets, South Korea’s Kospi, Shanghai’s SSE Composite index, and Japan’s Nikkei 225 index traded higher, while Hong Kong’s Hang Seng index quoted lower.

NNRG’s ECE department gets NBA Tier-I accreditation

Hyderabad: Nalla Narasimha Reddy Education Society’s Group of Institutions announced that its Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering (ECE) has been accredited by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) under Tier-I for a period of three years, from January 2026 to December 31, 2028. On this occasion, Nalla Narasimha Reddy, Chairman, NNRG, and Dr C V Krishna Reddy, Director, NNRG, congratulated the Head of the Department, faculty members, technical staff and students of the ECE Department on achieving this prestigious milestone.

10 questions that made Bombay High Court seek a fresh CBI probe



Disha Salian death, Bombay High Court, Breaking news, latest news, top news today, Satish Salian, top news, big news break, indian express, india news, world news, disha salian CBI probe, CBI probe disha salian case, disha salian death case, disha salian suicide case, disha salian news, disha salian death news, disha salian sushant singh rajpurln 2022, Satish Salian had alleged that politicians were maligning his daughter’s name by raising questions over the circumstances surrounding her death (Express Photo by Akash Patil)A spot panchnama conducted more than nine hours after Disha Salian’s death, police officers seen at the building before the death was officially recorded, unexplained discrepancies in the accidental death report and forensic samples, and the delayed seizure of her phone and laptop were among 10 circumstances that the Bombay High Court on Wednesday said raised “reasonable suspicions” and required a fresh probe. While directing the CBI to register an FIR and investigate the June 2020 death of Salian, former manager of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, a bench of Justices Sarang V Kotwal and Ranjitsinha R Bhonsale said the Mumbai Police investigation “raises more questions than it answers”.

The court stressed that these observations were made only while deciding whether an FIR and fresh investigation were warranted, and directed the CBI to investigate the case independently “in all aspects”. Police reached the spot “very shortly after the incident”, but the panchnama was conducted more than nine hours later. The HC said the delay, particularly in view of indications that police suspected foul play, and “quite significant” events prior to registration of ADR remained unexplained and raised “reasonable suspicion” about the initial investigation.

2. ADR timing questionedThe death occurred at 2.25 am on June 9, while the ADR was registered at 3.07 am. Yet the ADR referred to her parents’ statements saying they

had no suspicion, although her father reached the hospital only around 4 am. The HC said it was unexplained how his statement could have been referred to in the earlier ADR.3. Police presence before death recordedCCTV showed police personnel at the building between 1 am and 2.14 am. The HC found no explanation in the ADR or subsequent investigation about why they were there, who they were or what they did.4. Blood evidence not explainedTwo witnesses in ‘important’ statements said Salian had fallen on her face and blood was oozing from her head. Yet police did not collect blood-stained soil, while they recorded no bleeding injury to the head except an injury to the chin.

5. Injuries raised questionsThe HC found it “difficult to accept” that a fall from the 12th floor onto the face resulted in only a chin injury, with no fracture to the face, nose or jaw, despite skull and rib fractures. It said the issue would require expert assessment.6. Chemical analyser flagged ‘less blood’An Assistant Chemical Analyzer told police that articles from such a fall would be expected to contain more blood. But when the articles were opened, there was “less blood”. The HC noted that police themselves appeared unsure why Salian’s clothes had less blood when they questioned the postmortem doctor.7. No damage to doorA witness said Salian had locked herself in a bedroom and the door was forced open. But the spot panchnama recorded no damage to the door or lock, which the HC found unexplained.

8. FSL samples did not match report

The postmortem report referred to specific swab samples, but the envelopes sent to the FSL contained slide smears. Doctors attributed this to a clerical error, but the HC called the discrepancy a “glaring feature”.9. Questions over seizure records

The HC questioned why police asked the postmortem doctor about the condition in which Salian was brought if police were already aware that her clothes had been seized. “Then there was no occasion to ask the doctor,” it said.10. Phone, laptop seized eight days laterThe court said Salian’s mobile phone and laptop were “important” evidence but were not seized during the June 9 spot panchnama. They were seized only on June 17 from her friend’s custody. The HC said the circumstances, taken together, warranted registration of an FIR and a fresh investigation, particularly to ensure that evidence was not destroyed or lost with the passage of time. However, it cautioned against treating its observations as findings against any individual. The CBI, it said, must determine during its investigation whether there are sufficient grounds to raise suspicion against anyone and whether an offence was committed.

Gujarat temple protest art form strives for survival

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

WHEN HE was young, Om Chitara would come home from school to see his father Kiranbhai and other family members busy in dyeing, drawing and filling colour on fabric in a section of their home that doubled as a studio. They would create pieces of art that would be revered and worshipped. At 10 years, he learnt the art himself and now, 22-year-old Om Chitara – a ninth-generation artist – is among those keeping the dwindling art of Mata ni Pachhedi alive. Literally translating to ‘Behind the Mother Goddess’, Mata ni Pachhedi is a ritual textile painted with Goddess Durga as the central theme. Mastered by the Chitaras, a community of Devipujaks (earlier called Vaghri), it started as a form of protest over 300 years ago, when the community was not allowed inside certain temples. The community largely resides in Ahmedabad and around it. Om says the tradition took shape across different periods for different reasons: during times of conflict and temple destruction, the cloth offered a portable form of worship; later, caste barriers made it an alternative for communities denied entry into temples.



Mata ni Pachhedi, Mata ni Pachhedi art. Mata ni Pachhedi art form, Ahmedabad community sacred art form, Ahmedabad community sacred art form Mata ni Pachhedi, Ahmedabad news, Gujarat news, Indian express, current affairs Om says the tradition took shape across different periods for different reasons: during times of conflict and temple destruction, the cloth offered a portable form of worship; later, caste barriers made it an alternative for communities denied entry into temples. At their home in the Vasna area of Ahmedabad, the upper floor has a studio. “Our home serves as both our living space and our sanctuary for preserving Mata ni Pachhedi. Around 40 artisans in our community work together to keep this heritage alive, led by four senior craftsmen, including myself,” says Om. The studio has unleached fabric laid out to dry, earthen pots containing organic dyes made of indigo, henna and wild turmeric. Using specialised bamboo ‘kalam pens’ they draw on the fabric much like the kalamkari form of art used in clothing textile. Traditionally, our art relied purely on deep red derived from alum and tamarind seed paste; Black extracted from iron rust fermented with jaggery and water. We expanded our palette to use natural ingredients,” says Om. Om describes his training as having begun from paper before moving on to cloth. His father, Kiranbhai Chitara, won the national award in 2005. In 2023, the Mata ni Pachhedi got a Geographical Indication tag and in 2025 another artist Bhanubhai Chitara got a Padma Shri. Creating a piece measuring 2x2 feet takes up to two-and-a-half months. “The most time-consuming phase is the freehand drawing and line detailing using sharp bamboo sticks, followed by multiple rounds of mordanting, boiling in madder root and sundrying along the riverbanks,” says Om. The final stage is boiling. Dhavdi (flame of forest) flowers and alizarin are used to fix the colours onto the fabric. The process leaves little room for error. “If a problem crops up during washing, the whole painting gets ruined; if colour turns out bad, the painting gets ruined; if the cloth isn’t treated properly, the colour will spread,” Om says. He is eager to keep the art alive. “If we don’t make efforts, who will do so? This art will vanish completely,” he says. Although it is part of their livelihood, there is no fixed monthly production as each size of artwork decides its timeline. During the Covid-19 pandemic, when tourists stopped coming to the workshop, the family relied partly on online support. Ganga Kadakia, an artist and founder of Art Village in Karjat on Mumbai’s outskirts, has been exhibiting Chitara’s works after she first met Kiran Chitara around seven years ago when she brought him to school programmes to introduce students to indigenous art forms and commissioned projects for home interiors. “The way the art form is represented can determine whether audiences see it simply as an attractive object or understand the knowledge system behind it,” she says. She was particularly struck by the younger audiences who did not necessarily identify strongly with its religious associations but connected with the animals, fish, trees and other ele-

‘Mata ni Pachhedi’ is a ritual textile painted with Goddess Durga as the central theme. Mastered by the Chitaras, a community of Devipujaks (earlier called Vaghri), it started as a form of protest over 300 years ago, when the community was not allowed inside certain temples. The community largely resides in and around Ahmedabad

ments of nature represented in the artwork. Mata ni Pachhedi is also known as Chandarvo and Dhoti. According to Om, the craft served several purposes over time. During periods when communities were forced to move or when temples were destroyed, a temple could not simply be transported. A cloth could be folded, carried and put up again wherever the community found a safe place. Later, caste restrictions gave the cloth another significance. Chitara says members of his community were not permitted to enter certain temples. “So they also accepted the pachhedi, thinking, ‘Fine, if we can’t go to the temple, we will put this up at home’. We will pray to it in the village itself,” he says. And because each Goddess came with her own stories, the artwork became a way of preserving those stories too. The many forms of goddesses are known by their vehicles: Khodiyar Mata is associated with a crocodile, Meladi Mata with a goat, while Shetrunji Maa, the Goddess worshipped by Om’s community, is depicted with an elephant. The colours, too, carry meaning. Traditionally, Om says, Mata Ni Pachhedi was dominated by three colours: red, black and white. Red represented the Goddess, black was associated with protection from evil powers, and white represented good. Other colours were introduced later, as the craft evolved. Om says people from villages still come to buy Chandarvo and Mata Ni Pachedi for worship, while hand-drawn pieces are also bought as wall art and gifts. The difference between the two forms is significant. A block-printed piece can take around 15 days. A similarly sized hand-drawn piece can take a year and a half or more. Om says block-printed works sell for around Rs 40,000–750,000, while large hand-drawn pieces can sell for around Rs 4–4.5 lakh, depending on the artwork. The family has also adapted the imagery. Contemporary elements such as the Tree of Life have been incorporated into some works, responding to changing preferences while retaining the core visual language of the craft. Artificial intelligence or machines may be able to recreate a design, he says, but they cannot easily replicate the knowledge behind the process. “This isn’t just drawing. There is an entire process behind it,” he says. The family’s most immediate challenge, however, is the limitations of space. A large commission such as a seven-metre saree can occupy an entire space, leaving little room for other artists. When individual pieces take months or even a year to complete, production is inevitably limited. During winter, Om says, around 20–25 tourists can visit the workshop in a day to see the process, learn about the craft and buy the artwork.

Delhi gets BRICS makeover as India hosts Putin, Xi, Pezeshkian for Summit



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Delhi has got a BRICS makeover, with illuminated roundabouts, floral displays, freshly landscaped roads and summit-themed signage transforming key stretches of the capital ahead of the 18th BRICS Leaders' Summit. India is hosting the summit on September 12 and 13 as chair of the grouping, and the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has undertaken an extensive beautification drive across the city, particularly along routes connecting the airport and designated hotels to Bharat Mandapam, the summit venue. Several prominent locations, including Patel Chowk, Windsor Place, Mandi House, Teen Murti, Lok Kalyan Metro Station and the PMO roundabout, have been lit up with deco-

orative lighting. The NDMC has also installed LED signages carrying the BRICS Summit logo and put up summit-themed posters on street-light poles along key routes. The beautification drive includes more than 15,000 potted ornamental plants placed at prominent locations across New Delhi. Seventeen major roundabouts, at least a dozen hotel premises and 10 prominent NDMC buildings are being illuminated as part of the preparations, officials told PTI. Floral boards are being installed at 15 locations and floral fountains at nine others. Landscaping, plantation, pruning and trimming of hedges and shrubs have also been intensified along major avenues and VIP routes. The BRICS Friendship Rose Garden in Chanakyapuri has also received attention as part of the preparations. The garden was established in 2016, when India last hosted the BRICS summit, and has 107 varieties of roses. Beyond beautification, civic agencies have also stepped up cleaning and sanitation work across areas linked to the summit. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi and the Public Works Department have carried out joint inspections of key locations, including Bharat Mandapam, Sarai Kale Khan, Lodhi Road, Nizamuddin, Saket and Sheikh Sarai. Officials have been directed to intensify sanitation and cleaning operations and ensure adequate deployment of workers and machinery along identified routes and other important locations.

‘Knew what would happen’: Gurgaon sealing drive extends to Sushant Lok, South City



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

A residential home with rooms carved into its parking area, a guest house spread across two plots, four-storey houses operating as commercial lodgings: Several properties in two of Gurgaon's well-known colonies were sealed by the Department of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) on Thursday. The enforcement wing of the DTCP continued its crackdown on illegal constructions in residential areas, this time in Sushant Lok-1 Block A and South City-1. The drive targeted paying guest (PG) accommodations, unauthorised guest houses, commercial establishments and rooms built illegally in stilt parking areas. Action in Sushant Lok Among the properties sealed in Sushant Lok was a PG functioning out of A-589. By Thursday, only rubble and the remains of desks and walls were left on its ground floor. A poster outside warned that an FIR would be registered if the seals and locks were tampered with.

The building had been cleared after residents were informed and given notices last month. An official of the property, who was there to collect some documents after the drive, said: "We knew what would happen and that we had no other choice. All the videos going viral online of the drive showed the authorities do not listen to us." He said they catered to students and young people who start earning. "We were given a notice but can we find a new livelihood for all those we employed so fast?" The ongoing drive follows recent directions from the Punjab and Haryana High Court and the Supreme Court against illegal commercial activities and unauthorised constructions in private licensed colonies. According to officials, a recent department survey found widespread violations across nearly 90% of surveyed properties in these sectors. In Blocks A and C, enforcement teams specifically targeted illegal constructions in stilt parking areas, using earthmovers and manual labour to tear

down brick partitions and UPVC door-window assemblies used to divide the spaces into rental quarters, as well as offices built there.

By the end of the drive, rubble and broken masonry lay stacked in driveways. "Stilt parking is strictly sanctioned for vehicle parking. Constructing rooms, offices, or toilets in these spaces is a direct violation of approved building plans," said District Town Planner (Enforcement) Amit Madholia, who led the operations in the locality. A 36-room guest house created by combining two residential plots was also sealed.

"Owners were served prior show-cause notices and restoration orders. As they failed to restore the properties to their sanctioned state, enforcement action was initiated," Madholia added. A paying guest accommodation that was sealed Thursday along with its illegal stilt office being demolished at A Block of Sushant Lok. (Express Photo) A paying guest accommodation that was sealed Thursday along with its illegal stilt office being demolished at A Block of Sushant Lok. In South City 1, the enforcement team led by Assistant Town Planner (ATP) Divya Dahiya sealed several residential buildings operating as commercial hubs: a 20-room hotel; three separate guest houses; PG accommodations comprising 32, 39, and 27 rooms; and ground-floor brokerage and corporate offices in Block B. "After the way monsoons hit the sector this time, residents were unsparing in terms of wanting properties like ours to shut," said a guesthouse operator in South City whose stilt office was demolished and certain rooms were sealed. "We have accommodated tenants in hotels as of now; we had moved them after we got the notice last week."

The operation also focused on entry-point sealing. Several four-storey homes operating as commercial lodgings were vacated, locked, and secured with departmental chains. Red DTCP sealing notices were affixed to boundary pillars and main gates, warning that tampering with the seals would invite criminal proceedings under the Haryana Development and Regulation of Urban Areas Act. Local residents' welfare associations have welcomed the action, citing severe pressure on local water supply, sewer lines, and internal roads caused by high-density PGs. DTCP officials reiterated that the drive will continue across other licensed colonies over the coming weeks, warning that persistent non-compliance will lead to the cancellation of occupation certificates and recommendations to disconnect power and water utilities.

also argued that one of the accused had downloaded 'objectionable' books and there was a possibility that the accused had links with Maoist organisations in Bangladesh. Lawyer Vijay Hiremath, representing the student, had then argued that the literature found with him was not banned and did not amount to any anti-national activity. "...prima facie (there is) no material to connect the accused with the mindset of Maoist...merely because of finding of PDF books the inference of connection with the mindset of Maoist cannot be drawn," the court said. The FIR, which mentioned nine persons, stated that between 7:30-8:30 pm, around 10-12 students paid homage to Saibaba at the Deonar campus without permission.

ASHA workers detained near Telangana Assembly over pay demands

Hyderabad: Several ASHA workers were taken into custody by the police near the Telangana Legislative Assembly on Friday when they attempted to stage a protest demanding revision of their pay and implementation of long-pending assurances. The workers were stopped by the police as they tried to proceed towards the Assembly in small groups and were subsequently shifted to a police station.

The ASHA workers have been demanding a fixed monthly salary of Rs 18,000, besides job security and PF and ESI benefits. The demand for a fixed honorarium has been a longstanding issue, with the workers repeatedly holding protests in Hyderabad and other parts of Telangana. The latest protest comes days after thousands of ASHA workers participated in a 'Chalo Assembly' agitation in Hyderabad on September 8. Several workers and union leaders were detained during the protest as police attempted to disperse the gathering. The unions have accused the State government of failing to fulfil its assurances and warned of intensifying their agitation if their demands are not addressed before the conclusion of the ongoing Assembly session.

Bengal Congress man arrested for burning of Bageshwar Baba posters



Baba Bageshwar On September 8, Congress leaders in West Bengal protested against the Baba Bageshwar (left), who had appealed to people in the statenot to cook or eat fish or meat during Durga Puja festivities. A Congress leader in Bengal who had filed a police complaint against Bageshwar Dham's Dharendra Shastri over his remarks against non-veg during Durga Puja was arrested in Kolkata, hours after Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari spoke about tough action against those who burnt the religious leader's photos during protests. Atanu Das, Congress Kolkata general secretary, was arrested around midnight on Thursday. On September 8, Das and others protested against the priest, popularly called Bageshwar Baba, who had appealed to people in West Bengal not to cook or eat fish or meat during Durga Puja festivities. They had also lodged a police complaint against Shastri. The police raided Das' house in South Kolkata and arrested him. Das has been booked for promoting hatred between different religious groups and hurting religious sentiments, and is scheduled to be produced before the court on Friday. On Thursday, CM Adhikari directed the Kolkata police commissioner to arrest those who allegedly burnt the photos of Shastri.

West Bengal Congress chief Subhankar Sarkar told The Indian Express that the arrest reflected the government's arbitrary Tughlaqian mindset. "The so-called Baba insulted our religious practices, hurt Bengali sentiments by his statements. Congress leaders and workers protested against this and demanded his arrest. Now instead of arresting him, the police are arresting Congress leaders. This is a Tughlaqi government." He said the government will hold statewide agitation against the Baba and burn him in effigy. "How can the chief minister of a state talk about arrest in the Assembly and within hours our leader is picked up from his home? There are laws," added Sarkar.

