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Bus-tractor crash leaves 30 injured in Siddipet

Siddipet: At least 30 persons sustained injuries as an RTC bus hit a tractor on Rajiv Rahadari at Timmareddipally in Kondapak mandal on Friday evening. While 20 migrant workers travelling in the tractor sustained serious injuries, several passengers on board the RTC bus also suffered minor injuries.The Siddipet depot bus was proceeding towards Siddipet town from Hyderabad when the incident occurred. While 30 migrant workers working in a poultry farm at Timmareddipaly were on their way back to farm from Kukunoorpally after purchasing vegetables in a local market, the bus hit the tractor when it was taking a 'U' turn.

Congress leader dies by suicide in Hanamkonda

Hanamkonda: A Congress leader from the 52nd division of Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation Peddaboina Ganesh Yadav allegedly died by suicide.

He hanged himself from a ceiling fan at his flex banner printing shop at Kishanpura in Naim Nagar area on late Friday evening. The reason for the suicide is not yet known. Police have registered a case and are investigating.

Telangana Govt Forms Panel to Resolve Section 22A Land Issues

Hyderabad, Sept 18

The state government on Friday constituted a high-level committee to fast-track resolution of Section 22A land disputes and provide relief to affected property owners. Revenue minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy announced the decision in the Legislative Assembly, saying it followed Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's assurance in the House on Wednesday to address the long-pending issues.

The committee, constituted through GO Rt. No. 564, will be headed by Chief Commissioner of Land Administration D.S. Lokesh Kumar, with law secretary Papi Reddy and inspector-general of stamps and registration Rajiv Gandhi Hanumanthu as members. The government will invite applications from affected owners and take decisions on them on a fast-track basis.

Srinivas Reddy said orders had also been issued to begin regularisation of over 9,700 plots in colonies in the LB Nagar Assembly constituency under GO 118. The process will begin from Saturday and applications will be disposed of within a month, subject to court orders wherever applicable. He urged owners who had purchased plots and constructed houses in these colonies to approach the local authorities for regularisation.

The government was also examining cases involving layouts and colonies approved by HMDA, GHMC or DTCP but facing registration hurdles because of their inclusion in the prohibited list. A decision on removing such properties from the list would be taken within a couple of days, the minister said, adding that necessary legal measures would be taken to facilitate registrations.

On the Singareni coal belt, Srinivas reddy said steps would be initiated to regularise house sites in accordance with GO 76 issued during the tenure of then Chief Minister the late Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy. Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka would hold a meeting with MLAs from the region on Saturday to discuss the issue and work out a solution.

Srinivas Reddy said decisions on 12 land issues identified by the Chief Minister would be taken within a month to provide relief to applicants, adding that the government was committed to resolving the long-pending disputes through a time-bound process.

Telangana HC Disqualifies Danam Nagender as MLA

Hyderabad:,Sept 18

In the first such judgment in the state, the Telangana High Court on Friday disqualified Khairatabad MLA Danam Nagender from the Assembly on the ground of defection. The court consequently declared the seat vacant.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh and Justice G.M. Mohiuddin set aside the order of Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar, who had rejected petitions seeking Nagender's disqualification. The court declared that Nagender stood disqualified from April 23, 2024, under Paragraph 2(1)(a) of the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution.

The bench in its 91-page order held that Nagender, who was elected on a BRS ticket in the 2023 Assembly elections, incurred disqualification after contesting the 2024 Lok Sabha election from Secunderabad as a Congress candidate while continuing as BRS MLA.

The High Court also directed its registry to communicate the order to the secretary to the Assembly Speaker and to the Election Commission of India The bench also declined a plea from Nagender's counsel to keep the order in abeyance for some time to enable him to approach the Supreme Court.

The verdict came against the backdrop of petitions seeking action against nine BRS MLAs who joined the Congress, and challenging the Speaker`s decision in rejecting the disqualification pleas. The BRS as well as the BJP in particular challenged the Speaker`s decision in Nagender's case. BJP Assembly floor leader Aleti Maheshwar Reddy challenged the Speaker's decision when Nagender, elected to the Assembly on a BRS ticket, had contested from the Secunderabad Lok Sabha constituency on a Congress ticket, without resigning as BRS legislator. BRS legislator Padi Kaushik Reddy filed separate a petition. The bench had reserved orders on August 21.

Tirupati Laddu Prasadam Made From Palm Oil, Chemicals, Says ED; Arrests Ghee Company Owner

New Delhi:The ghee used to prepare the 'Tirupati Laddu' prasadam during 2019-2024 was allegedly manufactured using refined palm oil, palmolein and various chemicals, the Enforcement Directorate said on Friday, after arresting a ghee manufacturing company promoter on money laundering charges a day earlier.

The agency said the ED Hyderabad office had taken Kailash Chand Mangla of Sukriti Foods into custody on Thursday in connection with the ghee adulteration case. He was produced before a Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) Special Court in Visakhapatnam, which sent him to judicial custody, PTI reported from the ED statement.

The agency found that the adulterated ghee used to prepare the laddu prasadam was allegedly manufactured using refined palm oil, palm kernel oil, palmolein and chemicals identified as MG-90, Myvacet Soft 400, monoglycerides, and acetic acid ester. This was subsequently supplied as 'Agmark special grade cow ghee' for supply to the TTD during the period from 2019 to 2024.

The alleged fraudulent ghee supplies were valued at Rs 230 crore, and out of this Rs 96 crore of adulterated ghee was manufactured by Mangla, it claimed. The agency said Mangla was one of the co-conspirators in the case, facilitated the procurement of adulterants and manufactured adulterated ghee at his factory premises.

"He also coordinated the supply of adulterated ghee through various front entities, including Sri Vyshnavi Dairy Specialities, Malganga Milk & Agro Products and A.R. Dairy Foods," the ED statement said, according to PTI.

"Mangla created and maintained false records relating to the sale and purchase of ghee and refined palm oil, with the objective of concealing the actual utilisation of adulterants and creating an appearance of legitimate production and supply of genuine cow ghee," the ED alleged. The agency has earlier arrested Vipin Jain, promoter and director of a company named Bhole Baba Organic Dairy Milk, on similar charges.

'Delays in military projects serious, causing technology gap': Rajnath amid Tejas Mk-1A setbacks

New Delhi, Sept 18 Delays in completing critical military projects need to be taken 'seriously' as they create a technology gap and lead to cost escalation, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Friday.

Project timelines have to be kept 'realistic', the minister said amid schedule overruns in the production of indigenous Tejas Mark-1A fighter jets. Deliveries were scheduled to commence in March 2024, but not a single aircraft has been delivered, with the integration of the radar into the jets still pending.

"A very important issue is that of delays ... We will have to take these seriously. Because gaps are created in crucial defence requirements and needs are not met," the minister said while speaking at an event hosted by public sector undertaking Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in Bengaluru, where a set of training jets was handed over to the Indian Air Force (IAF).The minister did not name HAL, but the reference was obvious when he mentioned the delays. Besides the Tejas Mark-1A, the two Tejas trainer jets handed over to the IAF at the function on Friday were also part of an order placed in 2016.

FSSAI flags Nestlé infant products over claims, biotin test failure

New Delhi, Sept 18 The apex food regulator has opened three separate adjudication cases against Nestlé India over false claims related to infant nutrition products, putting the spotlight not only on how baby foods are marketed to parents but also on whether products sold in the market meet prescribed nutritional standards.

Nestlé India, however, rejected the concerns, saying its products and labels comply with applicable regulations and that the claims cited by the regulator are factual and scientifically supported.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said it examined Nestlé's infant nutrition products and their promotional material available on e-commerce platforms. The scrutiny covered NAN Excella Pro Stage 1, Lactogen Pro 1 and a follow-up formula.

For NAN Excella Pro Stage 1, the FSSAI flagged claims referring to "5 HMOs" and "whey protein". In Lactogen Pro 1, it flagged a claim describing whey protein as "easy to digest".

The regulator said it sought clarifications from Nestlé and subsequently found the promotional material for the two products contrary to Regulation 4(2) of the Food Safety and Standards (Foods for Infant Nutrition) Regulations, 2020. The provision restricts promotional claims or materials intended to increase the saleability of infant foods.

Immediate demolition of tilted four-storey building in Gopanpally ordered

Hyderabad:, Sept 18 Panic gripped NTR Nagar in Gopanpally, Hyderabad, on Friday afternoon after an illegal four-storey residential building developed a sudden and noticeable tilt, raising immediate fears of a tragic collapse, as the building was occupied by families.

The incident took place at around 1 pm in the Serilingampally Zone, triggering an emergency response from the authorities of Cyberabad Municipal Corporation (CMC) and local police authorities.Download Interactive Maps

According to officials, the building was constructed five years ago without CMC permission. The building was developed on a plot measuring just 50 square yards in severe violation of safety norms, which only allow a ground-plus-one structure for plots of that size.Thanks to prompt action by the authorities, all occupants of the tilting building, residents of surrounding areas, and families from adjoining residential buildings were safely evacuated within two hours to prevent any casualties, and the immediate vicinity was securely cordoned off.Teams from the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (Hydraa) Disaster Response Force (DRF), the CMC engineering wing, and town-planning officials rushed to the site to inspect the structural failure and foundation integrity.

'Vote theft, govt theft, party theft': Rahul hits out at Election Commission

New Delhi, Sept 18 Congress leader and LoP in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Friday accused the BJP and the Election Commission of working together to split Opposition parties and wrest control of their election symbols, after the poll panel froze the Trinamool Congress (TMC) name and its "Flowers & Grass" symbol amid a factional dispute ahead of the West Bengal Assembly bypolls.

Drawing a parallel with the earlier splits in the Shiv Sena and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Gandhi alleged there was as clear pattern in how a political party was divided before its electoral identity was taken away. "First Shiv Sena, then NCP and now TMC. Every time, the same pattern — BJP and the Election Commission join forces to split a party. Then its election symbol is snatched away," Rahul alleged.

His attack came a day after the EC, in an interim order, barred both rival TMC factions from using the All-India Trinamool Congress name and its reserved election symbol for the upcoming bypolls. Both groups have been asked to suggest alternative names and free symbols while the dispute over control of the party remains pending.The Commission's action followed competing claims over the party's leadership and organisational control. The poll panel said the dispute could not be finally determined before the bypolls and temporarily froze the name and symbol for both sides.Rahul, however, sought to connect the TMC development with his continuing allegations of electoral manipulation. "When an entire party can be stolen, it's hardly surprising that the votes of millions of Indians can be stolen too," he said.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

India faces another tariff blow

Tariffs are the new weapons of modern trade wars. United States President Donald Trump has been using this weapon to bully foes and friends alike. India, which has been bearing the impact of his tariff tantrums, is up for another challenge now. The US House of Representatives has given Trump another weapon to launch a fresh tariff war and disrupt global trade. It passed the 'Lindsey O Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026' by 262–159, empowering Trump to impose tariffs of up to 100 per cent on buyers of Russian oil. The Bill is designed to squeeze Russia's revenue from oil and gas exports amid the war in Ukraine. However, this legislation could have major implications for India's economy and oil markets, as Moscow remains a major supplier of crude oil to New Delhi. It could also have implications for the US-India trade ties if Trump imposes further levies. A 100 per cent tariff would severely hit Indian manufacturing sectors—including textiles, electronics, and gems—by destroying price competitiveness in the vital American market. India has saved billions by importing discounted Russian crude oil, which helps stabilise domestic inflation for its 1.4 billion citizens. However, these energy savings risk becoming a liability if the US levies massive export penalties. It is estimated that a full-scale tariff implementation could knock nearly 0.8 per cent off India's GDP growth over the next couple of years. India currently imports 88 per cent of its crude requirements, with Russia being one of its major suppliers.In fact, when Moscow began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russian crude oil became a significant part of India's crude import basket. According to data from the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), India imported $40.8 billion worth of Russian crude in FY2026 — nearly a third of its total crude imports. It must be pointed out that India buys Russian oil to secure affordable energy for the country

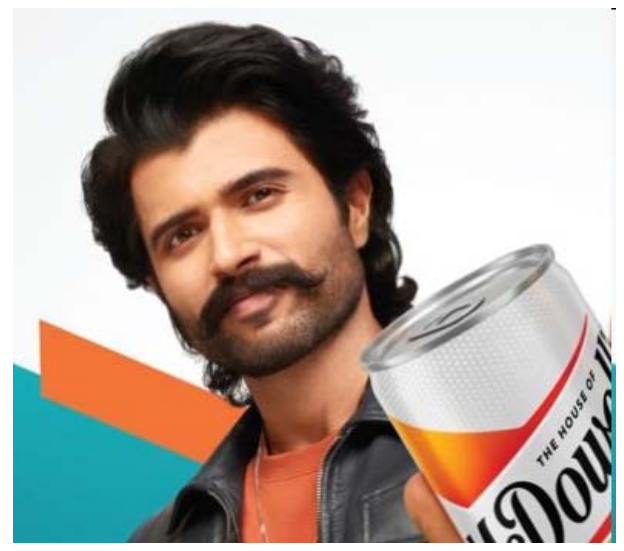
Grand Annadanam Distribution Held in Chilkanagar

---Annadanam Programme Commences After Special Prayers to Lord Ganesha""CHILKANAGAR, SEPTEMBER 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): An Annadanam (food distribution) programme was organised in Chilkanagar, Uppal constituency, under the aegis of Nova Banquet Hall and Om Sai Eye Hospital & Homeopathy Clinic. The programme commenced after special prayers were offered to Lord Ganesha."A large number of devotees and local residents participated in the programme and received the prasadam.The programme was attended by contested corporator Nerdham Eshwaramma Goud, Nerdham Bhaskar Goud, Chairman of Nerdham Balayya Bhagyalakshmi Trust, Dr. Nerdham Manush, and Advocate Anusha Goud as the chief guests. Bhagyashree, Balakrishna Eshwar, Vijayalakshmi, Shobhalakshmi, Sneha, and others also participated in the programme."On the occasion, the organisers expressed their wishes that, with the blessings of Lord Ganesha, all people would be blessed with happiness, prosperity, good health and well-being.

CEO P. Sudarshan Reddy Inspects SIR Process in Uppal and Habsiguda

Reviews Field-Level Arrangements and Verification of Voter Details with Officials""UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): As part of the SIR (Special Intensive Revision) process, Chief Electoral Officer C. Sudarshan Reddy visited the Uppal and Habsiguda areas on Friday and reviewed the arrangements and progress of the ongoing field-level activities related to the process."During the visit, Uppal Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta, Additional Collector Vijayender Reddy, Uppal Deputy Commissioner Anand, Tahsildar Pool Singh Chauhan, AERO Swapna, and other officials were present."The officials briefed the CEO on the activities being undertaken as part of the SIR process, the duties being performed by field-level staff, and the verification of voter details. They also discussed various issues being encountered during the implementation of the process."CEO C. Sudarshan Reddy directed the officials to conduct the SIR process efficiently and strictly in accordance with the prescribed rules and guidelines. He also instructed them to provide the necessary information and cooperation to the public and ensure that the process proceeds smoothly.

Vijay Deverakonda Unveils New Campaign 'Yaari Ki Nayi Vibe



"Hyderabad, September 16 (Indian Chronicle) : House of McDowell's Soda has unveiled its latest campaign, 'Yaari Ki Nayi Vibe', featuring its long-standing brand ambassador Vijay Deverakonda, Diageo India Vice President and Category Head-Marketing Anandita Dutta said in a statement on Friday. Speaking along with Satchi & Satchi India Chief Creative Officer Karthik Smetacek, she said the campaign continues the brand's association with friendship while reflecting the changing ways in which the new generation experiences and celebrates friendship. The campaign aims to go beyond simply spending time together and focuses on creating new experiences that make every gathering more memorable.

AKARAPU ARUN PATEL Fulfils His Promise

--New 150 mm Water Pipeline Sanctioned in Sai Krishna Colony"Ten-Year Drinking Water Problem Set to Be Resolved""RAMANTHAPUR, SEPTEMBER 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Residents of Sai Krishna Colony in the Venkat Reddy Nagar Division, who have been facing a drinking water problem for the past ten years, are set to get relief with the sanctioning of a new 150 mm water pipeline."During a recent Basti Bata programme conducted by Uppal Constituency Youth Congress President Akarapu Arun Patel along with officials, local residents brought their long-standing drinking water problem to his notice."Recognising the difficulties faced by the residents, Arun Patel brought the issue to the attention of Uppal Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy. Responding to the request, Parameshwar Reddy spoke with the concerned officials and took steps to sanction a new 150 mm water pipeline for Sai Krishna Colony and initiate the required works."The residents of the colony expressed their special gratitude to Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, Akarapu Arun Patel and the concerned officials for taking the initiative to resolve their drinking water problem, which had continued for nearly a decade.Medchal District General Secretary Kishore, Youth Congress Division President Bhanu, Uppal Constituency Youth Congress Secretary Bapireddy, Working President Pasha, Kuruma Sangham President Sattaiah, Bhaskar, Rajesh, Mahesh, Nagesh, Sai and other leaders, along with colony residents, participated in the programme.

Digital Ration Cards Distributed in Ramanthapur-Ration Cards to Be Provided to All Eligible Poor Families:

VALLAPU SRIKANTH YADAY""RAMANTHAPUR, SEPTEMBER 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A digital ration card distribution programme was held at the RTC Colony Community Hall in Ramanthapur Division, where digital ration cards were distributed to eligible beneficiaries."Ramanthapur Division Congress Party Working President Vallapu Srikanth Yadav participated in the programme and handed over digital ration cards to the beneficiaries."Speaking on the occasion, Srikanth Yadav said that steps were being taken to ensure that all eligible poor families in Ramanthapur Division receive ration cards. He stated that the government was implementing several welfare programmes aimed at the welfare of poor and middle-class families.He particularly highlighted the distribution of fine-quality rice and various welfare schemes being implemented by the government under the leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy."He said digital ration cards would make it easier for eligible families to access the benefits of various government welfare schemes."Shaga Sridhar, Bukka Suresh, Bhaskar, Shankar, Jangaiah, Mahesh, Ravi, Akhil, Women's President Sandhyarani, Ambika, Shobha and others participated in the programme.

Manhole Raising Works Begin on Special Initiative of MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY

"Solution to Manhole Problem Causing Road Accidents"RAMANTHAPUR, SEPTEMBER 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A solution has been initiated to the problem of manholes that are not at the same level as the road on the newly laid BT road from Sharadanagar ADRM Galli to Old Ramanthapur. On the special initiative of Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, works to raise the manholes to the road level have commenced."The BT road from Sharadanagar ADRM Galli to Old Ramanthapur was constructed about six months ago. However, as the manholes were not level with the road surface, depressions developed around them, causing considerable inconvenience to motorists. Local residents stated that the uneven manholes had also contributed to several accidents in the area."After the issue was brought to the notice of MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, he responded promptly and spoke with the concerned officials, taking steps to ensure that the manholes were raised to the level of the road.BRS state leaders Gantham Nageswara Rao and Dayakar Reddy, along with GHMC AE Shwetashree, inspected the progress of the works. Kittu, Ganesh Yadav, Pandu and Rakhi, among others, participated in the inspection.Local residents expressed hope that completion of the manhole raising works would reduce inconvenience to motorists and help prevent road accidents.

TJA New Committee Elected in Komuram Bheem Asifabad"

"Will Work for the Resolution of Journalists' Issues"

"Kumrambheem, Asifabad,District.Reporter "Indian Chronicle"September.19.""Kagaznagar: Telangana Journalists Association (TJA) will continue to work for the rights, welfare and resolution of journalists' problems, said Parvathi Suresh, Mancherial District President of TJA and member of the District Media Accreditation Committee. The new district committee of the Telangana Journalists Association for Komuram Bheem Asifabad district was elected at a meeting held in Kagaznagar on Friday.At the beginning of the meeting, members observed a condolence by paying tributes to Tukaram, a member of the Komuram Bheem Asifabad District Media Accreditation Committee, who recently passed away due to health issues.Later, the new district committee was announced as per the directions of TJA founder Uppala Laxman, State President Ramana Rao and State General Secretary Gouri.Speaking on the occasion, Parvathi Suresh called upon journalists across the district to remain united and work collectively for the resolution of their issues. He said the Telangana Journalists Association has been continuously working for the rights and welfare of journalists. He advised the newly elected committee members to coordinate with one another and strengthen the association further. He assured that he would extend his support in resolving the issues brought to the association's notice by journalists.Newly elected District President Mirza Shafi Ulla Beg and District General Secretary Boyire Somanna thanked TJA founder Uppala Laxman, State President Ramana Rao, State General Secretary Gouri and Mancherial District President Parvathi Suresh for entrusting them with the district responsibilities. They said they would work towards strengthening the association and take up the problems faced by journalists in the district for their resolution.""New District Committee:""District President: Mirza Shafi Ulla Beg"District General Secretary: Boyire Somanna""Vice Presidents: Sheikh Fazal, Dikonda Sanjeev, Erra Rajasekhar""District Secretaries: Kutikela Venkataswamy, Soulla Sandeep, Kothapalli Ramesh, K. Shiva""Publicity Secretary: Chapale Moreswar""Organising Secretary: Vadnala Sandeep""Joint Secretaries: Jadi Srinivas, Latakari Shankar""Treasurer: Tangallapalli Tirupathi""Executive Members: Kacham Ganesh, Abdul Safeel, Salauddin and Ahmed Ameen.

Aluguveli Sudarshan Reddy Appointed as Congress General Secretary of Medipally Division

"Former Corporator Singireddy Padma Reddy Extends Congratulations""BODUPPAL, SEPTEMBER 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Aluguveli Sudarshan Reddy has been appointed as the General Secretary of the Congress Party for Medipally Division under the Boduppal Circle of Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation."Following his appointment, Sudarshan Reddy met Medchal District DCC President Thotakura Vajresh Yadav as a courtesy and expressed his gratitude for the opportunity."Former Boduppal Corporator Singireddy Padma Reddy congratulated Sudarshan Reddy on his appointment and encouraged him to work actively for the development of the Congress Party. He also advised him to make sincere efforts to ensure that government welfare schemes reach eligible people."Singireddy Padma Reddy expressed hope that Sudarshan Reddy would achieve greater political progress and responsibilities in the future."Congress senior leaders, including Gurrala Venkatesh Yadav, and others participated in the programme.

FORMER CORPORETOR SINGIREDDY PADMA REDDY Visits Ganesh Mandaps"

Prominent Leaders Participate as Chief Guests and Launch Annadanam""BODUPPAL, SEPTEMBER18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Ganesh Navaratri celebrations are continuing in a grand manner with devotion and religious fervour across the Boduppal Circle in Medchal–Malkajgiri district."As part of the celebrations, former corporators Singireddy Padma Reddy and Thotakura Ajay Yadav attended an Annadanam (free food distribution) programme held at the Ganesh mandapam established at NIN Colony, Road No. 4, as chief guests. They performed special prayers to Lord Ganesha and later served food to devotees, formally inaugurating the Annadanam programme."Similarly, Singireddy Padma Reddy and Thotakura Ajay Yadav participated as chief guests in another Annadanam programme organised by the Gangaputra Association. After offering special prayers to Lord Ganesha, they served food to devotees and residents of the locality."Medchal District B-Block General Secretary Kotha Kishore Goud, Boduppal Division Congress Party President Bommak Kalyan, Chengicherla Division Congress Party President Pogula Dileep Reddy, former corporators and several Congress Party leaders participated in the programmes.Division-level leaders, members of the Gangaputra Association, local residents and a large number of devotees attended the Annadanam programmes.

Former Corporators Visit Ganesh Pandals and Offer Special Prayers"

"Nacharam, September 18(INDIAN CHORNICLE):""On the occasion of the Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations, former corporators Jeripothula Prabhudas and Gundarapu Srinivas Reddy visited several Ganesh pandals set up across the division.""During their visit, they offered special prayers to Lord Ganesha and sought His blessings for the peace, prosperity and well-being of the people. They interacted with devotees and members of the organising committees and enquired about the arrangements being made for the smooth conduct of the festivities.""Speaking on the occasion, they extended their heartfelt greetings to the people on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi and wished that Lord Ganesha would bless every family with happiness, good health and prosperity.""They also appreciated the efforts of the organisers and volunteers in conducting the celebrations with devotion and maintaining a peaceful and festive atmosphere across the division.

