

TG SAFE warns public, doctors against unapproved weight-loss drugs sold online

Hyderabad: The Telangana Standards Authority for Food and Essential Drugs (TG SAFE) on Wednesday issued a public advisory warning the general public and doctors against procuring, prescribing, or self-administering unapproved weight-loss medications and experimental peptide products from unregulated online platforms and social media channels. TGSAFE in a statement on Wednesday said that certain medical practitioners and online vendors are distributing unapproved drugs like Retatrutide and Orforglipron, and experimental peptides such as Tesamorelin, BPC-157, and GHK-Cu.

Minor drowns in Taliperu in Kothagudem's Cherla mandal

Kothagudem: A minor drowned in the Taliperu river in Cherla mandal Bhadradi Kothagudem district on Wednesday.

According to police, the deceased, Daggupalli Venkateshwarlu (16) of Munigollakatta village in the mandal went swimming in the river near Tegada bridge along with a few others. As he could not gauge the depth of the water, he drowned in the river. On receiving information Cherla Sub-Inspector of Police, Narsi Reddy reached the spot, retrieved the body with the help of expert swimmers, registered a case and launched an investigation into the incident.

Man booked for filming minor girl dies by suicide in Hyderabad

Hyderabad: A man accused of filming a minor girl while she was bathing allegedly died by suicide on Wednesday, reportedly fearing arrest in a POCSO case registered against him in Meerpeth.

According to police, a case was registered against the suspect, Harshavardhan Reddy, a resident of Almasguda under Meerpeth police station limits, on October 12. Following the case, he went to a relative's house in Raghavendra Colony, Turkayamjal, where he allegedly died by suicide.



El Nino Is Like Covid Pandemic, Says Revanth

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Wednesday said the state government must treat the impact of El Nino as a disaster comparable to the Covid-19 pandemic and asked all government departments to prepare for a prolonged spell of adverse conditions.

Announcing an informal Cabinet meeting at Secretariat on Thursday to review El Nino conditions in the state, the Chief Minister cautioned that a situation that appears manageable at present could develop into a serious crisis if officials failed to act in advance.

At a high-level review meeting held at MCRHRDI on Wednesday on the impact of El Nino, prevailing rainfall deficit and the availability of electricity and drinking water, the Chief Minister said, "An El Nino situation is like a Covid-like disaster. Nobody knows how long it will continue. What appears to be a problem now could turn into a crisis if we fail to remain alert," he said, directing every department to assess the likely impact within its jurisdiction, identify solutions and initiate immediate preventive measures.

He instructed all departments to prepare comprehensive action plans extending until June next year, anticipating that the prevailing conditions could continue until the next spell of rainfall. Departments were asked to coordinate their efforts and ensure that people did not face hardship during the intervening period.

The Chief Minister stressed the need for advance arrangements to prevent drinking water shortages across the state. He directed officials to prepare plans to maintain uninterrupted drinking water supply and ensure that adequate resources were available to meet public demand. In the Greater Hyderabad region, he asked officials to promote the use of treated wastewater from sewage treatment plants (STPs) for construction and other suitable non-potable purposes to conserve drinking water. He also directed officials to take special measures to protect livestock from the effects of drought and ensure adequate availability of fodder. Advance arrangements must be made to prevent shortages and avoid hardship to cattle, he said.

To strengthen monitoring at the grassroots level, Revanth Reddy ordered the appointment of Group-I and Group-II officers as special monitoring officials for every mandal.

Our Indian Culture Binds World: Modi

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said India's music, dance, cinema, cuisine and traditions continued to connect societies across the world, while its rich cultural heritage was gaining increasing international recognition.

In a message to the three-day Brihattar Bharat: International Conference on Bharat's Cultural Connections Across the Globe, which began at Vigyan Bhawan on Wednesday, Modi said efforts to bring back Indian antiquities from abroad had gained "renewed momentum". The government was also preserving the country's manuscript heritage through the Gyan Bharatam initiative, alongside its efforts to protect monuments.

Union culture secretary Vivek Aggarwal read out the Prime Minister's message at the inaugural session.

Tracing India's centuries-old cultural exchanges, Modi said centres of learning such as Nalanda had fostered intellectual ties with Asia, while Buddhist monks, scholars, traders and travellers carried Indian ideas across the world through land and maritime routes.



He said Indian philosophy, literature, music, dance, cinema and culinary traditions continued to strengthen these connections. The celebration of Indian festivals abroad and the global spread of yoga demonstrated the enduring appeal of India's ancient knowledge traditions, he added. Modi highlighted the significance of the conference, which marks the centenary of the Greater India Society, established in Calcutta on October 14, 1926, with Rabindranath Tagore as its spiritual guide. The society played an important role in advancing the study of India's cultural and intellectual links with Asia and the wider world. The Prime Minister expressed hope that the deliberations would deepen understanding of these historical ties and strengthen international cultural cooperation. Organised by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) under the Union culture ministry, the October 14-16 conference brings together ambassadors, scholars and delegates from several countries.



Rahul Brings To Press SIR Protesters Who Faced Delhi Police Brutality

NEW DELHI:, Oct 14

Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday accused Delhi police of assaulting student activists and Youth Congress workers during protests against alleged electoral irregularities and vowed action against those responsible.

Addressing a press conference alongside injured protesters, Gandhi alleged that a Delhi University student from Kerala had lost hearing in one ear after being struck by police personnel.

"The PM is standing before this voice. Amit Shah is standing before this voice. I suggest to the PM that he should not stand before this voice," he said, referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah.

Several students recounted alleged physical assaults and mistreatment during detention.

Gandhi praised the protesters for standing together across religious, caste and gender lines, describing them as "shers" and "shernis".

He urged the students to preserve evidence of the alleged assaults.

"I have asked every student to make videos and keep evidence with them and send it to us," he said.

Promising accountability, Gandhi said, "When this entire episode ends, we will get justice and punish those who have beaten up our students, from top to bottom."

An injured student played Mahatma Gandhi's favourite hymn, Vaishnava Jana To, on the flute, conveying a message of non-violence.

KTR demands independent probe into Rs 10,000-crore scam in Singareni

Hyderabad, Oct 14 (IANS) BRS Working President K. T. Rama Rao on Wednesday demanded an independent investigation into the alleged Rs 10,000-crore scam in Singareni Collieries Company Limited and warned that the BRS would intensify its agitation to protect workers' rights and prevent privatisation of the public sector enterprise.

He accused Telangana's Congress Government led by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy of encouraging corruption, commission-driven contracts and financial mismanagement in Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL).

Addressing the Singareni Karmika Garjana public meeting organised by the BRS at Godavarikhani in Peddapalli district, he alleged serious irregularities in the Naini coal block tenders, site visit certificates, opencast mine contracts, machinery procurement and other operations. He demanded a probe by the CBI or a sitting judge and questioned why the Centre had failed to initiate an independent investigation despite the serious allegations.

Referring to claims that cancellation of the Naini tenders had saved Rs 30,000 crore, the BRS leader asked who had allegedly sought to benefit from the deal and why the tender process had been repeatedly delayed. He alleged that the site visit certificate system was being misused and that tender decisions were benefiting contractors at the expense of Singareni.

Rama Rao accused the Congress Government of failing to safeguard the company's financial interests. He claimed that Rs 6,317 crore had been diverted over two financial years and alleged that approximately 40 lakh metric tonnes of coal had gone missing. He demanded a comprehensive audit of the company's accounts and disclosure of coal production, stock and transportation records.

The BRS leader further claimed that the State Government owed nearly Rs 60,000 crore to Singareni and demanded immediate clearance of the outstanding dues. He alleged that delayed payments were affecting the company's operations and its ability to maintain essential mining equipment.



KTR strongly defended Singareni workers, accusing the Congress Government of failing to honour its commitments on profit-sharing benefits. He recalled that the KCR Government had increased workers' profit share from 16 per cent to 32 per cent and demanded the release of their rightful share, bonuses and other pending benefits. He also called for the speedy resolution of issues concerning dependent employment, medical boards and land pattas.



Heera Group Ponzi case: ED completes registration of seven auctioned properties

Hyderabad, Oct 14 (IANS) The Enforcement Directorate (ED), Hyderabad Zonal Office, has successfully completed the registration of seven immovable properties, auctioned for Rs 15.03 crore in favour of the successful bidders in connection with the Heera Group Ponzi case.

The properties comprise six flats at H.S. Royal, Shaikpet Village, Hyderabad, and one house at MLA Colony, Road No. 12, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad.

The ED said in a statement on Wednesday that proceeds realised from the auction of the attached properties shall be transferred to the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) for onward disbursement to the genuine victims/claimants of Nowhera Shaik, Heera Group of Companies and others, in accordance with the directions of the Supreme Court.

Nowhera Shaik and her associates duped investors of over Rs 5,978 crore with false promises of 36% annual returns.

The auction was conducted on October 6 pursuant to the directions of the Supreme Court.

In its order dated March 5, 2025, the Supreme Court allowed the application filed by ED seeking permission to auction immovable properties attached in the case of Nowhera Shaik, Heera Group of Companies and others, with a view to maximising realisation from the attached properties for restitution to the genuine claimants/victims.

Subsequently, the Supreme Court directed the Registrar General, Telangana High Court to depute T. Venkateshwar Rao, Registrar (Protocol) for execution of the sale deeds on behalf of the petitioner-accused. Accordingly, the sale deeds in respect of the seven properties have been duly registered in favour of the successful bidders.

ED investigation was initiated under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 against Nowhera Shaik, Heera Group of Companies and others on the basis of multiple FIRs registered by police in different States.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Beyond the joke — what the Rs 370 biryani row reveals

What does it take for a room full of people to laugh at the violation of a woman's bodily autonomy? Apparently, it doesn't take much. Just a microphone, a comedian willing to egg it on, and a culture that's been quietly building toward this moment for a long time. Many of us have seen the viral clip from Pranit More's comedy show where a 23-year-old Himanshu Jangra talks about expecting physical intimacy from a woman because he spent Rs 370 on a biryani for her and "paisa vasool karna tha". Not only does More egg him on, but he also rewards him with Rs 5,000 because he "made the show successful".

While there is a lot to say about both Jangra and More's actions, an important part of the puzzle has been missing from the mainstream conversation – the audience who laughed, clapped and encouraged the conversation, both in the room and online, and what that says about the beliefs we've been brought up with. Jangra did not arrive at those beliefs alone. He was taught by a culture that has spent decades building the exact conditions that make a room full of people hear a woman's "no" as a punchline. A useful lens here is Thomas Ford's work on the prejudiced norm theory. It says that sexist jokes go beyond reflecting existing attitudes and actively create structures that grant permission for those attitudes. Through his experiments, Ford (2000) found that people already high in hostile sexism displayed an increased tolerance of sex discrimination when they were exposed to sexist humour. This works through subtle ways. When we laugh at something together, we implicitly agree to let go of our critical judgement and enter a space where what is being expressed is seen as acceptable and normal. This then brings up the question of where Jangra,

Shanti Srinivas Reddy Inspects Sewerage Pipeline and CC Road Works in Alwal Colonies

“Focus on Quality and Timely Completion of Development Works” ALWAL OCTOBER 14 (INDIAN CHRONICLE) “Former Corporator Shanti Srinivas Reddy visited Bheem Rao Nagar, Janaki Nagar and Anand Rao Nagar and inspected the ongoing sewerage pipeline and cement concrete (CC) road works in the respective colonies. During the inspection, she reviewed the progress of the ongoing works and emphasized the importance of completing the projects at the earliest without compromising on quality. She highlighted that proper sewerage infrastructure and well-developed roads are essential for improving civic ameni-



ties and ensuring greater convenience for residents. She stressed that the works should be carried out according to the required standards to provide long-lasting benefits to the local communities. The timely completion of these projects is expected to improve basic infrastructure and address the needs of residents in the respective colonies. Giri, Prashanth, Yadagiri, Prem, Saajid and Mahender accompanied former Corporator Shanti Srinivas Reddy during the inspection.

Odiyaram ZPHS secures 23rd rank nationally under SHVR.

Karimnagar October 14, Khaja Sikandar Mohiuddin (Correspondent): Zilla Parishad High School (ZPHS), Odiyaram, in Gangadhara mandal of Karimnagar district has secured 23rd rank among 190 schools nationally under SHVR 2025–26. It is one of 10 schools from Telangana selected for recognition for promoting cleanliness, personal hygiene, environmental protection and sustainable development. Union Minister and Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar congratulated in-charge headmaster E. Srinivas and former headmaster and former Mandal Education Officer Enugu Prabhakar Rao for their contributions to the school's development. The school will receive a certificate of appreciation and a cash incentive of ₹1 lakh at a national-level felicitation ceremony in Delhi. The amount can be used for school development and improving its SHVR standards. Mr. Sanjay invited the school representatives to visit his official residence during their Delhi visit.

The school had earlier received State-level recognition in 2016–17. Mr. Prabhakar Rao attributed the latest achievement to collective efforts by teachers, students and staff, sustained monitoring and environment-friendly initiatives. TPUS president A. Tirupathi Rao, Kanakoti Haricharan, Burra Nagaraj, Dyavanapalli Srikanth Rao and 50th ward corporator Boyinapalli Praveen Rao congratulated the school representatives.



Special Focus Needed on Graduate MLC Voter Registration - District Collector

“Khammam, October 14, Indian Chronicle.” District Collector Divakara TS has directed officials to expedite the distribution of pending notices and complete the remaining inquiries under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) programme. On Wednesday, the District Collector reviewed the progress of the SIR programme and Graduate MLC voter registration with representatives of various political parties at the Collectorate. Speaking on the occasion, Collector Divakara TS stated that out of a total of 1,75,841 notices in the district, the distribution of only 1,630 notices remained pending, with 99.07 per cent of the distribution completed. He also revealed that inquiries had been completed for 1,58,144 individuals. He instructed officials to complete the remaining inquiries by November and thoroughly scrutinise the documents submitted by voters. He further directed them to take necessary steps to include all eligible individuals in the electoral rolls in accordance with the prescribed rules and guidelines. “Form-6 Applications Must Be Cleared Within a Week.” The Collector stated that a total of 6,435 Form-6 applications were pending in the district. He directed Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) to pay special attention to resolving these applications. He instructed the officers to review the pending applications and dispose of them within the next week. He also emphasised the need for prompt action to ensure that eligible applicants do not face any difficulties. “Special Focus on Graduate MLC Voter Registration.” The Collector stated that approximately 27,000 graduates had registered as

voters in the district so far. He noted that around 84,000 voters had been registered during the previous exercise. This time, the district has set a target of registering at least 2 lakh graduates as voters. As November 6 is the last date for voter registration, he instructed officials to take special measures to ensure that all eligible graduates enrol themselves as voters. He called for extensive awareness campaigns on the registration process and urged officials to work collectively towards achieving the target. “Extensive Publicity Through the Media.” The Collector emphasised the need to widely publicise the eligibility criteria, application procedure and registration process for Graduate MLC voter enrolment through social media, newspapers, electronic media and cable television channels. He also appealed to representatives of political parties to create awareness among eligible graduates and actively participate in the voter registration drive. The meeting was attended by Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Dr P Sreeja, Kalluru Sub-Collector Ajay Yadav, Khammam RDO N Srinivas, Collectorate



Election Section Superintendent MA Raju, DT Ansari, Bharat Rashtia Samithi representatives B. Venugopal, M Ramesh and A Satish Babu, Congress Party representative Annam Gopal Rao, Bharatiya Janata Party representative V Rajesh, Aam Aadmi Party representative Swarna Subba Rao, Bahujan Samaj Party representative Velpula Ramaiah, CPI(M) representative R Prakash, and others.

Let Us Support Handlooms... Let Us Preserve Our Traditions!



Andhra Pradesh State Handloom Exhibition (SHE)-2026 Inaugurated in Hyderabad
A Recognition of Weavers' Artistry – Encouraging Weavers Through the Purchase of Handloom Products

Inaugurated by IAS Officer G. Rekha Rani, Kumari Nandamuri Mohana Roopa and Smt. Nandamuri Seemanthini

“: Handloom weaving, which stands as a symbol of India's rich culture and traditions, must be preserved and promoted while extending support to the weavers, said G. Rekha Rani, IAS, Commissioner of the Department of Handlooms and Textiles, Government of Andhra Pradesh. She emphasised that encouraging the purchase of handloom products would not only strengthen the livelihoods of weavers but also help pass on India's traditional heritage to future generations.” The inauguration

of the Andhra Pradesh State Handloom Exhibition (SHE)-2026, organised by the Department of Handlooms and Textiles, Government of Andhra Pradesh, was held grandly in Hyderabad on Wednesday. “The exhibition was inaugurated by Smt. G. Rekha Rani, IAS, Commissioner, Department of Handlooms and Textiles, Government of Andhra Pradesh; Kumari Nandamuri Mohana Roopa; and Smt. Nandamuri Seemanthini.” The exhibition has been organised at Sri Sathya Sai Nigamagalam in Hyderabad and will continue from October 13 to 26. Visitors can explore the exhibition every day from 10:00 AM to 9:00 PM. “Recognition for the Hard Work of Weavers” Indian handlooms have a rich history and a unique cultural heritage. The weaving traditions of different regions, each with distinctive techniques and styles, reflect the exceptional skill and craftsmanship of Indian weavers, said Nandamuri Mohana Roopa. “However, changing market conditions and competition from machine-made textiles have made it increasingly important for society to support the handloom sector. Greater patronage for handloom products would create more employment opportunities and provide sustainable livelihoods for families dependent on this traditional profession.” The exhibition aims to showcase the exceptional craftsmanship of weavers and increase public awareness of traditional textiles. It offers visitors an opportunity to explore the uniqueness of handloom products, discover a wide variety of designs and purchase textiles that suit their tastes and preferences. “Blending Tradition with Modernity” With changing preferences and fashion trends, the handloom sector is also embracing new designs, colour combinations and contemporary styles. While preserving traditional weaving techniques, creating products that appeal to younger generations can help attract a wider customer base and strengthen the sector. “Choosing handloom garments for festivals, weddings, family celebrations and other special occasions is



one meaningful way to support weavers and preserve traditional craftsmanship.” Purchasing handloom products is not merely a matter of personal style or fashion. It is also a way of supporting an art form, preserving a traditional profession and protecting the livelihoods of countless families. When more people choose handloom products, the sector can generate greater employment opportunities while earning wider recognition for India's rich textile heritage. “Supporting Handlooms Is Our Responsibility” The organisers have appealed to the public, textile enthusiasts and handloom lovers to visit the exhibition and purchase handloom products. Providing greater visibility to the handloom sector and expanding market opportunities for weavers can help strengthen the industry and ensure its continued growth. “Handlooms are our culture. The hard work of weavers is our heritage. Let us embrace handlooms, support our weavers and pass on our traditions to future generations!”

A Kingdom of Corruption in the Revenue Department

“Khammam Staffer, October 14, Indian Chronicle.” “It may not be an exaggeration to say that the Revenue Department ranks among the most corruption-prone departments in Telangana. Some officials appear to be making every effort to maintain that position. Driven by the fear of falling behind, they seem eager to stay at the forefront of the race for corruption. Whether a citizen needs a certificate or wants to have a farmer's land title changed, every task appears to come with a price tag. Some officials are turning government offices, which are meant to serve the public, into centres for negotiating and collecting bribes. Even though Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) officials are conducting raids, catching corrupt officials red-handed and sending them behind bars, the mindset

of some individuals remains unchanged. Despite reports of raids appearing in newspapers and arrests taking place before their very eyes, the collection of bribes continues unabated. Only these officials can explain what happened to the oath they took before joining government service and where the ethical values they promised to uphold have disappeared. Instead of taking the initiative to serve the public, they seem to have made personal gain their primary objective in every task. If they are determined to achieve the top position even in corruption, when will justice ever be delivered to the people? Is government employment meant to serve the public or to fill one's own pockets? Unless the conduct of certain officials in the Revenue Department changes, when will corruption ever be brought under control? “When Will the Common Citizen Be Treated with Dignity in Government Offices?” The oath taken before entering government service and the ethical values officials promise to uphold must be reflected in the way they discharge their duties. Setting aside their responsibility to serve the public and seeking personal gain from every task is a clear violation of their professional obligations. However, it would be unfair to paint every employee in the Revenue Department with the same brush. While protecting the dignity of those who work honestly, strict action must be taken against those whose involvement in corruption is established through evidence. Only then will those engaging in illegal activities develop a fear of the law, and public confidence in the government begin to grow.”



When Will Senior Officials Respond? “Senior officials need to conduct a comprehensive review of the Revenue Department, beginning at the grassroots level, to improve transparency. The services provided in government offices, the documents required, the prescribed fees and the deadlines for resolving applications must be clearly communicated to the public. Special monitoring mechanisms should be established to address issues such as unnecessarily keeping applications pending, repeatedly making citizens visit government offices and carrying out unauthorised alterations to land records. Complaints should not be treated casually. They must be investigated thoroughly so that the facts come to light. If corruption is established, action must be taken in accordance with the law, regardless of the official's rank. Meaningful change is possible only when authorities go beyond inspections and warnings and address the systemic weaknesses that allow corruption to flourish. It is unfortunate that a department expected to lead in public service is earning a reputation for corruption. Is government employment intended to serve the people, or is it being turned into an opportunity for personal enrichment? The officials responsible for the functioning of the Revenue Department, along with their senior authorities, must answer this question. Providing security and assurance to citizens regarding their land, property rights and access to government services is fundamental to good governance. In our view, this is the true test of the administrative system.”

Husband Arrested for Attempted Murder After Attacking Wife with Hammer



“MEDIPALLY , OCTOBER 14 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“Medipally police have arrested a man for allegedly attacking his wife multiple times with a hammer and causing severe injuries.“According to police, Ghouse Pasha Qureshi (42), a resident of Gandhi Nagar Colony in Parvathapur, married Jaibun Begum (28) in 2021 as his second marriage. The couple had been living in Parvathapur since then.“Police said the accused allegedly consumed alcohol frequently and subjected his wife to mental and physical harassment, often quarrelling with her. On the night of October 10, he allegedly picked a quarrel with her after consuming alcohol. Their sons intervened and managed to calm the situation.“However, at around 3 a.m. on October 11, while Jaibun Begum was sleeping in a separate room, Ghouse Pasha allegedly attacked her on the head several times with a hammer. She sustained severe head injuries and fell unconscious.Her sons immediately rushed her to Gandhi Hospital in Hyderabad for treatment. She is currently undergoing treatment at the hospital.Based on a complaint lodged by the victim's brother, Medipally police registered a case relating to harassment and attempted murder. As part of the investigation, police arrested the accused on October 14. The hammer allegedly used in the attack was also seized in the presence of witnesses.Medipally Police Station Inspector Jalandhar Reddy said further investigation into the case is underway.