"See the double face of the BJP. A number of its own leaders and ministers had condemned the baba for his remarks," added Sarkar, referring to the senior BJP leaders and ministers' comments that Bengalis would eat what they always have. BJP state president Samik Bhattacharya had said, "On Ashtami (the eighth day of festivities), Bengalis eat luchi, and on Navami, Bengalis eat mutton. So, they will keep eating that". Shastri sparked controversy after urging people to refrain from cooking or consuming fish and meat during Durga Puja, calling those who ignored the appeal "pakhandi" (fraud). His remarks triggered widespread anger and protests across the state, with many objecting to what they described as an attack on Bengali identity and culture. CM Adhikari on Thursday evening visited Kalighat and had fish offered to the goddess. "A 'Sant' (devout) has given an opinion. Those who wish to accept can — those who do not wish don't. During Ashtami I eat veg; also I have fish which is offered to the goddess as Bhog," the chief minister had said. The chief minister said that burning anyone's photos to express their opinion will not be tolerated. "I saw how many people burned pictures in front of the police station in Bhavanipur. I am telling the CP from here that those people must be arrested. This will not happen in this state."

14 dead in two separate accidents in Maharashtra's Nanded, Bhandara



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

At least 14 people were killed and nine injured in two separate road accidents in Nanded and Bhandara districts of Maharashtra, with both crashes involving heavy vehicles. In Nanded, six people were killed and five injured after a Tata Magic passenger vehicle collided head-on with a truck at Sitakhadi Ghat on the Nanded-Bhokar road. The injured were taken to hospitals in Bhokar and Nanded. In

Bhandara, eight people, including three children, were killed and four seriously injured after a pickup vehicle carrying workers collided with a truck on the Nagpur-Raipur National Highway near Pimpalgaon in Lakhni taluka. The accident took place near Pimpalgaon in Lakhni taluka on Lakhni Sakoli Highway, near the Motghare petrol pump and a roadside dhaba. According to preliminary information, the pickup van was carrying labourers from Chhattisgarh who were travelling towards Nagpur. District Disaster Management Officials said the driver of the pickup van may have dozed off, following which the vehicle rammed into the rear of the truck. The impact was so severe that the pickup van had to be separated from the truck with the help of a JCB. Eight occupants of the pickup van died on the spot. While four patients have been referred to Government Medical College in Nagpur, one patient has been admitted to a hospital in Bhandara, and three more are being referred to Nagpur, officials said. Residents, police personnel, and emergency responders rushed to the spot after receiving information about the accident. The bodies were removed from the mangled vehicle, and further procedures are underway.

40 metres below Malad Creek – Mumbai's Rs 5,821-crore tunnel takes shape

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Nearly 40 metres below the Malad Creek, Poisar River and mangrove patches, Mumbai is set to carve out a 3.9-km twin-tunnel corridor linking Mindspace in Malad West to Charkop in Kandivali. The Rs 5,821-crore tunnel package, a key part of the 22-km Versova-Bhayander Coastal Road, is expected to enter the mining phase early next year and be operational by 2029. The underground route is aimed at easing the western suburbs' dependence on the Western Express Highway, Link Road and SV Road, while allowing the coastal road to pass through an ecologically sensitive stretch without cutting trees or disturbing mangroves.

Significance of the project At present, North-South connectivity in the western suburbs is dependent on the Western Express Highway (WEH), Link Road and SV Road. Considering the increasing vehicular density, the coastal road is expected to take off the load from the existing roads, providing an alternate route for seamless connectivity. Features of the tunnels Out of the total 3.9 KM length, around 3 KM of this tunnel will be cylindrical in shape, to be constructed by mining through a Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM), and is set to have a diameter of 14.2 meters.

Coastal Road -- Tunnel Alignment Each tunnel will have three lanes for vehicular movement, along with five cross passages (Express photo) The cylindrical portion of the tunnels will pass beneath the Poisar River and Creeks. The remaining portion of the tunnels will be rectangular in shape and 700 meters long. Each tunnel will have three lanes for vehicular movement, along with five cross passages, built as a precautionary measure against emergency situations. The width of the tunnels will vary between 36 meters and 45 meters. Civic officials maintained that the tunnels will be equipped with a modern-day fire and accident prevention system, along with ventilation facilities and heat sensors.

Why a tunnel? The area through which this tunnel will pass is an ecologically sensitive zone (ESZ) having man-



grove patches and water bodies. The BMC has maintained that the reason the tunnel is chosen is to ensure that the mangroves don't get damaged and the process also doesn't require cutting of any trees. Cost and timeline The total cost of this project has been pegged at 20,000 crore, of which Rs 5,821 crore has been earmarked for constructing the twin tunnels. The mining for the tunnels is set to begin in early 2027, and the tunnels are likely to become operational by 2029.

Administration speaks "Considering the tunnels will pass below mangrove patches, rivers and creeks, we can say that this will be Mumbai's first vehicular tunnels that will pass underneath water bodies. We are eyeing a 2029 deadline for the coastal road project, and once operational, travel time between Versova and Bhayander will take less than 20 minutes, which now takes more than an hour," Abhijit Bangar, additional municipal commissioner (Projects). The tunnels will be part of the Mumbai Coastal Road Project (Phase II). This 22 km-long high-speed corridor being built by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is set to connect Versova with Bhayander in the northern end of Mumbai. As part of this project, a 3.9 KM stretch between Mindspace and Charkop will be connected through these underwater tunnels.

Medak farmer attempts suicide, alleges rivals influenced police to file false case

Medak: Accusing the police of filing a false case against him, a farmer attempted suicide by consuming a pesticide while shooting a selfie video at Konthanpally in Shivvampet mandal on Thursday.

The farmer Chelli Naveen accused Chelli Lakshman and his wife Mounika of filing false cases against him and his two sons Vishnuvardhan and Harshavardhan. However, Naveen said they just tried to calm down Lakshman and Chelli Anjaneyulu while they both were quarrelling over some land issue in the village recently.

Taking it as an opportunity, Naveen alleged that Lakshman influenced the police to file a case against them. After tracing Naveen near an agriculture field in the village, the villagers rushed him to a local hospital. Later, he was



taken to a corporate hospital in Hyderabad for better treatment. His condition is said to be critical. The police registered a case and the probe was on.

‘12,000 Rajiv Gandhis’, Vaghela’s 2027 push and Congress strategy



Welcome to Gujarat Confidential, your inside track to the power corridors of the state. Today: From the CEC’s SIR remark and Shankersinh Vaghela’s electoral push to Congress’s Gujarat strategy and Surat’s plastic-for-Ganesha-idol drive.Responding to a question on whether complaints regarding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) would be resolved before the next Lok Sabha elections, Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, in his first public address in Gujarat, said, “Do you know how many Rajiv Gandhis would be there in my electoral database? Not less than 12,000.” Sitting in the front rows in the audience was another Rajiv Gandhi, who is the MD and CEO of Hester Biosciences and President of the Ahmedabad Management Association. He was also the host of the event.

Shankersinh Vaghela’s PushVIEWING THE 2027 Assembly election as a last ditch effort, former Gujarat chief minister Shankersinh Vaghela announced an “aggressive campaign” to reactivate the Praja Shakti Party, which he launched, starting October 2. The 86-year-old Vaghela told The Indian Express, “This 2027 Assembly election is my last chance. I don’t think I can be as active later. And I want

to do my bit to fight against the BJP”. Vaghela convened a meeting at his residence in Gandhinagar on Sunday which, according to him, was attended by “over 500 people” in support of his outfit. “I did reach out to (Congress president) Mallikarjun Kharge and (former general secretary in charge of Gujarat) Mukul Wasnik around six months back, but there is no response from them yet. It is not for joining the Congress but to ally with it to fight against the BJP. We kept quiet for all this time because every time we would contest, we were blamed for dividing Opposition votes. But now there is hardly any time left,” said Vaghela.

‘Strategic’ VisitRANDEEP SURJEWALA, the newly appointed AICC general secretary in-charge of Gujarat, will visit the state on September 12. His trip here will coincide with the ongoing Gujarat visit of the BJP’s new Gujarat in-charge, Tarun Chugh. Sources say the Congress has planned a “centrally strategised” plan for the 2027 Assembly elections, given the deep differences within the party’s state unit.

Shunning PlasticAS PART of environmental conservation efforts, the Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) has started a drive under which citizens can give one kilogram of plastic waste and get an idol of Lord Ganesha from collection centres at nine of its zones. The campaign has received an enthusiastic response from the people, officials said. The SMC’s Health Committee chairman, Ashok Randeriya, said that since the launch of the drive, in the past seven days, over 1,200 kg of plastic waste has been collected and 750 idols of Lord Ganesha, made of mud, were given to the people. “Keeping in mind more demands from the public, we ordered 500 more such idols and these will reach us in the next few days. Through such an initiative, we want to cultivate a habit among citizens not to use plastic material in day-to-day life,” Randeriya added.

Lilac for women teachers, blue for men; students to get green uniforms

Himachal Pradesh on Thursday approved a new colour theme for 158 government schools newly brought under the CBSE curriculum, with the uniform and building colours drawing inspiration from the state’s green cover and forest landscape.Green uniforms for students, lilac for women teachers and light blue for men — the schools are set for a makeover in appearance as well as in attire. The school buildings will be painted in olive green and sand beige shades.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the state Education Department chaired by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu. A senior officer said a letter was issued in this regard on Thursday.Education Secretary Rakesh Kanwar told The Indian Express, “Green for the students’ uniform and the school buildings was chosen to reflect the green cover and forest cover of Himachal Pradesh. Our state is known for its greenery, dense forests, flora and fauna.”

Kanwar said all the teachers in 158 schools will adopt the new dress code from the 2026-27 academic session. Students, however, will switch to the green-themed uniform from the next academic session.According to broader guidelines discussed in the meeting, teachers’ uniforms will be expected to be formal, modest and professional, with minimal accessories. They will also be required to wear their identity cards while on duty.Education department officials said teachers’ uniforms are not limited to 158 schools.

A senior official said, “Earlier this year, the department

asked all around 6,000 government schools in the state to select a dress code for their teaching staff. While the process is still underway, teachers in the 158 CBSE-affiliated government schools have opted for light lilac-purple for women teachers and light blue shirts and trousers for men teachers.”At the meeting, Sukhu said the government was committed to providing quality education and ensuring better educational facilities for students closer to their homes. “The state has already released Rs 80 crore for developing the required infrastructure in the CBSE schools and strengthening facilities for students and teachers. An additional Rs 5 crore will also be released to improve the educational environment in these institutions further.”Approximately 5,100 teachers in the 158 CBSE-affiliated government schools will be instructed to follow the decided dress code from October 1.Additional Director (Education) Jeevan Singh Negi said, “We have decided to provide financial assistance of Rs 5,000 to the teachers in the CBSE-affiliated government schools for purchasing the dress.... A file was moved to the finance department for further sanction.”MLAs Suresh Kumar, Chander Shekhar and Neeraj Nayyar, Member of the Himachal Pradesh Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Commission Vijay Pal Singh, Education Secretary Rakesh Kanwar, Director of School Education Ashish Kohli and other senior officers were present at the meeting.Kangra has the highest number of government schools brought under the CBSE curriculum, with 29 schools; followed by Shimla with 25, Mandi with 19, and Hamirpur with 18 schools.

Delhi Police issues cyber security dos and don’ts



The advisory, issued for government officials and contractual staff handling technology and computer-related work, lays down precautions ranging from password and data security to warnings against phishing links, unauthorised software, external cloud services and remote-access tools.

Delhi police issued cyber security guidelines for BRICS summitDelhi Police has issued cyber security guidelines to guard against potential cyber attacks and misinformation during the BRICS Summit.(Image generated using AI)With the three-day BRICS Summit set to kick off in the capital Friday, the Delhi Police has issued guidelines to guard against potential cyber attacks and the spread of misinformation during the high-profile event. The advisory, issued for government officials and contractual staff handling technology and computer-related work, lays down precautions ranging from password and data security to warnings against phishing links, unauthorised software, external cloud services and remote-access tools.Issued from the Delhi Police Headquarters and signed by Additional Commissioner of Police, IFSO, Sanjay Bhatia, the guidelines cite the widespread use of information and communication technology across government departments and the presence of foreign dignitaries during the summit as factors increasing the risk of cyber threats.What the advisory saysDo’s Use passwords of at least eight characters containing a combination of upper- and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters. Change passwords at least once every 45 days, and enable multi-factor authentication wherever available. Officials have been advised to keep backups of important data on secondary or offline drives, regularly update operating systems and BIOS firmware, and

install the enterprise anti-virus client provided by the government on official desktops and laptops.

Log out even when stepping away from computer systems for a short period.Keep GPS, Bluetooth, NFC and other sensors disabled on computers and mobile phones unless required, and download applications only from official app stores. The advisory also recommends encrypting important data and documents before sending them through electronic means. Officials may use licensed encryption software or OpenPGP-based applications, while files can also be compressed into password-protected ZIP folders.Officials have been warned to exercise caution while opening shortened URLs, with the advisory noting that malware and phishing sites can use URL-shortening services Similarly, users have been asked to be careful while opening links received through SMS and social media platforms, particularly those accompanied by attractive offers, discounts or claims of providing information about current affairs. Such links could redirect users to phishing or malware websites and pose a risk to their devices.Suspicious emails and cyber security incidents are to be reported to the designated email addresses, while personnel have been directed to follow security advisories issued by NIC-CERT and CERT-In.The guidelines prescribe several system-level safeguards, including automatic logout after 20 minutes of inactivity on websites, web pages and applications requiring authentication. Screen savers with auto-lock facilities are to be enabled on client and server machines.Inactive users are to be disabled after 90 days, while user accounts should be locked after three unsuccessful login attempts and remain locked for 30 minutes before another attempt can be made.

Don’t use third-party cloud services, remote administration toolsOfficials have been told not to reuse the same password across multiple services, websites or applications, or store passwords in browsers or other insecure documents. Sensitive information such as passwords, IP addresses and network diagrams should not be written on unsecured material such as sticky notes or papers posted on desks. Government data and files should not be stored on system drives or uploaded to non-government cloud services such as Google Drive and Dropbox.Don’t use outdated or unsupported operating systems, third-party DNS or NTP services and unauthorised third-party services such as free VPNs, Tor and proxies.Use of unauthorised external devices, including unknown pen drives or USB drives, is prohibited. For sensitive internal meetings and discussions, employees have been advised against using unauthorised third-party conferencing or video-conferencing equipment. External mobile scanner applications should not be used to scan internal government documents.

Hours before Delhi hostel collapse, a worker hit a panic button



Hours before a five-storey paying guest (PG) accommodation for boys crumbled in Southwest Delhi’s Satya Niketan on Sunday afternoon, a labourer had allegedly called the PG operator to warn him that one of the walls of the building could collapse amid the ongoing construction work, The Indian Express has learnt. The construction work is said to have weakened the structure of the building.The labourer told police, according to sources, that he had called Sudhanshu, 31, who ran the ‘Hostel Daze’ chain in the area, to warn that the building won’t be able to take the load of the construction work in the basement.During the questioning, Sudhanshu, who was arrested on Wednesday, told police that he had also warned Mahesh, the son of the property owner, to not go ahead with the renovation work.The building didn’t have the base to bear the weight of the extra floors, he claimed to have said.

“We are also trying to get details of the timeline of the construction work, and ask neighbours how the building came up and whether it was inspected during the construction,” said a police officer.On Thursday, multiple people from the neighbourhood in the area where the building crumbled were questioned by the police to re-create the sequence of the events. The building collapse killed seven people, including five students.In Satya Niketan, all seven PGs operated by Hostel Days have been inspected by the MCD with

the officials preparing a report on the possible violations. Most of the company’s PGs visibly violate certain norms, specially the single entry- exit point, according to sources.

When The Indian Express visited the site on Thursday, one of the PGS, just opposite a Metro station, was found to be empty. “All the students left the day the other building came down. But this building hasn’t been sealed,” said a worker at the PG.“If there were to be a fire, we won’t even have space to run. We took it because it was the only place with decent food. The MCD official came today, and inquired about the whole building. But we are happy that Sudhanshu was arrested. He was very rude,” said a second-year Delhi University student, living at a four-floor girls PG, just 100 meters away from the collapsed building.Sudhanshu was among those who rushed to the five-storey building after it came crashing down on Sunday. But when students, mostly from DU, at the spot began recognising him, he left, fearing he would be beaten, The Indian Express reported on Thursday.Police on Wednesday traced him to a friend’s house in Burari and arrested him. A graduate from DU’s Hans Raj College, police said Sudhanshu had started the PG business in 2022, primarily catering to students studying at his alma mater.Sudhanshu was in charge of installing the 16-bed facility with amenities, looking after maintenance, and overseeing the repair and construction work needed at the 50-year-old building that collapsed. He was the main person prospective tenants met when they came looking for rooms, sources in the police said.They added that Sudhanshu took the building on rent as it was being offered at a lesser price than the usual market price, primarily due to its poor condition. The owner of the building, Hariram, his son Mahesh, wife Urmila, and labour contractor Saroj were arrested earlier in the case.“The owners allegedly knew that the building wouldn’t be able to bear the weight of four additional floors. And yet, they decided to give the construction a go-ahead and lease it out to a PG company last year,” a senior officer said.

This festive season, Tukaram Mundhe has an eye on your favourite snacks



The Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA), led by Tukaram Mundhe, has started the festival crack-down. As people in Maharashtra gear up to celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi and Navratri, the food safety regulator, acting on concerns over the quality of the namkeen, banana chips, sev, and other snacks people typically have during the festive season, has seized nearly 29 tonnes of food products, raw materials and edible oil worth Rs 20.48 lakh from 11 establishments in Thane’s Shil-Diva area.Following a tip-off on September 9, the FDA conducted a surprise inspection at establishments in Bhaskar Compound, Khadi Gaon and found poor-quality stocks of potato wafers, farali chiwda, spicy wafers, mixed farsan, sev, bhakarwadi, banana chips and other products, besides maida, besan, pea flour,

palmolein and used cooking oil.

Maharashtra FDA raids namkeen thane Maharashtra FDA has seized Rs 20.48 lakh worth of farsan, wafers and namkeen from multiple Thane establishments (Sourced photo)The food safety body said it seized 28,955 kg and 56 litres of food products and raw materials on suspicion of adulteration and poor quality. It also cited extremely unhygienic and unsafe conditions in which the food was being manufactured.Other violations include establishments running without valid food licences, dirty and greasy production floors, partly open production areas and inadequate drainage. Officials reported stagnant wastewater and foul odours around some premises, along with cockroach and rodent infestation. Workers were also found preparing food without aprons, gloves or head covers.Maharashtra FDA raid namkeen banana chips The department said 28,955 kg and 56 litres of food products and raw materials were seized on suspicion of adulteration and poor quality (Sourced photo)The FDA has ordered the suspension of licences/registrations of all 11 establishments and directed them to stop operations.The action comes as Maharashtra enters the festive period, when demand for traditional snacks and sweets typically rises. The FDA has separately asked organisers of mahaprasad, bhandara, langar and other community food distribution programmes to submit advance notice at least seven days before the event so that risk-based inspections and sampling can be carried out.