Nutrition Month Programme Held at Bambara Rythu Vedika

"Kumrambheem, Asifabad,District.Reporter "Indian Chronicle"September.19.""Wankidi Mandal A Nutrition Month programme was held in a grand manner at the Rythu Vedika in Bambara Gram Panchayat on Friday. Awareness was created among adolescent girls, lactating mothers, pregnant women, children, boys and girls about the importance of nutritious food for maintaining good health and proper growth.Speaking on the occasion, Bambara Sarpanch Bendare Krishnaji advised Anganwadi staff to ensure that the nutritious food being provided by the government through Anganwadi centres reaches every eligible beneficiary properly. He also explained the benefits of nutritious food to mothers, beneficiaries and adolescent girls.The participants were advised to include nutritious foods such as green leafy vegetables, fresh vegetables and pulses in their daily diet. The Sarpanch urged beneficiaries to receive and properly consume nutritional items such as flour-based food preparations, murukulu and Balamrutham provided through the government.

He explained that nutritious food helps in the proper growth of children, improves women's health and helps prevent health problems such as anaemia. DWO Swaroopa Rani, CDPO Vijayalakshmi, Block Coordinator Taufiq,Supervisors Amrutha Varshini and Latha, ACDPO Uma Fathima, Anganwadi teachers, helpers, Gram Panchayat Secretary Durgam Dharmayya, beneficiaries, mothers and children participated in the programme.The programme was organised with the message: "Nutritious food should reach every family – Let us build a healthy society."

Students Showcase Creativity in Youth Tourism Competitions

"Government Junior College Students Selected for District-Level Competitions.."""Venkatapuram, Indian Chronicle.september 18."""The main objective of the Youth Tourism programme is to create awareness among students about the historical and cultural heritage of the region while bringing out their hidden creative talents, said Government Junior College Principal Kogila Vijay Kumar."As part of the Youth Tourism programme, various competitions on the theme "Importance of Tourism" were conducted for Intermediate students at the Government Junior College on Thursday. Students enthusiastically participated in dance, reels, skits, songs, food festival and other competitions, highlighting the importance of historical and tourist destinations such as Ramappa and Kotagullu."The students impressed the judges with their creative performances and artistic skills. Students who excelled in various categories were selected for the district-level competitions."Judges Vijay Kumar and Satyanarayana said that such competitions help students develop creative thinking, artistic abilities and awareness of tourism and historical heritage. They

encouraged the selected students to perform well at the district level and bring recognition to the college and the mandal."College faculty members Kurumilla Shyam, P.V. Ramakrishna, Tholem Naresh, Tirunagari Harikrishna, J. Anita, Akula Sandhya and Narige Somanath, along with other staff members, participated in the programme.

Special Prayers Held at Uppal Ramalayam on Prime Minister Modi's Birthday

Prayers Offered for His Good Health, Long Life and Continued Service to the Nation""UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Special prayers were performed at the Sri Ramalayam in Uppal on the occasion of the 76th birthday of Prime Minister Narendra Modi."The programme was organised under the leadership of Seva Abhiyan Uppal Assembly Convenor and former corporator Bandaru Srivani, along with District Co-Convenor Devasani Balchander."The participants performed special prayers seeking good health, longevity and well-being for Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he marked another milestone in his public service journey. Special lamps were also lit, with prayers offered for his long life and for the strength to continue serving the people of the country for many more years."Former MLA NVSS Prabhakar attended the programme as the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, he congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his 25-year journey of dedicated public service. He prayed that Modi would have the opportunity to further enhance India's stature and reputation on the global stage."Prabhakar also called for greater public awareness about the welfare and service activities being undertaken across the country through the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan. He wished Prime Minister Modi good health and longevity and prayed that he would continue to have the strength to serve the people of India for many more years."Gorige Krishna, Srinivasa Sharma, Mahankali Laxman,

Jagan Yadav, Paluvula Yadagiri, Devender Reddy, Ramaraju Yadav, Shameerpet Chandraiah, Puppala Venkatesh, Rajender Goud, Ambati Bhagyalakshmi, Raghupathi Goud, Ella Chari, along with several other leaders and party workers, participated in the programme in large numbers.

ITDA PO Conducts Surprise Inspection of PHC Edira

""Reviews Medical Services and Drug Availability; Interacts Directly with Patients.""Venkatapuram, September18.indian Chronicle.""The Project Officer (PO) of ITDA Eturunagaram conducted a surprise inspection of the Primary Health Centre (PHC) at Edira in Venkatapuram Mandal on Friday to review the quality of medical services being provided to the public."During the inspection, the PO examined hospital registers and records and enquired with the medical officer about the availability and stock of medicines, treatment provided to patients, delivery details, laboratory services and overall hospital management. Medical Officer Dr. Ashish provided the required details."The PO also interacted directly with patients undergoing treatment at the PHC and enquired about the medical services being provided, staff response and availability of necessary medicines."The medical staff were advised to remain vigilant and ensure that every patient receives timely treatment, essential medicines and quality healthcare. The PO stated that Primary Health Centres play a crucial role in making

government healthcare services accessible to people in rural and tribal areas."Medical Officer Dr. Ashish, Nursing Officers Kavitha and Sai Lakshmi, Pharmacist Sravani and other staff were present during the inspection.

Special Prayers Offered at Ganesh Pandals by FORMER CORPORETOR BANBALA GEETHA PRAVEEN

"CHILKA NAGAR, SEPTEMBER 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): As part of the Ganesh Chaturthi Navratri celebrations, former Chilkanagar Division Corporator and former GHMC Standing Committee member Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj visited Ganesh pandals set up in Sairam Nagar Colony, Beerappa Gadda Srinagar Colony, and several other areas under the erstwhile Chilkanagar Division."During her visit, she offered special prayers to Lord Ganesha at the various pandals and participated in the devotional celebrations. She also took part in the annadanam programmes organised at the pandals and formally commenced the distribution of food to devotees."Speaking on the occasion, Bannala Geetha Praveen prayed for the blessings of Lord Ganesha to bring happiness, prosperity, good health, and well-being to all the people of the Uppal Assembly Constituency. She also wished that the divine blessings and grace of Lord Ganesha would always remain upon every family.

Traditional Ganesh Immersion Held in Nagaarjuna Nagar Colony

Grand procession featuring 200 women dressed in traditional Kerala attire""UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The Ganesh immersion ceremony organized by Vijayalakshmi Textiles in Nagaarjuna Nagar Colony was conducted in a grand and traditional manner amid devotional fervour. Raising slogans of "Jai Bolo Ganesh Maharaj Ki Jai," devotees participated enthusiastically in the celebrations."Around 200 women took part in the procession dressed in traditional Kerala attire. Accompanied by mangala harathis and traditional musical instruments, the idol of Lord Ganesha was taken in a grand procession to Kapra Lake, where the immersion ceremony was performed."Kushaiguda Circle Inspector Bhaskar Reddy and Sub-Inspector Venkanna participated in the special prayers during the procession and received theertha prasadams. They appealed to people in every colony to conduct Ganesh processions and immersion ceremonies while following traditional customs and practices."In recognition of the traditional manner in which the Ganesh immersion was conducted, organizers Mamatha and Suresh were felicitated with shawls at the Kapra Lake Festival Committee stage. The felicitation was organized under the leader-

ship of Regalla Satish Reddy, Co-Convenor of the Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi for the Uppal Assembly constituency."Devam Shailaja, Venkat Reddy, Sri Lakshmi Srikar, head of Dharani Hospital, Srikanth, and Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi representatives Kamal Pant, Pawan Kumar, Apinayi, Raju Vamsharaj, Suresh Naik, Srikanth and others participated in the programme.

MEDCHAL LEGISLATOR K.P. VIVEKANANDA GOUD EXTOLS TEACHING AS THE BEDROCK OF NATION-BUILDING AT PRIVATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION CONCLAVE

"GAJULARAMARAM | SEPTEMBER 18, 2026"Commemorating the birth anniversary of former President Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan on Teachers' Day serves as a profound homage to the sacred dignity, intellectual stewardship, and indispensable stature of the teaching profession. Marking this milestone occasion, the Private Teachers Association convened a magnificent Teachers' Day celebration on Friday at the Padmavathi Convention Hall in Gajularamaram, celebrating the transformative impact of educators across local private institutions."The grand assembly was elevated by the presence of Medchal Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), Shri K.P. Vivekananda Goud, who served as the Chief Guest. In a ceremonial gesture of deep reverence, Shri Vivekananda Goud personally felicitated distinguished teachers with traditional silk shawls and commemorative mementos of excellence."In his keynote address, the legislator asserted that the teaching fraternity occupies the apex position among all vocations, functioning as the foundational crucible from which every other profession emerges."> "Teachers are the true architects of human destiny. They possess the rare, sacred ability to refine character, ignite intellect, and sculpt the moral compass of the next generation," stated Shri Vivekananda Goud."> "He further shared his delight at prioritizing this event above several pressing engagements, honoring the warm, earnest invitation extended by local school correspondents and principals. His impassioned tribute to the pedagogical community evoked widespread appreciation and visible emotion among the audience."Echoing these sentiments, prominent civic leader and Lions Club dignitary, Shri Challa Srinivas, delivered a stirring address emphasizing the irreplaceable role of the Guru in holistic character formation. Citing the venerated Sanskrit verse, "Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu, Guru Devo Maheshwara; Guru Sakshat Para Brahma, Tasmai Shri Gurave Namah," Shri Srinivas observed that while parents provide physical life, it is the teacher alone who imparts enlightenment, wisdom, and social consciousness—thereby nurturing a righteous and progressive society."The execution of the conclave was meticulously orchestrated under the supervision of Shri Vinod Jadhav, Principal and Correspondent of Bright Concept High School. Among the notable honorees of the day, educators Smt. Santoshi and Smt. Swapna from Bright School were conferred with special laurels by Shri K.P. Vivekananda Goud for their exemplary academic dedication."The proceedings were further enriched by a series of vibrant cultural renditions presented by students, whose artistic finesse and stage presence spellbound the

attendees. Expressing sincere gratitude for the recognition, educators across participating institutions noted that such high-profile commendations serve as an immense morale boost for private school faculty."The event concluded on a resounding note of unity and inspiration, witnessing robust attendance from school proprietors, administrators, faculty members, and students alike.

Grand Annadanam Held Under the Auspices of Ramanthapur Padmashali Association

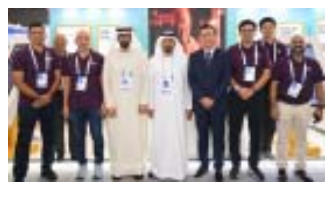
— Division Congress Party Working President Vallapu Srikanth Yadav Attends as Chief Guest""RAMANTHAPUR, SEPTEMBER 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): As part of the Vinayaka Chavithi celebrations, a grand Annadanam (free food distribution) programme was organised by the Ramanthapur Padmashali Association at the Sri Bhakta Markandeya Temple on Friday. The Ganesha idol installed at the temple had received the prayers of devotees for five days before the Annadanam was conducted."A large number of devotees and association members participated in the programme. Vallapu Srikanth Yadav, Working President of the Ramanthapur Division Congress Party, attended the Annadanam as the chief guest and served food to the devotees."Padmashali Association President Konda Krishnamurthy, General Secretary Sirisala Vijaya Prakash, Treasurer Kongari Balachandraiah, Advisors P.V. Ram Narsaiah and Gundla Ravindra Kumar, Vice Presidents Varkala Swamy, Ele Ramesh and Sangishetti Yadagiri, Assistant Secretary Rapolu Shekhar, Joint Secretary Gajam Murali, and Assistant Treasurer Dunuka Murali were among those present."Executive members Sangam Venu and Munagapati Narasimha, along with committee members Ulugonda Narayanadasu, Pandala Narsimlu, Garipalli Lakshminarayana, Ganji Suresh, Miriyala Sandeep, Ganji Ganesh and Edem Balu, also participated in the programme."Temple Committee Chairman Jannu Venkatayya, Vice Chairman Varkala Pentaiah, Founder Sakinala Krishna, along with Rapolu Ramulu, Tirandasu Venkatesh and Gurram Ambayya, also attended.Disciplinary Committee Chairman Vanam Yadagiri, Vice Chairman Rapolu Ramachandram, Founder Chintala Satyanarayana, and Tirandasu Sheshaiah, Chikka Satyanarayana, Bikshamaiah, Veeresham and Ganji Venkatesh, among others, participated and contributed to the successful conduct of the programme.Devotees participated in the puja rituals and Annadanam with devotion and received the blessings of Lord Sri Bhakta Markandeya.

Immediate demolition of tilted four-storey building in Gopanpally ordered

Hyderabad: Panic gripped NTR Nagar in Gopanpally, Hyderabad, on Friday afternoon after an illegal four-storey residential building developed a sudden and noticeable tilt, raising immediate fears of a tragic collapse, as the building was occupied by families.The incident took place at around 1 pm in the Serilingampally Zone, triggering an emergency response from the authorities of Cyberabad Municipal Corporation (CMC) and local police authorities.According to officials, the building was constructed five years ago without CMC permission. The building was developed on a plot measuring just 50 square yards in severe violation of safety norms, which only allow a ground-plus-one structure for plots of that size.

Wizz Financial Launches UPI-Powered Global Remittance App"

"Hyderabad, September 18 (Indian Chronicle) : Wizz Financial has launched a new digital app connecting UPI-based payments with international money transfers at GFF 2026, Wizz Financial Founder and Group CEO Amir Nagammy said in a statement on Friday.



Speaking along with Wizz Financial India Director and CEO R. Krishnan, he said the company will connect India, the US and the UAE through its SWITCH infrastructure and offer cross-border payouts to more than 80 countries. The app will provide remittance, forex, multi-currency card, UPI, bill payment, recharge, travel and visa services. The company serves more than 5 million customers through over 360 branches across 22 states in India.

Sought-after fish changes direction, India now exporter

GNS News Agency, Sept 18

In a role reversal of sorts, India is exporting Hilsa fish to Bangladesh, bucking the trend of the neighbour supplying the sought-after variety of fish that has the highest place of pride on Bengal's dining tables.Around 500 tonnes of Hilsa, known as Ilish in Bengali, have been sent to Bangladesh in the past two months through the Petrapole land port on the international border in West Bengal. Traders expect an additional 150 to 200 tonnes of Hilsa to be exported to Bangladesh in the coming weeks.Traditionally, Hilsa is brought in from Bangladesh when its government allows its import, generally during the Durga Puja festive season. Currently, Bangladesh has paused Hilsa exports to India."This is the first time Hilsa from our country is being exported to Bangladesh. It is a welcome development. Most of the catch is from Gujarat," said Syed Anwar Maqsood, secretary of the Fish Importers Association in Bengal and the Howrah wholesale fish market.

"The Bangladesh government gives permission for a certain quantity. But since the window is small, the imported quantity is very low... This does not work out."Roe extracted and re-exported; remaining fish salted and dried locally"This is the first time Hilsa from our country is being exported to Bangladesh. It is a welcome development. Most of the catch is from Gujarat."Note: Trade volumes and permitted-vs-actual figures are as reported by fish trade sources cited in the source article over the phone from Petrapole, Kartik Chakraborty, secretary of Petrapole Clearing Agents Staff Welfare Association, said, "Earlier, we eagerly waited for Hilsa from the Padma river in Bangladesh. Later, its import was restricted. Now we are happy that fish from India is going to Bangladesh and people there like it."

According to fish traders and exporters, the development reflects changing patterns of production, availability and consumer demand in the two neighbouring countries.A substantial portion of the Hilsa consignment is from Gujarat, particularly the Bharuch region, and some supplies have moved through the Howrah fish market in Bengal.The traders said Hilsa with high roe content is attracting considerable demand in Chattogram, Sylhet and other districts of Bangladesh. Roe refers to the fully ripe egg mass in female hilsa fish, also used to prepare delicacies. The roe is also being processed for re-export from Bangladesh. Some fish are also being used to prepare dried and salted fish delicacies."The fish exported has high roe content. The roe is extracted, packaged and then re-exported, and the hilsa is salted, dried and sold in Bangladesh," said Maqsood.

"The export of Indian Hilsa to Bangladesh is not merely a trade phenomenon; it is a strong market signal reflecting the exceptional consumer preference, economic value and regional demand for this iconic fish. It highlights Hilsa's potential as a high-value fishery resource capable of contributing to fishermen's livelihoods, food security, domestic consumption and regional trade. For West Bengal, this is an opportunity to develop a knowledge-driven, sustainable and value-added Hilsa economy through science-based stock enhancement, responsible fisheries management, post-harvest value addition and integrated market linkages," said Pradip Dey, director of Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute.For West Bengal, which has a strong cultural association with Hilsa and an established fish marketing network centred around Kolkata and Howrah, the development presents opportunities to strengthen production, aggregation, cold-chain logistics, value addition, processing, branding and export-oriented fisheries enterprises.

Earlier, a team from the Fish Importers Association visited Dhaka in August and met Ataur Rehman Khan, the Commerce Secretary of Bangladesh, and urged him to lift the ban on the export of Hilsa to India."The Association also wrote letters to the Bangladesh Prime Minister and others for lifting the ban. Since July 2012, Hilsa imports from Bangladesh were restricted. In 2019, the government of Bangladesh started permitting imports only during Durga Puja festivities with a window of a month. This does not work out," said Maqsood."The Bangladesh government gives permission for a certain quantity. But since the window is small, the imported quantity is very low. For instance, in September 2024, the quantity permitted was 2420 metric tonnes, but the actual import was 577 metric tonnes. In September 2025, 1,200 tonnes were permitted, but only 150 metric tonnes were imported," said Maqsood.

After 2024 stampede scare, Bandra Terminus to get 3,700-passenger holding area

GNS News Agency, Sept 18

To manage overcrowding and prevent a 2024 stampede-like situation, Bandra Terminus station is set to get a passenger holding area or 'Yatri Suvidha Kendra' ahead of Diwali in November. Railway officials aim to complete and launch the facility before the festival season in November. The estimated cost of the project stands at Rs 16.43 crore."Railways being a heritage network, there are only a certain number of infrastructural upgrades, like increasing platform size, that can be undertaken. Since the platform space cannot be changed, such a facility would help distribute and manage passenger crowds effectively," said a senior railway official.

Developed by the Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA), the dedicated holding area, spread across 2,625 square metres, will hold as many as 3,700 passengers. Of this, 1,345 square metres will be earmarked as a pre-ticketing zone, equipped with 45 three-seater benches, five passenger information display screens, water coolers, drinking water taps, and toilets.A 285-square-metre ticketing zone will have eight Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) counters, 10 workstations, six Automatic Ticket Vending Machines (ATVMs), and a 995-square-metre post-ticketing zone to include two luggage scanners and a ramp exit.Bandra Terminus A 285-square-metre ticketing zone will have eight Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) counters, 10 workstations, and six Automatic Ticket Vending Machines (ATVMs)Officials have said that passenger segregation will help regulate passenger flow towards the platforms, particularly during rush hours and festive seasons.The area outside the holding zone will also be fitted with bollards or short, thick posts, portable signage, reflective lights, and traffic marshals to prevent unauthorised vehicle entry.The holding area is being constructed to prevent a stampede-like situation at Bandra Terminus in October 2024 when over 2,500 commuters attempted to board a Gorakhpur-bound train, leaving 10 injured. In the aftermath, Western Railway implemented precautionary measures, including restrictions on carrying excess baggage and issuing platform tickets.

A smaller 370-square-metre passenger holding area with a capacity of 600 commuters was also erected in the station's east circulation area for crowd management.With the new 2,625 sqm facility, the station's holding capacity is set to receive a significant boost, as well as reducing passenger concentration on platforms. Currently, BDTS sees an average daily passenger footfall of 40,000 passengers and nearly 22 long-distance trains daily.The site is currently under construction and was inspected by Western Railway's Mumbai Central Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Pankaj Singh in August.Similar passenger holding facilities also exist at several stations on the Central Railway network across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. At Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT), there's a facility to hold 1,000 commuters, while Lokmanya Tilak Terminus (LTT) has two facilities, accommodating nearly 3,000 passengers.

Delhi High Court refuses immediate stay on copyright ruling

GNS News Agency, Sept 18

The Delhi High Court Tuesday refused to grant interim relief to news agency ANI, which had sought a stay on a ruling that held that using copyrighted works to train large language models (LLMs) does not amount to copyright infringement.The news agency had appealed against the July verdict by a single judge, which opened the doors for developers of artificial intelligence (AI), such as OpenAI, to continue training on Indian-origin content without licensing agreements.A division bench of Justices Avneesh Jhingan and Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora, which took up the appeal briefly on Tuesday, orally suggested that the court "would not like to pass anything ex-parte without the other side".It sought OpenAI's response, and will hear the matter next on December 8.ANI's caseANI filed its suit in 2024 against OpenAI Inc and OpenAI OpCo LLC — a first of its kind in the Indian jurisdiction — seeking an injunction against the use of its copyrighted content in the training of LLMs.The single judge had refused any interim injunction for the time being, even as the suit remains to be adjudicated.Taking a broad view of "fair use" of copyrighted works, the single judge had held that using ANI's original literary works to train LLMs would amount to "private" use, including research, and qualify as fair use.Weighing in on the potential commercial loss that the news agency stands to face, the single judge had ruled that it "would not result in market substitution of ANI's works and, consequently, will not affect its market share or cause actual or potential damage…"Before it moved court, ANI had offered OpenAI a licence to all its digital media video, imagery, photographic and/or news content that is owned or within the control of ANI for a fee of USD 7.5 million.In its suit, ANI had also opposed the verbatim replication of its copyrighted material

when a query was put in ChatGPT; and hallucinatory responses from ChatGPT, which it falsely attributed to ANI.In its appeal, ANI argued that fair dealing under the Copyright Act is a closed, purpose-specific exception, and commercial exploitation of copyrighted work at scale cannot be read into "private or personal use, including research".

It argued that the single judge's reasoning on fair use of copyrighted material effectively imports the wider American fair use doctrine into a statute that does not contain it.ANI, through its lawyer Sidhant Kumar Marwah, argued that public interest and the growth of AI cannot displace statutory rights, and that the Delhi HC ruling also ignores OpenAI's own policy of providing an option to website owners to opt-out of scraping for training of LLMs.According to OpenAI, following the pre-training phase, its models do not have access to the original training data after a cut-off date.OpenAI also told the court in November 2024 that it had already "blocklisted" ANI's domain, which meant that it was excluded from future training of OpenAI's software.

Pregnant woman dies after UP cops 'shove' her, 6 suspended; baby critical

GNS News Agency, Sept 18

A 28-year-old pregnant woman died after her husband was taken away by police from their home in Uttar Pradesh's Firozabad for questioning in a robbery case, with her family alleging she was shoved when she tried to stop them.Six policemen, including two sub-inspectors, have now been suspended for negligence.Anjali Verma had pleaded with the policemen not to take her husband, Gaurav Kumar, citing her condition, according to his elder brother Vijay Singh. Singh alleged that she was pushed during a scuffle."Hours later, Anjali went into labour and was taken to a government hospital, where she gave birth to a baby boy on Monday morning. Her condition deteriorated and she was shifted to a private hospital, where she died during treatment," Singh said.

According to police, a theft had taken place at a grocery shop in Labhaua village on Friday night. During investigation, police suspected the involvement of two men, including Gaurav, from the village and a team from Shikohabad police station picked him up.Anjali's death triggered protests in Labhaua village, with residents demanding that a case be registered against the policemen involved. Villagers staged another protest on Tuesday. Anjali Verma, 28, pregnant, died after her husband Gaurav Kumar was taken by police for questioning in a robbery case — her family alleges she was shoved when she tried to stop them She went into labour hours later, delivering a baby boy Monday morning at a government hospital; her condition worsened and she died after being shifted to a private hospital The newborn remains in critical condition Six policemen, including two sub-inspectors, have been suspended for negligence; SSP Firozabad Aditya Langhe has ordered an inquiry Gaurav was picked up over a suspected theft at a grocery shop in Labhaua village; he has since been released and reunited with his family Villagers have staged protests in Labhaua demanding a case be registered against the policemen involvedBhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad has demanded an investigation, legal action against those responsible, and financial assistance for the familySenior Superintendent of Police Firozabad Aditya Langhe suspended the six policemen and ordered an inquiry.

He said action would be taken based on the inquiry report. Gaurav has been released and handed over to his family.Reacting to the incident, Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad slammed the government and said it raises serious questions about police functioning.In a post on X, he wrote: "… Our demand is that the role of those responsible for the death of the pregnant woman be investigated, strict legal action be taken against the guilty policemen, and the victim's family be given justice and appropriate financial assistance."

Ahead of Paddy Harvesting, FCI Seeks 100% 'Improved Rice' from Punjab

GNS News Agency, Sept 18Ahead of paddy harvesting in the state beginning from October 1, the Centre government has asked Punjab to supply 100% 'Improved Rice' under Custom Milled Rice (CMR) during KMS 2026-27. The rice millers in the state said that are ready but have sought additional processing compensation, a 15-day deadline for lifting the resultant broken rice, and an advance guarantee of storage space for the rice to be delivered to government agencies.A high-level meeting was held on Monday at the Regional Office of the Food Corporation of India (FCI), Chandigarh, regarding the procurement of 100% improved rice from Punjab and various issues concerning the State's rice shellers and millers.

