

Khairatabad Bada Ganesh idol immersed in Hussain Sagar

Hyderabad: Amidst a massive, multi-layered police bandobast, the iconic Khairatabad Ganesh idol was immersed at Hussain Sagar Lake on Friday around 2.45 pm.Travel Guides & Travelogues

Devotees in large numbers accompanied the idol in the procession, which reached Hussain Sagar around 12 noon after a three-hour delay caused by a technical snag in a hydraulic crane.

For 3 km along the procession stretch, the atmosphere was thick with high-octane devotion and chants of ‘Ganapathi Bappa Morya’ from thousands of devotees.

Telangana primary teachers demand amendments to GO Ms No. 25

Hyderabad: Primary school teachers in Telangana are up in arms over the implementation of the GO MS No. 25 and demanded that the order be amended. The order details norms for rationalization of teachers based on student strength in the government and local body schools across the State.Book Walking Tours

At protests held during the school complex meetings across the State and a lunch hour protest at Manakondur Mandal in Karimnagar district on Friday, Secondary Grade Teachers’ Union (SGTU) president K Mahipal Reddy demanded the State government amend the GO MS No. 25 and immediately appoint Vidya Volunteers in the schools with high student enrollment as part of the staff rationalisation.

Eight arrested for clash inside Kothagudem police station

Kothagudem: Police arrested eight persons for clashing in the Kothagudem Three Town police station premises over a family dispute on Friday.

In a statement, Kothagudem DSP Adinarayana said that while the district police were engaged in security duties for the Ganesh immersion, two groups had come to the police station regarding a family dispute involving Koradala Kumar and his wife Vinoda.

At that time, a verbal altercation escalated, leading to mutual abuse and physical assaults. In addition to attacking each other, they also pushed and obstructed police personnel on duty, preventing them from discharging their duties.



New Delhi, Sept 25

Urging BJP workers to focus on social reforms and positive changes rather than vote bank politics, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that over the past 12 years, the gap between cities and villages in India has significantly narrowed and infrastructure in villages has improved to a great extent.

Put Social Reforms Above Politics: PM

Virtually interacting with participants of ‘Seva Yatra’, an ongoing motorcycle rally travelling from Varanasi to Vadnagar, he said that self-reliance among women has also increased in the country.

The Prime Minister said, “When we look at the life of Mahatma Gandhi, we see that alongside fighting against the British and leading the freedom movement, he was also a great social reformer. He always worked against the evils prevalent in society. Therefore, we political workers too must continue working towards social reform and positive change, not look at vote banks. Those who serve society deserve to have their service respected.”

He praised those who carried out the cleanliness work in Prayagraj, noting that their efforts made the ‘Kumbh Mela’ famous worldwide for sanitation and elevated India’s honour. “So, I felt compelled to wash the feet of those who have enhanced India’s honour so much, to seek

their blessings,” the Prime Minister said.

Modi said that the ‘Seva Yatra’ has played a very important role in his own life and there is hardly any district in the country that he has not had the privilege of visiting.

“There are countless districts where I have had the opportunity to spend the night. Every journey and every experience gathered along the way continues to guide me like a guru even today. These journeys have taught me so much,” he said.

Vadnagar in Gujarat is the birthplace of Modi, while Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh is his Lok Sabha constituency since 2014. The two rallies – Vadnagar to Varanasi and Varanasi to Vadnagar-- are passing through towns, districts, and villages to take the spirit of service directly to the grassroots.

Modi said Vadnagar gave him the values that shaped his life, and Kashi (Varanasi) has added countless colours of service to those values.

“I am glad that all of you, young friends, are also enriching this journey with the many colours of service,” he said.

The two bike rallies are bringing together several dimensions of public engagement, including ‘seva’ (service), ‘sampark’ (connect), youth participation, social welfare, cultural connect and community mobilisation, and carrying them from one grassroots location to another.

Paying tributes to ‘Sangh Parivar’ ideologue Deendayal Upadhyaya, the Prime Minister said that Upadhyaya had talked about seven principles to fulfil duties towards the society and those seven principles filled every BJP worker with new energy.



Gandhi Parivar Stands for Sacrifice: Revanth

Hyderabad, Sept 25

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday said the political battle over the future of India was a fight between two “parivars” — the Gandhi Parivar and the Sangh Parivar — and declared that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi would become Prime Minister.

Addressing a gathering at Nilambur in Kerala after receiving the Aryadan Muhammed Memorial Award 2026 for best public servant, Revanth Reddy said a “new breeze” had begun to blow from Kerala and would turn into a political storm across the country by the 2029 general elections.

He drew a parallel between Kerala’s monsoon and its political trends, saying weather experts across the country looked to Kerala every year because the onset of the monsoon there helped predict rainfall patterns in Telangana, Karnataka, Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and eventually New Delhi.

“Kerala is the bell-weather state,” he said, adding that political developments in Kerala had also coincided with changes at the Centre in several instances. In 1991, when the Congress’ K. Karunakaran was Chief Minister of Kerala, P.V. Narasimha Rao became Prime Minister; in 1996, when the Communists came to power in Kerala the Congress lost power in Delhi.

Revanth Reddy also referred to 2001, when Congress’ A.K. Antony became Kerala Chief Minister, followed by the Congress-led government coming to power at the Centre in 2004. He contrasted this with the period after Left leader Pinarayi Vijayan became Chief Minister, when Narendra Modi became Prime Minister in 2014.

“Now we see a new breeze, a new wind. In 2026, Congress won in Kerala again; that political breeze is blowing from Kerala and is becoming a storm,” he said.

Immersion Passes off Peacefully, To Continue Overnight

Hyderabad, Sept25

: Ganesha idol immersions continued overnight across Hyderabad on Friday, with thousands of idols queued up at 141 immersion sites, including Hussainsagar, Saroornagar, IDL and Shamirpet lakes. The immersions were expected to continue into Saturday.

The Khairatabad Bada Ganesh idol was immersed at 2.40 pm, while the Balapur Ganesh idol, which leads the main procession, was immersed around 4.30 pm, both from the NTR Marg side. The 72-foot-tall Ganesh idol at Nagole, the tallest this year, underwent immersion at the site, with fire tenders used to dissolve the clay. The clay was distributed among devotees.The immersions were held amid tight security and elaborate civic arrangements. Traffic flowed smoothly on the roads outside the Ganesh immersion zone.From Friday morning, major procession routes, including Mozamjahi Market, Charminar and Telangana Talli Flyover, witnessed a steady movement of vehicles carrying idols. Devotees accompanied the processions with drums, music, chants of “Ganpati Bappa Morya” and distribution of prasadam. Several participants wore colour-coordinated traditional attire and pagdis.Families also joined the processions, carrying idols on car bonnets and playing music from vehicles and Bluetooth speakers. Thousands of families, including children, gathered at Tank Bund to witness the immersions.Food and snacks were distributed to devotees at several places along the procession routes.P. Tirupati, who was among those distributing food, told Deccan Chronicle that his group had been doing so for five years. Some families also set up stages outside residential and commercial buildings to distribute snacks to procession participants.

Transport minister Ponnampalapati Prabhakar, accompanied by senior police, municipal and district administration officials, conducted an aerial survey of the pro-



cession routes and security arrangements.With the immersion processions coinciding with Friday prayers at mosques, Hyderabad police deployed around 20,000 personnel for bandobast. More than 10,000 CCTV cameras along the major procession routes were linked to the Telangana Integrated Command and Control Centre (TGICCC) at Banjara Hills.Police also deployed 24 drones and nearly 100 high-rise cameras for surveillance and crowd monitoring. Around 40 cranes were positioned at Hussainsagar, while teams patrolled the lake in boats.Several unusual Ganesh idols drew attention during the processions. These included a display resembling railway compartments with idols in each section, an idol depicting Lord Ganesha on Garuda, and idols made of soya chunks and dry fruits. Laddu auctions were another feature of the celebrations. The Balapur laddu fetched Rs 39 lakh, while the laddu at Keerthi Richmond Villas in Bandlaguda Jagir was auctioned for Rs 1.01 crore.

Plea in SC seeks SIT probe, CEC’s criminal prosecution over SIR row

New Delhi, Sept 25

Amid the ongoing controversy over the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls conducted by the Election Commission, a PIL has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking criminal prosecution of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar for alleged dereliction of statutory duties during the SIR exercise.

Filed by advocate Shailendra Mani Tripathi through advocate Chand Qureshi, the PIL seeks a judicial inquiry or a special investigation team (SIT) probe into the alleged deletion of 13 crore voters from the electoral rolls during the SIR.

It urged the top court to declare unconstitutional and void the decisions, guidelines and software modifications allegedly undertaken by Kumar without the concurrence of the two



Election Commissioners. “Declare all decisions, guidelines, directives and software modifications initiated, approved or implemented under respondent number three (CEC Gyanesh Kumar) without full commission concurrence or contrary to the majority opinion of the Election Commissioners (under Section 18 of the CEC and Other ECs Act,

2023) as unconstitutional, ultra vires and void ab initio,” the petitioner submitted.“Issue appropriate directions to the competent statutory authority to register complaints and initiate prosecution under Section 32 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, against respondents number 3, 5, 6 and all other officers found guilty of deliberate breach of official duty,” the PIL submitted.

Air India pilot found drunk ahead of Zurich-Delhi flight, suspended

NEW DELHI, SEPT 25

Air India has suspended a pilot for failing breath analyser test at the Zurich airport earlier this month before he was to operate a flight to the national capital and the airline is taking steps to strictly ensure regulatory compliance and curb violations, according to officials.

The incident that happened on September 6 came days after Air India terminated the services of the pilot-in-command of a Phuket-Delhi flight who had tested positive for drug use.

On Friday, the officials said the pilot was to operate Air India flight AI151 from Zurich to Delhi on September 6, and at the airport, he smelt of alcohol. Subsequently, the airline officials voluntarily informed the local authorities and requisite action was taken, they added.

There was no official statement from Air India.The officials said in the Zurich incident, the pilot was immediately removed from operating duties upon receipt of a preliminary breath analyser test report from local authorities and referred for further medical evaluation.The pilot was subsequently repatriated to India as a passenger and remains under suspension pending the final medical examination report and completion of the investigation. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken based on the findings, the officials said.

A terrorist country is asking me that: Jaishankars strong response to Pakistani journalist at UN

United Nations, Sept 25

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday sharply responded to a Pakistani journalist who asked him a question related to terrorism.

“A terrorist country is asking me that question. Come on,” Jaishankar said in a strong response to the question by the Pakistani journalist here.

Jaishankar and Liberia’s Foreign Minister Sara Beysolow Nyanti delivered remarks to the press at the UN headquarters on the Group of Friends on Safety and Security of Shipping and Seafarers.

After their remarks, the Pakistani journalist stood up and shouted a question to Jaishankar, “When will your government stop sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan?”

India’s Permanent Representative to the UN, Harish Parvathaneni, told the Pakistani journalist, “You have heard your reply. You have heard your response, loud and clear.”

On Thursday, an Indian journalist had asked Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, as he entered the UN building, “When will you stop harbouring terrorists?”



Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Reality check for private universities

The growing demand for higher education cannot be met by government-funded institutions alone. The private sector has an equally important role to play in expanding educational opportunities for the country's youth. However, unbridled commercialisation of the education sector by profit-driven private players is a major cause for concern. More often than not, they impose exorbitant fees that are not matched by infrastructure and amenities and resort to misleading self-promotion. While the contribution of the private sector to promoting and expanding higher education cannot be overlooked, what is needed is a proper balance between regulation and responsibility. The Supreme Court's latest order directing private universities across the country to disclose their financial records is a welcome development.

The landmark order ruled that no private university should be allowed to run as a profit-making institution and sought details of how universities generate, manage and use their financial resources. The audited financial records covering the last five years, utilisation of funds, fee structures, surplus investments and payments made to persons not directly involved in educational functions are among the details that have to be presented before the apex court. It has also directed the Centre and State governments to collect detailed information about admissions, fees, use of surplus funds, staff recruitment and grievance-redressal systems of private universities and colleges. With this unprecedented order, the stage is set not only for intense scrutiny of the financial management by private universities but also the conduct of regulators. It's a reality check that was long overdue.

Dyson V16 Piston Animal Vacuum Cleaner Launched in India



"Hyderabad, September 25 (Indian Chronicle) : Dyson has launched its new V16 Piston Animal cordless vacuum cleaner in India, Dyson Floorcare Engineering Head Asaf Oy said in a statement issued in the city on Friday. Priced at ₹79,900, the new model features an All Floor Cones Sense cleaner head, anti-tangle technology and a CleanCompactor dustbin, he said. The new Hyperdymium 900W motor delivers suction power of up to 315 air watts, he added. The vacuum cleaner is equipped with a dual conical brush bar, sensors and smart brush technology that detects different floor types and automatically adjusts cleaning power accordingly. The Dyson V16 Piston Animal also comes with MyDyson app connectivity, a Crevice Tool and Hair Screw Tool 2.0. The product is available through the Dyson India website and Dyson stores across the country, the company said.

PARAMESWAR REDDY Visits Several Ganesh Pandals in Uppal and Chilkanagar



"UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 25 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Congress Party Uppal Constituency In-charge Parameswar Reddy visited several Ganesh pandals in the Uppal and Chilkanagar divisions of the constituency on Friday. He offered prayers to Lord Ganesha and performed special pujas at the pandals. On the occasion, he visited the Ganesh pandals organised by Uppal Ganesh Utsav Samithi – Gandhi Statue, Padmavathi Colony Welfare Association, MJR Friends Association, and Amar Satyam of Chilkanagar Division. Parameswar Reddy offered prayers to Lord Ganesha and extended his greetings to the people on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi. The organisers and devotees warmly welcomed Parameswar Reddy at the pandals. They felicitated him with a shawl and expressed their gratitude for participating in the Ganesh celebrations. Speaking on the occasion, Parameswar Reddy said that special puja programmes were being conducted with devotion and religious fervour at various Ganesh pandals as part of the celebrations. He wished that people would celebrate the festivities peacefully and with devotion. The organisers of the Ganesh pandals, devotees, local leaders, youth and residents participated in the programmes in large numbers.

Dispose of Pending Land Applications Within SLA: Sub-Collector Harsh



Kagaznagar Sub-Collector Reviews Bhu Bharati Applications""Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, September 25: The Kagaznagar Sub-Collector held a review meeting with revenue officials, Tahsildars and other concerned officials at the Sub-Collector's office to review Bhu Bharati applications and public grievances. "During the meeting, the Sub-Collector directed officials to ensure that pending Bhu Bharati applications are disposed of within the stipulated Service Level Agreement (SLA) period. Officials were instructed to

identify the reasons for pendency and take necessary steps to resolve the applications promptly in accordance with the prescribed procedures and timelines."The Sub-Collector also reviewed applications related to Revenue Sadassus, TM-33, succession, mutation, PPB issuance in court cases, court-related matters, K&L proceedings and other land-related issues. Tahsildars were instructed to carefully verify the records and process eligible applications as per the applicable rules."The Sub-Collector further reviewed e-pass-book-related applications and other pending land matters, directing officials to take appropriate action within the prescribed timeframe. "Officials were also instructed to ensure that applications pending at the field level are processed properly and that eligible cases are resolved without unnecessary delay."The Sub-Collector emphasized that all Tahsildar offices should function efficiently, transparently and systematically. Revenue officials were directed to ensure that applications and grievances are addressed promptly and that eligible beneficiaries receive the required services without delay."The Sub-Collector further instructed officials to maintain proper coordination with concerned departments and ensure that revenue services are delivered effectively to the public.

Pedagogical Excellence: Manthani Educator Selected for State Educational Exchange Delegation to Vietnam.



MANTHANI, PEDDAPALLI DISTRICT, TELANGANA — September 25, 2026 — In a significant benchmark for local academic leadership, Sri Bharath Reddy, a Mathematics School Assistant at ZPHS Girls Manthani, has been selected for the state-level Teachers' Exposure Visit and Educational Exchange Programme in Vietnam. "Organized by the School Education Department under the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Telangana, Hyderabad, this international exposure initiative equips merit-driven teachers with global perspectives to advance public

school education."The week-long educational exchange is scheduled from October 10, 2026, to October 17, 2026 (inclusive of travel periods). "Key Highlights & Context of the Initiative:" * Rigorous Merit-Based Selection: Candidates were evaluated through a multi-tiered screening process led by District Selection Committees. Benchmarks included measurable student learning outcomes, digital classroom integration, innovative teaching methodologies, and contributions to school enrollment growth. " * Global Classroom Immersion: The delegation will observe Vietnam's modern educational infrastructure, study STEM/Mathematics instructional strategies, and evaluate student-centric learning frameworks. " * Knowledge Transfer & Capacity Building: Upon returning, delegates will serve as key resource persons to share global best practices, implement modern teaching techniques, and help upgrade pedagogy in Telangana state schools."

Community leaders, school officials, and colleagues in Manthani expressed immense pride, extending hearty congratulations to Sri Bharath Reddy Garu and wishing him a productive and inspiring educational tour. "An overview of teacher selection criteria and objectives for Telangana state exchange initiatives can be found in this analysis: Telangana Teachers Foreign Education Tour 2026. This video explains the guidelines, eligibility rules, and state objectives behind international teacher exposure programs.

India emerges as strategic hub for life sciences, healthtech GCCs



"Hyderabad, September 25 (Indian Chronicle) : The opportunities to position India as a strategic hub for Global Capability Centres(GCCs) in the life sciences and healthcare sectors were discussed at the RISE Health Innovation Summit 2026. Organised by HealthArk, the summit featured the launch of a publication by Telangana Minister D.Sridhar Babu. HealthArk CEO Dr.Poorav Gandhi, co-founder Sudeep Krishna, John Dabar of Novo Nordisk, Nilay Shastri of Roche and Chandni Palshetkar of Opella

addressed the gathering. Dr.G.V.Rao, Director of AIG Hospitals, delivered the keynote address. Held from September 22 to 24, the summit brought together representatives from Carelon Global Solutions, Thermo Fisher Scientific, Deloitte, Bosch, Medtronic, Sandoz, AbesCare, Biostate, CRISPR Bits and MedGenome. The discussions focused on leveraging artificial intelligence, analytics, engineering, genomics and biotechnology to strengthen India's advanced healthcare capabilities and drive innovation in the life sciences and healthcare sectors.

Religious harmony key to national development, says Gangula Kamalakar.



Karimnagar September 25, Khaja Sikandar Mohiuddin (Correspondent): Former Minister and Karimnagar MLA Gangula Kamalakar on Friday said the country could progress only when people belonging to different faiths lived together in harmony. Mr. Kamalakar was speaking after inaugurating an exhibition organised by Jamaat-e-Islami Hind at the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Grounds here to mark the birth month of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He inaugurated the exhibition along with Karimnagar city BRS president Challa Harishankar and the organisers.

The MLA visited the stalls showcasing various themes

and interacted with the organisers to know more about the exhibits. Students had prepared models as part of the exhibition. Responding to a request from the organisers for financial assistance to distribute prizes to students who had excelled in preparing the models, Mr. Kamalakar immediately contributed 60,000. He called upon people to maintain cordial relations with one another and live together peacefully, irrespective of their religion. Alphonse educational institutions chairman Narendar Reddy, MIM President Ghulam Ahmed, corporators Yusuf and Ali, leaders including Gade Srinivas, representatives of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and students participated in the programme.

Khairatabad Bada Ganesh idol immersed in Hussain Sagar

Hyderabad: Amidst a massive, multi-layered police bandobast, the iconic Khairatabad Ganesh idol was immersed at Hussain Sagar Lake on Friday around 2.45 pm. Devotees in large numbers accompanied the idol in the procession, which reached Hussain Sagar around 12 noon after a three-hour delay caused by a technical snag in a hydraulic crane. For 3 km along the procession stretch, the atmosphere was thick with high-octane devotion and chants of 'Ganapathi Bappa Morya' from thousands of devotees.

The atmosphere reached its spiritual peak as priests concluded the solemn Kalasa Pooja right at the idol's feet, signalling the conclusion of the 12-day Ganesh festival.

Expert rescue swimmers kept watch as the immersion of Khairatabad Ganesh was carried out in the presence of thousands of devotees.

Government of Telangana Renews Notary Official Practice Certificate for Peddapalli Advocate Solluri.Mallesham



"PEDDAPALLI, SEP 25:The Revenue (Registration.II) Department of the Government of Telangana has officially issued an endorsement renewing the Certificate of Practice for prominent Advocate and Notary Solluri.Mallesham. "According to Endorsement No. 45289/ Regn.II/2026, issued under Section 5(2) of the Notaries Act, 1952, the legal practitioner's license has been granted an extension for an additional five-year term. The renewal authorized via G.O.Rt.No.568 is effective from July 15, 2026, and will remain valid through July 14, 2031. "The official order, executed under the authority of the Special Secretary to the Government, formalizes the continuation of notarization and legal services provided by Solluri.Mallesham across the Peddapalli region in the erstwhile Karimnagar District. Legal professionals and local practitioners have welcomed the government order, ensuring seamless legal notarization services for citizens in the jurisdiction.

Applications Invited for Acharya Jayashankar Pratibha Puraskar;



VIVA Karimnagar to Honor Academic Excellence & Professional Merit""The Vishwakarma (Vishwabrahmin) Employees Welfare Association (VIVA), Karimnagar District Unit, has invited applications for the prestigious 'Acharya Jayashankar Pratibha Puraskar' awards to be presented at a grand ceremony on October 11. "Announcing this during an executive body meeting held at the Gananaka Bhavan VIVA District President Katta Ravindrachari stated that the awards aim to recognize exceptional academic performance and professional achievements within the community. High achievers in Class 10 (SSC), Intermediate, Degree, PG, Polytechnic, IIT, Medicine, and other courses are eligible to apply. The ceremony will also honor retired personnel, newly recruited government staff, recently promoted officers, and outstanding employees for their dedicated service. "Interested and eligible candidates must submit their relevant supporting documents on or before October 2. "Applications can be submitted directly to Award Committee Convener Kandukuri Srinivas. Digital copies can be sent via WhatsApp to 8500820930 or 8184855999. "The announcement meeting was attended by prominent VIVA leaders, including Gadde Jagadishwarachari, Kanaparthy Divakar, Velichala Venkataswamy, and Kandukuri Srinivas, among others.

Rapido Launches 'Only' Food Delivery App in Hyd



Hyderabad, September 25 (Indian Chronicle) : Mobility platform Rapido has launched its standalone food delivery app, 'Only', in Hyderabad, Rapido and Only co-founder Aravind Sanka said in a statement on Friday. Hyderabad is the second city after Bengaluru where Only has been launched, he said. Operating on a zero-commission model, Only will not charge restaurants any commission, while customers will pay only for the food and delivery, according to the company. Telugu superstar Nani attended the launch event and interacted with Rapido captains. The launch of Only in Hyderabad is expected to provide captains with additional earning opportunities, the company said.

46-YEAR EDUCATIONAL LEGACY UNDER THREAT

MANTHANI DEGREE COLLEGE RELOCATION DENOUNCED AS "HISTORIC BLUNDER" "Ready for Any Sacrifice to Protect the Institution; Intensified Agitation Inevitable," Declares Kondela Maruthi"



"MANTHANI, SEPTEMBER 25: The proposed relocation of the Government Degree College at Manthani, an institution with a four-and-a-half-decade educational legacy forged through prolonged public struggles, has triggered strong opposition, with Manthani Students and Youth founder Kondela Maruthi terming the move a "historic blunder" and a retrograde step in the region's educational development." "Addressing a press conference at the WJ Press Club in Manthani Division on Friday, Maruthi traced the institution's arduous journey from its inception through sustained student and youth movements to its present-day campus. He contended that relocating the college would not merely alter its physical location but would undermine an institution that had emerged from decades of collective aspiration and public mobilisation." "A College Born Out of Agitation" "Recalling the institution's origins, Maruthi said the Government Degree College was established in Manthani in 1979 following a two-year-long struggle by students and youth." "The movement, he said, encompassed a 100-day hunger strike, protest demonstrations and class boycotts, ultimately culminating in the fulfilment of a long-cherished demand of the people." "The college was formally inaugurated on November 16, 1981, marking a significant milestone in the educational history of Manthani, he said." "A Protracted Struggle for Infrastructure" "The institution, however, had to overcome formidable infrastructural constraints during its formative years. Initially functioning from the Junior College premises, it confronted an acute shortage of classrooms and other basic facilities." "The conduct of examinations too became a recurring challenge, occasionally giving rise to disputes, Maruthi recalled." "Following the devastating floods of 1983, the precarious condition of the college infrastructure was brought to the attention of the then District Collector. Subsequently, buildings constructed as a rehabilitation facility for flood victims were made available

for the college's use." "The institution continued to function from those premises for nearly 33 years, he said, underscoring the prolonged struggle associated with its development." "A Campus Built Through Years of Perseverance" "In 2012, the college eventually commenced functioning from its own buildings constructed on its allotted land on the outskirts of Malleshpally near Manthani, Maruthi said." "He pointed out that the college subsequently underwent assessment by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and secured a B Grade, while recommendations were made for extending necessary financial support to facilitate further development." "He also referred to issues concerning green clearances that, according to him, required attention in two phases." "What Happened to the Promise of a PG College?" "Questioning the rationale behind the proposed relocation, Maruthi recalled an earlier public assurance by Duddilla Sridhar Babu, during his tenure as Manthani MLA, that a Postgraduate College would be established in addition to the existing degree college if his government came to power." "When the institution should be receiving greater impetus for expansion and academic advancement, the proposal to relocate it has caused deep concern among students, parents, educationists and the wider public," he said. "Apprehensions Over the Existing Campus" "Maruthi further expressed concern that the existing campus could become vulnerable to anti-social activities if the college were shifted elsewhere." "He argued that an institution painstakingly secured through decades of public struggle should instead be strengthened with better infrastructure, academic facilities and additional courses rather than being relocated." "Protection Council to Spearhead Movement" "Issuing a strong warning against the proposed relocation, Maruthi said the ensuing movement would be conducted with far greater intensity than previous agitations." "We are prepared to make any sacrifice necessary to safeguard the college," he declared, adding that they would pursue the struggle relentlessly until the institution's interests were protected." "He announced that a Degree College Protection Council would be constituted shortly in consultation with educationists and other concerned sections of society." "The proposed council, he said, would remain above partisan politics and seek to mobilise people from all sections of society to protect the institution and ensure its continued academic growth." "If you want, I can also make this even more like The Hindu / Deccan Chronicle newspaper style, with a sharper headline, sub-headline, dateline, and highly sophisticated editorial vocabulary.

Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Offer Prayers to Lord Ganesha at Habsiguda



Grand Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations organised by Navkaar Gold World and Arihant Fashion World — Annadanam served to 5,000 devotees "HABSIGUDA, SEPTEMBER 25 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations were held grandly at the Ganesh pandal organised by Navkaar Gold World and Arihant Fashion World on the main road at Habsiguda. Special prayers

and religious rituals were performed at the beautifully decorated pandal with devotion and spiritual fervour." "Telangana Legislative Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar, Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, and Malkajgiri Parliament BRS party in-charge Ragidi Lakshma Reddy attended the celebrations as chief guests. They offered special prayers to Lord Ganesha and wished for the well-being, prosperity and happiness of the people." "A large number of devotees gathered at the pandal on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi. Devotees offered prayers to Lord Ganesha and sought His blessings. Later, the organisers conducted Annadanam and served prasadam to around 5,000 devotees. A large number of devotees participated in the programme and received the sacred food." "The organisers said that the Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations were being conducted with great devotion and that all necessary arrangements had been made to ensure that devotees faced no inconvenience. The pandal premises witnessed a festive atmosphere with the large gathering of devotees." "Uppal former chairman Mekala Shiva Reddy, Uppal former vice-chairman Gorre Krishna, BRS party leaders Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, Mekala Madhusudhan Reddy, former councillor Palle Raj Kumar Goud, and leaders from various political parties Uppal Badrinath Goud, Bajarur Krishna Goud, Bajarur Muralikrishna Goud, Kola Ravikumar Goud, Nerdam Bhaskar Goud, Guduru Ramesh Goud, Pilli Nagaraju, Somireddy, C.H. Lakshminarayana and Kailasapathi Goud, along with party leaders, organisers and devotees, participated in the celebrations in large numbers.

*Deendayal Upadhyaya's ideas serve as a guiding light for today's generation



Patriotism and creativity must be fostered among students "MLC Malka Komaraiah speaks at 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan — My Vision for a Developed India' "Nacharam, September 25 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "BJP MLC and Deputy Floor Leader of the Legislative Council, Malka Komaraiah, called upon the youth to look up to Pandit Deendayal—whose mission was the upliftment of the last person in society—as a role model. He stated that Deendayal's philosophies of 'Antyodaya' (upliftment of the last person) and 'Integral Humanism' continue to serve as guiding principles for society today. MLC Malka Komaraiah participated in the birth anniversary celebrations of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya held at Delhi Public School, Nacharam, where he paid rich tributes by garlanding the leader's portrait. Subsequently, as part of the 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' program, he held a meeting with the managements and correspondents of private educational institutions under the aegis of the BJP Teachers' Cell. Discussions were held regarding the organization of drawing and elocution competitions for students from classes 6 to 12 across the



state. Speaking on the occasion, Malka Komaraiah emphasized the need to foster not only academic knowledge but also an understanding of the nation, social responsibility, and creative thinking among students. He noted that initiatives like 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' serve as platforms for students to express their dreams, ideas, and opinions. He stated that activities such as drawing and elocution competitions help bring out students' perspectives on 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India) while instilling values like patriotism, creativity, and responsible citizenship.

He highlighted the concept of 'Antyodaya'—pioneered by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya—which prioritizes the upliftment of the most marginalized individuals in society, and stressed the need to work with that same spirit to ensure that education, opportunities, and the fruits of development reach every student. Representatives from the BJP Teachers' Cell, Vodnala Rajashekhar and Shivaram, along with correspondents and management representatives from various private educational institutions, participated in the event.

Grand Celebrations Mark Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jayanti in Ramanthapur



"Floral Tributes Paid to His Portrait" "Ramanthapur, September 25 (Indian Chronicle): The birth anniversary of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya was celebrated grandly on Friday at Indranagar in Ramanthapur Division. The programme was organised under the leadership of Ramanthapur Division BJP President Vangala Santosh Gupta, during which floral tributes were paid to the portrait of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya. "Speaking on the occasion, Vangala Santosh Gupta said that Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya was a great leader who dedicated his life to the service of the nation. He said that Upadhyaya propounded the philosophy of Integral Humanism, with the welfare of the last person in society as its central objective. "Santosh Gupta said that Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya's dedication and spirit of service towards the nation and society continue to serve as an inspiration for the present generation. He called upon everyone to take forward Upadhyaya's ideals among the people and work towards the welfare of all sections of society. "BJP senior leaders Mutthineni Jagadish, Thalla Balakrishna Goud, Kompally Upender, Chandramouli, Darshanala Sudhakar, Palugula Anjaiah Patel, Ramabrahmam, Thammali Ravi, Parvathalu, Suresh and Anil, along with women leaders Suvama Shinde and Ramadevi, among others, participated in the programme.

KANDI SHRAVAN KUMAR REDDY PARTICIPATES IN ANNA DANAM PROGRAMME AT NAVAKAAR GOLD SHOP

"Cantonment MLA Sri Ganesh and Habsiguda Division Congress President Kandi Shraavan Kumar Reddy attend as chief guests" "HABSIGUDA, SEPTEMBER 25 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The Ganesh Anna Danam programme organised by Navakaar Gold Shop, a prominent jewellery establishment located on Habsiguda Main Road, was held in a grand manner. At the invitation of the management of Navakaar Gold Shop, Cantonment MLA Sri Ganesh and Habsiguda Division Congress Party President Kandi Shraavan Kumar Reddy attended the programme as chief guests and participated in the Anna Danam programme. "As part of the Ganesh festivities, Navakaar Gold Shop organised the distribution of Annadanam to devotees. The management of Navakaar Gold Shop warmly welcomed MLA Sri Ganesh and Kandi Shraavan Kumar Reddy and felicitated them with shawls. Later, the chief guests participated in the Anna Danam programme and served food to the devotees. "They said that organising Annadanam for devotees during the Ganesh festivities was commendable. They stated that giving importance to social service activities along with spiritual programmes would help further promote a spirit of service among the people. "Habsiguda Division senior Congress leaders Gannaram Vijay Kumar and Lakshmi Narayana, along with



the management and staff of Navakaar Gold Shop, local leaders, devotees and others participated in the programme.

Jyothinagar's Streetlight Crisis: Who Will Take Responsibility?



"Residents face hardship due to lack of streetlights; call for immediate action from authorities and public representatives" "Alwal, September 25 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "Residents of Jyothinagar Colony in Old Alwal are facing serious inconvenience due to the lack of streetlights in several parts of the colony for years. Despite the long-standing issue, no permanent solution has been

provided, leaving many streets in darkness after sunset. Residents say the absence of proper lighting is causing difficulties for pedestrians and increasing concerns over safety, particularly for women, senior citizens and children travelling at night. Poor visibility on internal roads is also creating the risk of accidents and other untoward incidents. The residents questioned the lack of clarity over which department is responsible for installing and maintaining the streetlights. They expressed disappointment that the issue has continued for years without adequate attention from the concerned authorities or local public representatives. "Who will take responsibility for the streetlights in Jyothinagar Colony?" residents questioned, urging the authorities to stop passing responsibility and take immediate action. Residents appealed to the concerned officials and local public representatives to visit the colony, assess the situation and install streetlights in all required locations. They said providing proper street lighting is a basic civic necessity and demanded that the long-pending issue be resolved without further delay.

Former Corporator Singireddy Padma Reddy Participates in Vinayaka Navaratri Celebrations

Visits Ganesh Mandaps in Lakshmi Nagar, Green City, Bhim Reddy Nagar and ICT Colonies "BODUPPAL, SEPTEMBER 25 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Vinayaka immersion celebrations were held with great devotion and enthusiasm in the Boduppall Circle of the Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation. Former Corporator Singireddy Padma Reddy participated as the chief guest in the Vinayaka Navaratri celebrations held at the Ganesh mandaps in Lakshmi Nagar Colony, Green City Colony, Bhim Reddy Nagar and ICT Colony. He offered special prayers to Lord Ganesha and sought His blessings. Later, Padma Reddy participated in the Annadanam programme organised on the occasion and served food to devotees. He also personally presented the Maha Ganapathi Laddu Prasadam to the winners of the laddu auctions conducted in several colonies. Several po-



litical leaders, colony association members and local residents participated in the celebrations.

Ganesh Immersion in Hyderabad Proceeds Peacefully: Ponnamm Prabhakar

"Hyderabad Correspondent, September 25 (Indian Chronicle): Ganesh idol immersion across Hyderabad was progressing peacefully on Friday, with the State government coordinating arrangements to ensure the process was completed smoothly, Hyderabad in-charge Minister Ponnamm Prabhakar said. Prabhakar, along with DGP C.V. Anand, Hyderabad Police Commissioner V.C. Sajjanar, GHMC Commissioner R.V. Kaman and Hyderabad District Collector Priyanka Ala, reviewed the immersion process from the air after taking off from Begumpet Airport. Speaking to the media later, Prabhakar said the Khairatabad Bada Ganesh immersion had been completed by the afternoon and the process was moving ahead swiftly at other locations. He appealed to organisers and devotees to cooperate with officials and facilitate the early movement of idols.



The minister said all departments had been working in coordination to minimise inconvenience to the public and maintain law and order.

Hindu College standoff escalates: Governing body issues notices to 2 professors



GNS News Agency, Sept 25

The notices concern statements and communications issued by the professors during a dispute which began over admissions under the Sports and Extra-Curricular Activities (ECA) quotas but has since widened to include broader concerns raised by the Hindu College Staff Association (HCSA) over the functioning of the college administration.

‘Criticised principal, dishonoured college’Lal, an Associate Professor in the Department of History and president of the HCSA, was issued the notice over an August 18 statement and subsequent communications in which he criticised Principal Anju Srivastava and expressed “no confidence” in her. The governing body cited his allegations that the principal had “tricked, misled and pressured” the college’s statutory bodies and that admissions had been completed through “gross violations of procedures, rule and possible corrupt practices”. In the notice, the body said, “You have issued and circulated statements to external agencies, including the media, and persisted in making these allegations despite being made fully aware of the University’s explanation that the admissions were made on the basis of the lists issued by the University and errors, if any, were due to some glitch in the algorithm at the level of the University...”

“It further accused Lal of “dishonouring the college by seeking to tarnish its institutional standing and image”. It also accused him of violating the “code of conduct prescribed under relevant service rules of Delhi University”.

“You have continued to act in a manner highly prejudicial for the maintenance of internal discipline and order in the College. Your Act is unbefitting of a Teacher of the College,” it said. Lal said the notice was delivered to him today and questioned whether the college governing body’s chairperson has the authority to issue it.

‘Offensive characterisations of faculty’The notice to Vijayan, an Associate Professor in the Department of En-

glish, was over an email he sent to faculty members on August 21. The governing body alleged that the email violated long-standing DU and UGC rules and codes, including provisions requiring teachers to maintain a “professional, dignified, and collegial demeanour” towards their peers, speak respectfully to other teachers and refrain from making unsubstantiated allegations against colleagues. It alleged that Vijayan had used “derogatory” and “offensive” characterisations of fellow faculty members and sought to “tarnish the institutional standing and image” of the college.

The governing body took up the matter at its meeting on September 7 and decided to seek explanations from the two professors on why disciplinary action should not be initiated against them. Principal Anju Srivastava denied HCSA’s claims and said she has no direct role in the admissions process. The HCSA’s dharna began on September 14 after the association passed a no-confidence resolution against Srivastava on August 18 over alleged procedural violations in Sports and ECA admissions. The protest has since continued for more than a week, with students also joining the demonstration.

The immediate dispute began after the first round of admissions for the 2026-27 academic session. The staff association had alleged that too many Sports and ECA quota seats were allocated to two popular courses, B.Com (Hons) and BA (Hons) Political Science. According to the association, 17 of the 48 Sports and ECA seats were allocated to B.Com (Hons) and 15 to BA (Hons) Political Science. It said this breached the university rule limiting allocation under the supernumerary quotas to 20 per cent in a single undergraduate programme. The university, however, attributed the excess allocation to an error in its admission algorithm. DU Registrar Vikas Gupta had told The Indian Express earlier that candidates had qualified on the basis of their ECA and Sports scores and that there was no violation of merit. The HCSA had subsequently raised other concerns relating to the functioning of the college’s statutory bodies and administrative decisions.

Prof Chandrachur Singh, Secretary of the Staff Council and a professor of Political Science at Hindu College, said the admissions issue was the trigger for the wider dispute. “There are many issues, and the ECA and sports admissions triggered it. When the staff association tried to meet the governing body, instead of listening to us, they threatened the office-bearers and a senior colleague with show-cause notices. They also said that they did not recognise the staff association,” Singh said.

Uddhav Thackeray demands CEC Gyanesh Kumar’s arrest, fresh polls

GNS News Agency, Sept 25

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday demanded that Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar be removed from office and jailed after The Indian Express reported in an investigation that the other two Election Commissioners repeatedly objected to decisions taken by the poll panel. Demanding a probe into the functioning of the Election Commission, Thackeray also called for the cancellation of all the “wrong decisions” taken by the poll panel and fresh elections in Maharashtra, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu using ballot papers.

Addressing a press conference, Uddhav Thackeray said, “Gyanesh Kumar should be immediately sacked and jailed,” and thanked Sandhu and Joshi for registering their objections on record, which, he said, “exposed” Gyanesh Kumar before the country. The immediate trigger for Uddhav Thackeray’s remarks today was an Indian Express investigation which found that Sandhu and Joshi had formally objected at least 14 times over the last 10 months to decisions and orders they said were taken without their knowledge. Their objections concerned several aspects of electoral-roll management – the registration of new voters, deletion and restoration of names, appeals against roll decisions, changes to Form 6, and management of the Election Commission’s voter database.

‘Not unsubstantiated allegations’: ThackerayBuoyed by the Express investigation, Uddhav Thackeray said it showed his party and other Opposition parties had not made any unsubstantiated allegations. “I thank Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi for exposing Gyanesh Kumar,” he said. Thackeray also argued that the credibility of elections conducted under the Election Commission’s supervision had to be examined. The Maharashtra Assembly election was held in November 2024, while West Bengal and Tamil Nadu went to the polls in April 2026. His demand comes amid a controversy over



the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. In Maharashtra, the draft SIR roll published on August 31 left out about 2.07 crore names from the previous electoral roll, which the Election Commission stressed were not final. A subsequent analysis by The Indian Express found 62.48 lakh voter records with discrepancies in relatives’ details and another 59.75 lakh electors who could not be linked to a relative in the previous rolls. Maharashtra voter increaseThackeray also referred to the increase in the number of electors between the 2024 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in Maharashtra, an issue the Opposition has repeatedly raised. According to Election Commission data, 48,81,620 electors were added between the two elections, while 8,00,391 were deleted, significantly increasing the number of electors by 40,81,229. The EC has said the increase did not show an abnormal trend and pointed to the four qualifying dates for voter registration introduced by law. The issue has remained politically contentious, with the Opposition parties questioning the scale and timing of the additions. In Tamil Nadu, the revision removed nearly 70 lakh names, while in West Bengal, the electorate fell by around 61 lakh in the final roll; the Bengal process saw the removal of 27.16 lakh names.

Karnataka man’s body found in 9 pieces in car boot in Sharjah; family untraceable

Karnataka man murder SharjahAlwin Prakash had last visited his family in Kundapur in Karnataka’s Udupi district in December last year before returning to Sharjah. His wife Tina and their son are untraceable. July 20 was the last time Anil Kunder spoke to his younger brother, Alwin, who lived in Sharjah. When repeated calls to Alwin’s phone went unanswered, Alwin suspected something amiss and alerted his friend, asking him to check his whereabouts. Although initial reports suggested Alwin had left for India, Anil remained unconvinced. Weeks later, his fears were confirmed when Alwin’s body, cut into nine pieces, was recovered from the boot of his car on August 12.

Alwin, a 51-year-old from Kundapur in Karnataka’s Udupi district, had been working at Sharjah Airport for around 14 years. He lived in Sharjah with his wife, Tina, a teacher from Udyavara in Udupi, and their son, a Class 10 student. The couple had been married for around 20 years. The whereabouts of Tina and their son remain unknown. Speaking to the media on Tuesday, Anil said that Alwin did not answer his calls after July 20 but sent messages saying he was fine. “This was unusual because he would normally send voice messages. I asked him to call me and told him that even five minutes would be enough, but there was no response after that,” Anil said.

As his concern grew, Anil contacted Alwin’s friend, Manohar, in Sharjah and asked him to visit his brother’s flat. According to Anil, the watchman told Manohar that Alwin and his family had gone to India. HR officials at Alwin’s company also initially told the family that he had travelled to India. However, Anil allegedly informed them that his brother had not returned and requested that they verify his travel details. A passport check subsequently indicated that Alwin had not travelled to India, following which a missing per-



sons complaint was filed in Sharjah on July 30, Anil said.

Two jute bags with body parts in car bootAccording to a letter the family received from authorities in Sharjah, Alwin’s body was recovered on August 12 from the boot of his own car, which was found on a road towards Oman. The body had been cut into nine pieces and placed in two jute bags, his brother said. Anil said the family received Alwin’s death certificate after authorities in Sharjah verified his identity, the body and the car in connection with the complaint he had filed. He also said CCTV footage reviewed by authorities reportedly showed three people carrying the bags and placing them in the car. The circumstances leading to Alwin’s death and the identity of those responsible are yet to be established. Anil said the family suspects that his mobile phone may have been handed over to another person, and that the messages sent to the family after July 20 may not have been sent by him. Wife, son untraceableTina and their son’s whereabouts are unknown, Anil said. The family suspects that they may have travelled to India, but have not been able to establish their current location.

Devendra Fadnavis promises relief as Latur farmers break down



GNS News Agency, Sept 25

Emotional moments unfolded in Latur as Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra visited the district to assess the drought-like situation across the Marathwada belt on Wednesday following severe rainfall deficit. Moving directly through the parched fields, he interacted with farmers, some of whom broke down in tears while describing their plight. Embracing a farmer, the chief minister said the government will provide drought relief to the farmers. “We are issuing the drought GR (Government Resolution) within the next two days. We will provide all drought-related relief. Alongside this, our effort is to assist farmers so that they can take up rabi crops if possible. Our endeavour during this drought is to arrange drinking water, fodder for cattle, direct financial assistance, food grains, and all other forms of aid,” he said, adding that Latur and Dharashiv are the two districts that have received barely 50 per cent rainfall.

Fadnavis said, “Today, we are in Nilanga taluka of Latur district. Latur district has been the most severely impacted by this year’s drought. Considering the previous drought, there was at least 65% to 70% rainfall, whereas this time it is down to 50 per cent. Consequently, the crops have completely withered away. However, the government stands firmly behind the farmers.” The chief minister’s visit to the region comes amid increased crop loss and the Opposition’s cry for declaring the state as drought-hit. Sharad Pawar’s faction of NCP leaders, who have been touring the state over the past few days to assess the ground situation and the impact of deficit rainfall, have been criticising the chief minister for not visiting drought-hit regions.

Reacting to the plight of farmers in Latur, NCP’s Rohit Pawar said, ‘The sight of a farmer breaking down before the Chief Minister during the drought inspection tour in Latur

is deeply distressing to any sensitive human being. Having witnessed all of this firsthand in Vidarbha and Marathwada over the past eight to ten days, and seeing the sheer gravity of the situation, I demanded that the state immediately declare a drought and provide financial aid of Rs 50,000 per hectare to farmers and Rs 25,000 per family to agricultural labourers”. Pawar expressed confidence that the chief minister will take an immediate decision after having witnessed the severe drought crisis. Stating that the government was far away from the ground realities, Pawar said, “I appreciate the chief minister for his drought inspection tour. However, if he conducts these tours by placing barricades around the fields, will he actually understand the ground reality? It is precisely because of these barricades that this government remains miles away from the ground reality”. Alleging that the government does not trust the common people, the MLA said, “If the Chief Minister—who is readily available to meet high-profile figures—sets up barricades when it comes to drought-affected farmers, it means either the government no longer trusts the common public, or the common public no longer has faith in the government.”

Baramati MP Supriya Sule claimed that the government has been pushed into action only after the NCP (SP) national president Sharad Pawar highlighted the grim situation vis-a-vis the drought in the state. “This is an extremely sensitive issue. Better late than never, the chief minister and deputy chief minister are embarking on their tour, and they are welcome to do so. These visits have commenced following the letter written by Sharad Pawar,” said Baramati MP Supriya Sule on Wednesday. The MP added that leaders of her party are already visiting different parts of the state. “Our leaders Rohit Pawar, Jayant Patil, and Anil Deshmukh are already on the ground with the farmers. Uddhav Thackeray is also visiting the farmers directly in their fields. Something concrete must reach the hands of the farmers through this government tour. MP Supriya Sule appealed to everyone to leave politics aside during this drought and focus on helping the farmers,” she said. On Tuesday, after the cabinet meeting in Mumbai, the Chief Minister said “drought-like conditions” are prevailing in most parts of the state and standing crops had been adversely affected in several districts. The chief minister had also announced the setting up of a cabinet sub-committee under the leadership of Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule. The Chief Minister asked all MLAs, ministers and Guardian Ministers of the respective areas to tour and assess the drought situation.

Greater Bengaluru Authority upgrades property record management system e-Aasthi

GNS News Agency, Sept 25

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has upgraded its property record and e-Khata management system by enabling information exchange with other civic agencies and facilitating auto-updation of records. Speaking at the launch of e-Aasthi 2.0 on Tuesday, Greater Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said, “Some aspects of the existing system, including the process of uploading documents, were difficult for citizens. We have therefore worked on e-Aasthi 2.0 to make the system simpler, faster, more transparent, and more citizen-friendly.”

According to Gowda, Bengaluru has more than 35 lakh properties, of which around 23–24 lakh property records have already been digitised and draft e-Khatas issued. Around 11 lakh property owners have already obtained their final e-Khata. An e-Khata is a digitised version of a traditional property account record. One of the significant changes in e-Aasthi 2.0 is its integration with Kaveri, Bescom, and the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board. The upgraded platform also provides improved application-status tracking. Gowda said property owners who have not yet obtained their final e-Khata can complete the process by submitting the required information. Award-winning property record management systemIn October 2024, the erstwhile Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike rolled out e-Aasthi 1.0 to digitise property-related documents. Around 25 lakh e-Khatas were scanned, digitised and made available online.

The initiative subsequently received the National e-Governance Gold Award 2025 from the Government of India for technology-enabled and citizen-centric service delivery. A major focus of the upgraded system is to ad-



dress the problems residents commonly encounter in their property records—including errors in names, changes in names, continuation of previous owners’ names, and discrepancies in property extent.

The new e-Aasthi 2.0 provides structured digital workflows for corrections after e-Khata issuance, with clearer processing and approval trails. The system also supports multiple deeds relating to the same property, including historical deeds before and after 2004. Inheritance and mutation processes are also being streamlined through authenticated data and integration with relevant government systems, the GBA said. The GBA will introduce an online module for Khata bifurcation from September 28. Under the new module, eligible property owners will be able to apply online, upload the required plans and complete the bifurcation process digitally. The new platform also provides for New Khata, Bulk New Khata, property bifurcation/sub-division and amalgamation through digital workflows.

Bengaluru defence firm’s combat aircraft hits 100-hour flight test milestone

Bengaluru-based Flying Wedge Defence and Aerospace (FWDA) has completed 100 cumulative hours of flight testing for Kaal Bhairava Lite, India’s first indigenous, AI-powered Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) autonomous combat aircraft. Located in Electronic City, FWDA is the first Indian firm to secure Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)-type certification for an indigenous unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). The defence technology company focuses on AI-driven warfare systems and next-generation combat aviation solutions.

