

Revanth Reddy claims 1,000 days of good governance at Nakrekal meet

Nalgonda: Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Saturday claimed that the Congress government had delivered 1,000 days of good governance and questioned the BRS' demand for his resignation over the failure to fulfil promises made to the people.

He asked people to compare the 10-year rule of the BRS with the Congress government's 1,000 days in office. The BRS government had failed to implement the crop loan waiver, and farmers should bear this in mind, he said at a public meeting in Nakrekal.

KTR unveils ‘Vendi Vennela’ saree, congratulates Sircilla weaver Vijay

Rajanna Sircilla: BRS working president KT Rama Rao congratulated weaver Nalla Vijay for designing a new handloom using modern technology.

At Vijay's invitation, Rama Rao visited his home in Sircilla and unveiled the new loom equipped with electronic Jacquard technology. He also unveiled the ‘Vendi Vennela’ (Silver Moonlight) saree woven on the new loom.

10 convicted in 2013 Naxal attack that killed 29, wiped out Chhattisgarh Congress brass

Chhattisgarh, Sept 5

A special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region on Saturday convicted all 10 accused in the 2013 Jhiram Valley Maoist attack case that killed 29 people and almost wiped out the state's entire top Congress leadership.

Special Judge Abhay Singh Rajput of the special NIA court in Jagdalpur convicted the 10 accused, including two women. The quantum of sentence is expected to be announced on September 16.

The attack took place on May 25, 2013, at around 4.15 pm when Maoists ambushed a convoy of Congress leaders on a national highway in Jhiram Valley, under the Darbha police station limits in Bastar district. The site is located near the inter-district border of Bastar and Sukma.

The outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist) surrounded and opened fire on the convoy of Congress leaders who were taking out a “Parivartan (change) rally” ahead of the Assembly elections that were to take place later that year.

Among those killed were senior Congress leaders, including then-state party chief Nand Kumar Patel, his son Dinesh, former Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Mahendra Karma, former Union Minister Vidya Charan Shukla and former MLA Uday Mudliyar.

The main target of the Maoists reportedly was Mahendra Karma, who is said to have initiated the Salwa Judum movement in 2005, in which civilians were armed to fight against Maoists. The movement led to widespread violence in the Bastar region, until the Supreme Court struck it down in 2011. Several civilians and security personnel were also killed.

Congress leader Kawasi Lakhma, an MLA from Sukma who had survived the attack, was later questioned by the NIA, but no proof of conspiracy was found against him. Former Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel alleged that the NIA suppressed facts and prevented the state government from probing the case. He also alleged that the previous BJP government failed to provide security, enabling the Maoists to kill Congress leaders.

Former BJP national vice-president and former Chief



Minister Raman Singh countered the allegation, saying Baghel did not care about the case. “He just wants to play politics over the issue,” agencies quoted him as saying.

The convicts are Pramila Modiyam; Chaitu Lekam, alias Munna; Sumita, alias Punem Modiyam; Mukka Mandvi; Kosa Kavasi, alias Kosaram; Aayata Markam; Madkami Deva; Joga Madkami, Banjami Snna, alias Chamru; and Mahadev Nag.

Among the prominent names chargesheeted in the case but not convicted are Thippiri Tirupathi, alias Devuji, a politburo member who surrendered in Telangana this February; Barse Deva, who succeeded Madvi Hidma as commander of Battalion 1 and surrendered this January; and Ganesh Uikey, a central committee member who was killed in a December 2025 encounter in Odisha.

The Bastar police had initially registered the case. However, given the gravity of the attack, the probe was handed over to the NIA. The NIA had filed its chargesheet in September 2014 and presented 101 witnesses over the years. Apart from the NIA, two judicial commissions were also formed to probe the attack.

While 11 people were arrested, one died during the trial that lasted more than a decade, with at least 294 hearings. After final arguments were completed this month, the NIA court delivered its judgment on Saturday.

India Rises From ‘Fragile Five’: PM

New Delhi: Sprinkling his addres liberally with Gen Z-friendly phrases such as “OG”, and referring to the 'Dhurandhar' Prime Minister Narendra Modi returned to Delhi University's Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC) 13 years after his last speech there which gained immense traction and asserted that that India was not only growing at 7.8 per cent but also creating employment opportunities despite wars and disruptions. This demonstrated the country's strength, Modi said, and added said that those responsible for pushing the economy into the “Fragile Five” in 2014 could not digest

once called us the 'Fragile Five'. Today, they are talking about India as the fastest-growing major economy,” he said.

“In 2013, when I came to SRCC, I presented a vision. Whatever I said back then was my conviction... I gave the example of a glass filled with water. Some people see the glass as half full... It was a time when the country was lacking hope. So I said, 'I see the glass as fully filled',” he said. “Those who saw the glass as half empty in 2013, when I had visited the SRCC, still chose to see it the same way today.

“India's 7.8 per cent growth has also come at a time when the war in West Asia is ongoing and when disruptions related to trade have persisted. Achieving such growth during that time demonstrates India's strength,” he said, referring to GDP growth rate for April-June quarter.

He said that in the past six years, the country had faced many challenges, be it Covid or the conflicts in West Asia, and every time, it was said that PM Modi would not be able to survive these challenges. “But India has such immense capability that the wishes of those who want to see India fail are repeatedly being left unfulfilled,” he said.



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Addressing the SRCC centenary celebrations, Modi, frequently referring to his speech of 2013 as then Gujarat Chief Minister, also said that those who once spread terror have been silenced. Today if Pakistan commits any misdeed, the Indian Army would strike back on their own soil. He said from Jammu and Kashmir to the Northeast, there is peace and Naxalism has been dismantled.

Praising the SRCC's alumni, Modi said: “If I put it in your language, the alumni here are the OGs.” He also said: “Dhurandhar na ho lekin dhoom machai hei (They may not be the stalwarts, but they have made a splash)”.

Recalling that the country was struggling on every front in 2013, Modi said corruption, terrorism and inflation were unchecked, but India was now far more secure economically and socially.

However, some people's frustration was increasing after seeing this, he said. “For such people, I had given a homeopathy dose from the Red Fort (during Independence Day address)... 'dimagi Naxal'.

“When I said 'dimagi Naxal', all such people came to the forefront and started criticising me. People who were promoting dimagi Naxalism, their true colour can be witnessed by the people,” he said.

The Prime Minister said the world was at that time worried about India's policy paralysis before the 2014 polls, but today was talking about India's policy dynamism.

Modi said that in other words, India is not only growing, but also creating employment opportunities. “They

Modi said that 13 years ago, the seniors of the present generation of students could not dream of doing many things, but today, the current generation is dreaming big because India has created the ecosystem to achieve those dreams.

“I am happy that you are all ambitious. Ambition comes from the environment around you. Today, you talk about start-ups, becoming entrepreneurs and bringing innovation to agriculture,” he said.

Outside the campus, the prime minister said, the students will find two types of people--“those who positively transform the power of society into the power of the nation and the others who turn into angry uncles (naraz fufa) as soon as any work begins”.

He said such “negative people's favourite activity is to oppose every task and they have just one dialogue – Why do we need this’.

The Prime Minister said in 2013, when he talked about 'Make in India', people in that ecosystem thought it was not possible, and they still mock 'Make in India'.

“But now, you are witnessing the brand value of Make in India. Today, every person has a smartphone. Made in India smartphones are reaching every corner of the world. In 2014, India used to import mobile phones. Today, India is exporting mobile phones worth more than ₹2.5 lakh crore,” he said.

Modi said India will have its own space station, and everyone will witness that day too. “When India one day hosts such Olympics that the world will be left in awe. These are not mere words; these are resolutions, and work is underway in the country to turn these resolutions into reality,” he said.

TCS to Build India's Largest Data Centre in Hyderabad by 2028

Hyderabad, SEpt 5

Telangana will host the country's largest AI data centre campus, with TCS subsidiary HyperVault and its partners investing up to ₹70,000 crore in a one gigawatt (1,000 megawatt) facility spread over more than 250 acres in Future City. This is the largest single investment in the state's AI and data-centre infrastructure sector. The project is expected to create around 7,000 direct and indirect jobs and is planned to be inaugurated on June 2, 2028, on the occasion of Telangana Formation Day.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy announced the mega investment after a meeting with senior representatives of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and HyperVault here on Saturday, during which the government and the company signed a memorandum of understanding for developing the campus. Setting a firm deadline, Revanth Reddy said the government wanted the country's largest AI data centre to be inaugurated exactly 21 months from Saturday, on June 2, 2028, Telangana Formation Day

“This is a historic project not just for Telangana but for India,” the Chief Minister said, describing the announcement as one of the biggest investments in artificial intelligence (AI) and Future City. He said Hyderabad was now at the forefront of the global AI revolution and that access to AI models and computing capacity was rapidly becoming a form of public infrastructure. Having such computing capacity located in Telangana, he said, would provide the state with a significant strategic advantage.

The Chief Minister also highlighted the 50-km Radial Road-1, connecting the Outer Ring Road with Future City through Kongarakalan, saying it would be among the best roads in India and could potentially serve as an emergency runway. He said the road had been dedicated to Bharat Ratna Ratan Tata, recalling his announcement at the Telangana Rising Global Summit 2025 that a major road would be dedicated to an organisation investing ₹1 lakh crore in Telangana.

TCS CEO K. Krithivasan, COO Aarthi Subramanian, HyperVault president V. Rajanna and HyperVault CEO and managing director Deepesh Nanda participated in the meeting. OpenAI chief technology officer Uday Rudraraju joined through videoconference from the United States. IT and industries Minister D. Sridhar Babu, ministers N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and Adluri Laxman Kumar, Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju and government adviser K. Ramakrishna Rao were among those present.

Recalling his meeting with Tata Sons Chairman N. Chandrasekaran at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January, Revanth Reddy said he had asked Chandrasekaran to bring “big news” for Telangana in terms of investment. “He smiled and accepted. He promised me that he would announce it shortly,” the Chief Minister said. He explained that the state government had deliberately refrained from announcing the investment until the Tata Group formally made the announcement.

Eight Tamil Nadu engineering students killed in Thrissur road accident

Thrissur (Keralam): Eight students of an engineering college in Tamil Nadu were killed in a road accident in central Keralam's Thrissur district, police said on Saturday.

According to police, the deceased were students of an engineering college in Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, and were travelling from Guruvayur towards Kodungallur along NH-66.

Police have identified six of the deceased. Four of them — Surya, Yuvasanjith, Vishva and Johua — were from Dindigul, while Santhosh and Prasanna were from Madurai.

Police said the identities of the other two are yet to be confirmed.

The accident occurred at around 11.40 pm on Friday, police said.

The car, which had a Tamil Nadu registration, collided with a Maharashtra-registered lorry parked on the highway at Panambikkunnu in Kaipamangalam near here.

Six students died on the spot, while two others were declared dead on arrival at a nearby hospital, police said.

The youths were pulled out of the car during a rescue operation carried out by residents, fire and rescue personnel and police. Their bodies were taken to

the mortuary of Thrissur Medical College, police said.

Kaipamangalam police have registered a case against the lorry driver under Section 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for culpable homicide.

The lorry driver went into hiding soon after the accident, police said.

According to the FIR, the lorry was illegally parked on the right side of the highway, and the car rammed into its rear.

Police said the lorry was parked near a barricaded section where traffic had been diverted as part of ongoing construction work.

The car was travelling at high speed, and the driver apparently failed to notice the diversion barricade before hitting the rear of the lorry, police said.

Police contacted the families of the deceased using the student identity cards recovered from the bodies. Some of the families were unaware that their children had travelled to Keralam, police said.

Postmortem examinations will begin after the families of the deceased reach Thrissur Medical College, police said.



Indian Chronicle

English Daily

GDP paradox, a statistical wrangle

statistical wrangle that sounds hollow to the struggling common man. There are strong arguments on both sides of the divide. While the government has claimed that the 7.8% GDP growth in the first quarter of the current financial year clearly surpassed all expectations and reflected the robustness of the country's economy despite global uncertainties, the opposition has accused the government of fudging the statistics. Critics argue that the downward revision of the previous year's GDP has made the current year's growth rate look substantially better. It must be pointed out that India had changed the GDP series earlier this year, replacing the 2011-12 base year with 2022-23 and substantially modifying the methodology and data sources. The new series was released in February 2026. Changing the base year primarily changes the measurement of real GDP. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) says such rebasing is standard international practice and is intended to capture structural changes in the economy and improve measurement. GDP growth is useful to the government as a showcase of economic performance, particularly in the face of global headwinds, while unemployment and household financial stress are much more politically consequential to ordinary citizens. Critics have rightly argued that the official GDP number was inconsistent with the ground realities such as inadequate creation of quality jobs, weak household purchasing power, stagnant or weak real wages, subdued private investment, relatively weak FDI, and household indebtedness. Supporters of the government cite robust industrial activity, healthy consumption and strong goods exports, alongside accelerating government investment as the key drivers of growth in the first quarter.

'Manjeera Naadam' Cultural Programme Held in Grand Manner



“Hyderabad, September 05 (Indian Chronicle) : A cultural programme titled 'Manjeera Naadam' was organised grandly at the main auditorium of Ravindra Bharathi, with the support of the Telangana Department of Language and Culture and under the aegis of Shivaparvathi Natya Academy. The programme was conducted by the academy's Founder and Director, Chetti Nagasekhara. The dance and music performances by children captivated the audience. Speaking on the occasion, World Book of Records National Coordinator Lion K.V.Ramana Rao and Dr.P.Prasanna Rani appreciated the efforts of teachers and parents in preserving Indian art forms and passing them on to future generations. Daivajna Sharma said it was commendable that the programme was inaugurated on the occasion of Janmashtami by remembering Lord Krishna. He said dance contributes to spirituality and promotes a sense of national pride. Harinath Reddy, Satya Master, Dr.Srikanth Goud, Sheela Ramani, and Panuganti Venkatesh, among others, attended the event as chief guests and formally inaugurated the programme by lighting the ceremonial lamp. Artists and their gurus were felicitated on the occasion.

Mahathi Excels in NEET, Congratulated by MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy



“UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 5 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy congratulated Mahathi Shiralkar of Kalyanpuri Colony in Beerappagadda Division for her outstanding performance in the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), in which she secured an All India Rank of 3,759 and a Telangana State Rank of 117. “Mahathi Shiralkar is the daughter of Amit and Lalitha. MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy expressed his happiness over Mahathi securing a score of 99.08 percentile in NEET. He said her achievement was highly commendable and reflected her hard work, dedication and determination.”

MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, accompanied by state leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, visited Mahathi's residence in Kalyanpuri and felicitated her with a shawl. He also congratulated her parents on her achievement. “The MLA assured Mahathi that he would personally bear the entire fee for her higher education. He conveyed his best wishes to her and expressed hope that she would achieve greater heights in the future.” Kalyanpuri Welfare Association president T.R. Vikas, G.S. Ganesh Kumar, J.S. Pradeep, C.S. Madhavi Reddy, A.S.N. Murthy, Shwetha, Swapna and others were present on the occasion.

Make Elaborate Arrangements for Ganesh Festival



FORMER CORPORATER RAJITHA PARAMESWAR REDDY Urges Officials“UPPAL, SEP-

TEMBER 5 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Former Uppal Corporator Mandumula Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy urged the officials to make elaborate arrangements for the upcoming Ganesh festival and immersion programme. “On Saturday, Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy, along with municipal officials, inspected the Ganesh immersion pond near Nalla Cheruvu in Uppal. She directed the officials to ensure that devotees do not face any inconvenience during the festival and immersion activities.” She stressed the need for proper arrangements and adequate facilities to ensure the smooth and peaceful conduct of the celebrations. “Municipal officials and local residents, including AE Raj Kumar, DE Vennela Goud, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Barla Krishna, Peerambi, Peramma Tuna Maharani, Garlapalli Shivaprasad, Singaram Gurumurthy, Penchamma, Chinna Erramma, Bhavani, Kasim, Cheruku Shraavan Goud, Karunakar Gupta, Bhimesh, Telakal Raju Reddy, Ram Reddy, Satish, Ailayya, Ramu, Karthik, Ravi, Durgareddy, Naresh Yadav, Ramu Yadav, Upender Yadav, Nangi Srinivas, Vijender Raju, Vijay Kumar, Satish, Nayab and Rasool, among others, participated in the inspection.”

Residents seek crackdown on hostel boom, illegal constructions in Kamalanagar

“Hyderabad Correspondent, September 5 (Indian Chronicle): Residents of Kamalanagar have sought immediate action against alleged illegal constructions and the mushrooming of private hostels in the predominantly residential locality, saying the unchecked activity has begun affecting the safety and quality of life of families and children. Kamalanagar Association representatives Chandrasekhara, Lakshmi, K. Srinivas, Vijay Kanth and Jyothi said at a press conference at Hyderabad Press Club that repeated complaints to the police, GHMC, HYDRA and local elected representatives had failed to bring any substantial relief. They alleged that a six-storey building had been constructed on just 140 square yards, despite GHMC sealing the premises twice in the past two years. Even after a court direction to stop the construction, work allegedly resumed and the premises was subsequently used as a hostel. Residents also alleged that another five-storey building on about 148 square yards houses 150-200 people, without adequate parking. The resulting congestion, they said, has left roads clogged with two-wheelers, autos and cabs



and worsened drainage problems. They further alleged that late-night parties, noise and unruly behaviour by some hostel occupants were causing distress to families, particularly women and senior citizens. The association urged authorities to conduct comprehensive checks on building permissions, hostel occupancy, parking, fire safety and drainage, and take action wherever violations are established.

‘Tidutunna Kodutunna’ Love Song from ‘Mugguru Kothulu’ Released by Popular Music Director Anup Rubens

“Presented by GSR Creations and co-presented by Sky Flare Networks, ‘Mugguru Kothulu’ is produced by Shobha Rani Garimella and directed by Karthik Garimella. Teja Kondapally, Ganesh Boddu and Devansh are playing key roles in the film, while Varshika Pasam is the female lead. The film's first-look poster has already impressed audiences, while the recently released title song also received a positive response. “Now, the makers have unveiled a romantic melody from the film.” Popular music director Anup Rubens launched the song ‘Tidutunna Kodutunna’ from ‘Mugguru Kothulu’ and wished the entire team all the best. “Composed by S. Suhas, with lyrics penned by Jagadeesh, the song features the soulful vocals of Chaitanya and Lasya, making it a pleasant listen. “The lyrical video showcases the love track between the hero and heroine, which appears set to be a special attraction of the film. The visuals are also pleasant and appealing. “The shooting of ‘Mugguru Kothulu’ is progressing at a brisk pace. S. Suhas is composing the music for the film, while Raj Nomula is handling the cinematography and Jameer Shaik is taking care of the editing. The team is gearing up to en-



ertain audiences with more exciting updates in the coming days. “Cast : “Teja Kondapally, Ganesh Boddu, Devansh, Varshika Pasam and others” Technical Crew: “Presented by: GSR Creations“Co-Presented by: Sky Flare Networks“Producer: Shobha Rani Garimella“Director: Karthik Garimella“Cinematography: Raj Nomula“Music: S. Suhas“Editing: Jameer Shaik“PRO: Sai Satish

Grand Sri Krishna Ashtami Celebrations at JGR High School in Boduppal

“BODUPPAL , SEPTEMBER 5 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Sri Krishna Ashtami celebrations were held grandly at JGR High School, a prominent educational institution in Boduppal, on Friday. As part of the celebrations, the students dressed up as Lord Krishna, Radha, Satyabhama and Gopikas, becoming a special attraction at the event. The children participated enthusiastically and showcased their talents through various activities. Speaking on the occasion, school correspondent Gangaraju said that the school celebrates traditional festivals as well as national festivals every year in a grand manner to educate students about their significance. He explained that the birth anniversary of Lord Krishna is celebrated as Krishna Ashtami and said that, according to Hindu tradition, the divine takes birth in different ages in the form of great personalities to uphold righteousness, punish evil and liberate people from suffering. Students Veerani Ahma, Farina Nimma, Keerthana, Radhika, Sirisha, Praneetha and others participated in the celebrations. “School in-charge Vijayakartha, teachers Ramu, Velivi, Hema and others, along with students and parents, attended the programme and contributed to its success.



Rice Bags Distributed to Persons with Disabilities by Former Corporator Gandham Jyotsna Nageswara Rao

“RAMANTHAPUR , SEPTEMBER 5 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Helping economically disadvantaged persons with disabilities who are facing physical challenges is the responsibility of everyone, said Ramanthapur former corporator Gandham Jyotsna Nageswara Rao. She distributed rice bags free of cost to persons with disabilities in the Ramanthapur Division using her own funds. Speaking on the occasion, she said there was a need to stand by persons with disabilities who are struggling with financial difficulties. She assured that she would always stand by them and extend her support for resolving their problems. BRS leaders Suram Shankar, Nandu, and others participated in the programme.



UPPAL MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY Participates in Annual Brahmotsavams of Sri Abhayanjaneya Swamy Temple



“UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 5 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy participated in the annual Brahmotsavams of Sri Abhayanjaneya Swamy Temple, being conducted under the auspices of the Endowments Department near NGRI. He had darshan of Lord Sri Abhayanjaneya Swamy and performed special prayers. The MLA participated in the special puja and abhishekam rituals conducted at the temple and sought the blessings of the deity. He also inspected the arrangements made by the temple authorities for the convenience of devotees. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy said he prayed to Lord Abhayanjaneya Swamy for the happiness, prosperity, health and longevity of all people. He also prayed for peace, prosperity and further development in the Uppal constituency. “He appreciated the temple authorities for conducting the annual Brahmotsavams in a grand and devotional manner. He instructed the concerned officials and temple organisers to ensure that devotees attending the celebrations face no inconvenience and that all necessary arrangements are made. Temple Executive Officer Venkanna, BRS state leader Praveen Mudiraj and others were present.

Congress Government Usurping Land Rights in the Name of Bhu Bharati: BJP“Indira Park:



BJP senior leader Kanchi Mahender participated in the “Chalo Indira Park – Maha Deeksha” protest organised by the Telangana Bharatiya Janata Party at Indira Park, opposing the inclusion of lands belonging to poor and middle-class people and farmers under Section 22A in the name of Bhu Bharati. “He took part in the protest in support of the BJP's fight to protect the land rights of the people and safeguard the interests of farmers and the common public. “Speaking on the occasion, Kanchi Mahender said the BJP would continue its struggle to protect people's rights over their lands. He demanded that the government take appropriate measures to ensure that the land rights of poor families, farmers and the middle class are not affected. “The BJP's fight to protect the land rights of the people will continue relentlessly,” he asserted.

