

Hindu groups in US condemn foiled temple shooting plot, call for vigilance

New York: Hindu and Indian organisations have condemned the mass-shooting plot against a temple in the midst of the Navaratri celebrations and warned against rising Hinduphobia.

Soon after the arrest of the alleged plotter was announced by authorities on Wednesday (local time), two Hindu organisations called for vigilance by temples, especially now during the days of sacred observances.Hindu Mandir Empowerment Council (HMEC) asked the temples and devotees to “remain vigilant and promptly report any suspicious activity”.

Three Indian nationals die in house fire in Germany’s Bochum

Berlin: As many as three Indian nationals have been killed in a fire incident in Bochum in Germany’s North Rhine-Westphalia, the Indian Embassy in Germany said on Thursday.

The Indian Embassy said that all three Indian nationals were studying in Germany.

The Embassy said it is in contact with local authorities and the victims’ families and is providing all necessary assistance.German authorities have launched a probe into the incident.“Three Indian nationals (two women and one man) have tragically lost their lives in a fire incident in Bochum, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. All 3 were studying in Germany.

Telangana Rythu Sangham alleges faulty weighing machines at Warangal cotton market

Warangal: Cotton farmers at the Enumamula agricultural market are allegedly being cheated through faulty electronic weighing machines, prompting the Telangana Rythu Sangham to demand action against those responsible and the inspection of all weighing scales at the market.The alleged irregularities came to light when the Warangal District Committee of the Telangana Rythu Sangham visited the market on Thursday.A farmer, Budiga Chandra Reddy, had brought 10 bags of cotton, weighing about 500 kg in total, to a commission shop. Members of the Rythu Sangham noticed discrepancies in the readings displayed by the electronic weighing machine.

Telangana official suspended for negligence after CM Reddy’s warning over power outages

Hyderabad, Oct 15 (IANS) Acting tough on power outages, the government of Telangana has suspended chief engineer of Yadadri Thermal Power Station Stage-I for alleged negligence in power generation. The Telangana official was suspended for negligence after Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy’s warning over power outages

Telangana Power General Corporation Limited (TG Genco) suspended B. Suresh, Chief Engineer, Yadadri Thermal Power Station (YTPS) Stage-I.

Dr S. Harish, Chairman & Managing Director, YG Genco, issued the orders suspending Suresh for exhibiting “gross negligence towards duty”.

According to the order, he committed supervisory lapses in discharging the legitimate duties in the capacity of Chief Engineer towards planning, monitoring, execution of prioritised works in improving generation of power.

The Chief Engineer has been placed under suspension, pending department enquiry.

The action against him came hours after Chief Minister Reddy warned that he would suspend even the Energy Department Special Chief Secretary Navin Mittal and CMD of TG Genco S Harish if they were found negligent in discharging their duties.

At a meeting with officials on Wednesday evening, Chief Minister Reddy took serious note of the power outages. He questioned why power generation was not being carried out at full capacity in YTPS despite coal linkage from Naini and Mahanadi coal blocks.

He warned that officials acting negligently will face strict action and ordered that the reasons for power cuts be reported to him immediately.

He ordered the officials to ensure round-the-clock power supply to prevent crops from withering due to the prevailing rain-deficit conditions in the state.

Chief Minister Reddy emphasised the need to ensure uninterrupted power supply until the harvest is completed. Noting that the next 20 days are crucial for the crops, he cautioned that farmers should not suffer crop losses due to power shortages under any circumstances.



Hyderabad, Oct 15 (IANS) Telangana Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju said on Thursday the impact of El Nino is currently ‘very severe’ and is expected to reach its peak by February 2027.

He noted that the monsoon has been significantly affected due to El Nino, and temperatures have risen by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius.

Talking to media persons after a visit to the Singur Dam, he stated that the government is taking measures to address the current situation.

He revealed that the issue will be discussed extensively during the cabinet meeting scheduled for Thursday evening.

Impact of El Nino very severe, to reach peak by February: Telangana Chief Secretary

The Chief Secretary explained that this visit was conducted to assess the outlook for drinking water availability and the status of standing crops.

He urged all departments to work in coordination to protect the standing crops over the next 15-20 days.

Jaju noted that due to a significant decline in ground-water levels, water may not be available even when electricity is supplied; therefore, he has issued directives to prioritise drinking water needs.

He added that nodal officers are being deployed to every district. Under the supervision of the District Collector, officials from the electricity and agriculture departments will remain accessible to farmers on the ground to prepare appropriate plans for the challenges ahead.

The Chief Secretary began a field visit in Sangareddy district to assess changes in weather patterns caused by the El Nino, and their impact on water availability in the state.

As part of this visit, he inspected water levels at the Singur and Manjira reservoirs. He also held a review meeting with senior officials regarding the implementation of the government’s contingency plans, designed to ensure an uninterrupted supply of drinking water to Hyderabad, as well as the districts of Sangareddy, Kamareddy, Nizamabad, and Medak.

Given the declining water storage in the Singur and Manjira reservoirs, the Chief Secretary directed officials to ensure the efficient use of available water resources and strictly implement proactive measures to meet future drinking water requirements.

He emphasised the need for careful water management -- especially as groundwater levels are falling -- and instructed officials to assess water availability for the next 15 days and take appropriate operational steps accordingly.



Telangana: Dalit outfits accuse Congress of ‘political opportunism’ in Ankita Bhandari case

Hyderabad, Oct 15 (IANS) Four different Dalit organisations have accused the Congress party of practising political opportunism and selective social justice in the Ankita Bhandari case.

In an open letter to the leadership of the Congress party on Thursday, these organisations stated that the Congress party’s intervention in the Ankita Bhandari case raises serious questions about its commitment to constitutional morality and the consistency of its politics.

Separate open letters have been released by SC Hakkula Porata Sangham, Hyderabad, Dr B. R. Ambedkar Volleyball Club, Hyderabad, NBCC SC/ST Employees Welfare Association, New Delhi and SAIL SC & ST Employees Federation, New Delhi.

“The participation of senior Congress leaders in the India Gate protest has brought the issue into the national political arena. Yet, the larger question remains: Is social justice a consistent principle for Congress, or a political instrument invoked when it serves partisan interests?” they asked.

Dalit intellectuals, academics and representatives of social-justice organisations believe that constitutional values must never become tools of political convenience.

“Our objection is not to democratic protest, public scrutiny or institutional accountability. It is to the selective invocation of principles that ought to apply universally. A party that routinely lectures the nation on constitutional morality must demonstrate consistency in its own political conduct,” reads the letter.

“For the Dalit community, this question carries particular significance. Generations of Ambedkarite movements have struggled for equality before the law, institutional accountability and the substantive realisation of social justice. These ideals cannot be reduced to convenient political vocabulary. Dr B.R. Ambedkar’s legacy demands more than rhetorical references to the Constitution. It demands intellectual honesty, principled conduct and equal standards of accountability,” they said.



Hyderabad, Oct 15 (IANS) BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao on Thursday accused Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy of deliberately creating conditions for a coal and power crisis to pave the way for a ₹3,000 crore scam through proposed foreign coal imports.

He charged that the government was weakening Singareni Collieries Company Limited while preparing to facilitate expensive imports through questionable arrangements involving Bhotra Logistics.

In an open letter addressed to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and Union Coal Minister G. Kishan Reddy, Rama Rao demanded that all details relating to the proposed imports, including discussions, tender documents, draft agreements, pricing and the selection of Bhotra

KTR accuses Telangana CM of creating power crisis to facilitate foreign coal scam

Logistics, be made public.

KTR, as the BRS leader is popularly known, alleged that the proposed arrangement could involve commissions of ₹1,500 per tonne, potentially translating into a ₹3,000 crore scam.

He demanded an independent investigation into the proposals and questioned the basis on which Bhotra Logistics was being considered for the assignment. He emphasised that the proposed imports had not yet taken place and insisted that all decisions and financial arrangements be disclosed before the process advances.