Bengaluru teen left for college and vanished. Months later, OTP led police to her



GNS News Agency, Sept 12In January this year, an 18-year-old girl walked out of her Bengaluru home, telling her family she was headed to college with a friend. It was the last time they saw her—until seven months later, when an OTP generated for a government welfare scheme led the police to a Karnataka village, where she was found.The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) produced Tanishka, who went missing from Vidyaranyapura in Bengaluru on January 31, before the Karnataka High Court, which had earlier directed the CID to take over the probe after her parents filed a habeas corpus petition. The police said she is now married and pregnant.

A second-year PUC student, Tanishka left home with a friend, a minor, saying they were going to college. The two did not carry their mobile phones, ATM cards or other belongings, taking only their Aadhaar cards and college bags, according to the police.A few days after going missing, they reportedly contacted their friends and told them they were at Male Mahadeshwara Hills. They said they would call again in a week. But there was no further communication.A missing person case was registered at Vidyaranyapura police station, and a 10-member team searched for the girls at more than 100 locations, including Mumbai, Chennai, Coimbatore, Delhi, Varanasi, Kerala, Chamarajanagar and Mysuru, but could not trace them.After the investigation failed to yield a breakthrough, the girls’ parents approached the high court with a habeas corpus petition. The court transferred the investigation to the CID in April, following which the agency continued the probe.Neglect at home? A decision to leave together

According to the police, Tanishka said she felt neglected by her family. She alleged that her parents often scolded her for not doing well academically and favoured her elder sister, who was academically good.The minor, the police said, was the only child of parents who allegedly wanted a son, and she too felt neglected at home.“We established that the girls first travelled to a temple in Mysuru, followed by another temple in Chamarajanagar the next day, before proceeding to Male Mahadeshwara Hills. Their in-

tention was to end their lives. However, they met two young men there who spoke to them and dissuaded them from taking the extreme step,” a senior CID police official said.

The girls subsequently parted ways, each going with one of the men. Tanishka went on to live with the man she met, the police said. After his family accepted the relationship, the couple married at a temple and settled in his village in Kanakapura taluk.How an OTP helped police crack the caseWith neither girl carrying a phone or SIM card, tracing them proved difficult for months. Tanishka’s Aadhaar card was the only document she had, and the police sought her Aadhaar information through the high court as part of the investigation.The breakthrough came on Tuesday. Investigators found Tanishka had recently used her Aadhaar details to enrol for a government health scheme that offers financial benefits, and had entered her husband’s phone number to receive the OTP for that application. The police traced the number to him, took him into custody, and questioned him, leading them to Tanishka.“We had been investigating the case from different angles. Since the girls had not taken their phones, tracing them was difficult. We later got a lead through her Aadhaar details, which had been updated when she accessed a government scheme. Based on this information, we were able to trace her,” a senior CID official involved in the investigation said.Tanishka has now been handed over to her parents after being produced before the high court. Investigators are continuing to search for the other girl, who remains missing.

NIMS releases hall tickets for TIMS Sanathnagar recruitment exam

Hyderabad: The Nizam’s Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) on Friday released hall tickets for the upcoming written examination for contract positions at the Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences (TIMS), Sanathnagar.

The multiple-choice question (MCQ)-based examination is scheduled to be held on September 20, 2026. The recruitment covers technical, allied, administrative and support services staff, following the notification issued on June 22, 2026.

Eligible candidates can download their hall tickets from the official NIMS website by logging in with their registered phone number and date of birth.

Nepal’s flash floods death toll rises to 1,385

Houthi advance along Yemeni coast threatens Saudi oil exports



Kathmandu: The death toll in Nepal due to the flash floods rose to 1,385 on Friday as more bodies were recovered from the affected districts, while search and rescue operations continue for more than 5,000 missing people. The flash floods, triggered by an ice-rock avalanche near the Nepal-Tibet border on August 26, devastated towns and villages in northern and central Nepal. At least 364 bodies have been recovered from Chitwan district, 228 from Nawalparasi East, 222 from Nawalparasi West, 199 from Nuwakot, 185 from Rasuwa, 77 from Gorkha, 70 from

Dhading and 38 from Tanahu, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) said. Two victims of the flash floods died in Kathmandu while undergoing treatment. The joint command of security personnel has continued its search and rescue operations, with the number of missing people estimated to be 5,130. So far, 13,676 people have been rescued from different areas. Meanwhile, at least 703 Nepalese nationals, who were stranded in China following the floods, have returned home through the Tatopani border point in Sindhupalchok, Rising Nepal newspaper reported.

They were living in China for work before the devastating floods. They returned home via Keyrung and the Tatopani border after the disaster caused extensive loss of lives and property in Keyrung and Rasuwa districts. Of the 703 returnees, 205 were women and 498 were men, according to data released by the District Administration Office, Sindhupalchok. The Bhotekoshi River, which flows south from the Himalayan border region, carried the floodwaters downstream, sweeping away homes, vehicles, roads and bridges and damaging hydropower projects. The disaster also killed at least 43 people on the Chinese side, while more than 500 people remain missing in Tibet, according to Chinese media reports.

Iran seeks end to Saudi blockade of Yemen after Tehran-backed rebels take key port

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Cairo: Iran’s government on Friday called for an end to Saudi Arabia’s blockade of Yemen and the immediate resumption of talks, in its first public statement since Iran-backed Houthi rebels entered a key Yemeni port and intensified their threat to a key global shipping alternative to the Strait of Hormuz. In a statement carried by the state-run IRNA news agency, Iran’s foreign ministry said Yemen’s sovereignty must be respected and its problems cannot be resolved through a blockade or military alliances. Iran also said it was ready to help support negotiations. Meanwhile, experts say the developments in Yemen could give Tehran more leverage in any negotiations with the United States after over six months of war. Events threaten a key Strait of Hormuz alternative

The Houthis’ entry into the Red Sea port of Mokha on Thursday brings them within 80 kilometres of the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, an important alternative for global shipping as Iran targets vessels on the Strait of Hormuz. It’s the rebels’ biggest territorial gain in years. The Bab el-Mandeb at the southern end of the Red Sea is especially important to neighbouring Saudi Arabia, a key US ally, whose blockade of the Houthis has fed into the rebels’ escalating attacks on Saudi shipping as the kingdom tries to get its oil out of the region. About 12 per cent of the world’s goods are typically shipped through the strait. Disruption to the waterway could mean trouble for all shipping and for the price of crude oil, which has now soared again. Already, the Houthis in recent weeks have been targeting Saudi oil infrastructure and ships on the Red Sea.

Saudi Arabia, which earlier this week said it had always offered “opportunities for negotiation,” also has said it has the right to defend itself in response to the Houthis’ actions under the blockade they declared on the kingdom in July. Shipping through the Bab al-Mandeb had fallen by about



60 per cent since the Houthis began attacking some ships there in late 2023 while expressing solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza. Shipping increased this year as Saudi Arabia sought alternatives to the Strait of Hormuz, but renewed Houthi threats have “curtailed” that activity, according to Lloyd’s List Intelligence. In a statement released Friday, the National Defence Council of Yemen’s Saudi-backed and internationally recognised government on Thursday strongly condemned the Houthis’ renewed attacks on Saudi Arabia, saying it would respond to threats. It said a military operation by Yemeni forces would not be limited to a single front. The sharply escalating fighting threatens to end a fragile truce that had largely halted Yemen’s civil war since 2022. At stake are the 40 million people in the Arab world’s poorest country who fear a return to the conflict that killed 150,000 and brought many others to the brink of famine. The Houthis have been at war with Yemen’s government since 2014, when the rebels swept from their mountainous heartland and seized much of northern and central Yemen. Saudi Arabia entered the war the following year on behalf of the government.

South Korean, Iranian FMs hold phone talks over Strait of Hormuz issues



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Seoul: South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Hyun and his Iranian counterpart, Seyyed Abbas Araghchi, held phone talks on Friday and discussed the situation in the Middle East and the Strait of Hormuz, Seoul’s foreign ministry said. The phone conversation comes as South Korea is weighing whether to deploy military assets to help secure the strategic waterway amid the United States’ pressure on Seoul to make a military contribution. Iran has strongly opposed any foreign military involvement.

During the talks, Cho expressed deep concern over the recent situation in the Middle East and voiced hope that sustainable peace and stability would be restored in the region, according to the ministry, Yonhap News Agency reported. On the Strait of Hormuz, Cho also underscored Seoul’s continued participation in international efforts to ensure freedom of navigation through the strategic waterway. He also stressed that South Korea has consistently maintained that the free and safe passage of all vessels must be guaranteed.

Cho also asked Iran to pay close attention to the safety of South Korean nationals in the region, according to the ministry. Araghchi explained Iran’s position on the current situation in the Middle East, while the two ministers agreed to maintain communication on regional developments and bilateral issues through both bilateral and multilateral channels, the ministry said. It marked the sixth known phone conversation between the two ministers since the US-Iran conflict began in late February, with the latest call held at Araghchi’s request, according to the ministry. Tensions in West Asia have escalated sharply following renewed military exchanges between the US, Israel, and Iran, alongside intensifying maritime confrontations in the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea. The Strait of Hormuz links the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. It



CAIRO/WASHINGTON/DUBAI, GNS News Agency, Sept 12 Iran-aligned Houthis seized control of Yemen’s port city of Mocha on Thursday and advanced down the Red Sea coast to strategic islands, military sources said, hours after President ?Donald Trump said he expected the Iran war to end after the U.S. midterm elections.

Yemeni government military sources said the Houthis had gained further leverage over the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the southern ?outlet of the Red Sea and one of the world’s most important shipping routes, and had reached the islands of Hanish. The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. If the Houthis were to gain control of the waterway on the opposite side of the Arabian Peninsula from the Strait of Hormuz, it could give their backer Iran a critical advantage in the war with the United States, reducing supplies through a second major transit corridor and sending oil prices surging. It could also make it harder for Trump to find an exit from a war that has ?hurt his Republican Party’s electoral prospects ahead of the November midterms. Yemen’s Houthi-run humanitarian operations coordination centre said in a statement that Red Sea navigation is safe for all shipping companies except for Saudi ?vessels.

Saudi Arabia, the world’s largest oil exporter, has relied on the Red Sea route since the Iran conflict effectively closed Hormuz, through which a fifth of global oil used ?to flow. Yemeni government forces and their allies are relocating south along the Red Sea coast to Dhubab on the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, across from Perim Island, government military sources said. Control of Dhubab and the island is ?key to gaining hold of the strait, they said. U.N. Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg told a U.N. Security Council meeting about Yemen on Thursday that the international community must act to address “a new and more dangerous phase” ?in the Yemen war. The Houthis’ gaining control of Mocha gave them “a direct presence on the approaches to one of the world’s most vital straits,” raising serious concerns about freedom of navigation, he said. Jenifer Neidhart de Ortiz, the U.S. representative at the meeting, accused the Houthis of acting as “agents and tools of Iran.” “This escalation is unacceptable, and those who enable it bear responsibility for its consequences,” she said. Iran’s foreign ministry said in a statement that the Yemen conflict could not be solved by blockade or military action

As Saudi tensions with Iran-backed Houthis escalate, mediator Pakistan faces pressure to choose a side

ISLAMABAD/DUBAI, GNS News Agency, Sept 12 For much of the past year, Pakistan has played a dual role as Riyadh’s defence partner and Washington’s backchannel to Tehran but this week’s fighting between Yemen’s Iran-backed Houthi movement and Saudi forces is increasingly testing how ?long Islamabad can hold both positions at once. The fighting represents the first major test of the mutual defence alliance that was signed between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey last month, adding to ?a pre-existing pact between Islamabad and Riyadh. Under the arrangement, an armed attack on any one of the three countries is to be regarded as an attack on all.

Make sense of global markets with the Trading Day newsletter. Sign up here. Pakistani officials worry the Houthi threat is more likely to draw Islamabad into a war than Iranian missile strikes on Saudi energy infrastructure were earlier this year. Pakistani soldiers are deployed near the Saudi border with Yemen, two Pakistani officials told Reuters in July, increasing their direct exposure. Defence deals with Gulf nations have been a key part of Pakistan’s plans to boost its fledgling economy ?after years of crisis, and have often been accompanied by parallel or subsequent talks about Gulf investments. However, Pakistan also relies on oil and gas shipments through the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea — routes ?that Iran and the Houthis have shown they can disrupt — giving Islamabad reason to avoid alienating Tehran even as it deepens ties with the Gulf.

In the past, ?tensions between Iran and nuclear-armed Pakistan have at times escalated into deadly clashes. Two years ago, Iranian missile and drone strikes on alleged militant hideouts in Pakistan’s Balochistan province, along their shared border, prompted retaliatory attacks from Islamabad — ?tensions that briefly raised the spectre of a new conflict but soon calmed. This time, Pakistan is seeking to prevent an escalation before it’s too late. This week, it delivered a Saudi warning urging Iran to rein in its Yemeni Houthi allies, ?Saudi, Pakistani and Iranian sources told Reuters on Wednesday. Pakistan army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir also held a call with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Thursday evening to discuss “ways to restore diplomatic efforts to de-escalate on all fronts”, a Pakistani source said. “Pakistan is trying to keep a low profile in the Saudi-Houthi conflict because Pakistan’s own stakes are high,” a second Pakistani government official told Reuters. “It does not want to spoil relations with Iran.” In a briefing on Thursday, Pakistani foreign ministry spokesman Sajjad Haider Khan said no military response to the ?Houthi attacks was currently under discussion. “Iran’s leadership has consistently appreciated Pakistan’s mediation efforts,” Khan told Reuters in response to a request for comment. “Pakistan has consistently opposed escalation and advocated restraint, dialogue and diplomacy.” “BALANCING ACT Publicly, Iranian officials have praised ?Pakistan’s role and said they do not view the defence pact as a threat. But in private it is a different story, three Iranian sources familiar with the discussions told Reuters, explaining that while Pakistan might have good intentions, it does not have ?the means to ?deliver or the experience of negotiators such as Qatar. Iran’s foreign ministry did not respond to a request for comment. There are signs Islamabad is now recalibrating as it digests the scale of the balancing act it has taken on. After Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed their initial defence pact last year, Kuwait pushed for a largely identical arrangement, according to four sources with knowledge of the talks. Pakistani officials, wary of deepening military ties

?against the Houthis and called for dialogue, without addressing Iran’s own role. Yemeni government, Iranian and regional sources told Reuters the Houthi advance down the coast this week came with direct guidance from Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps. Houthi spokesperson Mohammed ?Abdulsalam said, without elaborating, that the group’s operations were defensive and would stop once attacks on Yemen stopped. Item 1 of 5 Members of the Saudi-backed Yemeni government forces during clashes with Yemen’s Iran-aligned Houthis in a location given as near Al-Hazm, Yemen, September 9, 2026. via Media Centre Of The Yemeni Armed Forces

Brent crude prices jumped as much as 4% on Thursday above \$105 a barrel on concern over disruption to supply routes, and the ?U.S. national ?average price of diesel surpassed \$6 a gallon for the first time ever, according to price tracker GasBuddy. After joining the war with an attack on Israel in March, the Houthis declared a naval blockade against Saudi Arabia in July and escalated attacks this month. Tensions in the region remained high, with Saudi civil defence authorities issuing emergency alerts in the southwestern city of Khamis Mushait for the fourth time in 24 hours, as the Houthis attacked.

Pakistan has delivered a Saudi warning to Iran to rein in the Houthis to try to prevent the crisis from spiralling, Saudi, Pakistani and Iranian sources said. A senior Iranian official said Tehran’s response was: “Iran does not control the Houthis”. The fighting comes during ?the biggest declared wave of U.S.-Iran tit-for-tat attacks on ?Gulf shipping since the war began in late ?February. The U.S. Treasury Department on Thursday announced new sanctions against firms and individuals aiding Hezbollah and other Iranian proxies as part of “Operation Economic Outcast,” which aims to cut off Tehran’s war funding.

TRUMP SEES WAR ENDING AFTER MIDTERMSThe war and subsequent increase in fuel prices have helped drive Trump’s popularity to record lows, according to polls. He said Iran ?was trying to influence the midterm elections, which will determine whether his Republican Party retains control of Congress. “I don’t believe in the word ‘regret.’ You can always ?question yourself a little bit,” Trump ?said in an interview with Fox News host Laura Ingraham broadcast on Thursday, when asked if he regretted the Iran war due to the impact it may have on the elections. “If I had it do again, I would do exactly as I did,” he added. Trump also reiterated his thinking that the war will end immediately after the midterm election, a comment he also made on Wednesday. In recent weeks Washington had cited increasing success guiding tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, ?which carried ?about a fifth of global oil supplies before the war. But a resumption of fighting this month appears to have set back any such ?gradual reopening. Just seven vessels transited the strait on Wednesday, half the 10-day average, preliminary ship-tracking data showed. Iranian state media said on Thursday the Revolutionary Guards Navy had struck a U.S. unmanned vessel at the entrance to Hormuz.



with another Gulf state exposed to Iranian bombardment, scaled the discussions back, the sources said.

The two countries instead signed a narrower protocol in Islamabad last month covering training, border security and capacity-building — falling short of what Kuwait had hoped for. On Thursday, foreign ministry spokesman Khan said there ?were no plans to expand the broader Pakistan-Saudi-Turkey alliance to ?new members at the moment.

MEDIATOR OR COMBATANT?Farzana Shaikh, ?an associate fellow at Chatham House, questioned whether Tehran’s trust in Islamabad was ever as solid as assumed. She said Pakistan “does not have the kind of wherewithal or indeed experience that Qatar and Oman would have brought to the table,” and that Islamabad’s elevated role owed less to its own diplomatic capital than to “the personal bonhomie” between President Donald Trump ?and Pakistani Field Marshal Asim Munir. Trump has called Munir his “favorite field marshal” on numerous occasions, following a charm offensive by Pakistan that revolved around crypto deals, American access to ?rare minerals, and counterterrorism. Others argue ?that this may not need to be a fatal blow for Islamabad’s role as a mediator. Kamran Bokhari, a Washington-based analyst on Pakistan-Iran relations, said Tehran engages Islamabad precisely because of its alignment with Riyadh and Washington. Islamabad’s alignment lets it deliver messages in ways a genuinely neutral party could not, which is exactly the value Riyadh and Washington are counting on when they route messages through Islamabad, he said. But an escalation in fighting between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia could upend that calculus. “Relaying and shaping ?messages is one ?thing,” said Bokhari, but “active air-defense or intelligence support is another, tipping Pakistan from stakeholder into combatant.” Pakistan, which maintains the seventh-largest military in the ?world measured by active military personnel, had already deployed thousands of soldiers and a squadron of fighter jets to Saudi Arabia under the earlier defence arrangement. With troops also being deployed along Pakistan’s tense border with India and fighting multiple insurgencies in the country’s western provinces, Islamabad is ?now trying to temper demand from other Gulf states eager for similar guarantees. “Pakistani forces are stretched,” Bokhari said, making additional commitments “daunting.” Shahzad is an accomplished media professional, with over two decades of experience. He primarily reports out of Pakistan, Afghanistan regions, with a great interest and an extensive knowledge of Asia. He also reports on politics, economy, finance, business, commodities, Islamist militancy, human rightsAriba Shahid is a Reuters correspondent based in Pakistan, reporting on the economy, energy, mining, climate and foreign policy.