According to FWDA, Kaal Bhairava Lite operates under a dual-role doctrine: the same platform can execute long-endurance intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) missions or be configured as a long-range precision-strike loitering munition. Designed to provide a common ship-deployable platform for maritime surveillance and strike tasks, it offers a targeted reach exceeding 1,000 km with an endurance of eight to 10 hours. The platform’s specific configuration is built around a 1,200 km-class range. During testing, the aircraft demonstrated climb rates of 7–8 m/s, cruise speeds between 100 and 120 km/h, and take-off and landing capabilities requiring less than 120 metres.

While the Indian Navy has not placed orders, it is currently at the Request for Information (RFI) stage for long-range ship- and shore-launched loitering munitions requiring ranges over 1,000 km and endurance exceeding nine hours. FWDA intends to participate and is evaluating the Kaal Bhairava architecture to meet these requirements. The aircraft has undergone testing under challenging operational conditions, including 25–30 knot wind gusts over the Bay of Bengal to gather data on aircraft control in adverse weather. FWDA has also conducted demonstration flights in Jammu and Kashmir. “One hundred hours of flight testing gives us an extensively tested indigenous aircraft architecture,” said Suhas Tejaskanda, FWDA founder and CEO. “Kaal Bhairava has demonstrated its short-field capability, strong climb performance and operation in demanding wind conditions. With a 1,200-km-class design and 8–10 hours of endurance, we believe the platform has significant potential for both the Indian Navy requirement and international markets.” Global expansionFWDA is developing a pneu-



matic-assisted launch configuration for Kaal Bhairava Lite to enable deployment from ships and remote locations without relying on conventional runway infrastructure. The company previously secured an export order from a South Asian country and has established its first international manufacturing node in Portugal. The European facility serves as an entry point to engage opportunities across the wider European and NATO defence ecosystem. FWDA previously unveiled India’s first unmanned bomber aircraft, the FWD-200B, which completed its maiden flight on September 3, 2024. Also, on August 22, 2025, FWDA announced the readiness of the Kaal Bhairava E2A2 programme, an indigenous MALE aircraft engineered for up to 30 hours of endurance and a 3,000 km range, designed for precision strikes, swarm operations, and real-time ISR.

Telangana junior doctors demand safety audits in govt hospitals

Hyderabad: The Telangana Junior Doctors Association (TJUDA) on Wednesday demanded comprehensive statewide safety audits, timely funding, and enhanced healthcare-worker protection in government hospitals. Citing recent developments in RIMS Adilabad and MGM Hospital in Warangal.

‘Women have degrees, gold medals, but are not in workforce’



President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday drew attention to the gap between women’s academic achievements and workforce participation, saying the growing number of women winning degrees and gold medals did not necessarily translate into greater workforce participation, as many women were contributing to nation building by raising and educating their children. Addressing the 75th convocation of Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda in Vadodra, President Murmu said the increasing number of women among degree and gold-medal recipients was a sign of a “changing India” and an indication of the country’s movement towards inclusive development. However, she added that many women drop out of formal employment despite being high academic achievers, as raising children is an important step in nation building. She said, “I am seeing this—not only this university, but across India, I have been invited to universities, whether they are universities of health, education, or technology. I am seeing that today, the kind of transformation that is visible here is that daughters are moving ahead in very large numbers. But in the workforce, daughters are not coming forward.”

President Murmu said, “It is not that they are not intelligent. It is not that they cannot work for the country. But they are working for the country by building the next generation... Sometimes people say daughters... have so many degrees, so many gold medals, but they are not in the workforce. They do not become professors, they do not become doctors... It is not that they cannot do it. They are

making efforts to build the country, to make the country a developed nation.”

Stating that women who stayed at home to educate their children and prepare them for the future were also contributing to the country, she said, “Staying at home, educating their children and preparing them for their future—this is also work for the country. Therefore, I want to thank the daughters. Whether you are visible in the workforce or not, you are making efforts to take the country forward.” The President’s remarks came as the university conferred degrees on around 12,600 students, with 202 gold medals to be awarded to 161 students across disciplines. President Murmu, the chief guest, presented gold medals to 30 students. In her address, the President noted that she had seen that women outnumbered men among the students receiving degrees at the convocation. She said a similar trend was visible across many higher educational institutions in the country where she had visited. Women outnumbered men among gold medallists in most faculties. The Faculty of Technology and Engineering had the highest number of gold medals at the convocation, with 33, followed by the Faculty of Medicine with 32 and the Faculty of Science with 25. While women outnumbered men among gold-medallists in most faculties, the reverse was seen at Baroda Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya and the faculties of Journalism and Communication, Management Studies, Pharmacy, and Technology and Engineering.

President Murmu also urged the graduating students to use their education not merely for personal advancement but for the benefit of society and the country. She urged students taking up professional careers to develop technologies that improve people’s lives, view medicine as a service, seek solutions to problems in the interest of humanity, and “enrich society’s sensitivity” through their work. The President also cautioned students to exercise discernment while adopting rapidly advancing technologies. “Artificial intelligence could provide solutions, but asking the right questions remains a human responsibility, and you should ask questions. Technology can provide speed, but people have to decide the direction in which it is used...” she said.

Pak repatriates Gujarat fisherman’s body; family awaits son’s release



GNS News Agency, Sept 25

When 48-year-old fisherman Bejal Bhaliya’s mortal remains reached his village Kob in Una tehsil, there was hardly any sense of closure. The Pakistan security agencies had arrested Bhaliya and his son Ashvin for allegedly crossing into their waters in 2022. They had been languishing in jail since March 16, 2022, when they completed their sentences. Meanwhile, Bhaliya died on August 27 and was one of the 178 Indian fishermen currently in custody of Pakistani authorities for allegedly venturing into Pakistan waters while fishing, whose jail terms had been completed.

One of Bhaliya’s four sons, Mansingh, who was in their village in the coastal Gir Somnath district, received the body but says their rites won’t be complete without Ashvin. “My father’s body arrived on September 18-19 around 12:15 am. I appeal that my brother should also be released immediately. We have performed the last rites of my father, but there are some rituals which we hope are done in the presence of my brother Ashvin”, Mansingh told The Indian Express on Wednesday. According to Mansingh, Ashvin is the third brother, married, and has two minor children, a son and a daughter. “We are a fishing family. My father and all four of us brothers are into fishing. We do not have any other profession. We have 2-3 bigha land, but it is saline

and not very productive. We give it to others for sharecropping,” Mansingh said.

In August, five fisherfolk women from Gir Somnath district and the Union Territory of Diu, whose husbands or sons are languishing in Pakistan jails after completing their sentences, had come to Gandhinagar to meet deputy chief minister Harsh Sanghavi to urge the government to push for their repatriation. In a media interaction organised by Pakistan India Peoples’ Forum for Peace & Democracy (PIPPFD), a group working for peace between India and Pakistan and National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) the women urged both countries to use the occasion of their respective Independence Days on August 14 and 15 to free the fishermen. Mumbai-based peace activist and journalist Jatini Desai, who has been taking up their cause, said in a statement, “Shockingly, Pakistan didn’t send his son Ashvin, who is also in jail. Both father and son were arrested in early 2022 when their boat inadvertently entered Pakistani waters. Their sentences was completed on 16 March 2022. The family was expecting Ashvin to be released and repatriated along with his father’s mortal remains. In such a case, some goodwill gesture and humanity is expected.” On July 1 every year, India and Pakistan share lists of prisoners in their respective custodies. This July India has shared lists of 386 civil prisoners and 53 fishermen in its custody, who are “Pakistani or believed-to-be-Pakistani”, according to a Ministry of External Affairs statement. Similarly, Pakistan has shared lists of 52 civil prisoners and 198 fishermen in its custody, who are Indian or believed-to-be-Indian. According to the statement, the Indian government has “consistently called for early release and repatriation of civil prisoners, fishermen along with their boats, and missing Indian defence personnel from Pakistan’s custody”. However, activists say even if they release the fishermen they hardly return their boats. “Without their boats, they have to start afresh”, says a leader from Mangrol, Junagadh district. Since 2023, 500 Indian fishermen fishermen and 20 Indian civil prisoners have been repatriated from Pakistan.

3 students, psychiatrist part of panel to probe Sahil’s death



Days after 20-year-old Sahil Wakode died by suicide after he was caught using a mobile phone inside an examination hall, IIT Bombay Director Professor Shireesh Kedare said on Wednesday that the Board of Governors has set up a 10-member committee to examine the circumstances surrounding the student’s death on September 18. He said, “The committee will be headed by Dr Ramesh Venkateswaran,” who serves as the Chairman of the Board of Governors at IIT Palakkad.

While Professor Kedare said the institute will later issue an official statement to share information on other members of the committee, sources said the committee will include Professor K Narayanan of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Professor Sadip Kumar Saha of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, convener of the institute’s SC/ST Students and Staff Cell, and Professor Deepti Kalsi of the Department of Chemistry. The three student members included in the committee are Aditya Joshi, general secretary (Hostel Affairs); Dev Arora, overall coordinator of the Student Mentor Programme; and research scholar Devi Lal. The committee also includes retired IAS officer Vishwanath Giriraj, former institute vigilance officer Professor K G Suresh of the Department of Physics, and psychiatrist Dr Harish Shetty.

The move comes amid demand from students seeking an independent probe into circumstances leading up to Sahil Wakode’s death. Meanwhile, a sharp divide among sections of IIT Bombay students has come into focus over Professor Doolla’s suspension – a common demand from all students has been for an independent and transparent investigation by the institute into the entire episode – from the time Sahil Wakode was allegedly caught using a mobile phone in the examination hall to his suicide minutes later. Professor Doolla was the invigilator at the exam hall where Sahil was writing his exam along with other students. He was allegedly caught using his mobile phone, and hours later, he was found dead in his hostel room. His death has triggered protests on the campus. The committee is directed to submit its report within seven days. Meanwhile, reports have emerged that Professor Doolla is being sent on leave until the probe into the IIT student’s suicide case is concluded. The Indian Express couldn’t confirm the reports.

Two Punjab students held for allegedly peddling drugs

Hyderabad: Two students studying in Punjab were arrested by the Excise State Task Force Team for allegedly peddling drugs in Hyderabad. The suspects identified as Deverakonda Vidyashree of Anantapur and Koduru Vishnuvardhan Reddy of Hyderabad, allegedly became addicted to drugs while studying in Punjab and began bringing narcotics to Hyderabad to fund their habit.

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The duo was caught in Saraswathi Colony, Uppal, with 9.6 grams of OG Kush and 14 grams of MDMA, worth around Rs 2.40 lakh.

They were handed over to Uppal Excise Station for further investigation into the drug supply network.

Bengal orders FIRs over missing Covid-time equipment at 64 health centres



GNS News Agency, Sept 25

The West Bengal government recently issued strict instructions to district health authorities following reports of missing and stolen medical equipment across dozens of state-run health centres. All district chief medical officers of health (CMOH) have been instructed to file FIRs after officials claimed that medical equipment worth crores of rupees, procured with Central grant funds during Covid, went missing or was embezzled. According to an official directive issued by the Health Department, essential items, including batteries, wire boxes, and critical machinery components, have gone missing from at least 64 public health facilities. The affected locations comprise 50 sub-centres (SCs), 13 block primary health units (BPHUs), and one pri-

mary health centre (PHC). The missing assets were procured under the 15th Finance Commission Health Grants (XV FC-HG) and delivered by the West Bengal Medical Services Corporation Limited (WBMSCL).

Department officials stated that the absence of these critical components has halted the installation and commissioning of necessary medical machinery across several facilities. “Facility custodians must immediately file an FIR with local police authorities upon detecting any missing or stolen equipment. A full incident report including facility details, item descriptions, delivery dates, discovery dates, and designated custodian names must be submitted to the Health Department through the respective chief medical officer of health (CMOH),” read the order copy. Facility-level investigations will be conducted to fix individual responsibility, and administrative proceedings will be initiated against custodians found negligent in their duties. The state government has also authorised direct financial penalties to recover lost public funds. “Where permitted under service rules, the government will seek full recovery of the cost of lost or stolen items directly from the salary or remuneration of negligent personnel. District CMOHs have been instructed to pass these directives to all block medical officers of health (BMOHs), community health officers (CHOs), and facility heads for strict compliance, alongside maintaining rigorous stock and movement registers for all state-supplied equipment,” the order further said.

Bombay HC clamps down on festive noise, air pollution: What changes in Maharashtra now?



Amid Ganeshotsav celebrations across Maharashtra, the Bombay High Court on Tuesday, September 22, imposed a “total ban” on bursting firecrackers on public streets, and issued a slew of directions to curb “high level of noise pollution”. Justices Girish S Kulkarni and Neela K Gokhale on Tuesday passed an order on a suo motu PIL, addressing noise pollution caused by amplified music systems and bursting of firecrackers on public streets. On Monday, the bench had observed that “innocent persons cannot be made to suffer due to a few who create objectionable noise pollution”.

Raising concerns over the “cumulative effect on air quality” and “toxicity of pollution,” causing a “serious health hazard”, the Bombay High Court noted that “these concerns cannot be taken too lightly and stringent actions are required” to prevent air pollution amidst post-monsoon “persistent haze”. Citing the “danger of accidents” on roads where pedestrians and vehicles ply, the court observed that firecrackers are used without “any indication of the level of noise pollution” or norms on the “extent of toxicity of the smoke,” making it, “prima facie, ... an unregulated area.” It added that bursting firecrackers in private places must also remain “within the restrictive ambit of decibel levels.”

Need for dignified processions in major cities: HCTerming steps taken by Nagpur, Solapur, and Pune Police Commissioners “heartening,” the HC stated that “it is better that certain activities are restrained or banned” since they affect the “fundamental rights of the public at large.” “It is high time that in large cities having dense population like Mumbai, Thane, Pune, Nashik, where the majority of the citizens are made to silently suffer such brazen violations, a regime of total restraint on the playing of loud music, by use of high-watt speakers, sound system, loud speakers, dhol tashas, use of cylinders etc. needs to be completely banned and a more dignified and civilised way of having these processions... is the imminent requirement of contemporary times,” the bench noted.

The high court observed that noise pollution rules cannot be “presumed to be non-existent and/or completely relaxed” due to festivities. Despite a “rosy picture being painted” by the government, the high court criticised the complete lack of strict enforcement. Rejecting the state’s

“all is well” stance, citing ground realities of “no change in brazen violations,” the bench observed that “all these issues cannot fall on deaf ears” and police permissions cannot be a “routine formality and (be) rendered ineffective” by permitting violations or acting only after receiving complaints.

Key directives by the Bombay High Court: 1. Complete ban on street firecrackers: The court ordered a total ban on bursting firecrackers on public streets and roads during festivities, seeking strict measures to implement the direction. 2. Prohibition of laser lights: Authorities must prohibit laser lights, high-intensity lumen lights, and beams in festive processions. 3. Decibel checks and enforcement: Police and other authorities shall measure decibel levels of permitted sound systems and take strict legal action against unlicensed, unauthorised, or illegal noise pollution activities. 4. Seizure of offending devices: Upon noticing breaches, authorities must seize and confiscate offending devices or instruments. 5. Mandatory meters and limiters: Organisers seeking permissions shall undertake installing “decibel measurement meters” at every venue or procession visible to the public at large and ensure sound systems are fitted with “internal sound limiters.” 6. Recording noise levels: Designated officials to maintain meters at all relevant times and record decibel levels both individually and cumulatively.

7. Substantial security deposits: Authorities are directed to consider accepting deposits, a minimum of Rs 1 lakh for groups or associations and Rs 50,000 for individuals, as a condition for permission under Noise Pollution Rules. These will be forfeited upon any decibel level breach, over and above statutory legal action. 8. Public display of permissions: Organisers must publicly display granted permissions alongside the names, addresses, and mobile numbers of responsible persons to fix accountability for violations. 9. Sensitisation at starting points: Police and civic authorities must inspect and sensitise organisers at the beginning of every procession regarding their “obligations towards society at large” to maintain permissible decibel levels. 10. Cumulative impact assessment: Designated authorities to assess the “cumulative impact” of noise pollution from multiple approvals in a single ward; permissions cannot be granted without such scientific assessment. 11. Citizen responsibility: Every citizen to recognise their “individual and collective responsibility” to “fellow citizens and the society at large” regarding noise and air pollution. 12. Penal consequences: Violators to be liable for penal action under the Noise Pollution Rules, Environment (Protection) Act, Explosives Act, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for public nuisance, and other statutes. 13. Strict dealing with breaches: Breaching noise pollution rules shall be “dealt (with) strictly” as they constitute a “breach of the fundamental rights of the citizens.” 14. Statewide implementation: The order must be circulated immediately to all relevant authorities across Maharashtra for implementation during festivities.

‘Be realistic’: Karnataka warned against Rs 10,000-crore rural road plan



Karnataka’s Rs 10,000-crore proposal to construct 15,000 kilometres of roads in rural areas across the state has come under scrutiny, with the state’s Finance Department advising the government to be “realistic” about available funding.

Karnataka’s Rs 10,000-crore proposal to construct 15,000 kilometres of roads in rural areas across the state has come under scrutiny, with the state’s Finance Department advising the government to be “realistic” about available funding. “In the current scenario, even if a part of the funds needed for proposals is to be met, it will lead to cutting down from the allocations marked to other departments,” the Finance Department said in the Cabinet note related to the project, while pointing out the severe drought situation of the state.

The D K Shivakumar-led Congress government made the big-ticket announcement mid-fiscal year at a Special Cabinet meeting held in Mangaluru last week. Besides, the government had cleared other projects worth around Rs 20,000 crore. Starting a project that demands thousands of

crores which is not budgeted and funds are not earmarked, will create issues for cash flow and fiscal management,” the Finance Department stated. The department noted that the state “has already exhausted its borrowing capacity to meet the budgetary announcements of the year (20)26-27... The state will not have any space to borrow any more amounts to fund any new projects of this magnitude.” The fiscal deficit in the 2026-27 financial year was Rs 22,957 crore as against a permitted limit of zero, and cumulative liabilities were at 24.94 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product — compared to a permitted limit of 25 per cent under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, it stated. The Finance Department has noted that the state government had a balance cost of works exceeding Rs 2 lakh crore and pending bills to contractors worth Rs 36,136 crore. It said it had cleared an additional Rs 5,000 crore worth of works in the first supplementary estimate on the budget presented recently.

“Karnataka is reeling under severe drought, and substantial amounts may be needed to address the immediate issues of livelihood of farmers and of the people living in rural areas this year. There is also likely to be an increase of Rs 4,000-5,000 crore in the IP set subsidy as a result of the drought,” the note said. The department said it would be “prudent to be realistic regarding the funding envelope that is available and not to add further to the overhang of pending balance cost of works. Before finalising the additional resources mobilisation or reallocation from already approved allocations, it would be difficult to fund new projects.” Meanwhile, the government’s decision to launch new projects while concerns remained about its finances has led to a protest from the Opposition. BJP legislators staged a demonstration inside the Vidhana Soudha premises on Wednesday, where BJP state president and MLA B Y Vijayendra demanded that the government release a White Paper on the state’s financial condition.

Trump threatens to annihilate Iran as diplomats push for deal at UN



UNITED NATIONS, GNS News Agency, Sept 25 US President Donald Trump warned on Tuesday that he could annihilate Iran if there is no deal to end the war, but also suggested an agreement ?could come soon amid a diplomatic push at the United Nations."I have a big decision to make," Trump said in a speech at the UN General Assembly in ?New York. The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here."Will a deal be made with Iran that lets them rebuild and create a far greater country than it ever was before?... Or do I annihilate the Islamic Republic and do it quickly, never giving them a chance to kill and destroy people and countries again?"In a statement on Tuesday, Iran's Armed Forces dismissed Trump's comments at the UN as "propaganda", saying their response is "full readiness to inflict more severe, crushing, and unpredictable blows on the aggressors."

But away from the fiery ?rhetoric, discussions continued to try to end the nearly seven-month conflict that began with joint US-Israeli strikes and has since killed thousands, driven up oil prices and drawn in neighboring ?countries. US envoy Steve Witkoff in a post on X said that the United States and Iran engaged in lengthy talks on Tuesday on the sidelines of ?the UN General Assembly through mediators "who shuttled between the two sides throughout the day".

The mediators will continue their work, Witkoff added, saying that he hoped Tuesday's discussions would "prove constructive and promising." Trump also met the ?leaders of Middle Eastern countries who are keen to restore shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, the conduit for a fifth of global oil and gas shipments before the war, but are wary of giving ?their longstanding rival Iran too much power. Many also host huge US military bases that have come under repeated Iranian attack throughout the war.

"We think that the situation with Iran could end right after the (November 3) midterm elections, maybe before. I don't know. You never know," Trump said as he met the leaders. The diplomatic maneuvering comes as Trump faces pressure on multiple fronts — rising energy costs at home, a widening regional conflict abroad, and the midterms six weeks away that ?could reshape his political standing. Whether talks produce a deal or the war escalates further carries consequences for global oil markets, Gulf security and millions of Iranians.

Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araqchi met with Prime

In UN farewell, Macron denounces Trump's Gaza diplomacy as spectacle of shame

UNITED NATIONS, GNS News Agency, Sept 25 France's President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday dismissed US President Donald Trump's claims of having ?secured peace in Gaza, saying not a single humanitarian corridor had been reopened in the enclave despite the proclaimed peace. In ?his final address to the United Nations before leaving office next year, Macron said the world was witnessing a spectacle that should shame everyone, rebuking Trump's portrayal of his Gaza peace plan as a diplomatic triumph.

Get a look at the day ahead in European and global markets with the Morning Bid Europe newsletter. Sign up here. He spoke at the United Nations General Assembly hours after Trump had from the same rostrum hailed his Gaza peace plan as a diplomatic ?triumph. "A year ago, here in this very hall, about a dozen states had recognized Palestine. I hear the cynicism of some people: 'Recognition ?is just a piece of paper, look at the reality,'" Macron said, banging his fist on the podium in ?his last speech at the United Nations before stepping down next May. "But what credibility do we have if we continue to remain inactive in ?the face of Gaza? Some boast of a supposed peace. But that peace has not reopened humanitarian access for a single second. Are we simply ?to stand by and watch this spectacle that should shame us all?"

In response to Macron's criticism, White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly said: "President Trump ended the war between Israel and Hamas, freed all living hostages, returned the bodies of the deceased to their loved ones, and is now leading the implementation of the 20-Point Plan for Peace ?in Gaza. While others talk, this President took this complex problem head on. No one has done more for peace and stability in the ?region." Macron has faced criticism among some politicians and activists in France that he has done little since recognising a Palestinian state last September. Despite the criticism, Paris has toughened ?its stance ?on settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank, imposing some national sanctions and launching a process to ban products from Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. "Look at what is happening in the West Bank, where every day violations are committed. In whose name? Hamas has never operated in the West Bank," Macron said. Item 1 of 3 France's President Emmanuel Macron addresses the 81st United Nations General Assembly at UN headquarters in New York City, US, September 22, 2026. REUTERS/Brendan McDermid

[1/3] France's President Emmanuel Macron addresses the 81st United Nations General Assembly at UN headquarters in New York City, US, September 22, 2026. REUTERS/Brendan McDermid Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab "What is happening there is building, day by day, the impossibility of a project that should be based on respect for ?the legitimate right of the Palestinian people ?to exist." France's ties with Israel ?have been particularly strained over the last year. Macron said those who believed that violating the sovereignty of all of Israel's neighbors would ensure its security were mistaken. "They are weakening Israel's security, both today and in the future," ?he said. 'LONG LIVE THE UNITED NATIONS'

Seven months from France's next presidential election, Macron was making his last ?appearance after first taking ?to the rostrum in 2017. Often showing a keen eye for the trappings of diplomacy — the grand settings, the symbolism, the personal connections — he has at the same time failed to translate this into lasting strategic gains, analysts say. However, he has always been a staunch defender

?Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani of Qatar, which has spent months trying to de-escalate the conflict, the Qatari state news agency reported. Item 1 of 3 US President Donald Trump addresses the 81st United Nations General Assembly at UN headquarters in New York City, US, September 22, 2026. REUTERS/Brendan McDermid [1/3] US President Donald Trump addresses the 81st United Nations General Assembly at UN headquarters in New York City, US, September 22, 2026. REUTERS/Brendan McDermid Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab A senior Iranian official said Tehran could reopen the Strait of Hormuz within days if ?the US ?eased military pressure and lifted its blockade on Iranian ports. The senior Iranian official told Reuters that Tehran had conveyed its latest proposal to Washington through mediators last week and could reopen the strait to Gulf shipping within seven days if its demands were met. In a reminder of Iran's firm position so far, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, who headed Iran's negotiating team at previous talks, said Iran would never surrender: "Trump must understand that he cannot impose his power on the Iranian people and its armed forces."