The former minister questioned the decline in Singareni’s coal production from approximately 70.02 million tonnes in 2023–24 to around 58 million tonnes in 2025–26. He demanded an explanation for the failure to strengthen domestic production, develop mines and ensure adequate coal supplies despite the predictable rise in electricity demand.

He also sought a comprehensive, institution-wise account of the approximately ₹60,000 crore in outstanding dues reportedly owed to Singareni, asking the government to disclose the amounts due, payments received and pending liabilities.

Referring to Yadadri Thermal Power Station, KTR cited the reported allocation of 14 million tonnes per annum of G9-grade coal from Singareni mines and the supply agreement signed in April 2022. He questioned why domestic supply concerns were not being resolved before foreign imports were proposed.

KTR further demanded transparency in contracts for coal and ash-handling operations at Yadadri and questioned the reported outsourcing of work despite the expertise available within state power utilities. He criticised Union Coal Minister Kishan Reddy for failing to protect Singareni’s interests.

The BRS leader demanded an independent probe into the proposed import arrangements, a white paper on foreign coal procurement, disclosure of all Bhotra Logistics-related dealings, a detailed report on Singareni’s production decline and audited particulars of outstanding dues.He warned that the BRS would strongly oppose any attempt to weaken Singareni, undermine domestic coal resources or impose an unnecessary financial burden on Telangana.He demanded accountability from the state and central governments and called for all relevant documents to be placed in the public domain.



Govt signs Rs 4,106 crore contracts for communication satellite for IAF, heavyweight torpedoes for Navy

New Delhi, Oct 15 (IANS) The Ministry of Defence on Thursday said it has signed contracts worth Rs 4,106 crore for the acquisition of a dedicated communication satellite capability for the Indian Air Force, and Varunastra heavy-weight torpedoes for the Indian Navy.

Both contracts mark a significant step towards advancing the development of domestic defence manufacturing capabilities while promoting self-reliance in critical technologies in line with the government’s ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat’ and ‘Make-in-India’ vision.

The contract for the GSAT-7C satellite, valued at Rs 2,563 crore, was signed with New SpaceIndia Limited, Bengaluru.

According to an official statement, this indigenously designed, developed and manufactured satellite will enhance the secure, resilient and seamless communication capabilities for the assets of the Indian Air Force, thereby strengthening operational effectiveness.

Meanwhile, the contract for Varunastra, worth Rs 1,543 crore, was signed with Bharat Dynamics Limited, Hyderabad.

Varunastra is an indigenous ship-launched anti-submarine torpedo developed by the Naval Science and Technological Laboratory.

"Equipped with advanced manoeuvring capabilities, it is capable of engaging enemy submarines at long ranges, thereby enhancing the anti-submarine warfare capability of the Indian Navy," said the statement.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Watershed moment

India's space journey has reached a historic milestone. The successful launch of Vikram-1, the first orbital rocket developed in the private sector, is a watershed moment because it achieved what is exceptionally rare in the space launch industry: a successful orbital mission on its very first attempt. Most new rockets suffer failures or major anomalies during maiden flights, making its flawless insertion of payloads into a 450-km orbit a remarkable demonstration of engineering maturity, rigorous testing and execution. Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace has now joined a small and elite group of global companies that have successfully developed and launched orbital rockets. India is only the third country, after the United States and China, where a private company has independently placed payloads in orbit. The seven-storey rocket, carrying technology demonstration payloads and postcards, lifted off ISRO's First Launch Pad at Sriharikota and, a little over 15 minutes later, placed its payloads in an orbit roughly 450 km above the Earth. Named 'Aagaman' (arrival), it was the first of two test flights Skyroot plans to do this year before starting commercial launches next year. For nearly six decades, the space sector was entirely in the hands of the government. Every celebrated milestone, from Aryabhata to Chandrayaan-3, every Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) that became the workhorse of global commercial launches, every Mars and Moon mission, bore the unmistakable signature of the Indian state. That monopoly has ended now.

Request to Grant Forest Department Permissions for Gond Kosara High-Level Bridge Construction

“Bambara Sarpanch Bendare Krishnaji Submits Petition to District Collector”“Kumrambheem, Asifabad, District. Reporter "Indian Chronicle "October. 16.”“Wankidi: Bambara Gram Panchayat Sarpanch Bendare Krishnaji has appealed to the District Collector of Komaram Bheem Asifabad district to facilitate the necessary Forest Department permissions for the construction of a high-level bridge on the route to Gond Kosara village in Wankidi mandal. The bridge construction work has been stalled due to objections from the Forest Department, causing difficulties for villagers travelling to and from the village. Sarpanch Bendare Krishnaji brought the issue to the attention of the District Collector and submitted a petition requesting immediate intervention. He explained that the high-level bridge is essential for improving transportation facilities and addressing the long-standing difficulties faced by the people of Gond Kosara village. Although the bridge project has already been sanctioned, the construction work has not progressed due to pending forest clearances. He requested the District Collector to coordinate with the concerned Forest Department officials and facilitate the necessary permissions and



clearance certificate so that the construction work can resume without further delay. Krishnaji stated that completing the bridge would significantly improve connectivity and provide better transportation facilities to the villagers. He urged the district administration to take appropriate steps to resolve the issue and remove the obstacles hindering the project. Deputy Sarpanch Jade Santhosh and ward members Kotnak Mengu, Lohabade Umesh, Soyam Gopal, Soyam Daulatrao, and others participated in the programme. “Village Development Is Our Goal; Resolving Public Issues Is Our Priority!