TRS Extends Support to NHM Employees' Agitation: Batti Ajay Issues Stern Warning to Congress Government

“October 14.(Indian chronicle) Medak.““The Telangana Rakshana Sena (TRS) party has extended its support to the just agitation being carried out by the NHM (National Health Mission) employees. Under the leadership of Medak Constituency TRS Party In-charge Sri Batti Ajay, party leaders and workers participated in this protest program and declared their full support to the employees.““Speaking on this occasion, Sri Batti Ajay severely warned the Congress government, saying... "It is atrocious that this government has left the NHM staff, who risked their lives and served during the difficult times of Corona, on the roads. Even though it is clear that regularizing them will not put any additional burden on the government, the government is behaving stubbornly. The Congress government should immediately fulfill the following just demands:““1. As per the Supreme Court orders, 100% Gross Salary should be paid to every employee.“2. The brokerage system of outsourcing agencies should be abolished and salaries should be paid directly through the State Health Society (SHS), through SPARSH.“3. 180 days of maternity leave should be immediately sanctioned for women staff, like in other government departments.“4. The family of an employee who lost his life in the line of duty should be given an ex-gratia of Rs. 20 lakhs and a job to one person in the family.“5. The pending 9 months PRC (PRC), arrears should be released immediately.“6. As per the orders of the former Commissioner, salaries should be paid by the 5th of every month.““If the Congress government does not resolve



these demands immediately, we will undertake large-scale agitations under the leadership of TRS party not only from Medak constituency. , but at the state level," he severely warned the government.““Senior leaders who participated:“Senior leaders of TRS party Mr. Ippa Ramesh, Mr. Kevalam Nanda Kishore, Student Wing leaders Mr. MD Junaid, Senior leaders Mr. Yashwanth, Mr. Naveen, Mr. Mahesh, Mr. Murali, Mr. Shravan, Mr. Choudari Naveen, Mr. Choudari Bhanu, Mr. Karate Prem, Mr. Dinesh, Gold Raju, Vaddera Shiva along with other TRS party fans and workers participated in large numbers.

Illegal Shed Construction in Shivanagar Jonnabanda: Why Is the Government Silent?

Who Will Stop the Alleged Unauthorized Construction? Residents Demand Immediate Intervention by Officials

““ALWAL, OCTOBER 14 (INDIAN CHRONICLE)““Allegations of unauthorized shed construction in Shivanagar Jonnabanda, Old Alwal, , have raised serious questions about the role of the concerned government departments. If the construction is being carried out without the necessary permissions, why have the authorities not intervened to stop it?Residents are questioning the apparent lack of action by the concerned officials while the alleged construction continues. Is the government waiting for the structure to be completed before taking action? Who is responsible for monitoring construction activities and ensuring compliance with the prescribed rules and regulations?The issue has raised concerns over the enforcement of building regulations and the accountability of the authorities responsible for preventing unauthorized construction. People expect government departments to act promptly whenever violations are reported, rather than allowing such matters to remain unresolved.The concerned authorities should immediately inspect the site at Shivanagar Jonnabanda and verify whether the required permissions have been obtained. If the construction is found to be in violation of applicable rules, appropriate legal action should be taken and the work stopped as per the law.“Why are the au-



thorities silent when questions are being raised about unauthorized construction? Will the government intervene immediately, or will it remain a silent spectator until the shed is completed?“The concerned departments must respond, clarify the facts and ensure that construction regulations are enforced fairly and effectively.

Kallem Navajeevan Reddy Visits Devi Navaratri Pandalas in Hayathnagar

““Indian chronicle October 14““Former Hayathnagar Corporator Kallem Navajeevan Reddy visited Devi Navaratri pandals organized by Sri Hanuman Youth Association (Mudhiraj Youth Association) in Hayathnagar and Diamond Youth Association in Anumagal. He offered special prayers, participated in annadanam, and appreciated the organizers for conducting the festivities with devotion. BJP Hayathnagar Division President Gangani Srinivas and District Executive Member Ittaboyina Narasimha were also present.“



As part of Navratri festivities, Former Corporator Sindhu Adarsh Reddy participates in special poojas at Bombay Colony Vasavi Temple

“October 14.(Indian chronicle) Patan cheru.““As part of the Navratri celebrations, former corporator of Bharathi Nagar Division, Smt. Sindhu Adarsh Reddy, attended the special pooja programs organized under the auspices of the Arya Vaishya Sangham at the Sri Vasavi Kanyaka Parameswari Devi Temple in Bombay Colony, Bharathi Nagar Division.““On this occasion, marking the Navratri festivities, she had darshan of the Goddess and performed special poojas. Later, she participated in the Kumkuma Pooja organized by the members of the Arya Vaishya Sangham and in the Bathukamma celebrations, and celebrated by playing Bathukamma along with the women.““Speaking on this occasion, Sindhu Adarsh Reddy wished that with the blessings of the Goddess, all people should live with happiness and good health.“Former corporator of Ramachandrapuram, Smt. Pushpa Nagesh Yadav, also participated in this program.



MLA Marri Rajashekar Reddy Pushes for Road Development in Malkajgiri Seeks Speedy Resolution of Land Exchange Issues for AOC Road Expansion



““ALWAL, October 14 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):““Malkajgiri MLA Marri Rajashekar Reddy has taken a proactive initiative to accelerate road infrastructure development and address traffic congestion in the constituency. As part of these efforts, he met Vikas Raj, IAS, Special Chief Secretary to the Government, Transport, Roads and Buildings Department, at the Telangana Secretariat on Tuesday.During the meeting, the MLA urged the officials to expedite the resolution of pending issues related to the land exchange process required for the development of additional Army Ordnance Corps (AOC) roads in the Malkajgiri constituency.The discussions primarily focused on the proposed Equal Value Land Exchange process, under which government land required for road development would be exchanged with the Railway Department for land of equivalent value. The MLA emphasized that re-

solving the pending matters at the earliest would help improve road connectivity, ease traffic congestion and provide greater convenience to commuters.He also highlighted the importance of coordination among the concerned departments to overcome procedural hurdles and facilitate infrastructure development in the public interest. Improved road facilities, he noted, would help reduce transportation difficulties and strengthen connectivity across the constituency.Responding to the request, Vikas Raj assured the MLA that the land exchange issue would be brought to the attention of the concerned ministers and that a further decision would be taken after discussions.Former Corporator Chintala Shanti Srinivas Reddy, BRS leaders Mekala Ramu Yadav and Nemuri Sridhar Goud, among others, participated in the meeting.

Kumbham Kirti Reddy visited several Durga Mata Mandapalas in Bhubaneswar and Bibinagar and performed special pujas



““(Yadadri Bhubaneswar District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. October 13):- On the occasion of Dussehra Sharannavaratri, young leader Kumbham Kirti Reddy visited several Durga Mata Mandapalas in Bhubaneswar town on Wednesday and performed special pujas to the goddess. She prayed to the goddess that all the people may prosper with happiness, good health and that every family may have happiness and peace. Municipal Chairperson Thangallapalli Srivani-Ravikumar, District Library Chairman Aves Chisti, Municipal Vice Chairperson Pothamsetty Manjula-Venkateswarlu, senior leaders, councilors, Congress Youth Congress leaders, activists and devotees participated in this program. Later, they visited various Durga Mata Mandapams in Bibinagar town and performed special pujas to the goddess. They prayed for the happiness and good health of all the people. PACS Chairman Pottolla Shyam Goud, Senior Congress leader Goli Pingal Reddy, local Sarpanch Srinivas, PACS directors, co-optation members, Youth Congress leaders, activists and devotees participated in this program.



Indian Red Cross Society, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri Branch Rotary Members Who Won Elections Honored

“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. October 13):- Rotary Club of Bhuvanagiri Central former president Saddi Venkat Reddy as chairman, former president Diddi Balaji as vice chairman, current president M. A. Rahim as treasurer, Dr. Edla Anil Kumar Reddy as director, Itikyala Lavanya (inner wheel member) as director were felicitated and congratulated on their victory in the recent elections.”Rotary Assistant Governor Pakir Kondal Reddy, Kakatiya Region Membership Chairman Dr. M.Palla Buchi Reddy participated and congratulated the newly elected members. Former Presidents Zilla Kondal Reddy, Gaddam Gnana Prakash Reddy, M.D. Hanif Memon, Dr. Pinnapureddy Sumanth Reddy, Club Secretary Baddam Srinivas Reddy, Treasurer Kontham Padma Reddy participated in this program. Club members SP Upender Rao Gudur Ashok Reddy, Balusuguri Yadagiri, Elagala Rajaiah, Sri Nalla Satyanarayana Reddy, Gudur Bali Reddy and others participated and congratulated the newly elected members. On this occasion, many wished that the newly elected members would further expand Rotary service programs in the future and contribute their best for the development of the society.



Hailo app launched with zero commission on bike, auto rides



“Hyderabad Correspondent, October 14 (Indian Chronicle): Telangana-based startup SK Raido has launched Hailo, a ride-hailing platform offering zero commission on bike and auto services, transparent fares without surge pricing and a range of passenger safety fea-

tures. IT Minister Sridhar Babu unveiled the app at Mercure Hotel in Somajiguda, in the presence of company representatives Srikanth and Maharshi. He said local startups developing innovative technologies to compete with international players needed encouragement from both the government and the public. Available on Android and iOS, Hailo brings bike, auto and car bookings onto a single platform. Its safety features include 24-hour emergency assistance, Rapid SOS, silent alerts and the option to share trip details with three pre-selected contacts. The company said passengers would be provided an alternative vehicle if their booked vehicle broke down en route. It also highlighted transparent fares, experienced drivers and a simplified registration process for driver-partners. SK Raido said the platform aims to improve drivers' per-kilometre earnings through a transparent pricing model, with payments made after each ride and no commission charged on bike and auto services. CK Reddy Groups chairman Chandrakanth Reddy and social activist Manjula Reddy attended the launch.

Red Cross Bank building construction should be completed and services should be made available:-District Collector Anurag Jayant



“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. October 14):- District Collector Anurag Jayanti said that the Red Cross Bank building should be completed and services should be made available. On Wednesday, District Collector Anurag Jayanti instructed the concerned officials to complete the construction of the Indian Red Cross Society Blood Bank and office building, which was planned to be built in the Irrigation Department office premises in Bhuvanagiri town, and make services available to the people. The District Collector visited and inspected the land allotted for the construction of the Red Cross Society building and the circle office under construction. Red Cross Society District Chairman Saddi Venkat Reddy, along with members and officials of the concerned departments, inspected the land allotted for the construction of the Blood Bank building and discussed the next steps to be taken regarding the construction. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector requested the Red Cross District Chairman to provide the necessary water facility to the Blood Bank building,



and the Collector assured that water facility would also be provided to the Blood Bank in view of the water supply to the municipality from Mallannasagar being started soon. Later, the construction model of the Blood Bank building was examined and the land allotted for construction was inspected. Also, the progress of the Circle Office work under construction under Division No. 11 of the Irrigation Department was reviewed. The concerned officials were advised to follow the quality standards in the construction work and complete the work within the stipulated time.”Red Cross Society District Chairman Saddi Venkat Reddy, State Committee Member Dr. Lakshmi Narasimha Reddy, District Directors Jampala Anjaiah, Kukatappu Chandrasekhar, Red Cross Member S.P. Upender, Municipal Commissioner Suryaprakash Reddy, TPO Nagaram Madhu, Irrigation Department EEs Sri Shailender, Shkhurshid Ali, DEEs, AEEs, staff of related departments and others participated in this program.

Vajrateja’s Beejam Invites Students to Participate in ‘The Journey of a Grain’ Art Campaign

“Hyderabad: Vajrateja Rice Clusters Pvt. Ltd., Telangana’s largest rice milling and distribution enterprise, announced the final fortnight of its state-wide student art campaign, “The Journey of a Grain,” at a press meet held at Hotel AVASA, Hitech City, Hyderabad, on 13 October 2026. The initiative, conducted ahead of the launch of its forthcoming consumer rice brand, Beejam, has reached approximately 10 lakh students across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.”The campaign encourages students from Classes 6 to 12 in government and private schools to explore the seven stages of paddy cultivation through art and conversations with farmers, grandparents and elders who have worked on the land. The seven stages include sowing and nursery preparation, transplanting, weeding, irrigation, harvesting, threshing, and drying and storage.”Students are required to hand-paint any one of these stages on a plain white A3 sheet after speaking to someone with firsthand knowledge of farming. The initiative aims to help children understand the effort, skill and decisions involved in producing the rice they eat every day, while building awareness of farmers’ contributions and encouraging responsible food consumption.”Addressing the press meet, Mr. Hanuman Prasad, Executive Director & CEO, Vajrateja Rice Clusters Pvt. Ltd., said, “Most of us eat rice three times a day and have never once thought about who grew it. We did not want to run an advertisement saying we respect the farmer—anyone can say that, and it costs nothing. We wanted to do something that was difficult to



fake. The poster is the excuse; the conversation is the campaign. When a child speaks to a farmer or an elder and understands what goes into growing rice, that experience can stay with them for a lifetime.”The company expects approximately 10,000 artworks by the closing date of October 31, 2026. Participation is free, and every student who submits an eligible entry will receive a Certificate of Participation. The artworks will be evaluated by an independent jury comprising a working farmer, a practising artist and an educator, reflecting the campaign’s emphasis on authentic understanding of farming alongside artistic expression.

DMFT funds of Rs. 125.45 lakhs will be sanctioned for the renovation of the feeder canal:- District Collector Anurag Jayanti



“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. October 13):- District Collector Anurag Jayanti said that the aim is to restore water supply to the tanks and remove irrigation water problems for farmers. On Wednesday, the District Collector inspected the feeder canal that supplies water to the Kanlakunta tank in Cholleru village of Yadagirigutta mandal at the field level. He inspected the situation where the water coming from the check dam was going into the stream instead of reaching the tanks due to the blockage of the feeder canal. He assured the farmers that Rs. 125.45 lakhs required for the renovation of the canal would be sanctioned under DMFT.”The water flowing through the stream from Yadagirigutta is supposed to reach five chain tanks through a feeder canal from the check dam in Cholleru village. Kanlakunta in Cholleru village, Devatala Tank in Marrigudem village, Patel Tank in Mahabubapeta village, Oora Tank in Motakondur village, and Chintala Tank are supposed to receive water

through this canal. However, due to damage to the feeder canal, the water is being wasted instead of reaching the ponds. Through the renovation of this feeder canal, water supply to the five chain ponds in the limits of Cholleru, Marrigudem, Mahabubapeta and Motakondur villages will improve and a total of 292.20 acres of ayacut will be irrigated. On this occasion, a large number of farmers present brought their problems to the attention of the District Collector and requested him to take up the renovation work of the feeder canal at the earliest. Responding positively to the farmers' request, the Collector assured that the necessary funds for the renovation of the canal will be sanctioned under DMFT.”The farmers expressed hope that if the renovation work of the feeder canal is completed, water will reach the five chain ponds, eliminating the irrigation problems of the ayacut farmers and increasing the groundwater level. Farmers and villagers thanked the District Collector for responding positively to resolve the problem. The concerned officials participated in this program.

Pending works in welfare hostels should be completed and a good and pleasant environment should be provided to students:- Additional Collector of Local Bodies Bhaskar Rao

“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. October 13):- “Additional Collector of Local Bodies Bhaskar Rao clarified that the pending works in welfare hostels should be completed and a good and pleasant environment should be provided to students. On Wednesday, the Additional Collector reviewed with the welfare officials in his chamber along with the Additional Collector of Local Bodies and District Education Officer Bikshapati. Speaking on the occasion, the Additional Collector said... A review meeting was held with the concerned officials on the works being done in welfare hostels and schools and inquired about the details. He instructed the officials to complete the pending construction and repair works immediately without causing any inconvenience to the students. He suggested that steps be taken to ensure that all necessary facilities are available to provide a clean and safe educational environment to the students. He said that the students should be provided with good and delicious food as per the menu. The officials were instructed to regularly monitor the infrastructure facilities like drinking water, toilets, electricity, compound walls, sanitation and others and rectify

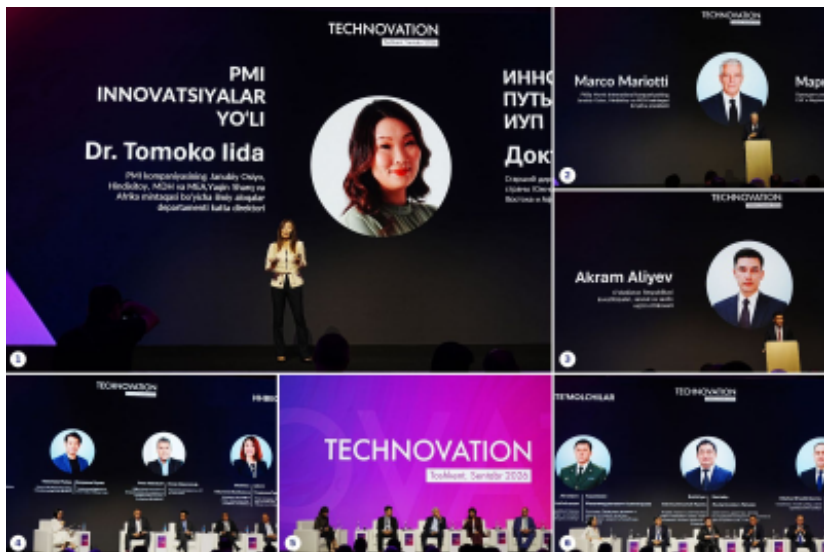


any deficiencies immediately. The Additional Collector instructed the concerned officials to complete all the work within the stipulated time without compromising the quality of the work and submit the report. District Education Officer Bikshapati, Welfare Department officials and others participated in this program.

Smoking Nearly Halved in Japan in a Decade: Experts at Technovation Tashkent 2026 Call for Science-Led Tobacco Policy

“Hyderabad Japan, Sweden and the United States show that giving adult smokers access to scientifically assessed smoke-free alternatives, under clear regulation, can help bring smoking down, experts told Technovation Tashkent 2026. The international innovation forum, convened by Philip Morris International (PMI), held its first Central Asian edition in Tashkent on 30 Sep-

the health of the nation”.”There are more than one billion smokers in the world, and the number is not declining. If they don't want to quit, you have to propose something better for them.” shared Marco Mariotti, President, South & Southeast Asia and CIS, Philip Morris International”In her keynote, Dr. Tomoko Iida, Senior Director, Scientific Engagement at PMI, explained why a better option is possible. Most smoking-related disease is caused by burning tobacco, which produces more than 6,000 chemicals, around 100 of them harmful. Nicotine is addictive and not risk-free, but it is not the primary cause of these diseases. She said products that deliver nicotine without burning can therefore reduce exposure to harmful chemicals, provided smokers find them acceptable enough to switch.”Japan shows what can happen when such products become available. Heated tobacco went on sale there, and in Italy, in 2014. Dr. Iida said earlier tax rises, advertising limits and smoking bans had produced only marginal declines. A study in the BMJ journal Tobacco Control found that cigarette sales in Japan fell by more than half between 2011 and 2023, and identified the rise of heated tobacco as a factor.”In Japan, smoking prevalence has nearly halved in 10 years. In 2014 it was around 20%, and now it is around 10%. The reason is that less harmful alternatives were available, accessible and affordable for legal-age smokers to switch to.” shared Dr. Tomoko Iida, Senior Director, Scientific Engagement, Philip Morris International”.



tember. It brought together senior officials of the Government of Uzbekistan, scientists, business leaders, consumer advocates and doctors from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Russia.”Opening the forum, Akram Aliyev, Deputy Minister of Investment, Industry and Trade of Uzbekistan, said the success of innovation “should be measured not only by economic indicators, but also by its contribution to preserving and improving

Messi, Ronaldo, Neymar cutouts light up Kolhapur streets as FIFA World Cup mania grips city



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

As the FIFA World Cup 2026 got underway, football fever has once again taken over Kolhapur, a city popularly known for wrestling, Kolhapuri chappals and its famous tambda-pandhra rassa. Across neighbourhoods and chowks, life-size cutouts of football stars such as Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, Neymar Jr and Kylian Mbappe have sprung up. Banners, murals and flags representing Portugal, Argentina, Brazil and France adorn street corners, while supporters proudly sport jerseys of their favourite players. For many residents, the World Cup is more than just a sporting event; it is a month-long celebration. "Kolhapurkars have always been passionate about football," said Amir Hakim, an IT professional and Kolhapur-based football player. "I am a die-hard Cristiano Ronaldo fan, and there is a friendly rivalry among Ronaldo, Messi and Neymar supporters across the city. Fans celebrate their favourite players' birthdays and sometimes even organise social activities such as distributing meals to the needy." According to Hakim, local football clubs become the heart of the celebrations during major matches. "Whenever important games are played, football clubs and community spaces are packed with supporters cheering for their teams. The atmosphere is energetic and festive," he said. Residents say the city's connection with football runs much deeper than the beginning of the Football

World Cup in 1930 and FIFA's establishment in 1904. "The city is not limited to wrestling and traditional culture. Football has been part of Kolhapur's sporting identity since the late 19th century under the patronage of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj," said Digvijay Jadhav, a resident of Sadar Bazar in Kolhapur. He pointed out that the sport has enjoyed strong local support since the pre-Independence era and received patronage from the erstwhile royal family. "Football occupies a special place in Kolhapur's sporting legacy. Several clubs continue to nurture young talent, and tournaments are regularly held at Chhatrapati Shahu Stadium in Mangalwar Peth. Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and others have further expanded the game's popularity among the younger generation," Jadhav said. "It is the only city in Maharashtra to display the same level of enthusiasm for international football tournaments," he added. The excitement is especially visible among younger fans, many of whom save money to buy jerseys, purchase mobile app subscriptions and gather with friends to watch matches late into the night. Pune Messi football Indian great Sunil Chhetri also finds a place among global stars (Photo by Sahil Desai). "Several talims (wrestling arenas) and football clubs arrange live screenings of important matches. People of all ages come together to watch and celebrate the sport," said 15-year-old Krishna Mangale. "If someone visits Kolhapur during the World Cup, they will realise that football passion is not limited to Kerala, Kolkata, or Goa. The craze here is equally strong," he added. Mangale, a devoted Lionel Messi fan, said he had saved his pocket money to buy his favourite player's jersey and mobile app subscription. "Almost every football fan here owns a jersey of their favourite player or team. Many even customise them and wear them regularly," he said. The FIFA World Cup 2026, being jointly hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico, is the largest edition of the tournament so far, featuring 48 teams. But thousands of kilometres away from the host nations, the tournament has already transformed Kolhapur city into a vibrant celebration of football.

Abhishek Banerjee appears before CID again in Bengal Assembly signature forgery case

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Trinamool Congress (TMC) General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee appeared before the West Bengal Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on Sunday morning at Bhabani Bhawan. This is his second round of questioning in connection with the Assembly signature forgery case, following a grueling five-and-a-half-hour interrogation on Thursday night. In compliance with a Calcutta High Court directive ordering him to cooperate with the investigation, Banerjee arrived at the CID headquarters at 11.43 am – 17 minutes ahead of his scheduled 12 pm appointment. Presenting his identity card and signing the attendance register, he proceeded inside for questioning.