Climate footprint of space exploration is passing below the radar



As the world becomes more reliant on space technologies for vital functions like climate monitoring, the environmental consequences of space activities also become increasingly urgent and in need of more attention. The rapid growth of the number of satellites in orbit has led to concerns about interference with climate monitoring systems and the accumulation of orbital debris. With no specific international regulations addressing these challenges, it is crucial the world’s governments act quickly to ensure space exploration doesn’t drift into unsustainability.

How are space activities affecting the environment?

Every rocket launch releases carbon dioxide, black carbon, and water vapour into the atmosphere. Black carbon is of particular concern because it absorbs sunlight 500-times more effectively than carbon dioxide does, amplifying global warming. As commercial space ventures become more common, the cumulative impact of these emissions will worsen. Rocket propellants, especially those using chlorine-based chemicals, deplete the ozone layer at high altitudes, increasing exposure to ultraviolet radiation on the ground as well as disrupting atmospheric circulation — both of which affect the global climate. According to a December 9 article in MIT Tech Review, when satellites “burn up in the atmosphere” once their missions end, they release “satellite ash in the middle layers of the earth’s atmosphere. This metallic ash can harm the atmosphere and potentially alter the climate.”Next, like many other forms of manufacturing, the production of satellites demands energy-intensive processes involving metals and composite materials, whose extraction and preparation have large carbon footprints of their own. Satellites also use propulsion systems to adjust their location and orientation in orbit, and their emissions add to the overall count. Equally, the rise of space mining — e.g. extracting valuable (on the earth) minerals from asteroids — could lead to increased industrial activity both in space and on the ground. Such mining activities haven’t begun yet but they are sure to be part of the future. While space technology supports essential climate monitoring and disaster management, the environmental costs for the earth’s atmosphere and space are escalating, requiring urgent redressal.

What are the dangers of orbital debris?

Orbital debris, or space junk, refers to defunct satellites, spent rocket stages, and pieces of satellites produced when they break apart in low earth orbit (LEO). According to the European Space Agency, as of September 2024, there had been around 6,740 rocket launches since 1957 that placed 19,590 satellites in orbit. Around 13,230 are still in space and of them 10,200 are still functional. Since the space in earth’s orbit is a resource just like water bodies and land masses on the ground, the occupation of orbits by non-functional objects constitutes a form of pollution as well — with the added threat of risk magnification. For example, space surveillance networks have catalogued around 36,860 space objects thus far, including those produced in the 650+ fragmentation events (break-ups, explosions, and collisions). The total mass of all space objects in orbit exceeds 13,000 tonnes. As this mass continues to increase, the collision risks to satellites increase as well. Most space junk can reach speeds of up to 29 km/hr. When moving so fast, even a minuscule piece of metal can smash through a satellite like a bullet, damaging critical components, including those used for communication, navigation, and to monitor climate parameters of merit. Orbital debris also poses

an indirect threat by interfering with scientists’ ability to collect data about the earth — from tracking disasters to monitoring weather — from space, such as by interfering with radio waves. Such threats also obligate satellite operators to invest in shielding satellites and actively perform costly manoeuvres to avoid collisions; both requirements drive up mission cost. The risks are even more significant for human-crewed missions. For example, the International Space Station frequently adjusts its orbit to avoid debris.

What are the barriers to space-sector sustainability?

Regulation is key to ensuring space remains accessible and space activities remain environmentally sustainable. Without clear guidelines, the unchecked growth of emissions and debris will harm the earth’s climate and increase the barriers to future space exploration. Space activities currently fall outside international sustainability instruments like the Paris Agreement, so governments need to establish standards for emissions from rockets and satellites to prevent them from becoming overlooked contributors to global warming. Without regulations, the increasing number of satellites and debris will overcrowd LEO, rendering future missions more expensive, which in turn would subtract from space’s identity as a shared global resource that needs to be equally accessible to everyone. International cooperation through bodies like the Committee on the Peaceful Use of Outer Space (COPUOS) is necessary to create enforceable standards in this context. Governments can also ensure such frameworks align with the Outer Space Treaty’s principles of responsible use of space while addressing the Treaty’s current lack of binding provisions. This unity is particularly crucial if countries are to address the environmental impacts of space activities.

How can space exploration be more sustainable?

Achieving sustainability in space exploration requires innovative solutions but which also present challenges of their own. For example, reusable rockets like those developed by SpaceX and Blue Origin reduce manufacturing waste and lower costs by allowing engineers to reuse rocket components in multiple missions. But the reusable parts are often heavier, which increases fuel consumption. These rockets also have limited applicability for high-orbit missions and their wear-and-tear invokes costly refurbishments. Thus scaling this technology while maintaining efficiency remains a hurdle. Second, transitioning to cleaner fuels like liquid hydrogen and/or biofuels can minimise harmful emissions during liftoffs. However, hydrogen is currently produced with non-renewable energy, negating its environmental benefits. Cryogenic fuels — which provide more thrust for the same mass — are more expensive and more complex to handle, keeping them out of reach of smaller operators. Electric propulsion is another option, but its low thrust restricts its use to specific missions like in-orbit manoeuvres. Third, designing satellites with biodegradable materials that naturally disintegrate during re-entry can prevent long-term debris accumulation. On the flip side, these materials currently lack the durability required for the extreme conditions of space. High development costs and limited adoption further slow progress. Autonomous debris removal (ADR) technologies such as robotic arms and laser systems also offer hope for cleaning up orbital debris, but again, they are currently expensive as well as need more legal clarity before they can begin to operate safely. A global traffic system to monitor satellites and debris in real time could reduce collisions and optimise orbit use. Resistance to data-sharing, including due to security and commercial concerns, and the lack of a unified international authority hinders its development, however. None of these hurdles are permanent of course. Moreover, whereas individual solutions face significant challenges, a combined approach may be more feasible. For example, binding agreements through COPUOS can standardise emission limits, debris mitigation, and data-sharing practices; governments and private entities can prioritise funding for green technologies, ADR systems, and satellite biodegradability; and financial rewards, subsidies or penalties can nudge private actors towards sustainable practices. At the intersection of technological advancement and environmental responsibility, the choices we make today will define the future of space exploration.

Way in the world: how Muslim women travelled from 17th-20th centuries

I began reading Three Centuries of Travel Writing by Muslim Women (Zubaan Books) chronologically, hoping rather ambitiously to read it from cover to cover, one essay at a time. That was a mistake, I think. The book is better served, and savoured, if the reader were to dip into it in no particular order. Each essay is so precisely contextualised by the immaculate ‘Introduction’ prefacing each entry and followed by ‘Further Reading and ‘Notes’ that even a casual reader can dip into this richly documented, beautifully translated volume of disparate writings and partake of the spirit behind it. For the more serious reader/researcher, there is of course the scholarly introduction by Siobhan Lambert-Hurley and Daniel Majchrowicz who edited the book (along with Sunil Sharma). They write: “On the face of it, the premise of this volume is simple: a comparative study of travel narratives by Muslim women who travelled the world before the ‘jet age’ transformed modern mobility. Yet in our contemporary moment, the very juxtaposition of these terms — Muslim, women, travel mobility — instantly raises a number of questions.”

Colonialism, gender, travel, religion, money come together in unexpected ways throughout this book. What is more, these accounts by educated and “privileged” Muslim women also contain descriptions — sometimes empathetic, occasionally derisive — of other Muslim women they meet during their travels who are poor and disadvantaged and, being illiterate, could not have recorded their experiences or left written records of their lives. So, apart from records of the new and the unexpected, there are also observations about the different practices of child-rearing, food, cooking habits, dress, religious and social practices.

Multiple voices

These first-hand accounts, originally written in Urdu, Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Chaghtaai Turki, Punjabi, Bengali, Indonesian, German and English, span the 17th to 20th centuries thus presenting an array of experiences and impressions. Written variously as conventional travelogues (Halide Edib, Zainab Cobbold), excerpts from autobiographies (Salamah Bint Said/Emily Ruete, Huda Shaarawi), diary entries (Muhammadi Begum, Begum Hasrat Mohani), written for limited circulation as magazine articles (Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, Shams Pahlavi), recorded for family and friends (Begum Sarbuland Jung, Ummat al-Ghani Nur al-Nisa), or with a pronounced political overtone (Suharti Suwarto, Melek Hanım) quite naturally, therefore, present different voices and concerns. Chatty, informal, informed when the writing is for herself or her family members; or formal, structured, detailed, sometimes even didactic when she knows what she is writing is

meant for public consumption. Travel as life

There are 45 accounts in all, grouped under four headings: Travel as Pilgrimage, Travel as Emancipation and Politics, Travel as Education, and Travel as Obligation and Pleasure. While large numbers of Indian women have written haj accounts, there is only one Indian in the second section, Shareefah Hamid Ali, who represented India at the United Nations and travelled by air. Several Indian Muslim women chose to travel for education, sometimes their own, or their husband’s or sons’. There is Mehr-al-Nisa from Hyderabad who joined her doctor husband in Ohio to train as an x-ray nurse, and Zaib-un-Nisa from Karachi writing an account of her 60 days in America as a member of the U.S. Department of State-sponsored Foreign Leader Exchange Programme where she crosses the breadth of the United States in a hired car with her husband. Safia Jabir Ali, daughter of the esteemed Tyabji clan, married Jabir Ali who travelled extensively for business from their home in Burma to Europe. Her memoir, written in Urdu, is brimful with an easy confidence: “I had to travel by myself from Bombay to Marseilles, and that was the first time I had occasion to depend entirely on myself and spend more than three weeks among entire strangers. However, as probably some of you know by experience, on board the steamer, one gets to know people very soon.

I was lucky in being able to travel on the Loyalty, the steamer of an Indian company where there were a good many Indian passengers, and some of us soon became great friends.”Connecting the dots

The last part, ‘Travel as Obligation and Pleasure’, has by far the most interesting experiences: Mughal Princess Jahanara’s mystical meeting in Kashmir; Salamah Bint Said, a princess of Zanzibar, who flees her home to unite with her German lover in Hamburg, converts to Christianity and takes the name Emily Ruete; and Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain’s pleasure trip to the Himalayas, among others. While most women travelled with a male (husband, father, son, brother), some travelled alone: “

Safia Jabir Ali travelled alone from Bombay to meet her husband in post-First World War Britain, Sediqeh Dowlatabadi from Tehran in 1923 to study at the Sorbonne in Paris, Selma Ekram from ‘Stamboul’ to New York in 1924 on the promise of work, Muhammadi Begum with her infant child from Bonn to Oxford in the mid-1930s, and Herawati Diah en route to study at Barnard College in New York in 1937. “Alone or chaperoned, veiled or unveiled, travelling for work or pleasure, these accounts by Muslim women bust every stereotype. In one voice, these women seem to be saying: “only connect”.

UGC rules on UG, PG: A case for ‘liberating’ autonomous colleges from universities



Recently, the University Grants Commission (UGC) published the Draft (Minimum Standards of Instruction for the Grant of Undergraduate Degree and Postgraduate Degree) Regulations, 2024. The draft is open for feedback from stakeholders. The draft democratizes higher education in terms of its flexibility, mobility, assessment patterns, curriculum design, and vocationalization. Therefore, it is imperative to redefine our education policy in tune with the skill gap and economy’s demand so that the workforce can be transformed. Educational policies are periodically revised to suit changing demography, socio-cultural context and socio-economic developments. The deficit in skilled workforce having socio-economic implications and the emergence of knowledge-based economy demands the redefining of the curriculum and the pedagogy. For instance, in recent times, we have been hearing about the decline in enrolment in conventional degree programmes in liberal arts and science colleges and the closure of degree programmes that do not run successfully in reputed universities in India and abroad indicating the need for reimagining the tertiary education landscape.

According to a Dell Technologies report, 85% of the jobs in 2030 that Generation Z and Alpha would embrace have not been invented yet. In addition, as per the world Economic Forum report, 65% of primary-school children today will be working in job types that do not exist yet. Having set the context for the need for education policy, it is our duty to critically analyse the pros and cons of the UGC draft for the minimum standards to be complied with from a neutral perspective.

Academic flexibility

The UGC draft states that academic institutions should value learning through Hybrid flexible (HyFlex) modes in 60:40 ratio. However, it is depressing to note that despite the UGC promoting online distant learning in recent years, many universities have not bothered to empanel themselves on the concerned portal that would facilitate affiliated colleges offering Online Distance Learning (ODL). While many south Indian universities are moving towards bankruptcy, they don’t quite realize that ODL is a potential revenue stream to become sustainable. Autonomous colleges in the top 100 NIRF rankings have the privilege of availing the ODL courses benchmarked with the standards of MOOC. However, lack of awareness among State universities and their stiff-necked attitude towards affiliated colleges has not let the autonomous colleges to register in the UGC portal. Only if UGC takes stock of the compliance of the universities and be a party to all the litigation in the court on compliance issues filed by the constituent colleges, academic flexibility as a scheme would be realized. While the positive impact of ODL needs to be appreciated, having learnt from the pandemic, we need also to recognize that social learning is acquired or imbibed through campus experiences from co-curricular and extra-curricular activities as well. This happens through immersive engagement through various clubs and societies as part of the curriculum. The idea of “whole person education” cannot be realized through ODL alone. Hybrid, flexible learning is the way to go. Tamil Nadu has the lion’s share of around 232 autonomous colleges among 995 such colleges in India. However, for 45 years autonomous colleges have not been liberated from the clutches of the universities to experiment academic flexibility in spirit and word.

Multiple entry and exit

HEIs shall provide multiple entry and exit options in academic programmes, as per the new draft rules. Multiple entry and exit would enhance student mobility and academic flexibility. Millennials seek value for money and go for professional certifications in addition to the degree programme. They seek return on investment on the tuition fee for UG and PG programmes. Keeping these perspectives in mind, the degree programme has been divided into certificate, diploma, degree and honours as four levels, rendering flexibility to the stakeholders. This scheme facilitates the students to exit after certificate or diploma levels and get into the world of work for internship or job and get back to complete the rest of the credits promoting lifelong learning. It is to be noted that only if the students pursue the vocation related to their domain, multiple entry and exit would have continuity. Although students would welcome it, financial sustainability is a concern if enrolment varies. If the number of entries and exits balance, then the programme can be sustainable.

Academic mobility

Academic mobility is not only envisaged between arts to sciences and vice versa but also between mainstream to vocational stream in order to eliminate harmful hierarchies and silos. Value-added courses integrate vocational education with mainstream education. Edutech firms have started developing modules by roping in industrial cohorts as ecosystem partners to design modules by suitably converting their practices into graded modules. Such courses are to be benchmarked with vocational standards for a seamless transition to the world of work. Further, the four-year course will enhance the global mobility of students. The UGC has been driving at enrolling in the Academic Bank of Credits as a mandatory assignment for autonomous colleges. Unfortunately, autonomous colleges are caught in the grip of universities that offer the degree certificates. The UGC needs to intervene and liberate the autonomous colleges. Minimum attendance requirement and outcome-based attendance

Guideline 7.0 discusses reforms in minimum attendance requirements. The concept of attendance needs to be redefined owing to the promotion of diverse learning modes (HyFlex) and as an attempt to dignify varied learning styles (cognitive, affective, kinesthetic and auditory). The redefinition may take into account learning outcomes rather than just the physical presence of students in the class. Since the knowledge is accessible, learning is progressively reckoned as facilitated constructivism where students construct the knowledge on their own rather than based on teachers’ instructions. Moreover, students are progressively inclined towards active learning that includes internships and projects than being confined to classrooms. Hence attendance cannot be defined exclusively on the number of instructional lectures attended by the students. Consequently, a process needs to be designed, wherein 450 hours per semester are distributed into several learning outcomes, and the marking of attendance for the absentees is made through the assessment for learning outcomes as per Bloom’s taxonomy levels of K5 and K6 and a passing minimum of 40% is benchmarked. This proposal would appeal to students who learn by modes other

than reading, writing, and speaking (cognitive mode) and dignify the auditory, kinesthetic and social learners who would have to learn outside the classrooms occasionally.

Beyond boundaries of domains

The UGC draft guidelines have ventured into achieving this goal in principle by democratizing admission norms by liberating it from domains. A major shortcoming in our system is the rigid segregation between the sciences and humanities/arts unlike the U.S. where students are encouraged to secure credits across streams. Unlike conventional universities, new-age private universities now offer courses that hybridize the sciences and the arts but this trend should spread to the older, established universities and colleges too. The future of higher education lies in intermarrying between disciplines and spanning across the boundaries of domains in solving problems. The need of the hour is solving problems from a transdisciplinary perspective where the boundaries between the domains cease to exist. Institutes of excellence such as the IITs, IISERs and IISc have already begun experimenting it. Unless there is a need and reward-based interventions by the UGC, the teaching fraternity would find it difficult to move from status quo. The ability to span across boundaries is a trait of researchers and teachers that is needed to bring the faculty from various specializations to join together to explore a given problem from multiple perspectives. Textbooks need to be rewritten from transdisciplinary perspectives right from schools to promote cross-disciplinary admissions as intended by the UGC. Common entrance tests as non-equitable assessments

Eligibility criteria for admission (Undergraduate / Postgraduate) states that admission in any discipline of the UG programme is possible (120 credits) if the student qualifies the national level or university level entrance examination in the discipline of the UG programme. Further, it states that a student is eligible for admission in any discipline of PG programmes if the student qualifies for the national level or university level entrance examination in the discipline of the PG programme. Although it is indispensable to have such screening examinations to normalize the knowledge acquired by the students, these examinations will not help scout real innovators and creators who can help build a skilled workforce. Such entrance tests do not test the ability of students to ideate, rather they test the ability to answer conditioned and stereotypical questions that can be learnt through a strategic pedagogy offered by tutorial colleges and structured thinking. Consequently, students who learn through learning styles other than cognitive means (read, write and speak) cannot succeed in such entrance tests and would miss the opportunity to progress towards higher education. While entrance tests could be one of the windows to assess the knowledge level of students, if alternative windows that evaluate their real competency, skill sets and ideation ability, are made available to admit lateral thinkers, the country would produce innovators and creators.