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA REVENUE (LA) DEPARTMENT									
DISTRICT COLLECTOR, JANGAON FORM-VII DECLARATION									
(See Sub-rule (1) of rule-25 and Section-19(1) of the Act-30/2013)									
Rc.No.B/29/2026 Dist.Collr.File No. G2/396/2026 Gazette No.JN/LA/42/2026					Dated. 15-09-2026. Dated. 21-09-2026. Dated. 22-09-2026.				
Where as it appears to the Government of Telangana / District Collector, Jangaon that a total land to an extent of Ac. 4.33 gts land is required in the limits of Mutharam village of Palakurthi Mandal in Jangaon District for public purpose, namely acquisition of Excavation of 5R of 3R of 7L Distributory of Nashkal Main Canal from KM. 0.000 to KM. 0.850 T.E under JCR DLIP for providing water to Agriculture lands under the Government of Telangana, Collector, Jangaon District, as per U/s 19(1) of the L.A. Act.30/2013.									
Whereas, the said irrigation project is exempted from the provisions of Chapter-II (Social Impact Assessment) and Chapter-II (Special Provision to Safeguard Food Security) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 by virtue of Section 10A of the RFCTLARR Act, as inserted by the RFCTLARR (Telangana Amendment) Act, 2016 (Act 21 of 2017), read with G.O.Ms.No.63, Revenue Department, dated 29.07.2017, published in the Telangana Gazette. Accordingly, the provisions of Chapter-II and Chapter-III of the Act shall not apply to this acquisition.									
Total Nil families are likely to be displaced due to the land acquisition. The Additional Collector (Revenue), Jangaon is appointed as the Administrator for the purpose of Rehabilitation and Resettlement of the affected families.									
Therefore the "DECLARATION" is hereby made that a piece of Land measuring more or less Ac. 4.33 gts under acquisition for the above said project in the limits of Mutharam Village of Palakurthi Mandal in Jangaon District whose detailed description is as following under acquisition.									
SCHEDULE									
5R of 3R of 7L Distributory of Nashkal Main Canal									
Village: Mutharam			Mandal: Palakurthi			District: Jangaon			
Sl. No.	Sy. No.	Classification	Nature of Land	Extent	Name and address of the Perosns Interested	Remarks			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
1	206	Dry	Patta	0.22	Unknown Persons				
2	206	Dry	Patta	0.14	Unknown Persons				
				Total	0.36				
3	207	Dry	Patta	0.11	Unknown Persons				
4	207	Dry	Patta	0.16	Unknown Persons				
5	207	Dry	Patta	0.005	Kunsoth Amru S/o Ganya				
6	207	Dry	Patta	0.16	Unknown Persons				
7	207	Dry	Patta	0.005	Unknown Persons				
8	207	Dry	Patta	0.1875	Unknown Persons				
9	207	Dry	Patta	0.0025	Unknown Persons				
10	207	Dry	Patta	0.05	Unknown Persons				
11	207	Dry	Patta	0.01	Unknown Persons				
12	207	Dry	Patta	0.02	Unknown Persons				
13	207	Dry	Patta	0.07	Unknown Persons				
14	207	Dry	Patta	0.075	Unknown Persons				
				Total	2.055				
15	216	Dry	Assigned	0.07	Dharavath Ramulu S/o Thavura	Details need to be verified			
16	216	Dry	Assigned	0.14	Unknown Persons	Details need to be verified			
17	216	Dry	Assigned	0.095	Podishetti Narayana S/o Somaiah	Details need to be verified			
				Total	0.305				
18	188	Dry	Patta	0.02	Unknown Persons				
19	188	Dry	Patta	0.12	Unknown Persons				
20	188	Dry	Patta	0.11	Unknown Persons				
				Total	0.25				
21	216	Dry	Assigned	0.11	Podishetti Narayana S/o Somaiah	Details need to be verified			
				Total	0.25				
22	189	Dry	Patta	0.05	Podishetti Narayana S/o Somaiah				
				Total	0.05				
Grand Total				4.33					
Trees/Structures									
Village: Mutharam			Mandal: Palakurthi			District: Jangaon			
Sl. No.	Sy. No.	Extent	Name and address of the Perosns Interested	Trees		Structures		Remarks	
				Variety	Number	Type	Plinth area/Number		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1	207	0.1875	Unknown persons			Pipeline	1		
2	207	0.0025	Unknown persons	Teak	5				
3	207	0.05	Unknown persons			Pipeline	1		
4	207	0.02	Unknown persons	Neem	1	Ironsheet Kottam	1		
5	207	0.075	Unknown persons			Pipeline	1		
6	216	0.07	Dharavath Ramulu S/o Thavura			Pipeline	3		
7	216	0.14	Unknown persons	Neem	1	Pipeline	3		
This declaration is made after hearing of objections of persons interested u/s 15 of the L.A.Act.No.30/2013 after verification of objections this declaration is issued. The number of families likely to be resettled due to Land Acquisition is NIL.									
Mines of Coal, Iron-Stone, slate or other minerals lying under the said land or any particulars pertain of the said land, except such parts of the mines and minerals which may be required to be dug or removed or used during the construction phase of the project for the purpose of which the land is being acquired, or not needed.									
A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the Land Acquisition Officer & Special Deputy Collector, LA, R&R, Unit-II, Irrigation Project, Jangaon on any working day.									
Sd/- Special Deputy Collector, LA, R&R Unit-II, Irrigation Projects,Jangaon			Sd/- Addl. Collector, Jangaon			Sd/- District Collector, Jangaon			
DIPR RO.NO: 1027/LA/PP/Advt/Pub/2026-27									

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA REVENUE (LA) DEPARTMENT									
DISTRICT COLLECTOR, JANGAON FORM-VII DECLARATION									
(See Sub-rule (1) of rule-25 and Section-19(1) of the Act-30/2013)									
Rc.No.B/31/2026 Dist.Collr.File No. G2/396/2026 Gazette No.JN/LA/60/2026					Dated. 18-09-2026. Dated. 23-09-2026. Dated. 24-09-2026.				
Where as it appears to the Government of Telangana / District Collector, Jangaon that a total land to an extent of Ac. 5.17 gts land is required in the limits of Dardepalli village of Palakurthi Mandal in Jangaon District for public purpose, namely acquisition of Excavation of 2R of 3R of Minor of 7L Distributory of NashkalMain Canal of ChennurTankfrom KM. 0.000 to KM. 1.200 T.E under JCR DLIP for providing water to Agriculture lands under the Government of Telangana, Collector, Jangaon District, as per U/s 19(1) of the L.A. Act.30/2013.									
Whereas, the said irrigation project is exempted from the provisions of Chapter-II (Social Impact Assessment) and Chapter-III (Special Provision to Safeguard Food Security) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 by virtue of Section 10A of the RFCTLARR Act, as inserted by the RFCTLARR (Telangana Amendment) Act, 2016 (Act 21 of 2017), read with G.O.Ms.No.63, Revenue Department, dated 29.07.2017, published in the Telangana Gazette. Accordingly, the provisions of Chapter-II and Chapter-III of the Act shall not apply to this acquisition.									
Total Nil families are likely to be displaced due to the land acquisition. The Additional Collector (Revenue), Jangaon is appointed as the Administrator for the purpose of Rehabilitation and Resettlement of the affected families.									
Therefore the "DECLARATION" is hereby made that a piece of Land measuring more or less Ac. 5.17 gts under acquisition for the above said project in the limits of Dardepalli Village of Palakurthi Mandal in Jangaon District whose detailed description is as following under acquisition.									
SCHEDULE									
2R of 3R of Minor of 7L Distributory of Nashkal Main Canal of Chennur Tank									
Village: Dardepalli			Mandal: Palakurthi			District: Jangaon			
Sl. No.	Sy. No.	Classification	Nature of Land	Extent	Name and address of the Persons Interested	Remarks			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
1	11	Dry	Patta	0.11	Jalugam Somanarsaiah S/o Somaiah				
2	11	Dry	Patta	0-18.5	Unknown Persons				
			Total	0.29.5					
3	12	Dry	Patta	0-13	Akula Somaiah S/o Venkataiah				
4	12	Dry	Patta	0-09.5	Unknown Persons				
			Total	0-22.5					
5	9	Dry	Patta	0-12	Mamindla Venkanna S/o Mallaiah				
6	9	Dry	Patta	0-07	Jalugam Komuraiah S/o Erra Mallaih				
7	9	Dry	Patta	0-01	Unknown persons				
8	9	Dry	Patta	0-05.5	Unknown persons				
			Total	0-25.5					
9	259	Dry	Patta	0-14	Margam Rama W/o Laxminarayana				
10	259	Dry	Patta	0-06	Unknown persons				
11	259	Dry	Patta	0-14	Immadi Prakash S/o Anjaiah				
			Total	0.34					
12	272	Dry	Patta	0-01.5	Road				
13	272	Dry	Patta	0-07	MD. Ismail S/o Vazeer				
14	272	Dry	Patta	0-03	Road				
15	272	Dry	Patta	0-10	Dasari Ellaiah S/o Somanarsaiah				
16	272	Dry	Patta	0-04	Dasari Sammaiah S/o Abbaiah				
17	272	Dry	Patta	0-25	Goli Ramakka W/o Dandaiah				
			Total	1.10.5					
18	269	Dry	Patta	0-03	Chiluvuru Manjula W/o Ilaih				
19	269	Dry	Patta	0-03	Belli Ashwini W/o harish				
20	269	Dry	Patta	0-13	Belli Narsaiah S/o Somaiah				
21	269	Dry	Patta	0-12	Belli Kumaraswamy S/o Somaiah				
			Total	0.31					
22	329	Dry	Patta	0-06.5	Sriram Sammaiah S/o Malleesh Sriram Suresh S/o Malleesh				
23	329	Dry	Patta	0-03	Belli Rama W/o Narsaiah				
24	329	Dry	Patta	0-03	Belli Manjula W/o Kumaraswamy				
25	329	Dry	Patta	0-10	Pailalanardhan Reddy S/oVeerareddy				
26	329	Dry	Patta	0-01	Belli Harish S/o Narsaiah				
27	329	Dry	Patta	0-00.5	Belli Kumaraswamy S/o Somaiah				
			Total	0.24					
Grand Total				5.17					
Trees/Structures									
Village: Dardepalli			Mandal: Palakurthi			District: Jangaon			
Sl. No.	Sy. No.	Ex tent	Name and address of the Persons Interested	Trees		Structures		Remarks	
				Vari ety	Num ber	Type	Plinth area/ Number		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1	12	0-09.5	Unknown persons	Teek Trees	150	Bore Well	01		
2	9	0-07	lalugam Komuraiah S/o Erra Mallaiah	Toddy Neem Teek Trees	04 01 62	-	-	-	
3	259	0-14	Immadi Prakash S/o Anjaiah	Sarkar Thumma Neem	10 01	-	-	-	
4	272	0-25	Goli Ramakka W/o Dandaiah	Toddy	01	-	-	-	
5	269	0-03	Belli Ashwini W/o Harshih	-	-	Pipe line	01	-	
6	269	0-13	Belli Narsaiah S/o Somaiah	Karanja Thumma	01 01	Small Temple Pipeline	01	-	
7	329	0-10	Paila Janardhan Reddy S/o Veerareddy	-	-	Pipe line	01	-	
This declaration is made after hearing of objections of persons interested u/s 15 of the L.A.Act.No.30/2013 after verification of objections this declaration is issued. The number of families likely to be resettled due to Land Acquisition is NIL.									
Mines of Coal, Iron-Stone, slate or other minerals lying under the said land and/or any particulars pertain of the said land, except such parts of the mines and minerals which may be required to be dug or removed or used during the construction phase of the project for the purpose of which the land is being acquired, or not needed.									
A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the Land Acquisition Officer & Special Deputy Collector, LA, R&R, Unit-II, Irrigation Project, Jangaon on any working day.									
Sd/- Special Deputy Collector, LA, R&R Unit-II, Irrigation Projects,Jangaon				Sd/- Addl. Collector, Jangaon		Sd/- District Collector, Jangaon			
DIPR RO.NO: 1014/LA/PP/Advt/Pub/2026-27									