The high court has granted Banerjee interim relief, directing the state agency not to take any coercive action against him in this case for the next two weeks. Though Sunday is a weekly holiday, CID officials arrived early in the morning to prepare for the high-profile interrogation. Security was significantly tightened around the Bhabani Bhawan premises, with a heavy deployment of additional police forces, central forces, and the Rapid Action Force to prevent any untoward incidents. The CID has also summoned Beliaghata TMC MLA Kunal Ghosh for questioning in connection with the same forgery case later on Sunday afternoon. The forgery case revolves around an official letter sent by the Trinamool legislative party to the Assembly Speaker, designating veteran leader Sovande Chattopadhyay as the Leader of the Opposition. Allegations surfaced that several signatures on the document are fraudulent. Multiple MLAs have claimed they never signed the letter, while other names were allegedly filled out in block letters. Because the letter carries Abhishek Banerjee's signature in his capacity as the party's general secretary, investigators are probing his level of involvement. While

Abhishek Banerjee initially skipped a few summons, he joined the probe following the high court's intervention. The interrogation comes on the heels of a dramatic midnight escalation. Late Saturday night, the Salboni police raided Abhishek Banerjee's Kalighat residence in search of his Personal Assistant Sumit Roy in connection to a land extortion case. Investigators allegedly traced the "tower location" of Roy's active mobile phone directly to the property. According to sources, the police knocked and called out for Roy from 3 am to 5 am without receiving a response. Disaster management personnel were subsequently called in to break the locks. Upon hearing news of the raid, former chief minister Mamata Banerjee rushed to the spot. The police search concluded around 8 am; however, no seizures were made, and Roy was not found on the premises.

Abhishek Banerjee faces a tight grid of legal challenges over the coming days, currently lacking interim protection in two other active cases. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned him to appear before it on Monday in connection with the probe regarding the primary school teacher recruitment scam. Meanwhile, the state police served a notice at his residence on Friday regarding a separate complaint filed in Salt Lake over a public statement he made. Additionally, a fresh criminal complaint was lodged against Abhishek Banerjee at the Siliguri Cyber Crime police station by a local trader on Friday. The complainant accused the MP of making provocative and unlawful remarks targeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah during an election rally. This follows a similar recent complaint filed at the same police station against former CM Mamata Banerjee by an advocate, who alleged that her public criticisms of constitutional institutions threatened national sovereignty and public order.

Rebel TMC MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar's son sends legal notice to Mamata Banerjee, seeks apology

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

In a fresh twist to the turmoil within the Trinamool Congress (TMC), rebel party MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar's son Saturday sent a legal notice to former Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee. Dr Baidyanath Ghosh Dastidar, a psychiatrist by profession, has accused TMC MPs Kalyan Banerjee, Sougata Roy, Mahua Moitra, former TMC MLA Sonali Guha, and Mamata Banerjee of making false statements against him.

The legal notice states, "He (Baidyanath Ghosh Dastidar) neither sought nor desired any nomination for the Barasat Assembly Constituency and had no political ambition in that regard." The notice further reads, "My client... states that IPAC representatives associated with political consultancy and organizational activities repeatedly approached him and requested that he consider contesting from the Barasat Assembly segment... Sohom Pal, then associated with the Barasat District TMCP, contacted him on multiple occasions through WhatsApp and encouraged him to contest elections. Every week, representatives from the Indian Political Action Committee (IPAC)... Sohom Pal would call Dr Baidyanath Ghosh Dastidar to attend health camps in Barasat." The legal notice also alleged that senior advocate and TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee made derogatory and uncharitable references against him and his brother, causing substantial distress and reputational harm. Furthermore, Baidyanath Ghosh Dastidar claimed that Sonali Guha's allegations that he consumes alcohol are false, defamatory, and unsupported by any evidence. In the notice, Baidyanath Ghosh Dastidar asked the respondents to desist from making, publishing, repeating, endorsing, or circulating any statement, insinuation, or allegation concerning him in relation to any political matter and to also "withdraw and retract all false, defamatory, and misleading statements" concerning him. "Issue a public clarification and apology within fifteen (15) days of receipt of this notice, acknowledging that my client neither sought nor desired any political nomination from the Barasat Assembly Constituency and correcting any false statements made regarding his personal conduct or character. Please take notice that should you fail to comply with the aforesaid demands within fifteen (15) days from receipt of this notice, my client shall be constrained to initiate such civil, criminal, and other legal proceedings as may be available in law," the notice states.

Meanwhile, attacking Mahua Moitra, Baidyanath

Ghosh Dastidar posted on social media on Sunday, "Mahua Moitra has falsely claimed that my mother was crying for an MLA ticket for me. 100 % lies. disagreements should be fought politically, not by dragging private individuals and family members into the dispute. I reserve my legal rights." He also posted that he was returning the gifts given to him for his wedding, "I am returning the gold necklace gifted to my wife at our wedding and the kurta-pyjama gifted to me during Durga Puja by @MamataOfficial. I remain grateful for the gesture, but in view of recent events and as a matter of personal conscience, appropriate to return these gifts." Reacting to her son's posts, Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar wrote, "Proud of you and your wife." The notice comes at a time when the TMC is facing the most serious turmoil within the party since its inception in 1998. Last week, a group of 20 Lok Sabha MPs, reportedly led by Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, wrote to Speaker Om Birla seeking recognition as a separate faction supporting the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance. According to sources, the rebel MPs will meet the Speaker on Monday.

The sub-jails operated under a separate Sub-Jail Manual first drafted in 1928 and amended in 1952. (Image: CHRI) The sub-jails operated under a separate Sub-Jail Manual first drafted in 1928 and amended in 1952. Calling time on what rights groups once described as Maharashtra's "abandoned prisons", the state government has decided to permanently shut all 116 sub-jails that operated under the revenue department, ending a colonial-era system criticised for poor sanitation, inadequate facilities and lack of oversight. A Government Resolution (GR) issued on June 12 ordered the closure of the remaining operational sub-jails and the transfer of inmates to prisons run by the state's prison department. The decision follows the recommendations of a government-appointed committee that reviewed the condition and future of the facilities. Of

Talasani Srinivas Yadav questions Congress government's ability to deliver Future City project

Hyderabad: BRS deputy leader Talasani Srinivas Yadav questioned the Congress government's ability to execute ambitious projects like the proposed Bharat Future City, while struggling to address basic civic issues in Hyderabad. He reminded that during the BRS regime, citizens of Hyderabad received uninterrupted drinking water and power supply, but the Congress government failed to continue the progress achieved over the previous decade. "Can this government that is unable to ensure regular drinking water supply to the existing city, is expected to successfully build and manage the proposed Future City project," he asked. He also criticised Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for holding constitutional position, but failing to maintain the dignity and decorum associated with it.

Addressing the BRS Khairatabad constituency meeting at Telangana Bhavan on Sunday, Srinivas Yadav recalled the formation of the BRS in 2001 and its struggle for

statehood under the leadership of K Chandrashekhara Rao. He said, unlike conventional political parties, the BRS emerged from a movement that fought against injustices in the united Andhra Pradesh over water, funds and employment opportunities. The former Minister credited Chandrashekhara Rao with securing statehood and placing Telangana as a frontrunner on the national map, with the State witnessing rapid development during the BRS government's ten-year tenure. However, he said public dissatisfaction had grown during the Congress government's two-and-a-half years in power and accused the administration of failing to meet people's expectations. On the occasion, Srinivas Yadav urged party leaders and cadre to actively engage with public issues and support people affected by the Congress government's misgovernance. He asked party workers to strengthen the organisation at the grassroots level and begin preparations for the forthcoming GHMC elections.

As water crisis and heat intensify, BMC is rejuvenating Mumbai's lost lakes

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

As Mumbai runs out of water stock and reels under a heatwave, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is set to rejuvenate two historic lakes—Bhujale Talao and Kamal Talao—in Mumbai's western suburbs. Currently in a dilapidated state, these waterbodies were key sources of potable water during the 20th century, when the Malad and Kandivali areas had not yet urbanised. Last week, Union minister and North Mumbai MP Piyush Goyal inspected both lakes in Mumbai and said the rejuvenation work would likely be completed within six months. "These lakes will serve as lungs for Mumbai and will improve the overall environmental condition in these areas. Plus, the lakes and the surrounding greenery will also help control pollution," he said. Speaking to the authorities said the overall rejuvenation plan comprises nine lakes in North Mumbai. The project will be executed under a public-private partnership model. Civic officials said the larger plan is to upscale the city's overall urban infrastructure by rejuvenating these waterbodies to make open spaces more accessible to people.

"At present, the first phase of rejuvenating the Bhujale Talao has already been initiated, and 90 metric tonnes (MT) of silt have been removed from the waterbody's bed," an official told The Indian Express. After the desilting, the entire waterbody precinct will be beautified and developed into a recreational space by creating a walking track and gardens, the official added. The origin of this lake dates back to the early 20th century, when the entire western suburbs in Mumbai were paddy grasslands where agricultural work used to take place. Locals recall that the water supply pipeline didn't reach this part of the city during that time and people would depend on freshwater lakes like the Bhujale lake for potable water. "Later, during the 1980s, the authorities initiated the construction of the link road and pipelines were built at the same time. As a result, people's dependency on the lakes reduced, and gradually the lakes were used only for dumping waste and immersing Ganesh idols. The civic body also reduced the frequency of cleanup in these lakes," said Ramesh Sharma, 71, a local resident. The Kamal Talao in Marve, home to various migratory birds, spans seven acres. Civic officials said that rejuvenation would significantly improve the lake's water quality and sur-

Punjab BJP flags off 8-day Ambedkar circuit pilgrimage to woo Dalit voters

With the Punjab Assembly elections approaching, the Punjab unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday launched its Panch Teerath Yatra, an eight-day pilgrimage tour to places associated with Dr B R Ambedkar's life and legacy. Three buses carrying around 150 pilgrims from different parts of Punjab were flagged off from the BJP's state headquarters in Chandigarh. According to party leaders, the entire cost of the tour, including transportation, boarding, lodging and food, will be borne by the Punjab BJP.

Punjab BJP president Kewal Singh Dhillon said the yatra is aimed at familiarising people with the life, struggles and contributions of Dr B.R. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. He said, "The pilgrimage circuit, known as the Panch Teerath, was conceptualised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June 2016 and consists of five locations closely associated with Ambedkar. These include Mhow in Madhya Pradesh's Indore City, Ambedkar's birthplace; Deeksha Bhoomi in Nagpur, where he embraced Buddhism; Mahaparinirvan Bhoomi in Delhi, where he passed away; Chaitya Bhoomi in Mumbai, where he was cremated; and the house in London where he lived during his student years." More than Rs 2,000 crore has been spent on preserving and developing these sites. The Modi government has created memorials, museums and visitor facilities to ensure that future generations understand Baba Saheb's contribution to the nation," Dhillon said. He added that while pilgrims would physically visit the sites in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Delhi, a virtual tour of Ambedkar's London residence would also be arranged during the journey. The buses will first travel to Mhow in Madhya Pradesh before proceeding to Nagpur and Mumbai in Maharashtra and then to Delhi before returning to Punjab.

Punjab BJP SC Morcha president and retired IAS officer S R Ladhari said the programme would continue in the coming months. "Three buses will be sent every two months and the entire expenditure will be borne by the Punjab BJP," he said. Political observers view the initiative as significant in the run-up to the Assembly elections, particularly because Punjab has the highest proportion of the Scheduled Caste population among Indian states. According to the 2011 Census, Scheduled Castes account for 31.9 per cent of the state's population. Dhillon used the occasion to contrast the BJP's initiative with previous governments. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi took the initiative to develop these sites, while Congress governments made no serious effort in this direction. We have also provided educational material to the pilgrims so that they can better understand the historical importance of these places," he said. Punjab government's pilgrimage scheme The launch of the BJP's Panch Teerath Yatra comes at a time when the Punjab government is already running the Mukh Mantri Teerath Yatra Scheme, under which pilgrims aged 50 years and above are provided free travel to religious destinations, including the Golden Temple, Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib, Takht Sri Damdama Sahib, Chintpurni, Naina Devi, Haridwar, and Rishikesh. Introduced in November 2023 for senior citizens aged 60 and above, the scheme was later expanded and relaunched in January this year for people aged 50 years and above. However, BJP leaders chose not to comment on the state government's pilgrimage programme and instead focused on highlighting the Ambedkar heritage circuit. Over the years, the Panch Teerath initiative has evolved beyond a heritage project into a broader social and educational programme. Several BJP-ruled states have incorporated visits to the Ambedkar circuit into their welfare and pilgrimage schemes.

After decades of neglect, Maharashtra's 'abandoned prisons' are finally being shut

the 116 sub-jails across Maharashtra, only 36 remained operational while the remaining 80 had already ceased functioning, many due to their dilapidated condition and need for repairs. The GR issued by the Revenue and Forest Department states that senior officials from the Revenue and Home departments met in January and the committee recommended shutting them down and, wherever necessary, allowing the prison department to seek land and infrastructure to upgrade facilities into district prisons. The government has directed authorities to formally close the sub-jails and repeal the separate jail manual under which they functioned. According to records from the Prison Statistics of India, Maharashtra had the highest number of sub-jails in the country in the early 2000s, with 172 such facilities. Over the years, many were gradually shut down. The sub-jails

operated under a separate Sub-Jail Manual first drafted in 1928 and amended in 1952. Dating back to the British era, these facilities were located in mahals or talukas and were meant to house prisoners sentenced to imprisonment of up to 14 days as well as inmates in transit to district or central prisons. Unlike regular prisons, these facilities were administered by the revenue department. Clerks functioned as jailors, while the tahsildar served as superintendent and reported to the Inspector General of Prisons. Maharashtra and Karnataka remained among the few states where such sub-jails continued to function under the revenue department instead of the prison administration. Over time, the facilities increasingly came to be used to temporarily house prisoners when district or central prisons were located far away and police were unable to immediately transfer inmates after courts remanded them to judicial custody.

Pune man held for distributing ‘rat poison capsules’ at Mumbai Muharram rally



Faiyaz Premji Mumbai poison capsuleAccording to the Mumbai police, Faiyaz Premji is a BBA graduate. His father owns a paint company in Pune. and his mother and sister are in Iran.A 39-year-old man from Pune was arrested on Saturday for allegedly distributing capsules mixed with zinc phosphide—rat poison—during a Muharram procession in south Mumbai on Friday night. The police identified the accused as Faiyaz Premji and said that he had 14,000 capsules with him. He allegedly told the police that he intended to harm those who had gathered for the religious

event. Officers are now interrogating him to determine his motive.Zinc phosphide, a rodenticide, is commonly used to kill rats and is also used as a single-dose poison in agricultural fields.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Jayant Meena said the case came to light after employees of a hospital reported that a man had been admitted with vomiting and severe stomach cramps after consuming a “painkiller” tablet that was allegedly being handed out during the procession. Suspecting something amiss, the doctors alerted the police, who picked up Premji.“He told us he wanted to target the procession and harm them. He had ordered 30,000 capsules online and 50 kg of zinc phosphide. He added 1 gram of zinc phosphide to each capsule,” DCP Meena said. He added that Premji claimed the capsules were painkillers while distributing them among participants.According to the police, Premji is a BBA graduate whose father owns a paint company in Pune. His mother and sister are in Iran and he himself had visited Iran and Iraq in 2025.DCP Meena added that by acting swiftly, the police had averted a major tragedy. An officer said they are checking how many people took the pills and if anyone else has complained of any health issues.

Punjab man dies in Italy police custody after sexual assault complaint

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

The death of a 23-year-old Punjabi man in police custody in Italy on June 23 has left his family in Punjab’s Hoshiarpur devastated and searching for answers, with Italian authorities ordering an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident.The deceased, Sukhwinder Singh alias Sonu, a resident of Miani village, was arrested by the Italian Police on June 21 following a complaint by three minor girls who allegedly accused him of inappropriate behaviour during a visit to Tibidabo Water Park.

The man had been living in Italy for the past five years. He worked as an agricultural labourer near Brescia and was reportedly in the process of regularising his stay in the country.What made the tragedy even more painful for the family was the manner in which they learned about his death. The family received an official communication in Italian, a language neither the family nor many educated residents of the village could understand. It was only after a local youth used an Artificial Intelligence-based translation tool to convert the document into Punjabi that the family came to know that Sukhwinder had died.The translated communication stated that Sukhwinder had died while in custody.Italian authorities stated that after Sukhwinder’s arrest, the matter was subsequently placed before a court, which recorded the statements of the minor girls.Based on those statements, the court reportedly held him responsible for sexual harassment-related allegations and ordered that he be sent to jail.Officials further informed the family that Sukhwinder had no previous criminal record in Italy. He had also applied for political asylum and was awaiting the outcome of his immigration-related proceedings.Family maintains Sukhwinder was innocentThe family, however, has strongly disputed the allegations.

Sukhwinder’s younger sister, Amandeep Kaur, said her brother had spoken to the family shortly before his arrest and narrated a different version of events.According to her, Sukhwinder told them that while passing through the water park, where three girls were taking selfies and chatting, his hand accidentally brushed against one of them. An argument allegedly followed, after which the police were called.Sukhwinder Singh’s family Sukhwinder Singh’s family has strongly disputed the allegations. Special arrangement)“He repeatedly told us that he had done nothing wrong and that the allegations were false,” Amandeep said.The family claims Sukhwinder was deeply disturbed by the accusations and insisted on his innocence during



conversations after his arrest.According to information received from Italy, Sukhwinder was lodged in jail after being produced before a court on June 21.The family said they later learned that he complained of feeling unwell inside the prison. Authorities reportedly shifted him to another cell, but he died on June 23, on the third day of his arrest.The family was officially informed of his death on June 24.Amandeep said the family believes the young man was unable to bear the emotional stress caused by the allegations. However, the exact cause of death has not yet been officially established.Investigation and post-mortem orderedFollowing the custodial death, senior Italian police officials have initiated an investigation into the case.According to information shared with the family, the Brescia Prosecutor’s Office has ordered a post-mortem examination of the body. A special inquiry committee has also been constituted to examine the circumstances leading to the death and determine whether any lapses occurred during his detention.

Authorities are expected to rely on forensic findings, prison records, and other evidence to establish the exact cause of death.For Sukhwinder’s family, the tragedy has brought an abrupt end to years of sacrifice and hope.He had moved to Italy around five years ago after studying up to Class 11, hoping to improve the family’s financial condition. His mother had reportedly mortgaged her jewellery and taken loans worth nearly ₹15 lakh to finance his journey abroad. She died two years ago. Sukhwinder could not attend her last rites because of his immigration situation.The family says he was their only son and the main hope for improving their economic circumstances.Relatives describe him as a religious-minded young man who had served as a pathi (a religious man at the Gurudwara who recites religious texts) at the village gurdwara before leaving for Italy.

MLA Humayun Kabir under fire after threatening BJP workers at Murshidabad rally



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Aam Janata Unnayan Party (AJUP) chief Humayun Kabir Friday sparked a controversy after threatening to beat up BJP workers in Murshidabad district.Addressing a public meeting in Murshidabad’s Rejinagar, Humayun Kabir said, “I told (Chief Minister) Suvendu Adhikari, it is good that you have won and the BJP has won. But ask (your) party not to boast too much in Murshidabad.”“If they (BJP workers) cross the limits, there will be trouble. Lakhs will hit the streets, and I will lead the community. We will beat them up. There

will be no one left to hold the BJP flag here. The BJP district president will also vanish,” threatened Nowda MLA Kabir.Reacting to his statements, Bengal Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Dilip Ghosh said, “Once Mamata Banerjee and her nephew made statements like this. Look at their condition now. One is trying to get cheap publicity by saying all this. But one should not forget that the government has changed in Bengal.”

CPI(M) leader Shatarup Ghosh, too, condemned Kabir’s remarks. He said, “Kabir should be immediately arrested. He made controversial comments in 2024 as well when the TMC was in power. But he was not arrested. After such communal and controversial comments, we want to see that he is arrested. If he is not arrested, then it will prove that he has a link with the BJP.”Kabir was expelled from the TMC last year after he announced plans to construct a Babri Masjid replica in the Muslim-majority Murshidabad district.He later formed the AJUP and announced an alliance with the AIMIM to contest the Bengal polls. The alliance, though, did not survive after it was alleged that Kabir had accepted money from the BJP to harm the electoral prospects of the then-ruling TMC.Kabir himself contested two seats, Rejinagar and Nowda, and won both, but chose to retain his Nowda seat.

This 94-year-old former US citizen has one last wish — to die an Indian

Kondragunta Mahalakshamma Indian“I do solemnly swear in the name of God that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as by law established” Mahalakshamma said as she stood by her son K Buchaiah at the PGRS Hall of Bapatla Collectorate on June 23. (Special Arrangement)At 94, Kondragunta Mahalakshamma has only one wish – to die an Indian. This week, the former US citizen’s wish was close to being fulfilled when she was administered the oath of allegiance to the nation at Bapatla, her native district in Andhra Pradesh.“I do solemnly swear in the name of God that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as by law established, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of India and fulfill my duties as a citizen of India,” she said as she stood by her son K Buchaiah at the PGRS Hall of Bapatla Collectorate on June 23. This 94-year-old former

US citizen Kondragunta Mahalakshamma has one ‘last wish’ — to die an Indian. A video of her taking the oath of allegiance on June 23 went viral on social media. pic.twitter.com/w0wuhcSx4tA US citizen since 2000, Mahalakshamma had approached authorities for Indian citizenship after having given up her American citizenship. A video of her taking the oath of allegiance on June 23 went viral on social media.The oath of allegiance is mandatory under Section 38 of the Citizenship Rules, 2009, to become a citizen of India. It is administered by the district collector and magistrate. In the video, Mahalakshamma, who’s hard of hearing, is heard administering the oath in Telugu with help from her oncologist son K Buchaiah, who’s heard shouting the words to her.The oath had to be administered in Telugu because she does not follow English.For District Collector V Vinod Kumar, the oath marked a “special day”.

Video row escalates, SGPC asks Bhagwant Mann to resign over ‘grave mistake’



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

The general house of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) on Saturday passed a resolution demanding the immediate resignation of Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann over a viral video and directed that a First Information Report (FIR) be filed against him.“This is a grave mistake by the chief minister, one that is unforgivable. Bhagwant Singh Mann has lost the moral right to remain in office and must resign immediately,” the SGPC declared.

Reading the resolution, SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhani said that the purported video of Mann has “caused massive outrage and anger across the entire Sikh world.” Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargaji was also present at the meeting.Mann has been under fire from the Akal Takht, the highest temporal body of Sikhs, which has alleged that the person in the video is him and declared him “Guru dokhi” (anti-Guru) and “panth virodhi”

Pune civic body plans new water tanker rules to fix complaints

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

The city’s ongoing water crisis took centre stage at a Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) standing committee meeting on Friday, as chairman Shrinath Bhimale ordered the formulation of a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to govern tanker-based water supply.The directive comes nearly two weeks after PMC introduced an alternate-day water supply on June 15, a measure that invited a flood of complaints, with over 1,200 grievances logged so far. Of these, 450 have been resolved, while roughly 750 remain pending.Addressing a press conference, Bhimale outlined the scale of the problem. “We are facing numerous issues – water being sold at inflated rates, delayed tanker arrivals, the deficiency of GPS systems, road accidents, complaints regarding water quality, and a lack of regulation,” he said.