Ganesh festival brings Hindu-Muslim partnerships to Hyderabad mandapams

Hyderabad: As the city gets ready for the 11-day Ganesh festival, preparations at hundreds of mandapams are bringing together people across communities, with Muslim craftsmen, decorators, bandmasters, drivers and suppliers taking up assignments and, in the process, offering a quiet example of Hyderabad's syncretic culture. For Mohd Hafeez, the festival is a busy season. A supplier of function items, he provides utensils, tents and other articles required for food camps organised at mandapams. His supplies are used by volunteers serving food to devotees and visitors during the celebrations. Mohd Shakeel, a flower decorator, has already taken several bookings. “We decorate the mandapams with flowers and, during the final days, we also decorate the trucks carrying the idols for the immersion processions,” he said. Illumination is another essential part of the festivities. Mohd Nooruddin has been providing disco lights, floodlights and serial bulbs for Ganesh mandapams and their surroundings for years. “I have a permanent set of customers. They call me nearly two months in advance and remind me about the assignment,” he said. In Chandrayangutta, the preparations take a different form. Huma Sweet House has for years been making laddus for the festival. Its proprietor, Sayeed Bin Mohammed Bahbela, describes the tradition as an expression of communal harmony, with Hindu devotees placing orders for the festival.

KCR Must Resign for Failing to Attend Assembly-

Demand VAJRESH YADAV and PARAMESWAR REDDY""----Congress Holds Massive Protest at ECIL"



“UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 5 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Medchal–Malkajigiri District Congress President Thotakura Vajresh Yadav and Uppal Assembly Constituency Congress in-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy demanded that former Chief Minister and BRS president K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) immediately resign from his position for failing to attend the Telangana Legislative

Assembly.“They alleged that KCR had completely failed in his role as the Leader of the Opposition. They said that there was no benefit to the people from a Leader of the Opposition who neither attended the Assembly nor raised public issues and instead remained confined to his farmhouse.“Following Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy’s call for statewide protests from September 1 to 5 demanding KCR’s resignation, Congress leaders and workers held a massive protest and dharna at ECIL Crossroads on Saturday.“Thotakura Vajresh Yadav and Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy attended the programme as the chief guests and addressed the gathering. They alleged that public money amounting to Rs. 1.24 crore was being spent on KCR towards salary and allowances as the Leader of the Opposition, while more than Rs. 21 crore was being spent on his security, bulletproof vehicles and other facilities.“They said KCR, who was allegedly restricting himself to his farmhouse despite enjoying facilities funded with public money, had no moral right to continue as the Leader of the Opposition.“Mass Participation Called for Sunday’s Protest“Vajresh Yadav and Parameshwar Reddy called upon Congress workers and supporters to make the protest meeting scheduled to be held at Indira Park in Hyderabad on September 6 a grand success.They urged a large number of Congress workers from the Uppal Assembly Constituency to participate in Sunday’s protest meeting.Division presidents, former corporators, senior Congress leaders, SC Cell, BC Cell and Minority Cell leaders, Mahila Congress, Youth Congress and NSUI leaders, along with Congress workers, participated in the programme.

KTR Inaugurates Constor Solutions’ New Office in Hyd



“Indian Chronicle“Gachibowli“05 Sept 2026““BRS working president and former Telangana IT Minister K. T. Rama Rao (KTR) inaugurated the new office of Constor Solutions at Phoenix Primea in Hyderabad’s Financial District, marking a significant milestone in the company’s growth journey.“During his interaction with the Constor Solutions team, KTR emphasised the importance of building capabilities within Telangana and encouraged the company to

remain rooted in the state while expanding its global presence.“The inauguration marked an important chapter for Constor Solutions, which began its operations in India in 2020 with a team of just four people. The company has since expanded its Hyderabad operations to more than 60 employees, according to the company’s LinkedIn post.“The new facility at Phoenix Primea, Financial District, is expected to provide the company with additional space to expand its operations, recruit more professionals and strengthen its talent development initiatives.“Company representatives Samuel and Suman also presented the organisation’s journey and growth story during the event. The leadership highlighted the company’s focus on hiring and training talent in Hyderabad and taking that expertise to customers across global markets.“The company described the new office not merely as a physical expansion, but as a platform for creating more employment opportunities, developing local capabilities and driving technology-led growth from Hyderabad.“The inauguration comes at a time when Hyderabad continues to strengthen its position as a major technology and global services hub, attracting companies looking to build and scale operations from Telangana.“With its latest expansion, Constor Solutions aims to build on its Hyderabad presence and create further opportunities for talent while serving customers across international markets.

Teachers Who Spread the Light of Knowledge Honoured with Grandeur

-Harivarsanam Charitable Trust Organises ‘Gurukrupakaram–2026““RAMANTHAPUR , SEPTEMBER 5 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Teachers who illuminate students’ lives with the light of knowledge and shape them into responsible and accomplished citizens were honoured at the ‘Gurukrupakaram–2026’ programme organised by the Harivarsanam Charitable Trust.Marking Teachers’ Day, the programme was held on Saturday at the Government ZPHS School in Ramanthapur. Senior teachers who have rendered several years of dedicated service to the field of education in both the primary and high school sections were felicitated on the occasion.“In the primary school section, Headmistress D. Renuka, along with B. Shantadevi and B. Nagajyothi, were honoured. In the high school section, Headmistress J. Latha, along with D. Nagaraju, Akbar, Y. Surendracharya, Anitha Reddy, Kiran Jyothi and Sujatha Joshi, were felicitated.“The organisers recalled the selfless services rendered by teachers and said, “A teacher is not merely a person performing a job, but a force that shapes an entire generation.” They highlighted the crucial role of teachers in imparting not only academic knowledge but also confidence, values and a sense of social responsibility to students.“The programme was conducted under the leadership of K.P. Shantha, Regional Director, Hyderabad Ramanthapur, with the participation of members of the Harivarsanam Charitable Trust.“The organisers stated that



the primary objective of ‘Gurukrupakaram–2026’ was to promote the values of respect for teachers, gratitude and a spirit of service in society by honouring educators. They noted that even after teachers retire, the knowledge and values they impart continue to illuminate the lives of generations.“Harivarsanam Charitable Trust General Secretary Burra Mahender, Vice-Presidents M. Rajamani and B. Punnaagiri, Secretary Harishankar, Treasurer B. Narasimha, Organising Secretary Mani, executive members K. Ramadevi, M. Subbarao and Laxman, Legal Adviser Kondranpally Giribabu, and others participated in the programme.

BJP Protest Over GO 22-A Restrictions



“ALWAL, SEPTEMBER 5 (INDIAN CHRONICLE)““On the call of the Telangana BJP State Party, a large number of BJP leaders, colony representatives and residents from various parts of Alwal Circle participated in the “Chalo Indira Park” Maha Dharna at Dharna Chowk, raising concerns over the implementation of G.O. No. 22-A.The protesters alleged that several survey numbers covering Venu Gopal Nagar, Mangapuram Colony, Anand Rao Nagar, Janaki Nagar, Vasavi Nagar, Ram Nagar and various colonies in Macha Bollaram, Alwal and Venkatapuram divisions had been included in the prohibited list for reasons that, according to them, were affecting entire colonies and residential properties.The representatives pointed out that issues involving small portions of land, including HMWS water works-related issues in Survey No.

52 covering two guntas and Survey No. 55 covering four guntas in Dammaiguda–Old Alwal, were allegedly resulting in restrictions being reflected across larger residential areas. They also raised concerns regarding hut registrations, railway-related issues and other newly added restrictions, stating that these were causing difficulties to colony residents, flat owners and property holders.Colony representatives submitted written representations at the Dharna Chowk along with BJP leaders and requested immediate steps to resolve the issues. Malkajigiri MP Eatata Rajender assured the representatives that their concerns would be taken up and efforts would be made to address the problems faced by the affected residents.Earlier, addressing a press meet at Alwal before leaving for the dharna, BJP State Executive Member Chintala Manikya Reddy also assured the people that the party would stand by the affected colonies and fight for a solution to their genuine concerns.A large number of residents participated in the protest. Buses were arranged from various divisions, while many colony residents reached the venue in cars, demonstrating their support for the demand.BJP State Executive Member Srinivas Varma, Division Presidents Ajay Reddy, Karthik Goud, Sreedhar Reddy, Mallikarjun Goud, Vinay Shankar, Sujatha and Uday Prakash, along with Raji Reddy, Surya, Vijay Manda, Anil, colony heads, representatives and members of the public, were among those present at the protest.

Blood Donation Camp Held by Telangana Jana Samithi Leaders on MLC Kodandaram’s Birthday



““HYDERABAD, SEPTEMBER 5 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The birthday celebrations of Telangana Jana Samithi state president and Legislative Council Member Professor M. Kodandaram were held on a grand scale by party leaders, activists and supporters.“The celebrations were organised under the leadership of Greater Hyderabad Telangana Jana Samithi president M. Narasaiah. A large number of party leaders and activists attended the

programme and conveyed their birthday greetings to Kodandaram.“As part of the celebrations, a blood donation camp was organised, in which around 17 young people donated blood and demonstrated their spirit of service. Professor M. Kodandaram personally presented certificates to the blood donors.“Speaking at the meeting chaired by Narasaiah, Kodandaram called upon party workers and supporters not to limit leaders’ birthday celebrations merely to festivities, but to organise service activities and stand by the poor and underprivileged sections of society.“Telangana Jana Samithi state vice-president Baduruddin congratulated the party leaders for organising the blood donation camp.“Those who felicitated Kodandaram and conveyed their birthday wishes included city general secretary Battala Ramachander, working president Afzal, BC Cell president Jaswanth Kumar, Minority Cell president Syed Ali, city vice-presidents Jayapal Reddy and Laxman, treasurer Suresh, Bigil Cell convenor Ismail, Mahila Jana Samithi leaders Pushpa, Neela and Sakkubai, labour leaders Akula Srinivas, Zaheer, Balaraju, Balwanth Reddy and Krishna, and leaders B. Ramesh, Pasha, Sadanand, Nagabhushanam, Sudhakar and Jawahar.Medchal district president Laxma Reddy, office in-charge Hanumanth Reddy and Vidyarthi Jana Samithi general secretary Prashanth were also present. Leaders and activists from various districts participated in the celebrations.“

Flood Situation is Grim in Bihar

“After the flash food in Nepal and heavy rain in the Himlyan range the flood situation has become grim in Bihar and all the major rivers as the Ganga,the Kosi,the Gandak,the Bagmati are running above the danger mark.As the flood water of the Ganga enters the schools of Danapur locality in Patna and other low area of Patna such as Bintoli where as the flood water inundated several areas of Munger.In Katihar district the flood water of the river has threatened the people.The District Magistrate Katihar took the stock of flood situation and directed advisory .The District administration has directed the people not to go towards the river zone.As the over flowing Gandak has inundated in several areas of West Champaran, East Champaran .and Gopalganj districts of Bihar.As in SitaMadhi District the flood water of the Bagmati has also affected the crops of the peasants.Several districts areas as Punia,Saharsa, Darbhanga Khagaia are the victims of flood“

As the flood water of the Gandak has overtopped at several places of Bhitha,Madhubani,Yogapatty and Nautan blocks of West Champaran district where roads are under flood water as well as the erosion of the Gandak has made the situation panic .The flood affected people of Bhitha block area and other parts of Bihar have got shelter on embankments and other high places.In Bhitha block area the flood victims have started rituals and prayers to control the erosion of the Gandak .As in some parts of Bihar the erosion has badly affected the people.In West Champaran under Bagha Sub-division schools buildings, the water tanks have submerged

in the Gandak.Hundred Acres cane farming has submerged in the Gandak under the areas of Bhitha, Madhubani, Yogapatty and Nautan blocks of West Champaran District In Nautan block area near Mangalpur locality the erosion of the Gandak has made the situation panic.The Gandak water has entered in several areas of Eat Champaran, Gopalganj and Vaishali districts of Bihar.In Vaishali district the the vegetables farming has destroyed in Sonepur locality .As the straying of crocodiles from the Gandak has also made the situation alarming in the area of Yogapatty block of West Champaran.

The fishes from Himlyan range have come to the river of West Champaran as in the Gandak reached in the fields of the peasants with flood water.As the administration has issued advisory not to eat the fish of new species which have washed away from the Himalyan locality after the flash flood of Nepal.

As it is noted that several rivers of Bihar named the Gandak,Bagmati,Kosi and the Ganga originate from the Himalyan ranges.“ To see the worst effect of erosion in the area of West Champaran by the Gandak,the CPI(ML) leader of the district Sunil Kumar Rao said that the government should launch a plan to save crops of the peasants as cane,paddy and vegetables otherwise the peasants would be pauper and rural economy would be dwindled.The economy of the state is dependent on agriculture. If the cane farming would be affected the cane industries of the state would be affected.“Ajay Kr Mishra “Bettiah/Bihar

Massive Rally Held for Resolution of Student and Youth Issues

— UPPAL MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY Atends as Chief Guest““UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 5 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A massive rally was organised on Friday by students and unemployed youth to bring the issues faced by students and young people to the attention of the government.“The rally was held with key demands including the immediate payment of pending fee reimbursement dues, the release of a job calendar, and the implementation of the Youth Declaration.The rally began at ECIL Road near the Round Building and continued up to Radhika Crossroads. Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy attended the programme as the chief guest and extended his support to the students and youth.“Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy urged the government to take the issues concerning the future of students and unemployed youth seriously and resolve them immediately. He said that the government should clear the pending fee reimbursement dues and fulfil the promises made to unemployed youth by creating employment opportunities.“He also demanded the immediate release of a job calendar and implementation of the Youth Declaration to provide confidence and security to the younger generation about their future. He said pending reimbursement dues should be released at the earliest so that financial difficulties do not become an obstacle to students pursuing their education.“Former corporators from the Uppal constituency, students, unemployed youth, youth leaders, representatives of student organisations and young leaders participated in large



numbers.“The rally proceeded with enthusiasm, with participants raising slogans calling for unity in the fight for students’ rights, the future of youth and implementation of government promises.

‘Won’t relent until fee dues are cleared’ Talasani flays Congress over 12,000 crore backlog



“BRS stages student rally in Padmarao Nagar ““ Indian chronicle, Secunderabad, September 05 :““ Former Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav on Saturday warned that the party would continue its fight until the Congress government fulfilled its electoral promises.“Mr. Yadav was addressing a large student rally organised by the BRS in Padmarao Nagar, demanding immediate clearance of pending fee reimbursement dues. The rally began at SP College and ended at the NTR statue, with students from several colleges participating.“Mr. Yadav alleged that the government’s failure to clear nearly ₹12,000 crore in fee reimbursement dues was adversely affecting the future of lakhs of students. He said several colleges were withholding certificates of students who had completed their courses because of unpaid fees, leaving them unable to pursue higher studies.“The government’s delay was also placing students and their parents under severe financial and mental stress, he said.“Recalling the fee reimbursement scheme introduced during the tenure of former Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, Mr. Yadav said the BRS government had ensured timely payments. He also alleged that the Congress government was failing to properly implement the overseas edu-



cation assistance scheme under which the previous government provided up to ₹20 lakh per student.““Taking credit for BRS works““Mr. Yadav accused the Congress government of taking credit for development projects initiated during the BRS regime. He cited the TMS hospital at Sanath Nagar, where, he claimed, about 60% of the work had been completed under the previous government, besides the Musarambagh and Saidabad bridge projects.“He also demanded the immediate withdrawal of GO 97, alleging that it threatened the future of polytechnic education and could facilitate the transfer of college assets to private entities.““Promises remain unfulfilled““Questioning the government over its promises of scooters for girl students, unemployment allowance and enhanced pensions for persons with disabilities, Mr. Yadav said the BRS would continue to raise the issues both inside and outside the Assembly.“He said people were “fed up” with the Congress government and asserted that its days in power were numbered.“BRS leaders Gurram Pavan Kumar Goud, Venkateshan Raju, Yesuri Mahesh, Ambulance Suresh, Venkataramana, Mahender Goud, Srikanth Reddy, Kothuru Venkat, Ashwin, Nagalakshmi were among those present.

Why Panjab University poll results have pushed fresh political narrative in Punjab — for BJP and AAP



GNS News Agency, Sept 5

Panjab University students hold a protest regarding the student union elections. Students raise slogans both inside and outside the Law Department area at Panjab University regarding the Panjab University Student Council (PUSU) Elections, in Chandigarh on Monday. On a day a senior BJP leader ruled out any alliance for 2027 Punjab Assembly elections, the Panjab University Campus Students Council (PUCSC) presidential election result on Monday evening added fresh fuel to the political speculations gaining ground in the poll-bound state.

RSS-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) retained the PUCSC president's post for a second consecutive year, with its candidate Ankit Bidhan defeating Aam Aadmi Party student outfit ASAP's Adil Brar by 506 votes. The victory assumed added significance as the Students' Organisation of India (SOI), the student wing of Sukhbir Singh Badal-led Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), had extended support to the ABVP candidate just a day before polling. Bidhan polled 3,143 votes against Brar's 2,637, while Congress student organisation NSUI's Gurman Sidhu finished third with 2,263 votes. The ABVP-SOI victory revived discussion about whether the former allies BJP and SAD could eventually find common ground ahead of the 2027 electoral outing. The SAD had parted ways with the BJP in 2020 after remaining alliance partners for nearly two decades. Panjab University elections are closely watched in Punjab, particularly ahead of Assembly polls, and are often viewed as an indicator of political sentiment among young voters. The latest verdict has therefore provided the BJP with an opportunity to project the result as evidence of growing acceptance among the state's youth. Rajya Sabha MP Satnam Singh Sandhu described ABVP's second consecutive presidential victory as an "important political message", saying it reflected growing trust in the BJP among

young people. ABVP being elected to the post of President for the second consecutive time at Panjab University is, in itself, an important political message," Sandhu said. He linked the result to the BJP's broader narrative of development, employment and opportunities for young people under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Viksit Bharat'. Panjab BJP chief Kewal Singh Dhillon, former state BJP president Sunil Jakhar and other party leaders congratulated Bidhan. Jakhar specifically acknowledged SOI's role in the victory. "The winds of change have begun to blow from Panjab University. For the second consecutive time, the ABVP has created history by securing victory in the student elections. SOI played an important role in this victory," he said, adding that the result reflected "the new thinking of the new generation". He also congratulated Bidhan and the ABVP team. Dhillon, in a post on X, said the second consecutive victory on the president's post showed that "Gen Z had once again made its choice loud and clear". For the AAP, however, the result presents an uncomfortable political signal. The party had put considerable organisational effort into the PU elections and appointed its youngest MP, Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer, as election in-charge for the ASAP campaign. Hayer was not available for comment. The defeat is particularly noteworthy because AAP came to power in Punjab in 2022 riding on an anti-establishment and youth-oriented campaign. The PU verdict could prompt the party to assess whether the enthusiasm among young voters that contributed to its landslide victory four years ago is showing signs of a shift. For the SAD, the outcome offers visibility at a university that attracts students from across Punjab. Its student wing's last-minute tie-up with ABVP, followed by a decisive victory, has inevitably added to the political conversation around the two parties' future relationship. The Congress, meanwhile, had little to cheer about, with NSUI finishing third. The result adds to the challenges confronting the party's student and state-level organisation. Kanchan Vasdev is a Senior Assistant Editor in The Indian Express' Punjab bureau. She is a highly experienced journalist with 22 years of expertise covering high-stakes politics, governance, and social issues in Northern India. Professional Background Role: Primary reporter covering the Punjab Chief Minister's Office (CMO), government policies, and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leadership in the state. Experience: She previously worked with The Tribune and has played a key role in launching various city editions. Special Projects: Abandoned Brides: Authored a monograph on brides abandoned by NRIs as part of the Prabha Dutt Memorial

900 fingerprint samples, 85 witnesses: Surat cops probe charging cable murder



GNS News Agency, Sept 5

Around 3:30 am on August 24, a farmer from a village in Surat district and his wife returned home from a pilgrimage and found the body of their youngest daughter, 25, on the terrace of their house with her hands tied and head covered in a polythene bag bound at the neck with a mobile charging cable. A week later, the Surat Rural Police still have no solid leads in the case — except that a couple was "questioned on suspicion". By Monday, the police collected 900 fingerprint samples, trying to match them with prints found around the house with those of villagers, but in vain. The village sarpanch has announced a reward of Rs 1 lakh to anyone — underlining that their identity would be concealed — who provides leads on the accused. The farmer last spoke to his daughter around 9:30 pm on August 23, asking her to keep the doors and windows closed and her mobile phone ringer on. On August 21, he and his wife left on a pilgrimage and returned in the early hours on August 24. They rang the doorbell repeatedly, but got no response. The door was locked from inside and their daughter was not answering her phone.

She had been alone the whole of August 23, after her aunt, who visited on August 22 with her husband and 24-year-old son, from Surat, left. According to the FIR, she left because of "some health issues". The farmer spoke to his daughter on the afternoon of August 23 after his sister left and then again on the night of August 24. A senior police officer said, "We are sure that the culprits behind the incident are known to the woman and her family members. After killing her on the ground floor, the accused lifted her body, took it to the terrace, tied both her hands and put a polythene bag over her face. We found some fingerprints in different places of the house. After the incident, we have taken statements from around 85 people known to the deceased's family, including her friends. We have also taken fingerprints from 900 people in the village to match them with those found at the scene, but none matched. It has been confirmed that there was no rape committed against the victim, but there are signs of sexual assault." The officer said, "There are no CCTVs outside the house and those of neighbours. We have got details of the phones from the area through a nearby mobile tower. We are retrieving data from her mobile phone, which was found submerged in a water pit. We have questioned a couple who is under

suspicion." According to the FIR, the farmer found the "rear door of the house ajar". "I entered the room and found household items lying on the floor. After crossing the kitchen, I reached the front room and opened the main door of our house so that my wife, waiting outside, could enter. We both called our daughter's name, but there was no response from any of the rooms. We checked each and every corner of the house, but to no avail. The almirah doors were found open and several items were lying on the floor. Cash and jewellery worth around Rs 2.50 lakh were missing", the FIR said.