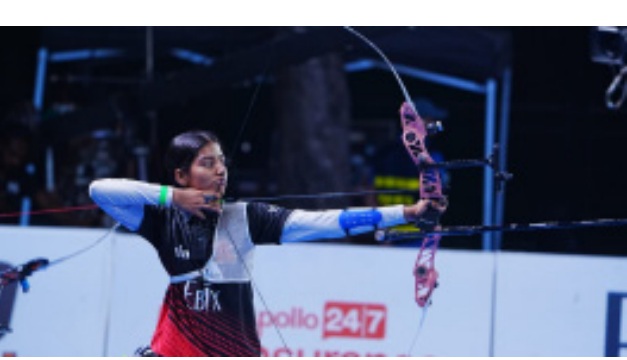
People Should Live in Happiness and Good Health with the Blessings of Goddess Durga

MLA Talasani Srinivas Yadav

“Indian chronicle, Secunderabad,“ October 15 :““ Former Minister and Sanath Nagar MLA Talasani Srinivas Yadav wished that people across the state live in happiness, prosperity and good health with the blessings of the Goddess. On the occasion of Devi Sharannavaratri celebrations, he visited several prominent temples in the constituency on Thursday and offered special prayers.“Talasani Srinivas Yadav visited the Sri Ujjaini Mahankali Temple in the Rangopalpete Division. Temple priests welcomed him with a traditional Poorna Kumbham. He offered special prayers to Goddess Mahankali and also worshipped the deity in Bhavani Mata Alankaram. Later, the temple priests offered him Teertha Prasadam and blessed him with Vedic chants.“In Ameerpet Division, Talasani visited the Hanuman Temple at Kummari Basti and offered prayers to the Goddess in Balatripura Sundari Alankaram. He subsequently worshipped Goddess Kanakadurga. Later, he visited the Balkampet Yellamma Temple, where temple priests accorded him a traditional Poorna Kumbham welcome. He offered prayers to Goddess Yellamma in Gayatri Devi Alankaram. The priests later presented Teertha Prasadam and blessed him with Vedic chants.“Talasani also visited the Katta Maisamma Temple in Begumpet and offered special prayers to Goddess Katta Maisamma and the deity in Sri Raja Rajeshwari Alankaram. Temple priests later offered Teertha Prasadam and blessed him.“Former corporators Attili Mallikarjun Goud, Attili Aruna Goud, Kiranmayi, Namana Sheshukumaari and T. Maheshwari, along with temple chairpersons, executive officers, division BRS presidents, party leaders and activists, among others, were present.



Prithviraj Yodhas Beat Chero Archers in APL



““Hyderabad, October 15 (Indian Chronicle) : Prithviraj Yodhas defeated Chero Archers 5-1 in Season 2 of the Archery Premier League(APL). Sixteen-year-old Gatha Anand Rao Khadake impressed with 58 points out of 60, while Asian Games compound medallist Ganesh Tirumuru scored 59 points. American archer Casey Kaufhold, who replaced Kulkarni Mohod, failed to deliver the expected performance. Mathias Grande sealed the victory for Yodhas by winning the third set 77-74. The defeat marked Chero Archers' third consecutive loss in the league. The APL is being held at People's Plaza in Hyderabad and will conclude on October 18.

Rs 2 Crore Sanctioned for Development of Beerappagadda Goud Crematorium

“PARAMESWAR REDDY HANDS OVER PROCEEDINGS FOR ALLOCATION OF FUNDS



““BEERAPPAGADDA , OCTOBER 15 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):Uppal Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameswar Reddy announced that ?2 crore has been sanctioned for the development of the Goud community crematorium in Beerappagadda Division. He handed over the official proceedings related to the fund allocation to members of the Uppal Goud Sangham.Parameswar Reddy stated that, following the directions of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, substantial funds had already been sanctioned for the development of various crematoriums across the Uppal Assembly constituency.He said Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and District In-charge Minister D. Sridhar Babu were extending special financial support for the development of Uppal constituency. As part of these initiatives, funds were sanctioned for several community crematoriums.“The allocations include ?25 lakh for the Uppal Kummari community crematorium, ?25 lakh for the Uppal Kurma community crematorium, ?25 lakh for the Chilkannagar Christian crematorium, ?25 lakh for the Uppal Brahmin-Vaishya crematorium, and ?25 lakh for the Uppal Reddy community crematorium. In addition, ?72 lakh was sanctioned for the crematoriums at Netaji Nagar and Rajendra Nagar in Ramanthapur.“He further stated that ?2 crore had been allocated for the Uppal Goud community crematorium at Beerappagadda.“Parameswar Reddy said development works were being undertaken in various parts of the Uppal constituency with the support of the state government. He expressed confidence that these initiatives would improve facilities for local communities.Uppal Goud Sangham leaders and members attended the programme.



Goddess Lalitha Devi Blesses Devotees at Sri Oorapochamma Temple

“““RAMANTHAPUR , OCTOBER 15 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):The Sharannavaratri celebrations are being held with great devotion and spiritual fervour at Sri Oorapochamma Temple in Gokhale Nagar, Ramanthapur. As part of the festivities, on the fifth day of the celebrations on Thursday, the presiding deity was adorned as Sri Lalitha Devi and blessed devotees.“A large number of devotees visited the temple and offered special prayers to the Goddess.“The celebrations are being conducted under the leadership of temple chairman K. Harish. Priests Manepalli Rajesh Sharma, Sri Charan and Avinash are performing special pujas and archana rituals as part of the Navaratri festivities. The temple priests announced that the Goddess will be adorned as Sri Saraswati Devi on Friday, October 16. The temple management appealed to devotees to participate in large numbers and seek the blessings of the Goddess.

Excessive Mobile Phone Use Poses Risk of Neck and Back Pain

““Hyderabad, October 15 (Indian Chronicle) : Prolonged travel, pothole-ridden roads, sitting for extended periods in front of laptops, and excessive mobile phone use are contributing to neck and back pain, CARE Hospitals doctors have warned. On the occasion of World Spine Day, observed on October 16, Dr.Randheer Kumar, Clinical Director, Senior Consultant Neurosurgeon, Neurointerventionist and Endoscopic Spine Surgeon at CARE Hospitals, along with Dr.Praveen Goparaju, Senior Consultant in Minimally Invasive and Deformity Spine Surgery at CARE Hospitals, HITEC City, stressed the importance of maintaining proper posture, exercising regularly and taking breaks during long journeys to help prevent spinal problems.