In my inquiry into these aspects, I have come to learn and experience that often those who clear the UGC NET, GATE, CSIR or JAM examinations by conscious monkey training from childhood are at times not critical in their thinking. On the other hand, many students with adequate research aptitude, demonstrated lab skills and process intelligence to execute projects are not inclined towards or are incapable of clearing the competitive exams. Each year, colleges witness the exodus of such potential candidates to careers other than domain or research for want of financial assistance. There should be provisions to allow such potential candidates to pursue research as their career. The government should be able to offer patronage to them for junior research fellowships so they can register for PhD after MSc or M.A. It would be ideal if a support system or another window is created for such students to pursue and publish in Indian peer-reviewed journals through a fast-track mode. Unfortunately, the present educational system provides opportunities for post graduate students of science to pursue research internships in institutes of excellence only based on academic excellence rated exclusively through marks obtained. This denies opportunities for low-scoring but highly skilled graduates from certain universities, allowing some geographic domains to reap almost all the benefits. Students selected through marks and references obtained from professors, if subjected to an intensive pre-internship process, can be an alternative mode of selection for paid research internships. Many of our students who are incapable of clearing GATE or CSIR exams get admissions in universities abroad because they can demonstrate their proven research skills and publications in journals. They can put together convincing applications based on their statements of purpose. The same students return after graduation to serve as faculty in the institutes of excellence that denied them opportunities to study. Our system has failed to spot such talented students. The UGC encourages innovation and out-of-the-box ideas through autonomy, good governance, and empowerment as per the draft guidelines. Common entrance tests may not foster such out-of-the-box thinking. While critiquing the idea of conducting entrance tests, it is imperative to find an intervention that would mitigate the limitations. Although the idea of boundary-crossing flexibility from sciences to arts and vice versa in principle is an intelligent move, the execution of the idea should be strategized through project-based pathway courses as part of the credit framework (foundational or bridge course). This should be a criterion while students seek cross-disciplinary admissions. Bottom-up consultations

This article has critiqued the UGC draft guidelines and suggested interventions. An effort has been made to perceive the implementation of the policy in the context of colleges. If the decisionmakers at the UGC conduct brainstorming sessions to curate opinions and design interventions authentically from bottom-up, the stakeholders will show ownership and the execution will be sustainable.

Four arrested, 21 kg marijuana seized in Mangar Basthi

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Hyderabad: The Habeeb Nagar Police arrested four persons in illegal possession of marijuana and seized 21 kg of the contraband from them at Mangar Basthi on Friday.

The arrested suspects were identified as Sandeep Nandha Kishore Bhongade (38), Rahul Rajesh Patil (24), Kamble Umesh (29) and Kamble Suraj (24)

Police said Bhongade and Patil allegedly brought marijuana from Maharashtra, while Umesh and Suraj were involved in its local transportation and distribution.

Only the second animal to find its way by polarised moonlight found



Many nocturnal animals, including insects like ants and bees, follow the moon's position to find their way when they go foraging. But the moon waxes and wanes in a cycle and can be obscured by clouds or overhanging tree canopies, so the animals can't always directly track its position. Now, for the first time, scientists at Macquarie University, Sydney, have found that two nocturnal bull ant species (*Myrmecia pyriformis* and *Myrmecia midas*) make their way at night with the help of polarised moonlight, which, while being dimmer even than moonlight, contains unusual patterns that can point the way. This is also only the second instance of an animal being found to use polarised moonlight to orient itself.

Seen from the ground, both sunlight and moonlight contain characteristic polarisation patterns. The way these patterns are oriented in the sky, rather than the location of the light source alone, allows animals to use it as a compass. The study found the nocturnal bull ants were able to detect and use polarised moonlight throughout the lunar cycle for foraging, even under a crescent moon when moonlight is 80% less intense. The polarisation patterns in moonlight are also a million-times dimmer than in sunlight. So while many animals are known to use the latter, very few use the former. The first animal found to use polarised moonlight was the dung beetle. Scientists already knew *M. pyriformis* and *M. midas* ants used polarised sunlight to navigate, but this light fades as the sun sets. The study's researchers were also aware most of the foraging *M. midas* ants returned overnight while the night-time activity of *M. pyriformis* ants increased on full-moon nights. The e-vector pattern

The sun and the moon both emit unpolarised light. Light is an electromagnetic wave, with the electric field oscillating perpendicular to the magnetic field, and both fields oscillating perpendicular to the wave's direction of motion. When the light moves through the earth's atmosphere, it is scattered by particles in the air and becomes polarised. Polarisation denotes a specific orientation of the electric field. Both sunlight and moonlight scattered in the atmosphere become linearly polarised, meaning the electric field oscillates in a single, fixed plane perpendicular to the wave's motion. The scattered light is also oriented 90° to the incident light. As numerous light waves are scattered in this way, an unusual pattern emerges in the sky when seen through a filter that can detect polarised light. This is called the e-vector pattern. "[W]hen the sun/moon is near the horizon, the pattern of polarised skylight is particularly simple, with uniform direction of polarisation approximately parallel to the north-south axes," the researchers wrote in their paper. The stability of this pattern gives an animal that can detect it a natural compass. The researchers created linearly polarised light and cast it on a population of nocturnal bull ants in the wild, then tracked the ants' ability to orient themselves relative to their two nests, located more than

50 metres apart. Under full, waxing, and waning moon conditions, the researchers rotated their polariser clockwise by 45° and later counterclockwise by 45°. In each instance, the e-vector of the light falling on the ants changed. The ants responded by adjusting their path to the left and later to the right. Once the foragers crossed the area where the researchers' light was being cast, they adjusted once more to reorient themselves according to the e-vector pattern in the sky.

The researchers used paired tests to compare the magnitude of these shifts between the initial orientation and the filter exit and again between the filter exit and the reorientation. The paired tests are a statistical tool with which researchers can determine whether paired observations — shift magnitudes in this case — differ between two samples. "Shift magnitude is the number of degrees the ants alter their headings under the filter," Cody Freas, a doctoral student at Macquarie University and one of the study's co-authors, said. While the nocturnal bull ants were found to use polarised moonlight throughout the lunar cycle, their heading shift magnitudes dropped during the waning phases. The researchers called this finding "unexpected". Likewise, foraging ants had substantially higher shift magnitudes during the waxing full moon and waxing quarter moon phases compared to the waning phases. Under the new moon, when the ambient moonlight e-vector disappeared, the paths of the foraging ants didn't change significantly when the polarisation filter was rotated in either direction. The ants also didn't reorient their paths to a meaningful degree once they exited the filter. The researchers used another statistical test to compare the differences in shift magnitudes when the filter was rotated clockwise and counter-clockwise across lunar phases. Shift magnitudes, vector distances During the full moon, when moonlight reaches 80% of its maximum intensity, the shift magnitudes were 36.6° to 43° at Nest 1 and 21.5° to 28.9° at Nest 2. According to Freas, the difference between the two nests is likely due to the long distance that foragers at Nest 1 traversed on their trip to the foraging tree, 6 m, versus 2.5 m from Nest 2. "At short vector lengths, like at Nest 2, the vector, which is informed by the sky compass, becomes less reliable," he said, adding that the longer the distance, the more "powerful" the guidance is. "Thus, if the ant walks 6 m to the foraging tree, we can say that the ant has a 6-m vector pointing back to the nest. This vector also [shrinks] as the ant travels in the nest direction. It's an updating estimate of how far away the nest is at any point. So when we release an ant halfway home, it still has the vector from where it was captured (6 m)." According to Clarke Scholtz, emeritus professor of entomology at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, and Marie Dacke, a professor of sensory biology at Lund University, Sweden, "The methods used in the study are appropriate." Neither was involved in the study. "While we cannot compare solar and moonlight polarisation navigation in outbound ants ..., striking similarities occur when comparing solar and moonlight polarisation navigation in ants homing to the nest," the researchers wrote in their paper. "... it remains unknown if these ants are tracking their lunar polarisation compass by using a time-compensated lunar compass, or if the compass is updated with reference to other cues, such as the panorama, throughout the night," they added. Honeybees and desert ants have been known to use such cues together with sunlight. They said future research could check whether the ants have a way to say where the moon is after specific intervals by "exposing or blocking access to the sky and familiar panorama for set time periods when the moon is naturally visible overnight..."

Sri Lankan Govt blames unrest provokers for spate of violence in country; vows action

The Sri Lankan Government said on Saturday that the recent killings in the country, including that of a prominent underworld figure, appear to be an attempt to undermine the ongoing investigations into high-profile criminal cases such as the 2019 Easter Sunday suicide bombings. The government's response came following this week's courtroom shooting that left the underworld figure dead. The incident sent shockwaves across the country, leading to the Opposition probing the government's measures to tackle the spate of violence. "Most of these are done by gangs now resident in neighbouring countries," Ravi Seneviratne the secretary to the Ministry of Public Security told reporters on Saturday (February 22, 2025).

Mr. Seneviratne said the government has felt that recent killings were an attempt to sabotage the ongoing investigation into high-profile cases of the past, including the revived investigation on the 2019 Easter Sunday suicide bombings. "We will take stringent action against those who are behind this move to create unrest in the country," said Mr. Seneviratne. On April 21, 2019, nine suicide bombers carried out a series of blasts that tore through three churches and as many luxury hotels in Sri Lanka, killing 273 people, including 11 Indians. Sri Lanka's new President Anura Kumara Dissanayake in September last year said he would reopen an investigation into the terror attacks after meeting with the head of the Catholic Church Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, who has been critical of the investigation into the attacks. Blaming both former Presidents Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Ranil Wickremesinghe for the incident, Mr. Ranjith slammed the investigation as a political cover-up of



the attacks. Former President Maithripala Sirisena had appointed a high-level probe committee following pressure from the church. The probe found Sirisena guilty and ordered him to compensate SRs 100 million (?27,443,756) to the victims' relatives. Then defence top brass were also found guilty of criminal negligence for ignoring prior intelligence warnings from India. Police chief Priyantha Weerasuriya on Saturday (February 22, 2025) said there have been 17 shooting incidents and 5 stabbings since January. The police have identified 57 organised crime gangs operating and manned by around 1,400 gang members. During the press conference, the police chief and enforcement officials faced intense questioning regarding the incident in which two criminal suspects died while in police custody. The police this morning said the two were shot dead by the police when the two criminals tried to grab police weapons in their bid to escape.

Come summer, sighting the shy, pint-sized members of the Rallidae family gets easier

As humans are christened around birth, before their character becomes manifest and their frame takes complete shape, there is always the possibility that their name might suggest the opposite of what the people around them largely perceive their character to be or that it is in embarrassing contradiction to their physical structure. Birds being named after their prominent features that are out there for the universe to see, the alignment between what they are and what they are called comes with the accuracy of railroad track geometry. Zapornia pusilla — Baillon's crake in watercooler conversations — is as spot-on as a binomial name can get.

When fed into Latin, pusilla comes out denoting "very small". The Baillon's crake can be missed in the field, when it is at a distance, as the magnification of the human eye is woefully short of what it takes to pick up this tiny creature. The other factor is the Baillon's crake's predisposition to present less of itself: it moves about furtively and slides into the reeds at the slightest suspicion of being noticed. But if you are keen on observing the Baillon's crake or the ruddy breasted crake in the field, in Chennai, this would be



the best time to put in efforts towards that end. These birds live amidst reeds, the bulrushes, which are likely to lose their density now as they would shrivel and go brown, leaving wide gaps, thereby reducing the cover for these tidly birds to stay inscrutable. This Baillon's crake — captured in photographs at Perumbakkam wetland on February 12, 2025 — had to come out of hiding to rinse itself in water and had to continue in the public glare to dry itself.

Meet Kani Kusruti at her Goa home: “My friends tease me that ‘this is Kani’s era’; I think I’m just an average actor”



You can't find Kani Kusruti easily. Her house is off a highway, down a winding, forested lane in Goa, with no signposts. Google Maps will take you only so far and no further. Through the trees, I spot a likely house, and after ringing the bell, and waiting, I call her. "Are you in front of a yellow house or a green house?" she asks, in a tone which feels like she's said the same thing a million times over. The first is her office, the second is home: no one's at work, it's a public holiday. I head to the house with the green facade, and there she is, the actor who has had a brilliant 2024, with two of her films still being feted around the globe.

As Anila, the mother of a difficult 18-year-old in Shuchi Talati's Sundance breakout 'Girls Will Be Girls', she gives us a complex character rarely seen in Indian cinema. When Mira (Preeti Panigrahi) invites her crush Sri home (Kesav Binoy Kiron), it is Anila's unexpected third-wheeling between the two which heightens tensions, leading to an even more unexpected resolution. In Payal Kapadia's Cannes winner 'All We Imagine As Light', she becomes Prabha, a Malayali nurse, trying to find her comfort zone in alien Mumbai, and turning into a supportive figure to the younger, flightier Anu (Divya Prabhu), even as she finds solace in Parvathy (Chhaya Kadam), an older colleague from her hospital.

In two web-series, also out last year, she plays that character who effortlessly catches the eye regardless of the length of the role — as a wildlife conservation officer in Richie Mehta's 'Poacher' which is even smaller than the nimble martial arts expert in Abhishek Chaubey's 'Killer Soup' — she makes you miss her when she's not on screen. For someone who has been on the best actress lists of some of the toughest-to-please film critics not just in India, but internationally, Kani comes off as a remarkably reluctant actor. "Acting is not my passion", she says, as we settle down for our chat. She slides to the floor which seems like her natural habitat; I join her, "It was never my passion. It's only in the last seven to eight years that I've started looking at it as something I can do." As a child in Trivandrum she remembers going to the 'first day, second show', a weekly ritual, with her parents. Being out and about at night was more of a joy than the film itself, during which she usually nodded off, waking up only when a vigorous dance came on. Clowning, moving her body, manipulating puppets, using masks, were more her thing, and that she found in theatre. Or rather, theatre found her. Once, she was part of a street theatre during a protest her activist parents took her to. They wanted a child actor, so she did it, just for a lark. Then, when she was 10 or 11, her father asked her to pack her bags — this, during school term — and deposited her at a theatre workshop where she was the youngest participant, zoning out in theory classes and enjoying the practical parts, which included making papier-mâché puppets and doing exercises, which opened up her mind. The workshop ended with a performance, which she remembers as being spectacular. With that began her deep association with theatre. When she was at a theatre school in Thrissur, an actor's physicality, while playing a spider, left a deep impact. Physical theatre touched her the most and she began savouring live performances, traditional dance forms (Koodiyattam, Kathakali, Bharatanatyam) and music, both Carnatic and Hindustani.

"Cinema was never for me," she says, laughing, "I was always falling asleep, honestly!" For a time, it seemed that theatre wasn't going to be for her, either. "At 15 or 16, I was this shy, embarrassed girl, wanting to be in everyone's good books." It was only when her "very progressive" parents pushed her to test her limits did she agree, and that theatre experience, a slapstick comedy, helped her get over her initial inhibitions. "I thought this isn't bad, I can do this, and then came the next experience, in a dark, serious play. Those exercises had a significant impact on me, I began thinking about why I was really doing theatre, am I laughing at the jokes I like, why am I sad, who am I pleasing, am I just pleasing other people, is it coming from a place of compassion, why am I scared to question things even when the other person is wrong."

Growing up, she was always encouraged to doubt and question. There were no dogmas. "My parents never forced me to do anything I didn't want. They opened up spaces and facilitated my thinking. My father always used to say life is for living. He was an atheist, and I came to it on my own, after having gone to both the temple and the church. My mother spoke to me about love, romance and sexual abuse. Both of them said I could do whatever I wanted after 18; till then we would have discussions. They have shaped me slowly and surely," she says. She calls them by their first names: Maitreyan and Jayasree. "My father was a monk at an ashram where he met my mother. By then he was disenchanted with the gurukulam, and was gravitating towards communism and the Communist party. My mother never wanted to get married." When they got together, they continued as they were, in a live-in relationship — two individuals who thought about things very differently. "When my mother changed her mind about not having a child, she told my father, it's okay if you don't want to, I'll have anyone's child, and my father thought, anyway I will have to bring up the child, so might as well have my own, so I came along," she says, with a laugh. This awareness of life's little absurdities is a running thread in our conversation. Kani was fascinated by philosophy, learnt Sanskrit, went to theatre school in Paris, and finally began taking on film roles as they gave her a chance to make the kind of money she wouldn't be able to in theatre.

Rkani Kusruti at home in Goa (Photo: Veepul Rege) She speaks of her early roles after her return from Paris with disinterest — the kind of films being made in Kerala at the time didn't resonate with her. At this point, I find myself breaking in: So, what is her passion? What is it that floats her boat, which she seems to want to row to different shores?

The answer is instant. "Science. I love science. I wanted to study maths and physics. Later, I loved biology

even more. Then came the realisation that acting is also something I can do. I would love to be a doctor, but I turn 40 this year, and it is too late to go back and do everything from scratch. I love, love health care. When I was taking care of my grandmother in her last few months, I really enjoyed everything about it — giving her a bath, taking her to the toilet. I think I would be very happy working in palliative care," she says. So when did this phase of saying yes to cinema begin? After 2013, Kani found that Malayalam films were getting "better". "And then I met Anand (Gandhi, director of 'Ship Of Theseus'), and we were dating, I came to Mumbai with him, but I didn't like it. I didn't speak Hindi, so I said no to the offers that came my way. I think in Malayalam, I read in Malayalam. If there is a definition of a regional actor, that is me. One role which I really liked was in the web-series 'OK Computer' (2021). It was whimsical, quirky, something I hadn't done before. Then Covid happened, and we were here, in the house, locked down." After a bit of prodding from Anand, Kani auditioned for 'Maharani' (2021-), a Sony Liv show, in which her character has to speak broken Hindi: her personal secretary to Huma Qureshi's inexperienced chief minister soon caught our attention.