The meeting assumes significance as the Centre's requirement marks a substantial jump from the previous season, when only around 11-12 lakh tonnes of Improved Quality CMR under the pilot project was taken from Punjab, according to the millers. Improved Quality Rice is rice processed to meet prescribed higher-quality specifications, with the process aimed at achieving better milling quality and acceptable grain characteristics. These rice are meant to Distribute under public distribution system (PDS). Broken rice refers to rice kernels that break into smaller pieces during milling instead of remaining whole. Broken rice is generally purchased by the government under the Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS) for supply to ethanol-making units, distilleries, poultry and cattle-feed industries, as well as the open market.

The meeting was attended in person by senior FCI and Punjab government officials at the FCI Regional Office, while Sanjeev Chopra, Secretary, Department of Food and public distribution, Government of India, participated through video conferencing from Delhi. Among those present were Ravindra Aggarwal, Chairman cum Managing Director, FCI; Rahul Tiwari, Principal Secretary Punjab; and other senior officials. The Rice Millers Association, Punjab, was represented by a delegation led by its President, Gian Chand Bhardwaj, along with Ashwani Kumar, General Secretary Jai Pal Goel, Chairman and other senior office-bearers of the Association."This year, the target for procuring paddy in Punjab is expected to be 180 lakh tonnes, out of which around 120 lakh tonnes of rice will be prepared after milling, based on the 67% Out-Turn Ratio (OTR) specification set by FCI. Of the 120 lakh tonnes, nearly 20 lakh tonnes will fall under the broken rice category, while the remaining around 100 lakh tonnes will be Improved Rice, which will be distributed through PDS," said Bhardwaj.

While FCI and Central officials maintained that Punjab would have to move to 100% Improved Quality Rice in the coming KMS, Bhardwaj said the millers were willing to implement the programme but warned that the additional cost could not be passed on entirely to the industry. The Punjab Rice Millers' Association has sought at least ?50 per quintal of paddy as additional processing compensation, over and above the existing custom milling charges. The Chairman said the new process would require machinery modification or upgradation, besides increasing expenditure on electricity and labour, while potentially reducing rice recovery.Broken rice: 15-day deadline soughtThe millers have also demanded that the resultant broken rice be lifted from mill premises within 15 days. They said prolonged retention of broken rice would consume valuable storage space and could expose them to additional storage costs, quality deterioration and financial losses. The association wants the government or its agencies to bear any losses arising from delayed lifting.The millers said that under the existing CMR process, around 1,155 bags of paddy are required to produce one consignment of about 580 new bags of rice, each weighing 50 kg. This means that the millers' storage liability is effectively around 50%. Under the proposed Improved Quality Rice process, however, they claim that around 1,395 bags of paddy would be required to produce the same quantity of 580 new bags of rice.Of these, only 580 bags would be delivered to FCI, while the remaining 805 bags—about 58.5% of the total—would have to be arranged and stored by the millers. The millers have argued that the additional cost of procuring and handling these extra bags should also be reimbursed by FCI, as the higher requirement is a direct consequence of the Improved Quality Rice specifications and should not become an additional financial burden on the milling industry. According to the association, around 10 lakh metric tonnes of CMR of last season is still lying with rice millers in Punjab.

Bail for Swatantra Bhardwaj, 'influencer' who beat CJP protester's father

GNS News Agency, Sept 18

Self-styled right wing influencer Swatantra Bhardwaj, who was arrested earlier this month, was granted a three-week interim bail by a Delhi court on Tuesday in the CJP protestor assault case.Bhardwaj, who admitted to attacking the father of a student protester at Jantar Mantar in July, was arrested by Delhi Police in September.

Bhardwaj, who describes himself as a "kattar Hindu", purportedly claimed in a widely circulated video podcast that he had cracked the skull of a protester at Jantar Mantar. He was referring to a scuffle in which the girl's father, a resident of Ghaziabad, sustained a head injury.In the video, Bharadwaj is purportedly seen and heard claiming that despite having attacked the father of a CJP protester, he had managed to stay out of jail due to the intervention of a politician.He also purportedly boasts in the video that the person he had attacked had to be given 60 stitches and was on the verge of death – and that a case under Section 307 of the IPC, which relates to attempt to murder, should have been registered against him.He was arrested shortly after Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) supporters, led by leader Saurav Das, marched to the Parliament Street police station, demanding an FIR against Bhardwaj under sections such as attempt to murder and the SC/ST act.

Karnataka sacks Congress MLA's niece over Rs 75,000 salary row

The Karnataka Government on Monday terminated the contract of a Congress MLA's niece, who was found allegedly drawing a monthly salary of Rs 75,000 as a government medical officer while pursuing an MD course at a private medical college in Bagalkot district.

Dr Ankita R Yaragal, niece of Bagalkot MLA Umesh Meti and daughter of district health officer (DHO) Dr Rajkumar Yaragal, was appointed the medical officer of Namma Clinic at Wambe Colony in Bagalkot town in April 2025 on a contract basis. Soon after the incident came to light, Gajanan Bale, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the district, directed that the medical officer be relieved from service."I have sought a report from the DHO, and action will be initiated," he told reporters on Monday.Raju Naik, a local activist, said that Dr Ankita Yaragal joined for an MD course in Pathology at a private college in March this year without resigning as medical officer.According to sources, Bagalkot taluk health officer Dr Saraswati Magi visited the Namma Clinic at Wambe colony a few days ago, and Dr Yaragal was not present at the time. When Dr Magi contacted her over the phone, Dr Yaragal claimed that she was out of station. However, the patients had complained to Dr Magi that the duty doctor had not attended the clinic for the past three months, but her attendance was intact.

BJP fields mother of murdered Suvendu aide for Nandigram bypoll

GNS News Agency, Sept 18

The BJP on Tuesday announced its candidates for the bypolls to two Assembly constituencies in West Bengal, fielding Hasirani Rath, mother of Chandranath Rath—Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari's aide who was murdered in May—from Nandigram and former Murshidabad BJP president Shakharav Sarkar from Rejinagar.Chandranath was shot dead in Madhyamgram in the North 24 Parganas district on May 6, two days after the results of the West Bengal Assembly elections were declared. The probe into his murder has been handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

Before the formal announcement, Hasirani visited the Siddheshwar Shiva Temple and Janakinath Temple in Reyapara, Nandigram, indicating she would contest the election. "I have received the message from the chief minister. I hope to get the cooperation of our party organisation. The two-time MLA and the current chief minister have done most of the work that the people of the area want," she said, adding that she would work for Nandigram's welfare.Hasirani is scheduled to submit her nomination papers at the Haldia sub-division office on Tuesday. Adhikari is expected to be present.Voting for the Nandigram and Rejinagar bypolls will be held on October 6, while the last date for filing nominations is September 16. The counting of votes is scheduled for October 9.The Nandigram bypoll was necessitated after Adhikari vacated the seat following his victory from two constituencies in the Assembly elections. In Rejinagar, a bypoll became necessary after Aam Janata Unnayan Party (AJUP) leader Humayun Kabir resigned the seat after winning from two constituencies. His son, Golam Nabi Azad (Robin), is contesting the bypoll.Other parties have also announced their candidates. In Nandigram, the Mamata Banerjee camp has fielded Sanchita Pradhan Dey, while the Congress has nominated Milan Pradhan. CPI candidate Shantigopal Giri is also in the fray. The rival Trinamool faction led by Ritabrata Banerjee has named Mohammad Ehetash Mul Haque as its candidate.In Rejinagar, the Mamata Banerjee camp has fielded Rabiul Alam Chowdhury, while the rebel Trinamool camp has nominated Sheikh Safiuddin Zaman. Congress candidate Abdullahil Kafi and CPM nominee Syed Asad Ali will also contest. The RSP, contesting separately due to disagreements with the CPI(M) over seat allocation, has fielded Bikash Chandra Mishra.Meanwhile, it is still unclear which Trinamool faction will contest under the party's 'Jora Phul' symbol, with the Election Commission expected to decide on the matter this week.

Look at results and understand what India achieved at BRICS, says Uruguay FM

New Delhi: Uruguay's Foreign Minister Mario Lubetkin has hailed India's leadership of BRICS and hosting of the highly successful BRICS Summit, asserting that the concrete and consensus-based Delhi Declaration has shown how Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed and reached agreement on many important and highly sensitive issues.

"I think the outcome of the summit was an incredible success. There were many questions and very few answers during the process of preparing for the summit about what might happen. But, we ultimately achieved a very serious, concrete and consensus-based final declaration, which addressed and reached agreement on many important and highly sensitive issues," Lubetkin told IANS in an interview."There were different protagonists involved in some of the ongoing wars and conflicts, but I think the Prime Minister and the Government of India, as the chair of the meeting, were able to facilitate the process and achieve consensus. That shows India as one of the key leaders at this moment, especially in the Global South. We do not need to simply use words, we need to look at the results and understand what India achieved," he added.He also showered praise on PM Modi's leadership and highlighted India's diplomatic triumph for successfully aligning diverse interests, with the BRICS nations reaching consensus and adopting the 'New Delhi Declaration' on the very first day of the summit despite sharply divergent geopolitical positions among various countries.

"The success of the summit was an Indian success, and it was also PM Modi's success. You could see during Saturday and Sunday how Prime Minister Modi interacted with some of the most important leaders in the world, and how those leaders listened to him and treated him as a real point of reference. I was not part of the bilateral meetings, but you could see that dynamism during the internal meetings. The fact that, at the end of the meetings, the Prime Minister announced that consensus had been achieved speaks louder than thousands of words about what Prime Minister Modi means at this moment."Lubetkin, who arrived in New Delhi last week, said he is very satisfied and happy with his visit as, besides attending the BRICS Summit, the purpose was to strengthen bilateral relations with India and further develop the relationship between India and Mercosur.

Over the last four days, the Foreign Affairs Minister from Uruguay also held several key meetings, including with Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar in New Delhi."It was a very important meeting with the Minister of External Affairs. One of the challenges we face, and I believe the Foreign Ministers of India and Uruguay are in exactly the same position, is that it is time to deepen and expand our relationship. In fact, this is linked to the meeting between Prime Minister Modi and President (Yamandu) Orsi of Uruguay at the BRICS Summit in 2025 in Rio de Janeiro. It was their first meeting after many years, and they discussed a long-term process for strengthening relations between India and Uruguay. I was very impressed by Prime Minister Modi because he came to that meeting with a piece of paper beside him on which he had outlined his vision for the relationship over the next 10 to 15 years. It was a long-term mission," said Lubetkin.

The Uruguayan Foreign Minister hoped that both countries could achieve the desired goals before the planned October 2027 visit to India by President Yamandu Orsi."The challenge for our two Foreign Ministries is now to put into practice the understanding and agreements reached between the Prime Minister and President last year. During our half-hour meeting, we carried out a very interesting exercise and created a roadmap for India-Uruguay relations for the coming year. We are trying to translate the broad and strategic discussions between the two leaders into concrete action. There are many areas that we can develop over this one-year period of economic,

According to Lubetkin, there is a strong synergy and agreement between the governments of India and Uruguay on the direction that they need to take to take the partnership to the next level."We also share a similar democratic vision on many issues, and there is a lot on which we can collaborate. I see three different highways, or tracks, that can work together. First, bilaterally, in areas such as the economy, culture, audiovisual cooperation, including Bollywood, as well as sports and many other fields. Second, today I agreed with the Minister of Trade to launch the next step in negotiations between Mercosur and India. This is a very important strategic process, not only for Uruguay but also for Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, the other Mercosur countries. The third track is through our regional roles. Uruguay currently chairs Mercosur and also chairs CELAC, which brings together 33 countries from Latin America and the Caribbean. This provides another important avenue to develop relations between India and CELAC," he told IANS.Later this month, Lubetkin and EAM Jaishankar are scheduled to meet again in New York, during which a meeting between the Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean through CELAC is also likely to take place with the objective of deepening relations between the region and India."I have said this to some of my European colleagues as well: In Uruguay, this is a time for India. When I say this is a time for India, I mean that India is much stronger today than we could have imagined 20 or even 10 years ago. This creates a new scenario. I am absolutely convinced that if we agree on three or four important areas, including economic, cultural, sports, social and others, they will be important for both Uruguay and India. No country can work alone. Now is the moment to reach concrete agreements and move forward in a world marked by fragmentation, divisions and conflicts…"In this regard, India has opened an Embassy in Uruguay for the first time in its history. As a young generation of diplomats in both countries, I hope the Indian Minister of External Affairs will come to Uruguay in the coming months to inaugurate the Embassy and continue working together to determine how we can develop our agreements in a concrete way," said Lubetkin.

In drugs crackdown, Gujarat police plan rejig of units, adoption of new methods

The focus on the narcotics trade follows a string of major seizures of contraband drugs over the last few years, including the huge offshore haul of more than 3,000 kg of hashish, meth and morphine in February 2024.The focus on the narcotics trade follows a string of major seizures of contraband drugs over the last few years, including the huge offshore haul of more than 3,000 kg of hashish, meth and morphine in February 2024.Gujarat Police will set up 41 new "Anti-Narcotics Wings (ANWs)" of the force, including at least one in each of the state's 34 districts.These ANWs will act as a force multiplier for the Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) that was announced in August 2025. The Narcotics Cell of the CID Crime was upgraded to the ANTF last year to "control the sale, trafficking and production of banned drugs".The strength of the unit was increased from 34 to 211, and six specialised police stations were proposed to be set up across the state.

Why the increased focus on the narcotics trade?

The focus on the narcotics trade follows a string of major seizures of contraband drugs over the last few years, including the huge offshore haul of more than 3,000 kg of hashish, meth and morphine in February 2024.This May, the Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad and Coast Guard recovered 118 kg of cocaine valued at almost Rs 1,200 crore from five bags thrown into the sea off Mundra, the largest commercial private port in the country.Over the past five years, the Gujarat Police has registered more than 3,700 cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act), and arrested 5,346 accused.During this period, more than 1.36 lakh kilograms of drugs worth about Rs 13,600 crore have been seized.These seizures suggest that Gujarat acts as both a landing point for international maritime consignments of narcotics, as well as a local base for the production of synthetic or psychotropic drugs. In 2021, the government launched a "Narco Reward Policy" to combat the menace.In February 2026, Ahmedabad Crime Branch seized 400 kg of ganja worth Rs 2 crore allegedly hidden in sacks of onions. Archive In February 2026, Ahmedabad Crime Branch seized 400 kg of ganja worth Rs 2 crore allegedly hidden in sacks of onions. Archive

So how will the new ANW units of the Gujarat Police work?

41 UNITS ACROSS THE STATE: An ANW each is planned in 33 of the state's 34 districts, and two in the coastal district of Kutch – East and West. Kutch is the largest district by area in the country, sprawling over an area bigger than that of the states of Haryana and Keralam.Two ANWs each are planned in the Ahmedabad and Surat police commissionerates, and one each in the Rajkot and Vadodara commissionerates.COORDINATION: According to the order issued by Gujarat Director General of Police G S Malik on September 5, the ANWs will operate under the district/ city police who already have Special Operations Groups (SOG) to conduct anti-drug investigations.Other units of the police such as the Local Crime Branch, the Prevention of Crime Branch, as well as local police stations where cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act are filed, are also part of the anti-

narcotics effort.

SUPERVISION, STAFFING: Each ANW will be supervised by a joint / additional commissioner of police in the commissionerates, and the superintendent of police in the districts. They will be staffed by eight officers, including an Inspector and a Sub-inspector. However, no additional hirings will be made in order to staff the ANWs.EXCLUSIVE FOCUS: The police chief's order said that unlike other units of the force, the ANWs would focus solely on drugs. Cases will be registered in the police station in whose jurisdiction raids are conducted. The order warned of action against local police officers if the ANW reported any negligence on their part during the investigation.

How will the ANWs coordinate with the Anti-Narcotics Task Force?

The September 5 order asked all Commissioners and SPs to set up the ANWs within a week. The plan is to coordinate this with the setting up of the six zonal police stations dedicated to the Anti-Narcotics Task Force – in Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, Rajkot, Kutch (Border Range) and Gandhinagar.The order creating the ANWs stated that while they would function under the local police jurisdictions, they would send regular reports on their work to the task force in the same way that cybercrime units report their work to the state Cybercrime Cell.A senior officer said that the task force would work with the ANWs, guide them, and work in an interoperable manner to crack down on narcotics, their supply lines and syndicates.Besides the creation of these new units, are any operational upgrades in their functioning expected as well?Along with the formation of ANWs in each police jurisdiction and the setting up of six police stations of the Anti-Narcotics Task Force, it is expected that gaps in the process of investigation of NDPS cases will also be addressed, officers said.This includes the gap at the officer level where issues such as proof of chain of custody and possession with intent to distribute, as well as evidence of storage, persist. There is also a lack of expertise among personnel.The state police are expected to deploy the Narcotics Analysis & RAG-based Investigation Tool (NARIT-AI) designed to assist in handling complex narcotics cases under the NDPS legal framework.The system, developed by IPS officer Abhay Soni, integrates legal provisions, case law, and investigative procedures to provide real-time analytical support to investigating officers. NARIT-AI is currently in field trials and has provided inputs in more than 60 cases under investigation in Gujarat.

Masked men allegedly attack KTR's staff inside Saifabad police station

GNS News Agency, Sept 18Hyderabad: A group of masked men allegedly attacked BRS working president KT Rama Rao's PRO Mahesh and PA Mahender Reddy inside Saifabad police station on Monday. The BRS accused the police of allowing the attack, prompting strong condemnation from the party leadership.Police registered cases against Mahesh and Mahender Reddy under Sections 132, 352 and 351(2), read with 3(5), of the BNS on a complaint alleging obstruction of officials performing their duties when the BRS legislators were prevented from entering the Assembly premises at Gate no.3 on September 7. They summoned both Mahesh and Mahender Reddy for questioning on Monday, despite the festive occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi.

While the questioning was underway, around 15-20 masked men reportedly entered the station premises at about 6.30 pm and attempted to attack the two. The BRS legal team present at the station came to the rescue of the duo, following which the attackers fled. Speaking to the media, the BRS legal team alleged that the attack occurred in the presence of the Saifabad police. The visuals of the masked attackers coming into the police station were captured on the CCTVs of a nearby hotel. political vendetta against the BRS leaders. He asked whether the attackers were Congress workers or policemen in plain clothes wearing masks. He held Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, who also handles the Home portfolio, responsible and sought an immediate response. He demanded an inquiry by a sitting judge into the attack.He said the High Court had directed that no action be taken against Mahesh and Mahender Reddy until further orders, and alleged that the incident was an attempt to intimidate them despite the court directions. He demanded that the CCTV footage from inside and outside the station be preserved, and the attackers be identified and punished. He also sought security and medical treatment to for his injured staffers.BRSLP deputy leader T Harish Rao suspected the masked personnel to be Task Force police, as they attempted the attack inside the interrogation room. He accused the government of using the police station to carry out an attack. He demanded that the CCTV footage be made public and an FIR registered against those involved. He called the attack inside the police station as evidence for complete failure of law and order in the State under the Congress rule.

RBI likely to begin rate-hike cycle as inflation edges up

GNS News Agency, Sept 18

New Delhi: The Reserve Bank of India is expected to begin a rate-hike cycle as headline inflation and wholesale price inflation accelerate, with the policy repo likely to move closer to 6.5 per cent, a report said on Tuesday.The report from Systematix Group states the early-October MPC meeting may show the first signs of such a pivot from the central bank."The RBI's current position of keeping the rate at 5.25 per cent as long as possible looks increasingly out of step with the inflation trajectory," the report said.Inflation is expected to sustain its rise, potentially crossing 6 per cent by October-November, driven by the feedback loop from elevated WPI inflation. El Nino-related effects on food supply and persistently elevated crude oil prices point to further upside risk for India's inflation trajectory.Headline consumer price index inflation rose to 4.82 per cent in August from 4.45 per cent in July, marking the highest reading under the new series and the third consecutive month above the RBI's 4 per cent target midpoint.

Food inflation rose to 5.95 per cent from 5.52 per cent, with rural inflation at 5.23 per cent outpacing urban inflation at 4.31 per cent. In rural areas, food inflation was even sharper at 6.13 per cent.Wholesale price inflation also inched higher, rising to 9.92 per cent in August from 9.78 per cent in July.

"Food prices remain the dominant pressure point across both indices, particularly certain vegetables and spices. Beyond food, elevated fuel and energy costs linked to global factors, especially developments in West Asia, along with rising manufactured and input costs, are broadening the base of price pressures," said Dhananjay Sinha, CEO & Co-Head, Institutional Equities, Systematix Group.Within CPI, other notable contributors included personal care, social protection and miscellaneous items. Restaurants and accommodation services, alongside select transport-related items, contributed significantly, while core inflation also edged up to 4.2 per cent, the report noted.

Vaishnaw to launch logistics, passenger projects in Gujarat

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw will launch several logistics and passenger amenity projects in Gujarat on Tuesday. Four Gati Shakti Cargo Terminals will be dedicated to the nation, while Gopalpur railway station and the Bhuj-Shalimar Express stoppage at Anjar will be inaugurated

Ahmedabad: Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw will launch various logistics projects and passenger amenities in Gujarat via video conferencing on Tuesday.He will dedicate four Gati Shakti Cargo Terminals (GCTs) at Bhimasar (Kutch), Devaliya (Junagadh), Chandisar (Banaskantha) and Shivlakha (Kutch) to the nation and also lay the foundation stone for the GCT at Linch in Mehsana.The Union minister will inaugurate Gopalpur railway station in Kutch district and the stoppage of the Bhuj-Shalimar Express at Anjar station, also in Kutch, an official release said on Monday.These projects and passenger amenities will significantly boost and strengthen goods transportation, commercial activities, logistics facilities and passenger rail connectivity in Gujarat, the release stated.

"The new Gopalpur railway station aims to strengthen rail connectivity and passenger amenities in the region, while also improving access to rail transport for local commuters. It eliminates the need for engine reversal at Gandhidham for trains travelling to and from Ahmedabad and Bhuj, thereby saving operational time," it added.The four GCTs that he will dedicate to the nation will boost rail-based freight transportation while promoting modern cargo management and logistics facilities, it said."These GCT projects will expand modern freight transport and logistics facilities, offering industries and businesses more effective options for transporting goods via rail. Additionally, through private sector participation, additional infrastructure for rail transport will be developed, and rail-based logistics will receive a boost," the release stated.

The stoppage of the Bhuj-Shalimar Express at Anjar station represents a significant and long-awaited railway facility for passengers in the area."This facility will enable passengers to undertake direct and convenient journeys to major cities and important destinations across the country via the Bhuj-Shalimar Express. It will eliminate the need for passengers to travel to other stations to board the train, thereby saving time and reducing additional travel costs," it said.

Zelensky says Ukraine ready to halt strikes if Russia does the same

GNS News Agency, Sept 18

Kyiv: Ukraine is ready to halt certain strikes if Russia does the same, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said."If our partners are ready to ensure that Russia genuinely refrains from striking our electricity system, other energy facilities, critical infrastructure, and food supply routes, then, of course, we are ready to ensure a corresponding halt to our strikes," Zelensky said on X on Monday (local time).

He said any partial ceasefire should be reliable and long-term, and should hold beyond Russia's elections scheduled for this month.At the same time, Zelensky stressed that the conflict must be brought to an end and a de-escalatory step involving critical infrastructure could be the first move towards peace, reports Xinhua news agency.Earlier in the day, US President Donald Trump said Ukraine and Russia had agreed to halt strikes on energy infrastructure. He said in a post on Truth Social that Ukraine had agreed not to strike Russian energy targets and "Russia has agreed to do, likewise!"The Kremlin welcomed Trump's call on Ukraine to halt strikes on Russia's fuel-producing facilities."Any call on Kyiv to stop attacks on civilian economic infrastructure can only be welcomed," said Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov."Any countries can use their influence on Kyiv to encourage it to show greater flexibility, which would be a significant contribution to the settlement process," Peskov said.On Sunday, Trump urged Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to stop attacking Russian refineries, saying such strikes were causing a shortage of diesel.Earlier, the Russian government introduced a temporary ban on the export of gasoline, diesel, marine fuel and gas oil to stabilise the domestic fuel market.

US judge blocks Trump administration rule limiting stay for foreign students, journalists

San Francisco: A US federal judge on Monday (US local time) blocked a Trump administration rule that would impose fixed limits on how long foreign students, exchange visitors and representatives of foreign media may stay in the United States.Judge F. Dennis Saylor IV of the District of Massachusetts granted the plaintiffs' request to postpone the rule's effective date under Section 705 of the Administrative Procedure Act. The rule was scheduled to take effect on Tuesday.The new rule, published by the US Department of Homeland Security in July, would have replaced the "duration of status" system currently applied to F-class academic students, J-class exchange visitors and I-class representatives of foreign information media with fixed periods of admission, Xinhua news agency reported.