Welfare Schemes Provide Financial Security to Eligible Poor Families - Pinapaka MLA and ST Welfare Committee Chairman

““Bhadradi Kothagudem (Gundala), October 15, Indian Chronicle.““Pinapaka MLA and ST Welfare Committee Chairman Payam Venkateswarlu participated in a programme held at the Rythu Vedika in Gundala mandal for the distribution of smart ration cards and Kalyana Lakshmi-Shaadi Mubarak cheques. On the occasion, he distributed smart ration cards and cheques to eligible beneficiaries.““? Welfare Schemes Provide Financial Support to Poor Families.““MLA Payam Venkateswarlu stated that the welfare schemes implemented by the government are providing financial support to poor and middle-class families. He said the government is striving to ensure that every eligible family receives the benefits of government schemes while working to improve people's living standards.““? Smart Ration Cards to Make Services More Accessible.““He stated that smart ration cards would make access to ration services through the Public Distribution System easier for eligible families. He added that the government's objective is to ensure that every eligible person receives government services and that poor families are provided with financial security.““? Kalyana Lakshmi-Shaadi Mubarak Schemes Support the Marriages of Daughters.““The MLA said the Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak schemes are immensely helpful in reducing the financial burden on poor families during their daughters' marriages. He stated that the government is supporting these families by providing financial assistance to eligible beneficiaries. He further said

that the government is committed to public welfare and rural development. The MLA urged all eligible beneficiaries to make effective use of government welfare schemes. He emphasized that their primary objectives are to provide better services to the public, support the upliftment of poor families, and promote village development.““? Officials and Public Representatives Participate.““The programme was attended by Gundala MRO Sangeetha, MPDO Balaraju, Housing Assistant Engineer Rajesh, AO Venkataramana, MPO Trilok, and the Panchayat Secretary. Other attendees included Bhadradi Kothagudem District Congress Party Vice-President Pomboyina Muthaiah, District Congress Party Secretary SK Khadeer, Mandal Congress President Uke Buchaiah, and Mandal Youth Congress President Dhara Ashok. Also present were Padugonigudem Sarpanch Esam Sanjeeva Rao, Rollagadda Sarpanch Bukya Mangamma, Shembunigudem Sarpanch Esam Sumalatha, Shettupalli Sarpanch Delhi Vasantha Rao, Damarathogu Sarpanch Kalti Krishna Rao, former MPP Chatla Padma, and mandal leaders SK Abdul Nabi, Vankudoth Bikoji, Bukya Srinu, SK Wajid Pasha, SK Kasim, Poleboyina Baburao, Vankudoth Ramesh, SK Ishrar, Bongo Chandrasekhar, and Pallapu Rajesh. Ward members Esam Chandraiah, Jatoth Veeranna, Banoth Narendra, and Boda Venkatram were also present, along with senior leaders, women leaders, Congress Party workers, local public representatives, and others.

UPPAL MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY Lays Foundation Stones for Development Works Worth Rs 3.82 Crore in Charlapalli Division

“““UPPAL, OCTOBER 15 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy laid foundation stones for various development works worth ?3 crore 82 lakh 70 thousand in different colonies of Charlapalli Division under the Uppal Assembly constituency, with the objective of providing improved basic infrastructure to residents.“Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said priority was being given to resolving public grievances and improving roads, drainage systems and sewage management facilities across the colonies. He outlined the details of the proposed works to be undertaken in various localities.“The development works include ?45 lakh in Pedda Charlapalli village, ?26 lakh in VR Colony, ?22 lakh in Mint Colony and Reddy Colony, ?46 lakh in BN Reddy Nagar, ?49 lakh in EC Nagar, ?49 lakh in Doctors Colony and Netaji Nagar, ?49 lakh in BN Reddy Nagar Phase-II, and ?49.70 lakh in BN Reddy Nagar Phase-I. RCC pipeline construction works will also be taken up in Rail Vihar Colony.“The MLA stated that completion of these projects would improve transportation facilities and help address drainage and sewage-related problems in the respective colonies.“He reiterated his commitment to fulfilling promises made to the public and ensuring the overall development of the Uppal constituency. He added that public issues would be identified regularly and necessary development works taken up in phases in coordination with the concerned officials.Officials, BRS leaders, representatives of various colony welfare associations and local residents participated in the programme.



Former President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam's Birth Anniversary Celebrated Grandly in Wankidi

“Programme Held Under the Leadership of Congress Mandal President Gurnule Mengaji““Kumrambheem, Asifabad,District.Reporter "Indian Chronicle"October. 16.““Wankidi: The birth anniversary of former Indian President and Bharat Ratna awardee Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam was celebrated with great respect at the Congress Party office in Wankidi mandal headquarters of Komaram Bheem Asifabad district.The programme was organised under the leadership of Wankidi Congress Mandal President Gurnule Mengaji. Congress leaders and party workers participated in the event, paid floral tributes to Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam's portrait, and remembered his invaluable contributions to the nation, particularly in science and technology.“Speaking on the occasion, the leaders described Dr. Kalam as a renowned scientist who brought international recognition to India and earned the affectionate title of the “People's President.” They said that his journey from a humble family background to the highest constitutional office in the country was an inspiration to everyone.The leaders stated that Dr. Kalam's life teaches students and young people to set ambitious goals and work hard with dedication, discipline, and determination to achieve them.They also recalled his significant contributions to national defence, space research, and scientific and technological development.They called upon everyone to work towards fulfilling his dream of making India a developed nation and encouraged the youth to follow his ideals and actively participate in the country's progress.“The leaders further emphasised the importance of upholding Dr. Kalam's values of patriotism, simplicity, dedication,and service to society.“Those who participated in the programme included: Congress Mandal President Gurnule Mengaji, Vice Presidents Selvutkar Pentu and Kodapa Maruthi, District Minority Secretary Sheikh Azeemuddin, SC Cell Vice President Vadluri Mondaiiah, Town President Danwalkar Kamalesh Banti, official spokesperson Jabore Ganesh, Wankidi SC Cell representative Shivaji,Jade, Prabhakar,Dikonda Mahesh,Samala Ramesh,Chand Pasha,Upre Dharmu,Moharle Vishwanath,Jade Soma,Durgam Hamsaraj,Mengaji, and other Congress Party leaders and workers.



Nipah in India: Why Kerala and West Bengal face the same virus but different outbreak risks

In January 2026, two healthcare workers at a private hospital in Barasat, West Bengal, tested positive for Nipah virus infection. Investigators traced the outbreak to a 55-year-old woman who had consumed raw date palm sap purchased from a local vendor — a well-known foodborne spillover route also seen in Bangladesh. She later died of acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) and multi-organ failure.Both healthcare workers had direct, unprotected exposure to the patient — one during routine nursing care and the other while performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Genomic sequencing showed a 99% match with the Bangladesh genotype 2022 strains, confirming hospital-acquired transmission.

The outbreak highlights a key finding from a recent Nature report, 'Two geographies, one virus: What recurrent Nipah spillover in India reveals.' It says that although the Nipah virus circulates in the same bat reservoir, outbreaks in India follow two distinct epidemiological patterns in West Bengal and Kerala."To understand Nipah virus in India, it is important to look beyond virology and consider ecological factors and the strength of health systems in shaping outbreak outcomes," said Dr Pragya Yadav, corresponding author of the report and Director-in-Charge of the National Institute of One Health, Nagpur. According to Dr Yadav, Kerala experiences more frequent spillover events, but outbreaks are usually contained to single cases or small clusters because of strong surveillance and a One Health approach. In contrast, West Bengal has seen fewer spillovers, but these have historically been associated with healthcare-related transmission. Enhanced surveillance was critical in detecting the recent 2026 outbreak. "The examples of Kerala and West Bengal show that the same virus, maintained in a common reservoir, can produce very different epidemiological outcomes depending on local ecological conditions, human behaviour and health-system preparedness," authors Deepak Y. Patil, Rima R. Sahay, Sreelekshmy Mohandas and Dr Yadav have written in the report. Nipah, a highly pathogenic virus carried primarily by Pteropus fruit bats, was first identified during a large outbreak in Malaysia in 1998-99. Since then, repeated spillover events have occurred across South and Southeast Asia, often with high fatality rates and no specific treatment available. Although the bat reservoir is widely distributed across India, recurring human infections have been reported mainly in West Bengal and Kerala. These states differ markedly in ecology, population density, healthcare capacity and human-animal interactions, yet both continue to experience Nipah spillovers. West Bengal reported outbreaks in 2001 and 2007, both epidemiologically linked to Bangladesh, and again in 2026. Kerala has recorded recurring spillovers since 2018, with outbreaks in 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023, 2024 and 2025. Most have been limited to isolated cases or small clusters that were rapidly contained.