The couple then went to a neighbour's house and woke them for help. The neighbour accompanied them and the trio went to the terrace of the house, which has a small cabin. Outside the cabin door, the couple found their daughter in her night dress, her hands tied with black string, her face covered with a polythene bag, a mobile charging wire, and another string wrapped around her neck. The parents informed the police. A police team, along with a dog squad and forensic officials reached the spot, and sent the body for postmortem examination. The farmer filed a complaint of murder and robbery against unidentified persons at the local police station. Surat District Superintendent of Police Rajesh Gadhiya also reached the spot after being informed.

'I have no enemies': Woman's father The farmer, who is in his 50s, has two other daughters who are married and settled outside the state. The youngest daughter had completed her graduation and was planning to go abroad for further studies. "I have no enemies... I never put pressure on her over studies or anything else. She was given full freedom. We even gave her permission to select a suitable boy to get married. There were a couple of proposals from boys who expressed their wish to marry her. We left the decision to her," he said. The sister of the deceased told The Indian Express, "My sister was good at studies. She wanted to do a masters' degree from abroad and her admission process was in progress, even as she started preparations for competitive exams. We have no enemies in the village and my father was tilling his own inherited land." Three days after the incident, the police found the mobile phone of the deceased in the backyard of the house, submerged in water. The family members initially refused to accept the body, demanding arrest of the accused. Later, the village elders intervened and persuaded them.

On Sunday, members of the tribal community to which the woman and her family belong announced that if the culprits were not arrested, they would launch protests. Surat's Superintendent of Police Rajesh Gadhiya assured them that police were making all possible efforts to catch the culprits. The village sarpanch said, "We have seen her right from her younger days. She was a studious child. Our village population is around 4,000, and the major occupation of the people is agriculture and animal husbandry." She added, "The announcement about the reward money has been posted on social media so that people from other villages can also know about it. We did so in coordination with the Surat Police."

CNG price up by Rs 2/kg in Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad from September

Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) will cost Rs 2 more per kg in Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad and neighbouring areas from September 1, Maharashtra Natural Gas Limited (MNGL) said on Monday.

MNGL attributed the increase to renewed tensions in West Asia, which it said had disrupted the movement of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) cargo ships through the Strait of Hormuz, a key route for global energy trade. According to the company, the disruption since July has pushed global LNG prices to nearly twice their levels before the crisis. Europe's efforts to build up gas stocks ahead of win-

ter have further added to pressure on international supplies. MNGL sources part of the gas used for CNG through imported spot LNG. The company said the Rs 2 per kg increase was only a part of the rise in its input costs. The price revision comes as CNG use continues to grow in Pune and across India, driven by its lower cost compared with petrol and diesel. MNGL said CNG would still be around 45 per cent cheaper than petrol and 23 per cent cheaper than diesel for private cars. For autorickshaw operators, it said, the savings compared with diesel would be around 25 per cent.

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GNS News Agency, Sept 5

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The farmer spoke to his daughter on the afternoon of August 23 after his sister left and then again on the night of August 24. A senior police officer said, "We are sure that the culprits behind the incident are known to the woman and her family members. After killing her on the ground floor, the accused lifted her body, took it to the terrace, tied both her hands and put a polythene bag over her face. We found some fingerprints in different places of the house. After the incident, we have taken statements from around 85 people known to the deceased's family, including her friends. We have also taken fingerprints from 900 people in the village to match them with those found at the scene, but none matched. It has been confirmed that there was no rape committed against the victim, but there are signs of sexual assault." The officer said, "There are no CCTVs outside the house and those of neighbours. We have got details of the phones from the area through a nearby mobile tower. We are retrieving data from her mobile phone, which was found submerged in a water pit. We have questioned a couple who is under suspicion."

Karnataka chain snatcher found dead after ambulance escape; murder suspected



GNS News Agency, Sept 5

Jayanth alias Battery Jayanth, an alleged chain snatcher from Tumakuru in Karnataka, was caught trying to steal a gold chain last month and assaulted by locals. He escaped from an ambulance transporting him—only to be found dead near a lake the next day. The investigation into the 35-year-old's death, initially thought to be accidental, has now taken a turn with the police suspecting murder. Jayanth and his associate, Yatheesh, were caught near Nelamangala in Bengaluru Rural district on August 23.

Signs of burglary According to the FIR, the farmer found the "rear door of the house ajar". "I entered the room and found household items lying on the floor. After crossing the kitchen, I reached the front room and opened the main door of our house so that my wife, waiting outside, could enter. We both called our daughter's name, but there was no response from any of the rooms. We checked each and every corner of the house, but to no avail. The almirah doors were found open and several items were lying on the floor. Cash and jewellery worth around Rs 2.50 lakh were missing", the FIR said. The couple then went to a neighbour's house and woke them for help. The neighbour accompanied them and the trio went to the terrace of the house, which has a small cabin. Outside the cabin door, the couple found their daughter in her night dress, her hands tied with black string, her face covered with a polythene bag, a mobile charging wire, and another string wrapped around her neck. The parents informed the police. A police team, along with a dog squad and forensic officials reached the spot, and sent the body for postmortem examination. The farmer filed a complaint of murder and robbery against unidentified persons at the local police station. Surat District Superintendent of Police Rajesh Gadhiya also reached the spot after being informed.

'I have no enemies': Woman's father The farmer, who is in his 50s, has two other daughters who are married and settled outside the state. The youngest daughter had completed her graduation and was planning to go abroad for further studies. "I have no enemies... I never put pressure on her over studies or anything else. She was given full freedom. We even gave her permission to select a suitable boy to get married. There were a couple of proposals from boys who expressed their wish to marry her. We left the decision to her," he said. The sister of the deceased told The Indian Express, "My sister was good at studies. She wanted to do a masters' degree from abroad and her admission process was in progress, even as she started preparations for competitive exams. We have no enemies in the village and my father was tilling his own inherited land." Three days after the incident, the police found the mobile phone of the deceased in the backyard of the house, submerged in water. The family members initially refused to accept the body, demanding arrest of the accused. Later, the village elders intervened and persuaded them. On Sunday, members of the tribal community to which the woman and her family belong announced that if the culprits were not arrested, they would launch protests. Surat's Superintendent of Police Rajesh Gadhiya assured them that police were making all possible efforts to catch the culprits. The village sarpanch said, "We have seen her right from her younger days. She was a studious child. Our village population is around 4,000, and the major occupation of the people is agriculture and animal husbandry." She added, "The announcement about the reward money has been posted on social media so that people from other villages can also know about it. We did so in coordination with the Surat Police."

According to the police, the duo was assaulted before being handed over. They were being transported in an ambulance when they allegedly attacked the driver, Siddharaju, and a nurse, Sachin, and fled.

The police patrol vehicle accompanying them was allegedly diverted to attend another distress call at the time. On August 24, Jayanth's body was found near Govenahalli Lake. The post-mortem report ruled out drowning and suggested a slit wound on his throat. "We have registered a murder case and are investigating further," Chandrakanth M V, Superintendent of Police, Bengaluru Rural, said on Monday. The police have lodged a First Information Report based on Jayanth's sister's complaint. Jayanth's lawyer Manjunath alleged that he was murdered and claimed the police had opened fire at him, an allegation the police denied. Lakshminarayana A V, Additional Superintendent of Police, who is monitoring the investigation, said that they are on the lookout for Yatheesh. "We have questioned the police and the hospital staff. Teams have been formed to nab Yatheesh," he added. Jayanth had a long record of criminal cases at the Nelamangala Rural, Dabaspet, and Thyamagondlu police stations, and was involved in more than 25 cases.

Only fifth recorded sighting in 150 yrs: Rare Siberian visitor spotted at Najafgarh lake

GNS News Agency, Sept 5

It was the bold white supercilium — the stripe above the eye — and rusty-brown scalloped feathers fading into the underbelly that helped identify the puffy-bodied wader at Najafgarh Jheel as a sharp-tailed sandpiper, rather than the similar-looking pectoral sandpiper. The bird was spotted near Mankrola village on the Gurgaon side of the marshy lake on Sunday — a rare sighting that added to the very limited records of the species in Delhi-NCR and the country as a whole. Akshit Dua, an NCR-based conservationist and birder, documented the sharp-tailed sandpiper (Calidris acuminata) as it moved in the fields, actively foraging amid a flock of common sandpipers and wood sandpipers. Crown features including the rufous-streaked cap, along with the distinctive eye-ring and rusty-brown scalloped feathers with diffused breast markings helped identify and distinguish the bird, Dua said. "It is hard to identify waders easily in the field, especially with the naked eye. Many species have similar bills and calls, making short viewings difficult," he said. Dua's sighting of Calidris acuminata is significant because it was only the fifth recorded sighting of the species in India over a period of almost a century and a half.

A study published in Indian Birds, widely regarded as the bird journal of record in India, documents the sighting of a male in Gilgit in 1880, a female in Vandalur in Tamil Nadu in 1915, an unconfirmed record from Kurud Tank in Chhattisgarh in 2004, and a photographed individual at the Najafgarh marshland on September 24, 2019. The sharp-tailed sandpiper breeds in northern Siberia, in an area that extends from the Lena river delta on the eastern Arctic Ocean southeastward to the Kolyma region, and migrates south over East Asia to its main non-breeding grounds in Australia and New Zealand. Smaller numbers fly to Melanesia, a cluster of islands in the southwestern Pacific Ocean between New Guinea in the west to Fiji in the east. The species is, therefore, an exceptionally uncommon

visitor to India. "The species never flies south over Kashmir, which makes it a very rare bird in India," naturalist Ramkumar, who has previously worked with the Bombay Natural History Society, said. Ecologist Sohail Madan said, "The sighting of the sharp-tailed sandpiper at Najafgarh Lake is remarkable not just because it is an uncommon visitor to the Delhi-NCR region, but because it highlights the extraordinary biodiversity that persists in wetlands around our cities." These places", Madan said, "are often seen as wastelands or vacant land, but they are incredibly important habitats for migratory birds and a whole range of other species". Overall, sharp-tailed sandpiper populations are in decline. A conservation assessment by the Australian government has estimated that population has declined by about 45 per cent over three generations, or roughly 15 years, and listed habitat loss and degradation among the major threats to the species, which is classified as "Vulnerable" in the IUCN Red List. The sharp-tailed sandpiper forages in both coastal and inland wetlands, in freshwater and hypersaline habitats. It feeds on seeds, worms, molluscs, crustaceans, and insects after rainfall, and often forages in agricultural pastures and in the shallow-water edges of wetlands. Around the Yellow Sea between China and the Korean peninsula, an important stopover region on the annual migration route of the bird, coastal habitats have been lost to residential, industrial and aquaculture development. Pollution, altered sediment flows, and rise in sea levels have added to the pressure. In Australia, drought and reduced areas of inland wetlands are major concerns. The sharp-tailed sandpiper reported by Dua is not the only unusual migrant recorded at Najafgarh. A rustic bunting was spotted at the wetland a few days earlier, another rare sighting in the region, NCR birder Yatin Verma said. Dr Anil Kumar, a veterinarian with the Haryana government and a birder who has been visiting the Najafgarh lake for around 15 years, said the region sees active migration in August-September, and again in March.

Banking leadership shake-up: HDFC Bank, Ujjivan SFB begin CEO search



New Delhi: HDFC Bank and Ujjivan Small Finance Bank have begun scouting for suitable candidates to be appointed as their new MD and CEO to drive the next phase of growth.Kotak Mahindra Bank and Fino Payments Bank are reportedly in the advanced stage of the appointment process.

The process began at Fino after its MD and CEO, Rishi Gupta, was arrested in February in connection with alleged violations of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) laws. Soon after the arrest, Ketan Merchant, Chief Financial Officer of the bank, was appointed as interim head, and the board initiated the process for replacement of Gupta.The next surprise was Kotak Mahindra Bank MD and CEO Ashok Vaswani, who backed out of an extension in June. His initial three-year term would end on December 31, 2026. It is being reported that the bank has shortlisted some internal candidates for the top job.As per the process, the board of a bank shortlists a couple of names for the top executive position. Once finalised, the shortlisted names are sent to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for its approval. After thorough examination, the RBI gives its nod.

Earlier this month, Ujjivan Small Finance Bank's MD and CEO Sanjeev Nautiyal sought early retirement compelling the board to look for his replacement. Nautiyal, former deputy managing director of SBI, was appointed as MD and

CEO of Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (SFB) for three years with effect from July 1, 2024.At HDFC Bank, the succession process assumes greater significance as last month its managing director and chief executive Sashidhar Jagdishan opted out of the reappointment process. Jagdishan, 61, decided not to seek reappointment after the completion of his current term on October 26. He has spent nearly three decades at the bank in various capacities.The HDFC Bank board had said that it will fast-track the process for selection and appointment of Jagdishan's successor "well within time". Jagdishan's reappointment has been a subject of intense speculation, especially after the surprising resignation of non-executive chairman Atanu Chakraborty in March this year, citing concerns on ethics and governance practices at the lender.

In late July, the bank board found shortcomings in the deposit arrangements with the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) and also slapped a fine of Rs 1 lakh each on Jagdishan and other key executives, even though it said that their actions were not mala fide. It was alleged that the bank paid, over and above the card rate, for getting high-value deposits from the state-run body and routed them as marketing spends.Besides, the bank has faced allegations of mis-selling Credit Suisse's AT-1 bonds to diaspora clients from its Dubai DIFC branch, which led the local regulator to prohibit the bank from onboarding new customers or conducting new business last year. There have also been reports of non-resident Indians being stuck with over USD 100 million in investments in a platform floated by Carlisle Asset Management sold as a high-yield product, but clients are unable to redeem their investments.

During his tenure, Jagdishan had also faced allegations of graft in the Lilavati Hospitals matter, which was eventually dismissed by the Bombay High Court.The RBI slapped an 'embargo' on HDFC Bank in December 2020, prohibiting the bank from sourcing any new credit cards and launching new digital initiatives due to recurring technology system outages. The management under Jagdishan ensured that the embargo was completely lifted in 15 months.

India need not worry about FCNR (B) repayment: World Bank's Neelkanth Mishra

Mumbai: India need not worry about repayment of foreign currency non-resident (bank) FCNR (B) deposits when they mature in five years, World Bank Executive Director for India, Neelkanth Mishra, as the instrument is a relatively cheap source of capital that can be rolled over if global financing conditions remain unfavourable.

In an interview with NDTV Profit, Mishra said India is getting it at 6.5-7 per cent interest which is, "reasonably cheap capital," adding that if conditions remain tight when the deposits mature, the country can issue another FCNR(B). "There's no reason why this should not work again," the report cited Mishra as saying.India's special USD-INR forex swap facility drew \$136.4 billion in foreign-currency inflows (as of August 31, 2026), with FCNR(B) deposits accounting for 93 per cent of that amount. FCNR(B) holdings stood at \$127.2 billion, while overseas foreign-currency borrowings contributed \$5.26 billion and external commercial borrowings \$3.89 billion, Mishra noted.

"Every single dollar flow is a liability," irrespective of source of inflow such as FDI, portfolio investment or other channels, he said. India's current account deficit must be viewed as a savings-investment gap, rather than as an indication of the country's economic weakness, he added. "When you have a current account deficit, you are taking



on liability. So you are either selling assets... or you are taking on debt," he said.

The debt could be foreign portfolio investments, private equity investments, external commercial borrowings and foreign investors buying Indian bonds. In terms of external debt position or external debt to GDP perspective, India is a very healthy economy which is growing fast, he said. He mentioned the country's biggest concern is the ways in which foreign capital is put to use, Mishra noted.

CJP seeks action against Swatantra Bharadwaj over alleged Jantar Mantar assault



New Delhi: The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) representatives on Friday said the Delhi Police has assured that Swatantra Bharadwaj, the man accused of assaulting the father of student activist Nishu Azad during a protest at Jantar Mantar, will be arrested within 72 hours.The assurance came a day after a video clip of an interview with Bharadwaj, who describes himself as a 'kattar Hindu' (hardline Hindu), went viral, in which he claimed to have "cracked the skull" of Sanjay Kumar, Nishu's father, during the protest and said he escaped being jailed despite the seriousness of the alleged offence.

The CJP, which had organised the protest where the incident took place, has been demanding Bharadwaj's arrest and alleging that police failed to take adequate action against him.The controversy intensified on Thursday after police said 38-year-old Kumar had suffered a simple head injury in a scuffle and rejected claims that his skull had been fractured.Police said Bharadwaj and another accused, Suraj Kumar, were detained at the spot, questioned and served notices, and that a chargesheet would be filed.On Friday, CJP co-conveners Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka, scores of supporters, and MPs Chandrashekar Azad and Pappu Yadav reached Parliament Street police station seeking action against Bharadwaj.Scores of CJP supporters also gathered outside the police station, raising slogans demanding justice for Nishu and action against the self-styled Hindutva influencer.Nishu said police assured the delegation that Bharadwaj would be arrested within 72 hours."Police said they will arrest Swatantra in 72 hours. We believe they will take action and not keep delaying it as they were doing," she told reporters.Nishu also alleged that she had faced verbal abuse and rape threats following the incident and said she had filed an FIR in the matter."I was ashamed of even stepping out. For a few weeks I could not go to school, I feel everyone is judging me. I hope police will take action," she said.Rishabh, associated with the AICC law department, said the delegation had demanded that charges of attempt to murder, provisions of the SC/ST Act and criminal intimidation be added to the FIR."The demand

was to add significant charges left out — attempt to murder, SC/ST Act, criminal intimidation charges. They agreed and assured that in 72 hours he will be arrested," he said.He said police had also assured the delegation that a separate FIR would be registered over alleged online abuse and objectionable images targeting Nishu.Das said the Additional DCP had committed to adding attempt-to-murder and SC/ST Act provisions to the FIR relating to the alleged attack on Nishu's father.

"Goons like Swatantra Bharadwaj came to Jantar Mantar. Did Delhi Police not identify them? He committed attempt to murder. Delhi Police is saving him, no action was taken," Das said.He said police had also assured them that an FIR would be registered over threats to Nishu and that provisions of the POCSO Act would be added."Delhi Police has assured action in 72 hours. We hope Delhi Police will not allow goons to have a free hand," Das said.Das said the CJP representatives would return to the police station if the police failed to fulfil its commitments."We came here, talked to Delhi Police. If they don't fulfil the commitment, we will have to come back. Delhi Police should fulfil its commitment. We are standing with the students," he said.The CJP has also questioned why Bharadwaj was allowed to remain free after the Jantar Mantar incident.

Azad Samaj Party chief and Nagina MP Chandrashekar Azad criticised the police for not taking action against Bharadwaj."We have all seen how the accused has publicly appeared on television channels and admitted to the allegations against him. He has said that they wanted to kill the victim, that they attacked her and that she suffered injuries. Yet, the police did not arrest them," Azad said."They were simply served notices and allowed to leave. The accused is intimidating the victim. He is putting up status updates, threatening to disturb the peace of the country and targeting Muslims. He is doing everything that could harm the country's communal harmony and unity," he said.Azad said Nishu had been repeatedly threatened with rape, being burnt with acid and being killed.They are terrified. If this is the situation in the national capital, one can imagine what the situation must be like in rural areas. We met the police officials, and they assured me that they were looking into the matter and would make arrests..." he said.In the one-hour interview, which is available on YouTube, Bharadwaj also claimed to have political connections."I have the blessings of Hanuman upon me. And secondly, Kapil Mishra is my elder brother. They say Kapil Mishra called and I was released. Chirag Paswan is my elder brother. How many leaders do you know? Do you know Modi ji? Modi ji is also my elder brother. I have everyone's support," he said."If the goon is openly saying Kapil Mishra and Chirag Paswan made the calls and he was released, top leaders of BJP should clarify on this," he said.

Adani Ports launches dedicated empty container yard at Mundra



Ahmedabad: Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) on Friday said it is launching a dedicated Empty Container Yard (ECY) with integrated warehousing at Mundra, offering end-to-end services across the empty container lifecycle, including storage, maintenance, inspection, and seamless movement to exporters and CFSs (container freight stations).As part of its 'Ambition 2031' roadmap, APSEZ is making significant investments to expand capacity across its network, with Mundra at the forefront of this growth.

India's largest integrated transport operator plans to add more than 6 million TEUs of container handling capacity over the next five years, said the Adani Group

company."The dedicated Empty Container Yard at Mundra, to be operated by APSEZ and/or partners (including CFS and shipping lines), will enhance efficiency across the container ecosystem by enabling faster turnaround times, reducing unnecessary container movements, and optimising logistics costs," said Ashwani Gupta, Whole-time Director and Chief Executive Officer, APSEZ.

Strengthening trade-enabling infrastructure remains central to APSEZ's commitment towards supporting India's growth and the vision of Viksit Bharat, Gupta added.Adani Ports commands a 45.5 per cent share of India's container market as of FY26. Within this, Mundra Port alone handles nearly 35 per cent of the country's container trade, making it India's largest container-handling port.The volume of empty containers handled at Mundra is estimated at around 1.6 million TEUs annually, underscoring its critical role in supporting India's import-export supply chains, said the company.Moreover, the initiative aligns with the government's focus on developing efficient, technology-enabled logistics systems and improving ease of doing business.Adani Ports operates a comprehensive ecosystem of 16 strategically located ports and terminals with a diversified marine fleet of 136 vessels and integrated logistics capabilities.With a current cargo handling capacity of 653 million tonnes per annum, APSEZ commands approximately 27 per cent of India's total port volumes, targeting 1 billion tonnes throughput by 2030.

Newlywed woman found dead in water tank in Indore, husband detained

Indore: A newlywed woman was found dead under suspicious circumstances in a water tank outside her house in Indore, just 25 days after her love marriage, police said on Friday. The deceased, identified as Vandana Kushwaha in police records, was found in the water tank in the Nehru Nagar area under Rau police station limits on Thursday.Police recovered the body after neighbours alerted them and sent it for post-mortem examination. Police said injury marks were found on the woman's body. Her husband, Upendra Patel, and brother-in-law have been detained for questioning.

"Prima facie, the case appears to be one of murder. However, the exact cause of death will be known only after the post-mortem report," ACP Nidhi Saxena said.According to police, Vandana and Patel had earlier lived in Nehru Nagar. Her family later shifted to a rented house in Rajnagar, reportedly because of Patel's addiction problems. The couple subsequently got married for love on August 11, and Vandana began living with Patel at his residence.