WIDENING REGIONAL CONFLICT On the table at the Gulf states' meeting with Trump is a Qatari proposal for a common security framework ?involving Iran and the Arab Gulf states, regional sources ?said. One source said Iran was reviewing ?the proposal. Al Thani has said any such arrangement would need to provide security guarantees for the Gulf states and expand economic interdependence with Iran. Saudi Arabia, the largest of the Gulf states, has been drawn deeper into the war this month as Iran-aligned Houthi fighters have advanced in Yemen, routing forces of the ?Saudi-backed government and threatening Saudi oil exports through the Red Sea. The US, which bombed the Houthis for two months last year, has so far rebuffed ?repeated pleas from Saudi Arabia's ?Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to rejoin the fight. The New York Times reported that Trump called off US strikes against the Houthis on Sunday at the last minute. Asked why Washington had held back from striking the Houthis, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the United States would always support Saudi Arabia, adding: "That said, that is a very dangerous and complex conflict that pre-exists ... We have a history with the Houthis as ?well, and that's ?something we don't want to see impacted either." Oil markets did find some relief on Tuesday after sources told Reuters that ?Saudi Arabia had restarted operations at its East-West Pipeline and could resume exports from the Red Sea port of Yanbu within hours, albeit at reduced volumes. The pipeline, Saudi Arabia's main export route bypassing wartime disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, had been shut after ?attacks this month that Riyadh blamed on Iranian-backed groups in Iraq. Gram Slattery is a White House correspondent in Washington, focusing on national security, intelligence and foreign affairs. His work covers how key U.S. foreign policy decisions are debated, shaped and executed. He was previously a national political correspondent, covering the 2024 presidential campaign. From 2015 to 2022, he held postings in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Santiago, Chile, and he has reported extensively throughout Latin America.



of the multilateral system and the United Nations. Macron ?warned against ?a global "return to the law of the jungle", saying countries faced a choice between a ?world governed by power and coercion and a "civilized international society." "Our duty, more than ever, is to stand alongside the United Nations. We cannot accept the new order of impunity that some ?would like to build," he said. He ended his speech with "Long Live the United Nations!" Additional reporting by Steve Holland; Editing by Michelle Nichols and Howard Goller Our Standards: The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles., opens new tab

Hyderabad hospital ordered to pay Rs 20 lakh for medical negligence

Hyderabad: Holding a city-based hospital and a consultant neurosurgeon responsible for medical negligence, the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission-I in Hyderabad has ordered Venkateshwara Ortho Health Care to pay Rs 20 lakh in compensation.

According to multiple reports, the case is from March 2021, when a US-based endocrinologist visiting the city underwent spinal surgery at the facility. The reports have indicated that a protective membrane tear occurred during the procedure. Although initial repairs were made, the patient subsequently suffered a persistent fluid leak from the surgical site.

According to the commission's findings, rather than performing standard secondary suturing upon readmission, the caregivers applied surgical adhesive without properly informing the patient, media reports have indicated. The complainant later returned to the United States, where local specialists discovered fluid accumulation and bone debris, requiring him to undergo emergency revision surgeries.

While the defence maintained that standard protocols were followed, the consumer panel ruled that there was a clear deficiency in post-operative care. The bench directed the hospital and the doctor to pay Rs 20 lakh compensation, along with Rs 50,000 for litigation expenses within 45 days.



Australian man is accused of being Islamic State group propagandist who shared 10,000 files online



Wellington: A man in the Australian city of Melbourne is accused of pledging allegiance to the Islamic State group and spreading thousands of pieces of extremist propaganda online over a period of years, the authorities said on Wednesday. He was the seventh man to be arrested in Victoria since May over allegations of possessing or distributing IS content online. Australia's federal police didn't link the latest arrest to the other six and wouldn't say if they believed the man's case was connected. The 65-year-old Australian citizen, whose name hasn't been released, was due to appear in a Melbourne court later on Wednesday. He's charged with being a member of a terrorist organisation and with transmitting violent extremist material in an encrypted messaging app the authorities didn't name. The maximum penalty for the offenses is 10 years in prison.

The authorities said the man had sent 10,000 files containing extremist content between 2015 and 2020, including material relating to executions, torture and IS propaganda. The federal police allege that he also shared information about avoiding detection from law enforcement and

Taiwan is watching closely as Xi, Trump meet and hopes US will keep up its arms sales



Tainan: As China's Xi Jinping arrives in Washington to meet with US President Donald Trump, Taiwan expressed confidence that US arms sales to the island that Beijing claims as its own will continue — despite China's pressure. China has pressed Washington to halt the arms sales, most prominently during a summit in May between Trump and Xi in Beijing. After that meeting, the United States paused the sale of a record-breaking USD 14 billion package — and Trump described arms sales to Taiwan as a "very good negotiating chip" with China.

Still, the US government and Congress have "repeatedly expressed support for Taiwan's self-defence capabilities," Taiwanese Defence Ministry spokesperson Maj. Gen.

Russian attacks injure 7 across Ukraine and damage structures

Kyiv: Russia launched strikes at businesses and storage facilities in Ukraine overnight, injuring seven people across the country, according to local authorities. The Russian Defence Ministry said Wednesday that its forces overnight carried out "group strikes" using drones on Ukraine's "military-industrial and energy sector facilities, logistics centres and maritime vessels." In Kyiv and the surrounding region, a storage facility and an industrial facility used for storing and making drones were hit, the ministry said. The Kyiv City Military Administration said three people were injured in the city, and added that a warehouse in Kyiv's Holosiivskyi district was damaged and caught fire, while a fuel station and an office building in the district were also damaged.

In the Solomianskyi district, drone debris fell in open areas between residential buildings and at another location. In the Darnytskyi district, debris fell in an open area in a non-residential zone and a gas station was damaged, the administration said. In Zhytomyr region, west of Kyiv, two people were injured in a Russian attack on a business, Ukraine's Emergency Service said in a post on Telegram.

And in Zaporizhzhia, in southeastern Ukraine, two men aged 37 and 39 by a strike that sparked a large fire at a shopping centre. Emergency services said the fire spread across about 6,000 square metres (1.5 acres) before being brought under control. Emergency crews worked under difficult conditions as the threat of further attacks forced them

instructional guides on planning and conducting mass casualty attacks, a statement Wednesday said. Acting Assistant Commissioner Paula Hudson told reporters in Canberra that the scale and distribution of the materials by the man "placed him as a principal distributor of ISIS propaganda within the group." "The material glorified acts of violence and terrorism, spreading hateful ideology that is designed to radicalise others," Hudson said.

An investigation into the man began when border officials examined the man's luggage as he departed Australia for a six-month trip to Egypt in 2020, the authorities said. He wasn't known to have travelled abroad since 2020 and wasn't linked to any attack or plot, Hudson said. Earlier this month, a 30-year-old Melbourne man was arrested and charged with possessing violent extremist content as he attempted to depart Australia for the Middle East, authorities said. The federal police allege he was part of an online group chat with five other Victoria state men arrested in May, who all face charges relating to possessing extremist material, including IS propaganda. The Islamic State group is a scattered and considerably weaker group since a 2019 United States-led military intervention drove it out of territory it had seized in Iraq and Syria, but its cells remain active, and it has inspired a number of independent attacks, including in western countries. In Australia, a mass shooting at a Hanukkah event in 2025, in which two men are accused of killing 15 Jewish people, was motivated by the shooters' IS affiliations, the authorities allege. It's thought 200 Australians travelled to Syria and Iraq to join the Islamic State group between 2012 and 2019, according to a website for the country's national security agencies. Dozens more "assisted" IS by supporting those overseas or by planning or carrying out terrorist attacks in Australia, the website says.

Chiao Fu-chun told reporters in the southern city of Tainan. "We will continue to maintain close contact with the US Department of War and continue to push forward the arms procurement deal between Taiwan and the US, ensuring it proceeds as planned," he added. The US is bound by its own laws to provide Taiwan — a self-ruled democracy that China sees as its own territory — with the means to defend itself. While not recognising Taiwan as a country, the US is the island's strongest informal backer and arms provider. Washington approved another USD 11 billion package for Taiwan in December. Hours before Xi's arrival for the three-day state visit to the US, Taiwan's military on Wednesday conducted live-fire drills featuring a domestically developed eight-wheeled armoured vehicle, highlighting efforts to strengthen its own arms production.

Called The Cheetah, the vehicle can be fitted with a 105-millimetre (4.1-inch) cannon and can reach a maximum speed of about 100 kph (62 mph) and an operational range of about 500 kilometres (311 miles). Taiwanese Maj. Gen. Chen Chien-chung said the vehicle can be used on various terrains and is suitable for urban warfare. Trump has in recent years pressed Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te to dramatically increase Taiwan's defence budget. The budget will exceed 3 per cent of Taiwan's gross domestic product for the first time in 2027, and Lai has pledged to get to 5 per cent by 2030.



to periodically halt operations and take shelter, it added. In the southern Odesa region, Russia also attacked warehouse buildings, sparking a large fire. Firefighters faced difficult conditions as repeated air raid alerts, the structure of the building and the large quantity of goods inside complicated efforts to extinguish the blaze, the service said. Russia said three logistics centres used for storage of military and dual-use goods were hit in Odesa. Another storage facility used for storing drone components, was hit in the wider Odesa region, the Russian defense ministry said. A bulk carrier "transporting military supplies to the port of Odesa" was also hit at sea, the ministry added.

EAM Jaishankar discusses collaboration in AI, space, energy with counterparts from UAE, France

New York: External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar, UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan and French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot participated in the India-UAE-France trilateral on the sidelines of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York, where they discussed collaboration in Artificial Intelligence (AI), space, health sciences, energy and culture.

The three ministers reviewed progress in trilateral cooperation across agreed areas of mutual interest, including space, artificial intelligence, and culture and heritage. They also discussed the situation in West Asia, according to the statement released by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The three ministers emphasised further strengthening and expanding trilateral cooperation in the areas of mutual interest and further building upon the strong and friendly ties that exist between India, France and the UAE.

During the meeting on Tuesday (local time), EAM Jaishankar, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Jean-Noel Barrot reaffirmed their commitment to further build constructive ties between the three nations through

concrete initiatives and agreed to meet at regular intervals to review the progress in all synergetic areas, according to the MEA statement. In a post on X, EAM Jaishankar wrote, "Glad to participate in the India-UAE-France trilateral on the sidelines of UNGA81. Collaboration in the fields of Artificial Intelligence, Space, health sciences, energy and culture was the main topic of discussion. Our shared interests and complementary capabilities offer immense scope for cooperation. Agreed to meet again soon to take the discussion forward." On September 21, EAM Jaishankar held a meeting with Jean-Noel Barrot in New York and discussed regional and global issues, particularly the Ukraine and Gulf crisis. The ministers also spoke about multilateral issues, including the reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). "Pleasure to meet FM Jean-Noel Barrot of France UN High Level Week. Our regular meetings and telecons enable us to maintain the momentum of our Special Global Strategic Partnership. Regional and global issues, specifically the Ukraine & Gulf crisis were discussed. Also exchanged views on multilateral issues, including the reform of UN Security Council," EAM Jaishankar posted on X.

Manipur’s long road to recovery



Sitting outside a small eatery constructed with tin sheets and iron mesh, Kundram Memori, 55, adjusts an assortment of vegetables spread on gunny bags on a foot-path in Manipur’s Bishnupur district. Sprinkling the stock of cabbages, beans, and carrots with water as she waits for buyers, Memori recalls how less than two years ago she lived a comfortable life, around 15 kilometres away in Churachandpur, where she owned a grocery store and her husband taught in a school.Memori’s life changed on May 3, 2023, when ethnic violence erupted between the tribal Kuki-Zo and the Meitei people in Manipur. It was triggered by a Manipur High Court order seeking the State government’s response on the inclusion of the Meitei community in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list. Her home in Churachandpur, dominated by the Kuki-Zo people, was burnt down. The family of four had to escape overnight.

Now, she lives in a relief camp in Bishnupur, and she says the family’s income has dropped by 80%. “My son is a research scholar; my daughter is pursuing a master’s degree in Imphal. After the violence, my husband developed hypertension. We do not have a home. I need to support the family now. We manage with whatever vegetables I sell here during the day. Evenings are spent in the camp, where we take turns to cook food and do the other chores,” says Memori.In Churachandpur, Holkim, 70, sits quietly on a thin mattress on the floor of a community centre. The centre was converted into a relief camp in May 2023. She stares blankly when asked about her life in Sugnou, a Meitei-dominated area from where she was displaced in May 2023. “She was born in Sugnou, where she owned a shop and a small hotel. Everything was razed during the violence,” says a relative.

Forced to stay in a large hall with broken windows along with 102 others, bedsheets and plastic sheets doubling as walls, Holkim’s relative says that she hopes to go back home one day. “While the men go out to do odd jobs during the day, we stay back, cook meals and maintain the camp, clean the toilets. There is no running water; we store it in buckets. For the past few months there has been a shortage of medical supplies,” said Gracy Niengneihang, 36, another camp resident whose house in Imphal was destroyed by a mob. She says the community members lean on each other for support but also that there is no privacy.Memori and Holkim are among the 62,000 people still living in relief camps, more than 21 months since ethnic violence erupted in the State. They have no opinion about President’s Rule in the State. All they want is to go back home.Manipur was placed under President’s Rule following an impending political crisis. The Congress party, in Opposition, was to move a no-confidence motion in the Assembly, which was set to be supported by the sitting Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislators. On February 9, Chief Minister N. Biren Singh was summoned to Delhi in a chartered flight. Following a meeting with the Union Home Minister Amit Shah, he resigned.The valley, with 10% of Manipur’s landmass, is dominated by the non-tribal Meitei ethnic group, mostly Hindus, who account for over 64% of the State’s population. The hills comprise 90% of Manipur’s area but send only 20 MLAs to the Assembly, mostly Kuki-Zo and Naga members.As per the 2011 Census, the population in the State stood at 27.21 lakh and the decadal population growth from 2001 to 2011 was 18.65%. Other than the Manipur police and the Army, 288 companies of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) are deployed in the State. The strength of each company may vary from 80-120 personnel.

The point where Bishnupur and Churachandpur districts converge has been one of the most volatile areas with armed men or ‘village volunteers’ aiming at each other frequently. To keep the warring communities away, ‘buffer zones’ were created. These buffer zones, where the Meitei areas in the valley and the Kuki-Zo areas in the hills converge, are secured by the CAPF and the Army, but not the State police. When The Hindu visited the Bishnupur-Churachandpur buffer zone, there were at least six checkpoints on a 2-km stretch. The Army and the CAPF personnel take photos of all the visitors and note down personal details such as phone and Aadhar number.After Central rule was imposed in the State, bunkers — sandbags and tin sheds — built by village volunteers in buffer zones to protect their communities have been removed. Some have been occupied by Central security forces.“We had a meeting with civil society groups. Some bunkers were voluntarily dismantled, and some were destroyed by the security forces,” says a police officer in Churachandpur.According to a senior government official, around 450-500 bunkers have been destroyed in the past 22 months. “Sometimes they are rebuilt. Since President’s Rule, it is being ensured that none of the bunkers exist in the buffer zones to prevent confrontation between the two communities,” says the officer.

The government is working on a 13-point road map to end violence and restore peace in the restive State. The road map includes disarmament, arrest of armed miscreants and extortionists, rehabilitation of internally displaced people, restoration of damaged and destroyed religious places, and free movement on highways.On March 8, after National Highways 2 and 37 — which connect the valley to Nagaland and Assam respectively — were opened for all vehicles, violence was reported in the hill district of Kangpokpi, leaving one protester dead and 40 others, including 27 security personnel, injured.Since ethnic violence began, cases of extortion and abductions by armed groups have seen a rise, particularly in the valley areas. On January 26, 2025, as India celebrated Republic Day, the Manipur government established a dedicated Integrated Anti-Extortion Cell to deal with the “significant” law-and-order threat in the State, as a government press release put it. It said that people, including government officials, had been threatened with severe consequences via calls, messages, or letters from unlawful organisations if extortion demands were not met.

Post February 13, billboards and posters have been put up across the State displaying the helpline number of the Anti-Extortion Cell.The trader community, many of who migrated to Manipur at least 100 years ago, have been the softest target of armed gangs. Those from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar say they are contemplating migrating from the State, which has become home to them.“Even at the height of insurgency and violence in the State in the 1980s and 1990s, the situation was not this bad. People no longer have the purchasing capacity. With daily blockades, goods cannot move. First, we pay in the hills to move ve-

hicles, then we have to pay sundry armed gangs in the valley. I do not accept calls from unknown numbers as those may be from extortionists,” says a trader from Uttar Pradesh on condition of anonymity. He notes that extortion calls and visits have stopped since President’s Rule was imposed.

Under a glass table at his shop in Thangal Bazaar in the heart of Imphal, the trader has a receipt of ₹4,500 acknowledging payment to Arambai Tenggol, a radical armed Meitei group, whose popularity has shot up in the past two years, coinciding with the period of violence. The trader says it is a pass to save him from other extortionists, as a few days after he paid the amount, another group arrived at his shop seeking money.“It is 6 in the evening now. The market should be bustling with activity. But what do you see here? Many shops are shut, while many have started rolling down their shutters,” says another trader of Marwari origin at Thangal Bazaar.

Anil Haorokcham, secretary of the Manipur Chamber of Commerce and Industry, says they have been pursuing the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the State and Central government for a moratorium on bank loans. “Up to 99% of entrepreneurs here will fall in the category of non-performing assets (NPA) if a financial package is not announced by the government,” he says.He says the government is yet to publish data on financial losses incurred in the State. “More than 50% of regular transactions have been lost. As the main city (Imphal) is cut off from satellite towns (hill areas) of Manipur, the towns are also facing collateral damage,” Haorokcham says.Kundram Memori, a resident of Churachandpur in Manipur, whose house was burnt down during the May 2023 ethnic violence.

He says the vegetable vendors at Ima Keithel (mother’s market), the all-woman-run market in Imphal, whose average turnover per day was ₹10,000 before May 2023, are not able to sell ₹2,000 worth of produce now. The exodus of Kuki-Zo people from Imphal has had an impact on health care, hospitality, and other sectors too.“Private hospitals are contracting their businesses because Kuki-Zo people are not coming. Private schools are affected; tourism is wiped out from the State. A hotel owner said they are running the hotel at a 20-30% occupancy. The staff is on a rotational basis. They can’t fire the staff, nor can they employ them full-time. Salary is based on working days,” he says. His list of economic troubles continues: FMCG distributors say demand has gone down by 50% because people have lost purchasing power.

Ch Priyoranjan Singh, a professor in Manipur University’s economics department, says many businesspeople from the valley are moving to neighbouring Guwahati in Assam, to Manipur’s west. “First the pandemic and then the violence have set back the economy by several years. A mineral water bottling plant shut down two of its units after rampant extortion calls,” Singh says.Manipur has a sizeable Nepali population. Devi, a clothes shop owner who came to Imphal after she married 12 years ago, says her family is considering moving back to Nepal. “We came to India as the education here is much better. But the other day my son was talking about guns and bombs. Last year, he heard gunshots outside his school. Many families from Nepal are now thinking of going back,” Devi says as she waits for customers to come.After President’s Rule was imposed, Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla appealed to members of all communities to surrender looted police weapons at the nearest police station within seven days or face strict action.Since May 2023, around 6,020 police weapons and lakhs worth of ammunition were looted from police armouries, almost 90% in the valley areas dominated by the Meitei people. Since 2023, there have been multiple advisories by the government to surrender the weapons. The amnesty period was extended until March 6. From February 20 to March 6, as many as 1,063 weapons, 15,027 pieces of ammunition, 684 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and 5,971 other items such as bullet-proof jackets and helmets were surrendered.

A police officer says that the deadline was not extended as people would stop taking the administration seriously. “A message had to be sent that the police mean business. The image of the police had taken a hit after Arambai Tenggol members abducted and assaulted a police officer on February 28 last year. After the deadline to surrender arms was over, it was made clear that the police and security forces would crack down on people hoarding them,” says the officer. Since February 18, around 90 people have been arrested for extortion-related activities.Meitei civil society groups argue that the Kuki-Zo people are backed by armed insurgent groups that are in a Suspension of Operation (SoO) pact with the Centre. They also want this protection.

In Churachandpur, most Meitei homes have been flattened after the arson. In Imphal, Kuki-Zo properties have either been gutted or occupied by members of the Arambai Tenggol. The Trulock Theological Seminary, run by the Kuki Christian Council, located metres away from the office of the Manipur Rifles, has “mobile unit of AT” scribbled on its wall, pointing to its current occupants.Mutum Yoiremba, a political consultant, feels the way forward is through an agreed collective amnesia, “a forgetfulness, even if not forgiveness”. “The government must enable, encourage, and protect those who are willing to come out and engage in this dialogue. The military way of resolving things with an iron fist has failed in the past. It was through political dialogue that the Northeast had finally seen peace after nearly half a century of turmoil. The Government of India must act as an enabler for peace,” said Yoiremba.Haorokcham says that a deteriorating economy does not discriminate on caste or religion. “There are many Kuki women married to Meitei men. When they want to have a family gathering, they go to Guwahati or Delhi. I wish normalcy comes back soon,” he says.Sharad Leishangtham, 46, who used to work as a welder in Churachandpur, now sells sugarcane juice in Bishnupur, and lives in the relief camp. “They tore down my house. I have lost just about everything. But there should be no more fighting in Manipur,” says Leishangtham.

Apple’s new watches are always listening

Melbourne: The latest Apple Watch models have some new features: they can listen to the sounds around you all day, transcribe snippets of conversation on demand, and write up summaries of everything they heard.This kind of ambient, always-on surveillance raises privacy concerns, which Apple addresses well. The company says audio is never “recorded” or stored, that nothing is attributed to any speaker, and all content is encrypted so even Apple cannot read it.

I have no reason to doubt any of that. But my reaction to these features is still clear: ick.I’m not the only one who feels that way, and the ick deserves to be taken seriously. Let me explain why.

The new features may run into problems with privacy laws, particularly those that require consent from people being recorded, but also with unspoken social conventions about speech.

Tanks battle polluted groundwater in Haryana



Ikbal Khan, 60, speaks in Hindi accented with a strong, rough Mewati accent. He recalls a time, over 25 years ago, when women from his village of Ghaghas would fetch drinking water from a well on the outskirts of the village. As the groundwater diminished, borewells were sunk. “But over the past four to five years, the groundwater has turned salty,” he says. People in Nuh district in Haryana began constructing kundas, underground water tanks, some with government support.Ikbal, like most of his fellow villagers, constructed one a month ago. He spent ₹60,000, with financial aid from the Block Samiti, a rural government body. Ikbal lives below the poverty line, with an annual income of less than ₹1.8 lakh. His tank, like most others, has a capacity of around 20,000 litres. The farming family uses the water only to drink, relying on the rain to feed the crop. This cuts the produce per acre to less than half that well-irrigated land brings in.

Before his family of six got their own tank, Ikbal used to share one with other families. This is common in this village of about 5,000 people, which now has close to 200 tanks. Together, three or four families bear the cost of water, supplied by privately owned water tankers. This way, they share the financial burden.Ghaghas is situated in the foothills of the Aravali mountain range, 10 km off National Highway 248A, connecting Gurugram in Haryana to Alwar in Rajasthan. Nuh figures among the government think-tank NITI Aayog’s list of 100 ‘Aspirational Districts’, for faring poorly on various development parameters. But it’s not just Nuh. More than two-thirds of Haryana’s districts face a groundwater crisis. Harmful chemicals have entered underground streams, making the water unfit for drinking and irrigation.

The Annual Ground Water Quality Report, 2024 released by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) in December 2024, stated that fluoride concentrations exceeded the permissible limit in Haryana, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana. Haryana was second on the list, with 208 out of 879 samples containing excessive fluoride. In addition, several samples had arsenic beyond permissible limits. Long-term exposure to both these contaminants can have severe health consequences, including fluorosis that degrades the skeletal system and causes cancer.Out of Haryana’s 22 districts, anomalous values of uranium (over 30 parts per billion) were found in 16 districts. This makes it part of the “over-exploited, critical, and semi-critical groundwater stress zones”, the report says. Chronic exposure to uranium can lead to kidney damage. The report was based on groundwater samples collected from 15,259 background monitoring network stations in May 2023 across India.In Haryana, 19 districts had a high electrical conductivity (EC) groundwater value. This is a measure of the ease with which water conducts electricity, indicative of the degree of salinity.Referring to the CGWB report, Indian National Lok Dal leader and Rania MLA Arjun Chautala raised the issue of deteriorating groundwater quality during the Budget Session in the Haryana Assembly this year. The first-time MLA said the report had made alarming revelations. He said groundwater contamination is a serious matter and that attention must be paid to ensure testing and reducing rising uranium levels in the Ghaghar and other rivers.Haryana Public Health Engineering Minister Ranbir Gangwa, in his reply, informed the House that a water testing laboratory had been established in every district of the State.Activist and convener of community-led Mewat RTI Manch Rajuddin Meo, who led a campaign, Jal Care Mission, for clean drinking water in Nuh in 2009, says, “The groundwater crisis is now serious. The water here has become so salty that even birds and animals do not drink it.” He adds that Nagina block bore the brunt. Out of 68 villages, 26, including Ghaghas, were the worst hit.“A survey by the Haryana government in 2022 identified these 26 villages as having levels of total dissolved solids (TDS) beyond the permissible limit,” he says. Nuh district water testing laboratory sources confirm this. “Of 860 borewells, 70 had a TDS over the permissible level of 2,000 mg/litre,” says a source.Meo says a locality of around 100 families in Ghaghas continues to use the groundwater as they cannot afford water from the tankers. He claims that the government’s free piped drinking water to Nuh villages is yet to cover the entire district. “Also, the ₹2,100 crore three-phase Mewat Canal project, announced by former CM Manohar Lal, is yet to take off.” A pipeline of the Central government’s Jal Jeevan Mission and the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation for Rural and Ur-

ban Areas was laid in Ghaghas last year. Villagers say it is being tested, so there is no regular drinking water supply.About half an hour’s drive from Ghaghas, down the highway, across the road, is Madhi village. Mohammad Jubair, 58, sits under a thorn-ridden keekar tree, often the only foliage in this water-starved area. His white beard matches white turban and kurta. He claims that the village is divided into three localities for water supply through pipelines. “Each locality gets only 10 minutes of piped water supply every third day. We need at least 30 minutes a day to meet our household’s water needs,” he says.