Under the rule, F and J nonimmigrants would generally be admitted for the duration of their academic or exchange programmes, subject to a maximum of four years, followed by a 30-day departure period. Those needing additional time to complete their studies, training or exchange programmes would need to apply to US Citizenship and Immigration Services for an extension.I-class foreign media representatives would be admitted for the period necessary to complete their activities or assignments, for no more than 240 days at a time, with extensions available.

Several organisations, including NAFSA: Association of International Educators, the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, the American Federation of Teachers, the United Auto Workers Local 2322, The NewsGuild-CWA and others, filed a lawsuit on August 18 seeking to block the rule.Earlier this month, the Trump administration proposed ending the up-to-60-day grace period that allows H-1B workers and several other employment-based visa holders to remain in the United States after losing their jobs, a move that could sharply narrow the time available to find a new employer or pursue another immigration option.The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) proposal, scheduled for publication in the Federal Register, would remove the provision at 8 CFR 214.1(l)(2), which covers E-1, E-2, E-3, H-1B, H-1B1, L-1, O-1 and TN visa classifications and their dependents.If finalised, workers whose employment or qualifying activity ends would generally have to leave the United States immediately, unless they are otherwise authorised to remain.DHS said the present grace period "disconnects the alien's lawful status from the very basis of eligibility" for these employment-based non-immigrant classifications.The proposal would restore what DHS described as its earlier policy, under which a worker was expected to depart once employment with the sponsoring employer ended.

Trump's Bombardier jet ban threat sparks alarm among US workers

GNS News Agency, Sept 18Washington: US workers at Canadian aircraft maker Bombardier fear for their jobs after President Donald Trump threatened to ban the company's aircraft, highlighting the domestic risks from his widening trade dispute with Canada.The Washington Post reported that concern has spread among Bombardier employees in Wichita, Kansas, where the company employs about 1,500 people.

"This is ridiculous," one employee told the newspaper. "We have thousands of Americans working here, and I don't want to be thinking about losing my job."Trump threatened the action last week in a social media post. He described Bombardier products as not "good enough" and called for more manufacturing to be moved to the United States."If they want our Market, they must build here, and stop treating America like a 'piggybank,'" Trump wrote.The president has taken no formal steps to impose the threatened restrictions. The White House has also not explained what a ban would cover or which Bombardier operations it wants transferred to the US.Bombardier employs another 2,000 people across the country. It operates service centres in Arizona, Texas, Florida and Connecticut. The company makes aircraft wings in Texas and flight-control components in California. It is also planning a new service centre in Indiana.Final assembly of its business jets takes place in Canada."I'm scared about what this might mean for my job and my family," a longtime Bombardier engineer in Wichita told The Washington Post."It's tough to look at many other Americans working here who are also struggling and got caught up in this global mess," the engineer said.

Bombardier highlighted its US operations in a public statement. A company spokesperson said there were no changes to its operations "at this time."The threat has caused unease in Wichita, a major American aviation manufacturing centre that calls itself the "Air Capital of the

World."Sedgwick County Commissioner Jim Howell, a Republican, warned that a ban would "be devastating to Bombardier" and represent a "huge loss" for the region."It's rare that I go against the president in my comments," Howell said. "But no, he's not perfect. And I think that this is one of those things where I'm just shocked that he wanted to wade into this, because I don't think it's helping."

Republican Senator Roger Marshall of Kansas has contacted the White House and urged Bombardier to expand its Wichita workforce to more than 3,000."America buys more than half of what Bombardier sells. If that's the market, more of those planes should be built here," Marshall said.Bombardier acquired the Learjet brand in 1990 and maintained its production base in Wichita until ending Learjet manufacturing there in 2022. Its remaining Kansas operations include aircraft maintenance, testing and engineering work.US and Canadian aviation supply chains are closely connected, with aircraft and components often crossing the border during production. Trump made a similar threat in January to revoke certifications for some Bombardier jets and impose a 50 per cent tariff on Canadian aircraft, but did not implement it.

Election officials prepare for chaos as Trump seeks to tilt the midterms to Republicans

GNS News Agency, Sept 18U.S. state and local officials are taking extraordinary steps to protect voting systems, staff and public confidence amid growing signs that the president is trying to use federal power and fraud claims to sway November's elections.Two months before Americans vote in midterm elections that could reshape the balance of power in Washington, local and state officials across the country are rehearsing for a crisis that once seemed unthinkable:

What if the U.S. president tries to use the power of the federal government to tilt the vote his way?In California, officials have gamed out what would happen if Donald Trump dispatches federal agents to polling places, intimidating voters and suppressing turnout.In Michigan, state officials are advising local clerks how to respond if the federal government demands access to voting machines.And coast to coast, election officials are bracing for legal battles over everything from ballot seizures to voter-fraud investigations.

Reuters interviewed more than 50 state and local election officials from both political parties, including a dozen secretaries of state, the top election officials in their states. Nearly all said they are adopting new strategies to prepare for political interference, misinformation, cyber attacks and even threats of violence ahead of the midterms. Their efforts span jurisdictions large and small, in areas controlled by Trump's Republican Party as well as the opposition Democratic Party.The preparations reflect growing alarm among state and local officials that the biggest threat to November's elections might come not from foreign meddling or technical failures, but from the Trump administration itself, as the president seeks to expand the federal government's role in elections, an area long overseen by states and localities.

The White House has dismissed concerns that federal actions could disrupt the midterms, arguing that the administration is enforcing election laws and safeguarding confidence in voting. It blamed Democrats for what it described as widespread voting by noncitizens, despite scant evidence to support those claims. A Reuters investigation published in July and independent studies have found that voting by noncitizens is extraordinarily rare and unlikely to affect election outcomes."The distrust in our elections is caused by extreme Democrats," said White House spokesperson Lauren Bis. The Trump administration has good reason for pursuing allegations of voter fraud "despite the media and Democrats denying it for decades," she added.

Yet Trump has openly portrayed many of his election-related initiatives as ways to help Republicans win.Under the U.S. Constitution, elections are administered by states and localities, not the president. However, Trump has urged Republicans to "nationalize" voting in at least 15 places, directed federal law enforcement to pursue debunked voter-fraud claims and sought to restrict mail-in balloting. His administration has also launched probes of election officials and offices in Wisconsin, Georgia and elsewhere.

His push to redraw congressional maps before the midterms sparked a nationwide redistricting battle that's expected to give Republicans a net advantage in House races. He has sued states that refused to provide federal agencies with confidential voter data, including birthdates, driver's license numbers and partial Social Security numbers, and gutted programs designed to thwart cyber attacks and foreign interference. At the Republican Party's midterm convention in Dallas last week, he urged supporters to "cheat like hell" and vote whether they're "registered or not" in the midterms."Election officials are concerned about the role the federal government is going to play," said Bill Gates, a Republican lawyer and former official in Maricopa County, Arizona, who now advises and trains election officials around the country. The mood, he said, is one of "apprehension," rather than the close cooperation that once characterized election cycles.More than a dozen local and state election officials said they are hiring outside lawyers or seeking legal training for themselves and their staff to prepare for potential demands by the administration for access to sensitive voting records or election equipment.Nearly twice that many said they are expanding public outreach and social media campaigns to counter misinformation, including the false claims made by Trump and Republican allies that voting machines are unreliable and mail-in voting is inherently corrupt.

And most said they are scrambling to fill gaps left by the Trump administration's cuts to programs that help safeguard elections from cyber attacks and physical security threats. That includes ongoing work to fortify election offices with camera systems and bulletproof glass – a trend that began after Trump disputed his loss to Joe Biden in the 2020 election, igniting waves of violent threats by Trump supporters against election workers.From Republican strongholds to Democratic cities, election offices are preparing for misinformation campaigns, cyber threats and possible federal intervention. REUTERS/Brian Snyder

The administration's election rhetoric could prove to be mere bluster, said David Becker, a former voting-rights lawyer for the U.S. Justice Department who now runs the Center for Election Innovation and Research, a group that works to build confidence in elections. Courts have repeatedly rejected the administration's efforts to change mail-in ballot rules and obtain confidential voter rolls from states that refused its demands. Other actions, such as sending armed agents to polling sites, would likely be illegal and risk political backlash, Becker added.But with control of Congress potentially hinging on a small number of races, many election officials say they cannot assume such guardrails will hold. The stakes are enormous: A Republican loss of one or both chambers would end the governing trifecta that has enabled much of Trump's agenda, opening the door to aggressive Democratic oversight of him and new obstacles to his legislative and judicial priorities.

Election officials are planning for a wide range of scenarios, particularly in battleground states and Democratic strongholds targeted by Trump's false election-fraud claims. Any disputed result, they say, could trigger federal investigations, courtroom battles, and even civil unrest.Wisconsin offers insight into those preparations.In Dane County, home to Wisconsin's capital, county attorneys have begun drafting court filings to fight any attempt by the Trump administration to seize voting equipment or election records, and they are preparing for the possibility that federal immigration agents could appear at polling places, said the Democratic county clerk, Scott McDonell."It's going to be a matter of speed," McDonell said of any legal response. The county is also preparing for possible protests over disputed results.He said January's FBI raid on election operations in Georgia's Fulton County was a wake-up call, convincing him that the Trump administration could try to intervene.

Dana Barrett, a Fulton County commissioner, told Reuters the raid exposed a vulnerability few local governments had anticipated. After federal agents seized about 650 boxes of 2020 election records as part of an investigation into voter-fraud allegations previously rejected by courts and audits, the county rushed to hire outside counsel and sued to recover the records. "The only thing that would have been nice is if we had already had those people on board," said Barrett, a Democrat. "But how could you know?"

The FBI's January seizure of election records in Georgia's Fulton County convinced many officials, including Fulton County Commissioner Dana Barrett, that federal intervention was no longer a hypothetical risk. REUTERS/Brian SnyderThe county, Georgia's most populous and a Democratic stronghold, lost that legal fight in May, when a federal judge ruled prosecutors could retain the records while their investigation continues.

Wisconsin faces similar pressure. In May, FBI agents sought to question at least eight current and former Milwaukee city and county employees about the 2020 election. Trump's loss in the state had spurred him and his allies to sue the state's two largest Democratic-leaning counties, Milwaukee and Dane, in unsuccessful cases alleging voter fraud. Almost immediately after the FBI visits – some of them to people's homes – Milwaukee city and county leaders moved to secure legal representation.The FBI declined to comment on its election-related work.Milwaukee County retained the Democracy Defenders Fund, a legal nonprofit that has battled the Trump administration in Fulton County and a number of other places. The city separately hired two firms, the Washington Litigation Group and the Public Rights Project, to represent current and former city employees.Legal groups are providing their services free of charge in the city and county of Milwaukee and in states including California, New Mexico and Pennsylvania. In some jurisdictions, including Fulton County, election offices and individual officials have hired private lawyers at their own expense.In Michigan, a pivotal state in the fight for control of the U.S. Senate, the Democratic secretary of state's office has consulted private attorneys about defending local election officials against potential federal scrutiny. The Trump administration has threatened to investigate at least one Democratic-led county in the state over alleged voter fraud in the 2024 election, despite producing no evidence of significant irregularities.

US suspends 870,000 borrowers over suspected pandemic loan fraud

GNS News Agency, Sept 18

Washington: US Vice President JD Vance announced that the Small Business Administration had suspended nearly 870,000 borrowers over suspected pandemic loan fraud, as officials linked the accounts to an estimated $39 billion in taxpayer money.Speaking at a fraud task force event in Missouri, Vance urged congressional Democrats to support the administration's efforts. SBA Administrator Kelly Loeffler said the suspensions covered borrowers across 45 states and territories.The action involved the Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loan programme. The figures presented concerned suspected fraudulent activity. They did not establish how many borrowers had been convicted or how much money had been recovered.Asked directly for those figures, Vance did not provide them in the remarks recorded in the pool report. He instead pointed to a process allowing borrowers to challenge their designation."We certainly appreciate that some people, you know, mistakes sometimes happen," he said.

Vance said blocking people previously identified as having defrauded the government from obtaining further assistance was a way to prevent future losses. He added that those who believed they had been wrongly flagged could appeal.Loeffler promised to pursue borrowers who had used false information to obtain pandemic assistance."If you stole from the Paycheck Protection Program, if you created fake companies and lied about your employees, we know who you are, we will claw back the money."Attorney General Todd Blanche said the administration was intensifying its response to the alleged misuse of funds."I flew in from Washington DC this morning for one reason. The American people were robbed and they deserve to know," he said."For years, fraudsters got the message that Washington would look the other way. That era is over."FBI Director Kash Patel said five people on a most-wanted fraudsters list had been captured in three months. He said he hoped to double that number by the end of the year.SBA Inspector General Bill Kirk announced "Operation No Doze", under which suspected SBA fraudsters in Kansas and Missouri would receive final 30-day demand letters.Vance also said the task force was examining whether the Biden administration had been aware of PPP fraud. The supplied account included no findings establishing wrongdoing by former administration officials."It was an open secret," Vance said, arguing that officials had known the programme was vulnerable to widespread abuse.

He acknowledged that some Democrats at the state level had helped the fraud effort. But he accused Democrats in Congress of obstructing it. The pool report included no response from Democrats to those allegations.Vance said investigations also covered suspected Medicaid fraud. He argued that money diverted from the programme could deprive low-income Americans of access to medical care.He called for a legislative framework that would allow the fraud effort to continue beyond the Trump administration. He said invitations had been extended to congressional Democrats to work with the administration."If you're thinking about defrauding the American taxpayer, if you're thinking about skimming off the top, if you're thinking about taking a program that was meant for hungry children or for needy young mothers, don't do it. Go and get a job instead."

No BRICS currency proposal yet, says MEA

New Delhi: There is no proposal for a BRICS currency "as of now", while discussions on trade in local currencies have been underway for some time, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Saturday.

In a press briefing, MEA's Secretary, Economic Relations, Sudhakar Dalela, said: "There is no proposal in the BRICS for a BRICS currency as of now.""Discussions on trade in local currencies have been underway for some time," he said.

"We believe local currency settlement is a practical mechanism to reduce transaction costs in bilateral trade. This has been encouraged as complementary to the global payment and settlement system, improving overall global trade across nations," he said.The mechanism can help reduce transaction costs in bilateral trade and is being encouraged as a complement to the global payment system.Dalela further stated that the 'BRICS MSME' cooperation portal, cooperation on global value chains, and logistics frameworks were among the key highlights during the BRICS Summit.He said that BRICS cooperation on DPI, a science and research repository, and collaboration on startups were also the key highlights.Dalela said it had been a year of robust participation and engagement, with more than 350 meetings held under India's BRICS chair. He described it as a "whole-of-nation effort", with BRICS engagement taking place in more than 30 cities across the country.He further informed that there were 150 practical outcomes across four pillars from the BRICS Summit."Strengthening food and health security, and BRICS cooperation on mental health were some of the important highlights," he said.

When the crows came together

It was a little past dawn. The sun hadn't fully risen yet, but there was that soft, golden light beginning to seep over the Attappady Hills. Mist still clung to the trees, and everything felt damp and fresh. We were on one of our road trips — no real destination, just a familiar route winding through the woods. The windows were down, and that earthy, rain-soaked smell drifted in. Somewhere out there, birds were singing — nothing dramatic, just the quiet music of a forest waking up.I was half-awake, sipping black coffee from a thermos, letting my thoughts wander. The road curved ahead, and then the driver, a local man, slowed down. He pointed towards a massive banyan tree by the side of the road. At first, I did not notice anything unusual — but then I caught a flutter of black wings.

A crow was making quite a scene. It flapped and cawed, darting around the branches like something was wrong. We looked closer — and there it was. A snake. Long, still, and sunlit, curled around a thick branch not far from a fragile little nest. The crow must have been the parent. It kept diving at the snake, trying to drive it away.We stepped out, careful not to disturb anything, and just stood there watching. The snake did not seem to be in a hurry. It moved slowly, creeping toward the nest, while the crow kept attacking. You could feel the tension build. Then, one by one, more crows showed up. Maybe they had heard the call, or maybe they just knew something was happening. They joined in, attacking from different angles.

It got loud. Wings beating, caws echoing, the snake twisting and striking back — but the crows did not stop. They were fierce. Finally, the snake hesitated. It paused, then slowly began to retreat, slipping back down the tree into the undergrowth. The crows did not chase it far, just hovered above, crying out like victors.We stood there for a while, not saying much. Just taking it in. There was something powerful in that moment — not just the drama, but the way those birds came together. That tree must have seen countless stories like this one. And for some reason, watching it all unfold made the world feel a little wilder, a little more connected.

Creating a humane police force

Even as the Global Week Against Torture was being observed, newspapers reported on June 25 that a constable was suspended for assaulting three women inside a police station in Tiruvallur district of Tamil Nadu. Another report on the same day published an order of the State Human Rights Commission in V. Priyadharshini vs K. Santhamoorthi, directing the State to pay ?50,000 as compensation for human rights violation by Santhamoorthi, who, as Inspector of Police, C2 Race Course police station, Coimbatore City, disrespected and harassed a woman complainant.

On the same day, The Hindu reported about the "threat of moral policing shadowing young couples in Chennai's public spaces". These are just a sample of the excesses committed by the police in their routine everyday interactions with the larger public, especially women.V. Kanadasan, SHRC Member, in the order in the Coimbatore case, quoted Section 58 of the Police Act, 2006, enunciating the social responsibilities of the police, assigning special duties with regard to the vulnerable sections of society: "Behave with the members of the public with due courtesy and decorum, particularly in dealing with senior citizens, women and children. Ensure that in all situations, especially during conflict between communities, classes, castes and political groups, the conduct of the police is always governed by the principles of impartiality and human rights norms, with special attention to protection of weaker section including minorities. Preserve, promote and protect human rights and interests of weaker sections, backward classes, poor, weak and the downtrodden."

Hence, the duty of the police officials is to behave with the members of the public with due courtesy and decorum. The higher officials in the Police Department may be well-mannered and well-trained to behave courteously. But they are not available for interactions with the general public.In 1998, a 21-year-old homemaker, Chitra, was found dead after being taken to the Aminjikarai police station in Chennai at night for investigation of an offence of theft allegedly committed by her husband, Ravi. She was humiliated at the station. After her death, the then City Police Commissioner had initiated sensitisation training for all police personnel and it percolated to the entire State police force.

As an advocate, I have personally visited various police stations. My experience is that it is a hierarchical place that is drunk with power. The personnel view complainants as a nuisance and a spoke in their wheels. The accused are seen as inhuman slaves at their mercy. The words spoken are generally insulting, rude with no respect or culture. There is an atmosphere of fear that makes people afraid of stepping into a police station.Policemen generally think that they are above the law. They are still in a colonial mindset. They are more adept at protecting the elite and more dutiful in maintaining law and order at the cost of the common man. They stop the entire traffic, even ambulances, to give way for a VIP convoy on roads. Crime investigation and victim justice are not their priority. Policing have turned against the common man's interest and dignity. Pedestrians, two-wheeler users and autorickshaw drivers are at their receiving end forever on the roads as the policemen vent their power and authority on them using vulgar language and physical intimidation. It is just not custodial violence or murder but torture simpliciter.Even as we find fault with the functioning of the policemen on duty at the police stations and outside, it is essential that we look at and advocate reforms. While the higher police officers are educated, trained and protected by service laws, the lower officials are definitely exposed to all imaginable vagaries. They are on duty round the clock, with very little rest or humane conditions of service. They are treated with contempt by the superior officers, politicians and the rich and powerful.

As early as 2006, the Supreme Court in the Prakash Singh judgment has suggested wide reforms in the police. One of the most important reforms suggested is separation of investigation and law-and-order wings. In 2010, the Common Wealth Human Rights Initiative, in one of its report on "Seven steps to police reforms", said the problem was "Investigations are poorly mounted, slow, done by inadequately trained and unspecialized staff and frequently subject to manpower deflection into other pressing law and order duties". "Both investigation and law and order are vital and specific police functions. In order to encourage specialization and upgrade overall performance, the Court has ordered a gradual separation of investigative and law and order wings, starting with towns and urban areas with a population of one million or more. It is felt that this will streamline policing, ensure speedier and more expert investigation and improve rapport with the people," it said.As the police were seen with suspicion and not as part of the community for whose welfare they exist, in 1993, Philip V. Prateep, an IPS officer, founded the Friends of Police (FoP), a community policing initiative in Tamil Nadu. It was to focus on promoting crime awareness, preventing crime, and enhancing fairness and transparency within the police force. But sadly, it was disbanded in 2020 after allegations of its members abusing their powers.The need of the hour is to ensure that the police force is revamped with sensitive, friendly, and honest people. Reward the best ones publicly, promote constant people-friendly interactions with the local police and citizens of the neighbourhood. A few years ago, in every zone, there used to be a police-citizens meet which was attended by the Deputy Commissioner in charge of the locality and police officers from every police station in the zone. It gave room for healthy interaction and introspection. With CCTV cameras and smartphones in everyone's hand, the police could be harnessed and sensitised to have a human face with compassion and empathy.

Searching for alien life means asking the right questions first

Since the 1990s, scientists have discovered hordes of planets outside the solar system together with tantalising hints of life — or more accurately hints of hints of life. So far, however, there exists no proof that there's life anywhere in the universe except on the earth.

Does that mean our quest for alien life has failed?

A team led by researchers at the Institute for Particle Physics and Astrophysics at ETH Zurich, in Switzerland, recently offered a more nuanced answer to this question — one reminiscent of an important attitude to have when doing research at the cutting edge.Writing in a recent paper in The Astronomical Journal, the team contended that a "no signs of life detected" conclusion can also offer valuable information to guide and refine future exoplanet studies. More broadly, the team emphasised the importance of recognising that every observation carries with it a degree of uncertainty and that it is important to ask the right questions.Nothing is somethingWith the ultimate goal of assessing the habitability of exoplanets and finding potential signs of life, researchers have used a statistical method called Bayesian analysis. "It's a way of updating our understanding or beliefs based on new evidence," Daniel Angerhausen, a scientist in the Department of Physics at ETH Zurich and lead author of the new paper, said.

This is like making a first guess based on what one already believes, then fine-tuning it. For example, you could start by assuming life is very common in the universe. When you observe a hundred exoplanets without finding signs of life, you adjust your guess to accommodate factors that might explain how life can be common yet not found on these worlds. As you continue this process over time, your answer to "how common is life?" acquires a more informed shape.In the new paper, the team explored how different starting assumptions affect final estimates of how common life might be.The researchers simulated observations of 100 exoplanets, ranging from 1 to 100, to determine the minimum number of exoplanets that must be examined to conclude how many worlds are possibly habitable.Their work suggested that if scientists examine between 40 and 80 exoplanets and find no evidence of life, they can confidently conclude that fewer than 10% to 20% of similar planets are likely to support life. That is, life would be relatively rare.If the prevalence of life is indeed low, around 10-20%, it would be understandable for no signs of life to be found in a sample of 40-80 planets. But if life was more common, scientists should expect to observe some indications of it in that same sample. At least, this is the team's argument.Need for better questionsThis key finding suggests the number of planets observed so far may suffice to establish an upper limit on the number of potentially habitable worlds. However, the authors were careful to note that "ideal" results are likely impossible because every observation has some uncertainty.This uncertainty can manifest in many ways (e.g. a false negative occurs when a significant sign of life is overlooked) and is related to the challenges in the questions researchers ask when they set out to find life signs.

Angerhausen explained that the question "does this planet have life?" itself carries a significant risk of false positives. For example, a planet may have a small biosphere that doesn't alter its atmosphere in a way that can be detected from a distance. In contrast, stipulating whether "this planet has a temperature within a specific range and concentrations of certain molecules above a defined threshold" could provide more informative data.When selecting which planets to investigate, the paper advises the importance of asking clear and specific questions. For example, instead of posing a vague question, one might ask, "of all the rocky planets in the habitable zone, how many show signs of water vapour, oxygen, and methane?" This would help create clear selection criteria for exoplanets as well as help experts avoid misinterpreting data from an alien world.When observations are filled with uncertainty, the conclusion "no life detected" can be meaningless.