Police said Vandana's family had earlier lodged a missing-person report at Chandan Nagar police station. Her statement was later recorded and, as she was an adult, she expressed her wish to live with Patel. Her family had also told police that the couple frequently quarrelled over Patel's addiction. The incident came to light on Thursday afternoon when neighbours allegedly heard Vandana screaming from inside the house.Soon after, Patel came out, and neighbours noticed bloodstains on his shirt, police said. When there was no further activity at the house for a long time, the neighbours informed the police."Police reached the spot and recovered Vandana's body from the water tank outside the house. The husband and his brother are being questioned, and all circumstances surrounding the death are being investigated," Saxena said.Police said the post-mortem examination is expected to provide crucial evidence regarding the cause of death. Further action will be taken based on the autopsy findings and the evidence gathered during the investigation.

Stock markets rebound in early trade after 4-days of slump; Sensex jumps over 530 pts

Mumbai: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty bounced back sharply in early trade on Friday tracking a rally in Asian markets after four days of sharp decline.The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 531.88 points, or 0.70 per cent, to 76,684.74 in the morning trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty advanced 78.25 points, or 0.33 per cent, to 23,951.70.Among the 30 Sensex constituents, Bajaj Finserv, Bharat Electronics Ltd, IndiGo, Trent, Reliance Industries, Infosys, Titan, Adani Ports, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finance, Kotak Mahindra Bank, HDFC Bank, and State Bank of India were the major gainers.Axis Bank, Eternal, ICICI Bank and Asian Paints were among the laggards.The rebound in domestic equities came amid a broad-based rally across Asian markets. Hong Kong's Hang Seng climbed 2 per cent, South Korea's KOSPI advanced 1.3 per cent, Japan's Nikkei 225 index gained 1.11 per cent and Shanghai's SSE Composite index traded 0.35 per cent higher.US markets had ended more than 1 per cent higher in overnight deals on Thursday, setting a positive tone for Asian equities.However, Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.48 per cent to USD 95.98 per barrel.Meanwhile, Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs)



offloaded equities worth Rs 2,345.87 crore on Thursday. Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs), however, remained net buyers, purchasing equities worth Rs 4,977.46 crore, according to exchange data.On Thursday, the 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 417.49 points to close at 76,152.86, while the 50-share NSE Nifty slipped 41 points to settle at 23,873.45, extending their losing streak to a fourth consecutive session.

No direct link to kickbacks, 27-month delay in arrest: Why Satyendar Jain got bail

Satyendar Jain gets bail in STP tender scam case as Delhi court notes no direct link to alleged kickbacks and questions 27-month arrest delay.Satyendar Jain gets bail in STP tender scam case as Delhi court notes no direct link to alleged kickbacks and questions 27-month arrest delay.Granted bail to AAP leader and former Delhi minister Satyendar Jain in the alleged multi-crore sewage treatment plant (STP) tender scam, a Delhi court on Thursday noted that none of the corrigendums that changed the specifications of the work were approved by him.

Jain did not sign corrigendumsSpecial Judge Dig Vinay Singh of Rouse Avenue Court said all the corrigendums — a formal correction for a mistake found in a contract or notice after it has been published or released — were approved and signed by former Delhi Jal Board (DJB) CEO Udit Prakash Rai, who is also an accused in the case."None of the corrigendums that changed the specification of the work was approved by the applicant. All were approved and signed by the CEO, Udit Prakash Rai (A-2)," the judge said.Allegations primarily against other accused

The court said the allegations in the case were primarily against the other accused, while Jain's alleged role was that of the minister who was allegedly in conspiracy with them and aided the illegal transactions."...even if the statements on record and the materials gathered are taken into account, the applicant's complicity will have to be established at trial, and, if convicted, the applicant will be sentenced," it added.The court said that a few decisions taken by Jain raised eyebrows, but the same couldn't be the reason to deny him bail.

"A few decisions taken by the applicant... as evident from the contents of the notes... do raise eyebrows, and he may not be innocent, but by themselves they are not enough at this stage to deny bail. The investigating agency ought to have first conducted a thorough investigation and gathered more evidence before rushing to arrest him," it added.The court noted that there were no WhatsApp chats, call records or SMS messages that, at this stage, connected Jain to the alleged kickbacks and hawala transactions involving the other accused.



The court said the allegations in the case were primarily against the other accused, while Jain's alleged role was that of the minister who was allegedly in conspiracy with them and aided the illegal transactions.

"Prima facie, none of the WhatsApp chats links the applicant," Judge Singh said, adding that there were no other phone records or SMS messages that might at present connect him to the alleged transactions."27-month gap in arrestFurther, the court questioned the "unexplained and extraordinary" 27-month gap between registration of the FIR and Jain's arrest.The FIR was registered on May 11, 2024, while Jain, Rai and four others were arrested on August 18 this year.The court said the delay indicated that the investigating agency had not considered Jain's physical custody necessary for more than two years. It also said the prosecution had failed to identify any new circumstance that warranted his arrest after such a prolonged gap.The court noted that the case largely rested on documentary and electronic evidence, including notes, files, technical proposals, minutes of meetings and bank transaction statements. These materials had already been seized by the ACB, it said.The court also noted that the ACB had not sought police custody of Jain, indicating that there was no active requirement for custodial interrogation.

US lawmakers discuss trade, defence and Indo-Pacific ties with India group



Washington: Trade, defence, China and Indo-Pacific security figured in a series of meetings between nine US lawmakers and an Indian American advocacy group seeking deeper strategic ties between Washington and New Delhi.The United States India Relationship Council, or USIRC, said Thursday that its delegation met Democratic and Republican members of Congress during two days of meetings on Capitol Hill.The discussions on August 31 and September 1 covered trade, defence, the Quad, the Indo-Pacific and what the organisation described as threats from the Chinese Communist Party.

Supply-chain resilience, maritime security and cooperation in space were also discussed, according to USIRC.The lawmakers were Representatives Jonathan

Jackson and Raja Krishnamoorthi of Illinois; Rich McCormick of Georgia; Young Kim, Derek Tran, Scott Peters, Jimmy Panetta and Sydney Kamlager-Dove of California; and Suhas Subramanyam of Virginia.USIRC is a registered political action committee that advocates stronger US-India relations and supports candidates it considers committed to the bilateral partnership.The organisation said it is concentrating its advocacy on lawmakers who serve, or are likely to serve, on congressional committees dealing with foreign affairs.

McCormick, a Georgia Republican, offered some of the strongest comments on the relationship during the meetings, according to USIRC.He described the prospect of the world’s largest economy working with a country expected to become the world’s third-largest economy as “very exciting and full of potential.”McCormick said the US-India relationship was the “top most priority” when viewed in the context of the world’s future, according to the group’s account.He also said Washington and New Delhi should ensure that the two countries are “not just friends, but allies into the future.”USIRC said Krishnamoorthi, an Illinois Democrat, was “very forthright about his commitment to the US India relationship.”

The organisation described Kim, a California Republican, as a longtime supporter of stronger relations with India.Subramanyam, an Indian American Democrat from Virginia, urged greater political participation with the message: “Get involved, Stay involved,” according to the release.USIRC said Tran expressed a commitment to building the relationship “for years to come,” while Peters expressed support for stronger bilateral ties.Panetta discussed opportunities for mutual growth in several areas, the organisation said.Kamlager-Dove, who serves as the ranking Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee covering South and Central Asia, stressed the importance of engaging the diaspora in strengthening bilateral relations, according to USIRC.The organisation said its meetings produced broad agreement on the importance of the Indo-Pacific and the need for Washington and New Delhi to deepen cooperation.USIRC listed among what it called “points of consensus” that threats from the Chinese Communist Party should be addressed “collectively and cohesively” and that the United States and India are “natural allies.”USIRC said differences between the United States and India should be addressed through dialogue and diplomacy while the two countries continue expanding cooperation in strategic areas.

Two workers pulled out alive from Trishuli 3A tunnel in Nepal

GNS News Agency, Sept 5Kathmandu: Rescuers on Friday pulled out two men alive from a tunnel at the Trishuli 3A Hydropower Project, which was affected by last week’s deadly floods, raising hopes that others could still be trapped inside. Nine days after a deadly flash flood tore through the Trishuli River corridor, sweeping away everything in its path and causing extensive damage to dozens of hydropower projects, two men employed at the Trishuli 3A Hydropower Project were rescued alive.The Secretariat of the Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation confirmed that Kabir Maharjan, 45, a supervisor for the Hydropower Automation Project of Upper Trishuli 3A from Kathmandu, and Sanjaya Sah, 30, a foreman from Saptari district, were rescued alive.

“They are being taken to hospital in Kathmandu after being airlifted,” the secretariat said. Sah was rescued earlier on Friday, followed by Maharjan, according to the latest information received from the rescue operation.The rescue followed an earlier breakthrough in which rescuers heard voices from inside the tunnel and established communication with people believed to be trapped there.

The Nepal Army and Armed Police Force intensified efforts to reach them after the voices were heard. According to local media reports, the rescue team called out to the trapped workers, asking them not to panic, and sustained efforts eventually paid off. The flash flood on August 26 swept through the Trishuli River valley, killing at least 1,252 people, while 5,053 people remained missing as of Thursday evening, according to the latest situation report released by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA).The floods also damaged several hydropower projects, including the 60 MW Upper Trishuli 3A Project, as well as key road links. Search teams have



since been working in difficult conditions to locate people who may have been trapped inside tunnels and other structures.

According to the minister’s secretariat, a joint team of the Nepal Army and Armed Police Force, including Chinese experts, has been deployed at the site. The team has been using five excavators, compressors and breakers, while tunnel drilling and holing work has been intensified to clear access to the tunnel. A large rock was located inside the tunnel, and blasting work was carried out to remove the obstruction and facilitate further search and rescue efforts.The Trishuli 3A hydropower plant was affected by the devastating floods in the Trishuli and Bhotekoshi river systems, which caused extensive damage to infrastructure in the region. The Independent Power Producers’ Association, an association of private-sector power developers, said on Thursday evening that as many as 945 people working in 11 hydropower projects affected by the floods remained out of contact.

US imposes new sanctions on Cuba amid deepening energy crisis

Havana: The US government on Thursday slapped new sanctions on Cuba in a fresh push to strangle the island’s economy and deepen its multiple crises.Among those hit with sanctions are Fidel Ernesto Castro, grandson of former President Paul Castro, and Cuba’s Oil Industry Supply Import Company, known as Abapet. The company is responsible for importing specialised equipment and spare parts needed to sustain Cuba’s crumbling power grid.The sanctions aim to push Cuba’s critical machinery offline and exacerbate its energy crisis, said Brett Erickson, a sanctions expert and managing principal at Obsidian Risk Advisors, a consulting firm. “The US is trying to really tighten the screws as much as possible,” he said. “The Trump administration seems to have no seriousness in accepting any change from Cuba other than a toppling of the regime. Marco is not going to let that go,” he added, referring to US Secretary of State Marco Rubio.Erickson anticipated that Cuba’s government would try to circumvent the sanctions “because they have to”. “They’ll get creative in how they try to procure these maintenance parts,” he said, warning that it would be a costlier alternative, which in turn would raise inflation and further hurt Cuba’s economy.Islandwide blackouts have become increasingly common, while daily outages in Cuba now surpass 24 hours as the aging grid fails and fuel reserves dwindle. This has occurred ever since US President Donald Trump, in late January, threatened tariffs on any country that sells or provides oil to the island. “The goal in theory is to create so much civilian hardship and suffering that they have no option but to essentially rise up and topple their government,” Erickson said. “It is an attempt to cause a humanitarian crisis.”Talks earlier this year between the US and Cuba have since halted, while sanctions have increased in recent months.Erickson said he expects the US to keep targeting smaller and smaller state companies to try to push them “into a death spiral”. The US has previously sanctioned entities includ-



ing Cuba’s state-owned oil and gas company.The US State Department made the announcement just hours after Cuban officials held a press conference to share more details on the historic economic reforms approved in June.When asked about the current situation in Cuba, Oscar Perez-Oliva Fraga, Cuba’s deputy prime minister and minister of foreign investment, blamed the US government. “This past year has been very complex, and we know why,” he said. “The blockade is a genocide.” He spoke before the sanctions were announced.Among the Cubans exhausted by the ongoing outages is 49-year-old Yaqueline Bernal. She said Thursday that she hasn’t had electricity since Sunday and worries most about the consequences for her eight young grandchildren. “If we don’t have power, we don’t have water,” she said. “You really don’t know what’s going to happen to you.”Eugenio Martinez Enriquez, Cuba’s ambassador to Mexico, condemned the sanctions on Thursday. “These neofascists aim to win through attrition and to make life unbearable for the people of Cuba,” he wrote on X.Meanwhile, Rubio asserted on X that those sanctioned “are part of the corrupt Castro financial and intelligence network”.

US military turns off ad trackers on devices amid Middle East targeting reports



WASHINGTON, U.S. military officials say they have disabled advertising trackers on a range of phones and computers,according to letters, opens new tabreleased on Friday by U.S. Senator Ron Wyden and statements given to Reuters, a development that follows reports that commercially available location data had been used to target American forces in the Middle East.

The Air Force told Wyden it disabled the advertising identifiers on computers and mobile phones two months ago. U.S. Special Operations Command said in a separate letter that it had “recently” disabled them on its Windows devices. The Army told Reuters that advertising IDs tied to mobile devices had been disabled since earlier this year.The Reuters Inside Track newsletter is your essential guide to global sports news. Sign up here.Wyden, an Oregon Democrat, has pressed the Pentagon on the issue for months.The disclosures highlight a growing national security concern: that location data collected by the advertising industry and sold by data brokers — companies that collate and resell personal data — can be used to track and target military personnel deployed to war zones.

The Air Force and Special Operations Command declined further comment. Similar letters from the Army and Navy to Wyden said they disabled advertising IDs on military devices but gave no indication of when the restrictions were imposed. The Army said in a statement that advertising IDs had been blocked on Windows computers “since

Deadly strike on Iranian wedding was likely a direct hit by a US munition, analysis shows

GNS News Agency, Sept 5LONDON/WASHINGTON - An explosion that ripped through a wedding celebration in southern Iran on Tuesday, killing four people and injuring at least 68 others, likely resulted from a direct hit by a U.S. munition and not a ricochet off another target, according to an analysis by weapons experts who reviewed images and video verified by Reuters.The incident in the small town of Kuhestak has reignited concerns about the civilian toll in the U.S. war with Iran and marks the most dramatic case since a missile struck an Iranian primary school in February, killing scores of children and teachers inside.

The U.S. Central Command had announced its forces carried out multiple strikes across Iran’s south on Sept. 1, targeting Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps air defense sites, radar systems, and communications facilities. The barrage came in retaliation for earlier Iranian attacks on U.S. military assets around the Gulf.On Thursday, U.S. Vice President JD Vance said the United States was investigating the strike. “We’re investigating it because obviously we care. We want to know,” Vance said during a White House press briefing.The U.S. military said it was aware of reports and was looking into them.

Iran’s delegation to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment.On the night of the attacks, dozens of residents had gathered in a home in Kuhestak for a wedding ceremony, according to eyewitnesses. During the party, a munition likely struck the building’s roof, according to photos and video verified by Reuters and reviewed by experts.Video taken after the strike shows debris inside the home where a wedding ceremony was held. Dress sandals are seen inside, along with colorful wedding decor in line with local customs. Social media via Reuters shared video and images of the incident with four military weapons experts who said the damage was consistent with a direct hit, as opposed to secondary damage from a munition ricocheting off a separate target. Three of the experts said the munition was likely a U.S. weapon, rather than an errant Iranian air defense missile.

One of the experts said the weapon may have simply missed its objective.“Given the number of bombs that have been dropped, this does occur from time to time even with the most sophisticated guidance systems,” said Gareth Collett, a retired British Army brigadier who specialized in counterterrorist bomb disposal and holds a doctorate in explosives engineering.

After the strike, bloody shoes lay amid the rubble, and wedding decorations that are common in that part of Iran were strewn about, the images show.One eyewitness sent a voice note to Reuters moments after the strike, saying: “Kuhestak is destroyed. Four, five, ten houses were destroyed. Many people are under the rubble. God help us.”

Local residents spoke on condition of anonymity.Two U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that the U.S. military had carried out strikes in the area of Kuhestak on Sept. 1, specifically targeting the town’s telecommunications tower.That tower is roughly 135 meters from the site of the wedding celebration, according to satellite imagery. The tower was hit at approximately 9:30 PM local time, according to Iranian media.

One of the U.S. officials said the government is looking at various scenarios related to the casualties at the wedding, including whether they were caused by a U.S. strike, some sort of ricochet of an Iranian air defense missile, or an errant interceptor itself.The count of four deaths and 68 injuries came from Balochestan Human Rights Documentation Network and Haalshv, which monitor and document human rights abuses.Three of the people killed were guests of the wedding — Kolsom Mollahi Najhandania, 43; Zarkhatoon Taheri, 50; and four-year-old Amir Mohammad Karimi — according to the groups. The fourth person, 16-year-old Mohammad Mallahi, was killed while riding his motorcycle near the communications tower.The names have also been confirmed in Iranian media.The incident comes more than six months after a missile destroyed a primary school in Minab on Feb. 28, hours after the start of the U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran that launched the current conflict. That hit killed more than 175 children and teachers, according to Iranian officials.The Pentagon has not publicly released the findings of its investigation into the Minab strike, which was the U.S. military’s biggest civilian casualty incident in decades. But Reuters first reported on March 5 that an initial, internal U.S. military investigation showed U.S. forces were likely responsible for that strike

before 2021” but that Android and Apple mobile devices had only had it disabled by default “since at least February 2026.”Messages seeking comment from the Navy went unreturned.

The effort to reduce the location data generated by smartphones comes as military officials weigh increasingly strict restrictions on phone use overall. In July, Reuters reported that some deployed personnel in the Middle East could be ordered to surrender their phones amid concerns that mobile videos they were posting to the internet were helping Iran target American bases in the region.Wyden and U.S. Representative Pat Harrigan, a North Carolina Republican, sent a letter to the Pentagon on Friday asking for an investigation into whether the military had properly countered the dangers of the location data trade. The letter included the updates from the various service branches on their efforts to disable advertising IDs on military devices.Wyden said in a statement that it was clear that the military’s efforts “have not been effective at neutralizing this threat.” Harrigan said that U.S. enemies “should not be able to pull out a credit card and buy information that helps them track American troops.”The Pentagon said in an email it would respond to the lawmakers directly.Mobile advertising IDs, often abbreviated MAID, are unique identifiers tied to specific devices that can be used to track a person’s activity across mobile apps and pinpoint their physical location.Zach Edwards, co-founder of privacy ad tech company Decryptads, said that efforts to disable MAID on military-operated devices were “definitely a positive thing.”The restrictions “will essentially ensure their location isn’t being included in bulk data sales being done by numerous vendors,” although he cautioned that personnel might still be tracked through apps in other more complicated ways, for example by triangulating technical device details with network data or location information.Reporting by Raphael Satter; Editing by Sanjeev Miglani and Saad SayeedOur Standards: The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles., opens new tabReporter covering cybersecurity, surveillance, and disinformation for Reuters. Work has included investigations into state-sponsored espionage, deepfake-driven propaganda, and mercenary hacking.



on the opening day of the war with Iran.

At approximately 9:30 PM local time on Sept. 1, posts on social media started to circulate about an attack on the local wedding.Human rights groups in touch with local residents said that after the strike, local authorities pressured eyewitnesses not to discuss the attack with foreign media.Reuters spoke to residents through intermediaries.“At the wedding, there were a lot of people. Many [injured] people have been taken away, many more [injured people] are being taken right now,” one local resident said in a voice message just after the wedding was hit.Photographs provided to Reuters show the telecommunications tower after the strike. The structure is on the ground and mangled metal is visible. Iranian Red Crescent Society via REUTERS

Iranian state media, citing telecommunication authorities in Hormozgan, said the tower was a civilian structure that delivers mobile, telephone, and internet services to people living in the surrounding Sirik County.During the six-month war in Iran, the U.S. military has repeatedly struck Iranian radar and communications facilities near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, with the aim of stopping the Iranian military from threatening commercial ships and oil tankers transiting the waterway.

Iran has shown that it can throttle energy shipments in the strait, driving up global energy costs and creating a political challenge for the Trump administration ahead of the U.S. midterm Congressional elections.Trevor Ball, a former U.S. Army explosive ordnance disposal technician and current weapons technical analyst for Armament Research Services, was among the experts who reviewed the photos and video at Reuters’ request.“The damage seen appears to be from a munition which detonated on contact with the roof, or just above the roof,” he said, adding it was apparently a direct hit.“The visible blast damage could not result from fragments from the nearby strike on the communications tower striking the area.”

“The weight of evidence leans towards a U.S. 500 lb air-dropped munition as opposed to an Iranian air defence missile,” he said.Sebastian Schutte, a Research Professor at the Peace Research Institute in Oslo also reviewed the visual material. Based on available evidence, he also agreed that the hole on the roof was not the result of a ricochet off of the telecommunications tower.The three experts said it was unlikely that a misfired Iranian missile had destroyed the home.Schutte said the angle of the impact was inconsistent with an air defense missile, and Collett said there was no evidence of the kind of fragmentation that would normally be present with an air defense warhead.Various weapons fragments were also shown on Iranian media. Ball identified “some of these remnants” as belonging to a joint standoff weapon (JSOW), a type of glide bomb commonly used by the U.S. military.Reuters could not verify that the fragments came from the attack on the house in Kuhestak.On September 3, mourners gathered to pay their respects in a funeral procession for 4-year-old Amir Mohammad Karimi in the town of Sirik, Hormozgan Province. WANA via REUTERSOn Thursday, residents of Kuhestak held a funeral for those killed. Mourners filled the procession, carrying a casket and holding posters above their heads as a funeral prayer played in the background.Women wearing black full body cloaks with bright red traditional facemasks distinctive to the southern coastal region of Iran, threw flowers on 4-year-old Amir Mohammad Karimi’s small casket as it passed.“The situation in Sirik is sad and mournful, and people are still in shock,” said one eyewitness.(This Sept 3 story has been corrected to fix the designation of JD Vance to Vice President, not President, in paragraph 4)

How is a census of river dolphins carried out? | Explained



The story so far: The first ever census of Gangetic dolphins, the only riverine dolphins in India, which began four years ago, has found 6,327 of the species in the river Ganga and its tributaries.

What did the census survey find?