Mohammad Sabir, 42, on a handicap tricycle, joins the conversation, adding that the water supply is only in name and the village is dependent on private water tankers. People in Jhajjar and Hisar had similar stories. Agroha, Barwala, and Adampur blocks of Hisar are the worst hit.Many village panchayats in Hisar have bought their own tankers. “Dushyant Chautala (former Deputy CM) had facilitated a donation of 50 tankers through a private firm four years ago,” says Suresh Kumar, the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (Hisar) president. He lives in Durjanpur village.Raj Kumar, Jhajjar’s Kheri Khumar village sarpanch, says, “The two wells in the village have been abandoned, as the water is not fit for drinking. We are dependent on a canal for irrigation and drinking water.” Around a dozen villages in Jhajjar district, including Gudha, Dhor, and Palra, also face similar problems. Sushila, the sarpanch of the neighbouring Khatiwas village, wonders what will happen when the canal dries up.Sandeep Kumar, an executive engineer at the Public Health Engineering Department in Punhana block, Nuh, says the whole district has piped water. “About 100 villages face difficulties, including those pertaining to illegal connections, but Madhi does not have a problem.”When Arjun Chautala raised the issue of groundwater in the Assembly, Chief Minister Nayab Saini had said that the government had, as part of its commitment to ensure the supply of clean drinking water, worked to provide tap water to every household in the last 10 years.Hazi Fateh Mohammad, who has been running a water supply business for the past decade, selling water to three or four villages in Nagina block, Nuh district, says the demand for tankers has decreased since the arrival of the pipeline. “We supplied 25-30 tankers during the month of Ramzan last year. Now it is down to 5-10 tankers.” He has installed a common water point fed by his tanks in his village of Nagina, where he gives water free of cost.Maya, 65, a fellow resident of the village, says she fetches drinking water from here twice a day despite the piped water supply to her home. “Almost all households prefer groundwater from the filling point for drinking. It tastes better. The piped water is mostly used for washing, cleaning, and for animals,” she says.Dilshad Khan, 32, is a marginal farmer in Madhi. He owns less than an acre of land and works as a truck driver to supplement his income. He shares a kunda with a neighbour, but they still find the water bill high. “A tanker costs ₹1,200 in winter, but it’s hard to find one for even ₹2,000 in summer. There’s often a five- to six-day waiting period. We need at least two tankers a month,” he says.Like him, many others in Nuh own agricultural land, which is often too little to live off. People either rear cattle or work as drivers and helpers to make ends meet. “We are at the mercy of god! There is neither a canal nor any drain for irrigation,” says Irfan Khan, 35, who holds a vocational diploma from an industrial training institute. “The groundwater here is so salty that we cannot even bathe with it. It causes a burning sensation. We put out clay pots filled with the tanker water even for the birds,” he says.

In Haryana, 1.14% samples have high sodium levels and 0.34% have very high levels making the groundwater unfit for irrigation, as per the CGWB report. The CGWB has listed some of the reasons for deteriorating groundwater quality. These included an excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides in farming, improper waste disposal, sewage leakage, landfill contamination, and the over-extraction of groundwater, among others.Kumar from Hisar says the government’s approach to the crisis seemed short-term, with the stress mainly on supplying water through a pipeline. “Instead of focusing on long-term sustainable solutions, such as recharging groundwater and promoting crop diversification to reduce the extraction of groundwater, the government is taking stop-gap measures,” he says.Shiv Singh Rawat retired as a superintending engineer in the Haryana government’s Irrigation and Water Resources department. He is now the convener of the Yamuna Bachao Abhiyan, a movement to clean up the river ghats and protect the river from pollution.He advocates for a comprehensive and sustainable water management strategy to move from water scarcity to water security. He suggests “holistic solutions adopted globally for water management, such as floodwater aquifer rechargers, large-scale rainwater harvesting, and the reuse of treated wastewater”. He also wishes that States would cooperate to resolve interstate water disputes, like the ongoing Sutlej-Yamuna Link canal and Ravi-Beas water allocation issue between Haryana and Punjab. “Investment in climate-resilient infrastructure is needed to withstand the impact of erratic rainfall and rising temperatures,” says Rawat. He also calls for improving public awareness and participation in water conservation efforts.

AI doom fears overstated, global pause unrealistic: Zoho Co-founder Sridhar Vembu

Chennai: Predictions that artificial intelligence could lead to catastrophic outcomes are overstated, and a global pause in AI development is unlikely, Zoho cofounder Sridhar Vembu said on Wednesday, while urging India to keep its strategic options open and invest heavily in foundational R&D across sectors.Vembu, said India should pursue an independent approach to AI, building on partnerships without becoming locked into the emerging technology rivalry between the United States and China.“We must be friends with everybody, enemies with nobody and keep our options open,” Vembu, Chief Scientist and Co-founder, Zoho said in an interview with PTI.Machine Learning & Artificial IntelligenceHe called for extensive investment in foundational research and development, drawing a distinction between long-term scientific and technological capabilities and the large sums being spent by global companies on developing and deploying frontier AI models.“We need to make extensive investment in critical foundational R&D. There is a difference between foundational R&D versus spending tens of billions of dollars on AI model development or deployment,” he said.Such research should span every sector, Vembu said, adding that building foundational capabilities does not necessarily require investments on the scale of frontier AI model development.“It is not a USD 10 billion proposition and can be done for USD 100-200 million,” he said.Vembu said he does not subscribe to predictions that AI will inevitably wipe out humanity, although he acknowledged that concerns about the risks posed by increasingly capable systems merit attention.... Maybe we can pay at-

tention to it, but am I really worried about it? No, absolutely not,” he said.His greater concern is the erosion of human judgment and skills as people become increasingly dependent on AI tools, as well as the potential disruption to jobs, particularly in software engineering.On regulation, Vembu said governments are likely to remain behind technological advances, as has happened with earlier technologies. He compared the development of AI with the early automobile industry, when cars became widespread before rules governing licensing, speed and road safety were established.The implication, he said, is that AI governance will evolve alongside the technology rather than necessarily preceding it.Vembu also rejected calls for a worldwide halt to AI development, arguing that such a move would be difficult to implement because major AI laboratories would have little incentive to stop while competitors continued developing the technology.A central concern for Vembu is the effect of AI on the development of skills among younger workers and students.Citing a study by the US National Bureau of Economic Research involving lawyers, he said junior lawyers using AI tools completed tasks faster but did not necessarily build or retain the underlying knowledge needed to perform the work independently.The same dynamic could apply to software engineers, he said, while more experienced professionals were better positioned to use AI because they already possessed a strong underlying foundation.Vembu said Zoho may therefore consider restricting AI access for junior engineers until they have mastered core skills and fundamen

‘GST is a good tax to share with urban local bodies. Every citizen becomes a stakeholder in welfare’: Vijay Kelkar at Idea Exchange



Dr. Vijay Kelkar, a distinguished economist and academic, has held several prominent positions in India and internationally. As Chairman of the Finance Commission (2008–2010), he contributed significantly to India's fiscal policy. He served as Finance Secretary of the Government of India (1998–1999) during Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's tenure, playing a pivotal role in shaping economic policies aligned with Vajpayee's vision of liberalization and development. Earlier, he served as Secretary to the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (1985–1988) and chaired the Tariff Commission (1997–1998). From 2010 to 2012, he served as Chairman of the National Stock Exchange and was a Director at Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) from 2010 to 2017. Dr. Kelkar has been a consultant for the UN and UNCTAD, contributing to global economic discussions. Honoured with the Padma Vibhushan in 2011, he holds a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, an M.S. from the University of Minnesota.'GST is a good tax to share with urban local bodies. Every citizen becomes a stakeholder in welfare.'

Sunanda Mehta: You have been delivering these talks on former Prime MinisterAtal Bihari Vajpayee and his policies. Would you like to start with that?

To my mind, the reform story of late Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee is seldom talked about. I have worked with him in various capacities. In 1999, I was moved from chairman of the tariff commission where my idea was to make it an independent body to safeguard liberal trade policies. I remember my daughter was studying in the US and I was visiting her when suddenly I received a call from Montek Singh Ahluwalia saying 'Look I'm moving to the Planning Commission, you have to become the Finance Secretary'. I said, 'I have bought tickets for my wife and myself out of my own savings and I would not come back immediately. When I came back though, I became the Finance Secretary. I had never met Vajpayeeji. As soon as I took charge, I went to meet him.It was a bit daunting as he did not speak much. I kept quiet. After a great pause, he said, "Aapko bahut soch samajh ke banaya gaya hai (You have been appointed after much deliberation)." Then, he said, if you have any problem come to me directly. When I came back to my office I wondered why he said that. He wanted to signal that the government might have changed but the reforms would continue. I was replacing Ahluwalia, who was spearheading the reforms, and, instead of choosing a civil servant, I was chosen.The way to think about Vajpayeeji's reforms is that they fall in four categories — micro, meso, macro and meta economic reforms. He firstly continued the path the earlier government of P V Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh had started of trade liberalisation. It was the first time during the Budget that no excise rates were changed. Back then, we were facing nuclear sanctions. So, we had to show the world that we were open for business and are not a closed economy. So, we continued tariff reforms in a planned manner, which was rule-based. Liberal trade policies became the cornerstone of the micro economy.If you slice or dice the macroeconomic performance for 30 years, Indian growth rate is stable and between 5-6 per cent. Our inflation rate is also stable. I would argue that is possible because Vajpayeeji created the policy infrastructure necessary for two reforms — one was the Fiscal Responsibility & Budget Management (FRBM) Act. For the first time, a democratic country's politicians put constraints on themselves on fiscal policy. The second was the Monetary policy. These were the guardrails which kept the Indian economy from falling off its rails. I would argue that these two guardrails helped India do well in comparison to other developing or developed countries in spite of enormous shocks, one of them being Covid-19. We got all sorts of advice but we did not require it because of these two guardrails that also explain India's macroeconomic stability in spite of sanctions, war, and the oil crisis.Now the Meso economic policies. He reformed three important sectors: telecom, electricity and roads. Interestingly, all three sectors are network industries. And they give enormous boost to goods productivity.I'm told an apocryphal story of how he got fed up with the great discussion in the Cabinet when he proposed the Golden Quadrilateral and he got up and drew the same on the map of India and got it pushed. More important is the concept of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna that revolutionised rural connectivity and is not well-appreciated. He took a lot of interest in this project.In the Telecom sector if you remember we had the licensing policy where people gave enormous bids and were stuck. He took a bold decision to change the policy: scrap the bid-dable licensing policy. This led to the telecom boom and revolutionised India's telecom sector. IT export was possible because of this. Another important reform was in the port sector, which allowed for private ports to be developed.His contribution to the meta economic policies is through the formation of various institutions, one of which is the Competition Commission of India (CCI). It was an independent commission. Second was the National Statistical Commission (NSC). One more institution was created, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), which was to be led by a Supreme Court Judge. He was concerned about social justice. He used to talk about Antyodaya as a policy.His crisis management was par excellence. A crisis came during his prime ministership when from a high interest rate regime, we went to a low interest rate regime. State governments, Maharashtra for example, had done borrowings on high interest rates, while the market rates were low. The Central government took all the high interest rate and allowed state governments to take the interest at a lower rate. I remember the Cabinet meeting which as Finance Secretary I was privy to. I told him 'Sir, do you remember our classics when the Samudra Manthan took place. Lord Shankhar took the poison and became Nilkanth. Reforms are like manthan and the government has to be Nilkanth'.He was a great prime minister and everything he did was by consensus. I think he had a God-given gift to charm and persuade people. He had the knack for managing people. He knew exactly which button to push. In public meetings, he used to talk but in private he used to listen. He was a class apart.

Anuradha Mascarenhas: What are the challenges India is facing as an emerging economy?

I think India's challenge number one in terms of com-

petition would be China. We have to work out a strategy in which we need to build our technology at home. That's the only way we can outpace China. In many ways we have the demographic dividend. China is aging. We are also aging but it would take some time to show. We have a small window to catch up. We have to really build on an innovation-led model for India. We are not spending enough on technology or innovation.

Partha Sarathi Biswas: A large part of our population is still working on minimum or below minimum wages. Should it not be a cause of concern? What is your opinion about Ladki Bahin Yojana?

I think this is where social policy is extremely important. Markets would provide market wages. We can't force them to pay higher. By improving public goods, public schools and public health, we can help the population. Improvement in public services can help growth. As for those schemes, they do not bother me much. What bothers me the most is that economic policies have become very bureaucratic. Our real problem is, public policy is not rule-based anymore. Have you tried starting a business or buying a flat? I would rather have general improvement in productivity rather than a few Unicornsl have no problem about direct benefit transfer if they go to those intended. But wastage is a cause of concern. Look at the city's infrastructure. There is no accountability. There is no elected mayor in the town. You would probably know who is the mayor of New York town who is the mayor of Pune

Sushant Kulkarni: You talked about nuclear independence and fiscal independence. In a largely interconnected world, how is this evolving?

Strategic patience and rapid economic growth are important. We have to be patient while dealing with China. If we grow we can catch up with them sooner than they think. In my view, we should concentrate on growth. We have to be intelligent with economic sanctions against them. Just be patient, grow, grow, grow and grow.Anuradha: Are you satisfied with the manner in which the Public Private Partnership model has evolved?No. The government is used to a one-time purchase contract while PPP is like marriage, so a different approach has to be taken. It has to be give and take. You can't write everything in advance and be ready to negotiate. Unless you do that it would not work. No one can anticipate change. The only PPP which works is the one when the contract owes the government money.

Sushant: So how does an economist who is in an administrative chair deal with a political leader? How was your experience?

No, I was not a dyed-in-wool civil servant. The one thing I have learnt, the only change agents in the country are the politicians. They want change. Because they want to win elections. All changes don't come from civil servants. They come from politicians.

Sunanda: So talking of changes by politicians, what is your opinion on demonetisation?

That's the kind of change one should not bring about. No civil servant would have recommended that. Continued languishing of the employment issue, which you mentioned, is the scar left by that shock. The whole idea came from the Pune-based group- many years before that they had discussed the idea with me and I had actively discouraged them from pursuing it.Soham Shah: Do you see any justification for the rationale they gave for it? That they wanted to fight black money through demonetisation.I don't understand it (the justification). Black money is not stocked, but it flows. So this move cannot be a means to end black money. The intention was honourable but the instrument chosen was a wrong onePartha: An economist is like a doctor. Feeling the pulse, you can understand the illness and the state of the Indian economy.As I mentioned to you, India is now recording 5-6% growth and no one can bring it down. Even if I became the PM, I will not be able to bring it down. In other words, as long as there are two guardrails, the economy will not be in crisis.As I told you, we passed the FRBM Act. And before that, Jaswant Singh was very correct. He told us that we should tax services. But according to the Constitution, the right to tax manufacturing was with the Centre. Agriculture was with states. So he said, 'Yeh toh accha nahi hai. Why don't we go to Parliament and get it done officially, the right to tax.'I said, this is the time. Let's share this service tax power with states in exchange for a common market. We called it a grand bargain. Because we gave Goods & Services Tax (GST), states also can now tax services. They can also tax imports now, which was with the Centre. So we gave this grand bargain. We are getting more money. But you share the sovereignty. The Centre is also sharing its sovereignty. So we share the tax sovereignty and GST was born. And then we submitted our report. The minister loved it, the Prime Minister loved it. And suddenly I got a call from Rashtrapati Bhavan that the President wants to see you.A P J Abdul Kalam was President. He asked penetrating questions. The last question was most interesting.

He said, 'If we have GST, would trucks go unchecked from Kanyakumari to Srinagar?' I said yes. He said, 'I'll support you.' To him that was the litmus test. Till then every state had boundaries and checks for trucks.Anuradha: GST has its problems too.GST has been a problem. Our solution, 'lakh dukho ki ek dawa hai': Have a single rate GST. No exceptions. You'll find compliance will go up. Your earnings will go up. Exports will go up. All these problems can be solved.I have been arguing that the real problem with delivery of public goods is because the urban local bodies are not strong enough. My argument is to share a portion of GST with them. Have a flat rate of GST and share equally with three levels of government. You have to empower the federal base and build a tax base. If you have a single rate GST on all commodities with no exception and share 5 (Central government), 5 (state government) and 2 (local bodies) percentage, it would allow local bodies to have enough money to approach the capital markets.Sunanda: Despite paying so much in taxes, what are we getting in return? Look at the infrastructure for instance.Empower cities. You have to empower mayors. Ludhiana has the largest number of Mercedes Benz, per capita. But 50% of the city has no drainage facility. This city has a poor municipality. That was our proposal. Share... GST is a good tax to share with the local government. Every citizen becomes a stakeholder in welfare. Everyone.... That's why we have to go about involving citizens. The actual taxpayer is only 10% of the population. With GST, that's the beauty. Everybody pays, then everybody becomes a stakeholder.Shubham Tigga: You spoke about minimum wages and social justice. With a growing gig economy and gig workers, we are seeing a lot of concerns on this. The number of gig workers is also expected to increase to 24 million by 2029-2030, as per NITI Aayog. How should companies respond to the demands of gig workers?

I think we have to give them liveable conditions. India has also become rich, it is not so poor

Introducing circularity in used-textile waste management, with inclusivity at its centre



At her Textile Recovery Facility (TRF) in Hirandahalli where used textiles from around 10 wards of Bengaluru arrive, Indumathi, a waste picker-turned-entrepreneur seems quite exuberant and optimistic. She remembers how during Deepavali the metal roof facility "almost turned into a shopping mall."“I was stunned that there is so much demand even for second-hand clothes! During Dasara and Deepavali, locals as well as migrant labourers came here to buy these clothes. The business was fast-moving during the festive month.” TRF, run by Indumathi and employing four people, is part of a larger attempt to create a value chain for post-consumer textile waste while weaving into it alternate livelihood possibilities for waste pickers.

Circular Apparel Innovation Factory or CAIF (an Intelcap initiative) and Hasiru Dala, an NGO, in partnership with Saamuhika Shakti – a not-for-profit organisation that brings together multiple organisations to empower the informal waste picker community – have been working to see if they could introduce systems and processes for the same. Under the initiative, used clothes are collected from individual houses, sorted, segregated and, depending on their quality, recycled, upcycled, downcycled or resold. According to the NGOs, this successfully diverted 1,31,000 kgs of cloth from reaching landfills last year between March and December and resulted in an 18-25% increase in the income of the waste pickers directly engaged with the programme. After a successful pilot last year with eight wards in the city, the programme has been scaled up to cover 10 wards this year. Five more DWCCs (Dry Waste Collection Centres) are getting operationalised and the aim is to save 800 metric tonnes of clothes from reaching landfills in the next three years.

In India, more than 80% of PET bottles are recycled, thanks to the value chain established around it. Collecting them makes it a valuable proposition for waste pickers too. The same has not been the case with used textiles. With no formal system in place to create value out of textile waste, most of it ended up in landfills making it among the top three items in landfills. "Earlier, it was not known what you could do with post-consumer textile waste. However, through the experiments and pilots done in 2023 and 2024, we have been able to showcase that there is value to post-consumer textile waste, and through methods and processes, we can create a system similar to what we have for plastics in India," says Zibi Jamal of Sattva Consulting, the facilitator partner in the Saamuhika Shakti collective. The first step is to collect the textile waste from individual houses. Waste pickers at the DWCCs in select wards were trained in collecting textile waste and awareness was created among residents. After collection, the first level of sorting happens at DWCCs. Once a month, when the quantity of clothes becomes a ton or more, they are sent to TRF. A secondary level of sorting happens at TRF. A lot can be thrifted. Some can go into recycling, be made into yarn. A small quantity can be upcycled. Some can be downcycled and used for stuffing. There is a small percentage - about 10 to 15% – which can't be used for anything. They are sent to the waste-to-energy plant in Bidadi," Jamal explains. It all started when CAIF launched its Closing the Loop on Textile Waste programme in 2021. The idea was to design and implement a circular textile waste management model. "This programme, as of today, is scaled up in 10 different cities across India, but it all started in Bengaluru with two entrepreneurs," says Rahul Chatterjee of CAIF. Hasiru Dala came on board as an on-ground implementation partner and the

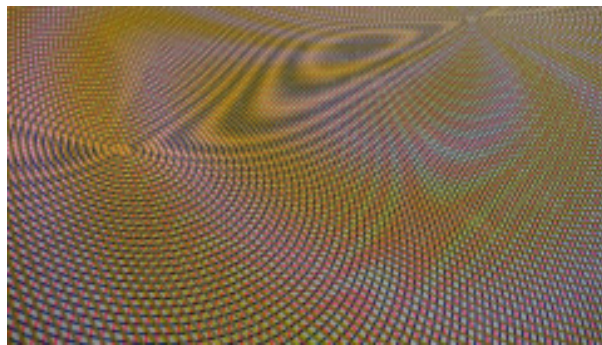
implementation of the programme in Bengaluru was supported by H&M Foundation and Saamuhika Shakti. "Together we onboarded eight DWCC operators as part of the programme and showed them the value that they can reclaim out of the textile waste," notes Chatterjee who points out that apart from preventing large quantities of clothes from reaching the landfill, the programme impacted the lives and livelihoods of 225 waste workers. "Out of them, 33 were directly getting employment out of this and they saw an increase in their income ranging from 18 to 25 percent." Kumuda who manages a DWCC in J.P. Nagar had been one of the first to on-board the programme.Kumuda, who runs a DWCC in J.P. Nagar, was one of the first to sign up for the programme. She notes that every day about 10-15 kg of used clothes come into her centre and income from it has been increasing over the period. "We get about ?15,000 for a ton of used clothes," she says.

Ravi, a division manager with Hasiru Dala, notes that the awareness-building exercises have helped. He is one of the team members who do door-to-door visits twice a week to raise awareness and inform people about BBMP guidelines."As fast fashion started, we saw a lot of textile waste coming into the centres. Earlier, it would go to cement kilns. But right now, there is so much waste that even the cement factory is not taking them in," says Bianca Fernandes who works with Hasiru Dala. "That is when Hasiru Dala identified different kinds of streams where waste pickers can get a livelihood out of. As part of it we collaborated with CAIF for this initiative." As the programme progressed, certain challenges cropped up eventually. The DWCCs experienced space crunch to store the textiles. Additionally, there were legal restrictions that allowed them to collect only from households and not from other sources. Some of the commercial buyers preferred to buy the textiles in bulk from a single entity instead of multiple DWCCs. "Factoring in all these learnings, in phase two, we pivoted to a hub and spoke model. We established TRF as the hub and the DWCCs would be the spokes. DWCCs will do the collection, a primary sorting and then sell it to the TRF. TRF will work as the central hub for aggregation, do a secondary sorting based on material and colour and then sell it to different buyers such as the recyclers, upcyclers, downcyclers and resellers. The TRF can also collect from other sources because they do not have such restrictions. They can collect from commercial entities, schools, hostels, and so on," explains Chatterjee. The second phase of the project aims to impact the livelihoods of 500 waste pickers between 2024 to 2026. Products like bags and artefacts are made from upcycled clothes.

The team also works on a 'skill as a service' model which CAIF introduced in partnership with Sambhav Foundation, yet another NGO which is a Saamuhika Shakti partner. Under the model, women from the waste picker families are trained to make upcycled products using textile waste. "We work with informal waste picker women and upskill them so that they don't remain at the lower end of the waste picking spectrum, but move on to production and higher value chains," says Dr Padmini Ram from Sambhav Foundation. "We get upcycled cloth from Hasiru Dala. We work on creating products such as bags, artefacts and so on from them and the products are sold to a buyer. The women get trained here to make the products and they get a share of the profits that's earned from selling them," she explains. Sagaya Mary, at her DWCC near R.V. Road, has finished the sorting for the day. All the clothes have been packed and neatly stacked away. The vehicle from TRF is expected to arrive the next day to collect them. "We have delivered clothes five times to the TRF. We are making profits," Mary says. Three months since becoming operational, TRF has processed 42 tons of textile waste. It is yet to turn profitable though. But Indumathi is optimistic. Drawing hope from the sales during the Deepavali season, she believes the facility would see financial success in about two years.She says, "So far, we have recovered only 10% of our initial investment. It may take a while. But I feel good that we are not sending clothes to landfills, we are saving the earth, we are able to generate employment for people, and it's helping me build a career.