In Frames: Stampede country

According to the International Institute for Population Sciences, India's population clocked 1,45,48,50,455, some time around the afternoon on July 11, World Population Day. These masses of people go to work squeezing themselves inside packed suburban trains, celebrate festivals as a community, elect governments by the sheer might of their mandate, and carry their heroes on their shoulders. However, there have also been occasions when their numbers were overwhelming and went out of control, leading to stampedes. In the past 12 months, dozens lost their lives in multiple such tragedies. On July 2, 2024, in Hathras in Uttar Pradesh, followers gathered in large numbers to see a self-styled godman. As they rushed to collect sand from his footsteps, which they considered sacred, there was a stampede and 121 followers lost their lives. Worn-out and broken slippers strewn around reflected the gravity of the tragedy.

In Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, six people died and 20 others were injured on January 8, 2025, while trying to collect tokens at counters for the Vaikunta Ekadasi darshan at the Tirumala temple. The tragedy struck despite 94 counters having been set up in Tirupati to avert crowding.Dozens sleeping on the banks of Sangam in Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh were trampled to death during the Kumbh Mela on January 29, 2025, when thousands converged here to take a dip in the Sangam on the occasion of Mauni Ammavasya, considered auspicious by devotees. While the official death toll is put at 37, a BBC Hindi investigation counted it at much higher 82.On June 4, 2025, IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) team members were to attend a celebratory event at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru after lifting their first ever IPL trophy. Already basking in celebration and amid an emotional outburst, RCB fans started flocking to the yet unopened stadium gates, in numbers not anticipated by the police, from the morning. By afternoon, the crowd was uncontrollable. In the resultant stampede, 11 people died and many others were injured.Except for the Bengaluru stampede and one at a Hyderabad theatre for an Allu Arjun film's premiere which occurred in cities, other tragedies struck during mass gatherings observing an act of faith.In New Delhi railway station, 18 people died during a rush of devotees to catch a train headed to the Kumbh Mela.Pall of gloom: Family members gather after the death of their loved ones during a stampede at a religious gathering of a godman in Hathras in Uttar Pradesh on July 2, 2024.Rushing to help: Devotees' belongings lie scattered on the ground as rescue personnel carry away a victim after a stampede at the Sangam in Prayagraj on January 29, 2025Me before you: Devotees at a counter for tokens to attend a religious event at the Tirumala temple, minutes before the stampede on January 8, 2025.

Fatal charm: Actor Allu Arjun being shifted to a hospital after his statement was recorded in connection with a stampede at a movie theatre in Hyderabad that claimed a life in December 2024.According to the International Institute for Population Sciences, India's population clocked 1,45,48,50,455, some time around the afternoon on July 11, World Population Day. These masses of people go to work squeezing themselves inside packed suburban trains, celebrate festivals as a community, elect governments by the sheer might of their mandate, and carry their heroes on their shoulders. However, there have also been occasions when their numbers were overwhelming and went out of control, leading to stampedes. In the past 12 months, dozens lost their lives in multiple such tragedies. On July 2, 2024, in Hathras in Uttar Pradesh, followers gathered in large numbers to see a self-styled godman. As they rushed to collect sand from his footsteps, which they considered sacred, there was a stampede and 121 followers lost their lives. Worn-out and broken slippers strewn around reflected the gravity of the tragedy.In Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, six people died and 20 others were injured on January 8, 2025, while trying to collect tokens at counters for the Vaikunta Ekadasi darshan at the Tirumala temple. The tragedy struck despite 94 counters having been set up in Tirupati to avert crowding.Dozens sleeping on the banks of Sangam in Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh were trampled to death during the Kumbh Mela on January 29, 2025, when thousands converged here to take a dip in the Sangam on the occasion of Mauni Ammavasya, considered auspicious by devotees. While the official death toll is put at 37, a BBC Hindi investigation counted it at much higher 82.On June 4, 2025, IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) team members were to attend a celebratory event at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru after lifting their first ever IPL trophy. Already basking in celebration and amid an emotional outburst, RCB fans started flocking to the yet unopened stadium gates, in numbers not anticipated by the police, from the morning. By afternoon, the crowd was uncontrollable. In the resultant stampede, 11 people died and many others were injured.Except for the Bengaluru stampede and one at a Hyderabad theatre for an Allu Arjun film's premiere which occurred in cities, other tragedies struck during mass gatherings observing an act of faith.In New Delhi railway station, 18 people died during a rush of devotees to catch a train headed to the Kumbh Mela.

How is Mizoram handling the refugee crisis?

The story so far: Mizoram has been grappling with a refugee crisis since the February 2021 military coup in Myanmar. After months of lull beyond the State's borders, some 4,000 refugees crossed over from Myanmar in the first week of July following a fratricidal battle between two rival armed groups. Mizoram is now caught between pushing back the refugees who are ethnically related to the State's dominant Mizos and letting them stay despite limited resources and a tepid response from the Centre.

What triggered the fresh inflow of people?

Within a week from July 3, some 4,000 from Myanmar's Chin State crossed into Mizoram's Champhai district. This was after a fierce gunfight between two anti-junta armed groups, the Chin National Defence Force (CNDF) and the Chinland Defence Force-Hualngoram (CDF-H). The two groups are part of the People's Defence Force aligned with the pro-democracy National Unity Government of Myanmar, which has seized control of large swathes of the Chin State from the junta over the last few months. They are said to have turned against each other to control areas in the region deemed strategic for trade with India. Indian intelligence officials said the CNDF prevailed over the CDF-H and captured its camps.While the sounds of gunshots have ceased across the Tiau river, which marks a segment of the 510-km border between the two countries, the refugees have not mustered the courage to return to Khawmawi, the village facing Mizoram's Zokhawthar. Champhai district authorities recorded 3,980 Myanmar nationals in Zokhawthar, a major border trade village, and Saikhumphai on July 6.

When did Mizoram's refugee crisis begin?

Present-day Mizoram has been used to Myanmar nationals moving in and out of the State even before the Free Movement Regime (FMR) between the two countries came into existence in 1968, allowing residents along their 1,643-km-long border to travel up to 40 km inside. The limit was reduced to 16 km from the border in 2004, and additional regulations were enforced in 2016.The Centre announced the suspension of the FMR in February 2024, but there has been no official notification or bilateral agreement in this regard, apart from the Ministry of Home Affairs bringing in a fresh protocol in December 2024 to limit the free movement to 10 km. The regulations had little impact on the ground until the February 2021 military coup in Myanmar drove thousands into Mizoram. The State's government, civil society groups, and villagers provided food, shelter, and security to the refugees on humanitarian grounds, although the Ministry of Home Affairs asked the northeastern States bordering Myanmar not to let the refugees in.The refugee crisis deepened when some 2,000 Bawm people sought refuge after fleeing persecution in Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts in 2022, and thousands of Kuki-Zo people displaced by the ethnic clash in Manipur crossed over. Mizoram houses more than 40,000 shelter-seekers from Bangladesh, Myanmar and Manipur.

How is the State dealing with the situation?

The dominant Mizo community of Mizoram shares ethnic and familial ties with the Chins of Myanmar, the Bawms of Bangladesh, and the Kuki-Zos of Manipur. All belong to the greater Zo ethnic group. In 2024, Chief Minister Lalduhoma told the Centre that ethnic affiliations and humanitarian reasons prevent his government from pushing the refugees back to where they came from. Influential organisations such as the Young Mizo Association (YMA), church bodies, and resourceful individuals have been contributing in cash and kind to take care of the basic needs of the refugees, Myanmar government officials and politicians among them.Initially reluctant, the Centre provided ?8 crore as assistance to provide relief for the refugees. However, some villagers began to feel the pressure of handling waves of refugees. In March, the Farkawn village council in Champhai district issued an order asking all Myanmar refugees to stop trading by March 31 and desist from moving out of their designated camps. Civil society groups issued similar diktats in Melthum, a village in Aizawl district, and Lawngtlai town later.In a departure from the hospitality extended since 2021, the refugees were threatened with eviction if they did not comply with the order. Almost simultaneously, Aizawl-based activist V.L. Thlamuanpuia wrote to Home Minister Amit Shah, underlining the churning in the State over the refugee issue. He stated that the uncontrolled movement of Myanmar refugees was threatening national security, changing the demography, and draining local resources.

Who are the Chins? What led to the fresh inflow? What ties does the dominant Mizo community of Mizoram share with the Chins of Myanmar, the Bawms of Bangladesh, and the Kuki-Zos of Manipur? How are foreigners identified in the State?

How is the government responding?

India is neither a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention nor does it have a specific national law on refugees, and it usually deals with them under laws related to foreigners. The country, however, has a history of hosting refugees from neighbouring countries and often works with the United Nations to determine refugee status. New Delhi has been talking tough on the refugee problem along the India-Myanmar border. Of late, the Mizoram government has been showing signs of feeling the pressure of influx from the civil war-torn Myanmar.In March, the Chief Minister said the FMR was one of the factors responsible for a rise in smuggling activities in the State. A month later, he said some refugees were taking advantage of the crisis in Myanmar to repeatedly cross the border by violating Indian laws. His government has also prodded the Centre to obtain presidential assent for the Mizoram (Maintenance of Household Registers) Bill, that seeks to identify foreigners in the State.

Modi's 'revdi' warning was lost on Opposition, BJP states. Now, it has reached Trump

It's not very often that an idea travels from a lower-middle-income country to the far-away rich developed world. But if it is about winning elections and staying in power, it catches the attention of even the POTUS (President of the United States of America). The humble Indian revdi whose recipe every political party here has mastered finally reached America — some 12,000 kilometres away. So what if it took a while?Last Wednesday, Trump promised $5,000 as a "dividend" to every adult citizen in the US if his Republican party managed to retain control of Congress in the midterm elections scheduled in November. This, he said, was "because of our tremendous strength and success economically…" Indeed, the US is the largest economy in the world, although not without its blemishes, and with China right on its heels.

The big Trump revdi is estimated to cost the US exchequer at least $1 trillion, given that there are about 245 million citizens over 18 years, as per the US 2024 Census Bureau data. To put it in perspective, this amount is equal to almost a fourth of India's GDP, which stands at $3.92 trillion in 2025-26.What is important to understand, however, is whether it will encourage the poor and lower-income Americans to step out and vote. For the citizens of the world's largest economy with a per capita annual income of $94,430 (almost 34 times India's per capita income, $2,813), what does this $5,000 mean?

America is a rich and developed country, but that doesn't mean every American is rich. According to the US Census Bureau's 2024 American Community Survey, for the lowest quintile, that is, the bottom 20 per cent or one-fifth of the American population, the mean household annual income is only $17,132 a year. For this household, $5,000 means more than 100 days of its annual income. And, for the next 20 per cent of the population, it means a little more than a month's income (their household income is $48,852 a year). Inequality is high in the US. For instance, the annual household income of the top 5 per cent of the population in the US is $5,25,113, which is more than 30 times the mean annual household income of the bottom 20 per cent of people.When Trump announced this $5,000 dividend, Indian policymakers and ministers were quite amused. At least one government official and one Cabinet minister told this correspondent in jest that rich countries are moving in the direction of the developing countries.But such is the universal appeal of a populist economic idea.

In India, Direct Benefit Transfers (DBTs) enabled by the Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) trinity was a powerful idea of the UPA government in its second term. In fact, an influential advisor to the then Congress-led government had imagined a scenario where, with the click of a mouse, funds could be instantaneously transferred to the bank account of a voter. "And if this is done ahead of elections, imagine what the political party in power can achieve," the advisor said with excitement and a gleam in both eyes.Over the years, DBT-based social welfare has become a prominent feature of India's political economy. From all regional parties to Congress to the Bharatiya Janata Party, none risk not including cash handouts to sections of the voter base in their election manifestos.Prime Minister Narendra Modi attempted to run it down four years ago by warning against the revdi culture during the inauguration of the Bundelkhand Expressway on July 16, 2022, but his own party succumbed to the enticement of its political returns.A key advisor to Modi, who does not wish to be named, says it used to be difficult for Cabinet ministers in the past to get the Prime Minister's nod on any proposal involving freebies. But not so much anymore. His party units in other states made cash handouts an essential ingredient in their poll strategy. In fact, it has now become a race to the bottom between the BJP state units, regional parties and the Congress. The Sixteenth Finance Commission estimates large-group unconditional cash transfers by states to be Rs 1.96 lakh crore in 2025-26, which is approximately $20 billion. The bulk of this went to women in Maharashtra, Karnataka and West Bengal.

'Why don't you feed them in your house?' SC asks petitioner over feeding of strays

The Supreme Court while hearing a plea alleging harassment over the feeding of community dogs in Noida, asked the petitioner, "Why don't you feed them in your own house?"A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta told the petitioner's counsel, "We should leave every lane, every road open for these large-hearted people? There is all the space for these animals, no space for humans. Why don't you feed them in your own house? Nobody is stopping you."The plea related to a March 2025 order of the Allahabad High Court.

The petitioner, the counsel said, was subjected to harassment and was unable to feed community dogs in line with the Animal Birth Control Rules.Rule 20 of the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023 deals with feeding of community animals and puts onus on resident welfare association or apartment owner association or local body's representative of the local area to make necessary arrangements for feeding of community animals residing in the premises or that area.The top court, however, said, "We give you a suggestion to open a shelter in your own house. Feed every dog in the community in your own house."The petitioner's counsel claimed compliance with the rules and said the municipality was creating such places in Greater Noida but not in Noida.He said feeding points could be made at a place not frequented by people."You go on cycling in the morning?" the bench asked, "try doing it and see what happens".'Walkers at risk, cyclists at greater risk'When the counsel said he goes on morning walks and sees several dogs, the bench said, "Morning walkers are also at risk. Cycle riders and two-wheelers are at greater risk."The bench then tagged the plea with a separate pending plea on a similar issue.In the High Court, the petitioner sought directions to the authorities to implement provisions of the rules with due care and caution keeping in view the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960."While protection of street dogs would be warranted in accordance with the provisions of the applicable statute, at the same time, the authorities will have to bear in mind the concern of common man, such that their movement on streets are not hampered by attacks by these street dogs," the High Court said.The High Court, therefore, expected the state authorities to exhibit "due sensitivity" to the concerns of the petitioner and the common man on the streets.The High Court said the observation was necessary because there were many instances of attacks by street dogs on people of late, which has resulted in loss of lives and grave inconvenience to pedestrians.It disposed of the plea with a direction to the authorities to ensure that concerns highlighted by the court were duly taken care of and appropriate measures were taken to ensure protection of strays besides ensuring interest of people on the streets was not jeopardised.

In 'Millennium City' Gurugram, problem isn't flooding or infrastructure — it's the rural state of mind

The so-called Millennium City's waterlogging problems are in the news again. In Gurugram, flats and houses that sell for prices that compare to real estate in Western countries and rentals that might equate starting salaries of many white-collar professionals have become islands surrounded by surging rain-induced floods. As a result of the waterlogging, there were also sustained cuts to the electricity supply as the privately owned transformers that kick in when the government supply fails also went underwater. There was, reasonably enough, an outcry over the state of infrastructure in a locality that is home to the offices of many Fortune 500 companies and a citizenry that has achieved wealth in many walks of global activity and expects a certain level of an "international" lifestyle.

But Gurugram's problem is not primarily physical infrastructure. It is one of the mental attitudes through which our cities are built and occupied. Physical infrastructure is not so difficult to build and operate. How we choose to live in urban environments — that are supposed to rid us of "backward" rural attitudes — has always been a more complex task. It is made more complex in places such as Gurugram because new urbanism has simply built upon old attitudes rather than changing them. The most fundamental of these is the idea of publicness or the distinction between the private and the public.When we think of contemporary urbanisation in India, the easy way out is to blame its ills on privatisation and that largely meaningless concept of "neoliberalism", where the state is supposed to have ceded ground to private capital. Public interest would have been much better served, it is frequently suggested, had public authorities looked after the welfare of citizens. This gross oversimplification overlooks the history of publicness in our everyday lives, one that also lies at the heart of the state of Gurugram and other such urban developments.

The first "licence" for private development was issued to the Delhi Land and Finance (DLF) corporation on April 21, 1981, under the Haryana Development & Regulation of Urban Areas Act of 1975 in the village of Chakkarpur in Gurgaon district. Everyday social life in Chakkarpur, as in all villages around it, was organised through the arrangements of caste: Public life was entirely expressed through caste hierarchies and beliefs. Who could say what, pray where and clean the garbage were matters of caste. There was no generalised public life but, rather, one that was entirely expressed through the personal attributes of caste. You looked after your own. "New Gurgaon" has simply built on that, keeping the old social attitudes alive while giving off the idea of newness. New highways, metro stations and shopping plazas appear to speak of a new public life, but that is a mirage.Urban life in Gurugram is largely organised through the idea that there is no public except that which belongs to one's family, caste and class circuits. It is this that also lies at the heart of what passes for urban planning. If, for example, it is considered personally beneficial to cement over a waterway or clear a forest area for a private residence, then that activity comes to pass. The wider ramifications are rarely considered as there is really no sense of a public and hence, public welfare beyond the immediate circles in which people live. This, however, has little to do with the privatisation of urban development in cities such as Gurugram. It is fundamentally connected to a ruralism practised by the urban well-to-do.

At the present time, the most significant urban development in Gurugram is taking place in what were earlier its rural hinterlands, the areas furthest away from Delhi. Lands are being bought, sold and cleared for residential, commercial and infrastructure purposes. It is not difficult to see how, while multiple modern technologies are being used for mapping and digitising records to make land market-ready in these areas, the state, private capital and citizens have combined to further the ends of private benefit through wilfully rejecting the idea of publicness and public welfare.Land consolidation and rectangularisation (chakbandi and kilabandi) are important for the rationalisation of holdings that might otherwise be scattered or irregular lands that prevent the construction of roads and other infrastructure. However, in most cases, these are also contexts when panchayat lands — meant for general benefit — are appropriated for personal use and profit. The assistance of a variety of government officials — able to bend GIS technologies that are meant to produce transparency to the needs of private benefit — is, of course, crucial. As urbanisable land is built upon and becomes urban, the attitudes towards publicness displayed in appropriating public lands for private benefit simply scatter in different directions. The re-fashioning of rural spaces into urban ones is not accompanied by a different attitude towards publicness and public welfare.Gated residential enclaves, where the problems of public life are simply pushed out to the spaces and people beyond the walls, are not really a dramatically new phenomenon. They are merely the concrete manifestations of mentalities that linger under the appearance of change. The roads and underpasses that surround the luxury apartments and which get routinely flooded and engulfed by rainwater do so because of the mental infrastructure through which city planning and design happens. That rural state of mind that appropriates public lands for private profit is simply reproduced within urban spheres where the idea of the public — if it ever existed — has largely disappeared.

Run, Fauja, Run: The man who never stopped running

Fauja Singh was 100 when he became 'the oldest man to run a marathon' – clocking 8 hours and 11 minutes at the Toronto Marathon in 2011. Some years earlier, when he was a sprightly 95, and soon after he had finished a marathon, Fauja Singh, resplendent in a big, black turban paired with a matching satin shirt, had told a group of journalists gathered around him in Chandigarh: "Zindagi inni sohni hai ki maran nu te jee hi nahin karda (Life is so beautiful that I just don't feel like dying)." His eyes twinkled and his face creased into a wide smile.

He ran some more, before he finally hung up his boots in 2013, when he turned 102. But Fauja Singh never gave up on life – or his shoes. He collected at least 100 pairs and much later in life, ditched his kurta-pyjama for joggers and fancy suits. "I love clothes too," he told The Indian Express that afternoon in Chandigarh, volunteering to open his suitcase to display his collection.At 114, Fauja Singh died too soon. For a man who led a remarkable life, the end was abrupt, almost staccato – hit by an unidentified vehicle while crossing the road.Fauja Singh was 100 when he became 'the oldest man to run a marathon' – clocking 8 hours and 11 minutes at the Toronto Marathon in 2011. Some years earlier, when he was a sprightly 95, and soon after he had finished a marathon, Fauja Singh, resplendent in a big, black turban paired with a matching satin shirt, had told a group of journalists gathered around him in Chandigarh: "Zindagi inni sohni hai ki maran nu te jee hi nahin karda (Life is so beautiful that I just don't feel like dying)." His eyes twinkled and his face creased into a wide smile. He ran some more, before he finally hung up his boots in 2013, when he turned 102. But Fauja Singh never gave up on life – or his shoes. He collected at least 100 pairs and much later in life, ditched his kurta-pyjama for joggers and fancy suits. "I love clothes too," he told The Indian Express that afternoon in Chandigarh, volunteering to open his suitcase to display his collection. Chandigarh-based writer Khushwant Singh, who wrote a 2011 biography of the marathoner, recalls that when he first met him in 2005, Fauja was wearing an electric blue suit, a tie that read "Marathoner" and a pair of shoes with "Fauja" on one and "Singh" on the other. If Fauja first ran, it was to escape a personal tragedy. Villagers in his Beas village in Jalandhar district say Fauja was building a dhaba for his son Kuldeep when the roof collapsed and killed the youngster, the fifth of his six children. That was in August 1994, just two years after his wife, Gian Kaur, died. Devastated, Fauja lost all will to live. His youngest son Harvinder Singh remembers seeing him mourning for hours at the cremation ground. That's when Sukhjinder, the eldest of his sons who lived in England, took him along. In London, he went on long walks. "I had nothing to do at home. My son told me to take a bus to the local gurdwara, but I decided to walk instead," he would recount. A chance encounter with Harmander Singh, a marathon coach who met Fauja at a neighbourhood park just six months earlier, would lead to the 89-year-old running his first marathon in April 2000, at age 89. He ran 6 hours, 54 minutes to finish the 26-mile (41-km) run. And soon, he was famous. Adidas appointed him as its brand ambassador and his billboards appeared across London. He was also a torchbearer for the 2012 London Olympics. Khushwant Singh says Fauja was once invited by Queen Elizabeth II, a meeting for which he was briefed extensively for two days. "They told him, 'Don't try to hug her, just shake her hand'," he says. "The best part was the affection that came my way," Fauja told The Indian Express in an earlier interview. "Even the memsahibs would call me grandad." Soon, Fauja was a jet-setting marathoner, greeted aboard flights with public announcements. A British Airways crew even printed "World traveller, centurion marathoner" on his boarding pass, and Fauja beamed. In 2011, after running nine full marathons in 11 years, he ran the London Marathon, his last when he clocked 7 hours, 49 minutes and 21 seconds. He later transitioned to the shorter 10-km category in marathons. At the 2013 Mumbai Marathon, Fauja rubbed shoulders with actors John Abraham and Gul Panag, jogging with one and cooking pasta with the other. When a reporter asked Abraham how it felt to be with Fauja, he replied: "Ask me how it feels to be with Fauja Singh ji." The same year, Fauja ran in the 10-km category in the Hong Kong marathon – his last international run. Khushwant Singh, who spent two years writing Fauja's 2011 biography Turbaned Tornado, recalls how he interviewed the marathoner on foot in East London: "He said, 'I can either walk or sleep.' So walk we did". Khushwant says Fauja's accomplishment as the "oldest marathoner" was not recognised by the Guinness World Records because he did not have a birth certificate to prove his age. Fauja, he says, had a British passport that showed his date of birth as April 1, 1911, while a letter from Indian government officials stated that birth records were not maintained in 1911. Khushwant, who once travelled with Fauja to Australia, recalls how he never lost his humility or his large heart, not even when fans from the expat Sikh community thrust dollars into his palm at gurdwaras, "On the way back, he would quietly put all the money into the gurdwara's gullak," he says. Khushwant says that when Nestlé asked for Fauja's address for a sponsorship cheque, he gave the name of an Amritsar-based charity organisation. Back home in Punjab, Fauja was courted by politicians, yet was never dazzled by authority. In 2011, in a meeting with then CM Amarinder Singh, he quipped, "Bibi Bhattal (former CM Rajinder Kaur Bhattal and Amarinder's rival) speech badi takri dendi hai (Bhattal gives very powerful speeches)." How Amarinder took the quip isn't part of the records. Around three years ago, Fauja finally moved back from London to his home in Beas, where he lived with his youngest son Harvinder's family. "He never sat still," says Bhanjit Kaur, Fauja's daughter-in-law in Beas village. "From room to courtyard to street, he was always on the move." Once awake, he wouldn't stop. He would start his day with a desi pinni (a ladoo made with flaxseed or dal and dry fruits), followed by a light brunch of chapati and a sabzi. He loved ghiya (bottle gourd), tinda (apple gourd), and was "crazy about mangoes. Even till the end, he would eat a kilo a day," smiles Bhanjit. The trees in the family compound bore fruits from the seeds he once planted. At 3 pm, he would have a cup of tea, after which he walked for hours through the village. "Jis din reh gaya, ussi din baith jaunga (The day I skip my walk is the day I give up)," he told The Indian Express once. On July 14, too, he was walking. He was crossing the highway to visit a small roadside eatery named after his late son, Kuldeep Singh, when an unidentified vehicle struck him down. The house of veteran marathon runner Fauja Singh, who died after being hit by an unidentified vehicle while out for a walk in his native village, in Jalandhar district, Tuesday, July 15, 2025. (PTI Photo)Chandigarh-based writer Khushwant Singh, who wrote a 2011 biography of the marathoner, recalls that when he first met him in 2005, Fauja was wearing an electric blue suit, a tie that read "Marathoner" and a pair of shoes with "Fauja" on one and "Singh" on the other.