He stressed the need to consider all these factors and establish a uniform, effective SOP.With several areas of the city receiving water on alternate days and others dependent almost entirely on tanker supply, the committee’s discussion covered a wide spectrum, from overcharging by private operators to the exploitation of vulnerable residents during peak scarcity.As an immediate step, the PMC administration has been directed to place before the standing committee a detailed status report on tanker operations in the city. This includes the total number of PMC and private tankers currently in service, the capacity of tanker-filling stations, authorised rates, accident data, driver credentials, GPS deployment, online booking mechanisms, water quality testing protocols, and information about the control room setup.The proposed SOP addresses both citizen convenience and operational accountability. On the transparency front, the guidelines call for an official rate card to be announced and displayed on every tanker, an online and helpline-based booking system, a mobile application for citizens to track tankers in real time, and strict enforcement of a first-come, first-served supply policy.



Road safety has emerged as a parallel concern. The committee has directed that speed limits be imposed on tankers, with stricter norms applicable near schools and hospitals. Tanker drivers will be required to undergo regular training, periodic medical check-ups, and mandatory testing for alcohol and narcotics. All vehicles must be fitted with safety lights, reverse cameras, and alarm systems, while hazardous locations and accident-prone stretches are to be identified and flagged.On the quality front, Bhimale announced that every tanker will be required to carry water that has been regularly sampled and chlorinated. Strict action has been mandated against suppliers found distributing contaminated water. Additionally, all private tankers will need to be registered with the PMC, obtain annual fitness certification, and be placed on a publicly accessible list – with a separate registry maintained for rule violators. The committee has also directed the administration to ensure priority tanker supply to hospitals, schools, police stations, and fire stations. A dedicated action plan is to be drawn up for water-scarce zones, and a 24/7 helpline is to be launched for the immediate redressal of tanker-related complaints, with a 24-hour resolution window mandated for each grievance received.

Punjab reverses stand, to roll out VB-G RAM G scheme from July



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

The Punjab government has notified the implementation of the Centre’s Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) scheme from July 1, in a complete reversal of the stand it had taken barely six months ago when the Punjab Assembly had unanimously passed a resolution rejecting the legislation.A notification issued by the Punjab Rural Development and Panchayats Department on Friday states that the provisions of the VB-G RAM G Act, 2025 will come into force in the state from July 1. The implementation follows the Centre’s rollout of the new rural employment law, which replaces the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).The move marks a sharp U-turn by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government. On December 30, 2025, the Punjab gov-

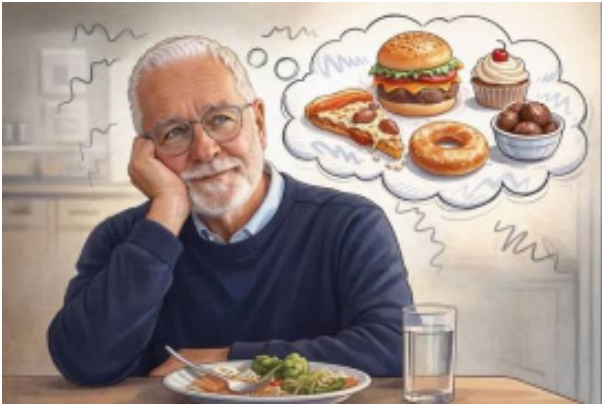
ernment had convened a special Assembly session and got a unanimous resolution passed rejecting the VB-G RAM G Act. The House urged the Centre to withdraw the law and restore MGNREGA in its original rights-based form.The resolution stated that the new law takes away the legal guarantee of employment and timely wages available to poor labourers, women and lakhs of job card holders. It said the legislation converts MGNREGA from a demand-driven, rights-based programme into a norm-based scheme, imposes an additional financial burden on states by changing the funding pattern, and weakens the federal structure by reducing the Centre’s responsibility.Replying to the debate in the Assembly, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann had described the legislation as anti-poor, anti-Dalit, anti-farmer, anti-labourer and anti-women. He had argued that it would deprive rural workers of their guaranteed right to employment and wages and maintained that Punjab would not implement the law.

The notification has triggered sharp political reactions, with the Congress accusing the government of contradicting its own position.Punjab Congress president Amarinder Singh Raja Warring questioned why the government had implemented the scheme after rejecting it in the Assembly. “What is the deal with the BJP?” he asked.Warring pointed out that the Punjab government had negated its own resolution by notifying its implementation. He said the timing of the notification was equally surprising and asked whether it had anything to do with the ongoing controversy surrounding Mann.



laid to rest in the country of her origin,” Kumar said.Mahalakshamma’s family declined to comment. However, Bapatla MP Krishna Prasad Tenneti told,

Why food noise is real: It has more to do with biology than willpower, so stop guilting



“I’ve just finished breakfast, and I’m already thinking about lunch.” It’s a sentence I am hearing with increasing frequency from my patients. They often describe a relentless stream of thoughts about food: planning the next meal while eating the current one, wondering what snacks are available, battling cravings throughout the day, or feeling as though food occupies far more mental space than they would like. Many arrive in the clinic worried that something is wrong with them. Some blame themselves for lacking discipline or self-control. But what they are experiencing is “food noise.” While not an official medical diagnosis, food noise has become a widely used term to describe persistent thoughts about food, eating and cravings that seem disproportionate to actual physical hunger. As research sheds more light on the biology of appetite, these experiences may have more to do with hormones and brain signalling than with willpower alone.

What exactly is food noise?

This refers to frequent, intrusive thoughts about food, eating, cravings or the next opportunity to eat. These are not driven by genuine physiological hunger. A person may have consumed sufficient calories and nutrients but still find themselves repeatedly thinking about food. My patients often describe it as a constant internal dialogue centred around food. Occasional food-related thoughts are entirely normal. However, for others, these thoughts can become persistent enough to interfere with daily life, concentration and eating behaviours.

The brain-hormone connection

Appetite regulation is controlled by a complex communication network between the gut, brain, pancreas and fat tissue. Several hormones influence hunger and satiety, including ghrelin, leptin, insulin and a hormone known as GLP-1, or glucagon-like peptide-1. GLP-1 is naturally produced in the intestine after eating. It plays multiple roles in regulating energy balance and metabolism. It helps signal the brain that enough food has been consumed, slows the rate at which the stomach empties, reduces appetite and assists in controlling blood glucose levels. In essence, GLP-1 acts as one of the body’s natural appetite regulators.

Why food thoughts can become overwhelming

The human brain evolved to seek food because survival depended on it. But today’s food environment is dramatically different from the one our biology was designed

for. Highly processed, calorie-dense foods are available around the clock. Advertisements, food delivery apps, social media feeds and stressful lifestyles constantly stimulate the brain’s reward pathways. At the same time, inadequate sleep, chronic stress and irregular eating patterns can disrupt normal hunger and satiety signals. The result can be a heightened focus on food that goes well beyond physical need. Researchers believe that brain regions involved in reward, motivation and impulse control play an important role in the experience of food noise. The term food noise entered mainstream discussion largely because of the experiences reported by people taking newer GLP-1 receptor agonist medications such as semaglutide and tirzepatide, which mimic the functioning of gut hormones.

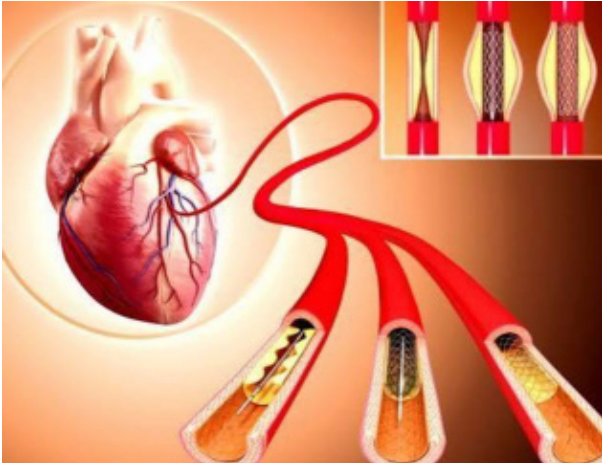
One of the most common observations among patients is not simply weight loss but mental relief. Many report that food no longer dominates their thoughts. The constant internal chatter about eating becomes quieter. They feel satisfied after meals and are less likely to spend the day thinking about what to eat next. This has been one of the most striking aspects of these medications because it highlights the role biology plays in appetite regulation. By enhancing the effects of GLP-1, these drugs strengthen signals of fullness, slow gastric emptying and help reduce excessive appetite. For many patients, that translates into fewer cravings and less mental preoccupation with food. But these medicines do not eliminate hunger

A common misconception is that GLP-1 drugs completely switch off appetite. They do not. Hunger is a normal and healthy biological signal. The purpose of treatment is not to eliminate hunger but to reduce excessive cravings and persistent food thoughts that occur even when the body’s energy needs have already been met. Patients still experience hunger. What changes is the intensity and frequency of food-related urges that are disconnected from genuine physiological needs.

Who can take GLP-1 drugs then?

Despite growing interest, these medications are not appropriate for everyone. Eligibility depends on factors such as body mass index, the presence of obesity-related conditions, diabetes status, medical history and overall health profile. Like all medications, GLP-1 therapies can have side effects, most commonly nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea or constipation. Their use should always be guided by a healthcare professional. Even as medications transform obesity treatment, lifestyle interventions remain essential. Several strategies can help improve appetite regulation and reduce food noise. These are as follows: Eating adequate protein and fibre Maintaining consistent meal timings Prioritising good-quality sleep Managing stress effectively Staying physically active Limiting ultra-processed foods Avoiding extreme or highly restrictive diets These measures support the body’s natural hunger and satiety mechanisms and can complement medical treatment where appropriate. Understanding food noise helps shift the conversation away from blame and toward biology. The goal is not simply to help people eat less. It is to help the brain and body communicate more effectively, so that food occupies its proper place in daily life — something to be enjoyed and nourished by, rather than something that constantly dominates the mind.

4 heart attacks in 5 years and 8 stents: My patient is now fit; his biggest lesson wasn’t about surgery



When this corporate executive suffered his first heart attack at 50, he assumed the worst was behind him. The attack was relatively mild, with a blocked coronary artery. Doctors moved quickly, opening the narrowed vessel and implanting a stent to restore blood flow. Like many patients, he believed that once the blocked artery was fixed, normal life could resume. Instead, the next five years became an education in the stubborn nature of heart disease. He experienced three new blockages in different arteries and at the end of it all, he had eight or nine stents. But he made aggressive changes in his lifestyle that has kept him intervention-free so far. And that brings to the most fundamental misunderstanding about heart disease itself. You have to keep working towards heart health continuously, not just hope one intervention will work for the rest of your life.

For decades, heart disease was often explained as a simple blockage problem: an artery narrows, blood flow is restricted, a heart attack occurs and the blockage is fixed. Modern cardiology views the disease very differently. A stent can treat a blockage, but it cannot cure the underlying process that created it. Coronary artery disease is a chronic condition affecting the entire arterial system. The artery that receives a stent may remain open, while disease continues to progress silently elsewhere. That reality became painfully clear in this patient’s case. Following his first heart attack, he embraced the kind of lifestyle transformation doctors dream of seeing. He quit smoking, made his diet and exercise non-negotiable. His LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol was driven below 40 mg/dL, an exceptionally aggressive target reserved for patients at very high risk. He remained scrupulous about taking medication and was prescribed one of the newest cholesterol-lowering therapies available, administered by injection to keep LDL levels suppressed over long periods. He was also given anti-inflammatory and anti-platelet drugs.

The changes undoubtedly improved his odds. But they could not reduce his risk to zero. One of the biggest misconceptions surrounding recurrent heart attacks is that they are always caused by a failed stent. In reality, most are not. A small proportion of patients develop problems within the treated segment itself. The artery can gradually narrow again, a process known as restenosis. In rarer cases, a clot forms inside the stent. The danger from stent thrombosis is greatest during the first month after angioplasty. Because a stent is essentially a foreign object inside the artery, the body can react by forming a clot around it. This is

why patients are prescribed two blood-thinning medications after the procedure. With modern drug-releasing stents and contemporary blood thinners, the risk of stent thrombosis is roughly 1 per cent during the first month. If blood-thinning medication is interrupted or does not work effectively, that risk can rise, potentially reaching 3 per cent in some circumstances. The larger threat often lies elsewhere.

Only a small percentage of these recurrences is directly related to the site of stenting. Far more commonly, fresh blockages develop in previously unaffected portions of the coronary circulation. This happens because coronary artery disease is rarely confined to a single location. Plaques can be present throughout the arterial tree, some large enough to be detected, others too small to attract attention during an angiogram. Over time, one of these plaques can become unstable, rupture and trigger a new heart attack. In many cases, therefore, the recurrence is not a failure of the original procedure. It is evidence that the disease itself remains active. Patients with poorly controlled cholesterol, diabetes, hypertension, obesity or continued smoking face the highest risks. But even among those who follow medical advice rigorously, biology can sometimes prove difficult to outrun. Aggressive cholesterol lowering, blood thinners, blood pressure control and lifestyle modifications can reduce risk by as much as 90 per cent. The remaining 10 per cent reflects factors that medicine still cannot fully control. Some patients carry a powerful genetic predisposition to atherosclerosis. Others have elevated levels of inflammatory activity within their arteries. Conditions such as diabetes and kidney disease can continue to accelerate vascular damage despite treatment. Researchers are also increasingly focusing on lipoprotein(a), an inherited cholesterol particle that appears to increase cardiovascular risk even when conventional cholesterol levels are well controlled. For these patients, treatment becomes a process of constant risk reduction rather than complete risk elimination. The encouraging news is that recurrent heart attacks are far from inevitable. Most patients, who adhere consistently to medication, maintain very low LDL levels, avoid smoking and manage associated risk factors, do not experience repeated cardiac events. The period immediately after a heart attack remains the most concerning. As time passes, the risk falls substantially. After the first year, recurrence rates typically decline to about 1 to 2 per cent annually for patients who remain compliant with treatment.

Amazon India focuses on long-term growth, big investments, says Samir Kumar

New Delhi: Amazon is in the midst of its “most aggressive phase of expansion” in India yet, country head Samir Kumar has said, adding that the ecommerce giant is firmly focused on playing the long game for market and customer wins. The comment from Amazon India’s top honcho comes against the backdrop of the company’s recently announced USD 35 billion investment by 2030 – building on USD 40 billion already invested – to support business expansion, AI-driven digitisation, exports and job creation. “If you look at our investments, we are one of the largest investments in India... USD 35 billion over the next five years,

After 60, they went back to college to study ageing: How this TISS course helps them take care of themselves



On a Friday evening at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), long after most college campuses begin to empty out, a different kind of classroom slowly fills up. A retired Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) scientist walks in carrying handwritten notes. Beside him sits a former schoolteacher from Hyderabad. A homemaker in her 60s quietly adjusts her spectacles before opening a notebook. Someone else has rushed in after finishing caregiving duties at home. There are no discussions about second life placements or corporate careers. Instead, the lesson begins with a question: How to manage the process of growing old, specially when one is alone? A faculty member projects an image of the human brain and begins explaining dementia and cognitive decline. The discussion quickly moves beyond medicine. Students speak about parents forgetting names, elderly relatives repeating stories or withdrawing after their children migrate abroad. One student recalls watching his father age rapidly after his mother died. Another talks about the silent exhaustion of caregiving. In another session, soft music fills the room as students participate in dance movement therapy and art exercises later explained as methods used to stimulate memory and emotional expression among older adults. Many laugh awkwardly at first. Weeks later, the same group would stage a street play on ageing and loneliness.

These are among the experiences shaping students enrolled in TISS’ one-year diploma in Gerontology, a part-time programme where elderly Indians are learning not only about ageing, but also about survival, companionship and purpose in later life. “India is witnessing a major demographic shift with people aged 60 and above projected to form nearly 20 per cent of the population by 2050. Loneliness, caregiving stress, emotional neglect, social isolation and the need for dignified ageing are emerging as critical concerns,” said Dr Saigita Chitturu, assistant professor at the Centre for Lifelong Learning and faculty coordinator for the programme, which was launched in 2008. Open to candidates above 25 years of age, it combines classroom teaching with field-based experiential learning focused on the biological, psychological, social and economic dimensions of ageing. Over the last couple of years, it has opened to the elderly, helping them help themselves. The programme currently admits around 30 students each year. Classes are held on Friday evenings and Saturdays over two semesters, with course fees of around Rs 63,000.

Learning to Teaching At 67, when most people are expected to settle into retirement, Prakash Apte walked into the classroom to study ageing. “For years, I have seen older people around me struggling with loneliness and neglect. I wanted to understand what ageing really means and how society can respond to it,” said Apte, a student from the 2021-22 batch of TISS’ Diploma in Gerontology programme. A yoga teacher, he said the course gave him a structured understanding of the challenges faced by senior citizens, from loneliness and declining health to the absence of support systems. “India’s elderly population is rising rapidly but support for them is still extremely limited. Most policies remain on paper,” he said. He now conducts awareness sessions for senior citizen groups, combining gerontology lessons with yoga practices suited for older adults. He also hopes to launch a social enterprise focused on helping elderly people living alone. Students are allowed to ask the most uncomfortable of questions, from retirement planning and elder abuse to grief, emotional neglect and the fear of dependency — Who will care for you in old age? What happens when children move away? How does one emotionally prepare for ageing?

For 76-year-old Arun Rahulkar, a retired senior scientific officer from BARC, the course became a way to rebuild purpose after retirement. “Retirement creates a vacuum. Your children grow up and move away, and suddenly you are left wondering what your purpose is. This course taught me how to age with dignity and meaning,” he

said. After completing the diploma, Rahulkar enrolled in a three-year light music course. He now spends time travelling, practising music and conducting awareness sessions for senior citizens. “People think retirement means sitting idle. But if you remain engaged and socially connected, ageing becomes easier,” he said. For Milind Patil, 59, who works in the oil and gas sector, the course helped him process years of caregiving stress after caring for ageing parents. His mother died in 2020, while his 95-year-old father continues to live with him. “I have seen ageing very closely inside my own house,” said Patil, a student from the 2024-25 batch. He is now constructing a senior citizens’ home in rural Amravati. “Migration has left many elderly people in villages and small towns ageing alone,” he said.

Practical life lessons The learning often extends beyond the classroom. Students visit old age homes, NGOs, hospitals and low-income settlements, including Dharavi, where they spend time listening to elderly residents speak about abandonment, illness and isolation. One student recalls interviewing an elderly woman while her son repeatedly shouted at her in front of them. Another remembers bedridden seniors who simply wanted someone to sit beside them without rushing away. The course introduced students to concepts such as neuroplasticity, cognitive stimulation and dementia care, while field visits exposed them to the realities faced by economically weaker elderly populations. Patil said modules involving art therapy, music therapy and street theatre also helped students overcome social hesitation and reconnect emotionally with themselves. “At 59, I had never performed before an audience. I have gained confidence and empathy,” he said. For many women, the classroom became a space for rediscovering identity after decades spent caring for others. Ela Thakur joined the programme in 2012 at the age of 60 after years as a homemaker. “I had lost my sister and was emotionally broken. Initially, I felt intimidated because many students were professionals or doctors. I was just a housewife. Then I started developing my own views and expressing myself. Today I write regularly and participate in discussions. I realised older people too need identity and self-worth,” she said.

Dr Anita M Kumar, a former radio producer who spent years caring for her elder sister with polio, described the programme as a refuge after emotional burnout. Now she conducts virtual support sessions while her weekly programme, Dil Se Dil Tak, is a space where senior citizens openly discuss loneliness, grief and emotional struggles. “People literally cry during these sessions because many have nobody to talk to. Sometimes what elderly people need most is for someone to sit beside them, maintain eye contact and simply listen,” she said. Her field visits reinforced how widespread loneliness among elderly Indians has become. “Children are not always intentionally neglectful. Modern life is demanding. But the result is that many elderly people spend entire days without meaningful human interaction,” she said.

Education for Self-reliance Dr Prasun Chatterjee, Group Clinical Lead, Geriatric Medicine and Longevity Science at Apollo Hospitals, New Delhi, said educating people about ageing, including its medical, social, physical and familial aspects, can help them prepare better for later life. “Ageing in India has largely happened by chance, not by preparation. Courses on ageing science help older adults understand their own health, remain mentally engaged and also support others in their peer group who may be struggling,” he said. Emphasising the need for meaningful engagement post-60, he feels gerontology, which focusses on the social aspects of ageing, should be promoted as the country’s elderly population continues to grow. “Every family will eventually deal with ageing. Basic understanding of elderly care and ageing should not be limited only to senior citizens, but extended to caregivers, healthcare workers and younger generations as well.

Older caregivers often understand the emotional and physical needs of elderly people better than younger caregivers because they themselves are going through similar experiences,” he said. He also pointed to the shortage of trained geriatric specialists and caregivers. “There are very few trained geriatricians and geriatric nurses in the country despite the growing elderly population. India needs stronger caregiver training systems, health educators and community-based support structures for older adults,” he said. For elderly students, a diploma is no longer an academic course. It has become a way of reclaiming visibility in a society that often sidelines the elderly once their professional and familial roles begin to fade.

Researchers find a protein that halts brain decline



Scientists may have uncovered a hidden biological switch that helps control how quickly the body ages. Research published in PLOS Biology suggests that declining levels of a brain protein called Menin can trigger inflammation, memory decline and other age-related changes throughout the body.

Researchers find a protein that halts brain decline Menin levels dropped sharply in the hypothalamus of lab mice as they grew older. It’s a protein that helps suppress inflammation. Scientists may have uncovered a hidden biological switch that helps control how quickly the body ages. Research published in PLOS Biology suggests that declining levels of a brain protein called Menin can trigger inflammation, memory decline and other age-related changes throughout the body. In experiments with mice, restoring the protein reversed several signs of ageing, while a simple amino acid supplement improved cognitive function. The findings add to growing evidence that ageing may be strongly influenced by the hypothalamus, a small but powerful brain region that regulates metabolism, hormones, body temperature, sleep and stress responses. Researchers increasingly view the hypothalamus as a central command centre

for aging itself.

The study, led by Lige Leng and colleagues at Xiamen University in China, focused on Menin, a protein that helps suppress inflammation in the brain. Earlier work had already shown that Menin plays an important role in controlling neuroinflammatory activity. The team wanted to know whether losing this protective protein might contribute to ageing. Their experiments revealed that Menin levels dropped sharply in the hypothalamus as mice grew older. The decline occurred specifically in neurons within the ventromedial hypothalamus (VMH), a region linked to metabolism and systemic ageing. Interestingly, Menin levels did not significantly decrease in nearby support cells such as astrocytes or microglia. To investigate what this loss might mean, the researchers engineered mice in which Menin activity could be selectively reduced. The effects were striking. Younger mice with lower Menin levels developed increased brain inflammation, thinning skin, lower bone mass, impaired balance, memory problems and a shorter lifespan compared to normal mice. The results suggest that Menin may act as a protective “anti-ageing” factor inside the brain. One of the most surprising discoveries involved D-serine, an amino acid that also functions as a neurotransmitter in the brain. D-serine helps regulate communication between neurons and is important for learning and memory. When Menin levels fell, D-serine production also dropped. The researchers traced this effect to reduced activity of an enzyme required for D-serine synthesis, which itself appears to be regulated by Menin. D-serine naturally occurs in foods including soybeans, eggs, fish and nuts, and is also sold as a dietary supplement. The connection caught the attention of researchers because other studies have linked declining D-serine levels with ageing-related cognitive impairment and reduced synaptic plasticity, which means the brain’s ability to strengthen neural connections involved in memory and learning.