The Environment Ministry on March 3, commemorated as World Wildlife Day, released a report by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), a Ministry body, that said there are 6,324 Ganges river dolphins, and three Indus river dolphins (a related species). There are an average of 3,275 dolphins in the main stem of the Ganga; 2,414 in the Ganga tributaries; 584 in the Brahmaputra mainstream; 51 in the Brahmaputra tributaries; and three dolphins in the river Beas. The effort began in 2021 and spanned a cumulative distance of 8,507 km along the stretches of the river and its tributaries. The maximum number of dolphins were reported in Uttar Pradesh (2,397), followed by Bihar (2,220), West Bengal (815) Assam (635) Jharkhand (162) Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh (95) and Punjab (3).

Why was such a survey necessary?

River dolphins grow slowly and are found in some of the most threatened habitats, vulnerable particularly to getting entangled in the nets of fishermen. Project Dolphin was launched on August 15, 2020 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to evolve a programme to conserve both marine and riverine dolphins by engaging multiple stakeholders such as the forest department, fishermen, and the fisheries department. In all, 58 rivers were surveyed, of which 28 were traversed by boat and 30 by road survey where Gangetic dolphins have been sighted historically.

How was the survey conducted?

Nearly all wild animals that are surveyed from time to time are land animals. Observational techniques and statistical modelling methods have evolved over the years to

estimate their numbers using camera traps, line transects, tracking their excreta, pug marks, and traces of their DNA. However, dolphins present a unique challenge. They are primarily underwater animals, and emerge for air only for seconds. This leaves very little time for an observer to characterise them. Being water-borne, they don't leave traceable biological samples that can be collected for analysis. This doesn't mean that wildlife research scientists haven't attempted to count them. The number of Ganges river dolphins has been estimated to be between 4,000 and 5,000 towards the end of the 20th century. This dropped to 1,800, according to a 2008 study. More recent studies estimate it to be between 3,500 and 4,500 though these are said to be "guesstimates," and primarily based on counting the number of dolphins seen from a boat on pre-defined stretches. For the Project Dolphin survey, the scientists used a combination of "visual and acoustic surveys." Here, two teams of observers on a boat, coasting at a constant speed, independently recorded a dolphin sighting. Every time they sighted a dolphin, they noted the distance of the sighting from their boat, whether the animals were adults or 'neonates', and whether it was the same dolphin sighted before. Then, these observations were correlated with an acoustic survey. Dolphins are largely blind and communicate via sounds, or echo-location like bats. Scientists used a hydrophone, or an underwater microphone, that can record these sounds. Using signal processing, it is possible to identify with a fairly high accuracy, unique individuals, the WII report said. For their final assessments, results from both these methods were combined with mathematical techniques.

What are the threats faced by the dolphins?

Accidental deaths from being entangled in fishing nets are a major threat. Unlike in poaching, where certain animals are actively hunted, dolphins wade into these nets and are unable to free themselves to break into the surface for air and are thus suffocated. Large-meshed gillnets made from nylon and polythene monofilament are particularly dangerous for them, says a report from the Wildlife Conservation Trust of India (WCT). According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List, the Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) are classified as 'Endangered.' Studies estimate that 4%-5% of dolphins die this way. The WCT report, however, mentions that there have been instances where the dolphins, once caught in these nets, are sometimes "opportunistically killed." The oil extracted from their fat, or blubber, is used as a bait in India and Bangladesh for catching catfish.

Russian special forces attack Ukrainian forces in Kursk via gas pipeline, bloggers say



MOSCOW,EMS News Agency, Sept 2 Russian special forces crept miles through a major gas pipeline near the town of Sudzha in an attempt to surprise Ukrainian forces as part of a major offensive to eject Ukrainian soldiers from the western Russian region of Kursk, pro-Russian war bloggers said. Thousands of Ukrainian soldiers seized about 1,300 square km of Russia's Kursk region in August last year in what Kyiv said was an attempt to gain a bargaining chip in future negotiations and to force Russia to shift forces from eastern Ukraine.

Russia has been pressing the attack with some success in recent days, with open source maps on Friday showing Kyiv's contingent in Kursk nearly surrounded after rapid Russian advances. Russian advances in 2024 and U.S. President Donald Trump's upending of U.S. policy on Ukraine and Russia have caused fears among European leaders that Ukraine will lose the war and that Trump is turning his back on Europe. The United States paused military aid and the sharing of intelligence with Ukraine this month after a meeting between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy on February 28 descended into acrimony in front of the world's media. In its daily update on the situation in Kursk, Russia's Defence Ministry said its forces had retaken the village of Lebedevka, as well as seizing Novenke, a hamlet across the border in Ukraine's neighbouring Sumy region. Yuri Podolyaka, a Ukrainian-born, pro-Russian military blogger, said Russian special

forces had walked miles along the inside of the major gas pipeline and some had spent several days in the pipe before surprising Ukrainian forces from the rear near Sudzha. Sudzha is the home of major gas transfer and measuring stations on a pipeline that used to carry Russian natural gas into the Ukrainian gas transmission system for onward transportation to Europe. Pro-Russian war blogger Two Majors said a major battle was under way for Sudzha and that Russian forces had surprised Ukrainian soldiers by entering the area via a major gas pipeline.

Russian Telegram channels showed pictures of special forces in gas masks and lights, some using colourful Russian curses, along the inside of what looked like a large pipe. A statement from Ukraine's general staff said that Russian soldiers had used the gas pipeline in an attempt to gain a foothold, but airborne assault forces promptly detected them and responded with rocket, artillery and drone attacks that were destroying the Russian units. Owing to battlefield reporting restrictions on both sides, Reuters was unable to verify the reports.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has led to the biggest confrontation between the West and Russia since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. Both the Kremlin and White House have said missteps could trigger World War Three. In the eastern Donetsk region, where Russian forces have made slow but steady progress during gruelling fighting in what was once Ukraine's industrial heartland, Moscow said on Sunday that its forces had taken the village of Konstantynopil. Ukraine's incursion into Kursk last August was the most serious attack on Russian territory since the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. "Fighting continued throughout the night in Sudzha," said Podolyaka, adding that part of the town was under Russian control. Another war blogger, Yuri Kotenok, said that Ukrainian forces have been moving equipment away from Sudzha, closer to the border. "At the moment, our units are attacking in the north-eastern part of Sudzha and fighting in the area of ??Lomonosov Street and the industrial zone of Sudzha," Kotenok said. The Soviet-era Urengoy-Pomary-Uzhgorod pipeline used to bring gas from western Siberia via Sudzha to Ukraine but Ukraine terminated all Russian gas transit through its territory from January

what does it mean to be human in an age of thinking machines?

What are you going to do in an economy when there is going to be massive displacement due to AI? Can AI chatbots replace teachers? Do you have to worry about your brain being scanned for targeted ads? These were some of the questions that were addressed during the annual Synapse Conclave in the capital last month, where over 40 speakers, including Nobel laureates, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists, neuroscientists and philosophers, joined AI pioneers to discuss what it means to be human in an age of thinking machines.

"The core intention was the intersection between science, tech and society," says Shoma Chaudhury, journalist and founder-director of Synapse and the firm behind it, Lucid Lines Productions. While last year's edition matched AI with quantum technology and biotechnologies, this year the team focused on the brain, life sciences and bio engineering. "AI and the life sciences — material sciences, climate change — they are all converging. Typically, science and tech conferences are very B2B. For instance, you will have a crypto conference or fintech conference or an AI conference. Here, we were making visible the intersection between all these sciences, its potencies and opportunities but also its ethics and impacts on society," Chaudhury continues. For the 1,500-strong audience, which included entrepreneurs, doctors, 10 sitting High Court judges, Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, people from the ministries, architects, artists, even those from Bollywood, there was a sense of learning something entirely new and its relevance to one's life. Take, for instance, the debate around technology giving access to the inner workings of the brain and the need for laws to regulate this. Lawyer and AI ethicist Nita Farahany, a Synapse speaker also known for her TED talk on the right to mental privacy in the age of AI, has often highlighted how we are quickly moving into a world where what one is thinking and feeling is just as transparent and can be just as easily decoded using AI and neurotechnology. Last year, in an interview with Manoush Zomorodi, the host of TED Radio Hour from NPR, she pointed out that while "consumer neurotech devices could finally enable us to treat our brain health and wellness as seriously as we treat the rest of our physical well-being and that regular use of brain sensors could even enable us to detect the earliest stages of the most aggressive forms of brain tumours... all of this will only be possible if people can confidently share their brain data without fear that it will be misused against them". These concerns were reiterated by Carme Artigas when I spoke with her at Synapse 2025. Artigas has served as a co-chair of the UN's AI Advisory Body from 2023 to 2024 and was also secretary of state for digitisation and AI in Spain. As an AI safety advocate, these days she appears as much an inhabitant of an uncertain frontier as the scientists, considering what her domain has been up against (AI safety has gone out of style, what with the U.S. and the U.K. refusing to sign on to a joint statement at Paris' AI Action Summit emphasising safe and responsible use of the technology). "There's no one in the world who disagrees with the need to develop AI in an ethical way," Artigas says. "But companies use this as an argument to say they don't need regulation because they already have their code of ethics. Well, ethics is subjective, and changes from country to country and from CEO to CEO." Artigas points to an EU ban on scanning brainwaves. "Immersive technology already exists, like in hospitals. The problem is when this goes out of the hospital and it becomes a consumer good... if I buy earphones from Apple, Apple has a patent already registered where they can read your mind through your earphones. Then what is the ethical use of that? Who is preventing a commercial company from maximising their benefit by using your brainwave data and selling it to a consumer?" As things stand, outside the European Union, there's largely more regulation of household appliances than there is of AI. These were the conversations that took centrestage at the conclave, as everyone from adman Prahlad Kakkar to filmmaker R. Balki from the audience paid attention to the speakers. While the event opened with robot Sophia — which rolled onto the stage, answered some light questions and had the crowd whipping out their phones — attendees now familiar with generative AI were more curious about what happens when we take these capabilities and plug our brains into them (or plug them into our brains)? "People essentially want to live longer and healthier lives," admits Elena Sergeeva, an advisor at the Foresight



Institute, which isn't just looking at brain-computer interfaces but is offering grants to leverage such brain-computer links to compete with the super-intelligent AIs of the future. Just like some of the other speakers, her work also looks into using biotech to extend lifespans. While the marriage of AI and biotech may seem new, Sergeeva points out that these are technologies that have long been intertwined. AlphaFold, first released in 2018 by Google parent Alphabet, has been used in predicting protein structures, a critical process that is of use to pharmaceutical researchers. "AI has already been helpful in drug discovery," Sergeeva says. "In a few years, it will not be possible to do biotech without any AI support." So what if these advances — like arresting ageing — burden the world with overpopulation, or what if they remain available only to the rich? "Humans are 'transhumanistic' all the time," Sergeeva responds. "In the past, nobody could imagine that if you have bad vision, you can just use glasses... Technologists will develop in synchrony. When technologies appear, they are kind of a luxury, but over time, they become available to everyone. Businesses compete to make it cheaper and better." Synapse founder Chaudhury says these conversations reflect how young tech entrepreneurs are thinking in the country. Awais Ahmed, founder and CEO of Bengaluru-based space-tech start-up Pixxel, is a prime example, she says. "Extremely tech-savvy and optimistic, they believe in techno-solutionism. It has opened my mind, even when I debate or question some of their enterprises. They don't think death, age, or the nature of human intelligence is inevitable. They believe that intelligence itself can evolve into something else. It is disturbing at some levels and eye-opening at another," she says. Earlier that day, when I opened Instagram, the platform had an ad featuring someone selling shared GenAI subscriptions on the cheap. The last time I saw such illegal ads on the social app was for shared Netflix subscriptions. More than 65% of Indians polled by Microsoft said they used AI, over double the global average of 31%. And Indians are using AI more and more for a host of things: it's not just about automating homework or writing polite emails with formal English. An increasing number of young Indians are using services like Character.AI to substitute real world friendships, or even emulate a relationship. This is particularly interesting for the consequences it can wreak on young people resorting to AI for guidance at sensitive times in their lives (see box). Beyond making digital friends and romantic partners, though, there's 'vibe coding,' a term invented by the computer scientist Andrej Karpathy. Give a chatbot information on what you want a piece of code to do, and it handholds a user on how to deploy it. I have no coding background, and while writing this paragraph, I was able to write a piece of code on my phone that will now alert me whenever the Union government's gazette website puts out a notification for the ministries I cover. This may well take off massively among young IT graduates, with many tinkering with unfamiliar coding environments, and perhaps successfully fooling prospective firms about their actual capabilities. Or they could just make really cool code for themselves. Then there are agentic models, which can take over an entire device and automate tasks end-to-end, as though a human was going through the steps. At the very least, we can expect something like "Send good morning messages to each family member on WhatsApp". At the limit, imagine autonomous embodied AI bots that, unlike Sophia, can actually take chores off your hands. On the industrial side, Automation Anywhere, a San Jose-based firm that develops AI code for robotic automations, said 40% of its deployments globally were in India.

Tahawwur Hussain Rana: In the terror web

According to U.S. investigations, Tahawwur Hussain Rana's links to the 26/11 attacks go back to August 2005, when he and his old school-mate from the Hasan Abdal Cadet College in Pakistan's Punjab province, David Coleman Headley (born Daood Syed Gilani) first discussed the plot. Headley had been chosen and trained by Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) chief Hafiz Saeed to conduct reconnaissance surveys in Mumbai and in other Indian cities for targets that would maximise the death of civilians and make an impact on the world. Rana, a businessman with a Canadian passport who ran a travel and immigration consultancy and butchery in Chicago, was well-placed to provide Headley with support, a place to stay, and the ability to provide false travel documents for tickets and visas. As children at the Hasan Abdal Cadet College, Rana and Headley had become close friends, said U.S. prosecutors, and although they separated in their teens when Headley's American mother took him out of school and returned to the U.S., they stayed in touch. Rana joined the Pakistani Army, serving for several years before he reportedly developed a medical condition, and left under a cloud for Canada in 1997. In Ottawa, neighbours remember Rana and his family seldom mixed with the community, Canadian newspapers reported at the time of his arrest. In Chicago a few years later, Rana reunited with his former cadet-schoolmate, and the two met regularly, which the U.S. investigators showed with a series of wire-taps and phone records provided to the courts. "Headley proposed using Rana's immigration business as a front for Lashkar's surveillance activities, with Headley posing as an 'immigration consultant' for Rana in Mumbai. To sweeten the deal for Rana, Headley offered to help resolve Rana's status as a deserter from the Pakistani Army," said the facts recorded by the U.S. District Court of Appeals in California, while ordering his extradition to India.

Pawn or handler?

While Rana has consistently denied being anything but a pawn in Headley's plans, some investigators have questioned whether Rana was in fact Headley's "handler", and had been sent to Canada early to serve the ISI's objectives by building a 'cover'. Indian prosecutors who secured his conviction in absentia in 2011 argued that Rana's involvement was intense — from helping Headley secure a five-year multiple entry visa to India to organising his tickets and stay in Mumbai and other cities, to liaising with a Pakistani known as "Major Iqbal" for instructions. In November 2008, just days before the attacks, Rana himself travelled to Mumbai with his wife, although he claimed he was there for business only. A month later, fresh from their "success" in plotting and planning the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, which was carried out by 10 Pakistani terrorists of the LeT who killed 166, Rana reportedly listened as Headley described their next target. Headley had been assigned by the LeT to conduct a surveillance operation on the Jylland-Posten newspaper in Denmark. The plan was to build the blueprint, as they had for 26/11, for terrorists on a suicide mission to attack the newspaper that had published cartoons depicting Prophet Muhammad. According to the account of the conversation, given by Headley in his "plea bargain" (filed with the United States District Court Northern District Of Illinois Eastern Division in October 2009), the order for the mission came not from the Lashkar-e-Toiba or its handlers in the Pakistani military, but from the "elders", and conveyed to him through Ilyas Kashmiri, a shadowy Pakistani terror-commander believed to work for ISI and al-Qaeda. The orders were chilling — that the suicide attackers would be head journalists in the newsroom and throw their heads on to the street below to "heighten the response from Danish authorities". Far from being appalled, however, Rana got to work on helping Headley falsify details for travel documents, printing business cards for Headley as an "Immigration Consultant" working for him, and other details, to secure Headley a meeting inside the newspaper office, which Headley did, a few weeks later. The plea bargain filed after Headley was arrested in Chicago's O'Hare in October 2009 for "The Mickey Mouse" conspiracy (named after the cartoons) in



Denmark, which exempted Headley from the death penalty or from being extradited, was a setback for Indian officials, as investigators had hoped to try the Mumbai 26/11 mastermind in India and glean details of his links to Pakistan's ISI, al-Qaeda, LeT, Hafiz Saeed, and co-conspirators in India, Pakistan and the US. But more than that, it was a blow for Tahawwur Rana's hopes that he could escape justice for his role in the attacks, by pleading that he was an innocent bystander on Headley's work, and had, as his lawyers said been "misled" by his childhood friend. New Delhi was also angry that the U.S. who was surveilling Headley, a former agent of their Drugs Enforcement Administration (DEA), closely by then, did not tell them when Headley returned to India in February 2009 for another LeT reconnaissance operation. Although the U.S. courts acquitted Rana of charges on the Mumbai 26/11 attacks, they convicted him for involvement in the Jyllands-Posten case and his links with the LeT, sentencing him to 14 years imprisonment before he was released early in 2020. As Rana worked his way through levels of appeal after U.S. courts approved his extradition to India, and now awaits the last port of appeal, the U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Roberts, he has had much time to think about the twists of fate that mean that it is he, and not his friend and co-conspirator who then testified against him, who will have to answer for the Mumbai attacks, and face justice for both their actions.

Hindu temple vandalised in US with anti-India graffiti

New York: A prominent Hindu temple in California was defaced with anti-India graffiti by some unknown persons in another incident targeting the community's sacred spaces in the US. Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) said that its Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Chino Hills city of San Bernardino County faced desecration. Chino Hills borders Los Angeles County. "In the face of another Mandir desecration, this time in Chino Hills, CA, the Hindu community stands steadfast against hate. Together with the community in Chino Hills and Southern California, we will never let hate take root," the BAPS Public Affairs posted on X. "Our common humanity and faith will ensure that peace and compassion prevail," it said, without providing details of the incident. Hindu American Foundation, a non-profit advocacy group, said the vandalism at the largest Hindu temple in California occurred on Saturday and demanded the FBI and its Director Kash Patel to probe the matter. "We ask @ChinoHills_PD, @FBI @FBI Director Kash @DNIGabbard to investigate this latest in a string of anti-Hindu hate crimes on our sacred spaces," it said. The Coalition of Hindus of North America (CoHNA), an advocacy group dedicated to improving the understanding of Hinduism in North America, drew attention to past such cases and demanded a thorough investigation. "Another Hindu Temple vandalised — this time the iconic BAPS temple in Chino Hills, CA. It's just another day in a world where media and academics will insist there is no anti-Hindu hate and that #Hinduphobia is just a construct of our imagination," it said on X. "

How India’s UAE gold trade deal may have made its import bill concerns worse



As the effects of an energy shock from the West Asian crisis, now in its third month, reverberate globally, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday asked citizens to take measures to reduce the consumption of petroleum products and conserve foreign exchange reserves. He suggested reviving COVID-era measures, such as work-from-home arrangements, and avoiding non-essential foreign travel and gold purchases for a year.

The Prime Minister’s caution about gold purchases comes amid heightened risk of weakening macro fundamentals if the crisis drags on. The domestic currency, under pressure since late last year due to weakening foreign investment in the country in the backdrop of steep US tariffs, slipped to a record low of \$95.63 against the US dollar on Tuesday as crude prices remained above \$100 a barrel due to a standstill in traffic via the Strait of Hormuz. Oil prices have surged nearly 50% since before the Iran war. However, this is not the first instance when the citizens have been asked to voluntarily stop gold purchases. In 2013, the then Finance Minister P Chidambaram had made similar appeals, even raising the customs duty on gold imports from 6% to 10% between May and August 2013 in the middle of this rupee turmoil after the ‘taper tantrum’ in the backdrop of the 2008 global financial crisis. The duty on gold is currently at 6%.

Economists point out that India’s heavy reliance on imported gold, close to 750 tonnes every year with negligible export offsets, has repeatedly emerged as a macro-economic concern, especially during external shocks. Since gold accounts for a substantial share of the country’s import bill, any sharp rise in purchases tends to widen the Current Account Deficit (CAD), put pressure on foreign exchange reserves and complicate the management of the rupee and inflation, especially during periods of external uncertainty. Offering concessions to the UAE as part of a trade deal seems to have catalysed a spurt in imports of gold from that country, according to experts. Structural challenges in the gold supply chain

India’s gold import in FY26 had jumped by nearly 25% to \$71.97 billion, compared to \$58 billion in the previous financial year. This was largely due to the value of gold prices, with gold imports in FY26 falling to 721.04 tonnes compared to 757.09 tonnes in the previous financial year, data released by the Commerce and Industry Ministry showed. Gold prices have surged over 40% in the last year, inflating the import bill. A working paper by IIM Ahmedabad titled ‘Strategic Acquisition and Value Addition of Gold Resources for India’ said that with an annual demand of approximately 750 tonnes, India stands as one of the world’s largest gold consumers. However, India’s domestic production capabilities, a mere 1.5 tonnes annually, create one of the country’s most persistent macroeconomic challenges. “Despite these challenges, India’s approach to gold management has remained largely unchanged for decades, focusing primarily on demand-side interventions with limited success. Import duty adjustments have inadvertently fueled smuggling and prompted trade diversions through countries with preferential tariff structures, particularly Least Developed Countries,” the report authored by Sundaravalli Narayanaswami and

Anatomy of a NEET leak: A paid WhatsApp group, a whistleblower under cloud, and a ‘guess paper’ that spread like wildfire

The unravelling of a suspected leak in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG), 2026, in Rajasthan began with an automated fine print on a WhatsApp message: “Forwarded many times.” When investigators following the trail of a “guess paper” stumbled upon this WhatsApp message, they realised that what they hoped was an isolated leak was much larger in scale.