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Fauja Singh, Fauja Singh centenarian, Punjab centenarian, Toronto Marathon, Harmander Singh, Queen Elizabeth II, remembering Fauja Singh, Fauja Singh obit, Fauja Singh obituary, Indian express news, current affairs Fauja Singh, resplendent in a big, black turban paired with a matching satin shirt, had told a group of journalists gathered around him in Chandigarh: "Zindagi inni sohni hai ki maran nu te jee hi nahin karda (Life is so beautiful that I just don't feel like dying)."A chance encounter with Harmander Singh, a marathon coach who met Fauja at a neighbourhood park just six months earlier, would lead to the 89-year-old running his first marathon in April 2000, at age 89. He ran 6 hours, 54 minutes to finish the 26-mile (41-km) run. And soon, he was famous. Adidas appointed him as its brand ambassador and his billboards appeared across London. He was also a torchbearer for the 2012 London Olympics.Khushwant Singh says Fauja was once invited by Queen Elizabeth II, a meeting for which he was briefed extensively for two days. "They told him, 'Don't try to hug her, just shake her hand'," he says."The best part was the affection that came my way," Fauja told The Indian Express in an earlier interview. "Even the memsahibs would call me grandad."Fauja Singh, Fauja Singh centenarian, Punjab centenarian, Toronto Marathon, Harmander Singh, Queen Elizabeth II, remembering Fauja Singh, Fauja Singh obit, Fauja Singh obituary, Indian express news, current affairs Chandigarh-based writer Khushwant Singh, who wrote a 2011 biography of the marathoner, recalls that when he first met him in 2005, Fauja was wearing an electric blue suit, a tie that read "Marathoner" and a pair of shoes with "Fauja" on one and "Singh" on the other.Soon, Fauja was a jet-setting marathoner, greeted aboard flights with public announcements. A British Airways crew even printed "World traveller, centurion marathoner" on his boarding pass, and Fauja beamed.In 2011, after running nine full marathons in 11 years, he ran the London Marathon, his last when he clocked 7 hours, 49 minutes and 21 seconds. He later transitioned to the shorter 10-km category in marathons.At the 2013 Mumbai Marathon, Fauja rubbed shoulders with actors John Abraham and Gul Panag, jogging with one and cooking pasta with the other. When a reporter asked Abraham how it felt to be with Fauja, he replied: "Ask me how it feels to be with Fauja Singh ji."

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Pichwai art takes centre stage in Hyderabad with 'Parampara' exhibition

Hyderabad: 'Parampara: Pichwai's Past, Present and Future' will be held at the Craft Council of Telangana, Hyderabad, from September 27 to October 3, featuring over 40 works by five master artists working in the Pichwai tradition.The exhibition is curated by MeMeraki, India's first culture- tech platform, which works to enable generational master artists from the remotest corners of India to reach a global audience.The show traces the arc of Pichwai painting across time, opening with a decades-old Pichwai, moving through pieces rooted firmly in classical convention, and closing with contemporary reinterpretations of the form.

The need for universal and equitable health coverage

India has made substantial and tangible progress in Tuberculosis (TB) care, adopting new strategies to detect, treat and prevent TB. Some key areas of progress include the expansion of molecular testing for rapid detection of TB and drug-resistance; the introduction of the shorter, all-oral BPaLM regimen (a combination of four drugs Bedaquiline (B), Pretomanid (Pa), Linezolid (L), and Moxifloxacin (M)); doubling of the entitlement under the Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana (NPY) for nutrition support to ?1,000 a month; roll-out of TB preventive therapy; and an expanded role for communities through the involvement of TB survivors and Champions. The impact of the roll-out of these strategies can be seen in the 17.7% decline in TB incidence in India, from 237 per 1,00,000 population in 2015 to 195 per 1,00,000 population in 2023, in tandem with a 21.4% reduction in TB-related deaths.

Since Independence, India's public health system has delivered disease control services through primarily vertical health programmes, such as the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP). While this vertical nature has allowed for concentrated focus and brought benefits in many ways, it has also been limiting. Integration of TB services within the broader public health system is key to India's pursuit of equitable, universal health coverage (UHC) for all.Decentralising TB care for all

The ambitious Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Scheme was launched in India in 2018 to provide UHC for the Indian population. Today, TB has been integrated within both key components of Ayushman Bharat: the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), considered the world's largest insurance scheme, and the Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs, formerly known as Health and Wellness Centres), which provide a comprehensive basket of primary health-care services in rural and urban India.From the perspective of a person with TB symptoms, the best experience would be accessing consistently high-quality services at the first point of contact. The integration of TB services at the AAM primary care level is designed to meet this need, bringing together diagnostic, treatment and preventive care under one umbrella. AAMs serve as sputum collection centres, where people with TB symptoms can give samples for testing. The NTEP has also been optimising sample collection and transportation methods through a diagnostics network optimisation exercise. A person diagnosed with TB at a secondary or tertiary care facility can undergo treatment at the health centre closest to their residence, again minimising time and costs. In the first two months when people with TB are weak and drop outs as well as mortality is highest, community health officers positioned at the AAMs and their teams must be trained to identify and refer such patients for admission.While TB services have been free within the public health system, over 50% of all people with TB symptoms continue to seek care in the private sector. Uneven standards of care across the vastly heterogeneous private health sector has led to delays in diagnosis and contributed to poor outcomes as well as significant out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE) for families. It is imperative to strengthen referrals from the private to the public health system, particularly for those who cannot afford to incur substantial expenditure on health and who may not be aware that TB services are freely available in the public health system. It is equally essential to ensure that the AB-PMJAY provides full insurance coverage for those who seek care for TB in the private or public sector, particularly those who are severely ill.Equitable and decentralised care for allWhat does the road to equitable TB care look like? There are five key steps we can take to accelerate our progress towards TB elimination and universal health coverage (UHC).

First, while we work to achieve decentralisation, we must strengthen person-centred care approaches, and deliver them at scale. There have been model interventions in several States that have assessed people with TB for social and clinical vulnerabilities and linked them to care. In Tamil Nadu, the Tamil Nadu Kasanoi Erappila Thittam (TNKET), or "TB death-free project", has been successful in achieving reduced TB mortality through a robust system of identifying those most vulnerable or sick, and referring them for a brief period of admission. Similarly, there have been other interventions focusing on tribal communities, migrants, and homeless populations. One clear pathway to achieving UHC and increased utilisation of the public health system is by strengthening investment in the traditional 'inputs' for health and streamlining their functioning — human resources, supplies and infrastructure.Second, we must develop mechanisms to recognise intersectionalities. Multiple factors such as gender, age, caste, disability, socio-economic status, and occupation determine health seeking intent and access to health and TB services. The intersection of these aspects of identity can both positively and adversely impact TB outcomes. The NTEP has adopted the national framework for a gender-responsive approach to TB, recognising that women, men, and LGBTQIA persons experience TB differently. Improving understanding of gender will take time, and inevitably challenge personal behaviours and norms, but is essential to equitable care. Similarly, there has been some early work to better understand TB and disability, which must be built upon.

Third, integrated care remains a challenge for India's health system, as we continue to build our primary care services. How do we ensure that someone who comes with TB symptoms is tested for Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or asthma? How can a person with TB be screened for depression or hypertension and linked to appropriate services and counselling? We must adopt models of integrated general health screening in community settings, for example, test for TB and COPD through validated Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enabled chest x-rays and upfront molecular testing, along with screening of common non-communicable diseases through blood pressure, blood glucose, and body mass index (BMI) monitoring.Fourth, UHC approaches are centred around minimising OOPE, thereby eliminating health-related debt. Schemes such as the NPY have helped alleviate the financial burden on families, by providing monetary support for access to nutritious food. Case-finding approaches, such as the ongoing '100 Days' campaign, can help reduce OOPE prior to diagnosis. However, there are still several significant indirect costs that remain. Expanding social protection by extending nutrition support to the family, piloting wage-loss schemes to offset a loss of income during TB treatment and introducing livelihood programmes for TB survivors are potential future actions.Lessons from COVID-19, communicationFinally, equity in terms of access to information and knowledge is critical. TB remains severely misunderstood. Recall how swiftly we were able to ensure public understanding of COVID-19, through a flood of science-based information using a multitude of platforms. We need similar approaches for TB, to encourage people to seek care and adopt simple measures to reduce transmission within homes and communities. Promoting knowledge about drug-resistant TB, in the context of growing anti-microbial resistance (AMR) is vital. Decimating TB stigma is critical to ensuring early detection and successful treatment outcomes for people with TB.An equitable TB programme is one where every individual receives the highest quality of person-centred care that takes into account individual needs. Equity is a cornerstone of health care, and is essential to achieving TB elimination and universal health coverage. India's TB response is well poised to define global standards and benchmarks. Applying the equity lens will only accelerate our progress.

5 years after Covid: 'I am happy if I can climb to the second floor without feeling breathless'

Five years have completely upended the life of 45-year-old Parminder Malhotra. From a robust fitness enthusiast, he struggles to climb to his second-floor apartment in West Delhi's Tilak Nagar, his oxygen levels sometimes plummeting to 80 per cent. He's breathless and needs oxygen support whenever pollution levels soar in Delhi and keeps an oxygen cylinder and concentrator on standby. An electrical engineer who vetted construction sites, he now runs an electrical appliances store. Still, he has managed to move on from Covid and two rounds of being on a ventilator. "As long as I can breathe in fresh air from my balcony, I am okay," says the long Covid survivor.

Malhotra has been a regular visitor to the long Covid clinic at AIIMS, Delhi, ever since he contracted the Delta variant of the virus in 2021. That led to lung fibrosis, a condition characterised by scarring and thickening of lung tissue, making it difficult for the patient to breathe and absorb oxygen. It's a progressive condition that worsens over time, and while there's no cure, treatments can help manage symptoms and slow down their progression. He now gets a CT scan done every three months to see if he is doing any better. Or worse."On a routine check-up last week, the doctor told me that I still had patches in my lungs," says Malhotra. Now his biggest challenge is to climb to the third floor of his apartment block and not feel breathless. "Till date, I feel uneasy for almost 10 minutes after climbing two flights of stairs," he adds. So he does spirometer exercises and yoga regularly. As part of a test exercise at the AIIMS clinic, he has to blow about 30 balloons one after another.

According to Dr Anant Mohan, professor and HOD, Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine, Malhotra had a severe Covid infection that had damaged a big portion of his lungs. "We didn't know how to deal with Covid in the initial days. So we don't know much about the future of patients who had severe infections then and had to be hospitalised. But what we can do is to monitor them, treat them like any other interstitial lung disease (a condition marked by inflammation and scarring of tissue) case and help them with pulmonary rehabilitation," he says. They need follow-ups and corrective lifestyle measures for a lifetime. "These patients should maintain good lung hygiene, do breathing exercises, vaccinate for pneumonia, get regular check-ups and follow changes in medication if required," adds Dr Mohan.In October 2024, Dr Mohan published a study after observing and treating patients at the AIIMS long Covid clinic. Malhotra was a test case too. It showed that a third of the patients who came to the clinic weren't breathing properly or getting sufficient oxygen from the air to their blood. The study is significant because it shows that after-effects can be quite severe and last beyond two years after initial Covid diagnosis. This was common in women, the elderly, those who had severe infection and smokers. "It is one of the first studies from a low- and middle-income country (LMIC) to report long-term pulmonary sequelae (after effects) of COVID-19. Some of them still need oxygen support occasionally," says Dr Mohan.

Malhotra needed oxygen support throughout 2022, a year after being diagnosed. He started tapering it off in 2023 but required it during Diwali that year after an intense coughing bout left him gasping for breath.Parminder Malhotra with his wife Parminder Malhotra with his wife. According to Dr Garima Shrivastav, who was one of the researchers on long Covid, the infected lung tissue undergoes a healing process but some of it leaves a permanent scar in the recovery phase of the Covid infection. "This stiffening tissue makes it difficult for patients to breathe in and breathe out. Their oxygen flow is reduced," she says.Malhotra, a non-smoker and occasional drinker, was surprised that his body could give in and lungs collapse so easily. "We have had many young patients who had high viral loads and severe scarring without any co-morbidity. Remember that the vaccine was not out back then, so their immunity took a severe beating. Their bodies didn't have any shield," adds Dr Shrivastav.

"Covid changed our lives," says Malhotra as he shares throwback moments. His wife Anjali, who was the primary caregiver for Malhotra and the children, had to battle trauma of another kind. "Given his health status that required him to be constantly in and out of hospitals, he was out of work for almost two years. We had to struggle hard to make both ends meet," she says, having to manage the stress of keeping her husband alive and be the pillar of strength to her school and college-going kids.Recalling April 2021, Malhotra says he developed severe breathing difficulties within three days of developing symptoms. "The doctor suggested a CT scan which showed severe lung damage. Oxygenated blood was not reaching my extremities and my toes had gone black. It took me two hours to climb down the stairs that day," he says. He was immediately rushed to a Covid centre in Chhattarpur and was put on a ventilator. He stayed there for over a month but his condition did not improve. So he was admitted to the AIIMS Trauma Centre where he needed a ventilator and remained under medical care and supervision till July.When he was finally discharged and signed up for rehabilitation, Malhotra could not keep his job as an electrical engineer with a Gurgaon construction firm as his job entailed site visits and construction dust was anathema to his weakened lungs. For the last year, he has been running an electrical appliance shop near his house, managing orders and rostering employees for field duties.However the couple chooses not to look back and have chosen a disciplined lifestyle to stay healthy for their children and their future. "There is no option but to move on. A new life means it has to be lived better," says Malhotra,

Buttermilk or kanji? Which fermented home-made drink is best for the gut?

The lactic acid bacteria present in buttermilk can ease digestion, prevent bloating and restore the balance of gut microbiota.The lactic acid bacteria present in buttermilk can ease digestion, prevent bloating and restore the balance of gut microbiota. As the season warms up, it is the time for including probiotics (the good gut bacteria) in our diet. While commercial probiotic drinks like flavoured yogurts and packaged kefir are readily available, they contain added sugar and chemical additives that you can do without. Home-made probiotic beverages offer a more natural, cost-effective and chemical-free alternative and can be easily incorporated throughout the day.

1. Buttermilk (Chaas): This is rich in lactic acid bacteria, calcium, potassium, vitamin B12, and proteins. It can be low in fat and calories when made from skimmed curd. The lactic acid bacteria present in buttermilk can ease digestion, prevent bloating and restore the balance of gut microbiota. Additionally, the presence of calcium and vitamin B12 supports bone health and energy production.

2. Fermented Rice Water (Panta Bhat/Kanji): This is high in resistant starch and short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), contains vitamins B1, B6, minerals like magnesium and is rich in good bacteria like Lactobacillus and Bifidobacteria. Since it is rich in prebiotics and probiotics, it enhances digestion, prevents constipation and tames acid reflux due to its alkaline nature. The resistant starch in fermented rice feeds good gut bacteria, promoting a balanced microbiome. SCFAs keep the gut lining intact.

3. Beetroot Kanji: This is made by soaking beetroot and mustard seeds in water with a pinch of salt. During fermentation, Lactobacillus species thrive in the mixture, making it a powerful probiotic drink that supports gut flora. The fibre content in beetroot also acts as a prebiotic, feeding beneficial bacteria in the gut. This is also high in antioxidants, iron, vitamin C, and nitrates which detoxify the liver and enhance cardiovascular health. The natural nitrates in beetroot improve blood circulation and stamina.

4. Sweet Potato Kanji: This lesser-known drink, prepared by fermenting boiled sweet potatoes in water, often with mustard seeds and spices, has good concentrations of Lactobacillus bacteria, which aid digestion and reduce inflammation in the gut. Additionally, the complex carbohydrates in sweet potatoes act as a fuel source for beneficial bacteria. They have fibre and the immunity-boosting vitamin C and beta-carotene.

5. Coconut Water Kefir: This is a fermented drink made by adding kefir grains to coconut water, allowing beneficial bacteria like Lactobacillus, Saccharomyces and Bifidobacteria to multiply. The fermentation process also breaks down sugars, making it a gut-friendly and low-calorie drink. This refreshing probiotic beverage helps balance the gut microbiome, reduces bloating and supports hydration. The high electrolyte content also makes it ideal for post-workout recovery.Unlike processed probiotic drinks which whittle down the efficacy of good bacteria during manufacturing, home-made fermented drinks are host to a wider variety of probiotic strains. Choose for your gut health wisely.

In Tiruchi, smartphone addiction among children causes concern

An increasing number of school children are displaying signs of addiction to their smartphones and other electronic devices, mental health experts in Tiruchi have said.A senior official at the District Early Intervention Centre, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Government Hospital said that children who are spending over 14 hours on their phones are being referred, at least once or twice a week, at the Tiruchi facility."We have seen young boys and girls who become aggressive and even threaten suicide when their phones are taken away from them. This is becoming a common issue among children across all ages with access to smart devices," the official told Approximately three to four children exhibiting symptoms of smartphone addiction are being reported on a daily basis at the Athma Mind Care Hospital (AMCH) in Tiruchi.

"Mobile phones are used as a babysitting device in many homes. As the eye-to-screen time increases, over time, children feel a compulsion to use the mobile phone for pleasure. Parents, teachers and friends play a role in how a child uses the smartphone. Addiction can develop due to factors such as a low intelligence quotient (IQ), undiagnosed learning disability or lack of parental affection. Overuse of phones can make children take up online gambling or even procure drugs through the dark web," said M. Rajaram, consultant psychiatrist, AMCH.Medical intervention and long-term residential care are required to break the habit in some of the more severe cases, said Dr. Rajaram.

With most schools adopting online tools such as WhatsApp and their own proprietary software to stay in touch with students, parents however, said that mobile phones have become an essential part of the learning module."Though my daughter's school does not allow mobile phones on campus, the only way to find out about upcoming assignments and other events is through their WhatsApp group. My daughter spends at least four hours on her phone after school, both for study and to relax. We argue about it, but we cannot control children for too long, because as grown-ups, we also use our phones constantly," said a parent.

iPhone 18 Pro launch draws long queues, eager buyers across India

New Delhi: Apple fandom was on full display across India on Friday as the iPhone 18 Pro and iPhone 18 Pro Max went on sale, drawing enthusiastic crowds eager to be among the first to get their hands on the new devices.

The launch-day excitement was palpable at Apple stores, with fans turning up early and celebrating the arrival of the latest offerings from the Cupertino, California-headquartered tech giant.

The India sales debut came days after Apple unveiled its latest smartphone lineup, with the new models bringing upgrades in performance, cameras, battery life and AI capabilities. Apple said the two models went on sale in India on September 18, following pre-orders that began on September 12.

The iPhone 18 Pro and iPhone 18 Pro Max are priced from Rs 1,64,900 and Rs 1,79,900, respectively. The two models are available in black, silver, glacier and burgundy.A customer at the Delhi store said he had booked the iPhone 18 Pro Max along with an Apple Watch as he was looking to upgrade from his iPhone 15 Plus.

"I wanted to upgrade from the 15 Plus, and the new model comes with several upgraded features and better performance. That was the main reason I decided to go for it," he said.Delhi customer Mannat Singh said he was drawn to the iPhone 18 Pro Max for its burgundy colour, upgraded A20 chip, AI capabilities and camera features, adding that Apple's brand appeal was also a big factor."…it is quite good for showing off because it has three cameras, and on top of that, of course, Apple is a big brand," he said.

Delhi customer Honey said he had been eagerly waiting for the iPhone 18 Pro since its launch, pre-booking the 512GB burgundy model as soon as bookings opened and securing the first available 8:15 am slot.

Health benefits of jackfruit

If the mango is described as the king of fruits, then the jackfruit will be the doctor of all fruits. Jackfruit (Artocarpus heterophyllus) is a plant known in India and the Middle East for a long time and has been used in Ayurveda and Unani systems of medicine as a health aid. Known as 'kathal' in Hindi, 'palaa' in Tamil, 'kanthal' in Bengali, and 'chakka' in Malayalam, the plant and its parts are used in cooking in Southern and Northeastern States of India, while it is eaten more as a fruit elsewhere. It is abundant in Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, from where it is exported to the Middle East.The jackfruit tree is large, and the fruit does not hang down from branches, but grows directly from the trunk and limbs. This helps it to grow to enormous sizes, the record being a 42 kg specimen from Kerala. The ripe fruit is sweet and tasty. Unripe jackfruit has many culinary uses. It is even used as a substitute for meat, since it has lower fat and cholesterol levels, and tastes just as good as meat! Jackfruit biryani is a tasty vegetarian alternative, as is jackfruit curry.The tree has many other uses. Southeast Asian monks wear robes dyed with jackfruit bark for a radiant, sunlit yellow that is reminiscent of honey. This colour also imbibes a pleasing texture to furniture made from jackfruit wood, which is hardy and termite resistant.But it is as a superfood that the jackfruit has been gaining global popularity. A comprehensive review from Cleveland University, U.S. points out that jackfruit is rich in proteins, vitamins, minerals and plant-based chemicals, and elements such as potassium, magnesium and phosphorus. In Duke University's site, scientist Brianna Elliott highlights the nutritional benefits of jackfruit. She points out that sliced jackfruit is nutritionally superior to apples and mangoes.

Government bars fees on UPI payments up to Rs 2,000, RuPay debit card payments

The government had earlier sought to allay concerns over UPI fees.The government had earlier sought to allay concerns over UPI fees.The Ministry of Finance on Monday notified that banks and system providers cannot levy charges on UPI transactions of up to Rs 2,000 and RuPay debit card payments.

"No bank or system provider shall impose, whether directly or indirectly, any charge upon a person making or receiving a payment by using the electronic modes of payment specified in paragraph above," the government notification said in which it specified RuPay debit cards and UPI transactions of up to Rs 2,000.Only 4% of person-to-merchant (P2M) UPI payments in 2025-26 were for more than Rs 2,000. And these 4% of transactions made up around two-thirds of UPI payments by value.In 2025-26, more than 24,000 crore UPI transactions worth Rs 314 lakh crore were made.

The notification comes after the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 – passed by Parliament last month – amended Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 such that the exemption from any bank charges to electronic payments under section 269SU of the Income-tax Act, 1961 was removed. Section 269SU applied to every person having a business turnover of over Rs 50 crore.Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 said no bank or system provider can impose any charge on payments made through electronic modes prescribed under Section 269SU. These modes were RuPay debit cards, BHIM-UPI, and UPI-QR code. As such, the amendment had paved the way for a Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) fee to be imposed on UPI and RuPay debit card payments to large merchants such as Amazon and Flipkart.

However, the government has repeatedly said that small value transactions and money paid by one individual to another will not face any charges. This is what has been notified on Monday."The recent amendment to the Payment and Settlement Systems Act (PSS Act) has generated debate, with some misinterpreting it as a move to impose charges on ordinary users. In reality, the amendment is an enabling provision designed to ensure UPI's long-term sustainability, technological advancement, and resilience against emerging risks," the finance ministry had said on August 8 amid speculation that charges would apply on all UPI payments.

Banks and payment service providers have for years been saying that the cost of maintaining digital payments infrastructure is rising, with the Standing Committee on Finance noting in a report in March that the "absence of MDR makes the UPI ecosystem financially unsustainable".Usually in the range of 1-3%, an MDR is levied on merchants by banks that process debit and credit card payments to help meet transaction processing, settlement, and infrastructure costs. Since January 2020, there has been no MDR on RuPay debit cards and UPI transactions to promote the adoption of digital payments across the country.In lieu of the lack of MDR, the government has been subsidising payments of up to Rs 2,000 made to small merchants through its 'Incentive scheme for promotion of RuPay Debit Cards and low-value BHIM-UPI transactions (P2M)'. The incentive offered is capped at 0.15% of the transaction value. Large merchants are not covered under this scheme.The Budget for 2026-27 estimated the subsidy payout under this scheme to be Rs 2,000 crore in the current fiscal. In 2025-26, Rs 2,196.21 crore was paid as subsidy, up from Rs 1,922.77 crore in 2024-25.However, the Ministry of Finance's Department of Financial Services told the Standing Committee on Finance earlier this year that the payments industry was incurring an annual cost of Rs 20,700 crore for person-to-merchant transactions.According to reports, an MDR of around 0.4% may be levied on high-value person-to-merchant UPI payments.