Can India’s national accounts make the grade?



The Union Statistics and Programme Implementation Ministry reported that India's real GDP grew 8.2% and the nominal GDP 8.7% in the second quarter of the financial year 2025-26 — the strongest print in six quarters. Just two days earlier, the IMF, in its data adequacy assessment, had given India's national accounts a "C" grade — the second lowest in its four-tier system— noting "short-comings that somewhat hamper surveillance", even as the overall macro data set earned a "B". The timing underscores a troubling irony.

India once set standards in official statistics. Under P.C. Mahalanobis, the National Sample Survey and a robust system of national accounts turned a poor postcolonial state into a model for the developing world. Today, that legacy is fraying. The uninterrupted decennial Census series (since 1881), which underpins most sampling frames, has been broken. The official consumption expenditure survey, the backbone of poverty and inequality statistics and consumer price index (CPI) reweighting, was last released in 2011-12. The 2017-18 round was scrapped after leaked results suggested a fall in real consumption, with the government citing "data quality" problems. In that sense, the IMF's "C" grade distils several long-running concerns.First, the current GDP series still uses 2011-12 as its base year — a benchmark that will be 14 years out of date by the time a new series with 2022-23 as base is rolled out in February 2026. Real growth, obtained by deflating nominal aggregates, uses price indices derived from consumption and production patterns that no longer accurately reflect the economy's structure. Both the consumer and wholesale price baskets, which should be refreshed roughly every five years, are long overdue for revision.

Moreover, the narrow gap between nominal and real GDP in the latest quarter, barely half a percentage point, is also telling. When deflators are based on outdated expenditure weights, they are prone to understating effective inflation and overstating real growth. Point estimates of 8%-plus growth should, therefore, be treated as only indicative.Second, the current price architecture is particularly ill-suited to a services-led economy. Services now account for about 55% of the gross value added (GVA). Yet India still relies heavily on the wholesale price index (WPI), which omits most services, for deflating output. The IMF has been explicit that the absence of a comprehensive producer price index (PPI) and "excessive use of single deflation" are central reasons for the "C" grade.

Third, the treatment of the informal economy in national statistics is a serious weakness. The informal sector contributes roughly 45% of the GDP, but is not measured annually from the ground up. Instead, statisticians fix the formal-informal relationship in the base year and then ex-

trapolate informal activity from formal-sector indicators such as corporate filings or GST data. That shortcut might work in a stable environment, but it breaks down when shocks, such as demonetisation, GST, and the pandemic, hit small, cash-dependent firms much harder than listed companies. Proxying kirana stores, small workshops, and petty services with large firms makes aggregate GDP look healthier precisely when vulnerability is greatest.Fourth, the quarterly GDP numbers are difficult to interpret in their current form. In an economy with pronounced monsoon and festival cycles, raw quarter-on-quarter changes say little about the underlying trajectory. Most advanced statistical systems publish seasonally adjusted series to strip out predictable intra-year patterns and identify genuine turning points. India does not, leaving investors and policymakers to read the cycle off unadjusted GDP, where a festival quarter and a genuine upswing are virtually indistinguishable.

Reform agendaTo be fair, India is moving on the reform agenda. A new GDP series with 2022-23 as the base, an updated CPI with 2024 weights, and a revised IIP are all slated for release in early 2026, with greater use of GST returns, corporate filings, digital payments, and recent consumption and enterprise survey data. If these revisions are implemented rigorously and then institutionalised as a regular cycle, India's statistical methods will come much closer to international best practice.Three reforms are essential. First, statistics must be treated as economic infrastructure, not an administrative by-product. The National Statistical Commission (NSC) should be given a firm statutory basis, its own budget, security of tenure for members, and a clear mandate to publish data without political clearance, with protections for its Chair analogous to those of the RBI Governor. India was an early supporter of the UN's Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. It now needs to write those principles into domestic law rather than merely endorsing them in international forums.

Second, a binding data calendar is overdue. The Census, consumption, labour-force and enterprise surveys should have legislated periodicity and statutory deadlines for release, with deviations explained to Parliament. Anonymised microdata should be routinely available to researchers with reasonable lags to enable independent "shadow" estimates that provide external validation, as investors and multilaterals often demand.Third, as digital sources multiply, the risk grows that selective high-frequency indicators (GST collections, toll data, UPI volumes) will substitute for, rather than complement, a coherent system. The integration of digital data into national accounts must be transparent and replicable; otherwise, dashboards will multiply, but doubts will persist.For global investors, weak and unreliable data mean mispriced risk; for policymakers, they mean misjudged slack, misplaced priorities and a macro stance looser than what fundamentals warrant. If trend growth is overstated and poverty undercounted, job creation looks less urgent than it is, and the case for safety nets and basic public goods appears weaker than it should. India's economic rise is real, but its statistical institutions have not kept pace. If the coming overhaul succeeds in building an independent, modern and transparent system, what will finally matter is not IMF's grade card, but whether an 8.2% print commands confidence, not scepticism.

Diabetes Atlas projections indicate 900 million people will have diabetes in 2050



In its projections for 2050, the 11th edition of the International Diabetes Federation Diabetes Atlas has calculated that from around 500 million people living with diabetes in 2024, the number will grow to nearly 900 million people, between the ages of 20-79 years.Publishing the key results as an article in the peer reviewed journal Lancet Diabetes Endocrinol 2025, the authors, who are scientists collaborating across the world, pointed out that in 2024, that figure was 11.11 % of the population and just over 580 million adults. As per their projections, diabetes will affect 12.96 % of the population, over 850 million people, in 2050. In the paper, Irini Genitsaridi et al, stress: As the diabetes epidemic has continued unchecked since the turn of the millenium, stronger efforts are needed to slow down progression, with strategies tailored appropriately across countries and population groups.A total of 210 countries and five

territories were included in the 11th edition of the IDF Diabetes Atlas.

Urban-rural estimates play a very important division in the epidemiological study of non communicable diseases, as they also have a strong correlation with risk-inducing behaviours in different settings. In 2024, more people with diabetes were living in urban areas (400 million) than in rural areas (189 million). The authors state that this trend would continue with the projection for 2050, for urban centres (655 million) but in rural areas, it is likely to remain almost the same (198 million) in 2050.Further disaggregating data on the basis of income levels, in 2024, middle income countries had the highest age-standardised prevalence of diabetes, followed by high income countries. The lowest prevalence was in low income countries. However, it is estimated that over 95 % of the increase in number of people with diabetes will occur in low and middle income countries in 2050. The explosion of population growth in the low and middle income countries, population aging and urbanisation are factors that explain the sheer rise in numbers.A.Ramachandran, one of the authors of the paper, from the India Diabetes Research Foundation, says "one of the unique features of this year's Atlas, is the table listing the top 10 countries of the world with diabetes load. China is right at the top of the table with about 148 million people with diabetes, and India comes up second on the table, with nearly 90 million. The United States comes third, and Pakistan, fourth. In 2050, while China and India will maintain their top positions on the table, it is projected that Pakistan will climb to the third slot.

Visibility and inclusion- advancing the case of children with disabilities

An invisibility cloak is a prop that is sure to excite children; what better than a touch of magic, to vanish, disappear for others, even when you are right there. But for children with disabilities, being invisible is a terrible fact of life — being counted, is a challenge. The cascade of other inadequacies in society that inhibits children with disabilities from achieving their full potential continues to be a call for action — on the part of communities and governments. With World Disabilities Day observed in early December, it is time to evaluate what more needs to be done, acknowledging that the barriers are physical, but also much more. A recent UNICEF report reveals stark disparities in access to rights and services for the nearly 108 million children with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. Birth registration, in particular, is a fundamental human right. Yet for many persons with disabilities, especially children, the process is riddled with barriers. Tanja B. Sejersen, and Manal Hassan of the ESCAP's (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) Statistics Division, say that a number of children in the region do not even have a birth certificate – thus impeding their access to basic rights, services such as health education and social protection. They argue, in an article, that “Civil registration, the official re-

cording of life events such as births, deaths, marriages and divorces, is more than paperwork. It's a gateway to belonging." "In terms of birth certification, in India, there's no explicit discrimination on the basis of disability," says Pratik Aggarwal, executive director, ASTHA, a non governmental organisation working to include children with disabilities. But he hastens to add: "When it's a larger ecosystem - how do you count children with disabilities? Apart from the Census and other surveys, we really don't have disaggregated data on the health conditions of children with disabilities. The National Family Health Survey should actually cover children with disabilities, but it doesn't. So, we don't have data on how many children with disabilities have been immunised, or how many children with disabilities are enrolled in anganwadis, how many of them have malnutrition. This is also undercounting of disability." When a parent has a disability, or if both parents have some form of disability, it can be a nightmare trying to access hospitals and government systems in order to access treatments and services meant to assist them, including trying to figure out interventions for their child, school admissions, and immunisation, says Mr. Aggarwal. Then the efforts to ensure the child gets a gainful education and is trained to be independent can be excruciatingly painful.

Why intimate partner violence is an under-recognised public health crisis in India



When Meera (name changed on request) first sought medical help, she was 34, a mother of two, and visibly exhausted. She went to a doctor at a private clinic, complaining of tightness in her chest, an uncomfortable awareness of her rapidly-beating heart, and episodes of intense panic that left her gasping for air."The doctor ran some tests. Everything came back normal," Meera recalled. "She just gave me multivitamin tablets and told me it would get better."

Meera next consulted another private doctor, who referred her to a government hospital for specialist care. Over the next three years, Meera shuttled between multiple departments at the same government hospital in Assam— general medicine, cardiology, psychiatry—searching for an explanation for her symptoms. During this period, she developed severe insomnia. Long after her husband and children had fallen asleep, Meera would pace the darkened corridors of her home. The lack of rest left her exhausted and irritable during the day. She began falling behind on household work and sometimes found herself breaking down in tears without knowing why.Doctors continued to investigate. Her ECGs were normal. Blood tests showed mild anaemia. She was prescribed iron supplements, anti-acids for gastric discomfort, and eventually sleeping pills to manage what was described as stress. It was only after a particularly severe episode, when Meera collapsed following an intense panic attack and was brought to the emergency department, that someone noticed what was really happening. A junior doctor noticed her flinch when her husband answered questions on her behalf and asked to speak to her alone. What emerged was a long history of physical violence, marital rape, economic control, and threats that she was enduring in her marriage.Meera was not suffering from an inexplicable collection of symptoms. She was living with untreated post-traumatic stress disorder, and it had taken years for the health system to recognise it.Meera's trajectory through India's health system mirrors what a recent Lancet analysis now describes as a global, yet under-recognised, public health failure. Drawing on data from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2023, the paper identifies intimate partner violence as a significant and measurable contributor to a wide range of health outcomes, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety, suicide, chronic pain, cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal disorders, substance use, sexually transmitted infections, and adverse reproductive outcomes.

In health, this burden is measured using disability-adjusted life years, or DALYs—a metric that captures not only deaths, but the years of healthy life lost to illness and disability. Globally, the paper estimates that intimate partner violence costs women 1.85 crore DALYs in 2023—years of life lost to premature death and years lived with disability due to conditions such as depression, PTSD, chronic pain, and reproductive ill-health. According to the paper, the prevalence of this is highest in the South Asian region.For women of reproductive age in South Asia, the analysis finds that intimate partner violence is a greater risk factor for poor health than high fasting plasma glucose, obesity, smoking, or alcohol use—placing violence among the leading drivers of disability and chronic illness.This evidence enables a crucial paradigm shift. Domestic violence is no longer a social issue but is a risk factor that impacts health.

Intimate partner violence is an insidious exposure that accumulates over years, shaping mental illness, non-communicable disease, and long-term disability rather than presenting as a single, identifiable event. This reframing also helps explain why violence so often remains invisible within the health system—even to the women living through it.When asked why she never reported the violence earlier, Meera put it simply: "How would I know this was what was causing all these symptoms? It's not like he beat me and I came to the hospital with an injury."

A.K. Jayashree, head, department of community medicine at the Government Medical College in Kannur, Kerala has worked at the intersection of gender and health for several decades now. Dr. Jayashree began her career in the 1980s, volunteering with an autonomous women's organisation working on gender issues and moved on to working with vulnerable populations such as transgender women and sex workers in the 90s. During this time, she worked with a large number of women who had been subjected to intimate partner violence. But when she entered formal medical education as a teacher in 2009, she was struck by how little of this knowledge had translated into training. What was being taught to medical students neither reflected the realities she had seen on the ground, nor did it take into account evidence generated by decades of research.Studies show that women come to outpatient departments repeatedly with non-specific complaints that do not resolve – such as chronic pain, tiredness, inability to sleep etc. – but medical students are not taught to look for everyday violence. As a result, as doctors, they are often unprepared for what they encounter in real-world settings: women may arrive at emergency departments after being beaten, accompanied by husbands or in-laws who answer questions on their behalf. Junior doctors may sense something is wrong but lack the training to ask safely, document accurately, or refer appropriately.

What little information does reach medical students is fragmented. "Most of it is confined to forensic medicine, as a legal and evidentiary exercise" Dr. Jayashree says. "It is not taught in clinical subjects that actually shape how doctors practise."For Dr. Jayashree, the Lancet analysis underscores an urgent need: to integrate gender and intimate partner violence into the training of all health workers, alongside practical guidance on how to respond when violence is disclosed.Some efforts are underway. In Kerala, Bhoomika clinics—district-level centres housed within government hospitals—offer counselling, referrals to shelters, legal support, and skill development under the National Health Mission. Yet large numbers of women remain underserved."Most women do not want to leave their partners or file police complaints," Dr. Jayashree says. "They want the violence to stop without their families breaking apart. Our systems are not designed to support that reality."

Nancy Angeline Gnanaselvam, assistant professor of community medicine at St. John's Medical College, Bengaluru, says the women most visible to the system are not representative of those living with intimate partner violence. "What we see in crisis centres or one-stop facilities are usually women in extreme distress, often brought by

the police after calling helplines or when neighbours report the violence." she says. "They are just the tip of the iceberg."Research by groups such as CEHAT, which is working on gender and health in India, also reveals that most women who receive help through the health system do so after a major crisis event, such as violence that necessitates a visit to the emergency department or a suicide attempt because of the violence.The much larger, invisible group, she explains, are women who continue to live with their partners and do not want to file complaints or leave their homes. "They come to outpatient departments of hospitals or clinics instead," she says. "They come with diabetes, hypertension, anxiety, and chronic pain. And we don't recognise what we are seeing."Dr. Nancy argues that intimate partner violence remains poorly understood within medicine because it sits at the uneasy intersection of healthcare, social services, and law enforcement. "Physicians and police often don't understand why a woman would want to go back to a violent man," she says. "They are not trained to understand gender, power, and dependence within intimate relationships."In her practice, Dr. Nancy has seen women with diabetes and hypertension, disorders that remain uncontrolled despite being given the maximum possible medications, who eventually tell her that they are being subjected to violence at home. "One patient who had heart failure and was on a pacemaker told me, 'From the day I was married, I have lived hearing my husband scream and shout, I am sure that that has something to do with me getting heart disease'" she recalls.

Referrals to psychiatry or other mental health services are often resisted by families or blocked altogether. The physicians, who are the only people the women have safe access to, receive little training in even basic mental healthcare, let alone trauma-informed care. "So the woman remains in medicine clinics, cardiology clinics, diabetes clinics—treated symptom by symptom, while the cause remains untouched," says Dr. Nancy.These women have enormous visible and invisible scars," she says. "And no one is trained how to even offer them empathy."For Dr. Nancy, this is why reframing intimate partner violence as a public health and chronic disease issue matters. It shifts the focus away from isolated incidents and moral judgment, and toward cumulative exposure, with it being seen for the long-term disability and preventable illnesses it causes. Without that shift, she argues, the health system will continue to manage diabetes, heart disease, anxiety, and depression—while remaining blind to the violence that fuels them.At this point the official core competency dealing with issues faced by women in the National Medical Council curriculum is only a one-hour lecture, says Dr. Nancy.Curriculum changes needed

"There are many entry points into the conversation about gender, for example, when discussing the PCPNDT ((Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques) Act and sex selective abortion, there is potential for conversation as to why sex selective abortions happen in India. When studying nutrition, there is potential to discuss why anaemia is so common in Indian women. But medical education continues to miss these opportunities to have these conversations," says Dr. Nancy. According to her, gender must be an ongoing conversation brought up again and again in various health contexts, not just in a single lecture. "This needs to make it into the curriculum of nurses, psychologists and other healthcare workers as well," adds Dr. Jayashree.Last month, in a modest auditorium at the Sree Uthradom Thirunal (SUT) Academy of Medical Sciences in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, an unfamiliar conversation took place. For the first time, a panel discussion brought doctors together to talk about intimate partner violence, not through case sheets or diagnostic codes, but through questions the health system has long avoided. What should a doctor notice? What should they ask? And what responsibility does medicine carry when violence shapes a patient's life?The discussion did not yet frame violence in the language of chronic disease or disability. But its significance lay elsewhere: in the acknowledgement that domestic violence is not external to healthcare. Several speakers spoke about discomfort, uncertainty, and the absence of training—about not knowing how to ask questions when family members sit beside the patient, or what to do after a disclosure. Others reflected on how often women return with the same complaints and symptoms, without anyone naming the underlying cause. The conversation was a nod toward to shift that is now happening: moving intimate partner violence out of the margins of emergency care and social work, and into the core of how medicine understands illness, risk, and long-term health.For women like Meera, this recognition came years too late. But the Thiruvananthapuram panel suggests that something is perhaps beginning to change, not in protocols or textbooks as yet, but in the questions doctors and healthcare workers are starting to ask themselves. If intimate partner violence is to be addressed as a public health issue, those questions—asked in clinics, classrooms, and conferences—may be where the work begins.

Russia warns U.S. not to make 'fatal mistake' in Venezuela

Russia on Thursday (December 18, 2025) called on U.S. President Donald Trump's administration not to make a "fatal mistake" in the Venezuela crisis, calling for restraint and saying it was in "constant contact" with its ally Caracas.Mr. Trump ordered a blockade of sanctioned oil tankers in Venezuela this week, marking a new escalation between Washington and the South American country led by leftist authoritarian Nicolas Maduro.Venezuela has insisted its crude oil exports were not impacted by the announcement, showing defiance.Mr. Maduro is a friend of the Kremlin's and has been a regular guest in Moscow for years.Moscow's Foreign Ministry said it hoped the White House would "not allow a fatal mistake and will refrain from further sliding into a situation that threatens unpredictable consequences for the entire Western hemisphere." It called for a "de-escalation" and expressed support for Maduro's government.

The Kremlin said it was in "constant contact" with its "ally and partner" Venezuela."We, of course, call on all countries of the region to show restraint in order to avoid any unpredictable development in the situation," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.It is unclear how the blockade will play out, with U.S. warships in the Caribbean.In his announcement earlier this week, Mr. Trump also said, "Venezuela is completely surrounded by the largest Armada ever assembled in the History of South America" — raising fears of a potential U.S. intervention. The Kremlin has, in the past, helped prop up Venezuela's struggling economy. Russian leader Vladimir Putin reaffirmed his support to Maduro in a phone call earlier this month.

Why eliminating tobacco smoking should be on the agenda of governments



Accelerating the decline in tobacco smoking globally, by decreasing smoking prevalence from current levels to 5% everywhere, could increase life expectancy and prevent millions of premature deaths by 2050, according to a study from the Global Burden of Disease, Injuries and Risk Factors (GBD) Tobacco Forecasting Collaborators published this week in The Lancet Public Health journal. The authors reiterate what experts world over have said for long that speeding up progress towards ending smoking could deliver substantial health benefits to the population. The authors focussed on a scenario for the next three decades.

Based on current trends, the authors find global life expectancy will likely rise to 78.3 years by 2050 – up from 73.6 years in 2022. However, if tobacco smoking were to gradually decline from current levels to a rate of 5% in 2050, this would result in one year of additional life expectancy in males and 0.2 years in females. In a scenario where tobacco smoking was eliminated from 2023 onwards, this could result in up to 1.5 additional years of life expectancy among males and 0.4 years among females in 2050. In both scenarios, millions of premature deaths would also be avoided. Smoking, as has been established, is a leading risk factor for preventable death and ill health globally. While rates of smoking have fallen substantially over the past three decades, the pace of decline varies and has slowed in many

countries. Cancers, ischemic heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are—and will continue to be—the leading causes of premature deaths from smoking, said the paper. Together, these conditions account for 85% of potentially avoidable years of life lost (YLLs)—a measure of premature deaths. Several countries have set ambitious goals to reduce smoking rates to below 5% in the coming years. However, there is still significant opportunity to expand and strengthen proven policies and interventions to achieve these targets, they pointed out. “We must not lose momentum in efforts to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, smoking around the world. Our findings highlight that millions of premature deaths could be avoided by bringing an end to smoking,” said senior author, Stein Emil Vollset, from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). The new analysis provides in-depth forecasts of the health burden for 204 countries, categorised by age and sex, from 2022 until 2050. It is the first study to comprehensively forecast the health impacts due to smoking for all countries and all causes, as well as on 365 diseases and injuries. The main measure studied was YLLs or Years of Life Lost, a measure of premature deaths, counting each death by the remaining life expectancy at the age of death. In the scenario in which countries reduce smoking rates to 5% by 2050, there would be 876 million fewer YLLs compared to the most likely future scenario. Life expectancy in 2050 would be 77.1 years in males and 80.8 years in females. The greatest gains in life expectancy among males would be in East Asia, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia, with between 1.2 and 1.8 extra years of life gained. Among females, life expectancy would increase the most in East Asia, High-income North America and Oceania, with between 0.3 and 0.5 additional years gained. For the scenario in which smoking would have ended globally in 2023, the estimates indicate a maximum of 2.04 billion YLLs could be avoided by 2050 compared to the most likely future scenario, and life expectancy in 2050 would be higher still, at 77.6 years for males and 81 years for females. Bottomline: use of tobacco kills and countries must throw in all the resources they have to ensure there is a decline in the prevalence of users.

A war that can have no winners



It's been a year since Hamas launched its ill-conceived and brazen terrorist attacks on Israel that enabled the group to take scores of hostages but led to a debilitating war. Israel's disproportionate response to the assault has led to the death of more than 40,000 Palestinians in Gaza, most of them women, children, and the elderly. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been unable to achieve his stated goals of destroying Hamas and bringing all the hostages home. With Israel's decision to expand the war to Lebanon, apparently, to decapitate Hezbollah and facilitate the return of Israelis who had fled the northern part of the country, concerns about the violence spiralling out of control have grown. Netanyahu, who just a year ago was desperately clinging to power to avoid facing corruption and fraud charges, today enjoys popular backing within his country. But this has come at a tremendous human cost — nearly two million Palestinians have been displaced in Gaza and nearly all of them remain trapped, while one million Lebanese have fled their homes in recent days. Netanyahu's actions in the West Bank and Gaza have triggered fears that he wishes to leave no room for a two-State solution.