India's first Nipah outbreak occurred in Siliguri, West Bengal, in 2001 and remains a classic example of hospital-acquired transmission. The outbreak exposed major gaps in infection prevention, including limited awareness of the disease, inadequate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and poor infection-control practices. The outbreak resulted in 66 cases with a case fatality rate of 68.2%. Nearly 75% of infections occurred among healthcare workers and hospital visitors. A smaller outbreak in Nadia district in 2007 caused five deaths and was linked to consumption of contaminated palm-derived products. Before the 2026 outbreak, West Bengal had already established proactive surveillance for Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) and Acute Respiratory Illness (ARI)/ARDS through a network of 10 Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratories (VRDLs). According to the report, this surveillance system enabled rapid identification of the two infected healthcare workers — a significant improvement over the reactive response seen during the 2001 outbreak. Following confirmation, authori-

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 blocks 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.

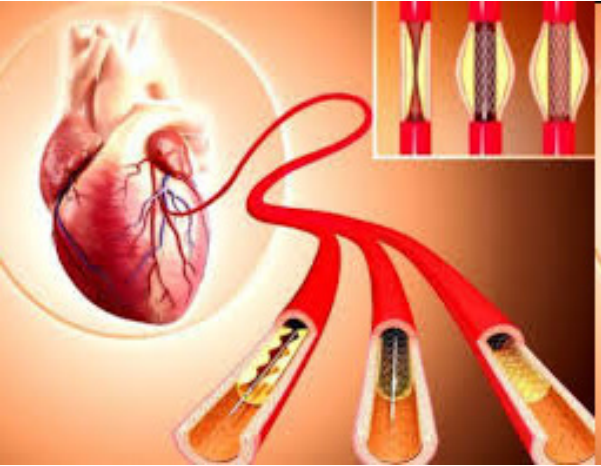
One of the biggest misconceptions surrounding recurrent heart attacks is that they are always caused by a failed stent. In reality, most are not. A small proportion of patients develop problems within the treated segment itself. The artery can gradually narrow again, a process known as restenosis. In 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



ties deployed a Mobile BSL-3 laboratory and conducted extensive contact tracing. All 196 identified contacts tested negative, helping prevent further spread. Kerala, meanwhile, has invested heavily in Nipah preparedness since its first outbreak in 2018. Routine triage systems, rapid isolation protocols, intensive healthcare worker training on PPE use, and enhanced hospital surveillance during the COVID-19 pandemic strengthened infection-control practices. "These measures have increased the capacity of healthcare facilities to identify suspected cases quickly, reduce exposure and prevent further transmission within hospitals," the report noted. As a result, apart from the large 2018 outbreak and the 2023 cluster, Kerala has reported virtually no hospital-acquired transmission during subsequent outbreaks. Following the 2024 spillovers, a 17-laboratory Virus Diagnostic and Research Laboratory network was established across Kerala and West Bengal for SARI/ARI surveillance, further strengthening early detection and outbreak containment.

Scientists say spillover events are strongly influenced by ecological and environmental factors. Human-driven changes such as deforestation, habitat loss and increasing intrusion into biodiversity-rich areas are major drivers of zoonotic outbreaks. These changes affect bat behaviour and increase opportunities for contact between bats and humans. In Kerala, Nipah outbreaks have consistently occurred between April and September, when hot, humid conditions coincide with fruiting seasons. During this period, bats frequently feed near human settlements, increasing the likelihood of contamination of fruits and surfaces. Bat colonies are also commonly found within residential compounds across Kerala, creating opportunities for direct and indirect human exposure. West Bengal presents a different risk profile. Bat roosts are typically located in peri-urban areas, and spillovers are more closely linked to the harvesting and consumption of fresh or fermented date palm sap. The risk peaks during the sap-harvesting season between November and April. The report cautions that attempts to reduce perceived risk by disturbing bat populations or removing roosting trees can sometimes worsen the problem by dispersing bats and expanding the geographic range of exposure. These patterns suggest that Nipah spillovers are not random events but are driven by predictable ecological and human factors. Why surveillance must move beyond outbreak response

The report argues that preparedness must extend beyond reacting to outbreaks after they occur. Continuous monitoring of both human populations and animal reservoirs can provide early warning signals. Surveillance for symptoms such as respiratory distress and encephalitis can help healthcare facilities identify suspected cases quickly, enabling timely isolation and rapid containment. The authors also recommend targeted public-awareness campaigns in high-risk regions. In Kerala, messaging should focus on avoiding fallen fruits, especially those with bite marks or signs of partial consumption by animals. In West Bengal's date palm sap-producing districts, public health efforts should prioritise covering sap-collection pots with bamboo skirts — a low-cost intervention proven effective in Bangladesh — and discouraging the consumption of raw sap during winter months, when viral shedding by bats is highest. While such measures may not be able to eliminate the virus, they can be substantially reduced through strong surveillance, ecological awareness and public health preparedness.



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

Tata Memorial study finds radiation cuts bladder cancer recurrence risk by over 50%

A major clinical trial led by Tata Memorial Hospital (TMH), Mumbai, and conducted across four Indian cancer centres over eight years has found that radiation therapy after bladder removal surgery can reduce the risk of cancer returning to the pelvis by more than half. The findings of the Bladder Adjuvant Radiotherapy (BART) trial were recently published in the 'Journal of Clinical Oncology,' one of the world's leading cancer research journals. "When bladder cancer recurs in the pelvis, treatment options are limited and survival is often measured in months. Our study shows that radiation after bladder removal surgery can significantly reduce the risk of pelvic recurrence with manageable side effects," said Dr Vedang Murthy, professor, Department of Radiation Oncology, Tata Memorial Centre, and lead investigator of the BART trial. A difficult cancer to treat

Bladder cancer is among the most difficult and expensive cancers to diagnose and treat. According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), it is the ninth most common cancer worldwide. More than six lakh people were diagnosed with the disease globally in 2022. In India, data from the Global Cancer Observatory (2022) estimates around 22,548 new cases and 12,353 deaths annually, making it the country's 17th most common cancer. The disease disproportionately affects men, with tobacco consumption among the major risk factors. Muscle-invasive bladder cancer is a particularly aggressive form of the disease. Standard treatment typically involves chemotherapy followed by surgical removal of the bladder and surrounding organs, including the prostate in men or uterus in women, along with nearby lymph nodes. Patients then undergo reconstructive procedures to create an alternative pathway for urine after bladder removal. "Patients go through extensive treatment, yet nearly two-thirds develop recurrent disease within three years," said Dr Murthy. "Some recurrences occur in distant organs such as the lungs or bones. However, in roughly a quarter of high-risk patients, the cancer returns in the pelvis where the bladder was originally located. These relapses are especially devastating because there are very few effective treatment options once they occur. This is the challenge we set out to address." Radiation cuts recurrence risk

The BART trial enrolled 153 patients, who had undergone surgery for bladder cancer. Half the participants



received radiation therapy to the pelvis after surgery, while the remaining patients were placed under observation. "The results were clear. Radiation reduced the risk of cancer returning to the pelvis by more than 50 per cent," Dr Murthy said. "This provides strong evidence that radiation can prevent local recurrence in high-risk patients." He added that advances in radiation technology have made treatment more precise and safer. In the trial, fewer than five per cent of patients experienced severe side effects, while most treatment-related symptoms were temporary and improved after therapy ended. Alternative to immunotherapy The significance of the study extends beyond India. While immunotherapy drugs such as nivolumab and pembrolizumab have shown benefits in reducing recurrence, their high cost remains a major barrier in many parts of the world. "Immunotherapy has demonstrated meaningful improvements in disease-free survival among high-risk bladder cancer patients, particularly in developed healthcare systems. However, these drugs are prohibitively expensive for most patients, not only in India but across Asia, Africa and Latin America," said Dr Murthy.