Even as we speak, Kani is mugging her lines for the fourth season of the series. Her Hindi may now be better than her French, she says, but she is still "as scared" when acting in the language. "I have humongous respect for actors who are more global. But I'm connected culturally only to Kerala," she says, aware of the irony of her calling herself a regional actor whose journey has been decidedly global. Which is, perhaps, why she felt so much at home doing Payal's film, which mines her ability to reach deep into a character to bring up the truth: Prabha is one of the most authentic portrayals of a Malayali woman of her kind. "I used to spend time with the nurses at my mother's clinic, they were like my didis. I don't know if my portrayal of a nurse is authentic — only a nurse can say so — but I have known many women like Prabha." All of that knowing, plus the director's wanting a mix of real and not-so real, she's poured into her Prabha, her contained resilience is both harrowing and heartbreaking. Both Payal and Shuchi describe Kani as being extremely collaborative. Payal calls her captivating. "I respect her so much and even if I don't cast her, I will always consult her," she says. Shuchi speaks of her having that rare quality of being able to reflect the multiple intentions that people carry within them. Kani says the two are very different in their approach — Payal sticks to pretty much what she wants, Shuchi is extremely open, can shoot two scenes diametrically opposite each other — but both respect process, a word she uses frequently to differentiate between the cinema she likes doing, and doesn't. All three sound like a mutual admiration society. Kani and Anand are no longer together, she tells me, but he is still her closest friend with whom she can discuss everything. The house that Kani lives in, is also home to Anand and his partner (Shreya Dudheria, filmmaker and TV director), and another couple, Zain Memon, the creator of the popular board game Shasn, and his partner. The fivesome, if there's such a word, work and play together. They are best friends, coming together when they need to, retreating to their corners when in need of privacy. "They have been teasing me, this is Kani's era, and we're just living in it, but I'm so bad at taking compliments, I keep wondering if all this praise is disproportionate. I think I'm just an average actor. If any of the fantastic actors I was surrounded by and grew up with get the same opportunities that I have, they too would do the same." I ask her if it isn't awkward for her to share the same space as Anand and his partner. "It did take us some time to understand how to transition but now we are close family," she says. Her parents come and go — they have their own relationship with Anand, and just like her, they continue to remain close. So, is she living her best life? "Absolutely. I love being home," she says, as she looks at the space around us, the westerling sun reminding us of the passing time. By now, we have been chatting for a few hours, as she talks about her love for Goa. "Even when I was a child, whenever I came here, I used to say I want to live in Goa. It has the same geography as north Kerala, which I love. The same laterite soil, the same dense trees," she says. Kani takes me out to the back porch, laden with creepers and plants, some of which she has planted. The entrance has a large jamun tree. A brown dog named Chinku lies under it. It's his home, too. On the wall close to the door jamb, a moth has settled, its earthen colours matching with the surroundings. I show Kani a photo I took of the moth. She opens her photo gallery, and there's a photo of the same moth: we laugh at the coincidence. But there's also something completely right about it. She really is a creature in sync with her surroundings, at home in her world.

UPI powers 84pc of digital transactions in India, set to triple by 2030

New Delhi: Amid a surge in digital payments where nearly four out of five payments in the country were conducted on the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in FY24, UPI has emerged as the dominant force driving financial inclusion, merchant adoption and cross-border transactions. According to a new industry report, UPI now drives 84 per cent of all digital transactions in India. The report by fintech consulting and advisory firm The Digital Fifth, UPI represents more than just a payment system — it's an entire financial ecosystem shaping India's digital-first economy. "With UPI handling 16 billion transactions a month and projected to grow 3x by the end of 2030, the role of robust, high-resilience switching infrastructure becomes paramount," according to Sameer Singh Jaini, Founder and CEO of The Digital Fifth. Real-time fraud detection, cloud-native architecture, and scalable, dual-core switches are no longer optional; they are essential to ensuring frictionless, secure, and fail-proof digital payments as India continues its journey toward a truly cashless, globally connected economy, he mentioned. UPI transactions surged 4 times from 2021 to 2024, reaching 172 billion transactions annually. It now dominates digital payments, far outpacing card-based and wallet transactions. With 30 million+ merchants onboarded on UPI, the merchant-to-consumer (P2M) segment is growing at 67 per cent on-year, outpacing peer-to-peer (P2P) transactions and signalling UPI's transition into the primary retail payment system, the report mentioned. According to the RBI, digital payments across India recorded a double-digit jump of 11.1 per cent year-on-year (YoY) as on September 2024. According to the report, the share of the UPI in the country's digital payments has surged from 34 per cent in 2019 to an impressive over 83 per cent in 2024, with a remarkable CAGR (cumulative average growth rate) of 74 per cent over the last five years.

Data more valuable than capital, treat it as ‘fiduciary responsibility’: RBI chief to fintechs



Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Thursday urged the fintech ecosystem to treat data as a “fiduciary responsibility” to build trust instead of considering it just as a business asset. He also cautioned fintech companies against building businesses by exploiting regulatory gaps, saying that the strategy of “scaling first and seeking clarity or forgiveness later” was not right. “I would urge all of you (fintechs) to treat data as a fiduciary responsibility, not as a business asset. Every fintech in this room holds something whichis much more valuable than capital, and that is the data, financial as well as non-financial, of very real people like you and me,” Malhotra said while addressing representatives from the fintech sector at the Global Fintech Fest in Mumbai. “This data must be treated the way a trustee treats assets held for a beneficiary, collected

with a clear purpose and used strictly within the consent provided and protected as though it was one’s own,” Malhotra said while addressing representatives from the fintech sector at the Global Fintech Fest in Mumbai.

Malhotra further said that using data as a mere monetisable asset first, instead of treating it as a responsibility, erodes the trust of consumers, which is then difficult to earn back.His caution for the fintech industry comes at a time when many fintech players are reportedly relying heavily on data to push new products to customers.On a similar note, Malhotra also urged fintech players to stop building businesses whose scale is dependent on exploiting the gaps that remain in the regulatory system. “The account aggregator framework was built precisely to formalise this principle — consent-based, purpose-limited data sharing, so that no single entity, including the aggregator itself, can see or exploit the underlying data,” he said.While fintechs are outside the central bank’s regulatory purview so that regulations do not become a burden on early-stage innovation, Malhotra also urged such fintech players to be responsible in their operations.“As a firm’s payment volumes, lending book, or user base grows to a point where its disruption could meaningfully affect the financial system, that firm acquires a responsibility that goes beyond its balance sheet or its shareholders. I would describe this as the obligation to be not just ‘too big to fail’ but ‘too significant to be careless’,” said Malhotra.

Bankruptcy law misuse: Why IBBI is on alert after NCLT order in Subhash Chandra case

IBBI has asked insolvency professionals to flag possible misuse of the bankruptcy process, including suspicious related-party transactions and very low creditor recoveries.IBBI has asked insolvency professionals to flag possible misuse of the bankruptcy process, including suspicious related-party transactions and very low creditor recoveries.The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) on Wednesday issued a circular asking insolvency professionals to stay vigilant to signs that the bankruptcy law is being misused for purposes other than resolution or liquidation of the companies under financial stress.

The IBBI said that it has received information from law enforcement and regulatory agencies that the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 is also being used to dodge taxes, escape investigations, closure or merger of companies without regulatory scrutiny, or monetising and ring-fencing assets.The board listed six indicators to be alert for: very low recoveries for creditors without proper valuation, a single non-bank creditor dominating the committee of creditors (CoC), a cluster of related companies with common promoters, addresses, directors, or inter-lending taken into bankruptcy process; a common resolution applicant recurring across connected corporate debtors, linkage of corporate debtor or its group to fraud probes by another regulator, and suspicious loans between group companies.

The circular has come on the heels of a National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) order on August 25 involving Essel Group founder Subhash Chandra, which approved a repayment plan providing for just Rs 6.25 crore to the creditors against their admitted claims of Rs 22,006.57 crore. Later, a five-member special bench of NCLT stayed the August 25 order, which was passed by a single-member bench of the tribunal.In this case, the five entities — Veena Investments, Direct Media Distribution Ventures, World Crest Advisors, Lemonade Capital Advisors, and Corpcall Capital Advisors — collectively held nearly 62% of the total voting share and pushed the repayment plan, while banks like LIC Housing, HDFC, RBL, Axis, and Canara Bank voted against it. The public banks alleged that the non-bank entities were associates or related parties of debtors and acted under Chandra’s influence.

However, the IBBI also said that some of these indicators may arise in cases involving genuine financial distress. “They are intended to flag circumstances that warrant closer examination, and no indicator, by itself, should be treated as conclusive of misuse of the insolvency process,” said the bankruptcy law regulator.“This is a timely order by IBBI when many bankruptcy cases are resulting in very lower recovery in NCLT. It casts an obligation on



resolution professionals to look at the lapses during the process itself and inform the tribunal in advance. This will create checks and balances. Not only the corporate debtor, but the resolution professionals will also be under scrutiny,” said Prateek Kumar, partner at Khaitan & Co.

The board further said that if the insolvency professional (IP), who conducts the corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP), forms a view that the process may be serving a fraudulent or malicious purpose other than the resolution of insolvency or liquidation of the corporate debtor, then the person shall file an application before the NCLT with fact for the appropriate direction under the code.“The application should identify the indicators noticed, the material relied upon by the IP, and the reasons for forming such a view,” said the IBBI.The IBC created a time-bound mechanism to deal with companies that fail to repay their loans — by either reviving such firms through a resolution process or liquidating them if resolution is not possible. If a company fails to pay its debt, its creditor then can approach the NCLT to initiate the “insolvency process” under the lawHowever, the August 25 order of NCLT yet again raised the question of “haircuts”, a highly debated issue under the IBC framework.

According to data available with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, between the financial years FY22 and FY26, a total of 1,077 cases were resolved under the IBC, with creditors recovering Rs 2.47 lakh crore. The average recovery was close to 29%. In FY26, the recovery against the admitted claims was 20%, the lowest in last five years.This means that a bank may have claims running into thousands of crores rupees, but what they receive after the resolution process could be a small part of what it is owed. Now, the IBBI circular says that resolution professionals should be alert in cases where realisation to creditors is grossly disproportionate to admitted claims.

Telangana district tops India, women make up 78% of informal workers

Telangana’s Nirmal district has the highest share of women among informal workers in India at 78%, while Uttarakhand’s Rudraprayag is at the bottom with 6.7%.Telangana’s Nirmal district has the highest share of women among informal workers in India at 78%, while Uttarakhand’s Rudraprayag is at the bottom with 6.7%.Nirmal district, in northern Telangana, tops a new ranking: 78% of all its informal workers are women, the highest of any district in the country. Nanded, immediately across the state border in Maharashtra, is ranked 288th in the country, with women making up only 31% of its informal workers.According to data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) on Thursday and analysed by The Indian Express, the 10 districts with the highest share of women in informal workers are all from south India or the north-east. Meanwhile, at the bottom of the list is Uttarakhand’s Rudraprayag, where only 6.7% of informal workers are women.High participation of women in the workforce is a very state-specific feature, with women making up at least half the informal workforce in only 25 districts – 22 of them are in south or north-east India, with the remaining three in the east: Chandel and Pakur in Jharkhand and Deogarh in Odisha.The all-India average is 29%.As per the data, the top-10 districts are either in Telangana, Manipur, Meghalaya, or Mizoram, “reflecting the significant role played by women in the unincorporated sector in these states”, MoSPI said in its report.Overall, women make up at least 33% of the total informal workforce in 237 districts.Pay divideWhile districts from the south and north-east see major participation from women, they pay very little. For instance, the best-paying district in the top-25 with women making up at least 50% of the informal workforce is Meghalaya’s South West Khasi Hills, where the per hired worker emolument is Rs 1.7 lakh, only 35% or so higher than the all-India average of around Rs 1.3 lakh.Meanwhile, workers in Dehradun get paid the most, with emoluments per hired worker at Rs 4.6 lakh. Only 19% of workers in the district of Dehradun are women.The new report provides data for 757 districts. “However, the geographical coverage of some districts and number of districts may differ from the current administrative configuration due to subsequent changes in district boundaries, names and/or the creation of new districts,” it

added.Based on the data collected from the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE) of 2025, this is the first time that MoSPI has released district-level estimates from a large-scale national survey. The enterprises covered are from the unincorporated non-agricultural sector, which broadly comprises establishments operating in manufacturing, trade, and other services in the informal sector.Concentration of activityUnsurprisingly, districts with greatest women participation are those with the highest percentage of female owned proprietary establishments. Nirmal tops this list again, with almost 80% of its proprietary establishments owned by women.However, in terms of the number of workers or establishments, the distribution of the top-10 districts is more pan-India. West Bengal’s North 24 Parganas has the greatest number of informal workers with 21.3 lakh as well as establishments (16.6 lakh).In a sign of how concentrated even informal economic activity is in India, the top-10 districts in terms of the number of establishments are responsible for around 11% of the total Gross Value Added. The top-50 districts account for almost a third of the GVA.Source of dataAccording to Geeta Singh Rathore, Director General of MoSPI’s National Sample Survey, the unincorporated non-agricultural sector contributes “significantly” to employment, livelihoods, and economic activity.“Given the diversity of economic activities and local conditions across the country, there is an increasing need for statistics that provide a more granular understanding of the sector for evidence-based policymaking,” Rathore said in the report.The main ASUSE 2025 report was released earlier this year in May after a ‘fact sheet’ was made public in March. As per the survey, the total number of unincorporated establishments rose by 58.5 lakh in 2025 to 7.92 crore. This was a smaller increase than the 83.5 lakh in the 12 months ended September 2024. As a result, fewer jobs were also created: 74.5 lakh in 2025 compared to 1.1 crore in October 2023-September 2024.The district-level data comes after MoSPI in June released a report on the informal sector in India’s 46 cities with a population of over 10 lakh as per Census 2011. Since those figures were based solely on urban areas, a district which shares the name with one of those cities – such as Howrah – may have different estimates as district-level figures in the latest report cover rural as well as urban areas.

She leaked urine whenever she exercised: How a 43-year-old discovered a hidden problem



For nearly two years, Priya Bhuvad, 43, a corporate professional, quietly adjusted her life around a problem she found embarrassing: urine leakage whenever she jumped, exercised, danced or did other high-impact activities. There were other signs, too. She often felt that her bladder was not completely emptying. She noticed her vaginal laxity and reduced sensation during intercourse, but, like many women, did not initially connect these symptoms to a pelvic floor problem. The pelvic floor is a group of muscles and supportive tissues at the bottom of the pelvis that hold the bladder, uterus, vagina and bowel in place and help control urination and bowel movements. Pregnancy, obesity and menopause may weaken them and you need exercises to strengthen them.

Fit and busy with work, Bhuvad had not prioritised pelvic floor exercises, core strengthening or rehabilitation after childbirth. She had had two normal vaginal deliveries, the last six years earlier. An examination eventually showed that her urinary bladder was bulging into the vagina, the rectal wall was protruding into the vaginal space and there was first-degree uterine prolapse, a condition in which the uterus slips downward from its normal position into the vagina.She underwent surgery to repair the front and back walls of the vagina and strengthen the tissue between the vagina and anus. Surgery for the uterus was not required because the descent was minimal. Six months later, her urinary incontinence and other pelvic floor symptoms had improved substantially. “Many women believe that urine leakage or a feeling of heaviness after childbirth is a normal part of becoming a mother, so they continue to live with these symptoms for years without seeking medical help or doing muscle-strengthening exercises,” says Dr Surabhi Siddhartha, consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist, Motherhood Hospital, Kharghar, Navi Mumbai.

More than a childbirth problemAt her hospital, Dr Siddhartha sees women in their 40s frequently present years after vaginal delivery with pelvic floor problems that may have gone unaddressed since childbirth. “Pregnancy and delivery put considerable stress on the pelvic floor muscles; without rehabilitation, weakness may become more apparent with ageing and the hormonal changes of menopause,” she adds.The scale of urinary incontinence is reflected in Indian studies. A 2023 study of 118 women aged 20 to 70 reported urinary incontinence in 27.1% of participants, with stress urinary incontinence — leakage triggered by activities that increase abdominal pressure — the most common subtype. A separate 2025 study of 500 women aged 40 and above reported urinary incontinence in 37% of participants, with stress incontinence accounting for more than half of the cases.For women, this can mean leakage while coughing, sneezing, laughing, exercising, jumping or

Up your fibre: Should you have soluble or insoluble?



When we hear the word “fibre”, most of us immediately think of digestion, constipation and keeping our bowel movements regular. But fibre does far more than keep the digestive system moving. It plays an important role in gut health, blood sugar control, cholesterol management, weight management and the health of the trillions of bacteria that live in our gut.So, when it comes to fibre, is one type better than the other? The answer is no. Our bodies benefit from both soluble and insoluble fibre, and the best approach is to get a variety of fibre from a wide range of plant foods.Two types of fibreSoluble fibre absorbs water and forms a gel-like substance in the digestive tract. This slows down digestion and the absorption of carbohydrates, which can help prevent sharp rises in blood sugar after meals. It can also support healthy cholesterol levels. Good sources of soluble fibre include oats, barley, beans, lentils, apples, citrus fruits, carrots, nuts and seeds.Insoluble fibre, meanwhile, does a different job. It adds bulk to stool and helps food move through the digestive system. This makes it particularly useful for bowel regularity and preventing constipation. Whole grains, vegetables, nuts, seeds and the skins of many fruits and vegetables are good sources.

The important point, however, is that we do not need to sit down and calculate how much soluble versus insoluble fibre we are eating. Most plant foods contain a combination of different types of fibre. A diet that regularly includes vegetables, fruits, whole grains, pulses, beans, nuts and seeds will naturally provide a mixture of both.

The danger of going from zero to “high fibre”One of the biggest mistakes people make is increasing fibre too quickly. Someone who has been eating very little fibre may suddenly start consuming large salads, several servings of fruit, chia seeds and fibre supplements in an attempt to improve their health. Instead, they may find themselves dealing with bloating, gas and abdominal discomfort. The body needs time to adjust to an increase in fibre, so it is better to increase intake gradually. Adequate water is equally important. Since fibre absorbs water, significantly increasing fibre without drinking enough fluids can sometimes make constipation worse rather than better. There is another trap: assuming that a packaged food is automatically healthy simply because its label says “high-fibre”. Fibre-fortified cereals, biscuits and other processed foods can still contain considerable amounts of sugar, salt or refined ingredients. Whenever possible, fibre should come from whole or minimally processed foods.And increasing fibre does not have to mean making dramatic changes. Simple choices can make a meaningful difference: eat a whole fruit instead of drinking fruit juice, choose whole grains more often, add dal or beans to meals, include vegetables at lunch and dinner and have nuts or seeds in appropriate portions.

dancing.But leakage is only one warning sign. Pelvic floor dysfunction can also cause heaviness or pressure, a vaginal bulge, difficulty emptying the bladder or bowel, urinary urgency, painful intercourse and persistent pelvic or lower-back pain.It can affect younger women, too

Pregnancy is an important risk factor, but it is not a prerequisite. Dr Anjali Talwalkar, consulting gynaecologist associated with Cama & Albless Hospital, Mumbai, recalls the case of Kiran Kadam, 25, an unmarried woman who developed persistent pelvic pain after treatment for tuberculosis. She had subsequently developed a chronic, irritating cough and an allergic variant of the cough.Investigations eventually pointed to pelvic floor weakness, for which she was advised intensive pelvic floor rehabilitation. Recovery took time: regular exercises, physiotherapy and home practice were needed over several months.Dr Talwalkar attributes the weakness primarily to the repeated increase in intra-abdominal pressure caused by prolonged coughing. Weight loss during her illness had also contributed to physical deconditioning. “Someone who is having a lot of intra-abdominal pressure symptoms, like chronic cough or chronic constipation, and they are pushing all the time — then the pelvic muscles say, give up,” she explains.