New moiré superconductor opens the door to new quantum materials

Scientists are constantly engineering new materials that exhibit exotic properties. Moiré materials are a deceptively simple.Take a material made of a single type of atom, like a block of graphite. Slice off a thin layer from the top so that you have a two-dimensional sheet of carbon atoms bonded together (graphene). Place one sheet on top of another. Finally, twist the top sheet by a small angle.You now have a moiré material.These materials have unusual electronic and quantum properties. The one made of graphene has even been found to be a superconductor.In a recent study in Nature, scientists reported that moiré materials made from semiconductor materials can also be superconducting, a property once considered to be exclusive to the graphene system.Exploring why semiconductor moiré materials behave differently from graphene in terms of superconductivity is key to advancing our understanding of quantum materials. This in turn can pave the way for new materials with more unusual properties — and unusual applications.The moiré patternThe researchers explored superconductivity in twisted bilayer tungsten diselenide (tWSe2), a moiré material created by stacking two layers of tungsten diselenide, a semiconductor, and rotating one layer by a small angle.Even though the two layers of a moiré material have the same arrangement of atoms, the misalignment caused by the small twist produces a completely different pattern when seen from the top (see image above). This is called the moiré pattern.In moiré materials, the moiré pattern gives rise to new behaviours that are not present in the individual 2D materials alone. This is because the twist leads to the formation of flat bands in the electronic structure of the material.Flat bands to superconductivityThe electronic structure of a material describes how electrons in the material behave. The energy bands are a way to visualise the energy the electrons possess and how fast they move within the material.Imagine the energy bands to be a ladder: each step (or band) represents the range of energies an electron can have. As you go up the ladder, the electron possesses more and more energy and momentum, meaning it will move faster.A flat band means that the energy values of the electrons across the ladder are nearly constant, creating a flatregion within the band. In this scenario, all the electrons have the same energy, unlike in typical materials where the energy levels are spread out over a range.Also in typical materials, electrons gain or lose kinetic energy when they move across different energy levels, which affects their speed and momentum. But in moiré materials, because the bands are flat, the electrons experience very little variation in energy.As a result, the electrons



move slowly and are said to be heavy. These slower-moving electrons are more likely to interact with each other, creating strong electron-electron interactions that aren't seen in typical materials.These interactions can lead to the formation of Cooper pairs, where two electrons pair up across a short distance and move around as a single unit. This pairing is central to the phenomenon of superconductivity.(Leon Cooper, for whom the pairs are named, passed away on October 23.)Their coordinated movement helps them avoid scattering, a process where electrons collide with atoms or impurities in the material and deviate from their path, causing electrical resistance. On the other hand, Cooper pairs can travel through the material without scattering, leading to zero resistance and energy loss, and thus superconductivity.The devil in the twistThe researchers used tWSe2 with a twist angle of 3.65° to form a moiré material.Then they examined how the electrons behaved when the material's electronic states were half-filled, a configuration strongly associated with superconductivity in moiré materials. (These states refer to the steps on the energy ladder: each state can accommodate a fixed number of electrons.)They also examined the behaviour of the electrons when the energy gap between the sublattices within the material is small, since this influences the superconducting properties. Sublattices are smaller grids of groups of atoms within the material.The researchers found that tWSe2 was a robust conductor with a transition temperature of around –272.93° C. The transition temperature is the critical value below which a material enters the superconducting state, exhibiting zero electrical resistance.The temperature observed is on par with those found in high-temperature superconductors. Conventional superconductors transition at around –250° C.The superconductivity in tWSe2 occurs precisely when the electronic states are half-filled.

A U.S.-like DOGE for India is not far-fetched



The United States President, Donald Trump, made headlines when he announced a U.S. Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) with its focus primarily on cost reduction. Yet it is a move that opens a broader discussion on streamlining government operations in developing economies through dedicated efforts to drive efficiency in governance.

Going beyond the narrow, cost-focused American proposal, India could reimagine government efficiency through the lens of enhanced service delivery and governance. While India has made significant strides in advancing its economic and social agendas, the country still faces persistent challenges in addressing bureaucratic inefficiencies, excessive regulatory red tape, and misallocation of resources in public spending. ‘Minimum government and maximum governance’ are still a far cry from reality. There are often outdated practices embedded in standard operating procedures (SOPs) across government departments. Many of these non-value-adding activities, originally designed for valid operational contexts, have lost relevance in the wake of digitisation or changes in upstream and downstream processes. Despite no longer serving their intended purpose, they continue to be performed, leading to unnecessary delays and inflated costs. Such inefficiencies not only slow down the execution of critical government programmes but also undermine their overall impact and cost-effectiveness.To tackle these issues, India could benefit from establishing a dedicated government efficiency department — a body that would focus on identifying inefficiencies, cutting waste, eliminating rework, and enhancing accountability across all levels of governance. This broader mandate could transform how citizens interact with government services while modernising administrative processes.Lessons from within India

There are lessons to be learnt from within the country. India’s private sector has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past decades. Many Indian companies have demonstrated standards of world-class efficiency, often outperforming global competitors. These organisations have successfully implemented modern management techniques, digital transformation, industrial engineering and lean operations while operating within the Indian context. Similar changes are not seen in public governance, with many government departments still operating on legacy systems and processes designed decades ago. While private companies have dedicated departments focusing on continuous improvement, digitisation and customer satisfaction, government departments often lack structured mechanisms for service enhancement.

As India aims to become a developed economy, the quality of government service delivery and ease of citizen interaction with administration will play crucial roles. Such a dedicated efficiency department could provide the structured approach needed to transform government operations, focusing not just on how efficiently services are delivered but also on fundamentally improving what is delivered to citizens.India’s bureaucratic machinery, based on the Weberian model, despite being well-intentioned, is often perceived to be cumbersome and slow. This inefficiency translates into delays in the execution of projects that are crucial for economic growth and development. Public spending in India is often plagued by inefficiencies, with a significant portion of the Budget allocated to welfare programmes, subsidies, and public services. An efficiency department could focus on minimising waste and maximising the impact of these programmes. By implementing a systematic approach to detect and prevent leakages, inefficiencies, and misuse of funds, this department could ensure that India’s already scarce public resources are directed where they are needed most.

In today’s digital age, technology can play a pivotal role in driving efficiency across government operations. India has already demonstrated remarkable success with several large-scale digitisation programmes, such as Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), Aadhaar, land records digitisation across many States, and the Passport Seva project. These initiatives have streamlined processes, reduced inefficiency, and significantly enhanced service delivery. However, despite their success, these programmes have largely operated in silos, lacking mechanisms for a cross-pollination of ideas, expertise, and best practices. Each new government initiative often starts from scratch and often depends heavily on

the private sector to build systems and frameworks. This not only leads to higher costs but also delays to implementation and a missing of opportunities for leveraging proven solutions from existing projects.A centralised government efficiency department could act as a repository for institutional knowledge, technical expertise, and reusable digital infrastructure. By facilitating the sharing of best practices and standardised processes across Ministries and departments, this body could reduce redundancy, lower costs, and accelerate the implementation of new initiatives. By championing digital transformation across ministries, an efficiency department could help India keep pace with technological advancements while also cutting down on the costs and the delays associated with manual processes.

Modifying a department that existsInterestingly, there is no need to build such an organisation from scratch. There already is the central government’s Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions. While the current mandate for DARPG primarily focuses on administrative reforms, disseminates successful good governance practices and grievance redress, much like the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (for multi-modal connectivity, a platform to bring 16 Ministries including Railways and Roadways together for integrated planning and coordinated implementation of infrastructure connectivity projects with the aim integrate and facilitate the last mile connectivity), it could be expanded to spearhead broader government-wide efficiency agenda.Drawing inspiration from the private sector, where centralised efficiency teams often act as innovation hubs to streamline operations and implement transformative practices, DARPG could adopt a similar role in governance. In corporations, such teams focus on integrating technologies, optimising workflows, and eliminating waste to improve both financial and operational performance. Translating this model to the public sector, DARPG could lead initiatives to identify inefficiencies, benchmark performance, and implement solutions that drive cost savings and enhance service delivery across departments and States.By leveraging its existing structure and expertise, the department could serve as a centralised body to standardise processes, eliminate redundancies, and foster cross-departmental collaboration. It could develop and house best-in-class digital capabilities for governance, creating reusable frameworks, platforms, and tools that can be cross-leveraged by various Ministries and State governments. Additionally, DARPG could institutionalise the use of process improvement methodologies such as Lean, Six Sigma, and data-driven decision-making tools. By embedding these practices into governance, the department could enable continuous improvements in efficiency and accountability, paving the way for a government that is both agile and citizen-centric.The Indian bureaucracy

Unlike the political appointments to executive administration in the U.S., India operates under a system of permanent bureaucracy, wherein civil servants hold long-term positions independent of the political leadership, ensuring continuity, institutional memory, and stability in governance. Rather than uprooting the system, India’s challenge lies in empowering and expanding the mandate of such institutions to drive efficiency without compromising the stability and consistency that permanent bureaucracy provides.

The path to operationalising this setup faces two formidable and intertwined challenges. First, the deeply entrenched bureaucratic structures, which have evolved over decades, often resist transformative changes that could alter existing power dynamics and administrative processes. Career bureaucrats, accustomed to traditional hierarchies and established workflows, may view such initiatives as threats to their autonomy and discretionary powers. Second, India’s federal structure adds another layer of complexity, where the delicate balance between central and State authorities must be carefully maintained in consonance with the spirit of cooperative federalism.

Any efficiency initiative would need to navigate the highly sensitive and political constitutional division of powers and respect State autonomy. Success would depend on creating a framework that not only addresses bureaucratic concerns through meaningful engagement and clear incentives but also provides enough freedom and flexibility for States to adapt implementation to their local contexts while maintaining core efficiency standards. Political will and public trust would be critical to enable success of such a programme.While the journey toward such reforms would certainly be challenging, the potential benefits make it an opportunity worth exploring. As India moves forward in the 21st century, a commitment to government efficiency could be one of the most powerful tools for achieving sustainable development and a harbinger of inclusive growth.Milind Kumar Sharma is Professor in the Department of Production and Industrial Engineering at MBM University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan. Sharad Sharma works with a “Big 4” and is an executive PhD scholar at MDI Gurgaon. The views expressed are personal

The cheapest way to prevent NCDs: reducing salt consumption

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 70% of deaths in low- and middle-income group countries are due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Poor lifestyles, smoking, the use of alcohol, lack of exercise, air pollution, and other factors contribute to this figure. It is of paramount importance to prevent NCDs, as their treatment can be a huge burden to the health budget of a country. One of the easiest and most cost-effective ways of preventing NCDs is reducing salt consumption in the population. Salt consumption, the WHO says, should be less than 5 grams per day from all sources: this includes natural sources, salt added while cooking, and hidden salt in processed and packaged food. Indians consume way above the recommendation at around 8 to 11 grams per day. It is important to clarify the confusion between sodium and salt. Two grams of sodium is equal to 5 grams of common salt. The relationship between salt and blood pressure is well known. High salt intake leads to increased blood volume, and unless the endothelium (lining of the blood vessels) produces nitrous oxide, the blood vessel fails to dilate, leading to hypertension.

This is called salt-sensitive or resistant hypertension and is genetically determined. However, what is not common knowledge is that salt-resistant hypertension can become salt-sensitive over time. High salt in the absence of hypertension can also lead to endothelial dysfunction. All NCDs have a common pathology of blood vessel damage. The ill effects of hypertension: contributing to heart attacks, strokes, and kidney failure are well known. And so, it is essential that salt intake is followed to the recommended level even in the absence of hypertension. There are more than

100 studies that have shown the benefit of salt reduction in the population. Studies from Japan, Portugal, and Finland are the oldest. A study from the U.K. showed a reduction of strokes by 24% and heart attacks by 18% when salt intake was reduced. The latest and the largest study from China, showed a considerable reduction in strokes with the use of low-sodium salt substitutes. The other ill effects of salt, such as kidney stones, worsening of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), stomach cancer, and osteoporosis, must be included in the benefits of salt control. The first step is creating awareness at all levels of the general population, health providers, the government, and food manufacturers.

The best way to find out daily salt consumption is by estimating urine sodium over 24 hours. In general, the salt we eat is removed from our urine. Only a very small quantity is lost in faeces or sweat. It is a common misconception that with increased sweating, the body requires more salt: only more water is required. Unfortunately, only about 3,000-odd people have been studied for urinary sodium excretion, which is miniscule considering our population. Studies using dietary recall are not reliable, however, knowing the average family consumption may help to monitor and advise accordingly. Salt meters have been used in some countries but do not help in determining salt in traditional Indian foods. Studies from our country still show that the majority of salt is added while cooking at home. But this is likely to change, since eating out and consumption of packaged food have been on the rise. The average person cooking at home needs to be educated on the skill of lowering salt through the use of spices and condiments to improve taste.

Why is the Internet giving Lewis Hamilton a digital bath at the Ganges?



My chronically-online self is usually unfazed by Internet absurdities. However, the time has come to let you know that one particular trend has got my goat: Having to type sentences like ‘Prayagraj-based entrepreneur Deepak Goel gives snans (baths) to celebrities like Logan Paul, Sydney Sweeny, Lewis Hamilton, and Virat Kohli at the Narmada and Ganga rivers’. It’s all downhill from here, isn’t it?Back in January and February, when the Maha Kumbh Mela was being celebrated in full swing in Uttar Pradesh, Deepak Goel, an entrepreneur, saw an opportunity that you and I didn’t. When the world was rushing to dip themselves into the Ganges, Deepak put out a video on Instagram introducing himself. “Hi, I’m Deepak Goel from Prayagraj and I am performing digital snans for people. All you have to do is send me a WhatsApp picture of yourself. I will take a printout and dip you five times. I come here every day,” he declared.

Earlier, the dips came at a hefty price. When the Kumbh was taking place, Deepak could be seen standing at the ghats by the river with his pants rolled up, holding up passport sized images of strangers who wanted their sins to be washed away. He charged ₹1,100 for a picture. Since February 23, the end of the fest, the service has been largely free though. One only needs to pay ₹25 to cover the cost of printing the photo out and conveyance. “I offer digital snan services at Sangam-Prayagraj, Narmada-Jabalpur and at Haridwar. For Sangam-Prayagraj, you only have to pay ₹25 per photograph. There can be many people in one photograph also,” he says.

Since February, the entrepreneur has been flooded with requests — gag and serious ones alike — for digital salva-

tion. It has also invited several spoof spin offs. Do you have a broken leg but still wish to work those abs? Go to the digital gym where someone places your photo on a treadmill for cardio? A parody account @digitalgym01 has 608k views on their first video already. Can’t drink a peg of whiskey because your parents or partner disallows you from doing so? A digital peg by YouTuber Mister Param is the way to go.Deepak’s video of a snan of American influencer and wrestler Logan Paul, his wife Nina Agdal and their child Esme, has gotten nearly 5 million views. Pop-culture content creator @thepjexplained sent a collage of himself and actress Sydney Sweeny, known for her striking beauty, and requested a dip.In a television interview, Deepak said that he was using advanced technology to help facilitate the wishes of those who could not be present at Prayagraj for this festival. “Old people who cannot travel need to be accommodated somehow. People say that I am using advanced technology for this,” he said. How kind.

I ended up saving a number of his videos so my algorithm now only shows me an odd mix of F1 and Maha Kumbh reels. The ones that cracked me up the most were requests from Westerners like Alex, a woman from Kent, who paid \$20 for this; and from forlorn Formula One fans who prayed for Ganga-fuelled victory laps of drivers like Charles Leclerc and Max Verstappen. “Charles’, ‘Charles’, ‘Charles’. How many of you have requested him. Hope he wins the race tomorrow,” Deepak said in all seriousness, announcing the date: May 24 and location: Sangam Prayagraj.Curiosity got the best of me so I wrote to the man on WhatsApp requesting an interview. I am upset to report that I only received an automated reply from an account with a profile photo that reads ‘Digital Snan Guru’.For your sake, dear reader, I have sent him my photograph and ₹25 on Google Pay, hoping to see if this experiment works. Let us if he can wipe my sin slate clean. At least this way, I will end up taking a bath.Chad: A ‘Chad’ is usually a generic, attractive, young white man who is supposedly muscular and cocky. Now, the term is synonymous with male entitlement and is often used to describe the incel community. For example, Henry Cavill is a hot Chad.Are you wondering about what’s happening on Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Reddit and Discord? Pop it like it’s hot, a fortnightly column from The Hindu, catches you up on everything pop culture. All you need to do, is tune in.

Awadh’s last mirasins struggle to keep their musical heritage alive



With more people opting for film music at weddings, these women singers may be the last custodians of their community

Umrana Niyazi hunkers down in her small verandah with her paan daan (betel leaf box) and sings Chhap tilak sab cheeni... mohse naina milaik (You have taken away my identity, my beauty, and everything that was mine... just by locking eyes with me), written and composed by Sufi poet and mystic Hazrat Amir Khusrui in braj bhasha, a western Hindi dialect. Her husky voice floats out into the lanes of old Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, where she lives.“Now people rarely call us to sing at mehfilis [gatherings]. Times are changing but I hope our songs will continue to resonate with people. Otherwise, how will we survive?” asks the 51-year-old, who hails from the Mirasi community, a group of traditional singers and dancers commonly found in northern India and Pakistan.The word ‘mirasi’ comes from the Arabic word, ‘miras’, meaning heritage. In Awadh, the Mirasins, or female singers, are traditionally invited to sing at auspicious events such as births, Aqeeqah (where a newborn’s hair is shaved for the first time), Bismillah (when the child reads the Quran for the first time) and weddings.Umrana and her sister Farzana, 45, are perhaps the last custodians of the musical heritage of the Mirasins, who enjoyed great popularity in the 19th century, when there was a surge in cultural nationalism. In response to the colonial rulers’ disdain for Indian culture, talukdars, landowning Indian aristocratic families, began supporting artists, including the Mirasins, who became linked with their patron families.

“Though considered socially inferior to women from ‘respectable’ families, they received the patronage of nobles and royals,” says Rana Safvi, historian, translator and author of The Forgotten Cities of Delhi and Shahjahanabad: The Living City of Old Delhi.Mirasins played a special role during weddings as they were invited to sing at every function. It would begin at the bride’s home with Milad recitations in praise of the Prophet, followed by the haldi ceremony. There were songs to welcome the baraat (groom’s party) and, after the nikaah (wedding), songs were sung to bid farewell to the bride.

Mirasins also sang at the bridegroom’s home — while he tied the headress or sehra, and when family members applied surma to his eyes. During the wedding, when families and friends gathered to bless the newlyweds, the Mirasins sang a Persian composition by Hazrat Sarmad Shaheed Shahana Mubarakbaad. “Mirasins play a crucial role in preserving our cultural heritage. Their songs are a repository of our history,” says Safvi.Umrana and Farzana are part of the

third generation of their family keeping the tradition alive. Umrana remembers a time when Mirasins were paid generously. “We travelled to Aligarh for a wedding in 1996 and received ₹81,000. It was a golden time for us,” says Umrana, who has been singing for almost 30 years without any formal training.Her grandmother and mother were invited to sing at functions in Hindu homes, too. “We sang Dadra, Thumri, and songs about Sawan, Basant, and Holi for wealthy Hindu families. But we are not invited any more,” she says.Modernisation, gender norms contribute to decline

Patronage to Mirasins has been on a decline since the early 2000s. Many patrons, especially the talukdars, passed away or relocated to urban areas. As society modernised, traditional arts like those of the Mirasins came to be viewed as outdated, especially those performed by women from marginalised communities.In some areas, growing religious conservatism has discouraged musical traditions, particularly those involving public performances by women, labelling them inappropriate. In a male-dominated society, the Qawwals or male singers from Mirasi families who perform at dargahs, enjoy a higher status and earn more. “We don’t get paid well because we can’t perform on stage like men,” explains Umrana, adding that the men also use more musical instruments.Traditionally, women in the Mirasin community were not allowed to play any musical instruments other than the dholak, which they learned informally. “One person plays the dholak while the rest of us sing. If we had access to more musical instruments, we could enhance our songs and performances,” says Farzana.As people migrated to cities, film music began gaining popularity. “Many prefer to play film songs at their functions rather than traditional ones. I fear the Mirasins will eventually fade away from our society,” says Riyaz Ahmed, a 45-year-old Qawwal, who has been singing since the age of 20.An heirless heritageThe next generation is not interested in carrying on the tradition. “My children don’t want to sing at people’s homes like we do. My son says that the little fame and name I have earned is not enough to fill our stomachs,” says Farzana. “I feel sad but understand why they are reluctant to take up a profession that is in danger of disappearing altogether.”Umrana, who is unmarried, supports her three sisters and brother, and struggles to make ends meet. But she can’t imagine doing any other work. “Singing has been my entire life. However, when I meet good people through my work, I try my hand at matchmaking. If I am lucky, I earn generous amounts from both parties,” she says.

Bank frauds amount rises 46 pc to Rs 48,000 crore in FY26: RBI Annual Report



The amount involved in fraud cases reported by the banking sector shot up by 46 per cent to Rs 48,021 crore during FY2026 as against Rs 32,803 crore in the previous year. However, the number of fraud cases dipped to 10,114 from 23,722 a year ago, the Reserve Bank of India's Annual Report said.Of this public sector banks accounted for Rs 35,709 crore in FY 26 as against Rs 23,617 crore last year and private sector Rs 11,399 crore (Rs 8,927 crore), the RBI said. Data pertaining to 2025-26 includes fraud classification in 314 cases amounting to Rs 30,199 crore, pertaining to previous financial years, reported afresh during the current financial year after re-examination and ensuring compliance with the judgement of the Supreme Court, dated March 27, 2023, the RBI said.

Amount involved in advances of banks shot up to Rs 40,774 crore in 8,640 fraud cases as against Rs 30,367 crore (7,924 cases) in the previous year."Frauds reported in a year could have occurred several years prior to the year of reporting," the RBI said.Interestingly, fraud amount involved in cards and digital payments fell to Rs 29 crore (293 cases) in FY26 against Rs 517 crore (13,332 cases)

in FY25 and Rs 1,452 crore (28,836 cases) in FY24, RBI said."An assessment of bank group-wise fraud cases over the last three years indicates that although the number of frauds for public and private sectors banks have reduced, the amount involved has increased over the years," the RBI report said. While number of frauds was highest under card internet/ digital payments category during 2023- 24 and 2024-25, advances category accounted for the largest share in 2025-26. In value terms, frauds were concentrated in the advances category across the three years, the RBI said.The RBI is exploring the possibility of introducing a 'switch on' and 'switch off' facility for all digital payment modes along with a 'kill switch' to block all debits from the account in one stroke. This facility would help bolster consumer confidence and contribute towards controlling frauds in digital payment transactions, the RBI Annual Report said.A 'kill switch facility' is a mechanism that allows a system, device, account, or service to be shut down, disabled or blocked immediately in an emergency or under specific conditions.

The RBI report said 'switch on' and 'switch off' facility for domestic and international card transactions is available to customers which has helped customers exercise greater control.The RBI said it will address the continuing challenge of authorised push payment frauds – where customers themselves initiate payments despite the various safeguards already in place such as mandatory additional factor of authentication (AFA), payee name lookup, card controls, tokenisation, and related measures, introduction of certain frictions in digital payment processes would be explored, with a view to enhancing customer protection and facilitating more effective recovery of funds.The RBI's initiative to introduce an exclusive '.bank.in' domain, marked India as the first country globally to mandate a secure domain for the banking system thereby strengthening cybersecurity and reducing digital payment frauds.

West Asia crisis could pose headwinds to growth, inflation in the short run: RBI Annual Report

The Reserve Bank of India on Thursday said the West Asia conflict and risks such as higher energy prices, supply chain disruptions, financial market volatility, global trade uncertainty and weather disruptions could affect growth and inflation in the short term.However, India's growth outlook remains positive, it said. Considering various factors, and on the assumption that the adverse impact of the West Asia conflict would remain contained in the near-term, real GDP growth for 2026-27 is projected at 6.9 per cent with risks tilted to the downside, the RBI said in its Annual Report for 2025-26.The RBI Annual Report said inflation in 2026-27 is likely to remain aligned with the target on the back of adequate foodgrain stocks, sufficient reservoir levels and stable agricultural prospects despite possible El Niño conditions and above-normal summer temperature. However, the evolving upside risks to inflation may emanate from multiple other factors such as spike in global fuel and commodity prices amid geopolitical tensions, potential spillovers to input and wage costs, and volatility in exchange rate, the RBI said.Considering all these factors, CPI inflation for 2026-27 is projected at 4.6 per cent with risks tilted to the upside, it said.The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will announce the new interest rate policy on June 5.