"When immunotherapy is unavailable or unaffordable, our research shows that radiation can offer an effective, safe and relatively affordable alternative to reduce recurrence and potentially improve survival." Radiation therapy typically requires patients to visit a treatment centre five days a week for about six weeks. While this can be logistically demanding, the treatment is available at most cancer centres across India. Dr Murthy emphasised that patients should have detailed discussions with their radiation oncology team before starting treatment. "It is important to understand the expected benefits, possible bowel-related side effects and whether radiation is the best option in a patient's specific situation," he said.

Eating oats every day? A dietitian reveals mistakes that could cancel their benefits

Oats have earned a reputation as one of the healthiest breakfast foods and for good reason. They're rich in fibre, particularly beta-glucan, which supports heart health, improves cholesterol levels and helps keep you full for longer. Yet despite their health halo, many people consume oats in a way that doesn't deliver the benefits they're hoping for. At the same time, oat milk has become a trendy substitute for dairy, often marketed as a healthier alternative. The reality is a little more complicated. One of the biggest mistakes people make is treating oats as a carbohydrate-only meal. A plain bowl of oatmeal cooked with water may seem healthy, but it lacks enough protein and healthy fats to keep you satisfied for long. This often leads to hunger within a couple of hours and increased cravings later in the day. The oats plus bowl

The right way to have oats is to build a balanced meal around them. Think of oats as the carbohydrate component of your breakfast rather than the entire meal. Add a quality protein source such as Greek yogurt, milk, protein powder, eggs on the side, or a handful of nuts and seeds. This combination slows digestion, stabilizes blood sugar levels, and keeps you energized for longer. For example, instead of having a bowl of plain oats with honey, try oats cooked with milk, topped with chia seeds, nuts, and some berries. The added protein, fibre, and healthy fats make the meal far more balanced and satisfying. Another common mistake is turning oats into a dessert. Many packaged oat products are loaded with sugar, flavoured syrups, chocolate chips and artificial flavourings. While they may contain oats, they're often no better than sugary breakfast cereals. If your oatmeal tastes like dessert, chances are it has lost much of its nutritional advantage. The goal should be to keep added sugars minimal and focus on naturally nutrient-dense toppings. Cinnamon, fruits, nuts, seeds, and unsweetened cocoa powder can add flavour without causing a dramatic blood sugar spike.

Watch the portion size Portion size also matters. Oats are healthy, but they're still a calorie-containing food. More isn't always better. For most adults, a serving of around 40-60 grams of dry oats is sufficient, especially when paired with protein and healthy fats. Eating a giant bowl of oats under the assumption that it's "healthy" can easily lead to consuming more calories than intended.

What about oat milk?

Oat milk has exploded in popularity over the last few years. It's creamy, convenient and often marketed as a sustainable and healthy dairy alternative. But if you're



choosing oat milk because you think it's nutritionally superior to regular milk, you may want to reconsider. The first issue is protein. Dairy milk naturally contains high-quality protein that supports muscle maintenance, recovery, satiety and overall health. Oat milk, on the other hand, is primarily a carbohydrate-based beverage. Most commercial oat milk products contain very little protein compared to dairy milk. So, if you're replacing milk with oat milk in your coffee, smoothies, or breakfast, you're often reducing the overall protein quality of your diet. The second issue is processing. To create oat milk, oats are broken down into a liquid form through processing that converts some of their starch into simpler sugars. This is one reason why many oat milk products can have a sweeter taste despite containing little or no added sugar. While this doesn't automatically make oat milk unhealthy, it does mean that it's not nutritionally equivalent to eating whole oats. Additionally, many commercial oats milk products contain added oils, stabilizers, gums, and flavour enhancers to improve texture and shelf life. Again, these ingredients aren't necessarily harmful, but they move the product further away from the simplicity and nutritional profile of whole oats.

This doesn't mean oat milk is bad. For people with lactose intolerance, dairy allergies, vegan preferences, or ethical reasons for avoiding dairy, oat milk can be a useful option. The problem arises when it's marketed as a nutritional upgrade for everyone. If your goal is better health, improved body composition, greater satiety, or higher protein intake, switching from milk to oat milk is rarely the game-changing solution. In many cases, it may actually make your diet less filling and less protein-rich. When consumed correctly, oats can be one of the most effective and affordable breakfast options available. But like most foods, their benefits depend less on the ingredient itself and more on how you use it. And if you're looking for better nutrition, the answer is usually not found in a trendy milk alternative, it's found in building a balanced diet.

Alia Bhatt shares her 'beauty essential': 'Saw my score was above 85'

Alia Bhatt, 33, recently spoke about her beauty essential, which, no prizes for guessing, is... "Sleep," she told The Hollywood Reporter India in a conversation on the sidelines of Cannes Film Festival. Laughing out loud, she admitted to sleeping on her flight from Mumbai to France. "I felt so proud when I woke up. I have been tracking my sleep all the time. I woke up and saw my sleep score was above 85. I was like, 'Wow...on a flight...that's amazing,'" she said. Dr Aniket Mule, consultant, internal medicine, KIMS Hospitals, Thane, said quality sleep is not just about feeling rested; it is a critical physiological process. "During sleep, the body repairs and recovers in various ways, including hormonal regulation, immune function, metabolic balance, and cognitive restoration. Even one or two nights of poor sleep can impact concentration, mood, energy levels, and daytime performance." Sleep also directly affects stress hormones like cortisol. "When sleep is frequently disrupted or insufficient, cortisol levels may stay high, leading to fatigue, irritability, headaches, poor appetite control, and lower productivity," added Dr Mule. Air travel usually disrupts sleep. Why does the body struggle to rest properly during flights? Air travel can disrupt the body's circadian rhythm,

the internal biological clock that regulates sleep-wake cycles. According to Dr Mule, factors such as cabin pressure, dehydration, limited movement, noise, and time zone changes can reduce sleep quality. Are sleep trackers medically useful? Sleep trackers can help raise awareness about sleep habits, especially for people with irregular schedules, high work stress, or too much screen time. "They help individuals identify patterns such as sleep duration, interruptions, and consistency." However, the score itself should not be seen as a diagnosis. "Clinically, we focus more on whether a person wakes up feeling refreshed, maintains steady energy throughout the day, and avoids excessive daytime sleepiness. A good score is encouraging, but overall sleep quality and daily functioning matter more," Dr Mule said. Long flights may also increase physical fatigue and disrupt normal hormone cycles, especially when people are already sleep-deprived before traveling. "That is why many passengers either find it hard to sleep at all or wake up feeling tired, even after several hours on board." What are the most common signs that someone is not getting adequate sleep? Persistent fatigue, trouble concentrating, frequent headaches, irritability, low productivity, daytime drowsiness, and reliance on caffeine are common warning

3 students killed after train rams school van in Bengal's Murshidabad



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Three school students and a cyclist have died after a passenger train rammed a school van in West Bengal's Murshidabad district early on Friday. Four people were critically injured in the incident at Gobindpur railway gate. According to police and eyewitnesses, the tragedy unfolded

moments after the Howrah-bound Nabadwip Dham Express passed through the area. A police officer said the railway crossing was shut when the express train passed. Soon after, it was opened even though a passenger train was scheduled to pass next. The driver of the van carrying school students spotted the open crossing and tried to drive across the tracks. At the same time, a cyclist tried to cross the tracks. "The Nimtita-Katwa local train, hurtling at high speed, rammed the school van," said the police officer.