Officials of the Rajasthan Special Operations Group (SOG), which had been investigating the case before the CBI took charge on Tuesday, said that they found a WhatsApp group named ‘Private Mafia’, where the said paper was being circulated and had members who had paid various amounts, beginning from around Rs 5,000, to join the group. However, despite strict “instructions” from the group administrators not to share the paper, it was circulated far and wide. Officials said that preliminary investigation had indicated that the paper may have leaked from Nashik, Maharashtra. Nashik police officials said they have picked up a medical student, identified as Shubham Khaimar (30), who allegedly managed to obtain the question paper days before the exam and shared it further. Kishor Kale, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Nashik City, said that Shubham’s questioning indicates that he “got the question paper from one of his associates in Pune”. “He received a physical copy of the question paper and transferred it to others as a soft copy,” Kale said, adding that it is being investigated whether this soft copy was the “guess paper” or the actual question paper. “He was a student of Bachelor of Ayurveda, Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) in Bhopal last year and stays in Nashik with his family. We received information from the Rajasthan SOG early Tuesday morning about taking him into custody. We apprehended him and brought him to the crime branch office. As per the preliminary inquiry, he was also a part of the (paper leak) syndicate. We are now transferring him to the CBI,” Kale said. But he insisted that “rumours of paper leaking from Nashik are baseless” and that “the paper wasn’t printed here.” Kirankumar Chauhan, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Nashik, said, “The accused had changed his appearance by cutting his hair, making identification difficult. However, based on technical analysis and police investigation, the Crime Branch team managed to trace and detain him.” Officials suspect he purchased the paper for Rs 10 lakh and later sold it for Rs 15 lakh.

Shubham is alleged to have shared the paper with people in Gurgaon and elsewhere, with copies eventually

Anmaya Agarwal said.

The IIM paper pointed out that the fundamental supply-demand imbalance necessitates massive imports, chiefly as finished bullion (approximately 500 tonnes) and doré (essentially the semi-pure alloy of gold and silver created at mine sites; approximately 250 tonnes), though these proportions remain somewhat fluid. The import structure is heavily skewed toward finished products, significantly limiting domestic value addition opportunities. “Policy initiatives have sometimes exacerbated this challenge, as evidenced by the UAE trade deal agreement that inadvertently incentivised bullion imports over doré by creating a more favourable tariff structure for the former... the deal with the UAE has created unintended consequences by inverting the intended duty differential between bullion and doré,” the report said. Giving concessions to the UAE for importing gold from the country under the deal has inflated the import bill, as India does not source gold from countries that offer prices cheaper than market value and lacks refining capacity. Certain countries, such as Argentina, Peru, and the Dominican Republic, supply gold at below-average import costs. But these countries collectively represent only 15% of India’s total gold imports. “Alternative gold sources show promising development, with imports of gold ores and concentrates increasing (primarily from Colombia, with emerging volumes from Taiwan and Peru) and gold colloidal and compounds growing substantially (with Japan emerging as the dominant supplier),” the paper said.

Several countries, such as Switzerland, that do not produce gold have become gold trading hubs on the back of refining infrastructure. Using world-class London Bullion Market Association (LBMA) refineries, they have transformed low-cost gold doré into high-purity bullion for global distribution. This refining process generates approximately 40% value addition, neutralising trade deficit concerns through substantial high-value exports, the report pointed out. Japan, for instance, has 11 LBMA refineries which recycle roughly 500 tonnes of gold scrap annually to sustain massive export capacities. They exploit “urban mining” by recovering metals from electronic waste, which contains far higher gold concentrations than primary ore, the IIM paper pointed out. India has only one LBMA refinery. While global gold trading hubs have used refining capacity to close vulnerabilities around gold imports, India’s gold refineries remain underutilised and lack the required policy support.

A Niti Aayog report released last month found that, unlike established global hubs such as Switzerland and the UAE, which benefit from favourable policy regimes, large-scale operations, and deep integration with international markets, India’s gold-refining ecosystem continues to face multiple bottlenecks. Historically, the duty structure has not sufficiently incentivised refining, with only a narrow differential between doré and refined gold. While a modest advantage existed between 2013 and 2016, subsequent duty rationalisation under GST and post-2021 adjustments shrank margins for refiners, leading to closures. At the same time, capacity remains fragmented, while the number of refineries increased from fewer than five in 2013 to about 33 in ? most remain small operations under 50 tonnes annually, limiting economies of scale,” the Trade Watch Quarterly report said. Global integration is also constrained by limited international accreditation, with only one LBMA-accredited refinery, restricting access to global financial markets and reducing India’s ability to position itself within international supply chains, the report said. “These challenges are compounded by financial and operational constraints, including high working capital requirements, limited access to capital, regulatory complexities, and informal operations. Countries like Switzerland and Hong Kong are top gold exporters, with estimates stating that Switzerland alone refines 70% of the world’s gold, and this position is the result of the top refineries and their role in finance. Similarly, Hong Kong is the primary conduit for gold flows in and out of China, along with being a centre for financial trading in Western markets,” the Niti report said.

reaching Rajasthan, Kerala, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir, and possibly other states. Those who received it included students and career counsellors. One paper, many trails SOG officials also reached Sikar on Tuesday as part of their investigation, putting the spotlight on the district that has recently emerged as an alternative to Kota, especially for NEET coaching. SOG officials said their investigation also indicated that an MBBS student from Rajasthan’s Shekhawati, who is studying in Kerala, allegedly shared the paper with their father, who runs a paying-guest accommodation in Shekhawati, before the examination. This was shared further, spreading the leaked paper. Ajay Pal Lamba, the SOG Inspector General, said that more than 150 candidates, their friends and parents have been questioned so far. The SOG has also submitted a list of 150 students and about 70 parents, who allegedly received the paper, to the CBI. Additionally, two dozen key suspects have been handed over to the CBI, Lamba said. He said that the investigation has revealed that the accused allegedly conspired to sell the genuine question paper as “guess papers”. “Questioning several persons has pointed to an organised group. All these suspicious persons are being questioned by the CBI now. It is wrong to say that Rajasthan is the epicentre; it reached the state via other states. Before Rajasthan, it had reached a person near Gurgaon. It did not originate in Rajasthan,” he claimed, adding that so far, there is no link to gangs in Rajasthan that had earlier been linked to other paper leaks in the state. Before the messages circulating on WhatsApp blew the lid off the lead, sources said that a whistleblower in Rajasthan had approached the local police but did not get a positive response.

He then wrote to the National Testing Agency, which verified the complaint, and the Rajasthan SOG eventually initiated a probe. Sources said that the whistleblower himself is now under scrutiny for allegedly receiving and sharing the question paper, and that he may have complained to avoid arrest once the leak became widespread. NTA Director General Abhishek Singh on Tuesday said the whistleblower had said he received a WhatsApp message before the exam in which a few questions matched those in the actual examination. Addressing journalists in Jaipur, Vishal Bansal, Additional Director General of Police, SOG, had earlier said that the “guess paper” had over 400 questions, of which around 120 appeared in the actual examination. “And this guess paper was with students’ weeks before the examination, as far back as a month,” he said, adding that it was being shared “as a .pdf file of about 150 pages with over 400 questions.”



Now, as parallel investigations by the SIT and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) continue, the scam has emerged as one of the largest land grabs in the state. At the heart of the investigation are 117 properties spanning nearly 1.5 lakh sqm across North Goa, an area equivalent to 21 football fields.

On a Sunday morning in April 2022, a hurried meeting was called at Our Lady of Miracles, a church on a small hillock in Badem village, a close-knit community of 45 houses in Assagao, in North Goa’s Bardez taluka. After Mass, the priest asked the parishioners to settle down. Christina Dias, 53, a lawyer and local resident, then laid bare an elaborate plot that had been quietly unfolding around them. Badem was the target of a criminal conspiracy, she said, one of the many villages across North Goa where vast tracts of land had allegedly been grabbed by real-estate agents in connivance with government officials. But it was what Dias told them next that shook the gathering: the dead had been signing sale deeds in the village for years, and over half of its properties had already changed hands.

As complaints poured in from Calangute, Parra, Anjuna, Pilerne, Nerul and other villages in Bardez taluka, on June 15, 2022, the Goa government formed a seven-member Special Investigation Team (SIT), headed by the Superintendent of Police (Crime). According to land deeds, revenue documents and case and court records reviewed by The Indian Express, the land grab was part of a plot allegedly hatched by a group of real-estate brokers who used a trove of 500-year-old Portuguese-era land records to allegedly forge property titles. Goa Land Grab case The church in Badem where villagers were alerted of the scam in 2022. (Express photo by Pavneet Singh Chadha)

Now, as parallel investigations by the SIT and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) continue, the scam has emerged as one of the largest land grabs in the state. At the heart of the investigation are 117 properties spanning nearly 1.5 lakh sqm across North Goa, an area equivalent to 21 football fields. The scam was spun through three key loopholes: a largely Catholic population whose members had migrated over generations, leaving homes empty and unguarded; a real-estate boom that sent land prices in villages soaring; and an Archives department with poorly monitored and maintained records. In 2022, constituting an SIT in the state “for the first time ever to investigate matters of illegal land grabbing”, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said, “This has been happening for the last 20 years and it’s happening more over the last 15-20 years. Some people live abroad. Their properties are being illegally transferred to someone else... Goa, being one of the most sought-after destinations, has been the target of such criminals involved in illegal land grabbing.”

It was in early 2022 that residents in Badem started spotting “outsiders” surveying properties in the village: labourers fencing and clearing land, and contractors “threatening” owners. Speaking to The Indian Express, Dias, the local lawyer, pointed to property 78/2, where, in 2022, bouncers had allegedly set up sheds on a 18,500 sqm plot. Case records show the property was originally owned by Domingos Vincente De Souza and Maria Quiltera De Souza. After their deaths, it had passed on to their children. The revenue records, however, told a different story. A sale deed purportedly executed on February 19, 1934, claimed the original owners sold the property to a couple, Antonio Martinho Diniz and Antonia Francisca Pereira. The document showed Domingos to be unmarried at the time. Except, in 1934, Domingos had been married for years. His youngest child Mary was born in June that year. Goa Land Grab case As news of the scam spread, boards went up across Badem. (Express photo by Pavneet Singh Chadha) Another deed claimed the property was sold, bizarrely, to the same couple again in 1951.

Dias also spoke about property 39/6, co-owned by her relative Anacleto Vincent Monteiro. Revenue records, however, reflected a mutation proceeding with a new set of owners. Dias filed an objection and obtained certified copies of the mutation proceedings through RTI. The documents claimed Dias’s relative Monteiro, Miguel Arcanjo de Souza and other co-owners had executed a sale deed on November 26, 1951, in favour of the ancestors of the new owners. But, as Dias pointed out, Miguel had died in April 1951, nearly six months before “signing” the deed. Monteiro was 15 years old in 1951 and only became a co-owner through inventory proceedings in 2000, she said. “It was shocking to learn that my dead relative Miguel returned from his grave to execute this deed of sale,” Dias said. Anacleto Monteiro’s son Ashley, 50, remembers attending the church meeting. “Everyone was concerned. We were told that a set of people were trying to grab our ancestral properties through fraudulent means. The property was bequeathed to my father through inventory proceedings. It was shocking to hear that it had been sold by some third party, based on a forged sale deed. When the sale deed was supposedly executed, some co-owners were dead. How did the dead sign deeds?” he asked. Then, there is the case of “Aframento or Quinze Adicoes”, a property in Badem spanning 2,942.5 square metres co-owned by Matilda Leopoldina Coutinho on the western portion and Eliterio Anthony Carvalho on the eastern portion. The western portion had been gifted to Matilda’s husband Simon Paul Coutinho by Jose Pedro Coutinho and his wife Maria Anton D’Souza via a deed of gift in 1974. The eastern portion was recorded in the name of Maria Joaqueina Carvalho and Pascoal Carvalho. Yet, a sale deed dated June 25, 1996, claimed the two women — Maria Anton D’Souza and Maria Joaqueina Carvalho — were “married to each other” and had jointly sold the property to one Diago Roberto Rodrigues. Maria Joaqueina Carvalho had died in 1991, five years before the purported transaction.

Advocate Augustus Monteiro, who was helping villagers compile the list of targeted properties, learnt that his own family property in Anjuna was on the radar. A purported sale deed from 1951 showed his wife, mother-in-law and sister-in-law as joint owners of eight properties in Anjuna and that they had ‘sold’ them to one Antonio Pereira. His mother-in-law, Esperenca Oliveira, was 12 years old in 1951 and had been listed in the deed as the daughter of her father-in-law. His wife and sister-in-law were not even born that year.

Tucked in a valley between Anjuna and Siolim, Badem

is a largely Catholic village with old houses bearing Goan balcaos (covered front porches), courtyards and laterite stone walls. Over the years, as many residents migrated abroad, their homes remained vacant. Paddy fields have given way to large villas, driven partly by an urban elite re-locating to Goa after the pandemic and the resulting real estate boom.

After the church meeting, Dias asked every resident of the village to check the occupants’ column in Form 1 and XIV (documents with details of property ownership) in the revenue records on the Goa government’s Directorate of Settlement and Land Records website. Her team of eight then began quietly conducting inquiries at the offices of the mamlatdar and sub-registrar. They rushed to the Department of Archives and Archaeology in Panaji and found that more than half of Badem’s properties had allegedly been sold off by ‘dead ancestors’ to fictitious people using forged deeds and fraudulent mutation proceedings. Soon, boards went up across Badem: “Private Property. Not For Sale. Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted.” According to Dias, inquiries at the Department of Archives and Archaeology revealed that records had been tampered with. Pages 13 to 19 in book number 551, volume 328 of 1951, had been inserted and loosely bound with string; they were also shorter than the rest of the pages. An internal inquiry by the Archives department found that two genuine sale deeds had been removed from the register and four fake ones inserted, through which 45 properties had been targeted across Bardez taluka. “The dates of the deeds were not in chronological order, the pages of some deeds were shorter than the other pages in the books. There was a difference in handwriting. The paper quality, the shade of ink were different, there was a mismatch in the signature of the notary,” Dias said. With the scam exposed, the SIT made its first major arrest a week after it was formed in June 2022 — Vikrant Shetty, a 48-year-old real-estate broker. More arrests followed, including of Mohammed Suhail alias Michael, who is named in at least 13 FIRs and identified as the ‘mastermind’, and Rajkumar Maithi. While Suhail is in jail, Shetty and Maithi are out on bail. The ED, meanwhile, initiated a money laundering probe in July 2022, filing a prosecution complaint against 36 accused in 2024 and attaching properties worth over Rs 535 crore. Subsequently, the ED has filed four more prosecution complaints. In a disclosure statement, Suhail, the ED claimed, allegedly admitted to illegally acquiring more than 100 properties in Goa in the names of friends and associates over the last 15 years. Born in Chitradurga, Karnataka, the 49-year-old had dropped out after the third year of a BE programme in Honnavar and worked in his father’s tailoring business before turning to real-estate brokerage. Dismissing the ED’s allegations, Advocate Ritesh Rawal, who is representing Suhail, the main accused, said, “The matter is sub judice. Whether these statements [disclosures] are valid or not, or whether they can be corroborated, is a matter of trial. The ED proceedings are dependent on trial in the predicate offence. If the accused is proved to be innocent in the predicate offence, then there can be no PMLA conviction that can be attracted.”

Advocate Vibhav Amonkar, who has represented Suhail’s co-accused Shetty and Maithi, said, “The material at this juncture is highly insufficient to call anyone a mastermind. The investigation is ongoing and the trial will take its own course.” According to a senior police officer who was part of the SIT, the accused first identified vacant, unattended or dilapidated ancestral properties owned by people with common Goan surnames such as Fernandes, Rodrigues and D’Souza. The gang then allegedly obtained ownership and title information of properties from government offices, websites and the Registo de Agrimensor, a register maintained by Portuguese-era land surveyors. During the Portuguese regime, and for some time after Goa’s liberation in 1961, land deeds of all kinds were registered with notaries under the continental system of registration. In 1963, the powers of registration were transferred to sub-registrars and notary ex-officios under the Law Department, who took over the registers of deeds and wills from the old notaries. These books were subsequently handed over to the Department of Archives and Archaeology, which is today the custodian of archival records. The department holds over 3.2 lakh bound volumes, files and loose manuscripts containing approximately 3 crore folios, with the earliest record dating back to 1498.

Suhail allegedly told the ED that two sorters in the Archives department were paid Rs 15 lakh each to provide documents and pages of notarial books. The sorters would allegedly tear the original pages from the notarial books, and insert the new documents, showing forged sale deeds, in their place.

But the forgery required skill of a rare kind. The notarial deeds were typically in Portuguese and the forged pages, with details of the property changing hands, had to resemble the original script. According to the ED prosecution complaint, Suhail allegedly roped in his nephew Denver D’Souza, who was proficient in Portuguese, to reproduce the script. D’Souza also allegedly translated the Portuguese documents that were then used to draw succession deeds at sub-registrar offices, charging around Rs 15,000 per page. D’Souza is yet to be arrested. According to the ED, the main accused allegedly approached three Goan residents — Royson Rodrigues, Sandric Fernandes and Caetano Fernandes — and collected their personal documents, along with that of their ancestors, to forge succession records and land documents. The fabricated documents allegedly showed that the actual owners had long since sold the properties to the ancestors of the Goan residents. The mastermind then approached the sub-registrar offices at Canacona and Ponda to get succession certificates. Suhail also told investigators that three mamlatdars assisted him and were paid Rs 8 lakh in cash per property mutation. Advocate Anoop Gaoker, who is representing Royson, Sandric and Caetano, said, “The matter is sub judice before the courts.” While the investigation continues, back in Badem, the ordeal is far from over for Ashley Monteiro and other residents. “Though the properties are attached, the names of the original owners are still not reflecting in the revenue records. We are now forced to run from pillar to post to restore ownership and possession of properties which were snatched from us. I lost my father in 2024. He was a heart patient and all this stress took a toll on him,” he said. Across the village, the boards are still up: “Private Property. Not For Sale. Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted.” Target properties: Identify vacant properties, mainly with absentee or foreign-based owners; collect title details from govt offices, surveyor registers\Forge land deeds: Fabricate Portuguese-era sale deeds, showing original owners selling to accused’s ancestors. Bribe Archives department staff to insert fake pages into notarial books, supply certified copies\Establish inheritance: Use forged deeds to obtain fraudulent succession certificates from sub-registrar offices, impersonating legal heirs of fictional buyers\Fudge & sell: Bribe local revenue officials to delete original owners’ names from revenue records and substitute the accused’s associates. Execute nominal first sale deed to legalise the title, sell to unsuspecting buyers

Centre rebuffs criticism of methods, says 7.8% growth correct

With questions being raised about the higher-than-expected GDP growth rate of 7.8% in the April-June quarter, the statistics ministry on Wednesday issued a six-point rebuttal to the questions being raised about the numbers, asserting that its methods and the numbers released on Monday were correct.Saurabh Garg, Secretary in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), added that he expects a “more informed debate” to happen once the new methods used to calculate India’s GDP are understood.

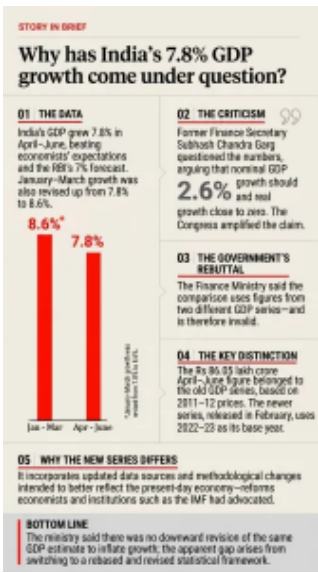
On Monday, MoSPI data showed India’s GDP grew 7.8% in April-June, much faster than what most economists expected and significantly higher than the Reserve Bank of India’s forecast of 7%. Revisions were also made to past data, including to the growth rate for January-March, which was raised from 7.8% to 8.6%. These revisions were caused by the use of the new Producer Price Index (PPI) series, the updated Index of Industrial Production (IIP) data series, and the Banking Services Price Index released earlier this year.Why has India’s GDP growth come under question? (AI generated image) Why has India’s GDP growth come under question? (AI generated image)However, certain economists, former bureaucrats, and politicians have raised questions about the numbers. While some economists have been unconvinced by the figure used to ‘deflate’ the manufacturing sector’s gross value added (GVA) in current prices to arrive at the ‘real’, or inflation adjusted estimates, former finance secretary Subhash Chandra Garg has criticised the data, saying nominal GDP growth in April-June should be 2.6% and “in real terms close to 0”.Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, MoSPI Secretary Saurabh Garg said the double deflation practice is “new for everyone”.“So, the lack of familiarity was there all round, whether it is within the statistical community or the economist community. But I am sure as people get used to the double deflation methodology, as they understand it better, there will be a more informed debate,” Garg said.

To find the value added by a sector – or the Gross Value Added (GVA) – the value of inputs it uses is subtracted from the value of output it produces. This is GVA in current prices, or nominal terms. To find the GVA after accounting for changes in prices – or real GVA – the output and input values are adjusted by their respective inflation rates. This is called double deflation.Prior to the new GDP series, which has 2022-23 as the base year, that was released earlier this year in February, one of the biggest criticisms of Indian data was MoSPI used double deflation only for agriculture and mining and quarrying sectors. For the others, input and output values were ‘deflated’ by the same number, with the Wholesale Price Index and Consumer Price Index being used. This can be problematic when input and output prices change at different rates.With the new GDP series using the double-deflation method for all sectors, there have been revisions to past estimates of GDP and growth. These revisions have also been accentuated by the use of the new Producer Price Index numbers for inputs and outputs, which is used internationally. According to MoSPI’s Garg, the PPI has more than 300 deflators for different parts of the GDP to compute real values from nominal ones, up from around 180 under the old series. This makes the new series’ estimates more accurate.

No ‘deliberate downward revision’Without naming Subhash Chandra Garg, MoSPI released ‘additional information’ on the GDP data, specifically refuting the former bureaucrat’s claim that growth was much lower than 7.8% in April-June.

It argued that the downward revision in the April-June 2025 nominal GDP from Rs 86.05 lakh crore in the old series to Rs 80.00 lakh crore in the new series was the result of “successive revisions to the GDP series arising from the change in base year, incorporation of improved data sources and methodologies, and updation of available indi-

cators”. As such, it is “incorrect to interpret the difference as a deliberate downward revision of last year’s GDP to mechanically increase the current year’s growth rate”. It added that one cannot compare GDP numbers from different series to arrive at the growth rate, as Garg had done.Changing the base year of economic indicators and improving the methods of calculating them is an international practice that is performed regularly, with India usually



the revisions made to previous GDP numbers, MoSPI's Garg said there was no “secular trend that it’s only increasing – some quarters it’s decreasing, some quarters it’s increasing”. As a result, the annual numbers have only been revised upwards slightly by 10 basis points each to 7.3%, 7.2%, and 7.8% for 2023-24, 2024-25, and 2025-26, respectively. This, Garg said, shows “the numbers are broadly resolute and robust”.Quizzed on the magnitude of revisions that could be made to the 7.8% growth rate estimated for the first three months of 2026-27, Garg said he didn’t want to commit to anything, although substantial changes are not expected.“But quarterly numbers are based on hundreds of indicators while the annual numbers are based on actual data. Given the fact that we have more real-time data available now than 5-10 years back, we would expect changes to be lesser. But I don’t want to speculate on what exactly would be the nature of those changes,” he said.Quarterly GDP estimates are compiled using what is called a ‘benchmark-indicator approach’. In this method, movement in quarterly GDP estimates is guided by the movement of hundreds of high-frequency indicators, such as growth in crop production, cement production index, finished steel consumption, and commercial vehicle sales. Annual GDP estimates are based on actual output and numbers.