While the ongoing geopolitical tensions are likely to exert pressure on the availability and prices of key inputs, particularly fertilisers, the government's continued efforts in ensuring adequate availability of fertiliser and other key inputs through diversified sources and buffer management are expected to mitigate these potential concerns, the RBI said.The central bank said geopolitical risk has re-emerged as the dominant drag on global growth in 2026. "The adverse impact of outbreak of the conflict in West Asia in end-February 2026 is reflected in the forecasts of global growth and inflation," the RBI said.With continued geopolitical tensions, inflation faces upside risks globally, the RBI said. "The surging energy prices and disruptions in key shipping routes could intensify supply-side pressures."The RBI said



elevated valuations in technology sectors may undergo reassessment, raising the risk of corrections in equity markets. With increased protectionism and debt sustainability concerns, the escalating geopolitical risk calls for coordinated policy actions across fiscal, monetary and multilateral fronts.It said the Indian economy exhibited resilience in 2025-26, amidst several external headwinds, supported by strong private consumption, sustained investment and sound macroeconomic fundamentals.The report said healthy corporate and bank balance sheets, the government's continued thrust on capital expenditure and the implementation of trade agreements with the key partners are expected to sustain investment and growth momentum. Nevertheless, in a highly uncertain global environment, continuous assessment of the evolving developments is warranted to frame the appropriate policy response on an ongoing basis, it said.Initiatives announced in the Union Budget 2026-27, focusing on diversification, targeted promotion of high-value crop cultivation across regions, enhancing commercial viability of fisheries and aquaculture, and a greater push towards technology adoption with the proposed launch of Bharat-VISTAAR would support strong and sustainable growth in the agriculture and allied sectors, the RBI said.

Outlook for oil remains extremely vulnerable to geopolitical risks: RIL

Global oil demand growth is expected to be sluggish due to higher oil prices and economic slowdown in FY 2026-27 amid West Asia conflict, RIL said in its annual report. Crude oil has been highly volatile since March this year when the US-Israel conflict started."Refinery and oil infrastructure damages which caused product supply losses are likely to take a longer period to recover, resulting in continuous volatility in the market," RIL said.

In FY 2026-27, volatile product and feedstock prices, supply disruptions from the West Asia, Government of India directives on SAED, petrochemical feedstock usage and duty exemption on key petrochemical products may weigh on domestic demand and margins, it said.Fuel prices have gone up by Rs 8 in Mumbai in the month of May alone.

RIL said natural gas is expected to play an increasingly critical role in India's energy transition, with its share in the energy mix targeted to rise from around 6% to 15% by 2030. "RIL's gas portfolio remains well-positioned to support this structural shift, contributing nearly 30% of the country's domestic gas production," RIL said.Continued development of deepwater and CBM assets, supported by existing infrastructure and operational efficiencies, is expected to further augment supplies and cater to India's growing gas demand in FY 2026–27 and beyond, it said.RIL set to operationalise 40 GWh BESS capacityRIL said its battery energy storage system (BESS) giga-factory is nearing commissioning, with the company set to operationalise 40 GWh of annual capacity—scalable to 100 GWh—as production ramps up in the second half of 2026.BESS is a technology that stores electrical energy in batteries so it can be used later when needed. Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) has already commissioned a cumulative 3.37 Gigawatt-hour (GWh) BESS this week.According to RIL's latest annual report, the company is progressively commissioning its HJT (Heterojunction Technology) cell and module lines. The first 200 MWp of high-efficiency HJT modules have been delivered — demonstrating 10% higher energy yield and 25% lower degradation versus industry standards, with 720 Wp BIS — certified panels."Reliance remains on track to scale to 10 GWp per annum, with expansion to 20 GWp planned, targeting 26% module efficiency. Polysilicon, glass, ingots, and wafers are being commissioned in phases toward full integration," it said.It said Reliance is progressively commissioning its HJT (Heterojunction Technology) cell and module lines. The first 200 MWp of high-efficiency HJT



modules have been delivered – demonstrating 10% higher energy yield and 25% lower degradation versus industry standards, with 720 Wp BIS-certified panels."Reliance remains on track to scale to 10 GWp per annum, with expansion to 20 GWp planned, targeting 26% module efficiency. Polysilicon, glass, ingots, and wafers are being commissioned in phases toward full integration," it said.The Dhirubhai Ambani Green Energy Giga Complex at Jamnagar — being developed across 5,000 acres with 44 million sq. ft. of manufacturing and operational built-up area — is envisaged as the world's most integrated clean energy manufacturing ecosystem outside China, the Annual Report said.RIL is building India's largest integrated CBG (Compressed Bio Gas) platform. CBG production has reached 270 plus TPD across 35 operating plants (capacity 700 TPD), and is on track to reach 1,100 TPD with 55 operating plants by end of FY 2026-27. The platform is being built towards the Rs 75,000 crore committed investment in clean energy.

Nil salary for Mukesh AmbaniRIL Chairman and MD Mukesh Ambani has declined to draw a salary from the company for the sixth straight year, despite the conglomerate posting its highest-ever consolidated net profit for FY2025-26.The 68-year-old chairman and managing director drew nil in salary, allowances, perquisites, commission and retiral benefits for the year ended March 31, 2026, according to the company's latest annual report.However, the promoter group which holds over 50% stake in RIL has received over Rs 3,721 crore as dividend out of the total payout of Rs 7,443 crore in FY26.RIL Executive Directors Nikhil Meswani and Hital Meswani got remuneration of Rs 25 crore each, PMS Prasad Rs 20.58 crore and Anant Ambani Rs 12.17 crore, according to the annual report.

Why escaping an abusive marriage requires more than financial independence



Twisha Sharma. Deepika Nagar. In recent days, headlines have been dominated by the alleged dowry death cases of these two young women. Disturbingly, they came from well-to-do families and were financially independent too. The Supreme Court has taken cognisance of these cases, but an alarming question lingers: Is money alone not enough to help someone walk away from an abusive relationship?Sangita Durbha Gopinath, whose partner allegedly cheated on her, says financial independence gave her the strength to walk away from the relationship. Not only did it allow her to take a stand, but it also helped her provide for her child and herself. "The job gave me a safe space. It was my life away from a difficult environment," Gopinath, Director-Growth and Business Initiative at PR Pundit, shares with indianexpress.com.

India reported 5,737 dowry death cases in 2024, involving 5,811 victims, according to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data. This statistic holds up a mirror to a worrying reality that, though dowry has been banned in the country since the Dowry Prohibition Act was passed on May 1, 1961, dowry-related violence continues to claim thousands of lives each year.

Dr Parin Somani, the CEO of London Organisation of Skills Development, a company focused on upskilling, says that throughout her years of research, she has met several individuals who shared deeply painful experiences of feeling trapped as they lacked economic security. "One survivor explained that although she wanted to leave her abusive partner, she feared homelessness and could not financially support her children independently. Another revealed that their spouse controlled all household finances, restricted access to bank accounts, and prevented them from pursuing employment opportunities," she adds.Somani points out that abuse also extends beyond physical violence and often includes emotional manipulation, psychological control, and financial dependency. "In many situations, the inability to access financial resources becomes one of the greatest barriers preventing victims from leaving abusive environments," she elaborates.

Trapped in a silent prisonDr Saurabh Mehrotra, Director-Neurosciences, Medanta Gurugram, adds that many continue to tolerate emotional, psychological, or even physical abuse because of concerns around financial security, social stability or fear of uncertainty. This prolonged stress can contribute to anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and feelings of helplessness over time.

Dr Munia Bhattacharya, Senior Consultant, Clinical Psychology, Artemis Hospitals, agrees. Financial dependence often creates a silent psychological prison, she says. Financial independence, on the other hand, creates emotional agency, she adds. It gives people the confidence that they have options. And psychologically, Dr Bhattacharya explains that the moment a person feels they have options, they begin to reclaim their voice. "They set healthier boundaries, tolerate less disrespect, and are less likely to stay stuck in cycles of manipulation," she shares.Women empowerment Many women realise the importance of financial independence only during separation, divorce, or family disputes. (AI generated)

So does having money save you from abuse?

No, Dr Bhattacharya says this does not mean financially independent people never experience abuse. They do. But they often feel more empowered to seek help, walk away, rebuild, and heal. "Financial security reduces helplessness, and helplessness is one of the core emotions that keeps people trapped in unhealthy dynamics," she reiterates.Kolkata-based homemaker Mousumi Dasgupta got out of an abusive marriage with legal and police support. A decade ago, she reflects, working women were more compliant and tolerant in relationships. "In today's day and age, young women are a lot less tolerant of disrespect. Abuse should not be tolerated in any shape or form, but things definitely change when children come into the picture. It's not so easy to leave a marriage then," she tells indianexpress.com.

Tanvi Singh, mental health expert and founder of Leap of Foundation, highlights that for many Indian women, this conversation carries an added emotional reality. "Many grow up feeling like they move from one form of dependence to another, from their father's homes to their husband's homes, without ever fully experiencing ownership over their own lives," she says. In that context, financial independence becomes far more than income; it becomes the freedom to make choices without fear.Men, too, are deeply affected by financial expectations, says Singh. "Society often measures masculinity and self-worth through the ability to pro-

vide, leaving many men feeling inadequate, disrespected in relationships, or diminished when they struggle financially," she points out.Why financial security matters

Delhi-based lawyer Bani Kaur Allagh says one of the biggest misconceptions many women have is that marriage automatically guarantees long-term financial security. According to Allagh, many women realise the importance of financial independence only during separation, divorce, or family disputes—when they discover that emotional partnership does not necessarily translate into financial ownership."Maintenance as a remedy is very insufficient," she cautions, adding that many women do not have independent assets in their own name—whether savings, investments, or property—which can leave them financially exposed during major life transitions.

Adding, Priti Rathii Gupta, founder of Lxme, a woman-first financial app, points out that there's a marked difference between being financially independent and secure, and it's often the key to making important life decisions."Financial independence comes from earning money, having skills, and creating the confidence to stand on your own feet. But financial security comes from what you build over time—an emergency fund, investments, retirement savings, a child's education fund and importantly, having ownership and control over them yourself," she says.Gupta says women must actively manage their money and understand where it is invested. "so that when life demands strength, they can access and use it without fear or permission".Binitha Dalal, Founder and Managing Director, Mt K Kapital, says financial freedom is no longer about bringing home a paycheck, but true independence means understanding money, building assets, and participating in wealth creation.Dalal tells us that women have already started moving in that direction. "They are continuously breaking barriers by actively participating in conversations related to investments, real estate, or alternative assets."Become financially aware first: Understand the basics of money management, even if your income is modest.Build disciplined saving habits: Start small, but set clear long-term financial goals.

Diversify your investments: Spread your money across assets such as real estate, equities, and fixed-income instruments for more balanced wealth creation.Think long-term: Financial planning requires patience, consistency, and resisting short-term market panic.divorce There is also an urgent need to strengthen legal awareness at the grassroots level. (AI generated)

Is the law on your side?

Ashwini Kumar, advocate and founder of My Legal Expert, believes fear of economic instability, especially where children are involved, discourages women from initiating legal action or seeking protection.While laws do provide several safeguards, including protection orders, residence rights, maintenance, child support, and relief under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, Kumar says the real challenge often lies in timely implementation and accessibility."Lengthy legal proceedings, social stigma, financial coercion by abusive spouses, and lack of immediate support can make the process extremely intimidating for survivors," he tells indianexpress.com.

According to him, there is also an urgent need to strengthen grassroots legal awareness. "Many women are unaware that they are entitled to maintenance, shared household rights, custody protections, and interim financial relief even while legal proceedings are ongoing," he shares.Beyond legal remedies, Supreme Court lawyer Sana Raees Khan, founder of SRK Legal, says society must focus on "financial education, knowledge of law, and also on available support services for women".Women empowerment Empowering people financially and emotionally is essential for long-term healing. (AI generated)Rebuilding the selfMahalakshmi K, senior health and wellness coach, says that leaving an abusive relationship is enabled by a constellation of factors, with money as a critical but not singular pillar. "Having independent income, savings, and financial literacy is not merely about access to money, but the confidence and competence to manage it independently," she explains.

Recognising and beginning to untangle the trauma bond is also essential. This often requires therapeutic support, and cannot happen through willpower alone. "The presence of trusted people—family, friends, colleagues, community organisations—who can offer shelter, solidarity, and practical help matters," says Mahalakshmi.According to her, isolation is itself a tool of control, and connection is its best antidote. Without this, financial independence is insufficient. "Many survivors return to abusers not because they lack money, but because they lack a safe roof. Practical plans for schooling, childcare, and emotional support for children during and after the transition..." she elaborates, adding that the invisible and yet most profound factor is that abusers systematically dismantle a person's sense of self. The key lies in rebuilding it, knowing that one has value independent of the relationship, which becomes foundational to a sustained departure., it's not about ego or power, but psychological safety. It allows a person to stay in a relationship out of love and choice, not out of fear, survival, or dependency. And at the end of the day, empowering people financially and emotionally is essential for long-term healing.

‘No one asked me’: Saif Ali Khan says his dad spoke less but taught a lot; expert weighs in

Speaking at the Tiger Pataudi Memorial Lecture 2026 in Kolkata, Saif Ali Khan reflected on his father, Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi, and described him as someone who communicated differently from those around him. Recalling his relationship with his father, Saif said, "I knew him respectfully as Abba, a man of very few words who somehow said everything to us as a family that mattered. He never raised his voice and was always there for us. He taught us to respect people at a very early age."

Saif also spoke about his father's quiet nature in social situations and how it often stood out during gatherings. "At home, he rarely spoke about achievements. He rarely spoke about anything. My mother would be exasperated at dinners and gatherings, where people who knew less than him would be giving their opinions. He would say, 'No one asked me,' but he wouldn't speak because no one had asked him. It was a very different brand of confidence," he shared.Reflecting further on his father's influence, Saif added, "He believed in belief, instilling self-belief in Indian players who had never before been told they could dominate world cricket. At a time when Indian teams were expected merely to participate, he insisted they compete to win. That massive change in mindset, I think, was one of his greatest contributions." He also noted that his father may have been "slightly embarrassed" by the attention but "quietly pleased" that discussions remained centred around

cricket, ideas and the future.families can tell the difference between personality and emotional distanceCounselling psychologist Athul Raj tells indianexpress.com. "A quiet person is not necessarily emotionally distant. Emotional withdrawal has a certain absence to it. The person checks out emotionally, avoids difficult conversations, and often makes others feel alone, even while being physically present. But some people are simply not wired to express affection verbally. They communicate through dependability, routine, and quiet presence."In many Indian families, Raj states, especially older ones, love was rarely spoken out loud. Care showed up as responsibility. Picking you up at midnight. Sitting silently beside you during a difficult time. Remembering what you need without asking. Families need to look at emotional consistency, not just words. Silence can feel rejecting, but it can also feel deeply reassuring.What separates healthy quiet confidence from social hesitation or low self-esteem?Quiet confidence comes with ease. "The person is not trying hard to impress anybody. They are comfortable listening, comfortable not being the centre of attention, and they do not collapse when someone disagrees with them. There is a steadiness to them," says Raj.Low self-esteem carries a different energy. You usually see self-doubt underneath the silence. Raj explains, "The person hesitates constantly, second-guesses themselves, apologises too much, or avoids visibility because they fear judgment. Quiet confidence is not about being silent.



Madhya Pradesh's sports push: A complex in each constituency – with a helipad



GNS News Agency, Sept 25

The state Cabinet on Tuesday gave in-principle approval to a Rs 962.50-crore budget to build and operate sports complexes across 140 Assembly constituencies. However, the plan goes beyond another round of stadium construction. The government has decided that the new facilities will be called Chief Minister Sports Complexes. In a particularly unusual provision, a permanent helipad will be built in the middle of the main ground at each complex to facilitate helicopter movement under the PM Shri scheme.

"There is a plan to develop a Chief Minister Sports Complex in every Assembly constituency of Madhya Pradesh. Over the next five years, complexes will be built at 140 new locations with Rs 960 crore. These complexes will provide coaching, security, and other essential facilities along with indoor-outdoor games. Helipads will also be constructed in these complexes, enabling the landing of air ambulances when needed," said MSME minister Chetanya Kashyap. The decision is part of a broader attempt by

Madhya Pradesh to build a statewide sports pipeline — from facilities at the constituency level to specialised academies — and turn infrastructure into a mechanism for identifying and training athletes at the grassroots. The scale of the proposed expansion is significant. The 2026-27 budget provided Rs 815 crore for sports and youth welfare, according to the state government's budget presentation. The government says the investment intends to make sports facilities accessible beyond established sporting centres. Currently, the department operates 11 sports academies covering 18 disciplines, while four hockey turfs and 30 sports stadiums are under construction. The department's infrastructure list includes specialised facilities for shooting, hockey, archery, equestrian sports, cricket and other disciplines. The state's strategy has been developing for nearly two decades. The Sports and Youth Welfare Department says its blueprint for making Madhya Pradesh a major sporting state dates back to 2005, followed by the establishment of specialised academies from 2007 to identify talent at the grassroots and provide residential training and competition opportunities. Madhya Pradesh's push to build sports infrastructure coincides with a growing network of specialised academies and a recent success in national and international competitions. The state Sports and Youth Welfare Department says it currently has 700-plus athletes, more than 84 training centres and over 90 coaches, with academies specialising in disciplines including shooting, hockey, athletics, archery, water sports, fencing and equestrian sports. The state already has a sizeable infrastructure footprint with the sports department constructing 126 indoor and outdoor sports facilities at 86 development-block headquarters, and another 24 stadiums under construction.

Mirabai Chanu ends years of near-misses at Asian Games to win silver and complete the set

She had won Olympic silver, become a world champion and collected Commonwealth golds. She had come through triumphs, failures and injuries to become one of the most dependable faces of Indian sport. But there was no Asian Games medal. On Wednesday, she finally filled that blank. "In a way, my life is complete now," she said, the medal dangling around her neck as she flashed a wide smile. Chanu won silver in the women's 49 kg category, completing her collection of major medals. She also became India's first Asian Games weightlifting medallist since Karnam Malleswari won silver in Bangkok in 1998.

Perhaps no medal could have been more fitting for the athlete she has become. If there is one quality that has defined a career that has never been perfect, it is persistence. Rio was supposed to be her Olympic moment. Instead, she failed to register a valid lift. Five years later, in Tokyo, she made amends with an Olympic silver. Hangzhou was supposed to finally give her the Asian Games medal that had eluded her. Instead, she finished fourth, the podium slipping away in another heartbreak. Three years later, she returned to Japan, this time to Nagoya, and won silver. The 32-year-old, the oldest of the seven lifters in the field, lifted 198 kg — 87 kg in the snatch and 111 kg in the clean and jerk — to finish behind North Korea's Ri Song-gum. Ri completed an Asian Games golden hat-trick with a world-record 215 kg total, including a 121 kg clean and jerk.

Weight of expectations Gold was out of reach against a fully fit Ri. But Chanu had another expectation to meet. Every time she steps on to the platform, a medal is expected. She knows it. So does everyone watching from home. And when a country has already convinced itself that its athlete will deliver, that expectation can become its own weight. "There is pressure. Really. There is pressure," she said. "The whole world has kept hope for me. That Mirabai will get a medal." Yet she has also learnt to draw strength from that belief. "On the one hand, I feel strong. There is strength. People think so positively of me. They have prayed so much for me. That thing gives me more confidence." The other side is less comfortable. "What if something is left by mistake? What will I do? Everyone is thinking that I will get a medal. If I don't get it, what will I do? There is pressure."

For someone who has spent so long carrying expectations, the harder burden has often been getting herself back to the platform after things have gone wrong. The setbacks have not been confined to competition. A career spent pushing her body to its limits has taken a considerable toll.

Arjun, Pragg & Vaishali to feature in Total Chess World Championship Tour pilot



R Praggnanandhaa, Arjun Erigaisi and Vaishali Rameshbabu are all set to feature in the Total Chess World Championship Tour pilot. R Praggnanandhaa, Arjun Erigaisi and Vaishali Rameshbabu are all set to feature in the Total Chess World Championship Tour pilot.

Three Indians will take part in the inaugural Total Chess World Championship Tour set to be held in Budapest from November 10–20 with R Praggnanandhaa, Arjun Erigaisi and Vaishali Rameshbabu all set to feature. The 24-player tournament will also host other big names in world chess like 5-time world champion Magnus Carlsen, Fabiano Caruana and Hans Niemann among others. The new tournament will feature four events as part of a tour each year that will be held across various cities: there will be three events with 24 players at first while the fourth event will be the finale with only four players. The event aims to crown the world's best player across all three existing formats as the FIDE World Combined Champion. Presently, there are three world championships in chess: the classical world championship which is held every two years while the FIDE World Rapid and Blitz Championship event crowns the World Rapid Champion and the World Blitz Champion each year in December.

What will be the format?



There have been injuries, rehabilitation and long periods of uncertainty. After Paris, where she finished fourth again, missing bronze by just 1kg, it was reasonable to wonder how much more her body could give. Chanu, however, had not given up on the Asian Games. Alongside Vijay Sharma, her coach and long-time presence through the peaks and troughs of her career, she kept preparing in the basement of a gym in Ghaziabad. The pursuit was no longer about proving she belonged at the top. She had done that long ago. There was simply one medal she did not have. And at 32, she knew there might not be too many more chances to win it. That stubbornness has made Chanu more than India's most successful weightlifter of her generation.

Lasting legacy She has been the constant in a sport that has struggled to find one. Doping offences and suspensions have repeatedly dragged Indian weightlifting into the news, while the talent pipeline has struggled to produce lifters capable of consistently challenging at Asian and world level. Chanu has provided the counter-narrative. For much of the last decade, she has kept the sport visible by competing, winning and returning. When Indian weightlifting needed a medal, a headline or simply a reason to believe, Chanu was usually there. In many ways, she has held the sport together at the highest level. Which makes the question of what comes next unavoidable. There are promising lifters coming through, but nobody currently offers anything close to Chanu's combination of longevity, consistency and international achievement. Her career has stretched across generations and continued to produce medals at the biggest stages despite injuries and setbacks. There is no obvious replacement for that. Perhaps Chanu understands that better than most. Her legacy cannot simply be the medals she leaves behind. At Sharma's academy in Ghaziabad, she is now helping develop the next generation, passing on what she has learnt through years of competing, recovering and returning. "If I can do it, others can too," she said.

The format used at the events will be "fast classic" (45-minute games with increment of 30 seconds per move), rapid, and blitz chess. It is learnt that in the group stage, players will play fast classic games. Since the games are much shorter than regular classical chess games, there will be two games per day. Then, in the semis and the final, players will face off in all three formats to decide an overall winner. Even though the fast classic format will be much shorter than regular classical games, games played in the format will be rated as per the classical section. The tour will also offer Candidates qualification opportunities in the Classical World Championship cycle.

DDCA director Vikas Katyal named India team manager for home series

Hyderabad: The Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA) director, Vikas Katyal, has been appointed manager of the Indian cricket team for the upcoming home series against West Indies.

The series will feature three One-Day Internationals (ODIs) and five T20 Internationals (T20Is) across various cities.

Katyal's appointment is a significant achievement for the DDCA and brings recognition to Delhi's cricket administration at the national level. This is a proud occasion for the entire DDCA fraternity, as one of its directors has been entrusted with the responsibility of managing the Indian cricket team. The DDCA congratulates Vikas Katyal on his appointment and wishes him and Team India every success in the West Indies series to be played in India.

Gambhir highlights preparation and mental strength ahead of Australia Tests



New Delhi: India head coach Gautam Gambhir believes mental toughness and the ability to absorb pressure will hold the key for India's young batting lineup when they face Australia's formidable bowling attack in the five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy series, to be played from January 21 to March 3, 2027. Australia's marquee bowling group comprising Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Nathan Lyon will pose a stern examination for the Indian batters when the matches are played in Nagpur, Chennai, Guwahati, Ranchi and Ahmedabad. India last won the series at home in 2023 by a 2-1 margin. "Looking forward to it. That is probably one thing which I'm absolutely looking forward to, because playing against Australia at home, and obviously it wasn't the best when we went to Australia. And for me, I think it is going to be India versus Australia, but before that, it is New Zealand. But the other challenge against Australia will be their experienced bowling attack. Stream History Documentaries

"They've got the likes of obviously Starc, Nathan Lyon, Cummins and Hazlewood. Obviously, they've got so much experience of playing Test cricket against our young batting lineup. So it's going to be a great experience for these guys. "More importantly, in Test cricket, it's about the skill, but it's about how mentally strong and how much pressure you can absorb. The more pressure you absorb, and the more pressure you embrace, it's going to give yourself the best chance," Gambhir told JioStar ahead of the start of India's home season, which begins with three ODIs and five T20Is against the West Indies.

Reflecting on India's preparation for the tough Test assignments at home, Gambhir pointed to their recent tour of Sri Lanka as proof that adequate lead time and targeted preparation for facing spinners can produce clear results on the field. "But you could see that in Sri Lanka, we played two Test matches, and we got more than 400 runs in both

India's batting will face key test in New Zealand, says Gambhir

New Delhi: India head coach Gautam Gambhir said he expects early summer conditions in New Zealand to present a stern examination for his developing Test side, but insisted the Shubman Gill-led team has the quality to take 20 wickets in any part of the world and qualify for the World Test Championship (WTC) final, to be held in 2027. India are scheduled to play a two-match Test series in New Zealand from November 19 to December 1 in Wellington and Christchurch. India are placed fifth in the WTC standings and will also face current table-toppers Australia at home in five Border-Gavaskar Trophy Tests in January-February 2027.