New procedure spares 70 of 75 patients a major neck surgery

For people diagnosed with early tongue cancer, one of the biggest questions is often hidden from scans: Has the cancer already reached the lymph nodes in the neck? That question is crucial because it means cancer cells have broken away from the original tumour and travelled through the lymphatic system to nearby lymph nodes, indicating a potential spread and relapse.Doctors at a Mumbai hospital are using a procedure that can help answer that question without subjecting every patient to an extensive neck operation. In a series of 75 patients with early tongue cancer, 70 were able to avoid a full neck dissection after undergoing a procedure called sentinel lymph node biopsy.

What is sentinel lymph node biopsy?

It is a procedure in which doctors remove and test the first lymph node that cancer cells are most likely to reach from the original tumour. In simple terms, it is a way of checking the "first stop" for cancer to see whether the disease has started spreading to the lymph nodes. If that node is clear, patients may be able to avoid removing many more lymph nodes. If cancer is found there, doctors can consider more extensive treatment.Five patients were found to have cancer in the lymph nodes and underwent a neck dissection during the same operation.

The cancer that scans may missOne of the challenges with early tongue cancer is that the neck can appear completely normal even when cancer cells have already travelled there. "Lymph nodes can look completely clear on examination and scans, yet the cancer may have already spread there at a microscopic level," said Dr Mandar Deshpande, Head, Head and Neck Oncology, Surgical Oncology, Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital.

Why avoid neck dissection if possible?

Traditionally, some patients with early tongue cancer undergo neck dissection even when there is no obvious evidence of cancer in the neck.The operation involves removing lymph nodes from several areas of the neck. While it can be necessary when cancer has spread, it is still a major procedure and can cause problems such as neck pain, numbness and stiffness, as well as difficulty moving the shoulder. It can also leave a larger scar and require a longer hospital stay, depending on the extent of surgery and recovery."Only around 10 to 20 per cent of these patients actually have cancer in the lymph nodes," Dr Deshpande said. "That means the large majority are undergoing a significant operation they did not need."

How does the new procedure work?

The process begins with a small injection of a radioactive tracer into the tongue. Imaging then tracks the path taken by the tracer and identifies the lymph node it reaches first.During surgery, doctors locate this sentinel node and remove it through a relatively small incision.

The tissue is then examined to look for cancer cells, with an intraoperative test allowing doctors to get a preliminary result in about 30 minutes. If cancer is detected in the sentinel node, the surgical team can proceed to a full neck dissection during the same operation.If the node is clear, the patient can avoid the more extensive surgery.70 patients avoided extensive surgeryThe procedure was introduced at the Mumbai hospital in 2023. Since then, it has been performed in 75 patients, according to Dr Deshpande. About 93 per cent of the patients in this series avoided the extensive neck operation. The hospital's clinical findings also reported an average neck incision of about 3 cm and an average hospital stay of 4.5 days for patients undergoing the sentinel node approach.The smaller operation may reduce surgical trauma and help patients return to normal neck and shoulder movement and routine activities sooner, doctors said.A more targeted approach to cancer surgerySentinel lymph node biopsy is not an experimental concept. The approach has been evaluated internationally, including in randomised controlled trials in Japan and Europe, and has been shown to provide outcomes comparable with conventional treatment in appropriately selected patients, according to Dr Deshpande.But the technique is not available everywhere.It requires specialised equipment, nuclear medicine imaging and expertise in examining the lymph node tissue. It is, therefore, currently available only at a limited number of centres in India.For doctors, however, the principle behind the procedure is straightforward: not every patient needs the same amount of surgery. The aim is to treat the cancer adequately while preserving as much normal function as possible.

After 3 foreigners flew out of Delhi without immigration check, Air India gets notice

Three Italian nationals travelled from Delhi to Munich without going through immigration at the Delhi airport on September 4. The incident prompted the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) to issue a show-cause notice to Air India, said sources.The three passengers had taken an Air India "hub-and-spoke" flight on the night of September 3 from Amritsar to Delhi, after which they boarded a Lufthansa flight to Munich early on September 4 without going through immigration.Given the serious nature of the lapse, Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan is likely to soon hold a meeting with stakeholders, including top officials at MoCA, Bureau of Immigration, Air India and airport operator Delhi International Airport.

Under the hub-and-spoke arrangement, also known as 'Easy Connect', Air India passengers flying overseas via Delhi from select domestic airports can clear immigration at the origin airport, and then take the Air India international flight from the Delhi airport without having to go through immigration.For such passengers, the boarding pass for the first flight has a special designator code I, which means they can head directly to the departure gate for the international flight after landing at the Delhi airport. For others, the boarding pass for the domestic flight has a designator D, requiring them to technically exit the arrivals at Delhi. The designator codes allow the airline and other authorities to differentiate the Easy Connect passengers from others.

According to sources, in this instance, the three Italian nationals were not eligible for the Easy Connect service and were supposed to exit at Delhi and go through immigration again for their Lufthansa flight to Munich. Prima facie, it appears to be a case of oversight and confusion, with these passengers directly heading to the boarding gate for the next flight, along with the Easy Connect passengers, as per a source. Their boarding cards for the Delhi-Munich flight were issued at the Amritsar airport. Lufthansa and Air India have a codeshare partnership.After the incident came to light, following manual reconciliation of passenger data, MoCA on Saturday (September 12) issued a show-cause

notice to Air India, giving the airline seven days to respond, it is learnt. The Tata group carrier has not responded yet, sources said. Air India didn't comment on the incident and the show-cause notice.The Civil Aviation Ministry has sought the airline's response on various counts, including how passengers with the D designator on their boarding passes were able to move freely in the international transit area of the Delhi airport instead of being directed towards the arrivals area, it is learnt. It has also asked Air India about the role of its ground handling agency AISATS in handling transfer passengers at the Delhi airport, and about the reconciliation of domestic and international passenger data for the incoming flight from Amritsar, which was evidently not done promptly.Air India's hub-and-spoke flights were launched with the government's backing a few months ago to make one-stop domestic-to-international connections easy and hassle-free for flyers. The service is currently available from Varanasi, Amritsar and Ahmedabad, with more airports expected to be added over time.The programme allows passengers to complete check-in and immigration at the home departure airport instead of Air India's main hub Delhi. Bags are also checked through to the overseas destination. Normally, any passenger taking a one-stop domestic-to-international transfer has to go through immigration at the port of departure for the international leg of the journey.

Cola-coloured urine, pounding heart: How 20-year-old took workouts too far

Recently, I saw a 20-year-old patient who had come in with an episode of life-threatening arrhythmia or irregular heartbeats and fainting spells. Turns out he had stayed away from the gym for months. Then came Pulikalli — the traditional tiger dance performance of Kerala. Wanting to get into shape before the event, he suddenly returned to rigorous exercise, pushing himself through workouts that lasted nearly two hours. That evening, he noticed his urine had started looking like dark cola. He ignored it and went to sleep. Till he woke up with a pounding heartbeat and a spinning head.The underlying problem was rhabdomyolysis, a condition in which muscles break down severely and release their contents into the bloodstream. While uncommon, it can become a medical emergency — and, in severe cases, can affect the kidneys and the heart.

What is rhabdomyolysis?

Rhabdomyolysis occurs when muscle fibres are damaged so extensively, usually after sudden stress caused by excessive workouts, that their contents spill into the bloodstream. One of the substances released is myoglobin, a red-coloured protein that normally remains inside muscle cells. When it enters the urine in large amounts, it can turn it dark brown, red or cola coloured. That striking change in urine colour can be one of the warning signs that something more serious than ordinary post-workout soreness is happening.

How can a muscle problem affect the heart?

Severe muscle breakdown can release large amounts of potassium into the bloodstream. The kidneys normally help remove excess potassium, but significant muscle injury can overwhelm the body's ability to maintain normal levels, particularly when kidney function is also affected. When potassium rises too high, it can interfere with the heart's electrical activity.The heart may develop dangerous arrhythmias, or abnormal rhythms. In severe cases, the rhythm can deteriorate into cardiac arrest. So, the heart danger from rhabdomyolysis is primarily an electrical problem caused by severe metabolic and electrolyte disturbances, rather than a typical heart attack.

Rhabdomyolysis is not the same as a heart attackThe distinction is important. A heart attack usually occurs when blood flow through a coronary artery becomes blocked, depriving part of the heart muscle of oxygen. Rhabdomyolysis, on the other hand, begins with severe muscle injury elsewhere in the body. Its cardiac complication can occur because substances released from damaged muscles—especially potassium—disturb the heart's electrical system.A person can, therefore, have a cardiac arrest related to rhabdomyolysis without having had a conventional heart attack.Why sudden, intense exercise can be riskyExercise itself is not the enemy. In fact, regular physical activity is one of the best things a person can do for cardiovascular and overall health. The problem is the sudden jump from little activity to very strenuous exercise. Someone who has been inactive for months may suddenly decide to train intensely for an upcoming event. But muscles need time to adapt. A sudden increase in exercise intensity, duration or volume can cause significant muscle injury.Extreme exertion, particularly when combined with dehydration or exercising in very hot conditions, can increase the risk of rhabdomyolysis.If severe muscle pain or swelling is accompanied by marked weakness, unusual exhaustion, dark brown or cola-coloured urine, or a noticeable reduction in urine output, it is important to seek medical attention promptly rather than waiting for the symptoms to settle on their own.Doctors can check for rhabdomyolysis with blood tests, particularly creatine kinase (CK), along with kidney function and electrolyte tests. An ECG may also be needed when there is concern about potassium abnormalities or an abnormal heart rhythm.

If you have been inactive, don't try to make up for lost months in a few days. Start gradually and increase the duration and intensity of workouts step by step. Give the muscles adequate recovery time, and take particular care with hydration and strenuous exercise in hot weather.The heart, kidneys and muscles all have to cope with what we ask of the body. A workout should make you stronger—not leave you wondering whether a frightening warning sign can wait until morning.

Zomato adds Rs 5-Rs 20 fee for cash-on-delivery orders

food delivery platform Zomato has begun charging customers an additional fee of Rs 5 to Rs 20 for choosing cash on delivery (COD), as the company seeks to monetise payment methods amid intensifying competition.The 'pay on delivery fee' shown separately in the app's bill summary appears to be levied on orders where customers opt to pay in cash upon delivery.In addition, app screenshots showed the charge commonly at Rs 5, though in some cases users were billed Rs 7 or as much as Rs 20, according to multiple reports.

Accounting & AuditingThe fee is separate from Zomato's platform fee, restaurant packaging charges and GST, while customers who pay online are not charged the COD fee.Zomato processes an estimated 2.3-2.5 million food orders a day even as new players step up their presence, with Rapido's Ownly gaining traction and Flipkart piloting its Eat In food-delivery offering.Zomato's main competitor, Swiggy, has not introduced a similar fee so far, but it remains to be seen whether the company plans to follow suit.Food-delivery platforms introduced platform fees in 2023, with Swiggy starting with a Rs 2 charge and Zomato later following suit. Zomato raised its fee to Rs 14.99 per order earlier this year from Rs 12.50, with GST charged separately, and at current order volumes, even small hikes can translate into hundreds of crores in annualised revenue.Zomato laid off around 250 employees in its latest round of workforce restructuring, a report said in August. The job cuts followed a review of the company's customer delight operating model and organisational requirements.Merchant Services & Payment SystemsAs part of the restructuring, Zomato decided to discontinue its Customer Delight operations in Hyderabad and consolidate its remaining in-house operations at a single location in Gurgaon.

Rupee falls 27 paise to 95.79 against US dollar

Mumbai: The rupee depreciated 27 paise to 95.79 against the US dollar in early trade on Friday, driven by elevated crude oil prices and foreign portfolio outflows.Forex traders said that while record foreign exchange reserves, active Reserve Bank intervention and robust domestic growth provide crucial support, rising global yields and crude trading above USD 108 continue to weigh heavily on the country's import bill.At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.70 against the US dollar before losing ground to touch 95.79, registering a loss of 27 paise from its previous close.On Thursday, the rupee depreciated 44 paise to close at 95.52 against the US dollar."For the rupee, the pressure continues. It remains in an uptrend beyond 95 on the back of costly oil and foreign portfolio outflows, and we could see 96, with 95 now acting as support," said Anindya Banerjee, Head of Commodity and Currency Research at Kotak Securities.

Experts want warning for even 1 high-risk nutrient

As the Supreme Court considers a petition seeking mandatory front-of-pack warning labels on packaged foods high in fat, sugar or salt, global experts have called for a key change: a warning should be triggered even when a food is high in just one of these nutrients.The suggestion is significant because the country's food safety regulator, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), has proposed introducing such warnings in phases. Under its proposal, the warning would initially be triggered when a product is high in two of the three nutrients, with warnings for individual nutrients to follow in the second phase. The expert panel wants everything at one go.

The experts' position is also supported by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and India's National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), whose 'Dietary Guidelines for Indians 2024' have been used as a reference while determining the nutrient thresholds for the proposed warnings. The global experts are affiliated with organisations including the International Food Policy Research Institute, Harvard Medical School, Johns Hopkins University, the National Institute of Public Health Mexico, the University of Chile and the University of Sydney.What have the experts saidThe global experts have welcomed FSSAI's proposal to introduce red, hexagonal warning labels on the front of packaged foods. They said warning labels are the only type of front-of-pack label with real-world evidence showing that they can influence consumer perceptions and behaviour, encourage improvements in the nutritional quality of food products, and lead to healthier purchasing and dietary choices.

But they have made two key suggestions on how the system should work.Warnings should apply to each nutrientFirst, the warning should be triggered separately for each individual nutrient. In other words, if a packaged food is high in both salt and fat, it should carry two warning labels—one stating that it is "high in salt" and another that it is "high in fat."The experts cited evidence from Chile showing that consumers understand that products carrying more warning labels are less healthy than those with fewer or no warnings. Their concern is that requiring a product to cross the threshold for two nutrients before receiving a warning could allow foods that are extremely high in just one nutrient to escape attention.The second suggestion relates to the design of the warning. The experts have recommended using black hexagonal boxes instead of red ones, or at least requiring red warnings to be placed against a white background.The reason is visibility. A warning label needs to be immediately noticeable when a consumer looks at a package.

Why Pathirage's latest gold for 91.09m came on a black infield at Budapest

It wasn't 'Budapest all over again' as the 2023 World Championships host rolled out a stunning black carpet to form the backdrop of the javelin event for last week's World Ultimate Athletics in Hungary.Sri Lankan Rumesh Pathirage's gold winning 91.09 m throw was captured by drone cameras moving in the sky, also collecting myriad data points like exact trajectory, wind distortions and aerial angles. All of it made possible as the white javelin streaked along the black backdrop.A reported half a million fans visited the World Athletics website, using the new World Athletics app as a second-screen companion to the live TV broadcast – combining modern short-form video and storyled content with gamification to create interactive content for fans getting peeks into athlete actions.The reimagined Black Infield was one of many innovations besides the athlete-led 200m lane draft, and event presentation, with augmented reality for enhanced broadcast and data presentation. Interactive fan predictions and games through the World Athletics app, also made the event more riveting in an experiment that will likely be followed at top events in coming years. Sony's optical tracking virtual finish line concept, also brought the excitement closer considered the innovation that triggered most enthusiasm from fans and broadcasters.But what Budapest did for Javelin Throw, which barely had dedicated streams till recently, was path breaking. The stadium infield featured a dramatic black turf with only active competition zones lit up, centering visual attention entirely on the event.Javelin notoriously gets sidelined on traditional T&F fixtures, interrupted by track races — and generally happening in the backdrop despite actually happening in the centre.

The grass was painted black with 'eco friendly' glaze, a water based formulation, eliminating harsh chemical solvents or toxic compounds. "The grass can breathe and will grow out in due course," a WA official said.For the 200m lane draft, athletes could choose their preferred semifinal heats and lanes live in a draft format based on their world ranking seed order. Other rules included strictly avoiding First-place ties in the high jump and pole vault, resolved via a jump-off. Most Field events saw Knockouts with athletes progressively going from 8-8-6-4, the field whittled down.Javelin offered a reverse dome effect with its Augmented reality graphics. Center-court style immediate interviews also went out to the full house stadia on all three days.

Yamaguchi, Miyazaki on billboards; javelin star gets 67m cutout ahead of Asiad

Triple World champion Akane Yamaguchi's smiling visage grinning out of a giant Window Glass at Katsuyama Post Office.A record-breaking 67m38 freestanding billboard (approx size of 20 floors of building) at JR Hokkaido Asahikawa-Yojo Station of women's javelin legend Haruka Kitaguchi whose national record stood at that mark but who promptly broke this record at the "Ultimate World Athletics" in Budapest at 68m92.And another Outdoor billboard of upcoming Badminton star Tomoka Miyazaki near Yamaguchi Prefectural Yanai Shoko High School (in Yamaguchi Prefecture).

All coinciding with the lead up to their events at the Asian Games and prominently displayed in towns and villages and cities where they grew up. Japan has unveiled a sports blitz ahead of the Asian Games splashing their athletes in public squares and front office buildings in order to ring in the Aichi Nagoya Games.These "Personalized Ads" are displayed at alma maters and local communities of Japan's National Team Athletes by the official live broadcaster for the event starting September 16.

The ads came up overnight, displayed in 20 locations with ties to the athletes, such as areas surrounding their schools, nearest train stations, and routes to school. TBS reported, "Featuring copy that speaks directly to "you"—such as "To everyone at Matsudo Kokusai High School" or "Do you go to Aomori Yamada?"—the ads are designed to catch the eye of current students and locals familiar with the area. By sending cheers to the national team from all corners of the country, the campaign aims to spark community-wide excitement for the Asian Games."Athletes' specific sports, personal stories, and school cultures are getting electronic scrolls and bold copy typeface in public community centres. Kitaguchi, who is a legend of women's javelin has an ad placed at a spot specifically. It says, "I could hurl a javelin all the way from the station to here."For Yamaguchi who grew up as a prodigy and barely left her small town in Fukui Prefecture, the ad copy says, "No. 1 in Japan at age 7; No. 1 in the world at age 20." For upcoming shuttling star, Miyazaki, her billboard asks, "Do you go to Yanai Shoko?" Women's doubles star Yuki Fukushima finds pride of place in a poster at JR East Aomori Station (Aomori Prefecture), given she went to Aomori Yamada High School.Some of the Top Japanese track stars, like 400m runner Yuki Joseph Nakajima finds a display near Shiinamachi Station, Seibu Ikebukuro Line (Tokyo) given he studied at the local Josai University High School. "To the Josai University High School track team: Are you pushing yourselves to the absolute limit?" Nakajima is seen asking.While Tokyo's night skyline has looming billboards at Shinjuku and Shibuya, the games broadcasters have taken the idea of athletes' glamour into gritty local corners from where they rose.The Asian Games are only riffing off the World Athletics championships where 110m hurdler Rachid Muratake became a sensation in Japan as his photos, stats and geeky deets after going under 13 seconds at 12.92 were splashed across trains and stations as he became a real life anime protagonist in real-time. This time he is devoted a freestanding billboard at the intersection along Yashibira Cemetery (Chiba Prefecture) given he went to Chiba Prefectural Matsudo Kokusai High School.Rikako Ikee the Butterfly swimmer, has advertisements across bus stops in Shukutoku Sugamo High School (Tokyo), as the stroke is analysed minutely."Support originating from hometowns and local communities across the country serves as a new form of encouragement for Japan's national team athletes. We hope you will spot these "personalized ads" in your town, share them on social media, and join us in building excitement for the Asian Games—hosted in Japan for the first time in 32 years," TBS reported.TT sensation Tomokazu Harimoto who went to Nihon Uni School, is seen at the ping pong table on art displays around Hiyoshi Station, Tokyu Toyoko Line (Kanagawa Prefecture).Though the Display dates have been announced, the Japanese have issues strict instructions of, "Please refrain from contacting stations, stores, or other facilities regarding this matter. The country hosting it's first since 1994 Hiroshima though, is bigging it up as "Asia's premier sports festival held every four years to determine the continent's best among a population of 4.8 billion. It features a larger number of sports and events than the Olympics—comprising 43 sports and 469 events (*)—with approximately 45 countries and regions scheduled to participate.

Indian chess team stranded without hotel rooms in Samarkand ahead of 2026 Olympiad

The Indian chess team's arrival in Samarkand for the 46th Chess Olympiad has been marred by a serious accommodation crisis, with several players left without hotel rooms hours after landing.Men's team captain Srinath Narayanan confirmed that the entire contingent is yet to receive their rooms, with the local organising committee allegedly failing to send reservations to the hotel. "We were told that the hotel was overbooked and the reservation wasn't sent by LOC to the hotel," Srinath told The Indian Express from Samarkand.

The team was supposed to stay at the "Silk Road by Minyoun" hotel in Samarkand. At the time of writing, some players had been allotted rooms, but a few remain stranded without accommodation.The All India Chess Federation (AICF) has sent Head of Delegation Grandmaster Abhijit Kunte to assist the team on the ground. "AICF president Nitin Narang is coordinating over the phone with the local organising committee and FIDE," Srinath added.Srinath also took to social media to express his frustration. "Having a terrible experience at the @FIDE_chess 2026 Olympiad. The team landed 5 hours ago at Samarkand airport. The team still haven't been allotted rooms, with absolutely no clarity on when it'll be allotted," he wrote on X."Very poor first impressions of the Samarkand, Uzbekistan Olympiad 2026. Still waiting," Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi also posted on X.The Indian squad is headlined by current World Champion D Gukesh, 2026 Women's Candidates winner R Vaishali, and Grand Chess Tour and Norway Chess champion R Praggnanandhaa. The open team features Gukesh, Arjun Erigaisi, Praggnanandhaa, Nihal Sarin, and Gujrathi, with Srinath Narayanan as captain. The women's team comprises Koneru Humpy, R Vaishali, Divya Deshmukh, Vantika Agrawal, and Savitha Shri B, captained by Swayams Mishra.India are the defending champions in both the Open and Women's sections, having claimed a historic dual gold medal in Budapest in 2024. The 46th Chess Olympiad runs from September 15 to 27, with the first round starting September 16 at the Silk Road International Exhibition Centre.

'Definitely feel bad for yourself': Kuldeep Yadav on India Test snubs

Kuldeep Yadav is no stranger to India snubs. The left-arm wrist spinner has often been at the centre of conversation after being left out of the playing XI, be it in Tests or T20Is.He was omitted from India's Test side against Sri Lanka after an indifferent start to the series in Galle last month. The 31-year-old was also left out of India's T20I squad for the Afghanistan series and the Asian Games later this month.

Nevertheless, he has chosen to return to England and tasted fresh First-Class success. Kuldeep recorded his maiden First-Class 10-wicket match haul at Headingley recently, producing career-best innings figures of 6 for 50 in Yorkshire's innings win over Essex.He did not get to play any of the five Tests in India's tour of England last year. Asked about that omission and whether his latest 10-wicket haul was some sort of consolation, Kuldeep admitted to being disappointed when left out of the playing XI for all the matches."Sometimes you just have to go with the team combination or strategy, unfortunately or fortunately. Definitely you feel bad for yourself when you're not playing, when you're not part of the playing XI," Kuldeep told South African broadcaster Neil Manthorp and former England fast bowler Steve Harmison in a talkSPORT interview."You want to play because when you are in the squad you want to play, but sometimes it doesn't happen because of the whatever the management thinks… Last year, I was hoping to get a chance in a few games but it's okay. Maybe next time," he said.The spinner added that he did not make the county return to prove a point to anyone, but had gone there to enjoy the cricket. He vowed to come back next season."I personally feel it's (English county experience) very good for batters and spinners. Obviously, you will see seaming conditions here and there, but you play here to get used to the challenges you face. You're not going to face them back home because you grew up playing there and you know the conditions pretty well," Kuldeep said."So you come here and face different challenges, different conditions. Some (pitches) are very dry here; if you go south side you'll feel that there's a dryness in the wicket. When you come (a) bit north, like Yorkshire, you'll see a bit of cold," he added.

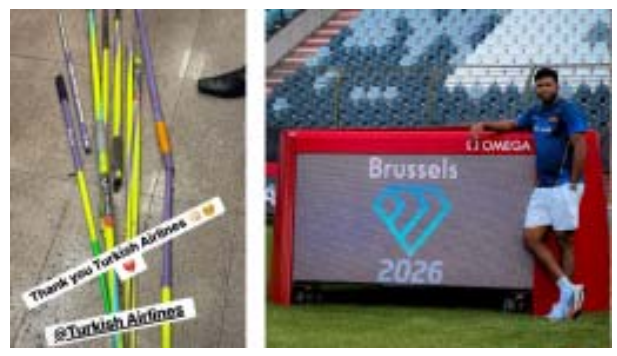
Stephen Fleming to do commentary on India vs NZ while being England Test coach

Stephen Fleming Chennai super kingsHead Coach of Chennai Super Kings Stephen Fleming during a press conference after the Match 11 of the TATA Indian Premier League 2026 between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Chennai Super Kings at M Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru, India, on April 5, 2026. (CREIMAS)Stephen Fleming has formally taken over as England's red-ball coach but will balance his new duties with his role as a television commentator when India visit New Zealand for a full tour starting next month.