Former finance secretary Garg’s comments on social media, his column on the same on a website, and interview to a television channel have been cited by critics of the government to question the GDP numbers. Economist and former Chief Economic Advisor Kaushik Basu said on social media platform X that while he has not studied the numbers in “sufficient depth to take a stance but the best analysis I have heard is that of Subhash Garg, who, as former Finance Secretary, GOI, knows these statistics extremely well”.The Congress, meanwhile, quoting Garg’s television interview, said on X: “7.8% GDP Growth in Fudged Data, 2.6% in Reality”.Subhash Chandra Garg was the Economic Affairs Secretary in the Ministry of Finance until July 2019 and took charge as the Finance Secretary in his final few months. The title of Finance Secretary is given to the senior-most secretary in the finance ministry. He was transferred to the Ministry of Power in July 2019, following which he sought voluntary retirement.



‘Are we slaves to other people?’: Kenyan President orders Tata Chemicals to halt operations

Kenyan President William Ruto on Thursday said he had directed Tata Chemicals to stop operations in Kenya, alleging that the company’s presence had not benefited the country. “Are we slaves to other people?” he asked.The Kenyan government would bring in two new companies to take over the operations currently handled by Tata Chemicals, Ruto said, according to news organisation Reuters.

Why is Kenya targeting Tata Chemicals?
The announcement comes weeks after Tata Chemicals said in late July that the Kenyan government had ordered its Kenyan unit to suspend operations at the Magadi Soda factory and halt exports of soda ash.Ruto criticised Tata Chemicals’ long-standing presence in Kajiado, saying the company had failed to create sufficient local industrial capacity. “That TATA company ... had that contract for 100 years. They have not built ?anything in ?Kajiado, they have not built any factory in Kajiado,” ?Ruto had ?said.“We have said we will bring a new company ?and... they should put a big glass company here in Kajiado. And another company to make chemicals here in ?Kajiado. Are we slaves to other

people?”Tata Chemicals could not immediately be reached for comment on Ruto’s decision or his criticism of the company.What Tata Chemicals does in KenyaTata Chemicals operates the Magadi Soda business in Kenya, which produces soda ash, an industrial chemical used in products including glass and other manufacturing processes. The Magadi operation has been at the centre of the recent dispute between the company and the Kenyan government.

Rupee rises 2 paise to close at 94.49 against US dollar

Mumbai: The rupee settled for the day higher by 2 paise at 94.49 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, supported by optimism over rising foreign inflows and improved risk appetite.Forex traders said the rupee was likely to strengthen due to robust foreign capital inflows and active RBI intervention.

However, rising crude oil prices and escalating US-Iran geopolitical tensions may cap these gains.At the inter-bank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 94.53 and touched an intra-day high of 94.46 and a low of 94.53 during the session.At the end of Friday’s trading session, the rupee was quoted at 94.49 (provisional), higher by 2 paise from its previous close.On Thursday, the rupee extended its gaining momentum for the fifth straight session, appreciating 22 paise to close at 94.51 against the US dollar.“The Indian rupee gained on positive domestic markets. Foreign inflows and FII buying also supported the rupee,” said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Mirae Asset Sharekhan.

This was the sixth straight session of gains for the rupee. On Wednesday, the rupee settled at 94.73, recording a gain of 22 paise.The local unit gained 27 paise to settle at 94.95 against the US dollar on Tuesday, after rising 21 paise and 2 paise in the preceding two sessions on Mon-

day and Friday, respectively.“We expect the rupee to trade with a positive bias on positive global markets and improved global risk sentiment. Foreign inflows and reduced expectations of a rate hike following dovish comments by Fed Governor Christopher Waller may also support the rupee.

“However, elevated crude oil prices and any fresh escalation of tensions between the US and Iran may cap sharp gains. Traders may take cues from the non-farm payrolls report from the US. USDINR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 94.15 to 94.75,” Choudhary added.Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback’s strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 99.11, higher by 0.21 per cent on safe-haven demand amid renewed US-Iran tensions.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.01 per cent higher at USD 95.53 per barrel in futures trade, amid escalating US-Iran tensions and fears of disruption to oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz.On the domestic equities market front, the Sensex rose 362.57 points to settle at 76,515.43, while the Nifty was up 24.25 points at 23,897.70.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,345.87 crore on a net basis on Thursday, according to exchange data

Exports push GDP growth, but low-margin shipments struggle



India’s goods exports bucked expectations to record their best-ever June, with outbound shipments jumping to a record \$44.24 billion at the peak of the disruption caused by the crisis in West Asia. This performance helped drive GDP growth in April-June to an unexpectedly high 7.8%.But under the headline number, most labour-intensive and low-margin exports did not fare well.

Overall goods exports in April-June rose 15% year-on-year to \$129.32 billion while non-petroleum, non-gems and jewellery shipments were up 12% at \$99.04 billion – well above the 6.5% growth exhibited over the previous two financial years. On Monday, Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran attributed the “brisk” growth in India’s core exports to the signing of free trade agreements (FTAs), export diversification efforts, and “possibly rising competitiveness”.According to economists, net exports added 3 percentage points to GDP growth in April-June 2026 and this was driven by a decline in real imports as the conflict in West Asia weighed on import volumes.“Export growth accelerated to 12% in Q1; combined with the decline in imports, this meant net exports contributed positively to GDP,” Barclays economists said Monday. The headline numbers, however, mask an uneven sectoral picture.While high-end products such as engineering goods, electronics and pharmaceuticals grew 18.1%, 22.6% and 6.8%, respectively, during the April-June quarter, several labour-intensive sectors registered a sharp decline. Textile exports slipped 12.4% while leather products declined 4.7%. Exports of low-margin products such as fruits and vegetables, ceramics and glassware, and jute products fell 10.3%, 25%, and 13.4%, respectively. Tea exports were under particular pressure, falling 17.5%.According to economists and industry executives, the West Asia crisis is disrupting trade at various levels, with steep logistics costs hurting exporters’ profit margins. While products which have a high margin, such as consumer electronics, allow their exporters to absorb the shock of more expensive logistics, exporters of low-margin products struggle and give up profits to protect market share.According to Devendra Kumar Pant, Chief Economist at India Ratings, the problem for exporters would be the margins. “On higher margins, exporters would not be competitive, or the importers won’t give the price which will protect exporters’ margins. So, they will be forced to lower margins. Export figures will not show the dip in profitability,” Pant said.

She blamed hair loss, gas and low ferritin on different things. Then doctors joined dots, found gut bacteria

For months, 30-year-old Anshika had been trying to solve her health issues, one symptom at a time. Her hair was shedding, so she bought supplements for hair growth. The gas was becoming increasingly difficult to ignore, so she reached for antacids. Then came the heaviness after meals. She could eat what seemed like an ordinary meal and still feel uncomfortably full, bloated and as though the food was simply sitting there. Someone suggested going gluten-free. So she began changing her diet too, cutting out foods and hoping that eventually she would identify the culprit.

Then came the blood test: her ferritin was low. She started taking iron. But instead of feeling as though she was finally fixing another piece of the puzzle, she felt her digestive symptoms getting worse. The gas seemed more troublesome, adding another layer of discomfort to an already frustrating routine.

Nobody seemed to be connecting the dots. “This kind of symptom cluster is indicative of small intestinal bacterial overgrowth, or SIBO. Patients often show up with mixed symptoms like gas, abdominal bloating, feeling heavy after eating, and unexplained nutritional deficiencies,” says Dr Harsh Kapoor, Chairman, Gastroenterology, Metro Hospital, Noida.SIBO means there is an abnormal increase of bacteria in the small intestine, where bacterial numbers are normally much lower than in the colon. “When bacteria grow abnormally, they can ferment too early and break down carbohydrates or other nutrients that produce gas, i.e. hydrogen and methane,” explains Dr Harsh Kapoor, Chairman, Gastroenterology, Metro Hospital, Noida. This early fermentation can result in bloating, abdominal pain, excessive flatulence, belching and a feeling of fullness or heaviness after meals. For patients, the experience can become a frustrating cycle: eating leads to discomfort, discomfort leads to food restriction and persistent symptoms lead to repeated attempts at self-treatment.

Why do the bacteria overgrow?
According to Dr Kapoor, the presence of bacteria is only part of the story. The more important question is what allowed them to accumulate in the small intestine.Normal intestinal function helps prevent excessive bacterial growth. Problems that slow down the movement of food through the intestine, changes in the structure of the digestive tract, previous gastrointestinal surgery and other digestive conditions can increase the risk of SIBO. “Diseases causing weakening of the intestinal function, anatomically impaired intestines, past surgical operations and gastrointestinal diseases may contribute to SIBO occurrence,” he says.This is important because SIBO can recur if the underlying problem remains untreated.

What about low ferritin?
SIBO may affect how nutrients are processed and absorbed. Excess bacteria can utilise nutrients before the body absorbs them, and bacterial overgrowth may contribute to malabsorption in some patients. But low iron or ferritin should never automatically be blamed on SIBO. Iron deficiency has many possible causes, including inadequate dietary intake, menstrual blood loss and gastrointestinal conditions that interfere with absorption. Gastrointestinal blood loss also needs to be considered in appropriate patients.“Not every low iron or ferritin level should be connected with SIBO,” Dr Kapoor cautions.There is another complication: oral iron itself can cause gastrointestinal side effects. “So, if gas or abdominal discomfort increases after starting iron, that does not prove that bacteria are consuming the iron or that SIBO is responsible,” he explains.

And the hair loss?

Anshuman Kanoria, Chairman of the Indian Tea Exporters Association (ITEA), said the outlook for tea exports this year is very poor and the West Asia war could lead to a 25% fall in outbound shipment.“There has been a 10-fold surge in freight rates in key markets including Iran, Iraq, the US and the EU. Payment has also become a major problem in trade with Iran, which is India’s largest export market for tea. Things have aggravated after the UAE cut trade ties with Iran,” Kanoria said.Experts said a sharp depreciation in the rupee has aided competitiveness.

The Indian rupee ended June at 94.7-per-dollar, down around 10% compared to 12 months ago. While this helped export-oriented sectors such as IT and pharmaceuticals, import-dependent sectors such as oil and gas, and companies that depend heavily on imported raw materials have been hurt as the weaker rupee made these inputs costly.“As of now, the rupee at 94 is providing good support to exports,” Ajay Sahai, Director General & CEO of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), said. “Over a period of time, the rupee has depreciated by around 7% and the Chinese yuan has appreciated by 8%. This is giving Indian exporters a 15% advantage over China. Besides, in the sunrise and knowledge- and technology-driven sectors, exports are doing well. But in labour-intensive sectors, it’s a mixed picture,” he said.

Swift diversification and higher export absorption by countries with which India has signed FTAs also helped cushion the impact of the West Asia crisis. When Indian exports came under pressure, particularly those going to UAE, exporters turned their attention to Singapore, another transshipment hub.Data shows that Indian exports to Singapore nearly doubled during April-June from a year earlier. While exports to the UAE fell 11% year-on-year to \$7.9 billion from \$9 billion, exports to Singapore jumped 101% to \$6.5 billion from \$3.2 billion.

The UAE is India’s second-largest export market after the US.India’s exports to FTA countries, particularly Australia and the UK, also showed significant growth. Exports to the UK rose 11% during the quarter, while shipments to Australia jumped 25%. Exports to China also increased, rising 25% to \$5.6 billion, although this was dominated by inputs rather than finished goods.Addressing reporters after the release of April-June GDP data, CEA Nageswaran also said headwinds to export growth could come from volatile crude oil prices due to the “lurking risk” of supply disruption, which could prevent oil prices falling materially and sustainably below \$80 a barrel. In the US, diesel prices are heading towards \$6 per gallon – a level last seen in 2022 – while natural gas prices in Europe are significantly higher compared to last year, he said.This, according to the government’s top economist, could impact the demand from abroad for India’s exports.Net exports and a June export record of \$44.24 billion amid falling imports have fired the GDP growth. But it remains uneven. High-end electronics and engineering goods have thrived under new FTAs but soaring logistics costs have severely impacted labour-intensive sectors like ceramics and textiles.



Hair shedding can occur in the presence of nutritional deficiencies, including iron deficiency in some patients. But hair loss should not automatically be attributed to SIBO. “The commonly repeated claim that women need ferritin levels of 40–70 ng/mL to stop hair loss is not a universally accepted medical rule. There is no single ferritin level that guarantees shedding will stop. A low ferritin may warrant investigation, but the patient’s overall clinical picture matters more than chasing one number,” says Dr Kapoor.

How is SIBO diagnosed?

One commonly used non-invasive approach is a hydrogen and methane breath test. The patient consumes a specified carbohydrate substrate and then provides breath samples at set intervals to measure hydrogen and methane production. Dr Kapoor stresses that the test results must be considered together with the patient’s clinical presentation, history and symptoms.

What about treatment?

Depending on the individual case, treatment may include antibiotics to reduce bacterial overgrowth and appropriate nutritional management. But treating the bacteria is only part of the process.“The underlying condition also needs attention. Otherwise, the symptoms may return. Thus, it does not mean that the recurrent condition should be treated with the help of antacids only,” says Dr Kapoor.Diet may also have a role in managing symptoms, but repeatedly eliminating foods—including gluten—without establishing the underlying diagnosis can lead to unnecessary restriction and may complicate existing nutritional deficiencies.The right approach is to look at the whole picture: investigate persistent digestive symptoms, establish the cause of iron deficiency, assess hair loss appropriately, use breath testing when clinically indicated and, if SIBO is diagnosed, look for the reason it developed.

Crude oil futures rise for sixth straight session to Rs 8,592 per barrel

New Delhi: Crude oil futures extended gains for the sixth consecutive session, rising nearly 1 per cent to Rs 8,592 per barrel on Wednesday amid renewed US-Iran hostilities, which stoked fears of disruptions to global energy supplies.On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), crude oil futures for September delivery rose by Rs 56, or 0.66 per cent, to Rs 8,592 per barrel. The October contract also gained Rs 56, or 0.67 per cent, to Rs 8,391 per barrel.“Crude oil’s rally accelerated on Wednesday after Washington and Tehran resumed direct hostilities following a period of relative calm,” said Kaynat Chainwala, AVP – Commodity Research at Kotak Securities.

BCCI promises kinder FTP cycle, rest between series and tour games



With an eye on managing players' workload, providing them adequate rest and recovery time between series, and thus limiting the possibility of picking up injuries, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has promised a better-planned Future Tour Programme from the next cycle. Some of the proposed measures include chalking out the calendar in such a way that the players get more rest between series, and sufficient time to get acclimatised to conditions, more so in SENA countries, including warm-up games before series. "We have instructed our FTP persons who will be meeting very soon in various international forums that our FTP should be in such a way that there is proper rest for the players as well as some kind of acclimatisation or friendly matches before any major series in SENA countries," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia told media after a meeting with captains Shubman Gill (Test and ODIs), Shreyas Iyer (T20Is, coach Gautam Gambhir and head of Centre of Excellence (COE) VVS Laxman. Ajit Agarkar, the chairman of selectors, couldn't attend the meeting due to prior commitments.

In the review meeting held in the board headquarters here to discuss the roadmap of Indian cricket in an important season, they discoursed the frequent incidence of injuries, possibly due to a packed calendar. Saikia admitted: "Individual players are having injuries because they have to play a lot of matches. If you look at their schedule, in England, three-four players of the 15-member ODI squad got injured. We have to think that they have played two months of IPL before that. All this takes a toll on the health of the players."

The schedule is not getting kinder, with India set to feature in seven Tests, 14 ODIs, and 16 T20Is, apart from the Asian Games, until the next IPL in late March. The board,

though, has assured the team management and its captains that they will plan better so that players get sufficient rest. "To avoid those kinds of situations under the present FTP, we are trying to find some ways out. We have a protocol in place for how a player can come back to international matches after injury. We are taking feedback from the captains and head coach to chalk up a proper strategy to avoid these unwanted situations," the secretary assured. He also asserted that, "everybody is on the same page." "BCCI is working very well, like a well oiled engine. There is proper coordination amongst all the wings of BCCI, whether it is women's teams committees or their technical staff or their coaches, vis-a-vis the COE, vis-a-vis the Indian men's team's coaching staff and the head coach. There is no difficulty in the coordination, everything is moving in the right direction." "The only challenge we are facing is that there are too many matches in the year and that is why in the next FTP, we will do certain things. We will take certain measures," he added.

The board secretary defused speculation on former captain Rohit Sharma's future. "He is playing superbly in all matches. So what more do you want? Last match he scored 138 runs so why is there speculation? I do not want to give some fodder for the speculators," he said, stubbing rumours that he was not in the selectors' scheme for the World Cup in southern Africa later next year. He also said they didn't discuss the future of Agarkar, and clarified that the talks revolved only around the roadmap for the 2027 World Cup. "Today he was out of station. He could not be a part of the meeting because this meeting was called at a very short notice, and our head of the selection committee was not in town, so he could not join it. He was in such an area that he could not join online also, in spite of all these efforts," he said.

No issues in Asian Games Regarding concerns on facilities and accommodation in Asian Games, he said: "We are not going to have any difficulties in Japan." There were reports that the cricketers had raised complaints about being put up in container villas of cruise ships. But the secretary said: "If any kind of situation arises, we'll take an appropriate call at the right time, so that we ensure that our players and the support star will get the best of facilities in Asian Games, whether it is from their organisers or us. If required, BCCI will have its own system in place to provide the best facilities to our players," he replied. Meanwhile, three bowlers—Rasikh Salam, Kartik Tyagi and Vicky Ostwal will travel with the Indian team to the Asian Games.



the Asian Games in 2010, 2014 and 2023. "The second problem is that there probably isn't enough realization that cricket is a different kind of sport. The facilities that are required just to perform at the highest level aren't ready at all. They say they can't provide hotels, two people will stay in a room, and that they are using cruise ships or converted containers as hotels. This is not how cricket actually happens," he said. "You can call it slightly elitist or classist, as to why it is not right for them when it is right for everyone else. You may have a point, but the truth is that cricket is not played like that. When you go to play cricket around the world, you get a single room to stay. You get your privacy, and you are used to that," Chopra observed. Twelve nations will compete in cricket in the men's and women's formats between September 17 and October 3. The Indian men's and women's will begin their gold medal defence with a direct berth in the quarter-finals.

we had won or not, I had already made this decision."

While he mostly operates as a midfielder, Llorente played as a right-back for his national team during this World Cup where he provided the assist to Alex Baena during Spain's 1-0 win against Uruguay.

The La Liga player, still only 31, addressed the relatively young age at which he is retiring, saying, "I realize that I'm still young and that, perhaps, if I continued to perform well, I'd still have years left to play in this jersey." He further said, "I know many of you won't understand this, and I probably wouldn't have understood it either if I were looking at it from the outside." He signed the letter off by thanking his Spanish teammates for the journey he has been on. "I'll cherish everything I've experienced, but above all, these last 52 days. With a wonderful group that fought until the very end to put Spain at the top. And that's exactly what they did." Llorente currently plays for Atlético Madrid and signed an extension with the club just 5 months ago. While his contract runs out by 2027, in an interview with Sport, he said, "if I am honest I would like to retire at Atlético de Madrid."

Sreeja to lead Indian women's table tennis team at Asian Games

GNS News Agency, Sept 5 Hyderabad: Akula Sreeja of Telangana will lead the Indian women's table tennis team and her coach-cum-mentor Somnath Ghosh will be one of the coaches for the Indian team in the Asian Games to be held in Japan from September 19 to October 4, 2026. Currently ranked World No. 64, Sreeja will lead a strong Indian women's team comprising Diya Parag Chitale, Syndrella Das, Yashaswini Deepak Ghorpade and Sutirtha Mukherjee. Apart from leading the team, Sreeja is to compete in the singles, team and doubles events. Sreeja said she was delighted with the opportunity to lead the Indian team at the Asian Games.

Former Pakistan coach blasts selectors for 'disrespectful' treatment of players



Former Pakistan head coach Jason Gillespie has expressed his sympathies for the players who have been part of the team on their ongoing tour of England and blasted the management for how they have handled them. Pakistan airlifted their limited overs coach Mike Hesson to England to suddenly take over as the red ball coach after they lost the first two Tests of the three-match series, sacking the incumbent Sarfraz Ahmed and members of his staff. Additionally, they sent home as many as seven players from the squad, including Salman Ali Agha who captained the side in the first Test. "I feel for the players; this is these guys' livelihoods. From the outside, it looks like they are playing with fear," Gillespie told Code

Sports. "Salman Ali Agha goes from captaining the team in the first Test against England to being out of the team for the second Test and on the plane home before the third Test. How does that work?" Gillespie said.

Gillespie said that any chance of getting consistency on the field is being scuppered by the management's decisions off it. Sarfraz, who had led Pakistan to victory as captain in the 2017 Champions Trophy, had been made head coach in April this year. "If you want consistency on the field there needs to be consistency off the field. That goes to board level, selection and coaching level." Pakistan's chief selector and high performance director of cricket Aaqib Javed had blamed the coaching staff led by Gillespie for the team's current situation in Test cricket. They have won one of their last eight test series since August 2024, a run that includes a 2-1 victory over England under Gillespie. Pakistan have had six test coaches in the past three years. "It's pretty clear they don't have a selection strategy at all, particularly under Aaqib Javed. They change their mind like they change their pants — daily," he said.

"The players who were sacked heard it through family and friends and the media," he said. "How disrespectful is that?" Gillespie said he remained a strong admirer of Pakistan's players. "The talent there is as good as anywhere in the world," he added. "These players just need support off the field."