Other contributors can include obesity, repeated heavy lifting, chronic constipation, hormonal changes and physical deconditioning. In other words, pelvic-floor weakness is not synonymous with childbirth.Why women often miss the signsAwareness remains a major problem, particularly among younger women who may not expect pelvic floor symptoms. There is also a gap between knowing about pelvic floor exercises and actually doing them. A Motherhood Hospital report says more than 90% of women are aware of pelvic floor exercises, but only a minority practise them regularly. The postpartum period can be a missed opportunity: routine follow-up often focusses on feeding, contraception and recovery, while pelvic floor assessment receives less attention.

Kegels are not a diagnosisPelvic floor exercises, including Kegels, can help, but simply being told to “do Kegels” is not always enough. The first step is determining what is actually causing the symptoms. Pelvic floor assessment may include evaluation of muscle strength and coordination, followed by physiotherapy, biofeedback (sensors measure muscle activity and give the patient visual or audio feedback, so they can see whether they are using the right muscles and improve their technique with practice) or, in selected cases, electrical stimulation.Technique matters, too. Some women inadvertently tighten their abdominal muscles instead of the pelvic floor. Others may focus only on strengthening when the problem involves poor coordination or an inability to relax the muscles properly.

The postpartum gapFor women whose symptoms begin after childbirth, early rehabilitation can make a difference. Yet many either never start pelvic floor exercises or stop within weeks because they have no obvious symptoms or are unsure whether they are doing them correctly. “Pelvic floor disorders should never be accepted as an unavoidable consequence of ageing or childbirth,” says Dr Siddhartha.Common postpartum exercises include Kegels, pelvic-floor relaxation, deep breathing, gentle core exercises and bridges, ideally introduced with guidance on correct technique.

More fibre is not always betterIt is also important not to look at fibre in isolation. Someone may consume plenty of fibre but still have a diet high in ultra-processed foods, added sugar, unhealthy fats or excessive calories. Fibre is one component of a healthy dietary pattern; it cannot compensate for an otherwise poor diet.For most adults, roughly 25–30 grams of fibre a day is a reasonable general target, although individual requirements can vary. What matters more than obsessively counting grams is making fibre a regular part of everyday meals.More is not necessarily better. Very large amounts of fibre, particularly when introduced suddenly, can cause significant bloating, gas and digestive discomfort. The goal should be an adequate and varied intake rather than an unnecessarily high one.People with certain digestive problems may also need to modify the amount or type of fibre they consume, particularly when symptoms are active. Anyone experiencing persistent bloating, abdominal pain, unexplained changes in bowel habits or other digestive symptoms should not simply keep increasing fibre without understanding the underlying cause.Small, consistent dietary changes are far more sustainable—and usually more beneficial—than suddenly making extreme changes in an attempt to eat more fibre.

Sheraton Hyderabad Adds 42 New Apartments, Takes Total Inventory To 326



Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel has added 42 new apartments to its long-stay accommodation portfolio, taking its total inventory to 326 units, comprising 98 apartments and 228 rooms.Geographic ReferenceThe expansion comes as Hyderabad continues to see strong commercial activity, with growing demand for accommodation from business travellers and professionals staying in the city for longer periods. The new apartments are available in three categories — Studio Rooms measuring 35 sq. m., One-Bedroom Apartments spanning 61 sq. m. and Two-Bedroom Apartments covering 88 sq. m. The units offer garden, city and Outer Ring Road views.Designed for extended stays, the apartments are equipped with practical amenities including washing machines, dishwashers and potable water supply. The offering is aimed at corporate travellers, professionals relocating to Hyderabad, project teams and families looking for longer-term accommodation. The addition of the 42 apartments expands the hotel’s presence in Hyderabad’s extended-stay segment, alongside its existing rooms and serviced apartment inventory.

BRICS security gets K9 boost: 100+ sniffer dogs deployed at Bharat Mandapam, hotels



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

More than 100 Delhi Police K9 dogs will be on security duty at the BRICS Summit, carrying out anti-sabotage checks at Bharat Mandapam and hotels where foreign delegates are staying. The K9 teams are part of the security deployment involving 30,000 personnel, with the dogs being used to check venues and their surroundings — including hidden spaces, seats, staircases, gardens and parking areas — for suspicious objects. The police force currently has 110 dogs in its K9 unit. Each dog has a handler, whose rank ranges from constable to Assistant Sub-Inspector.

The deployment Thirty sniffer dogs, along with their handlers, have been deployed round the clock at the main venue, where talks and bilateral meetings will be held on Saturday and Sunday. The remaining dogs have been de-

ployed at hotel venues and kept on standby to check markets and other strategic locations before the visit of any foreign guest, dignitary or their family members. Around 25 dogs have been earmarked for the New Delhi district, particularly the Chanakyapuri area. At some locations, the police have also taken assistance from the National Security Guard (NSG), the Army and other paramilitary forces, which have provided dogs from their respective K9 units for security checks. "These dogs are an integral part of the anti-sabotage checks, which are carried out alongside security personnel using metal detectors and handheld detection devices," an officer said. The dogs also participated in mock-drill exercises conducted under the supervision of the NSG ahead of the BRICS Summit.

More than 50 dogs inducted this year This year, the Delhi Police inducted more than 50 trained Belgian Malinois, Labradors and German Shepherds from the Indian Army. The Dog Squad, established in 1967, functions under the administrative control of the Crime Branch. It assists in crime detection, the identification of explosives and narcotics, and operations requiring speed and precision. The unit works alongside Mobile Crime Teams, the Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS) and the Bomb Detection Team (BDT). Before every event, the dogs conduct thorough sniffing operations to detect any explosives that may have been hidden at the venue, the officer said. In September last year, Delhi Police Commissioner Satish Golchha launched the unit's emblem, featuring a dog beneath the force's logo, along with its official title, 'Shwan Dasta'.

3 wickets for 0: India spinner equals 131-year-old record in County game



Playing for Warwickshire, Manav Suthar became only the second man in history to record wickets across both innings of an FC game without conceding a run. (CREIMAS) Playing for Warwickshire, Manav Suthar became only the second man in history to record wickets across both innings of an FC game without conceding a run. (CREIMAS) Left-arm spinner Manav Suthar has been the find of the season for India, growing into the role of a front-line Test bowler within three games of his debut. Only three days after playing a vital role in India's 1-0 series win in Sri Lanka in August, Suthar flew out to England to resume his County Championship stint with Warwickshire.

On Wednesday, the 26-year-old Rajasthan spinner equalled a colossal landmark that has been witnessed only once before in First-Class cricket history. Playing the County Division One game at the Sophia Gardens in Cardiff, where Warwickshire steamrolled Glamorgan by an innings and

257 runs, Suthar conceded no runs across both innings. Moreover, he bagged three wickets as Glamorgan were bundled out for 69 and 65 on either side of Warwickshire's hefty 391.

A first since 1895! Suthar became only the second man in all First-Class history to pick up at least one wicket in both innings of a match without conceding a single run. All three of his dismissals were effected bowled. In a match were his seam-bowling teammates did the bulk of the damage, Suthar only bowled three deliveries in the first innings, cleaning up No. 11 Mir Hamza. In the second innings, the left-arm spinner came on to bowl in the 24th over and began with a maiden. In his second over, Suthar cleaned up wicket-keeper Chris Cooke and No. 10 Jamie McIlroy within four deliveries. Suthar's achievement was only the second such instance after English pioneer Tom Hayward, who effected three dismissals in six deliveries across two innings for Leicestershire against Surrey in 1895 at the Oval. Suthar has relished a stellar run with the ball this season. After a dream Test debut against Afghanistan where he claimed seven wickets, including a six-wicket haul, Suthar dominated Sri Lanka with 16 wickets across two matches. He has exuded similar strengths in the County Championship, bagging 21 wickets in eight innings for Warwickshire, including a five-wicket haul against Somerset. Suthar will likely feature in Warwickshire's final two fixtures against Essex and Leicestershire as their County Championship title charge reaches the finish line. The Bears sit atop Division One with 184 points from 12 games, holding an 11-point cushion over second-placed Somerset.

‘Where will he bat?’: de Villiers on India vice-captain Tilak Varma’s T20I spot

India's T20I team will bear a unique selection headache involving vice-captain Tilak Varma, according to former South Africa captain AB de Villiers. The national selectors recently named a full-strength T20I side for India's three-match series against Afghanistan and the subsequent Asian Games campaign. India will also feature in a historic one-off T20I against Japan on September 22, six days out from their quarter-final fixture in the Asian Games. However, despite his glowing form in recent First-Class assignments, de Villiers said India will find it difficult to find a fixed slot for the left-handed Tilak. "There will definitely be some selection issues with regard to the batters. Obviously, Shreyas, captain, Ishan Kishan, Samson, Sooryavanshi, and then there are all-rounders, Tilak Varma; I think that's where the balance is quite tricky. Where will he bat?"

Since clinching the T20 World Cup at home in March, India have had a mixed record in the format. Shreyas Iyer's men lost all six completed matches on the tour of Ireland and England before winning a three-match series in Zimbabwe. With a host of first-choice players in the mix, de Villiers said that the team management will need to prioritise role clarity. Head coach Gautam Gambhir will look after the Indian side in the Afghanistan series, while the BCCI's Centre of Excellence (CoE) chief VVS Laxman will oversee the



Asian Games contingent in Japan. The continental event will clash with India's limited-overs series against West Indies, starting September 27. "Really, really strong squad, but the balance will be tricky to figure out. It is T20 cricket, so they can play around with the squad a little bit. There are different roles, but the role clarification will still be incredibly important for India, as they are playing quite a dangerous team," de Villiers added. Tilak was the key batter for South Zone during the recently-concluded Duleep Trophy, registering scores of 116*, 51* and 99 across the semi-final and final for South Zone.

‘I’m a fan, love watching his chess’: Magnus Carlsen on Praggnanandhaa



Magnus Carlsen's admiration for India's R Praggnanandhaa has been an open secret in chess. The duo famously faced off in the final of the FIDE World Cup in 2023, where Carlsen prevailed but not before he introduced the world to the phrase 'Be Like Pragg' which was a catch phrase concocted by coach RB Ramesh. Many of Pragg's headline-making battles have come against Carlsen. Pragg had become a household name in India in 2022 after defeating Carlsen for the first time at the Airthings Masters, an online event. At Carlsen's home tournament, Norway

Chess, Pragg had defeated the Norwegian World No 1 three times over two editions, 2024 and 2026 (twice in two games).

Now, in a freewheeling interview on the sidelines of the ongoing Global Chess League, Carlsen has spoken about why he's a fan of the Indian prodigy, who has gone on a title-winning streak recently, winning Norway Chess with a remarkable second half resurgence and then winning the Grand Chess Tour Finals. Magnus Carlsen is playing for the Alpine APL Pipers franchise in the Global Chess League. Magnus Carlsen is playing for the Alpine APL Pipers franchise in the Global Chess League.

"I don't think Pragg's approach has changed too much. He has a very good foundation in chess, but he plays in a very aggressive way, and it's been working out pretty well for him recently. I'm a fan. I love watching his chess. He pushes very, very hard, and he manages to put pressure on basically everybody, including myself," Carlsen, who plays for the Alpine APL Pipers franchise in the GCL, told reporters in Bengaluru. of Magnus Carlsen and Praggnanandhaa during the Tata Steel India Rapid and Blitz tournament in Kolkata. Images of Magnus Carlsen and Praggnanandhaa during the Tata Steel India Rapid and Blitz tournament in Kolkata. "I think Pragg is still not at a point where he can say that he's distanced himself from his peers. He's not quite consistent enough for that, but he's a tough, tough class player," Carlsen added. Carlsen also spoke at length about the upcoming World Chess Championship match between Gukesh and Javokhir Sindarov.

‘Ranji Trophy split for IPL auction’: Gavaskar slams BCCI’s domestic cricket schedule

Legendary Indian batter Sunil Gavaskar has lambasted the scheduling for India's 2026-27 domestic cricket season, highlighting a disregard for First-Class cricket and the Ranji Trophy in favour of auctions for the Indian Premier League (IPL) auction. The senior men's domestic season began with the Duleep Trophy tournament played over the last fortnight in Bengaluru and Chennai. It will be followed by the first leg of the Ranji Trophy group stages set to be played across the country between October 11 and November 5.

The tournament will then witness a break of over two months during which the limited-overs tournaments — Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20s and the 50-overs Vijay Hazare Trophy — will be played between November 14 and January 8, 2027. The white-ball leg will also coincide with the IPL auction for the 2027 season. "All for IPL auctions!" After the league stage of the Ranji Trophy, there's a gap of over a month for the white-ball tournaments, after which the Ranji Trophy knockout starts. The rhythm and momentum get destroyed.

"Why is the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy not played till the quarterfinal, then a break for a few weeks, and then the semifinals and final, as it happens with the Ranji Trophy? It won't be done because the auction for the IPL happens pretty soon after the tournament," Gavaskar wrote in his Sportstar column. The second half of the forthcoming Ranji season will commence on January 17, 2027, with the final set to be



played from February 27.

"How can a tournament be interrupted to accommodate a white-ball tournament? The Ranji Trophy national championship needs to be given pride of place again, rather than being pushed around here and there as it has been over the past few years." The BCCI opted the current format of fixtures for the Ranji Trophy since the 2024-25 season, citing harsh winter conditions in north India that disrupted several matches over previous years. In 2023-24, the tournament ran from January to March. The former India captain forewarned that neglecting red-ball cricket will impact the development of top talent in the red-ball format. "Ignoring domestic cricket to focus on international cricket will prove counterproductive in the end."

The force behind 400 metre national record holder Vishal

Early last year, Vishal TK approached coach Jason Dawson with the wish to train with the Jamaican. Dawson told him to start eating. Dawson does not recall Vishal's weight, but he felt the six-foot-two sprinter was too thin. "That's why I called him stickman. I looked at Vishal, and I said, 'ok I will try to coach you'. But I need you to grant me a favour. Just eat everything you can. I think it has to do with his metabolism because he can eat, but he burns it like this (snaps fingers)." The 54-year-old's training regimen is not for everyone. "I am out of my comfort zone, but I am living in hell happily," is how Vishal, the first and only Indian to clock sub-45 seconds in the 400 metres, described Dawson's training camp. By the end of a training session, his athletes typically have nothing left in the tank. Dawson is like the father pushing them to run one more lap or an extra training drill. They are like children who speak freely and fuss, hoping the father's heart melts. Dawson's hardy-yards method bore fruit when, months after he joined the Indian setup, the men's 4x400 meter relay team finished fifth at the 2023 World Championships final in Budapest. "I am glad they performed like that because they needed it. India needed to see that their team can perform amongst the biggest athletes out there. The youngsters coming up needed to see that," Dawson said.

Yet, not everyone bought into Dawson's approach. Thereafter, he took a different set of athletes under his wing. Among them is Vishal, who is reaping the rewards for having faith in the Jamaican. "One of the things that shocked me when I came to India was the mental side of how athletes viewed training. It was more like a resistance because anything that seems new is impossible. Like 'we have never done this before.' I would always tell my guys, especially Vishal, that difficult is not impossible. So now when I tell Vishal, 'this is difficult,' he says 'difficult is not impossible, coach,'" Dawson said. Vishal recalls naysayers discouraging him from training under Dawson. The outcome of his first race after he linked up with Dawson gave the cynics fodder. At the Indian Open 400 metre competition in Thiruvananthapuram in March last year, Vishal clocked 49.07 seconds and finished seventh.

But a month later, he bounced back to win gold at the Federation Cup in Kochi with a time of 46.19 seconds. Four months later in August, at the Inter-State competition in Chennai, Vishal broke the national record for the first time by clocking 45.12 seconds. "For my coach Jason" was scribbled on the back of his bib, an acknowledgement of Dawson's contribution. "People made me feel bad by saying why are you running a girl's timing (after the Indian Open). I shut everyone's mouth after one month when I won the Fed Cup," Vishal said. "That one month (between the Indian Open and the Federation Cup) there was so much negativity. When I started working with him, people said, 'I told you Jason coach's work is hard'. See that is why you are running 48-49. I was like 'why are you trying to disturb me'. When I was going to the Federation Cup, people said, 'hey, you can finish in the top 6'. They were trying to hold me back. But I won." Born to coach

Dawson, a former sprinter, was drawn to coaching even when he was a teenager. He considers himself fortunate to have the opportunity to pick the brains of Glen Mills, the coach at the famous Racers Track Club, who mentored Usain Bolt. Fitz Coleman, another legendary coach from



Jamaica, and the late Lloyd Cowan, the coach of Christine Ohuruogu, the 400 metre gold medalist at the 2008 Olympics, are men whom he was influenced by. When the opportunity to work with Indian athletes came his way, Dawson thought why not. "So when I came (to India) I observed as much as possible. I realised that talent is there. Before I even came here, I clearly remember telling Fitz Coleman that talent is there in India. He travels the world and he is one of those prolific coaches. He said, 'yes, talent is there, but we don't know what is the problem'."

Once in India, Dawson took the 400 metres to new heights — first the relay team in Budapest and now Vishal. Vishal's coach at the Lakshmi Bai National College of Physical Education in Thiruvananthapuram, Srinivasan, convinced the quarter-miler, who earlier specialised in the 100 metres and 200 metres, to train with Dawson. His previous coach Vinod Kumar, too green-lighted the move. At the Federation Cup in Ranchi in May, Vishal clocked 44.98s to become the first Indian to complete the one-race lap in less than 45 seconds. "Coach had told me a week earlier, I want you to be the first 44-second runner in India. He told me, if you do this your grandchildren will remember it," Vishal said. But before Vishal broke records, his technique needed to be fixed. Despite being a sprinter, Vishal didn't use the starting blocks to his advantage. But this wasn't the only issue. "His pattern of running and body language was nothing. I said, 'Vishal you have to learn to use your hands'. Your hands are very important when you are sprinting. I looked at what he was like on the starting block. Then I said forget about the starting block, I will help you with it later. The starting block was just there as an instrument on the track for Vishal. The starting block is supposed to propel you for your race," Dawson said. Vishal terms his start as 'garbage' and admits as a sprinter, he should have been better at it. "When I came to him, I was standing up and running and he changed everything. It is 400 metres, not just the first twenty metres or thirty metres. So he made me better in that 370 metres," Vishal said. Improving the start is kept for the next season. The immediate focus is the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya. Vishal didn't qualify for the 400 metre final at the Commonwealth Games. The Asian is an opportunity to end the season on a high. "I also told Vishal, you have to keep working hard. Because I am going to coach others. So don't get comfortable. I am going to push everyone I work with to hit you, because you are up there," Dawson said. Vishal is ready to walk through fire. That is how much he trusts Dawson. "Like father and son. Even if he scolds me, I don't get upset. People come and take photos with me now even when I am watching a race from the stands. I am happy we raised the bar."