Iran, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen have faced the brunt of Israel's military might as Netanyahu claims he is destroying an ecosystem of Islamist terror. Israel has the support of the US, from where evidence has emerged of the Biden administration turning a blind eye to Netanyahu's flagrant human rights violations, but Tel Aviv has lost the propaganda war. The Palestinian cause has received a fillip with countries such as Ireland, Norway and Spain voicing support for a two-State solution. The gains and diplomatic wins made through the Abraham Accords lie in tatters and West Asia has been dragged back several decades, with Israel isolated in a hostile region. The United Nations has again been exposed as a toothless body that is a prisoner to the interests of the five permanent members of the Security Council. In India and elsewhere, concerns have increased about the conflict's impact on oil prices and exports at a time when the global economy remains fragile. Israel's plan to retaliate against Iran could well tip West Asia past the breaking point. This war must end, and the world must then seriously look at UN reforms to ensure there are mechanisms in place to assert a rules-based order and avert prolonged wars.

When imagination becomes real: How AI is quietly rewriting fashion’s creative rules

A homemaker in her 40s from Punjab, self-taught with a needle and thread after a tailor once quoted her more than she could afford, was scrolling through Pinterest the way she always does, looking for something beautiful to make. She found it: an elaborate gown, detailed and dreamy. She studied it, sourced leftover fabric scraps from her elder daughter's fashion work, and spent the better part of ten days bringing it to life, stitch by careful stitch, between her household chores. The dress was stunning. The original image, it turned out, had never existed in the physical world. It was AI-generated.

“I had no idea it was AI,” Sunita says. “I just liked the design and thought about it and made it. I will try to make any dress I like, be it AI or not. I just want to bring out the design in its truest sense.” Her daughter Shalu, a 19-year-old content creator, posted the video of her mother's creation. It spread quickly, not merely as a feel-good moment, but as an almost perfect illustration of something larger quietly happening across fashion: the dissolving boundary between the imagined and the made.

For Delhi-based fashion designer Afsha Noor, who goes by Noor Alchemy on Instagram and creates AI-generated couture and bridal collections, this dissolving line is not a side effect. It is the entire point. “You cannot come inside my head and see what I am imagining,” she says. “What we are doing with AI is imagining out loud.” Noor uses AI at every stage of her process, from concept sketching to presenting finished looks to clients, and says the results have changed how buyers engage with her work. “Till date, whatever clients I have are not able to differentiate between what is real and what is AI. They are able to see what the actual outfit will look like. And this makes them feel confi-

dent in placing an order.” She is emphatic, though, that AI is not the author of her vision. “We treat AI as an assistant. You have a vision, and AI is just helping you. That is it.” Her creative instinct comes first, always, and the technology follows. This distinction matters enormously to Vijay Raj, a visualiser and branding expert based in Kochi with over a decade in advertising, who has watched AI reshape the industry from the inside. “My workflow is that when I get a concept or a brief, I think it through by myself first. After that process, I use AI only for prompting,” he explains. “Otherwise, we are not controlling something; the AI is completely controlling us.” Raj is both an enthusiast and a watchdog. In workshops he conducts at universities, he tells students plainly: “You are completely free to generate anything you want, but as a designer, you have a value to your society and a responsibility to it.” He argues that fashion shares the same ecosystem of trust and misinformation as any other part of society, and designers must take that seriously. Luxury label founder Ranna Gill, trained at FIT New York and a veteran of Donna Karan and Ralph Lauren, sees AI with the measured pragmatism of someone who has watched several revolutions come through the industry. Her studio uses it for early visualization, testing how a colour, print, or embroidery might look before committing to samples, but she is clear about its limits. “AI generates designs, but we still have to recreate it. We rework on it, reposition it, colour it. It is not the final draft,” she says. She draws a longer arc: “When the computer was invented, we learned to use it. We learned to use smartphones. And as we will learn to use AI, we will bring it into our worlds in the ways best for us.” Couture designer Ridhi Mehra, known for blending traditional Indian craft with contemporary silhouettes, echoes this measured view.

After the decapitation of Hizbullah, Iran could race for a nuclear bomb



WHEN AN ISRAELI bomb killed Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hizbullah, last week, it did not just decapitate a fearsome militia that has driven some 60,000 Israelis from their homes with frequent rocket attacks. It also dealt a hammer blow to Iran's “axis of resistance”, a constellation of proxy forces that Iran has for decades used to attack both Israel and Western interests in the Middle East. In addition to its current assault on Hizbullah, Israel's year-long dismemberment of Hamas in Gaza has vastly diminished Iran's capacity to cause trouble if threatened. Those defeats, in turn, may be prompting Iran to fall back on its other main form of deterrence: its nuclear-weapons programme.

In recent days, amid Israeli strikes on Hamas, Hizbullah and militants backed by Iran in Yemen, Iranian officials have been insinuating that Israel's belligerence may induce Iran to develop nuclear weapons. Others have suggested that Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, might rescind an earlier fatwa, or religious edict, ruling out the pursuit of nuclear weapons. The regime has been expanding the number and sophistication of centrifuges it uses to purify uranium. It now has a big stockpile of near-weapons-grade material. It is plausible, though not yet likely, that Mr Khamenei might decide that the only way to protect his regime, which is despised by its own citizens and vulnerable to Israeli attack, would be to seek nuclear weapons.

America and Israel have long promised that Iran will not be allowed to build a bomb. Israel, in particular, appears to have detailed intelligence on the progress of Iran's nuclear programme. If it were to pick up signs that Iran was crossing a threshold, it might well attack Iranian nuclear sites—something it came close to doing in 2011. But there is no guarantee that this would succeed. Israeli insiders, in their more candid moments, acknowledge that the chance to set Iran's nuclear programme back significantly with air strikes may have passed: the relevant facilities are too deeply buried and nuclear know-how too widely dispersed. Bombing them would set the region ablaze while only delaying the programme by months, some argue.

The first question is, what sort of arsenal would Iran seek? Becoming a country with nuclear arms is more of a spectrum than a single point. Such weapons require three things: a core of fissile material, such as enriched uranium; a warhead that can house the material and initiate a chain reaction that ends in an explosion; and a delivery system, such as a bomb or missile, to transport the warhead to a target. Iran might not make all these things at once. It could produce weapons-grade material without a viable warhead, or it could build a warhead without a suitable delivery system. Iran could also build a complete weapon but, like Israel, refrain from announcing that it had done so. The intention behind such opacity is to reap the deterrent benefits of nuclear arms without incurring all the diplomatic costs. Much would depend on how blatant Iran was. It could build a weapon entirely covertly, on the assumption that deterrence would still be established because foreign intelligence agencies would have some idea of what it was up to. It could signal its intentions more clearly by expelling international inspectors, pulling out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and renouncing the fatwa. Or it could conduct a nuclear test, guaranteeing that it had a working device and demonstrating its capability to the world, but also inviting international outrage. Whether Iran crossed the nuclear threshold openly or furtively, it would then have to choose how many bombs to build and how to deploy them. It could, like Israel in the 1960s, build just a handful of devices in the hope that sympathetic powers would come to its aid when it was threatened to avert a nuclear war. Iran's problem is that it has no clear patrons: it is not certain that Russia would step in to save the regime. A second option would be to emulate India. That would involve building a larger, though still modest, arsenal, which could survive an enemy's first strike, allowing subsequent retaliation. A decade ago many experts and officials thought that the Indian option was Iran's likeliest course. It would appeal to Iran's leaders, who could maintain close control over the weapons—as they did with chemical weapons in the past—rather than devolving authority to use them to commanders in the field. In recent years, however, Iran's calculations may have changed. The military gap with Israel appears to have widened. Worse, the regime is more vulnerable at home, with mounting dissent. It is also becoming bolder militarily, as it showed when it launched missiles at Pakistan in January and Israel in April. An Iran that has decided to build nuclear weapons, perhaps in the aftermath of Mr Khamenei's death, is one in which the armed forces are probably more powerful, exacerbating these tendencies.

Iran's emboldened generals may prefer a third option: the Pakistani model, in which they would build a much larger arsenal—hundreds rather than tens of warheads—designed to be used first and early in a conflict to ward off even minor conventional military threats. That might require building small nuclear weapons, dispersing them widely to ensure they could be used in a crisis and delegating the authority to use them to commanders in the field. The choice of posture relates to a second question: how would a nuclear capability shape Iran's behaviour? In 1981 Kenneth Waltz, a political scientist, published an essay entitled, “The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better”, which argued that countries tended to become more secure and thus more cautious when armed with nuclear weapons. “It's been proven without exception that whoever gets nuclear weapons behaves with caution and moderation,” Mr Waltz argued years later, with reference to Iran. In 2007 Jacques Chirac, France's president at the time, was phlegmatic about the idea of a nuclear Iran. “What is dangerous about this situation is not the fact of having a nuclear bomb,” he said. “Having one or perhaps a second bomb a little later, well, that's not very dangerous.”

Many others are horrified by these arguments. Scott Sagan, another political scientist, has offered two counter-arguments. One is the risk that nuclear material might be stolen or sold to terrorists, either by rogue members of the regime or with its blessing. The second is that the weapons might serve as a “nuclear shield”, which would allow Iran to become more aggressive, safe in the knowledge that it could not be attacked in response. That is just what happened with Pakistan, Mr Sagan has argued: the country's armed forces allowed paramilitary groups and disguised troops to encroach on Indian-controlled territory in 1999, in part because Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear weapons the year

before had made its top brass more confident. Similarly North Korea, having conducted its first nuclear test in 2006, torpedoed a South Korean ship in 2010. How would these dynamics play out in Iran? It, like Pakistan, has a long history of funding, arming and supporting armed groups to compensate for conventional military weakness and to put pressure on its adversaries, Israel foremost. The regime would not want to share nuclear technology with proxies, as much as some militant groups might like to syphon off some nuclear material via sympathetic members of the Iranian security forces. But it could well decide that the immunity afforded by nukes would allow it to redouble its support for proxy groups and to encourage those groups to intensify pressure on Israel. This issue is not clear-cut, though. Nuclear weapons offer security, but not complete immunity from attack. Argentina invaded the Falkland islands in 1982 despite Britain's nuclear capability. Iran's own missile strikes on Israel and Pakistan, both nuclear-armed states, are proof that nuclear shields have holes. Moreover, Pakistan has tended to host Islamist proxies on its own soil—and even then India launched air strikes against them in 2019. Iran has preferred to cultivate foreign groups located far from its borders. So unless Iran extended a nuclear umbrella over Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen—an unlikely prospect, not least because it would require a very large arsenal with sophisticated command and control, capable of surviving multiple rounds of strikes—those groups would still be at the mercy of American and Israeli firepower. That raises the third question: how would others respond to an Iran that had successfully built and deployed nuclear weapons? In the 1960s America contemplated attacking China's nascent arsenal. It decided against such a risky operation. Today Israeli intelligence has clearly burrowed deep into Iran and, with America, might believe it could locate and strike a site where warheads were being assembled or stored. That in itself could trigger turmoil inside Iran, Iranian retaliation against American bases and Arab states and a wider regional war, perhaps layered on top of existing ones. In practice, the response might be more muted. “Although an Iranian nuclear test would be condemned across the globe and lead to a temporary spike in support for new penalties against Tehran,” says Eric Brewer of the Nuclear Threat Initiative, an advocacy group, “enthusiasm would wane in the subsequent months and years.” Iran is already subject to many sanctions; China and Russia would help insulate it from any more that might follow. And if the arsenal could not be eliminated, Iran's rivals would turn to deterring its use—as America has sought to do in Asia after North Korea acquired nukes in 2006.

America would probably extend its nuclear umbrella over Saudi Arabia, other Arab allies and Israel, none of which currently enjoy formal guarantees. That step, which would raise many questions—would America, for instance, deploy tactical nuclear weapons to the Middle East, as it does in Europe?—would have two purposes. One would be to persuade Iran that any use of its weapons would risk the destruction of the regime. The other would be to dissuade America's friends in the region from pursuing nukes of their own. Saudi Arabia has long said that it would respond to the development of an Iranian bomb by making one of its own. Egypt, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) would all be likely to explore such an option, too. That does not mean a nuclear arms-race is inevitable. The UAE wants to cool tensions with Iran and stay away from a regional conflict, not paint a target on its back. Egypt is insolvent and dysfunctional, and is farther from the threat. Jordan is broke. Even Saudi Arabia would probably prefer American protection to the uncertain pursuit of a bomb, which it might only be able to obtain with Pakistan's help.

Israel faces a different dilemma. Since the 1960s it has been coy about its nukes, saying only that it would not be the first country to “introduce” nuclear weapons to the region. Israel would face strong pressure to reverse that policy, publicly declaring its nuclear status despite the inevitable diplomatic backlash. Israeli leaders might also want to advertise their nuclear capability, by showing off the submarines and missiles that carry the country's bombs. A nuclear test is another possibility. This would be risky, cautions Richard Nephew of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a think-tank. “If they provided a lot of new information about their alleged weapons programmes, they might even expose weaknesses or deficiencies no one thinks they have,” he says. “Keeping that club in the bag may have much greater deterrence value than brandishing it, since everyone assumes they must have some top-flight stuff.” In any case, the deterrent dynamics between Israel and Iran would be worryingly untested. America and the Soviet Union had worked together as allies for several years before they began their nuclear stand-off. India and Pakistan had well-established backchannels of communication. Israel and Iran have no such history. In the past year their shadow war has turned ever hotter. An Iranian bomb would be a dangerous and unpredictable addition to an already combustible region.

Akshay Kumar is getting Rs. 35-40 crore for 'Golmaal 5', here's what Ajay Devgn's charging

Mumbai: Bollywood's very own “Khiladi” Akshay Kumar, who will be seen in the fifth installment of Rohit Shetty's “Golmaal”, is getting a whopping Rs. 35-40 crore for his 18 to 22-day shoot, which is more than the film's lead actor Ajay Devgn's upfront fees.

A source close to IANS knows about the development and went on to share: “Akshay Kumar is shooting for 18-22 days, and he is getting around 35-40 crs, which is more than Ajay Devgn's upfront fees because he is on a profit-sharing basis.” Rohit had announced “Golmaal 5” on the occasion of his 52nd birthday in March. It was also on the filmmaker's birthday that news of Akshay being a “surprise package” was revealed. In the BTS moments shared by the director from the sets of the new installment, Akshay's bald look was unveiled. On April 27, Ajay revealed that the new shoot schedule for the film had commenced. He had also shared a fun video montage from Ooty featuring Arshad Warsi, Tusshar Kapoor, Sharman Joshi, Shreyas Talpade and Kunal Kemmu. The first installment of the Golmaal film series, it stars Ajay Devgn, Tusshar Kapoor, Arshad and Sharman along with Rimi Sen and Paresh Rawal. It is reportedly based on Harsh Shivsharan's Marathi play Ghar Ghar, which also inspired Vora's Gujarati play Aflatoon, in turn one of the inspirations for the film. The film was followed by 4 sequels such as Golmaal Returns, which released in 2008, 2010's Golmaal 3 and Golmaal Again, which hit the silver screen in 2017. All the films starred Ajay, Arshad, Tusshar, Sanjay Mishra, Vrajesh Hirjee and Mukesh Tiwari, with Shreyas Talpade appearing in three, Kunal Khemu and Johnny Lever in two. Akshay is joining the fifth installment.

Goldman Sachs hikes India’s GDP growth forecast



Global investment and financial services firm Goldman Sachs has raised its calendar year 2026 real GDP growth forecast for India by 30 basis points to 6.8% and FY27 forecast by 40 bps to 6.5% in the wake of the fall in crude oil prices. The recent US-Iran peace deal should improve India’s growth outlook — lower oil prices have taken out the risk of additional fuel pass-through to consumers, while easing supply constraints were already beginning to support a recovery in investment related indicators in May from their March-April troughs, the firm said in a report.

On June 5, the RBI’s Monetary Policy Committee lowered the growth projection from 6.9% to 6.6% and hiked the inflation forecast from 4.6% to 5.1%. International benchmark Brent crude futures for August were 3.2% lower at \$72.83 a barrel on Friday. “While the fuel price hikes already announced will continue to feed through into inflation over the coming months, the lower oil price path suggests that the risk of additional pass-through has diminished materially,” Goldman Sachs said. The firm said lower crude oil prices have also been accompanied by a decline in petrochemi-

cal product prices. “Although the earlier increases in polymer price are still likely to lift core goods inflation in the near term, we now expect the impact to be limited (vs. our earlier expectations), with a lower likelihood of incremental price increases across the core goods basket,” it said. Reflecting the lower oil price assumptions and reduced manufactured goods inflation pressures, Goldman Sachs lowered its core goods inflation forecast for CY26 and FY27 by 30 basis points and 50 bps each to 3.2% and 4.1% respectively. “Going forward, we expect consumption growth to moderate in Q2 and Q3 on earlier pump fuel price increases. We have also seen deterioration in the RBI’s urban and rural consumer confidence surveys (90.7 in May vs. 93.2 in April for the urban confidence index),” Goldman Sachs said. However, the recent decline in oil prices reduces the likelihood of further fuel price increases, implying no further incremental drag on consumption growth from Q4, it said. Further, the sharp correction in global urea prices is likely to limit the increase in the government’s fertilizer subsidy bill relative to our earlier expectations. “Recent import tenders have cleared at substantially lower prices than those seen at the peak of the Middle East conflict, prompting the government to indicate that the FY27 fertilizer subsidy requirement could be reassessed. Together with lower oil prices, this should help alleviate near-term fiscal pressures,” it said. Goldman Sachs said the Indian economy remained resilient through the West-Asia shock, as fiscal and quasi-fiscal measures absorbed much of the increase in energy costs and limited pass-through to consumers. As a result, consumption held up in March and April, even as investment somewhat softened amid supply disruptions and commercial LPG allocations remained around 70 per cent of pre-conflict levels, it said.

US warns tariffs will be back ‘exactly where they were’ as India eyes trade deal

“We have rebooted the tariff program. Right now, we have something called Section 122 tariffs, which is a 10 per cent global tariff. Currently, USTR Ambassador Jameson Greer is doing studies for Section 301s, and if those studies are successful, and I have no reason to believe they won’t be, but we don’t know until they are — then the tariff rates are going to go back to exactly where they were,” Bessent said in a TV interview. The International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) tariffs on India were set at 25 per cent before it was brought down to 18 per cent in February, just days before the US President Donald Trump’s powers under the IEEPA were declared illegal. Washington has already proposed 12.5 per cent tariffs on India, which is expected to come into effect on July 7. The results of another Section 301 are also expected before the end of next month.

“I would say the good thing about having used IEEPA in 2025.. it allowed us very quickly to get to trade deals that we never would have gotten to before. You know, the EU... the EU is going to pay us 15 per cent, and they are going to charge us zero. So we have had a big rebalancing there. And they are bringing down their non-tariff trade barriers, many of their unfair financing practices. And it’s the same around the world, whether it’s Japan, Korea, our allies... whether it’s China,” he said. The Commerce and Industry Minister on Thursday said that the India-US trade deal was confirmed by both the countries on February 6 based on IEEPA tariffs, which gave India a competitive edge over competing countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and China and that India is looking for a similar advantage in the new US tariffs architecture.

Meanwhile, India has accelerated its attempts to strike more and more trade deals. The UK trade deal is set to come into effect next month, EU by the end of the year. The India-Oman deal also came into effect on June 1. Indian negotiators are also in talks with the Russia-led Eur-



asian Economic Union (EAEU), Canada, Peru and Chile. Notably, the United States Trade Representative (USTR) was due to visit Uzbekistan after India this week. While the India-US deal was not announced, the US and Uzbekistan agreed to an early harvest of trade commitments to strengthen the bilateral ties. USTR had launched two sets of broad Section 301 investigations based on forced labour and excess capacity. India, China, the European Union, Japan, Vietnam, Taiwan, Switzerland and South Korea feature in both the lists, and the US has already proposed the first set of tariffs. However, countries like the UAE, the UK, Israel, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, as well as Pakistan only feature once and may face lower tariffs compared to other countries. US proposed a lower rate of 10% on Pakistan, Canada, Ecuador, the European Union, Indonesia and Mexico, stating that they have demonstrated a commitment to addressing forced labour imports and have committed to imposing and enforcing a forced labour import prohibition through a formal Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) with the United States. Separately, the US has launched a third investigation on Vietnam and a fresh case against Germany. China has also been facing Section 301 tariffs since Trump’s first administration.

Govt, RBI’s June 5 bond measures working; pull 8 months of foreign money in two weeks



The measures announced by the government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on June 5 to attract foreign capital into Indian sovereign bonds have started to work as hoped — debt falling under the fully accessible route (FAR) category has seen inflows to the tune of \$2 billion in the subsequent two weeks, almost equal to the money that had come in the previous eight months combined. Data from the National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL) showed that foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have net bought FAR bonds on all but one day since capital gain taxes on government bonds were done away with and the pool of securities in this category expanded. This has led to net inflows in these bonds in June rising to \$2.2 billion — the highest in 15 months.

In March 2025, FPIs had invested \$3.34 billion in FAR bonds — a category of government bonds that foreigners can invest in without any restrictions. According to Radhika Rao, Senior Economist at DBS Bank, foreign investors have “turned constructive” on rupee debt. “Sentiment has been supported in part by expectations that Indian government bonds could be considered for inclusion in Bloomberg’s global bond indices,” Rao said on Wednesday.

The removal of long- and short-term capital gains as well as the withholding tax on investment by foreign investors in government bonds was aimed at spurring their inclusion in the Bloomberg Global Aggregate Bond Index, which economists predict could pull in anywhere between \$20 billion to \$30 billion of passive foreign funds over a period of 10 months post inclusion. Several global funds track the weight a certain country has in these bond indices and invest accordingly. In January, Bloomberg Index Services Ltd (BISL) had deferred the inclusion of Indian government bonds into its flagship global index, saying it will provide another update by mid-2026. Over the last couple of years, Indian government debt has been added to bond indices of JPMorgan, Bloomberg’s Emerging Market Local Currency Index and that of FTSE Russell.

On Thursday, yield on the benchmark 10-year Indian government bond was 6.77% in the secondary market, 22 basis points (bps) lower than on June 4. One basis point is one-hundredth of a percentage point. Bond yields move opposite to their prices. So, a fall in yields means prices have risen, which is profitable for bond holders. The decline in bond yields has also been aided by comments by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, who in an interview this week argued against expectations of interest rate hikes. While foreign investors are now putting more money into government bonds, they continue to dump stock, with net share sales increasing to \$5.55 billion so far this month from \$3.45 billion in May. Consequently, net FPI investment in Indian shares and debt across all categories has still seen an outflow of \$562 million so far in June, as per NSDL data. As a result, the Indian rupee is trading not too far from its June 5 level of 94.94 per dollar, having closed at 94.40 on Thursday. Economists, though, expect the Indian currency and bonds to climb once money flows into the country thanks to the RBI’s two temporary schemes that encourage public sector companies to borrow from abroad and non-resident Indians to deposit their foreign currency money with Indian banks at higher-than-usual interest rates. As per latest available data, deposits in Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) accounts stood at \$33.92 billion at the end of April, having increased by just \$166 million in the first month of 2026-27. The same scheme had attracted \$26 billion in the last few months of 2013 and is expected to pull around double that figure this time around. Meanwhile, registrations for external commercial borrowings (ECBs) by Indian companies stood at \$3.77 billion in April, having fallen to \$42.97 billion in 2025-26 from \$61.18 billion in 2024-25.