Fleming, who stepped down as head coach of Indian Premier League franchise Chennai Super Kings after 17 seasons before replacing compatriot Brendon McCullum as England Test coach in July, wasn't in charge for the three recent home Tests against Pakistan with Marcus Trescothick being handed the assignment.Fleming was allowed to join late on his request to spend some time with his family. He finally arrived in England on Monday for a 10-day trip when he will hold discussions with skipper Joe Root and England and Wales Cricket Board's (ECB's) managing director of men's cricket Rob Key, according to The Guardian.

The former Kiwi captain would be back home in time for India's tour, which begins with the first of five T20Is in Christchurch on October 22. They will be followed by five ODIs and two Tests, the latter crucial for both teams in the race to qualify for the World Test Championship (WTC) final. Fleming has been assigned by Sky New Zealand to do commentary for this high-profile all-format series.This arrangement has been approved by ECB and is in contrast with the provision in McCullum's initial contract four years ago, which required him to leave his job as a co-host of SENZ radio's Breakfast Show.Fleming's first series in charge will be the three-Test visit to WTC holders South Africa in December-January, which is expected to be one of the major topics in his talks with Root and other key figures in the England cricket establishment.The Guardian reported that the 53-year-old Fleming frequently spoke with Root and Trescothick during the Pakistan series as well, even giving his inputs in selection matters, but seems likely to be based in his home country when not preparing for a Test assignment.

'All 90m javelins damaged': Rumesh Pathirage slams airline for incident on flight



Javelin throw sensation Rumesh Pathirage claimed that three of his javelins were damaged in a flight from Hungary to Sri Lanka. Pathirage was returning from Budapest, where he had won the World Athletics Ultimate Championships title on Sunday."All three javelins I used for over 90 throws have been damaged. It might have been a mistake by the airline, but that's how it is. It's not a big issue. I'll move on," Pathirage was quoted as saying by Sri Lankan outlet NewsWire.

The star Lankan athlete posted photos of the allegedly broken javelins in an Instagram story, with captions "Thank you Turkish Airlines" and "Bad luck".

Pathirage had thrown 91.09m in his final attempt to win the World Athletics Ultimate Championships title. He is having a superlative run this season, having won 11 out of the 12 international competitions he has participated in. This includes the Diamond League finale and Commonwealth Games.He had earlier thrown a world-leading 92.62m in Rome and backed it up with a 92.07m victory in Zurich. The 23-year-old thus holds the top three throws in the world this season and eight out of the top 10 throws."My next goal is to bring Olympic gold to Sri Lanka," he told World Athletics after winning the title in Budapest. "This was my one and only goal… to bring the trophy back to Sri Lanka. I was facing a lot of challenges today, but I was still hoping to bring the trophy home and I'm proud I did it."Sri Lanka is a small island to be from and be here at the World Athletics Ultimate Championship, so to win a trophy feels very special," Pathirage added.The javelin thrower, who won $150,000 as the Ultimate Champion in the inaugural edition of the event, is a former pacer who switched to track and field. "I was playing cricket when I was at school but, after finishing school, I wanted to switch from a team to an individual sport – that's why I changed from cricket to javelin. I inputted almost all my technique from cricket into the javelin throw because there are some similarities," he said.

'Make good decisions off field': Brendon McCullum tells England white-ball teams

The 3-0 triumph against a hapless Pakistan team in the recent Test series may have given some breathing space to England cricket even as off-field and alcohol-related incidents continued to mar its public image. The controversy and uproar prompted the international retirement of Ben Stokes before Brydon Carse became the most recent example of an England player being somewhere and doing something he should rather not.Now, England's white-ball head coach Brendon McCullum, who paid for the fall in standards on and off the field with his Test job, has warned players to present a positive example for the public.

Referring to the incident where Carse was briefly arrested – before being de-arrested – in Derby on charges of being drunk and disorderly, resulting in him not being considered for the remainder of the Pakistan series, the former New Zealand captain said every player needed to make the right choices off the field as well, including the 31-year-old, who needs to "get his house in order.""I've spoken to Carsey a lot. Again, it's the same message, not just to the guys within the squad at the moment, but also to those who have got aspirations of representing England in white-ball cricket over the next 12 to 18 months. We want to play the style of cricket that comes with responsibility, it comes with physical attributes which you need to be ready for. And you need to make good decisions off the field that allow you to be able to be the best version of yourself," McCullum said ahead of the first of three T20Is against Sri Lanka at Southampton.He warned that any transgressions will have a bearing on the offenders' selection prospects."I hope it's crystal clear what is expected… it comes with responsibilities, and that's just life living in the fast lane of international cricket. There is a lot of talent around – if you're not prepared to do that, there are other guys who will be given those opportunities."I want us to be the fittest, strongest, most robust, dynamic one-day and T20 side in the world. That comes with hard work, commitment to training, the physical element, but also the high-octane style we want to play comes with responsibilities off the field to look after yourself."McCullum said the line in the sand was reinforced by new white-ball mentor Kevin Pietersen, who incidentally was not always known to keep to the straight and narrow during his playing days, and had several run-ins with the English cricket establishment."

Sahithi Varshini earns third WGM norm, becomes Woman Grandmaster

Hyderabad: The wait has finally ended for Sahithi Varshini.The gifted chess player from Visakhapatnam, the City of Destiny, kept her date with destiny by earning the significant third and final WGM norm to become a Woman Grandmaster.

By securing her third and final WGM norm in the recently concluded international tournament in Europe, she completed all the requirements for the title.Sahithi produced an outstanding performance in the latest tournament. She finished runner-up with six points from nine rounds and recorded a 2408 performance rating. Her victories over strong opponents IM Neelash Saha and Vedant Panesar were among the highlights of her performance. Competing on equal terms with highly rated players and securing crucial victories demonstrated Sahithi's steadily improving strength.With this performance, Sahithi's live classical rating has reached 2324.

In recent months, Sahithi has shown significant progress in her performances. At the Juraflore International Chess Tournament in France, she excelled in a strong international field and was named Best Woman Player. Competing against four IMs and one GM, she demonstrated her strength by securing victories against strong opponents.

Sahithi continued her impressive run at the Kanizsa Open 2026 in Hungary. She scored 5 points in 9 rounds, recorded a 2429 performance rating, and secured her second WGM norm. Her victories over GM Yeshaayahu Tzidkiya, rated 2492, and IM Sahib Singh, rated 2354, were particularly noteworthy.

Operation Safed Sagar deleted scenes: Baldy bought Ajay Ahuja's coffin, Alka drove the car

Amrita Bagchi as Alka Ahuja and Siddharth as Ajay Ahuja in Operation Safed Sagar.Amrita Bagchi as Alka Ahuja and Siddharth as Ajay Ahuja in Operation Safed Sagar.Oni Sen's period war drama Operation Safed Sagar opened a treasure trove of lesser known stories from the 1999 Kargil War, where India defeated Pakistan. But there's a lot that didn't make it to the final cut of the Netflix India show. Director Oni and actor Amrita Bagchi, who plays war widow Alka Ahuja in the series, spill the beans exclusively to SCREEN on the many deleted scenes.

Alka Ahuja never saw Ajay Ahuja's face in the coffinAs we see in Operation Safed Sagar, Golden Arrows Squadron Leader Ajay Ahuja (played by Siddharth) is captured, tortured, and killed by the Pakistani army. He's sent back to India in a coffin shorter than his height, and not in a very good condition. So much so that Amrita claims Alka told her that she didn't even see the face of her late husband in that coffin."She didn't see the body. She just saw the coffin. So, in her head, she's not allowed that physical closure to happen. That's why she says, 'I feel he'll walk in any time,'" says Amrita. "We didn't receive his body in a good condition. The coffin was smaller than his height. It was very inhuman. She chose to not see that. Whether at that time, it was her intentional choice or she was suggested not to, I don't know. I didn't have the heart to ask," adds the actor.

How Baldy bought Ajay Ahuja's coffinAnother story related to the coffin that we don't see in Operation Safed Sagar is how Flying Officer Bal Reddy aka Baldy (Mihir Ahuja) buys the new coffin of Ajay Ahuja. Before Ajay left for Srinagar, he forgot to go to the bank to collect some money. So, he asked his wife to send it through a colleague. When he's handed over the envelope with the money and the letter, he's about to take off. So, he just keeps it in his overalls."Because it was meant to be a regular mission. But it ended up not being one," says Oni. The envelope was sent back along with Ajay's coffin. Baldy and Goofy (Arnav Bhasin) then go out to buy a new coffin. "We'd actually shot this beautiful scene when this coffin maker is making hundreds of coffins because the army had lost so many of its men. These were the subtle ways we were trying to talk about the loss which we'd suffered at the moment," adds the filmmaker.Golden Arrows in Operation Safed Sagar. Golden Arrows in Operation Safed Sagar.It's in that moment that Baldy realizes he doesn't have any money on him to buy the coffin. The only money he has is that envelope. "He has tears in his eyes. He takes out that money, which is Ahuja sir's money, to buy his coffin. Unfortunately, we couldn't put that into the show, but it's such a deep moment. It could've added another layer to it, but these are all real stories. They aren't fictitious," says Oni.

When Alka Ahuja drives the car left by Ajay AhujaThere were also a lot more scenes shot to demonstrate the sisterhood between the three soldier wives — Alka, Kamalpreet Kaur (Dia Mirza), and Madhavi Reddy (Prajakta Koli). "That was such an incredible scene. We were all so emotional shooting that scene," recalls Amrita. She narrates that the scene happens when pregnant Madhavi's water breaks while her husband Baldy and all the other men are at war.

"Madhavi falls ill suddenly at Alka's house. Kamal is like, 'No one's here. The boys are all gone. They're fighting the war. My car is not here. What to do?' And Alka says, 'Car toh hai (there's a car). And then she pulls out the key with a bow on it. Then she goes out to that car, which still has the bow on it," says Amrita, referring to the car that Ajay books for her as a gift before he leaves for what turns out to be his final mission.Dia Mirza and Amrita Bagchi in Operation Safed Sagar. Dia Mirza and Amrita Bagchi in Operation Safed Sagar.Alka then drives both Kamalpreet and Madhavi to the hospital in that car. "I remember very specifically that Oni told me, 'When you're backing the car, I want one victorious smile. It doesn't even have to be a smile, but just, 'Ajay prepared me for this.' This is so many things for her! She says, 'I have to do this' and drives. That moment was so cathartic for us to shoot. This is the moment when Alka chooses to be on the bright side of life," says Amrita."She's nervous. And she can hear Ahuja sir telling her, 'Ye clutch aise chhodo" (release the clutch like this). And that's how she drives to the hospital. I wish we could put in all of these tracks," says Oni. "We're trying to figure out if there's a way to release these scenes. The extended features were so amazing on DVDs," he adds, laughing.Another full-circle moment for Alka Ahuja, which didn't make it to the final cut, was when in the last scene, she tells Tony aka BS Dhanoa (Jimmy Shergill), "Ajay mujhe gaadi chalana sikha rahe the. Ab dekho, main doosro ki gaadi mein petrol bhar rahi hoon." Ajay taught Alka how to drive in order to make her independent. Years after his death, she makes her own living by working at a petrol pump. "That line still gives me goosebumps. There are many such full-circle moments, and it's important to show she chose optimism. Not everybody does," says Amrita.Oni and the creators of Operation Safed Sagar — Kushal Srivastava and Abhijeet Singh Parmar — even humanized Pakistani characters in the show. While one only catches a glimpse of the relationship that then-Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (Vinay Pathak) shares with his father, there was a lot more to that dynamic in the show that didn't make it to the final cut."We were limited by our canvas, and that's the unfortunate truth. There was so much we'd not only written, but also shot," says Oni. "There was so much we'd shot on Chow sir and Rao sir, who was the head of maintenance. There were arcs of everybody. None of them was fictitious, they were all real. It's just that given the time, the balance, and the rhythm of the edits, we had to lose some of it. We didn't have a choice," adds the director.

India's first VJ Ruby Bhatia rejected Bigg Boss, now offers Rs 1000 life coaching

Ruby Bhatia was once one of the most recognisable faces on Indian television. After winning Miss India Canada in 1993, she moved to Mumbai and became the country's first and most popular video jockeys. At the height of her career, she hosted shows and high-profile events, interviewed celebrities and became a familiar face to television audiences.But Bhatia eventually walked away from the entertainment industry to pursue a spiritual life. Now, years after stepping away from the spotlight, she is working online as a life coach and content creator. In a recent conversation with The Quiet Stories Podcast, Bhatia opened up about her career, spirituality, motherhood, finances and why she chose a quieter life over fame.

'I took my first sanyas at 18'Bhatia said her search for spirituality began when she was just 18. She recalled being ambitious at the time and wondering what the highest achievement in life could be."I took my first sanyas at 18. I was very ambitious, and I thought, what is the highest achievement in life? Moksha. So, inwardly, I said, 'Lord, I want only you. I don't want anything else. I just want you.' And I started studying philosophy at the University of Toronto," she said.She later won the Miss India Canada title in 1993 and came to India."When I came to Mumbai, I thought I would go into Bollywood because I didn't know what else to do. At that time, there wasn't much awareness about modelling. Films were what you knew," she recalled.

Her entry into television happened almost by chance. Bhatia said the industry was looking for someone with an international personality at the time, and she happened to be in the right place at the right time.

"That was the right place, right time and an explosion. I couldn't believe it. I couldn't handle it, and honestly, I still can't handle it. I still can't process it. I look at it more as a responsibility than a career," she said.Bhatia went on to become India's first VJ and a familiar face on television. She hosted shows including BPL Oye! and the Filmfare Awards and also appeared in television and films.

'I had enough to leave it and live a simple life'Despite the success and money that came with television, Bhatia said she eventually felt that showbiz was taking her away from the peace she was looking for."I had to leave everything to find God because my mind had become disturbed in showbiz. There should be some purpose to your work as well. I had enough money to leave it and live a simple life. I wanted my peace back because I grew up in the countryside in Canada. I wanted the peace that I was no longer finding in showbiz," she said.Her spiritual journey eventually became a defining part of her life. In another interview, Bhatia said she spent two years meditating almost constantly after leaving the entertainment industry.

'My kids became my teachers'Bhatia said motherhood brought another major shift in her priorities. She has two children, Krishna and Vishnu, and said becoming a mother taught her more than anything else could."At 28, I had all the answers. Then I got busy with my own process and had my own kids, who taught me more than anything else could."She recalled trying to continue working after the birth of her son Krishna, but said one experience made her reconsider. She had taken up an anchoring assignment and planned to be away for only about an hour. When she returned after around an hour and a half, she found her son crying."I said to my husband, 'Has he been crying since I left?' He said yes. I was like, 'Oh gosh, he has been crying for one and a half hours.' I thought, no. What is the point? I got a good amount of money, but I thought, 'Your tears? We will wipe them. We won't be the reason you cry,'" she recalled.Bhatia said she realised that her children needed her presence."When life becomes that tender, that sensitive, that vulnerable, you take a call. What else are you going to do? I did it out of choice because, in a way, I didn't have a choice. They are your babies. You want to make sure they are okay. That is the kind of transition my life took," she said.

Bhatia said her spiritual beliefs have also influenced the way she looks at work and ambition.She said, "I know my kids need me, and being with them is what the Lord wants right now. He doesn't want me to serve millions. He wants me to serve these two. That requires a kind of flexibility that is difficult but very rewarding. I was a star, and today I have to clean the house. I cook, I make roti and sabzi. I need to do what needs to be done and have the grit to do it as a human being."

Why she turned to social media for workBhatia said that while she had chosen not to return to the demanding schedule of mainstream television, she still needed to earn."We are a simple household. You have to keep track of every rupee; otherwise, everything goes up and down. My husband, my kids and I live a simple life. I had to start earning by myself. I can't do a 12-hour shoot. I can't physically live that life. I can't do it. So I started working on social media."She was also approached for Bigg Boss, but turned down the opportunity despite the money involved."I was called by Bigg Boss. It was big money, but I said, 'I have two little bosses at home and I need to take care of them,'" she said.She explained that her family's needs are modest and that she would rather earn enough to maintain their lifestyle than sacrifice the balance she has created."We don't need that much money. We need a few thousand here and there. Around Rs 40,000-50,000 a month and we are comfortable. If Rs 1 lakh or Rs 1 crore comes, most welcome, but I am not going to disturb the balance we have in the family. If I am away for three months, I am sad and they are sad. Everything gets disturbed. Then what is the point of the money?"Bhatia said her work now includes life coaching, personality development and weight management. Rather than conducting formal therapy sessions, she offers as informal, one-on-one personal guidance."I am like your big sister. Some people call me Ruby Di. Whenever you need me, I am there for you," she said.She also sends clients material she has prepared so that they can work through it and apply it to their lives.In another conversation with the Veriinteresting Podcast, Ruby spoke about her current fees for life coaching. She said she has deliberately kept her charges low to make her services more accessible."I charge very little now because if I say Rs 1 lakh, nobody will come. I have kept it at Rs 1,000 for a starting one-month program, Rs 3,000 for six months, and Rs 5,000 for a year. This is my fee structure," she said.She added that even a few clients a day are enough to provide her with the additional income she needs."If I get two or three clients in a day for Rs 1,000, that is good for me — it comes to around Rs 1 lakh a month," she said.Bhatia has also started working with small businesses, creating promotional reels for them."I got offers to make reels for small businesses, so I do that as well. Income comes in, which feels good, but it is a small business," she said.She acknowledged that working for herself comes with its own uncertainties."As an entrepreneur, I have to take on that roller-coaster ride. Sometimes a lot of work comes in at once, and sometimes absolutely nothing comes in. That's when I do promotions to get the enquiries rolling again," she said.Bhatia said her work allows her to maintain the life she has chosen."I have a picture of my perfect life. It is a very quiet and simple life," she said.

Shah Rukh Khan confirms King release date, addresses suffering injuries during shoot

Shah Rukh Khan hasn't had a release since 2023's Dunki, and this year, the fans will get to see him again in Siddharth Anand's King. The film is set to release on December 24, and fans of the star have been wondering if he might change the release date, considering Marvel's highly anticipated Avengers Doomsday is releasing days before King. Shah Rukh, in a recent Ask Me Anything (AMA) session, cleared the air and declared that King's release date won't be changing. Avengers Doomsday and Dune 3, both highly promoted Hollywood films, are releasing on December 18.He was asked if his son AbRam will watch Doomsday first or King, SRK responded, "Pehle to Baap hi ayega beta!!! (It will be the father first)."

A fan asked SRK about King release date and tweeted, "Sir, King is stuck between a sandwich. Change in release date?" SRK replied, "Not at all….Baaki bread pieces ka bhi toh socho….hum toh center ki tasty Tikki hain. (Think of the other pieces. We are the filling of the sandwich.)"

Asked what was the hardest part of shooting the film, Shah Rukh said he suffered some injuries. "Had a few injuries while shooting, so had to start stop many times but now all broken is fixed…and nearly all done…so all good."SRK was also asked about reuniting with Deepika Padukone and Rani Mukerji on King. "The best ever. It's lovely always to work with my best friends," he said.The film is being directed by Siddharth Anand, who worked with SRK in Pathaan. The film was a massive hit at the box office, and was one of the three big hits that Shah Rukh had in 2023, along with Jawan and Dunki. When a fan asked about the director-actor collaboration on set, SRK said, "Ha ha main toh normally wire se latak raha hota hoon….harness pe! Sirf Director hi bolta hai…humari toh bolti bandh hoti hai…also Sid shouts toooo loud so nobody can hear us only. (I am normally hanging on a wire, in a harness. Only the director dictates, and we stay quiet. Also, Sid shouts loudly so nobody can hear us.)"A fan also asked about releasing one of the songs from the album, and SRK revealed that Arijit, who has now retired from playback singing, is still adding final touches to the song. "Arijit is yet to add the finishing touches. He is a perfectionist. Takes some time, rightfully," he said.When another fan asked Shah Rukh about a new teaser, since the last teaser released in November 2025, SRK said, "Sid toh bechara laga hua hai. Late bhai hain…(Sid has been working so hard. We are late) taking time to put our best foot forward so u all enjoy it and feel proud and happy with #King."King also stars SRK's daughter Suhana Khan in a key role. In July, there were reports claiming that the film was made on a budget of Rs 450 crore, but the director shut these rumours down. The film is being produced by SRK's Red Chillies Entertainment.

'Twisting words out of context': Supriya Menon clarifies remarks amid Urvashi English row

Legendary actor Urvashi recently sparked controversy after she criticised — seemingly playfully — a female anchor for speaking English at a promotional event for her latest movie, Aasha, in Keralam. While some backed the actor, saying she reminded the younger generation of the importance of upholding Malayalam, others pointed out that Urvashi should have avoided doing it in public and could have, if needed, "corrected" the anchor in private.After it became a hot topic, film producer Supriya Menon also weighed in. Pointing out that attacking people for speaking in English is something she has never been able to wrap her head around, particularly since a large section of Malayalees study in English-medium educational institutions, Supriya wondered how using another language could reduce the glory of our mother tongue.

In the comment section of a video shared by content creator Carl Lafrenais on Instagram — where he reacted to Urvashi's remarks and the general habit of many to "make someone feel small for speaking another language" — Supriya wrote, "I don't understand this constant debate about speaking in English. As someone who has been at the receiving end of this since the time I entered public space here, I am always confused by this."She continued, "We send our kids to English medium schools and colleges. Our people move abroad at the drop of a hat, and we form some of the largest diaspora worldwide. Yet when someone speaks in English, why is it considered to be a mark of haughtiness or arrogance? Why must language pride in Malayalam reduce if one communicates in another language? Baffling indeed."Memories of Blunder | A 'Pramod Pappanic Approach': How Mammootty, Nayanthara's Thaskaraveeran went horribly wrong

'Am I surprised?'

Although Supriya didn't mention Urvashi's name or comment on the acting legend's actions, many described her words as a reaction to the latter. Carl later responded, saying Supriya was actually commenting on what he said and pointed out that many, including media houses, misconstrued her words without proper context. Reacting to this, she wrote, "Am I surprised? Not really! Twisting words out of context! Nothing new here! But noted media houses not even doing basic fact checks. What a shame, the press here has come to!"The controversy erupted after Urvashi, during Aasha's promotions, criticised an anchor for speaking a mix of English and Malayalam while interacting with them. "Aren't we all Malayalees? I thought you might be speaking in English to Aishwarya Lekshmi because she came busy from Chennai. You're also attacking me by speaking in English. Why aren't you reacting, kids? Save me," she playfully told the gathering. When the anchor, Daksha Raveendranath, replied, "I am the sorry, chechi." Urvashi quickly added, "It's not that bad to say sorry. When we are in our land, it's enough to speak in our language; everyone will understand, right?"After the incident gained attention, Daksha also responded. Commenting on Carl's first video, she wrote, "Thank you so much for looking at the moment with such empathy and for understanding the intention behind it. I have immense respect for the artiste involved, but the love and support from people who understood where I was coming from has genuinely meant the world to me. Thank you for speaking up with such grace."

Anupama Parameswaran reflects on life, says 'every moment counts'

Chennai: Underlining the fact that life was short and that every moment counted, actress Anupama Parameswaran on Tuesday said that if there was one thing she had now come to understand, it was that "Today is really all we have."Taking to her Instagram page to post a reel, the actress wrote, " Not just a reel, an archive of memories."She further went on to add, "Life is full of surprises, and with them come lessons. Some beautiful, some difficult, all leaving something behind. But if there's one thing I've come to understand, it's that life is short. Every moment counts. Every memory matters. And today is really all we have."

It may be recalled that Anupama had put out a cryptic post in July this year that came under the spotlight.In it, Anupama had said that peace had found her and that she no longer needed to take any more permissions or be in fear.Taking to her Instagram page to pen the rather cryptic post that gave the impression that she was finally free from something that had been imprisoning her, the actress wrote, Sometimes, you have to let go of the dead ends to finally find your peace. And today, peace found me."She had further said, "From today, I choose my voice. I choose my life. No more permissions. No more fear. Just me, finding my way back to myself and falling in love with the life I almost forgot was mine. And there's something I've wanted to say for a very long time…Something I wasn't allowed to say for far too long. I love you all."She wrote, "Thank you for standing by me, believing in me, and filling my life with so much love. If I haven't said it enough before, please know that I have always felt it. Every message, every prayer, every ounce of kindness reached me when I needed it the most. Thank you, Universe, for leading me back to myself."

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