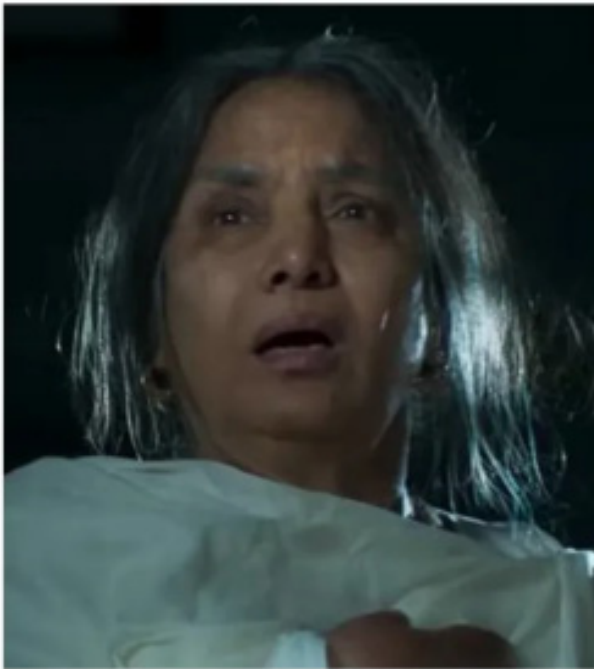
Tanya Chaudhary throws hammer farther than any Indian ever has; eyes Asiad gold

Tanya Chaudhary became the unlikely star at the Indian Athletics Series Final as the 22-year-old from Uttar Pradesh shattered the national record in the women's hammer throw. Tanya sent the hammer to a distance of 68.35 metres, improving her state-mate Anushka Yadav's previous record of 67.02m set in June at the Inter-State National Championships. Anushka finished second with 66.34m. Both men's and women's hammer throw were organized in the second field of play, away from the main mondo track, but both events saw national records going down with Nirbhay Chaudhary shattering it in the men's event with 71.02m. "It feels good to break the national record. It is good when me and Anushka compete together as it pushes both of us further," Tanya said after breaking the national record. Tanya and Anushka are both part of the Asian Games squad and train at Sri Krishna Inter College Ground in Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh. The ground is famous for producing multiple hammer throwers including the former national record holder Rachna Chaudhary. When Anushka broke the national record in Bhubaneswar, it gave Tanya a new target to chase. "I had been chasing the previous national record for three years but when Anushka broke the NR in Odisha, I told myself that you have a new target now," Tanya quipped. Tanya and Anushka have been regularly finishing on the podium. "I had three injuries at once. There was baker's cyst knee, stress injury in femur bone, and problem in ACL also," said Tanya. "In January, I felt the problem



for the first time in my knee but didn't pay much attention to it. After the injury deteriorated further, we did an MRI in April. After that I had to take rest for a few weeks," she said. Tanya hasn't completely recovered. "While I am back to competing I still have to manage my injuries," she said. Talking about her national record, Tanya said, "I used to visualise the national record but achieving it at such a crucial point is important. My official PB was 63.91m but I had crossed the 65m mark unofficially at All India University. "Earlier, Tanya missed the qualification mark by just 2 centimeters but Athletics Federation of India later added her to the squad. "I was further motivated after my name was included in the Asian Games list," she said. Tanya will have tough competition at the Asian Games with Chinese hammer throwers and her country mate Anushka."

Batwara 1947 failed as people couldn't accept Sunny Deol as a Muslim: Shabana Azmi



Batwara 1947, released on August 14, has tanked at the box office, with the film earning just Rs 53 crore so far. In contrast, Emraan Hashmi's Awarapan 2, which released on the same day, has crossed the Rs 200 crore mark. Reflecting on the film's poor box-office performance and its reception among audiences, actor Shabana Azmi, who plays an important role in Batwara 1947, said people may be unable to accept Sunny Deol playing a Muslim character. She compared it to Amitabh Bachchan, who, despite being the biggest star of his time, played Muslim characters with ease and was widely accepted in those roles. In a conversation with Zoom, Shabana Azmi said, "Firstly, I am very surprised at the total box office disaster that Batwara 1947 has been because I am surrounded by people who come and tell me they have loved the film. They tell me that they loved the

message. A lot of them feel that it is very important to speak about humanity in today's environment. On the other hand, people didn't go to the theatre and the ones who did, they walked out with confused reactions."

She explained, "The thing is that you cannot accept Sunny Deol as a Muslim. In Coolie and in many other films, Amitabh Bachchan very comfortably played Muslim characters. In Deewaar, he put 786 and that was accepted. So how do we understand this? Are they creating an environment where such decisions are being taken on purpose? I am not able to understand." The actor also highlighted that, in many cases, people who have watched the film may not have fully understood it. "I am surprised at how people are reacting to it. Even the ones who have watched the film think Sunny Deol is playing a Pakistani. He is not. It is simply not registering in their heads. Even Bushra Ahmed (Pakistani actor) objected to the film's language. She said the Punjabi dialect used by the villain is not right. If both religions are not liking the film, it means it is something which is pure and beautiful." Pointing to the current environment, the actor said, "The problem is that you cannot touch the subject of Hindustan and Pakistan in this setup, which is very disappointing. This is a film which is politically not incorrect in any way. You can't find fault with it. Sunny has done a very good job. It is very surprising and also contradictory that when I meet people, why are they praising the film so much?" Batwara 1947, starring Sunny Deol and backed by Aamir Khan, is directed by Rajkumar Santoshi and was expected to be one of the biggest releases of the year. The film marked the reunion of Ghatak and Gadar collaborators Sunny Deol and Santoshi. It also marked Preity Zinta's return to the big screen after an eight-year gap. However, none of these factors appear to have worked in the film's favour at the box office. The film is reportedly made on a budget of Rs 120-150 crore. The year 2026 has seen a number of films attempting to portray the human side of war and the people caught on either side of the conflict, including Ikkis and Main Vaapas Aaunga. Both films were received warmly by audiences and earned positive reviews. A similarly humane approach was also evident in Border 2.

Rupali Ganguly says she prefers Goa after Maldives holiday: 'Hindustan se better kuch bhi nahi'

Anupamaa actor Rupali Ganguly recently took a family holiday to the Maldives and gave fans a glimpse of her getaway through a YouTube vlog. While the actress was excited to explore the island nation, including experiencing a seaplane ride, her excitement soon gave way to homesickness after checking into her hotel. "Hindustan se better kuch bhi nahi hai," she said. In her vlog, Rupali shared several moments from her vacation with her husband, son and mother. While spending time with her mother in their private pool and teaching her how to swim, the Anupamaa actor also revealed that she was missing her dogs back home. Rupali, who is known for her love for animals, particularly dogs, said she missed seeing stray animals during her stay. "I have not seen a single stray animal in Maldives. That's something that I miss. Maldives is nice but okay. I prefer my Goa. You can go anywhere in the world, but there is nothing better than India. Hindustan se better... Bharat se better... kuch bhi nahi. Humara Bharat mahaan," she said.

Her love for India was evident even while returning from the holiday. As soon as Rupali and her family boarded their flight, they were seen enjoying homemade theplas. Sharing the moment with her viewers, she said, "You can take Indians out of India but never India out of Indians. As soon as



we sat down, we all started eating thepla." She further explained, "Whenever Nani travels, she travels with a lot of food." Rupali also revealed that she was pleasantly surprised to find Indian breakfast options, including idli, chutney and poha, at her hotel. Rupali was accompanied by her husband, son and mother on the trip. The actor first became widely popular for her role in Sarabhai vs Sarabhai and later achieved massive fame with Anupamaa. The show became a major hit during the pandemic and turned Rupali into a household name. Several of her dialogues from the series have since gone viral, with fans frequently recreating them on social media.

Nimisha Sajayan shines, but weak murder mystery holds it back



Babita Singh Reporting movie review: Babita aka Baby is your average Indian woman, trying to navigate politics at the work-place as well as in her domestic sphere. It could be the story played out in millions of households, but the thing that makes this film different is that Babita is a cop, elevated by circumstances into her position. The fact that hers is a 'compassionate posting' keeps coming up: a death in Baby's family empties up a spot at the police station, which she steps into, with her colleagues expecting her to earn her place over and over again. The fact that it parallels her home situation, as a wife and daughter-in-law, is not hidden either: dutiful bahu are expected to fill empty spots day after day, to keep the family happy.

This duality is captured deftly in Ambiecka Pandit's atmospheric film which threads societal ills through a police procedural, a well-established genre flourishing in the age of streaming. Arriving in small-town Rewa with husband Sharad (Anshumaan Pushkar) for her sister-in-law's (Priya Yadav) godh-bharaai, Baby's focus is split between her domestic duties and the sordid murder of childhood friend Banshi (Barun Sobti). It is when the director and writer Amita Vyas train their sights on the spikiness that happens within the chaar-diwari — mother-in-law (Sunita Rajwar) ruling the roost, sister-in-law behaving like the entitled nanad, and husband doing the passive-aggressive act — that the film works best. Not this sari, that one; haldi doodh at the

crack of dawn — all the petulance is saved for the daughter-in-law, who realises that she is being put upon but keeps soldering on regardless.

The ensemble cast is solid, led by a wonderful Nimisha Sajayan, as she does about trying to keep everyone happy, pausing to check in on herself only when she can. But the performances can't paper over the weaknesses of the film. The victim is thinly-written. We never really get a satisfactory sense of who he is. Why does Baby get so involved? Was there something between the two? Why would a woman who is clearly not confident of her own abilities go barreling into tricky situations which are clearly above her pay-grade? This is where Baby, and the film stumbles: her attempts at understanding the weight of patriarchy and her tentative pushing back has more impact, than the unravelling of the mystery. You may get reminded of Sandhya Suri's 'Santosh' in the way an 'anukampa' posting is used to prop up a woman who learns to learn on the job, as well as Rajwar's presence. But the small town woman, and the small town cop, sometimes one playing the other, are in the danger of becoming tropes, if they haven't already: Sudip Sharma (Pataal Lok, Kohrra) is co-producer here, and well-versed in creating atmospheric, grounded crime thrillers. Having liked Pandit's short 'Under The Waters' very much, I was waiting to see what she did with her debut feature. It lags, but there is also no doubt that there is a voice here. Babita Singh Reporting cast: Nimisha Sajayan, Anshumaan Pushkar, Sunita Rajwar, Priyanka Setia, Priya Yadav, Barun Sobti, Ravi Jhankal, Geetika Vidya Ohlyan, Rajesh Kumar Babita Singh Reporting director: Ambiecka Pandit Babita Singh Reporting rating: 2.5 stars

Pitbull pays heartfelt tribute to late music legend Dolly Parton

Los Angeles: Rapper Pitbull has shared a heartfelt tribute for the late singing legend Dolly Parton, as he said that she "believed" in her when a lot of folks didn't. The rapper was performing at Northwell at Jones Beach Theater in New York, when he paid the tribute to the late singer. He told the crowd, "We're having a great time and then we're losing our minds, but there's someone that was very special to me and showed me love and believed in me when a lot of folks didn't and gave me an opportunity. And her name is Dolly Parton. She lived an amazing life. A hardworking woman, intelligent, sophisticated, funny, powerful, intimidating,

At Aamir Khan-Saif Ali Khan's Dil Chahta Hai reunion; fans ask, 'Where's Akshaye Khanna?'



Farhan Akhtar's directorial debut Dil Chahta Hai recently clocked 25 years of its release, on August 10. The film, starring Aamir Khan, Saif Ali Khan, and Akshaye Khanna continues to be considered among one of Bollywood's most loved cult classics. To celebrate the special milestone, the team of Dil Chahta Hai reunited in Mumbai. However, Dhurandhar star Akshaye Khanna was missing from the celebration. Preity Zinta was also not seen at the event. On Friday, the cast members and director of the film met at an event to celebrate the silver jubilee. Actors Saif Ali Khan, Aamir Khan, Farhan Akhtar, Dimple Kapadia were spotted in several paparazzi videos surfacing on social media. Co-producer Ritesh Sidhwani was also snapped posing with the team of Dil Chahta Hai. However, fans flooded the comments section, wondering about the absence of one of the main leads — Akshaye Khanna.

Preity Zinta, who is currently in Paris, also couldn't make it to the event in Mumbai. "Incomplete without AK n PZ," a fan wrote. Another comment read, "Where is Rahman dakait?" referring to his character in Aditya Dhar's

Dhurandhar. "Akshaye got too busy after Dhurandhar???" a curious user asked. "Not gonna lie, I low-key expected this of him," a person commented.

During an interview with Anupama Chopra on the film's 25th anniversary, Farhan Akhtar reflected on the impact of Dil Chahta Hai. He said, "I feel that what Dil Chahta Hai writing embodied was what was happening around us all the time. It's just that nobody was capturing it and putting it into a script or putting it into a film. I just happened to be the right person at the right place at the right time." He further added, "Nothing really represented me, you know. Or my friends. It was time to represent it the way that we felt it."

About Dil Chahta Hai Helmed by Farhan Akhtar, Dil Chahta Hai explores the story of three best friends, Akash (Aamir Khan), Sameer (Saif Ali Khan) and Siddharth 'Sid' (Akshaye Khanna), who go through the ups and downs of friendship and love together. The movie also featured Preity Zinta and Dimple Kapadia as female leads. The coming-of-age drama has achieved the cult status over the years.

Orry refuses to be introduced to India's Got Latent panel, asks Samay Raina to stay in his lane

For the fifth episode of Samay Raina's India's Got Latent Season 2 on Netflix, the comedian welcomed Archana Puran Singh, Orry, Nishant Suri and Sharon Verma to the panel. While the episode was among the funniest instalments of the season, it was the banter between Orry and Samay that stole the limelight. After introducing the panel, Samay said, "What a panel," prompting a hilarious response from Orry. Looking at the branding products placed on their table, Orry said, "You have got such cheap sponsors! It's all falling apart. We move even a little, and it falls apart." Archana quickly joined in and replied, "With cheap guests like you, what did you expect?" leaving everyone in splits.

Orry had reportedly flown all the way from London to appear on Samay's show. Explaining this, he said, "I took a ten-hour flight for the first time, only to sit on a panel where I know no one but myself. Who are the other people?" Samay responded, "I will introduce them, man." Archana then took a dig at Orry and said, "He always wants to seem busy, so he tells people he's from London. He's from Dahisar, but he tells everyone he's from London."

Samay then curiously asked, "Orry bhai, what are you doing these days?" Pointing at the other panelists, Orry said, "This, unfortunately. Look at my state, I am stuck here." He added, "Imagine. I go out with such big shots, we party, make content. Now I am stuck with them. My first time on a panel where I only know myself. I don't know anyone else." When Samay once again offered to introduce him to the other panelists, Orry looked at them and quickly replied, "No, thanks." When Samay asked, "Why not?", Orry said, "No, it's okay." "Why so mean, Orry?" Samay asked. "It's okay, I pass," Orry replied. Looking at his response, Samay joked, "I am gonna f*** him up today." Samay then said, "Orry, I love you. Thanks for coming. Have you seen the show?" "I will, I will watch it," Orry replied, confessing that he had not watched the show yet. Samay later took a dig at Orry's sexuality during their banter. Orry warned him, "The people I know, you will go in, but you won't come out. Be careful. Aukat mein raho (stay in your lane)." Samay immediately quipped, "Where? In Vantara?" Samay then asked Orry to explain his now-viral hand-on-chest pose.



Explaining the pose, Orry said, "I am not saying this, people think that when I put my hand on their body, their age goes down a bit. That they feel younger." He clarified, "I am not saying. They think so, not me." When they finally began calling contestants onto the show, the first contestant, a singer, said that he made jingles for an ad agency. However, Samay misheard this as "Arijit Singh." Highlighting the number of advertisements and brand deals associated with the show, Sharon pointed at Samay and said, "Ad agency toh teri bhi ho gayi hai." Orry added, "It feels like we are in some market."

He then looked at Samay and asked, "Are you that short on money, Samay? YouTube, Netflix, brand deals... He's got every sponsor in the world here." Samay replied, "I don't get paid to hold my hand to my chest like you." Orry then turned to the contestant and asked, "What's the biggest brand jingle you have made?" When the contestant replied, "PhonePe," Orry joked, "Kis Phone Pe?" Archana and Samay, surprised by his response, clarified, "Arre, PhonePe. It's a brand name." "Never heard of it," Orry replied. He then proceeded to read a line from the form submitted by the contestant. He read, "Main nashta nahi karta aur kabhi nahi karunga!" The contestant immediately corrected him: "Nasha!" The correction left everyone in the audience in splits. Samay laughed at Orry's mistake and said, "Abey yaar!" He then addressed the camera with his hands joined and joked, "Anant bhai, if you are watching... please enrol him in Dhirubhai Ambani School."

Archana Puran Singh calls laughing on Kapil Sharma's jokes 'toughest': 'Ek job hai, vo bhi...'

Comedian Samay Raina is back with another hilarious episode of his controversial Netflix show — India's Got Latent 2. And this time, he welcomed Orry, Archana Puran Singh, Nishant Suri, and Sharon Verma in the guest panel. At one point, he age shamed Archana and asked her to share her plastic surgeon's number. He also joked about the actor's iconic laugh and made her admit that laughing on Kapil Sharma's jokes is the 'toughest work'. "For the first time when I saw you, it was when you played Miss Breganza. I am a big fan. From that time till now, you haven't aged a single day," said Samay. As soon as she thanked him, he said, "You have aged decades."

After ageing decades, if I still look like this, then learn something from me," Archana replied. "Then, please give me your plastic surgeon's number," Samay said, leaving her in splits. Archana Puran Singh, who has around 1.31 million subscribers on YouTube, has been vlogging with her family since 2024. The comedian asked the audience if they've watched her vlogs. "I have seen in your vlogs that neither your husband works, nor your two useless sons. They are sitting here in the first row," Samay pointed out. "I told you beforehand that don't sit in the front row, because this is not how you get fame, this is how you get insulted," Archana looked at her sons Aaryamaan and Ayushmaan, and emphasised. "You know how you get fame?" Samay shot back, and instantly mimicked Archana's signature laugh. When Samay Raina teased the actor about not taking her job of 'laughing' seriously, Archana told him that it's the most difficult task. "That's the toughest work," she said.



"Laughing on Kapil Sharma's jokes is tough?" Without thinking twice, Archana Puran Singh said, "Yes". She immediately realised her mistake and said, "

I fell right into that one." Samay didn't leave any stone unturned to take humorous digs at Archana's husband, actor Parmeet Sethi. When Archana and Parmeet started dating in 1988, she had already achieved recognition after Jalwa (1987), while he was still finding his space in the industry. "I never thought of money when I was dating," said Archana, during a conversation about what women want. "Ya, but your husband did," Samay replied. To which, Archana added, "