Nifty and Sensex post weekly gains as crude oil prices decline

Mumbai: The Indian equity benchmarks posted a third consecutive week of gains, aided by a sharp correction in crude oil prices to pre-Iran war levels and improved traffic through the Strait of Hormuz. Nifty added 0.18 per cent during the week and edged up 0.14 per cent on the last trading day to reach 24,056. At the close, the Sensex was up 109 points, or 0.14 per cent, at 77,100. It added 0.39 per cent during the week. The domestic markets navigated a week of mixed signals with notable resilience, even as broader indices, especially mid-caps, faced modest selling pressure.

Meet leafy seadragon, the ocean’s most remarkable master of disguise



At first glance, it looks less like an animal and more like a piece of floating seaweed. With delicate, leaf-like structures covering its body, the leafy seadragon is one of the ocean’s most extraordinary masters of disguise. Found off the southern and western coasts of Australia, this unusual marine creature has evolved an appearance so convincing that predators often struggle to spot it among underwater vegetation. Despite its dragon-like name, the leafy seadragon is actually a close relative of seahorses and pipefish. Growing up to about 35 centimetres long, the animal is covered in elaborate appendages that resemble drifting leaves. Surprisingly, these “leaves” aren’t used for swimming. Their main purpose is camouflage.

As the seadragon gently sways with ocean currents, its leaf-like extensions move too, helping it blend seamlessly into kelp forests and seagrass meadows. To both predators and prey, it can appear almost indistinguishable from the surrounding plants. Although it looks fragile, the leafy

seadragon is a skilled hunter. It feeds primarily on tiny crustaceans, plankton, and small shrimp-like animals. Instead of chewing, it uses its long tube-shaped snout like a straw, sucking prey directly into its mouth. Unlike many fish, leafy seadragons have no teeth and no stomach. Food passes through their digestive system quickly, meaning they need to eat frequently throughout the day. Another fascinating feature is how they swim. Most fish rely on powerful tail movements to propel themselves through the water. Leafy seadragons, however, use nearly transparent fins that are so small they are difficult to see. These tiny fins allow them to glide gracefully through the ocean while maintaining the illusion of drifting seaweed. Interestingly, unlike seahorses, leafy seadragons cannot curl their tails around plants or objects for support. Instead, they rely heavily on their remarkable camouflage to stay safe from predators. Like their seahorse relatives, leafy seadragons also have unusual parenting habits. After mating, the female deposits her eggs onto a specialised brood patch under the male’s tail. The male then carries and protects the eggs for several weeks until they hatch, taking on the role of primary caregiver. The species is so beloved in Australia that it has been named the official marine emblem of South Australia. Today, leafy seadragons face threats from habitat degradation, pollution, and climate change. Their reliance on healthy kelp forests and seagrass habitats makes them particularly vulnerable to environmental changes. Fortunately, they are protected in Australian waters, and conservation efforts are helping researchers better understand and safeguard these remarkable creatures. With its leaf-covered body, gentle movements, and almost mythical appearance, the leafy seadragon looks like something straight out of a fantasy novel. Yet it is very real — and proof that some of nature’s most impressive disguises are hiding beneath the waves.

Bhagyashree shares home remedy for PMOS: ‘Without side effects’

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) — recently renamed to Polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome (PMOS) — is a condition many women silently struggle with on a regular basis. Bhagyashree recently took to Instagram to share a simple home remedy “without side effects” that can help reduce disruptions to your everyday life. As a part of her ‘Tuesday Tips with B’ series, the Bollywood actor suggested drinking mulethi water to ease symptoms. “PCOS is a condition in which there’s an excess of male hormone androgen in the body, which leads to irregular periods, unwanted facial hair, etc. Mulethi decreases the androgen level in the body and solves all your problems,” she could be heard saying in the video. Dr Gayathri Karthik Nagesh, Program Director — Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Aster CMI Hospital, Bangalore says that Bhagyashree’s suggestion of drinking licorice water for managing PMOS is based on traditional use of mulethi, which may provide mild supportive benefits but is not a standalone treatment or cure for the condition.

She suggests always combining it with proper medical guidance, healthy diet, exercise, and lifestyle changes for better long-term results. “Licorice contains active compounds like glycyrrhizin that may help reduce excess androgen (male hormone) levels, support adrenal gland function, and reduce inflammation,” she tells indianexpress.com, adding that all of this can slightly improve common PMOS symptoms such as acne, unwanted facial hair, irregular periods, mood swings, stress, and digestive discomfort. “It



also has antioxidant and soothing properties that may support metabolism and hormonal balance, but scientific evidence is still limited and effects vary from person to person, so it should be seen only as a supportive home remedy rather than a proven treatment,” she elaborates. However, important precautions must be followed because regular or high intake of licorice water can cause serious side effects. Dr Nagesh recommends watching out for increased blood pressure, reduced potassium levels, water retention, weakness, fatigue, and in severe cases heart rhythm problems. “People with hypertension, kidney disease, or heart conditions should avoid it, pregnant women should be especially careful, and those taking medicines like diuretics, steroids, or blood pressure drugs should consult a doctor before using it,” she shares.

This is what happens to the body if you swim daily for a month



There is a reason swimming is often called the “perfect workout”. It is low-impact, full-body, and surprisingly meditative. But what actually happens if you commit to it every single day for a month? Or, more importantly, is it even a wise idea? According to Dr Manjusha Agarwal, Consultant — Internal Medicine, Gleneagles Hospital, Mumbai, the changes go far beyond just feeling fitter. One of the first things to improve is your cardiovascular fitness. Swimming consistently trains your heart to pump more efficiently, which boosts circulation and endurance over time. Dr Agarwal explains, “Daily swimming strengthens the heart, improving blood circulation and overall cardiovascular endurance.” You may notice this in small ways — less breathlessness while climbing stairs or an ability to swim longer laps without needing breaks. Lungs learn to work smarter. Unlike many other workouts, swimming forces you to control your breathing. Over 30 days, this has a noticeable impact. “It enhances lung capacity by training controlled breathing, helping the body use oxygen more efficiently,” says Dr Agarwal. The result is better breath control, im-

proved oxygen use, and benefits that carry into other physical activities. Weight loss, muscle toning start showing up

Swimming is deceptively intense. Because water creates resistance, your entire body is constantly working—even when movements feel smooth and easy. “Swimming daily helps burn calories and supports weight loss by engaging the whole body in continuous movement,” Dr Agarwal notes. At the same time, it tones multiple muscle groups—arms, legs, core, and back—without the harsh strain of gym workouts. Over the course of a month, your body may feel tighter, stronger, and more balanced. Your joints get a break—but your mobility improves. One of swimming’s biggest advantages is how gentle it is on the body. The water supports your weight, reducing pressure on joints. “Regular swimming is gentle on the joints as water supports body weight, reducing stress and risk of injury,” says Dr Agarwal. At the same time, the fluid, full-range movements help improve flexibility and overall mobility, making your body feel looser rather than stiff. Mind feels calmer, more balanced. The mental benefits are just as powerful as the physical ones. Swimming has a naturally calming rhythm—breath, stroke, glide—that can feel almost meditative. “Swimming regularly helps reduce stress by promoting relaxation and releasing feel-good hormones like endorphins,” Dr Agarwal explains. Swimming daily without rest can lead to fatigue or overuse injuries, especially in the shoulders. Dr Agarwal cautions, “Swimming every day without adequate rest can lead to muscle fatigue, shoulder strain, and overuse injuries.” The key is balance—mix intense sessions with lighter swims or rest days to allow proper recovery and prevent burnout.

Smart rings gain popularity as discreet alternative to smartwatches for health tracking

Hyderabad: Smartwatches may have dominated the wearable technology space for years, but smart rings are quietly emerging as a sleek alternative for those looking to track their health without a screen on their wrist.

Designed to look like ordinary rings, these devices can monitor a range of metrics including heart rate, blood oxygen levels, body temperature, sleep quality, stress levels and daily activity. Some models also provide menstrual cycle insights and recovery scores, helping users better understand their overall well-being. For many users, the appeal lies in their discreet design and the ability to collect health data around the clock. “I wanted something less distracting than a smartwatch. I want to use it to track fitness, but smartwatches keep showing messages and notifications too, and the ring has been perfect,” says Riya Menon, a lawyer who is into fitness.

Apart from their compact form, smart rings are also

helping users make small but meaningful lifestyle changes. By offering insights into sleep quality, stress and recovery, they can encourage better habits such as maintaining a regular sleep schedule, taking breaks and staying active. Many users say these changes have helped improve their energy levels and overall sense of well-being.

Others say the device has encouraged healthier lifestyle choices. “I never paid much attention to recovery or stress levels before,” says Rahul Verma, a software engineer. “Seeing those insights every day pushed me to take regular walks and prioritise sleep. Small changes have made a noticeable difference in my energy levels.” Among the better-known options in India is the Gabit Smart Ring, starting at around Rs 13,000-Rs 15,000 depending on the variant and offers, the ring tracks sleep, heart rate, stress, activity and calorie metrics. As wearable technology continues to evolve, smart rings are proving that health tracking no longer has to come in bulky or highly visible forms.

Will Sooryavanshi's high-backlift game survive England? YouTube may have the answer



Vaibhav Sooryavanshi is 15, on his first tour with the Indian senior team, and everyone is asking the same question: will the high backlift survive tall pacers in English conditions? Before you worry, there's a YouTube playlist worth putting together. Not of his sixes. Of something less discussed. Starting with a video story of village-cricket in rural Bihar. It's from a time when the world hadn't heard of Sooryavanshi. He's barely 13, looks much younger. He is playing a game at Barauni refinery ground, a 50 km bumpy road ride from his home in Samastipur. It's the final of the Shyamal Sinha junior tournament – as the colourful banner says – where he has hit 218 from 121 balls in his team's total of 289 in 40 overs. The report starts with the anchor, in that delightfully Chand Nawab tone, showering unadulterated praise on the “chhota bacha” who he is blown away by. He repeats words like “Karaamat pe karaamat kar rahe ho”, “century pe century diye ja rahe ho”, “taabad-tod batting kar rahe ho”. They all mean broadly the same – the boy is killing it. Soon the camera is on little Aryan, the captain of the losing side. He goes beyond the usual Sooryavanshi cliches. “Shuru mai woh neeche neeche khel raha tha... pakad pakad ke khel raha tha ...last mai maara bhi ... koi galat shot nahi khela, koi rash shot nahi khela. (At the start of his innings he mostly played along the ground strokes, he was holding back but he started hitting later but he had no rash strokes),” he says. It is clear, little Aryan has read the Sooryavanshi book beyond the cover.

There is someone at the higher echelons of Indian cricket who would agree with Aryan. That is because he, too, has followed Sooryavanshi and the few others like him, those who not only promised much but also delivered on it. Vikram Rathour, back in the 90s, played his first ODI as Sachin Tendulkar's opening partner. As a batting coach he has worked closely with Virat Kohli, Shubman Gill and now has been on Sooryavanshi's side at Rajasthan Royals. To say Rathour has seen every Indian batting prodigy since the 1990s more closely than anyone else, would not be an exaggeration.

He is on a podcast hosted by the 2006 u-19 world champion batsman Taruwar Kohli. Rathour has coached this Kohli too. They talk serious cricket. After calling Sooryavanshi the cleanest and most consistent hitter he has ever seen, he talks about a dimension of his batting that many don't see. Here he mentions the IPL semifinal

against Gujarat Titans, where at one point he had scored just 34 in 21 balls – a virtual crawl by the little smasher's standards – but finished with a 53-ball 96. “The wicket was up and down .. He showed a completely different side of his batting. Took time, took it deep. Once he was set he started hitting,” he says, sounding not too different from little Aryan at the Barauni refinery ground many years back. It's Rathour's details on how Sooryavanshi avoided second-season IPL blues that gives an idea about the teenager's batting flexibility. It starts with the Rajasthan Royals training staff being aware that their star player would be on the target of rival bowlers. They knew they would try to exploit his high backlift. But Sooryavanshi had it in him to deal with this challenge.

“We knew bowlers would try bowling wide lines to him, some will bowl short or try yorkers at the start of the innings. But he was prepared for those challenges. His off-side game is better this year. So when people tried to go wide to him he started hitting them over covers and extra cover,” he says. “People tried to bowl full to him but he handled it pretty well. In between, they started bowling slow balls at him but he would change his swing. He would stop a bit and hit the ball. He is a special talent, it is this adaptability that makes him special.”

Another amateur vlog, a hidden gem, gives more clues about the making of a multi-dimensional player. It's by a young man who first shows the world the route to the star's home in Samastipur's Tajpur village. He launches into a monologue outside the sprawling home that he says is painted in the RR colours. There is a barren plot close to it that has two pitches – one that has black soil and the other is cemented. There was also an uncle at home to explain Vaibhav's training routine from the day he was barely 4 years old and the sacrifice of the family. The story is similar to many Indian batting greats whose fathers were their coaches. So Sooryavanshi Sr, Sanjeev, would ask bowlers from the neighbourhood to be at the net where his son is the only batsman. As the father realised that his son needed expert coaches, he enrolled him at an academy in Patna. Coach Manish Ojha would give personal training to boys from Samastipur three days a week. The Sooryavanshi household would now have a new routine. So thrice a week, Sooryavanshi's mother would wake up at 4 am, cook lunch for her son and five of the bowlers who would accompany him. The entire party would stay all afternoon and early evening. Ojha had many hours to work on his pet student. The coach says he would design drills that would make him a complete player. For an entire day for close to 4-5 hours, Sooryavanshi would be asked to master one stroke at a time. So it could be cover-drive on Monday, a pull on Wednesday and lofted shots on Thursday. Sooryavanshi wasn't part of the Indian team that lost to Ireland in the tour opener. He will likely play the next game. In Tajpur, a mother who once woke at 4 am to cook lunch for five neighbourhood bowlers, is probably watching. She has seen this preparation up close, day after day, for years. The English conditions may be new. The challenge isn't.

Williams and Pino's injuries overshadows Spain's Uruguay triumph

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Spain's clinical 1-0 win over Uruguay was overshadowed by injury concerns, with reigning European champions now anxiously awaiting updates on the fitness of Yeremy Pino and Nico Williams. Courtesy of a goal from Alex Baena, Luis de la Fuente's team topped the Group H table of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, and will now face the runner-up of Group J in the round of 32 on 2nd July. However, they could be without two key attackers for that encounter.

Williams had already arrived at the tournament carrying a hamstring issue that forced him to miss Athletic Bilbao's final three La Liga matches. Accordingly, he has been used only as an impact substitute by de la Fuente, but the Spanish coach will be sweating over a fresh injury he picked up on Friday. Replacing fellow winger Lamine Yamal in the 76th minute, Williams was seen in discomfort. Providing an update about the injury, de la Fuente said: “Nico was experiencing some slight discomfort. It could be a strain or just fatigue. We'll have to wait until tomorrow to know for sure.” The bigger concern for the 2010 champions, however, will be the shoulder injury that Yeremy Pino sustained. Introduced in goalscorer Baena's place in the 66th minute, Pino injured himself after an awkward landing during the



dying stages of the game. Though he was able to complete the full 90 minutes, as Spain did not have any substitutions remaining, the Crystal Palace attacker's agony was visible. De la Fuente revealed after the game that Pino's tournament could be over. “I am really sad about this, what really concerns me is Yeremy's injury. It looks bad and there is a very strong possibility he will miss the rest of the tournament. It could be a collar bone injury. We'll see, he'll undergo tests tomorrow. He's suffering a lot. He made a huge effort to hold on until the end of the game. It was heroic,” he said.

Muslera apologises after yet another mistake costs Uruguay a spot in Round of 32



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Fernando Muslera has issued an apology to his teammates and fans, after yet another costly error contributed to Uruguay's group stage exit from the 2026 FIFA World Cup. The two-time champions were eliminated following a 1-0 defeat at the hands of European champions Spain on Friday, with Muslera's mistake proving to be decisive once again.

Alex Baena's shot in the 42nd minute, which ultimately earned Spain the three points, should have been a regulation save for the goalkeeper. Muslera was substituted in half-time, which coach Marcelo Bielsa later revealed as a decision taken by the veteran shot-stopper himself. “I didn't make that decision. It was a decision Muslera himself made,” he said. Muslera's error against Spain was not an isolated incident in this tournament. In fact, he has been responsible for all four goals conceded by Bielsa's team in this competition, with the most glaring error being an ill-fated outing against Cape Verde which resulted in the equalizer. Had they held on to the 2-1 lead, Uruguay would have been in the round of 32.

Speaking to media after the clash against Spain, Muslera acknowledged his mistakes and revealed he has apologised to his teammates. “I told the lads in the locker

room after the game, when they'd calmed down a bit, ‘Today it's my turn, I haven't had a good World Cup.’ I apologized to them and to all Uruguayans, although it's too late now. Unfortunately, despite all my preparation, I failed to perform well at the World Cup,” he said.

He further elaborated: “I've never been one to hide, but to face the music. This is the most direct way to speak to Uruguayans. I never imagined I would suffer so much with this sport. Especially with all the work I put in, with how I prepared.” Notably, Muslera had announced his retirement from international football in 2024, only to revoke it earlier this year, reportedly at Bielsa's insistence. His return saw him become the first Uruguayan to feature at five FIFA World Cup finals, but after a nightmare campaign that ended with Uruguay's earliest World Cup exit in over two decades, he appears set to bring the curtain down on his international career once more. He hinted at doing so, saying: “Now it's time to be with my closest friends and family, gather my strength, and move forward, because that's what this sport is all about, and this position (goalkeeper) is too. Sometimes it gives you a lot, but other times it takes away. I accept what I have to deal with, and there's no other option but to keep going.”

KV Bolarum lift KVS football title

Hyderabad: Kendriya Vidyalaya (Bolarum) emerged winner in the KVS Regional Sports Meet football tournament winning all the matches. Air Force Station (Hakimpet) and KV Trimulgherry were placed second and third respectively. The winner will take part in the 55th KVS National Sports Meet in Dehradun from September 28 this year. Mrs Veena Rote, Principal, gave away the awards to the winners and appreciated the efforts of the school coach Prabhakar Reddy.

We want to play aggressive brand of cricket against Australia says Smriti Mandhana



London: Vice-captain Smriti Mandhana on Saturday said India will play an “aggressive brand of cricket” against Australia in the must-win Women's T20 World Cup match here. India need to beat six-time champions Aussies on Sunday to progress to the semifinals of the showpiece after getting entangled themselves in a two-way tie with South Africa. “It's a big game obviously. We've all spoken a lot about how we really want to be playing the aggressive brand of cricket and that's something which we'll all look to do tomorrow,” said Mandhana in the pre-match press conference.

However, Mandhana was quick to admit that the Indian batting unit has not often been able to bat to their full potential in this tournament. “We've been speaking a lot in the batting meeting about how we really want to go out there and bat with intent. It's not happened as much as we would have loved to. But having said that, I think everyone in the batting unit is itching to go,” she added. Mandhana said

India's outings against the Aussies have seen a steady improvement in the last four or five years. “We did well in the T20 format in Australia. We'll take a lot of confidence from that. With the WPL, I feel the girls are also very well prepped in terms of taking the high pressure games a little better than what we could before.

“But, yeah, again, I feel the gap has definitely narrowed. With a few of our players playing Big Bash, the experience is being shared and I feel the kind of cricket Indian team has played in the last four, five years — the gap has narrowed down.” The 29-year-old also hoped the she and her opening partner Shafali Verma can make a heftier contribution against the Aussies as a pair. “We had a very quiet series in England. We both were really pumped to get back to giving the good starts for India because, of course, whenever we lay the foundation, more or less, we are in a good place.” So I'm really happy with the way she's striking the ball and I hope that we can switch up our partnership together,” she noted. The elegant left-hander also said her recent discussions on batting with former Australian opener Matthew Hayden and former Sri Lanka skipper Kumar Sangakkara did her a world of good. “I have looked up to Sangakkara sir and Matthew Hayden quite a lot. I remember even in my bad days, I would watch their videos. So, when I saw him (Hayden) doing the commentary, I got really excited.” “We had a good discussion and I wanted to know a few things about the grip etc. I also told him that chatting before an Australian game, I don't know if you would like to do that, but he was really kind and sweet. He shared a lot of things, which I hope I can apply to my batting,” she said.

After an eye-opening defeat, Men in Blue chase series-levelling win against confident Ireland



Belfast: India will have little time to dwell on their shock defeat in the series opener as they return to the Civil Service Cricket Club on Sunday for a must-win second and final T20I against a confident Ireland side eager to script another piece of history. The reigning T20 World Cup champions were outplayed in all three departments of the game on Friday as Ireland recovered from 36/3 to post 182/9 before dismissing India for 148 to register their first-ever T20I victory over the Men in Blue. The result not only handed Ireland a 1-0 lead in the two-match series but also put them one win away from what would arguably be the biggest bilateral T20I series triumph in their history. For India, Sunday's contest is about far more than levelling the series. It is an opportunity to respond after a performance that exposed flaws in both planning and execution.

The visitors made the perfect start with the ball in the opening match, reducing Ireland to 36/3 inside the Powerplay through disciplined spells from Harshit Rana and Arshdeep Singh. However, the momentum slipped away in the middle overs as Lorcan Tucker and Gareth Delany rebuilt the innings before George Dockrell's late assault helped Ireland finish with a daunting 182. Iyer, who was captaining the side for the first time in T20Is, admitted after the match that India lost execution during the middle phase, allowing Ireland to attack straight down the ground on a venue where the boundaries are comparatively shorter. He also stressed that the team would “forget what's happened” and return “all guns blazing” in the series finale. That statement now needs to be backed by action. India's bowling plans, particularly in the death overs, are expected to come under scrutiny. Despite Harshit Rana finishing with impressive figures of 3/24, Ireland plundered 66 runs in the final five overs after capitalising on a few tactical errors. Better management of bowling resources and improved execution at the

death will be key if India are to prevent another late-innings surge.