Sadagoppan Ramesh says Sanju Samson should be considered CSK's next captain

Ruturaj Gaikwad has had an ordinary season as captain in the Indian Premier League 2026. It was the third season in a row that Chennai has missed the playoff spot. Former Indian cricketer Sadagoppan Ramesh said CSK should change the captain for the upcoming season to Sanju Samson, who has been traded from Rajasthan Royals. "CSK are seemingly thinking of many options as captain and even wondering if there is a captaincy change needed. Sanju Samson should be considered as captain because he's such a fantastic team player. The CSK captaincy must be changed, and if it is, CSK must seriously consider Sanju Samson," said Ramesh on his Instagram handle.

"Samson has also captained 66 matches in the IPL and won 33. So he has a 50% success rate. Under him, RR performed well by reaching a final and making another playoff appearance. Of course, CSK need several other things to change, and just making Sanju the captain won't win them the trophy. But if at all they change captains, Sanju must be strongly considered," said Ramesh. Former CSK batter Subramaniam Badrinath minced no words either earlier in the year. "Ruturaj Gaikwad should not lead CSK. It should be Sanju Samson who should lead them. Ruturaj the batter is too important for CSK. His batting is more important than his captaincy because, anyway, Sanju Samson is a better captain than him. Ruturaj Gaikwad is a phenomenal T20 batter and has done extraordinary things for CSK,"



Badrinath told on his YouTube channel. Gaikwad finished the season with the lowest strike-rate among all batters in the Powerplay and only amassed 337 runs in 14 matches at 28.08. Badrinath said that freeing up Gaikwad from leadership duties will elevate the Maharashtra batter back to his best as an opener. "So once you remove him from captaincy, he'll perform well as a batter. It won't be a harsh decision if he is stripped of captaincy. It's more beneficial for the player and the franchise. It'll only do Gaikwad a world of good. This is not new only to him. Even greats like Sachin Tendulkar have been affected by captaincy. If you are someone who is intense and thinks too much, it's hard to detach from captaincy even while batting," added Badrinath.

Behind Smriti Mandhana's transformation: More hundreds and better strike rate

GNS News Agency, Sept 5 For more than a decade into her career, hundreds didn't arrive as frequently to Smriti Mandhana as the quality of her batting suggested they should. There were plenty of starts and fifties across countries and formats, enough to establish her among the best batters of her generation. But converting those innings into hundreds remained an area for improvement. The last two years have changed that. Mandhana's 124 from 64 balls against Hong Kong in the Women's Asia Cup in Dubai on Thursday was her 18th international century, taking her past Meg Lanning for the most hundreds in women's international cricket. During the same innings, she also went past Mithali Raj's 10868 runs to become the highest run-scorer in women's international cricket. Mandhana now has 10880.

It was also the highest individual score in Women's T20 Asia Cup history, surpassing Chamari Athapaththu's unbeaten 119 against Malaysia in 2024.

The two records coming on the same evening captured two different parts of her career: the consistency that took her past Raj and the improved conversion rate that carried her beyond Lanning. Mandhana made her international debut, aged 16, in 2013. Her first ODI hundred came three years later, a 102 against Australia in Hobart. Hundreds followed against West Indies in 2017, South Africa in 2018, New Zealand in 2019 and West Indies again in 2022. Smriti Mandhana plays a shot against Hong Kong, China in the Asia Cup. (Credit: ACC) Smriti Mandhana plays a shot against Hong Kong, China in the Asia Cup. (Credit: ACC) But they remained occasional landmarks. Through the end of 2023, Mandhana had five ODI hundreds and 26 fifties. Of the 31 occasions on which she reached 50, only five were centuries — a conversion rate of 16.1 percent. Then came a transformation. Mandhana had never scored more than one ODI hundred in a calendar year before 2024. She made four that year — 117 and 136 against South Africa, 100 against New Zealand and 105 against Australia. A batter who had spent years getting off to starts was now beginning to make them count.

Mandhana followed those four hundreds with five more in 2025, when she made 1362 ODI runs. The left-hander made nine ODI hundreds in those two years, almost twice as many as she had managed across the first 11 years of her international career combined. Across 2024 and 2025, nine of Mandhana's 17 fifty-plus scores became hundreds — a conversion rate of 52.9 percent, more than three times her rate through 2023. Her overall ODI record now stands at 14 hundreds and 35 fifties.

The change is perhaps even more apparent in T20Is. Until the end of 2024, Mandhana had played T20Is for nearly 12 years and accumulated 30 half-centuries without reaching three figures. She had come close — 87 against Ireland in 2023 and 86 against New Zealand in 2019 — but a hundred kept eluding her. That wait ended against England at Nottingham in June 2025, when she made 112 from 62 balls. A little over a year later, the 124 against Hong Kong became her second. The way the latest hundred came also showed how her game has evolved. Mandhana hit 14 fours and seven sixes and reached three figures from 57 deliveries. She struck three successive sixes in the 18th over, during which she went past Raj's career aggregate. India were playing Hong Kong for the first time, and Mandhana said the lack of familiarity with their bowlers meant they had to adapt in the middle, instead of relying on pre-match footage. "We had seen a few videos, but not really aware. We're playing them for the first time, so when you come against a bowler who you don't know a lot, you have to just



forget that you've played whatever cricket. You just have to go, watch the ball," Mandhana said after winning Player of the Match. Better strike rate Her scoring rate has risen alongside her improved conversion rate. After striking at 126.53 in T20Is in 2024, Mandhana went at 135.85 in 2025. In 2026, she scored 579 runs at a strike rate of 145.84.

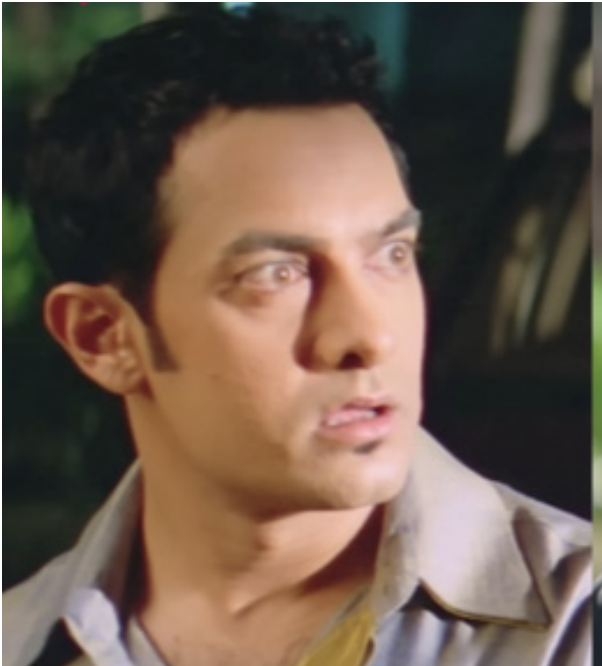
For Mandhana, overtaking Raj and Lanning was significant. "Two of the legends of women's cricket, Meg Lanning and Mithali Raj. Genuinely, these are the two people who I have grown up watching a lot, watched a lot of their cricket, and tried to take a lot of things from them as batters," she said in the post-match press conference.

At 30, Mandhana has gone from a teenage prodigy to an established international opener and one of the most consistent run-scorers in the women's game. What has changed in the latest phase is what happens after she gets in. She has turned fifties into hundreds, while the runs have come quicker. The combination has taken Mandhana from chasing the records of Raj and Lanning to owning two of the biggest records in women's batting herself. And Mandhana's own assessment suggested she does not consider Thursday's achievements as an endpoint. "It's just a start," she said.

NRAI announces final shooting camps ahead of Asian Games

Hyderabad: The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) has announced the schedule for the final preparatory camps ahead of the highly anticipated Asian Games. The intensive training programme is designed to fine-tune the skills of the selected athletes and ensure peak performance across all shooting disciplines before they depart for the Games. The preparatory camps will be held at two premier training centres — the MP State Shooting Academy in Bhopal and the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi. The camps will ensure that athletes have access to the best facilities in the country, tailored to their respective events. NRAI President Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo said, "The 2026 Asian Games represent a monumental opportunity for our shooters to showcase their exceptional talent on the continental stage." These preparatory camps are a critical step in our journey to the podium. We have complete faith in our athletes and remain steadfast in our commitment to providing them with the world-class resources they need to bring glory to the nation." NRAI Secretary General Pawan Kumar Singh said, "Organising these camps concurrently across Bhopal and New Delhi ensures that our athletes can train in optimal environments specifically suited to their respective disciplines."

Aamir Khan insisted on getting slapped 17 times by Akshaye Khanna in Dil Chahta Hai



GNS News Agency, Sept 5

Farhan Akhtar's Dil Chahta Hai recently celebrated its 25th anniversary and on the occasion, the makers, cast and some of the crew members reunited to reminisce about their memories from the making of the film. Aamir Khan, who played one of the key roles in the film, along with Saif Ali Khan and Akshaye Khanna, recalled the time when Akshaye's character Sid slapped his character Aakash during the tension-filled interval scene of the film. Farhan recalled that none of these were fake, which are often done while shooting for a film, which meant that Aamir was actually getting slapped on his face, and by the end, one side of his face was red and swollen. The slap was shot 17 times.

'Aamir insisted, his face was swollen' Aamir shared that the slap was done 17 times for different angles and magnifications and Farhan added, "They were all real slaps." Farhan shared that he only wanted a real slap in the wide-angle shot but the impact of the scene was such that Aamir insisted on getting really slapped for the rest of the shoot of the scene as well. Farhan had prepared Aamir for the slap but at the last minute, he told Akshaye to slap him a little before the planned moment for an element of surprise. "I told Akshaye that he is expecting it to happen at the end of this line. Do it while he is saying the line so you get the element of surprise on his face. After that, Aamir said that even when we were doing it in the OTS (over-the-shoulder shot), let him just slap me because he is bringing me into a

frame of mind which is really helping me. So then he just insisted on getting slapped," Farhan recalled in a chat shared by Yuva. Aamir added that it worked for the scene so he went ahead with it. "But it works. And even his angle, because when you actually slap someone, it makes you feel differently," he said, and Farhan recalled Aamir's face being swollen by the end. "When we were finished, I remember there was a full mark. He was all swollen on one side of his face," he shared.

Why did Akshaye slap Aamir?

The moment when Sid slaps Aakash happens after Sid admits that he is in love with Tara, and Aakash says something unsavoury about their relationship. Sid slaps Aakash, and this causes a rift between them, that doesn't get solved until the end of the film. When Farhan was asked why he chose a slap, instead of something more violent, he explained that between friends, a slap means much more than any other form of physical beating. "I think between friends, when a friend slaps another friend, it's a massive happening so I don't think you need to push it any further than that. At most, we could have added some digital reverb to make it more dramatic," he said and added, "I mean between friends, a slap is more than enough. It doesn't need to be more." Aamir Khan and Dimple Kapadia revealed that they convinced Saif Ali Khan not to drop out of Dil Chahta Hai. Akshaye Khanna, Saif Ali Khan and Aamir Khan in Dil Chahta Hai. (Express archive photo)

Aamir also spoke about the scene and shared, "As a violent act, you can say that a slap is not as violent as stabbing someone or beating up someone but actually, between friends, just a slap is much more demeaning, insulting, or hurtful. A slap is much more hurtful than getting beaten up, so for me all that worked beautifully." Speaking about his character's reaction to that, Aamir added, "When Aakash gets slapped, his anger rises so much that beyond that, he doesn't want to compromise. I felt that on the written page, and I had no doubts about that."

When Suchitra Pillai told Sharmila Tagore about slapping Saif Ali Khan The film had another scene which featured a slap and this scene was between Saif Ali Khan's Sameer and Suchitra Pillai's Priya, where she slaps him when they are on the verge of breaking up. Suchitra was also present at the event and recalled that even she was asked to slap Saif for real and she ended up doing it thrice. "I slapped you, Saif. I slapped you three times," she recalled with a laugh. She also recalled running into Saif's mother, veteran actor Sharmila Tagore, where she introduced herself as the actor who had slapped Saif in Dil Chahta Hai. "I told her, 'Ma'am, I am Suchitra. I don't know if you remember Dil Chahta Hai, I slapped your son'. And she said, 'I hope it was a hard one', she recalled with a laugh.

Amin Hajee was told not to marry British Lagaan co-actor, says daughters have 'no religion'

Actor Amin Hajee, who played Bagha in Ashutosh Gowariker's Lagaan (2001), has given a deeply personal account of how he fell in love with his wife Charlotte Whitby-Cole on the film's set in Bhuj, the complications around her existing relationship at the time, the cultural warnings from friends, and the couple's decision to raise their two daughters without any religion. In conversation with Siddharth Kannan, the couple recalled that Charlotte was already in a relationship when she arrived on the Lagaan set. "At that point, she wasn't really looking for love. She was kind of already romantically involved," Amin Hajee said. "But I was bold about it. I thought she was really cute. I'm quite shy as a person. So basically, she danced around me, hoping I'd make a move too."

When asked how Charlotte ended her previous relationship, She answered, "She went home and broke up with him and told him that she found an Indian guy," he said. Amin Hajee said a turning point in their relationship came when Charlotte, who is eight years younger than him, confronted him about his self-doubt. He had been going through a difficult phase professionally and personally, and Charlotte challenged him directly. He said Charlotte told him something he has never forgotten: "Maybe you're giving too much negative attention, and that same negativity is coming back to you." Amin Hajee then shared a story that Charlotte had told him about the British contingent on the Lagaan set. Among the 40 to 50 British cast and crew members, including cricketers and extras, an informal vote was held to pick their three favourite people from the 200-strong Indian contingent on set. Amin was voted number one. "She told me, 'So many people want you, and you're telling yourself that you're this or that, like you're nobody. Don't do that. Look at what you have,'" he said. "You used to talk yourself down a lot. That's the one thing she noticed the most."

Amin Hajee said if anyone asks him today why they have been together for 26 years, his answer goes back to that moment. "She said, 'You're a rockstar, never forget that. You're very capable. You'll go wherever you want. You'll succeed and come back successful. Believe in yourself. You have what it takes.' And that carried me." Not everyone around them was encouraging. Amin Hajee recalled that friends in the industry, including Ronit Roy and Javed Jaffrey, raised concerns about the relationship's viability. "They told me, 'Amin, you fell in love with a fair-skinned girl in 2000. How are you going to keep her in India? Do you know those people drink Bisleri water? Do you know how much a bottle of Bisleri costs?'" he recalled. "The bird and the fish can never be friends." Amin Hajee said the warnings came from a place of genuine concern. "Of course, everyone encouraged me. But I'm saying there were concerns, you know how friends talk," he said.

Aamir Khan and Kiran Rao at the wedding of Lagaan co-star Amin Hajee and Charlotte Whitby-Cole Aamir Khan and Kiran Rao at the wedding of Lagaan co-star Amin Hajee and Charlotte Whitby-Cole (Photo: Amin Hajee/Instagram) Charlotte, meanwhile, left a life of considerable comfort to be with him. Amin Hajee described her father as wealthy. "Leaving all that behind and coming here," he said. "I have a place in Bandra. Up in the attic, we made a small bedroom where she stayed. Maybe some people here would feel cramped because it's pretty small. But she calls it being 'ardhangini,'" he said, using the Sanskrit word for a devoted wife. "She played the role really well. I always tell her, you might look fair-skinned, but you're totally desi." On their daughters following a particular faith, Amin Hajee said, "They don't have any religion, no formal religion," he said. "The names come from the sky, from nature. Our kids are human beings. Our kids aren't Hindu, aren't Muslim. They



won't become Hindu or Muslim. They're children of humans. They'll be human. We decided that together." He said the couple made a conscious choice to strip away the layers of religion, culture and tradition that would have kept them apart. "If I have to do that and then leave my loved ones, no. I'd rather leave them. So, we both stopped being those things," he said. Amin Hajee said he is "a bit more the opposite," not particularly spiritual and not fully convinced about the existence of a higher power. "Sometimes I believe it, sometimes I don't. But it's something we were raised with," he said.

Sourav Ganguly returns to TV after 10 years to host Bigg Boss Bangla

Mumbai: Indian cricket stalwart Sourav Ganguly is set to return to television hosting after a decade. This time, he would be seen taking charge of the Bengali edition of the popular reality show Bigg Boss Bangla.

Ganguly, who has hosted many television shows during his career, said returning to the format after 10 years and associating with Endemol Shine India for the first time makes the project a new experience for him.

"Bigg Boss is the biggest show in the country and has always stood apart because of the scale of its audience and the way the franchise has travelled across languages. I have done many shows on TV but never hosted this, so joining Endemol Shine India for the first time and leading its Bengali edition with Bigg Boss Bangla, after ten years is a wonderful new experience," Sourav Ganguly said.

The former cricketer has previously been associated with television as a host and presenter, but Bigg Boss Bangla marks his entry into the Bigg Boss franchise. Meanwhile, the Hindi edition of Bigg Boss is also gearing up for its landmark 20th season, with superstar Salman Khan continuing as the host.

The new season is set to premiere from September 5, bringing back the franchise's signature mix of contestants, tasks, confrontations and unexpected twists. The 20th season is being positioned as a special milestone for the franchise, with the makers introducing new elements inside the Bigg Boss house.

Among the additions is a two XL room, along with a few more fun elements.

'Young Amitabh' Mayur Verma quit Bollywood to follow wife's dream, now runs restaurants



in his Khuda Gawah look.

The project marked Mayur's debut as a director. Soon, Variety featured several leading actors and became a stepping stone to the next phase of his career.

When Big B sent him to the UK

The show eventually helped take Mayur to the UK. Around the same time, Amitabh Bachchan and his brother Ajitabh Bachchan had launched TV Asia for South Asians in the UK.

Story continues below this ad

Mayur became the host of The Breakfast Show, where he interviewed personalities from entertainment, sports, business and politics. He soon became a familiar face among South Asian audiences in the UK. During this period, he interviewed personalities including Imran Khan, Joseph Carvo, Rahul Roy, Bappi Lahiri, Dev Anand and Hariharan, among others. Around the same time, he took on the role of Abhimanyu in BR Chopra's iconic television series Mahabharat.

Mayur as Abhimanyu Mayur as Abhimanyu in BR Chopra's Mahabharat. "This role was first offered to Govinda, followed by Chunky Pandey. It was because of Goofy Paintal sir that I could bag this role. If it wasn't for his casting, I wouldn't have gotten the role," Mayur said. After acting in Mahabharat and hosting The Breakfast Show for TV Asia along with In the Hot Seat, and Bombay Calling, Mayur continued to work across television and content, creating programmes for Zee TV, B4U and Sony TV. In 1991, he also successfully bought his first property in the UK.

However, around 2007, Mayur made a decision that would change the course of his life. After years of being in front of the camera, he chose to leave the limelight behind and lead a quieter life. He moved to Wales with his wife Noori and mother Sneh Latha. "Long ago, I had come to Wales for a holiday when I wished to have a house here. I wanted to live a simple life among original people. I wanted to give a quiet life to my children. I didn't want to wait until my retirement to move to something so beautiful. Soon, I discussed it with my wife and mother, and without a second thought, we moved," he recalled.

Mayur is now the owner of multiple restaurants in the UK. After leaving the film industry, Mayur and his wife started an Indian restaurant in Wales, supporting Noori's dream of becoming a professional chef. "It is called Indiana Cuisine. I often used to get bothered when star's wives are identified by the star's name, but what about their individuality? That's when I thought it was time Noori followed her dream, while I became her support system. Noori is a gifted cook as her father was a chef," Mayur said. The restaurant has now been running for over two decades. It was originally located in Fairbourne but was relocated two years ago to Macdonald Plas Talgarth Resort in Pennal, near Machynlleth.

Speaking about his transformation and decision to leave acting, Mayur told North Wales Live, "I was at the peak of my acting career in London in 2007. I couldn't even walk down the street without being recognised. But I was very sure that I did not want my children to see me as someone larger than life. So we moved to North Wales where nobody knew who I was." He added, "Both of our children started their education in North Wales and I was embraced by the lovely Welsh community when we first arrived in 2007. Well, it's been one heck of a journey since then." According to Raj's LinkedIn profile, the couple also runs a cafe in Abergynolwyn. Mayur couldn't complete his education, but has no regrets. With acting becoming his passion from a young age, Mayur eventually could not complete his studies. "I have completed just higher secondary. I was never interested in studies. I was more focused on manners and ethics," he told Prasar Bharti.

Even before he decided to move away from acting, Mayur believed that formal education was not the only route to financial success. "If you have a smart brain, then you can use it to do business," he said. Today, Raj and Noori continue to live in Wales with their children. From a child actor sharing screen space with Bollywood's biggest stars to an actor in Mahabharat, a television presenter, director and eventually a restaurateur, Raj Mayur Verma's journey has taken him through several lives—and he seems to have found his happiest chapter away from the spotlight.

Chiranjeevi's Kaaka heads into next schedule on September 7

Hyderabad: The unit of director Bobby Kolli's eagerly awaited action entertainer, 'Kaaka', featuring Telugu star Chiranjeevi in the lead, is to begin its next schedule in Hyderabad on September 7, its makers have now announced. The makers, using the film's movie handle on Instagram, put out a post that read, "Our #KAAGA will be BACK IN ACTION from September 7th in Hyderabad! A lengthy and crucial schedule featuring Megastar @chiranjeevikonidela Garu and the main cast is all set to begin. Worldwide Grand Release on January 13th, 2027. A @director.bobby Film. Produced by @thekvnoofficial @kvn.productions."

It may be recalled that the makers had announced the title of the film only a few days ago. KVN Productions, which is producing the film, had announced the title through a title teaser and revealed that the film would hit screens on January 13 next year. Taking to its social media timelines to share the title teaser, the production house wrote, "Meet Supervisor Satyam, C/O Ammaji Aqua Industries, Ravulapalem. Team #KAAGA wishes the one and only Megastar @Kchirutweets garu a very HAPPY BIRTHDAY. Title glimpse out now. January 13, 2027 – Sankranti release." The title teaser showed Chiranjeevi working in a shrimp farm called Ammaji Aqua Industries. His name in the film is Satyam and he works as a Supervisor in the facility that has people from all regions of the country working in it. The title teaser showed an employee attempting to return a key to Chiranjeevi but ends up dropping it in a pool full of shrimps. Chiranjeevi was then seen retrieving the key using a giant electromagnet. Along with the key, a lot of weapons too come up. The key has a keychain that reads, 'I love dad'. The film has triggered huge interest in fans and film buffs ever since it was first announced and the title teaser only added to the excitement. Sources close to the unit of the film say that the first half of the film ends with a spectacular action sequence.