India need to win their remaining WTC fixtures if they are to enter the final. Before this, India A will play three four-day matches against New Zealand A from October 24 to November 10 in Lincoln, Christchurch and Lincoln. "That's not true that we need to win six games, because we can manage with five as well. But again, because Australia is playing South Africa, then South Africa is playing England, and New Zealand is playing Australia. But more importantly, it's about every Test match that you want to go out there and win — as simple as it can get.

"It's about winning both the series. If we can go on to win both the series which are going to be in front of us, we will give ourselves the best chance to qualify for the World Test Championship. "Till the time we've got that opportunity and chance of reaching the World Test Championship final, we will always be optimistic. That's the kind of person I am, that even if you've got the slimmest of chance, we've got to go out there and give our everything possible," said Gambhir to JioStar ahead of the start of India's home season via three ODIs and five T20Is against the West Indies.

Detailing the historical significance of the tour, Gambhir noted that a series win in New Zealand would mark a monumental achievement for the young team. India last won a Test series in New Zealand in 2008/09, when Gambhir himself played a match-saving 137 in a 643-minute marathon knock in Napier. "More importantly, I think we've got two massive series coming up. If we can go on to win both the series, it's going to be a massive feather in the cap. If a young side like this can go and do that, it's going to be a huge, huge achievement and then Australia at home for five Test matches is never easy.

"So I know we've got our task cut out, but I'm sure we're going to go out there and probably prepare to the best of our ability and try and give everything possible. What better achievement than that?" he added. Addressing the unique challenge posed by the scheduling of the New Zealand multi-format tour, Gambhir pointed out how weather and pitch behaviour will test India's top order. "Before that against Australia, it's New Zealand, because the conditions are going to challenge us. And this probably is the first time when we are going to New Zealand in October, November. "Normally we go December, January, or January, February, which probably is late summer. This is going to be early summer, so the conditions are going to be completely different to what normally we've experienced in New Zealand. So that's going to be a massive challenge," he added. On the composition of the Test side, Gambhir stated that India are nearing a settled batting lineup and possess a potent bowling group capable of dismantling opposition batting line-ups.

"I think we are getting there, that now we are getting into that settled batting lineup. Whether it is at home, whether it is away, we've got two openers who are pretty much settled. We've got obviously Dev (Devdutt Padikkal) who has done phenomenally well in Sri Lanka, then we've got a settled number four and five, and then we've got Dhruv (Jurel) getting 100. "More or less we are getting there, because sometimes, I know people will talk about it, but the reality is that when you go through a transition, sometimes in T20 and one-day formats, it's far easier to have a settled batting lineup.

"But in Test cricket, to identify the right players for different conditions and giving them a longer rope, first and

the innings. And the reason was that we prepared extremely well. We went 10 days before the Test match, we could prepare playing spin, and then you could see the results as well. "The thing is, I'm not going to give any excuses, but that's the reality. When we played the Test series against South Africa, we were coming after playing a T20 series from Australia. And we had two days before the first Test match. I remember coming from Brisbane, and then we reached Calcutta. We had two practice sessions, and we were straightaway into the Test match against South Africa. "Against the West Indies, obviously we did manage to win that series, but we came after winning the Asia Cup, and we had two days of practice sessions in Ahmedabad, and we were right straight into the Test match and now you could see the difference.

"When we went to Sri Lanka early, you could see the way guys played spin, because Sri Lanka isn't easy conditions. In their own backyard, the weather, their spinners, their experienced spinners against our batting lineup. "If you can get 400-plus in both the innings in both the Test matches, that just shows that there is a lot of improvement happening. So we will have to prepare well before New Zealand and before Australia, and obviously the focus is on spin, yes, that how well we can manage and how well we can negate spin," he explained. Gambhir also stated that young cricketers making their mark in the national setup must prioritise red-ball cricket over short-format monetary gains, citing Devdutt Padikkal and Manav Suthar as examples. "Extremely important, because both of them are young, both of them are hungry, both of them value Test cricket. "It is so important for the next generation who's coming in to value Test cricket, because in today's day and age, with so much of focus and so much of limelight and so much of monetary gains that are associated with T20 cricket, how we can keep Test cricket divine, and above the other two formats is going to be key. "Also, how much value a young generation or the new guys coming in gives that red-ball cricket is going to be key. That's why I said, a strong Test-cricketing nation is going to be a strong cricketing nation. When it comes to Manav and Dev, I think they value Test cricket, they're disciplined, hungry, and prepare really well. "And Manav, we've seen that I've got to give selectors and BCCI a lot of credit because the way they've handled Manav, for the amount of opportunities he's got, the way he's been groomed over such a long period of time, the amount of A tours he's done and bowled in different conditions... So my belief is that the better we prepare, the better opportunity we have to deliver," he concluded. The three-match ODI series of the West Indies tour of India will be broadcast live on JioHotstar and the Star Sports Network from September 27 to October 3, from 2 pm onwards.



foremost, they need to have the technique to adapt to different conditions. Because you don't want to keep chopping and changing, looking at New Zealand or Indian conditions. You might make one change here and there, but the more settled your batting lineup in Test cricket is, the better chance you've got to succeed. "Then obviously we've got pretty much settled bowling line-up. If all our seamers are fit, we've got an attack who can take 20 wickets, which again is a massive, massive positive for any side because most of the time what you're thinking is, what kind of attack can you have that will take 20 wickets for you? "We are very fortunate that when we go to New Zealand, if all those guys are fit and firing, we can take those 20 wickets. So the responsibility and probably the accountability will be on the batting lineup to put runs on the board. "We are very clear that whether we play in India, South Africa, New Zealand or anywhere in the world, if we put runs on the board, we've got an attack to take 20 wickets anywhere, in any conditions. So I think the onus and the focus and the responsibility will be on the batting lineup to put runs there," concluded Gambhir.

Sai Charan hits 121 as Hyderabad post 345/8 against Bengal

Hyderabad: Fine centuries by R Sai Charan (121, 91b, 8x4, 12x6) and a good knock by Wafi Kachchhi (90 batting) helped Hyderabad score 345 for eight in 78 overs on the first day of their Under-23 practice match against visiting Bengal here on Wednesday. Bengal men's Under-23 team tour to Hyderabad: Hyderabad 345/8 in 78 overs (Raghava Pattapu 31, Wafi Kachchhi 90 batting, R Sai Charan 121, 91b, 8x4, 12x6; Shiladitya Mondal 3/67) vs Bengal. C-Division one-day league: International 105 in 24.5 overs (MV Nagendra Reddy 3/28) lost to Southern Stars 106/6 in 16.3 overs (P Ramakrishna 35).

Chums XI 202/9 in 44.5 overs (Hare Krishna Pradhan 59, R Sri Venkata Rishikesh 49, P Sai Keerthan 36) lost to Heeraadhi 203/0 in 27 overs (Siva Aditya Das Gupta 101 not out, Rishi Rathod Ramavath 64 not out). ML Jaisimha 113 in 42.1 overs (Bhuvik Reddy R 3/26) lost to SN Group 117/2 in 24.4 overs (L Sanay 33, D Kriday Sai 47). Southend Raymonds 96 in 32.5 overs (Shreyas M 3/14, K Ashish 3/17) lost to Raju CA 97/0 in 16.1 overs (J Jagathveer Raj Nayak 54 not out, B Amarnadh Reddy 41 not out). HCA Dist 1 190/6 in 40 overs (N Suchith 45 not out, Vamshidhar P 4/9) bt Lal Bahadur PG 60/3 in 20.4 overs (Md Ayan 30) by 23 runs via the VJD Method. Sungrace 235/9 in 45 overs (Mokshith Jannu 115, K Baba Sai Tej 30, N Nikhil 5/38) bt HCA Dist 6 109/5 in 29 overs (Hrithik Roshan 38) by 46 runs via the VJD Method. Adnan 102 in 27.1 overs (Kethavath Tharun 4/21) lost to Amberpet 108/4 in 10.5 overs (Syed Afzal 38). Golconda 159 in 37.5 overs (Advaith Vinjamur 31, Vishnu Rao 48, Malim Shaffan 4/18) lost to XI Masters 161/5 in 23.5 overs (B Sudhamsh 60, L Sai Harshith 44).

‘We are not scared’: Hanuman Ansh producer on Drishyam 3’s impact on its box office run



Hanuman Ansh, the movie on spiritual guru Neem Karoli Baba, was made on an estimated budget of Rs 1.75 crore to Rs 2 crore, and has earned more than 180 times its original production budget. This historic run of the film makes it one of the most profitable Indian films of all time, alongside the legendary 1975 classic Jai Santoshi Maa. With OTT having penetrated the entertainment industry, it gets exciting to see which theatrical release will stream on which OTT platform. Conversations about Hanuman Ansh receiving a Rs 100 crore OTT deal have been denied by one of the three producers of the film, Ragini Sona.

Speaking exclusively to SCREEN, she said, “I think Vishal (Chaturvedi) has an opinion, I will give it to him because he’s the one who has created this, and all his decisions have fallen in place. I will respect his decision because he is still saying that he will wait for some more time. We are receiving offers but the 100-crore offer is definitely not there. We will definitely very soon announce our OTT deal but not immediately.” “This is the film, which can only be watched in theatres” She continued about why the audience should experience watching Hanuman Ansh in theatres rather than on OTT.

“One thing we need to understand is that this is the film, which can only be watched in theatres. Not only in theatres but it is best to watch in theatres. One is that you get the feeling when you watch it on the big screen. There are movies that can be seen with all the distractions that we have; OTT means you are sitting at home in your comfort zone, there will be the doorbell ringing, there’ll be some-

body else coming in, many things happen, so you can’t concentrate. This movie is something that people cannot take their eyes off the screen. After the film is over, people are still just sitting and watching the scrolling titles. Somebody is sitting with their hands joined, and we have seen that. I still get very emotional when I see that. People have taken off their slippers and are just sitting like that with joined hands. Just before the end, there is a scene where he’s (Shobhinaw, Baba’s character) chanting Hanuman Chalisa, and the raksha chakra (protective shield) that is created on all four sides, is something that takes the audience to another world, it’s a trance,” opined the producer. She continued, “This is what the film is doing to people. This film, I really want people to watch it in theatres, even if it is coming on an OTT platform, and this is happening. The joy that you will get on watching this movie in the theatre, isn’t something that you will get on OTT. Having said that, ultimately we have to come on OTT but the team now, at the moment, thinks that how much we can be in theatres that will help.”

With Drishyam 3 releasing on October 2, producer Ragini Sona believes the film will impact Hanuman Ansh’s box-office numbers. “Of course, it will. As I said, we pray for all movies to do well. I am also looking at Drishyam to come in the theatres and I’ll go and watch it because I am a Drishyam fan. But the thing is that we are not competing with that genre at all, that is why when Toxic came, the fear was not there.” Speaking about bigger movies getting more screens, Ragini Sona said, “The confidence we are coming from is that we have survived so many... and we will survive this too. Now, we know that the graph goes up and down, and that will start because somewhere or the other because that’s the ultimate thing which happens with every movie. So, we now, are not scared at all. We are just looking at things how they are happening, and we also know what will happen. Theatres, I think that, as we come to know from our distributors, people are not saying anything about that at all, or take it out. I think time will tell what will happen but certainly some theatres will not show it.”

Hoping to create history with a 100-day run in theatres, Ragini concluded by saying, “We all are expecting this, and we all are very confident that this will happen, and Baba ji is with us, Neem Karoli Baba ji, Hanuman ji, and he is blessing the movie, and we can see that they’ve arrived on Earth to see that most of the people go and watch this film.” Helmed by Vishal Chaturvedi, Hanuman Ansh features Shobhinaw Satyaa and Chandan Anand in pivotal roles. The film is inspired by the life of Neem Karoli Baba, popularly known as Maharaj-gi. Revered by his followers as an incarnation of Lord Hanuman, the spiritual leader was known for his teachings centred on love, devotion and service. His influence extended beyond India, attracting several Western spiritual seekers who travelled to India during the 1960s and 1970s. The film has amassed Rs 331.70 crore gross and Rs 280.93 crore net at the domestic box office, taking its worldwide collection to Rs 366.45 crore.

Ajay Devgn’s Drishyam 3 end of Hindi franchise

Drishyam is one of the most-loved franchises in both the Malayalam and Hindi film industries, led by Mohanlal and Ajay Devgn, respectively. The third installment of the Hindi franchise, Drishyam: The Conclusion, is set to release on October 2. However, director Abhishek Pathak has confirmed that this will be the end of the Hindi franchise and there will not be a fourth part. The Malayalam franchise, meanwhile, will continue on its own trajectory. Abhishek Pathak, in an interview with Hindustan Times, said, “I think they (Malayalam franchise) might have a story which they want to take forward. And obviously, the story is moving in two different trajectories. They have a completely different screenplay and story going on.” Earlier this year, the makers established that the Malayalam and Hindi versions of Drishyam 3 are following different narratives. Directed by Jeethu Joseph, the Malayalam Drishyam 3 is an emotional family drama, while Abhishek Pathak’s Hindi version takes the route of a family thriller.

Pathak stated that Drishyam: The Conclusion will give the Hindi franchise a definitive ending, leaving no possibility of another sequel. “So, as filmmakers of the Hindi version, I think we want to really cater to what the audience expects out of it. And I think we have made sure that the route we took is something they will love. And beyond this, I don’t think I’m going to be doing that. So there’s no possibility of revisiting the Hindi ‘Drishyam’ for sure,” the director said.

Abhishek Pathak also explained that the title Drishyam: The Conclusion reflects the makers’ decision to end the



franchise with the third film. “Every story has to end, and I think this is the end for Drishyam. I think everyone will have their own closure, and there won’t be another Drishyam in this franchise for sure,” he said. The director also believes that ending a trilogy at the right point is important rather than stretching the story simply because the franchise is successful. “I think it’s always good to end the trilogy if it’s getting done beautifully. I think that’s the point we need as a filmmaker. I think we need to stop and just let the film live its life on its own, rather than stretching it beyond what it requires. I think that’s the reason why we decided to say that this will be the last stop for the franchise,” Pathak said. In Drishyam: The Conclusion, Ajay Devgn returns as Vijay Salgaonkar, with Tabu, Shriya Saran and Rajat Kapoor reprising their roles. Jaideep Ahlawat and Prakash Raj are the new additions to the cast.

Rajpal Yadav ditches VIP treatment at Lalbaugcha Raja; waits patiently in queue

Rajpal Yadav is one of Bollywood’s most recognisable actors, but when it came to seeking blessings at the famous Mumbai’s Lalbaugcha Raja, he chose to stand in the ‘aam janta’ like any other devotee. The actor was seen waiting in the long queue instead of opting for VIP treatment, patiently making his way towards the pandal with fellow devotees. Rajpal stood in the queue, chanted ‘Ganpati Bappa Morya’ and waved at people around him.

The actor’s simple gesture caught the attention of devotees, many of whom recognised him and tried to capture the moment on their phones. Rajpal, however, appeared completely at ease as he waited alongside the crowd for his turn to have darshan.

In the video from his visit, Rajpal can be seen standing in the queue and participating in the chants of ‘Ganpati Bappa Morya’. He also acknowledged people who waved at him, flashing his trademark smile and greeting them as he made his way through the crowded streets. What made his visit stand out was that the actor chose to experience the darshan alongside regular devotees. Rather than being seen in a separate VIP arrangement, Rajpal waited in the long queue like everyone else. Lalbaugcha Raja is among Mumbai’s most popular Ganapati pandals and attracts thousands of devotees every day during Ganesh Chaturthi. The 2026 celebrations have also seen a steady stream of Bollywood celebrities visiting the pandal to seek Bappa’s blessings.

Shah Rukh Khan recently visited Lalbaugcha Raja with his wife Gauri Khan and daughter Suhana Khan. Salman



Khan also visited Lalbaugcha Raja earlier during the festivities. His arrival drew a massive crowd, with fans and devotees gathering around his car. During the visit, Salman was also seen helping protect children who appeared to be caught in the rush around his vehicle. Ranveer Singh was another celebrity who visited the iconic pandal. The actor was seen in a white kurta-pyjama as he sought Bappa’s blessings and greeted people outside the venue. Shilpa Shetty was also among the celebrities who visited the pandal during the ongoing celebrations. Riteish Deshmukh and Genelia Deshmukh, Sidharth Malhotra and Prithviraj Sukumaran have also been spotted at Lalbaugcha Raja this Ganesh Chaturthi. Taapsee Pannu, Mouni Roy, Parineeti Chopra, Maniesh Paul and Neil Nitin Mukesh are among the other names who have visited the pandal in recent days. More recently, Sanjay Dutt visited with his wife Maanayata Dutt, while Esha Deol, Ananya Panday with father Chunky Panday, also sought Bappa’s blessings.

George and Amal Clooney visit Cindy Crawford after son Presley Gerber’s death



George Clooney and his wife Amal Clooney visited longtime friends Cindy Crawford and Rande Gerber following the death of their 27-year-old son, Presley Gerber. The couple was photographed arriving at the Los Angeles home of Crawford and Gerber’s daughter, Kaia Gerber, on Tuesday, September 22.

As per a report by TMZ, the Clooneys arrived in a black SUV, with George seen waiting by the vehicle as Amal stepped out. Their quiet visit came two days after Presley’s death as the Gerber family continues to mourn his passing. George has shared a close friendship with Rande for decades, with the two having first met in the 1990s. Their friendship later extended into business, as they became partners in tequila brand Casamigos along with Mike Meldman. George and Amal have also remained close to the Gerber family and have known Presley and Kaia since they were children.

Presley, the only son of Cindy Crawford and Rande

Gerber, died on September 20 at the age of 27, according to the Los Angeles County Medical Examiner. The investigation into his death remains ongoing, and an official cause of death has not been released. However, police have said that the death is being investigated as a suspected overdose. The family has asked for privacy during this difficult time. According to reports cited by the Daily Mail, the actor had previously offered advice and support to the young model and was considered close to the Gerber family. Presley followed his mother into modelling and had also spoken publicly about his struggles with mental health and substance abuse. He used his platform to discuss his experiences and encourage others facing similar challenges. Earlier, Paris Hilton, Brooklyn Beckham and several other celebrities have paid tribute to him. Paris Hilton remembered Presley as a “kind and beautiful soul” in an emotional Instagram Story. She recalled their conversations, laughs and time together, describing him as someone with a “gentle heart” who made a lasting impression on everyone who knew him. “My heart is with your entire family during this unimaginable time,” Hilton wrote, adding that Presley would be deeply missed.

Television personality Brody Jenner also remembered Presley, commenting “Love you brother” on his final Instagram post. Social media personality Chase Keith added, “Rest in peace man,” along with a broken-heart emoji. Weeks before Presley’s death, his sister, model Kaia Gerber, had spoken about his openness regarding his mental health journey. In an interview published in August, Kaia described her brother as someone who was willing to be open and vulnerable about his experiences. “My parents for most of our lives were very, very private and didn’t share anything—and now we have this absolute teacher, my brother, who says, ‘I’m gonna be very human for everyone,’” Kaia said. She added that trying to hide difficult experiences could make a person feel as though their family was ashamed of them. Her comments have since resurfaced following Presley’s death.

Mahima shot Mandaadi song days after accident, plastic surgery: ‘20 stitches, collapsed face’



Despite facing stiff competition from director PS Mithran’s Karthi-starrer Sardar 2, Mathimaran Pugazhendhi’s Mandaadi, featuring Soori and Mahima Nambiar in the lead roles, has emerged as a blockbuster and entered the Rs 100 crore club. Mandaadi crosses Rs 100 crore globally. With a worldwide collection of Rs 109.25 crore as of Wednesday (September 23), according to industry tracker Sacnilk, Mandaadi has surpassed Arun Matheswaran’s Lokesh Kanagaraj-led DC (Rs 106.59 crore) to become the fourth highest-grossing Tamil film of 2026, trailing behind Vishwanath & Sons (Rs 209.44 crore). While the sports action drama’s team revels in its massive success, director Mathimaran’s words highlighting actor Mahima Nambiar’s commitment to her work have gone viral. Revealing that she returned to the sets just days after an accident that left her with an injury to her face, he thanked her for her dedication, which helped him complete the filming on time. “I saw in a couple of your interviews where you mentioned crying after performing. Thank you so much for the effort you put into the movie,” he recalled during the movie’s success meet. Director Mathimaran on Mahima Nambiar’s accident “When talking about the song ‘Usure Needhan Pulla,’ I don’t think many people know about her accident. About five days before the shoot of this song, she had a major accident. Her face was completely collapsed and injured, leaving over 20 stitches,” he said. “She even sent me a selfie after the accident. Yet I shamelessly asked if she could come to the shooting. I had no other way. She returned to the set on the sixth day after her plastic sur-

gery. Behind our success is her immense hard work and dedication. I will never forget it,” he added.

Mahima Nambiar is best known for her roles in movies such as Saattai (2012), Kuttram 23 (2017), Puriyatha Puthir (2017), Magamuni (2019), Madhura Raja (2019), RDX: Robert Dony Xavier (2023), Chandramukhi 2 (2023), Jai Ganesh (2024), Little Hearts (2024), and Broomance (2025). Also starring Suhas, Sathyaraj, Mithun Jai Sankar, Ravindravjay, Bala Saravanan, and Stun Siva in key roles, Mandaadi features music by GV Prakash Kumar, cinematography by SR Kathir, editing by Pradeep E Ragav, and production design by DRK Kiran.

‘Am I dead?: Ambika breaks down over sister Radha’s Rs 46 cr cheque fraud allegations



when such a vigilant person says she left signed cheques elsewhere,” she maintained. Ambika further expressed her heartbreak over ARS Garden Studio, which she said they built together, being renamed without informing her. She shared, “When I saw the ARS Garden board being removed and another board being put up, I could not bear it. Everyone in Tamil cinema knows what ARS Garden means to me.” “The ‘A’ (for Ambika) in ARS Garden is gone. Why? Am I dead? No, I’m alive. Shouldn’t I have been told? She doesn’t even have that basic courtesy,” the veteran actor alleged, tearing up. Ambika further revealed there had been earlier disputes over family property. She stated that a large share of gold ornaments entitled to her are in Radha’s possession now. “When I ask about the gold I deserve, she doesn’t give a proper reply. Radha has a special weakness for gold. It’s okay to take one’s mother’s or sister’s gold once in a while. But a large amount of my gold is still with her. If I try to speak directly about it, she won’t even pick up the phone,” Ambika alleged. Their brother added to her statements, saying, “It was decided to divide the properties equally when our mother was alive. Radha’s method is to say nothing when spoken to directly and then change her statement later.”

Ambika reportedly noted, “When we were struggling, I was the first stepping stone for the family. At one point, we believed that if there was family and a bond, we should do anything for the family. But things are not like that now. Everyone is living separately.” “I don’t know why Radha has filed a complaint against me. Looking at this, I find it strange because I am actually the one who was cheated. I should have been the one to give the complaint. It is okay. Someone may have advised Radha, and that is why she has given the complaint,” Ambika added. Ambika and Radha were two of the most celebrated South Indian female actors of the 1980s. Originally from Kerala, they worked in various languages and shared the screen with some of the biggest names in Indian show business. Ambika is best known for her roles in movies such as Neelathamara, Andha 7 Naatkai, Enkeyo Ketta Kural, Sakalakala Vallavan, Vazhvey Maayam, Naan Paadum Paadal, Naan Sigappu Manithan, Uyarnndha Ullam, Rajavinte Makan, Irupatham Noottandu, Kakkothikkavile Appooppaan Thaadikal, and Mr Bharath, among others. Meanwhile, Radha played notable roles in films such as Alaigal Oivathillai, Ilanjodigal, Pakkathu Veetu Roja, Valibamey Vaa Vaa, Nalla Thambi, Tik Tik Tik, Oru Kaidhiyin Diary, Muthal Mariyathai, Irakal, Revathikkoru Pavakkutty, and Kadhal Parisu.

Days after veteran actor Radha levelled cheque fraud

allegations against her sister, actor Ambika, and their

brother, Mallikarjuna Kunjan Nair, Ambika has stepped

forward to explain her side. Rubbishing Radha’s claims as

fake and fabricated, Ambika broke down in tears before the

media, expressing disbelief that her dear sister portrayed

her as a “thief” in front of the world. For those unfamiliar,

Radha had recently filed a police complaint against Ambika

and Mallikarjuna, alleging that blank cheques belonging to

her were taken from her home and misused in an attempt

to claim around Rs 46 crore.

Ambika refutes cheque fraud allegations While ad-

dress the media, Ambika pointed out that it is hard to

believe Radha, who is extremely cautious in all matters,

would carelessly leave signed blank cheques at home.

“Radha is a person who uses a special number lock even

for her handbag. Then, when she goes to sleep, she keeps

that bag in a cupboard and locks it again. It is unbelievable