The batting unit also has significant questions to answer. Abhishek Sharma's explosive 50 off just 20 deliveries briefly put India on course during the chase, but the innings unravelled once he departed. Captain Shreyas Iyer managed only three runs, while Ishan Kishan, Tilak Varma, Washington Sundar, and Axar Patel all failed to convert their starts. Apart from Shivam Dube's brisk cameo, the middle order struggled to build partnerships or keep pace with the required run rate. With the series on the line, the Indian think tank could consider changes to the playing XI. Teenage batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi is among the players waiting for an opportunity and could come into contention if the management opts to freshen up the batting order after the disappointing display in the opener. Ireland, meanwhile, will enter the decider brimming with confidence. Having finally broken their T20I victory drought against India after eight successive defeats, Lorcan Tucker's men now have the chance to achieve something even more significant: a series victory over the world champions on home soil. Captain Tucker led from the front with a composed half-century in the first match, while Gareth Delany narrowly missed out on a fifty. More importantly for the hosts, debutants Matt Holland and Jai Moondra repaid the team's faith with outstanding performances. Holland was named Player of the Match after claiming three wickets, while Moondra's disciplined spell and two wickets highlighted Ireland's growing bowling depth. Although Ireland holds the psychological advantage, they will be aware that India possesses enough quality to mount a strong comeback. The visitors have often responded positively after defeats, and Shreyas Iyer's side will be determined to avoid an uncommon bilateral series loss. With Ireland chasing another historic milestone and India desperate to restore their reputation, the stage is set for a compelling finale in Belfast. Where to Watch: Sony Sports Ten 1 SD & HD and Sony Sports Ten 5 SD & HD on TV. SonyLiv will live-stream the match on its website and app. India: Shreyas Iyer (c), Tilak Varma (vice-captain), Ravi Bishnoi, Abhishek Sharma, Suryansh Shedge, Prasidh Krishna, Sanju Samson, Axar Patel, Harshit Rana, Ishan Kishan, Washington Sundar, Arshdeep Singh, Shivam Dube, Prince Yadav, and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. Ireland: Lorcan Tucker (c), Ross Adair, Ben Calitz, Gareth Delany, George Dockrell, Stephen Doherty, Matthew Humphreys, Gavin Hoey, Matthew Holland, Liam McCarthy, Jai Moondra, Harry Tector, Tim Tector, and Reuben Wilson

Is Washington Sundar a victim of role confusion under Gautam Gambhir?



New Delhi: Is Washington Sundar a batter who bowls decent off-spin? Or is he specialist off-break bowler who can also contribute a few runs when need be? The question has circulated for some time but the way Indian team management has used the 26-year-old cricketer, it is now being asked openly. Does Gautam Gambhir and his team of support staff have actual clarity on what exactly is Washington's role? Neither in his 61 T20I appearances has he looked like a batter, who can finish games with brute power nor has he emerged as a spinner on whom opposition coaches would be burning midnight oil. The result of mediocre performances in the shortest version is a term that once irked Ravindra Jadeja — bits and pieces cricketer. And Washington is not even close by a country mile when compared with Jadeja at his peak. At 26, he has already spent almost decade in the senior dressing room having played his first game before his 18th birthday. But when someone only gets to bat in 26 innings out of the 61 games with a strike-rate of less than 130, then he is certainly not a finisher. And when the same person takes 51 wickets in 57 innings with an economy rate of just over 7, it can be at best termed decent and not even good. Add to it he has delivered 1049 legal deliveries which constitutes 18 balls per innings. That effectively means that on an average Washington has most of the times not given opportunity to finish his quota of overs. With the strategic shift in T20Is powerplay batting,

Washington, who entered the scene as an off-spinner who bowled with the new ball inside first six overs, isn't being risked due to rampaging batters around the globe.

On Friday, against Ireland, he bowled a solitary over and that too was introduced in the 16th over of the innings. While batting, he got stuck and managed just 9 off 12 balls coming in at No.6. But what's more interesting is a pattern that emerged out of these numbers: 1, 2, 4, 4, 1.2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2. In the last 12 T20Is that Washington played, these are the number of overs that he bowled in 10 innings (2 games in Australia were washouts). And a pattern has emerged since the time Washington has played under Gambhir. While he manages to find a place in the team, in five of those 10 bowling innings — he bowled just one over. In a match, where he bowled 1.2 overs, he had actually polished off the Aussie tail getting his best T20I figures of 3/3. Among the five times, he was been given a single over, on three occasions he was brought as first change and he got a wicket too but then wasn't given a chance to bowl. Out of 57 bowling innings (in 61 games) that he has bowled, only 25 times has he been given an opportunity to bowl full quota of overs. And whenever he has got that opportunity to bowl his full quota of four overs, his average economy rate has come down to 6.65 (compared to career ER of 7.05) and his strike-rate (balls per wicket) comes down to less than 20 compared to 22.2 when he bowls partial quota of overs. Former India great Ravichandran Ashwin's take on his Hindi YouTube show ‘Ash Ki Baat’ also seemed to corroborate these statistics. “Washington has been backed by this team (management). He seems an automatic choice in this line-up. They are backing him but what I feel that even as they play him, there is no specific role for him. There are times he is on the field, he gets one over, at times, he doesn't even get an over. If you guys remember, during T20 World Cup, they (team management) dropped vice-captain Axar Patel to play Washington. That much back up Washington is getting,” Ashwin said. Ashwin seemed a bit perplexed that Washington is being used a finisher, a skill that perhaps doesn't go with his domain expertise. Even in batting, they are using him as a finisher and he is not a finisher.

When Aamir Khan’s Lagaan cast played a real cricket match and the British won easily



When Lagaan released nearly 25 years ago, the buzz around the film was unprecedented. The sports drama clashed at the box office with Sunny Deol's Gadar: Ek Prem Katha, and what followed was one of Bollywood's most memorable box-office battles, with both films emerging as massive successes. Lagaan's unique blend of cricket, patriotism and emotion struck a chord with audiences. The climax, where the villagers of Champaner defeat the British in a high-stakes cricket match against all odds, drew thunderous applause, whistles and cheers in theatres across the country. But while Indian audiences celebrated the ending, the British actors playing the colonial team reportedly weren't too thrilled—largely because many of them were accomplished cricketers in real life.

When British actors were unhappy with Lagaan climaxIn his book The Spirit of Lagaan, production executive Satyajit Bhatkal revealed that the off-screen rivalry between the Indian and British cast became very real during the shoot. "The script forces the Brits to lose and they know there isn't a thing they can do about it. This has injured their vanity. Now they want revenge—off screen," Bhatkal wrote.

According to him, the British actors had repeatedly demanded a real cricket match throughout the shoot of Lagaan. However, the production team kept postponing it due to concerns about exposing cast members to extreme heat and exhaustion after weeks of filming under the harsh Gujarat sun.As shooting for the cricket sequences neared completion, the much-anticipated "grudge match" was finally organised. Aamir Khan assembled a team comprising actors, technicians, lightmen and members of the art department. The British side featured several actors who portrayed the colonial cricketers in the film.The British team was initially short on players because of injuries and illness, forcing the Indian side to lend them Aditya Lakhia, who played Kachra in the film. The decision prompted playful cries of "traitor, traitor" from the Indian camp. "When captains Aamir and Chris England (who played the menacing fast bowler Yardley in the movie) go out for the toss, the atmosphere is electric. It could well be England versus India," Bhatkal recalled.The match, played on March 26, 2000, became a major event on set. Complete with live commentary, a scoreboard and enthusiastic spectators, it felt like a genuine international fixture. Unfortunately for Team India, the result was far less dramatic than the film's climax. "The Brits are regular club players, some have even played at the county level, whereas the Indians are novices at best," Bhatkal wrote.The British side comfortably won the match. However, in a display of sportsmanship, the Indian team reportedly gave them a standing ovation. According to Bhatkal, the day-long contest ultimately helped strengthen friendships between the Indian and foreign cast members

during the gruelling seven-month shoot near Bhuj.

Cricket wasn't the only sport keeping the cast entertained. Members of the Lagaan team also participated in a table tennis tournament organised by British actor Barry Hart. The competition ran for two weeks and featured 16 doubles teams, each consisting of one Indian and one British participant. Every night after filming wrapped, cast and crew members gathered to watch the matches and cheer on their colleagues.The final saw Aditya Lakhia and Chris England face off against Aamir Khan and Charlotte, one of the British actors. Lakhia's experience as a state-level table tennis player from Gujarat proved decisive, helping his team secure victory.Away from the sporting contests, another activity became hugely popular among the cast—late-night card games. The pastime was introduced by actor Rajendra Gupta, who played the village headman. According to Bhatkal, cast members would gather after shooting and continue playing cards well into the night. The group jokingly named itself the Lagaan Playing Cards Club or LPCC.

At the time of its release, Lagaan was regarded as one of the most expensive Hindi films ever made, with a reported budget of Rs 25 crore. It also marked Aamir Khan's debut as a producer, a gamble that paid off spectacularly. Actor Akhileendra Mishra, who played Arjan in the film, later recalled the extraordinary scale of the production."The production management was exceptionally good. The film wouldn't have been a success without it. They had all kinds of food—any cuisine you wanted, any juice you wanted. Even the foreign artists were eating Indian food. There was a huge continental spread for them, but they all flocked to the Indian section," he told Friday Talkies.He added, "The arrangements were of international standards. The moment we stepped out in the morning, there would be a lavish breakfast spread waiting for us. You could eat and drink as much as you wanted. Nobody stopped you."

Mishra contrasted the experience with many other productions."Other production houses keep an eye on even things as small as Bisleri water bottles. They're worried about who is using what. On Lagaan, it was the opposite. Everyone was instructed to drink only Bisleri water. They were extremely careful about the cast and crew's health because any illness could halt the entire shoot. People were even washing their hair with Bisleri water," he recalled.The shoot was initially expected to conclude in May but eventually extended by another month. Yet, according to Mishra, nobody complained. "Aamir called a meeting and informed us that the shoot wouldn't finish in May as planned and would continue until June. Not a single person objected. Everybody's contract was extended," he said.Directed by Ashutosh Gowariker and produced by and starring Aamir Khan, Lagaan told the story of a group of villagers who challenge their British rulers to a game of cricket in order to avoid paying an oppressive land tax. The film also starred Gracy Singh, Rachel Shelley, Paul Blackthorne, Suhasini Mulay, Kulbhushan Kharbanda and Rajendra Gupta.The film received widespread critical acclaim and earned an Academy Award nomination in the Best Foreign Language Film category, becoming one of Indian cinema's most celebrated achievements.Featuring an iconic soundtrack by A.R. Rahman, with songs such as "Ghanan Ghanan", "Mitwa", "Radha Kaise Na Jale" and "O Rey Chhori", Lagaan continues to hold a special place in the hearts of audiences. As part of its 25th anniversary celebrations, the film is being re-released in theatres from June 12 to June 14, giving fans another chance to relive the magic on the big screen.

Govind Namdev distances himself from Salman Khan blackbuck film: ‘I was kept in the dark’



The controversy erupted after the makers unveiled Kala Hiran's first look video on June 12, carrying the message: "Dedicated to Guru Jambheshwar Bhagwan and the Bishnoi community." The teaser features actor Kashif Iqbal Khan portraying a character strongly resembling Salman Khan, complete with a black T-shirt and the actor's signature bracelet.

In 1998, Salman Khan made headlines after being accused of hunting two blackbucks in Kankani village near Jodhpur, Rajasthan. Following the incident, members of the Bishnoi community filed a complaint against the actor and his Hum Saath Saath Hain co-stars Saif Ali Khan, Sonali Bendre, Neelam and Tabu. Now, producer Amit Jani has turned the controversial episode into a feature film, Kala Hiran, featuring veteran actor Govind Namdev. However, Namdev has now claimed that he was unaware of the film's actual narrative and was allegedly kept in the dark about its intent.'I was kept in the dark'

The controversy erupted after the makers unveiled Kala Hiran's first look video on June 12, carrying the message: "Dedicated to Guru Jambheshwar Bhagwan and the Bishnoi community." The teaser features actor Kashif Iqbal Khan portraying a character strongly resembling Salman Khan, complete with a black T-shirt and the actor's signature bracelet. The film appears to depict the character in a negative light, while Govind Namdev is shown as an advocate seeking justice on behalf of the Bishnoi community.Reacting to the teaser, Namdev distanced himself from Kala Hiran and said he felt misled. "I would never do a film against Salman Khan," the actor said.Speaking to Amar Ujala, Govind Namdev revealed, "As soon as I watched the trailer, I was shaken to the core. I instantly understood that the project is completely different from what I had shot for. We were never told that a character resembling Salman Khan would be created and portrayed in this manner. The moment I saw the

trailer, I felt I had been kept in the dark and used. There is a world of difference between what I was told and what has actually been made."He further claimed that the project was initially presented to him under a different title. "I was told we were making a film called Sambhal. At that time, I had absolutely no idea that the story would later take a completely different direction," he said.Explaining his involvement, Govind Namdev stated that he had only agreed to perform courtroom scenes. "I was informed that there was a long courtroom sequence and that was all I had to do. It was also mentioned that nothing new was being added from our side and that we were merely presenting what had happened in court. I felt there was nothing wrong in depicting facts already on record, which is why I agreed to be part of it," he said.

The trailer's description, however, leaves little room for ambiguity. It reads: "This is not just a movie; it is a profound testament to the Bishnoi community's unwavering vow and their core principles of wildlife protection, which set an unparalleled example of struggle for the entire world to see. Inspired by the infamous 1998 blackbuck poaching case in Kankani village, Jodhpur, this film is adapted from authentic literature that brought the truth of this incident to light."Namdev also clarified his position regarding the Bishnoi gang controversy that has frequently surfaced in connection with Salman Khan."I cannot consider any Bishnoi gang as my ideal. I cannot even think of such a thing. I believed I was only performing the courtroom portion. However, what has come to light now has made me uncomfortable as well," he said.'Characters are entirely fictional', claim makersInterestingly, despite the first look video making it apparent that the central character is modelled on Salman Khan, the makers have included a disclaimer stating that all characters and events are fictional. The disclaimer reads: "All characters and events in this film are entirely fictional. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, places or entities is purely coincidental. Although inspired by the 1998 blackbuck poaching incident, several elements have been fictionalised for entertainment purposes and have no connection to reality."Meanwhile, Salman Khan has moved court seeking a stay on Kala Hiran's release. Through his legal counsel, the actor has argued that the film is based on the blackbuck poaching case allegedly involving him and violates a Delhi High Court order protecting his personality rights.

A vacation bench of Justice Neena Bansal Krishna issued notices to Amit Jani, Akshay Pandey and others on Khan's plea and listed the matter for hearing on June 19. The court was informed that although the film's release date has not yet been announced, its trailer was released earlier this week.In his application, Salman Khan contended that the film's poster, unveiled on May 29, contains a "blatant and obvious reference" to him. "The character depicted bears an uncanny resemblance to the plaintiff and is clearly seen wearing a bracelet that is immediately identifiable with the plaintiff and no one else," the plea states.

‘Your consent is not an EMI’: Kunickaa Sadanand on Rs 370 biryani row after backing Pranit



The controversy surrounding comedian Pranit More's viral crowd-work clip continues to spark debate online, but actor Kunickaa Sadanand believes the conversation should move beyond memes and outrage. A day after publicly supporting More following his second apology, Kunickaa shared a video on social media arguing that the Rs 370 biryani row exposes a much deeper social issue about entitlement, consent and emotional guilt.Addressing the controversy, Kunickaa said that while social media users have been making jokes and memes about the incident, she believes it reflects a much larger societal problem.

"People are making jokes and memes about the Rs.370 biryani debate on social media. But I think there is a very deep social issue behind this controversy. In our society, many people still think that if they pay for dinner, give a gift, sponsor a trip, then there is an obligation on the other person."She said that many women internalise this feeling even when no one explicitly pressures them.The actor said, "And many girls start feeling guilty within themselves without any pressure. As if someone has written a debt on them. Or they don't deserve it. Or they are not so good that somebody can do something."Kunickaa stressed that consent can never be treated as something that can be purchased."A person's consent cannot be bought with Rs.370 biryani. A coffee, a gift, an expensive dinner, or even lakhs of expenses cannot be the price tag of another person's autonomy, dignity, and choice," she said.The actor went on to discuss what she described as emotional accounting within families and relationships."Let's talk about how society uses guilt. Not just in relationships, but everywhere. Parents say, we did so much for you. Relatives say, we helped you. Partners say, I sacrificed for you. I left my career. I took care of your house. I worked so hard for you. I got tired while working. I did so much to survive for the kids. And many times, this becomes emotional accounting more than love."Comparing relationships to a balance sheet, she said, "As if life is a balance sheet. Debit, credit, return, interest. And who bears the most burden? Women."According to Kunickaa Sadanand, women often end up carrying that burden because they are taught from childhood to prioritise giving.Kunickaa said, "Because they have been taught to be givers since childhood. Love is not a transaction. If you give someone a gift and expect something in return, it is not generosity.It is an investment. And if there is always an accounting going on in a relationship. I did so much. You did

so much. Then maybe it is not a relationship. It has become a business contract."

"Your consent is not an EMI"Kunickaa Sadanand also spoke about the lessons parents should be teaching their children.The actor said, "So, what should we teach our daughters? Maybe it is time to give some new lessons to our daughters. Don't teach them not to be grateful to someone. Instead, teach them that there is a difference between gratitude and obligation. Being thankful to someone and feeling indebted to someone are two different things."She continued, "Teach them that if someone gives you a gift, there is no compulsion to return anything. Refusing is not rudeness. Saying no is not selfishness. And most importantly, your consent is not an EMI of someone's generosity."She added that these lessons should not be limited to girls."We must also teach our sons. Not just our daughters, we have to teach our sons as well. That if you give someone a dinner, you have given one dinner. You have not bought any rights. If you give a gift, it can be an expression of love. It is not a certificate of ownership."Kunickaa's support for Pranit MoreKunickaa Sadanand's latest comments came a day after she publicly supported Pranit More following his second apology over the controversy.The comedian recently shared a video statement acknowledging his role in the incident and apologising for his conduct. In the video, More said, "I wanted to address this issue for a long time, but I couldn't because my Instagram account was suspended. You must have seen the crowd-work video for which I have been receiving a lot of hate. And rightly so. I deserve this criticism because during that crowd interaction, I made multiple derogatory remarks. People laughed, and I got carried away. It was a lapse in judgment.It was a huge mistake. I could have stopped it from happening or taken a stand, but instead I gave it a platform where it was celebrated. To everyone who has been hurt because of my behaviour, I am sorry. I will fully cooperate with all legal proceedings. I just want to request that you give me another chance to work on myself and my content."

Reacting to the apology, Kunickaa wrote, "Everyone makes mistakes, but not everyone has the courage to own it. @rj_pranit you are a good boy, with right values, but as I always said, roasting or crowd work can carry you away, especially as an entertainer when you see people reacting and laughing. I hope people forgive you, and I also hope they change their attitude towards women/girls. You were not the cause of a generational mindset; you were one of the many who inherited this mindset from generations of objectification. God bless you; I'm sure you will be back with brilliant content. Stay strong, stay mindful."

What triggered the Rs 370 biryani controversy?

The row erupted after Pranit More uploaded a crowd-work clip from one of his stand-up shows featuring audience member Himanshu Jangra. In the now-viral video, the 23-year-old recounted a date where he spent Rs 370 on a plate of chicken biryani and suggested that he was entitled to physical intimacy in return because of it. The comments drew sharp criticism online, with many questioning not only Jangra's remarks but also More's response, as the comedian laughed along during the exchange and later shared the clip on his social media platforms.

‘He should have taken consent’: Biswajeet’s daughter on the kiss that left Rekha in tears



At the same time, Pallavi was unequivocal that the incident was wrong."It was definitely wrong. It was not right, whether it was done by my father or by anyone else. He should have either refused to do it or obtained Rekha's consent first.

Actor Pallavi Chatterjee has reacted to the controversial kissing scene involving her father, veteran actor Biswajeet, and Rekha during the filming of Anjana Safar. The incident was detailed in Yasser Usman's biography Rekha: The Untold Story, which claimed that the then-15-year-old Rekha was kissed without prior knowledge during a shoot, leaving her distressed.Speaking to journalist Vickey Lalwani, Pallavi said she believes the episode would have been "traumatic for any young girl" and added that her father should have either refused to perform the scene or obtained Rekha's consent beforehand.She, however, suggested that directors in that era sometimes withheld information from actors to capture spontaneous reactions on camera."There were directors who would tell one actor about a scene but would not fully inform the other person because they wanted a particular reaction on camera. I feel that if an incident like this happened, where someone was kissing another person for several minutes in front of the entire unit, it could not have happened without the director's approval. Perhaps the director had said, 'This is the shot I want.' In those days, on-screen kissing was neither common nor widely accepted."Pallavi Chatterjee said Rekha's age would have made the experience even more traumatic.She said, "She was very young then. If something like this happens to you without warning, what are you supposed to do? When you are young and something inappropriate is happening, you often feel awkward even about speaking up. Those times were very different. If a much bigger star was doing something like that, what could you really do?"The actor also re-

vealed that the two families shared a close bond at the time."Rekha used to come to our house and we played together as children. Our families were very close and we visited each other's homes. Perhaps it was even more traumatic for her because there was a family connection. You think of someone as part of your extended family and then something like this happens."

'My father should have obtained Rekha's consent'While defending her father's overall conduct towards women, Pallavi Chatterjee maintained that she did not believe he was solely responsible for what happened.Pallavi said, "My father worked with many women throughout his career and nothing like this was ever reported. He always had great respect for women. If a woman entered a room, he would stand up to greet her. I don't think it was just my father involved in what happened."She added, "I personally feel someone must have told him, 'Do this, I need this kind of footage.' Otherwise, there have been so many successful films where nothing of this sort ever happened."

At the same time, Pallavi was unequivocal that the incident was wrong."It was definitely wrong. It was not right, whether it was done by my father or by anyone else. He should have either refused to do it or obtained Rekha's consent first. She was not prepared for it, and obviously it would have been shocking for a 15- or 16-year-old girl."Pallavi also noted that Rekha later worked with Biswajeet again."Rekha worked with my father again after that incident in Kahte Hain Mujhko Raja," she said.What happened during Anjana Safar?The incident was detailed in Yasser Usman's biography Rekha: The Untold Story. The film was originally meant to be Rekha's debut, although Sawan Bhadon eventually released first. At the time of filming, Rekha was around 15 years old while Biswajeet was 32.According to the biography, a romantic scene was being filmed at Mumbai's Mahboob Studio when director Raja Nawathe allegedly planned to capture Rekha's genuine surprise on camera. The book claims that Rekha was not informed beforehand that a kissing scene would take place."As soon as the director said 'action', Biswajeet took Rekha in his arms and pressed his lips on hers. Rekha was stunned. This kiss had never been mentioned to her. The camera kept rolling; neither was the director ordering 'cut' nor was Biswajeet letting go of her," the book states. The biography claims the kiss continued for nearly five minutes while members of the unit whistled and cheered. Rekha was reportedly left in tears."Her eyes were tightly shut but they were full of tears," the excerpt reads.Biswajeet later said the idea came from director Raja Nawathe, who wanted to capture Rekha's "surprised" expression. The veteran actor maintained that he was following the director's instructions."It was not for my enjoyment, but important for the film. Rekha felt betrayed and was furious," Biswajeet reportedly said.Anjana Safar remained stuck with the Censor Board for nearly a decade and was eventually released in 1979 under the title Do Shikaari. By then, Rekha, Vinod Khanna and Amjad Khan had all become major stars. Despite its cast, the film failed at the box office.