The impact crumpled the vehicle, flung it to the side of the tracks, and the children were trapped inside. Three school students from Gobindpur village and the cyclist died on the spot. The cyclist has been identified as 50-year-old Jamshed Sheikh. The screams of the children trapped in the mangled van alerted locals and they started making attempts to rescue them. Soon after, police personnel from the Baharampur police station joined in. Three students and the van's driver, who have suffered serious injuries, were rushed to the Murshidabad Medical College and Hospital. The bodies of the dead have been sent for autopsy.

Akali Dal appeals to PM to announce reopening of Kartarpur Corridor

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal has urged PM Modi to use his Punjab visit to announce the reopening of the Kartarpur Corridor and resume trade via the Attari-Wagah border. SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal has urged PM Modi to use his Punjab visit to announce the reopening of the Kartarpur Corridor and resume trade via the Attari-Wagah border. Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Thursday appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to announce the reopening of the Kartarpur Corridor during his visit to Punjab on Friday. Badal also called for opening the Attari-Wagah border for trade with Pakistan.

The Kartarpur Corridor connects Dera Baba Nanak in Punjab's Gurdaspur district to the Darbar Sahib gurdwara at Kartarpur in Pakistan's Narowal district has remained shut since May 7 last year, when the Indian armed forces carried out pre-dawn strikes on terror hideouts in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir under Operation Sindoor in response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack. Chairing a meeting of the party's core committee and constituency in-charges, Badal also demanded that a special package be announced for Punjab to ensure development, alleging that the AAP government had left the state "bankrupt", along with a legal guarantee of MSP for crops. At the meeting, the Akali Dal decided to form a committee to finalise SAD's manifesto for the 2027 Punjab elections. The party said it would treat the manifesto as a legal document and implement it at the first Cabinet meeting if it comes to power in Punjab. The Akali Dal also decided to prepare a 'chargesheet' against the AAP government, which would "expose how it looted Punjab and its resources and presided over the complete collapse of law and order and economy". According to senior Akali leader Daljit Singh Cheema, it was also decided that Sukhbir Badal would tour



the constituencies that suffered huge crop losses and damage to houses and infrastructure. "The decision was taken after it was brought to Badal's attention that the AAP government did not learn any lesson from last year's devastating floods, triggered by its failure to undertake flood protection works," Cheema said.

The Akali Dal claimed that similar mismanagement continued this year as well, with the AAP not even providing compensation for crop losses due to the floods. With the AAP not undertaking any flood prevention measures, a major catastrophe can occur in case of heavy rain this year as well, the party claimed. Cheema said the party would launch a movement â€• 'Apna Punjab Aap Bachaiye' â€• under which Sukhbir Badal would visit the flood-prone areas, interact with people and take up flood protection works, wherever needed. The SAD leadership also decided to form committees to organise rallies to mark the sacrifice of Karnail Singh Isru, a Punjabi leader who was killed during the Goa Liberation Movement in 1955, on August 15, the martyrdom day of Harchand Singh Longowal on August 20, and 'Rakhar Punya' at Baba Bakala on August 28.

Maratha quota: Can a politically dominant community be 'backward'? Bombay HC examines



Two weeks after losing their only son when a tree crushed his school van, Vihan Srivastava's parents speak about rebuilding their lives, seeking accountability and carrying forward his dream of becoming a cricketer.

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Have Marathas been left out of the country's development and can they be considered socially and educationally backward? The question has landed before the Bombay High Court (HC) as the State of Maharashtra defends the constitutional validity of the Maharashtra State Reservation for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) Act, 2024, which grants 10 per cent reservation to the Maratha community in the education sector and government jobs.

During hearings on a batch of pleas challenging the 2024 law, a three-judge bench of Acting Chief Justice Ravindra V Ghuge and Justices NJ Jamadar and Sandeep V Marne asked whether Marathas, arguably Maharashtra's most politically influential community for decades — having produced scores of chief ministers and ministers — can be considered "out of the mainstream of national life" — one of the factors to consider when examining whether exceptional circumstances exist to breach the 50 per cent reservation ceiling. To this, the state argued that the political prominence of a few individuals cannot determine the backwardness of an entire community. Marathas' long-standing reservation demand

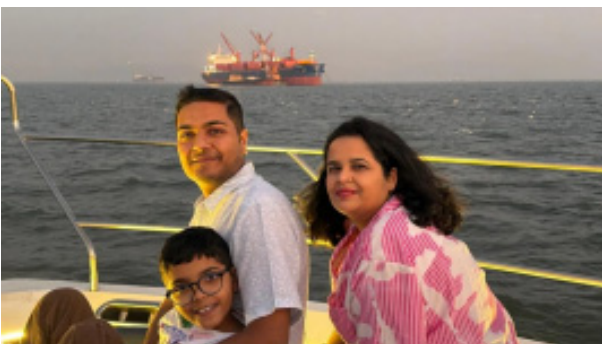
Marathas' decades-long demand for reservation in educational institutions and jobs, often resulting in protests and violence, is one of the state's politically sensitive issues. Even though the community constitutes nearly one-third of Maharashtra's population and has had a significant presence in the state's politics and cooperative sectors, supporters of the quota demands have argued that the division of landholdings and agrarian distress over the years have eroded prosperity among middle-class and lower middle-class Marathas. Why did the last two Maratha quota laws fail?

The State of Maharashtra has twice enacted laws to reserve seats for Marathas, but both later failed on the floor

of the court. The Bombay HC first stayed the first Maratha quota ordinance in 2014. Subsequently, Maharashtra enacted the SEBC Act, 2018, based on the findings of the Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission (MSBCC), granting a 16 percent quota to Marathas in jobs and education. In June 2019, the Bombay HC upheld the SEBC Act, 2018, but reduced the quota from 16 per cent to 12 percent in education and 13 percent in public employment. Two years later, the Supreme Court's Constitution bench struck down the law, saying Maharashtra had failed to establish "existence of extraordinary situation and exceptional circumstances" to breach the 50 percent reservation ceiling laid down in the Indra Sawhney case. The Supreme Court observed: "The Marathas are a dominant forward class and are in the mainstream of national life." The new law for Maratha reservation Three years later, the Maharashtra legislature passed a fresh law, again based on the MSBCC's findings.

A batch of PILs and writ petitions subsequently challenging the "unconstitutional" 2024 law and the Shukre Commission before the HC argued that Maharashtra's reservation, which earlier stood at 52 percent, would rise to 72 percent with the addition of the 10 percent quota for the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) and the 10 percent Maratha quota. In March 2024, the HC stated that applications for admissions and job advertisements availing the law's benefit would be subject to further orders. The question of Marathas' political prominence and their backwardness During hearings, when questioned about the political dominance of the Marathas in Maharashtra, Advocate General (AG) Milind Sathe, representing the state, argued that their political presence "cannot take away the fact that the Maratha community as a whole in the state is backward." "The ones who have achieved will be excluded by the concept of creamy layer... Because the larger community is still backward," he added. Justice Jamadar then questioned whether the overwhelming legislative representation of the Marathas satisfied the 'mainstream of national life' test. "The 2014 ruling refers to nearly 150 of 288 MLAs from the Maratha community at that point of time... If nearly 150 MLAs belong to one community, and a larger share of that community will be replicated in the Council of Ministers, can still you argue that this is out of the mainstream of national life?" The judge also noted that the state must establish both social backwardness and exceptional circumstances to justify breaching the 50 percent ceiling. "You have to cross this impediment for more than 50 percent reservation. It is not just the adequacy of representation but also about the social backwardness to show the community is out of the mainstream of national life." Sathe said political representation cannot determine backwardness, arguing that the relevant tests are backwardness, adequacy of representation in public employment under Article 16(4) (reservation for backward class) of Constitution, and the existence of extraordinary circumstances to cross the 50 percent ceiling. Drawing comparison with the office-bearers from SC/ST communities, he argued that individual advancement cannot determine the status of an entire community. "In the case of SCs and STs also, there are a large number of people at the top of the social hierarchy, including political hierarchies, starting from the President of India, etc. downwards. The test is not based on whether a member of the community is a President, Prime Minister, Governor or a Chief Minister, the test is for the larger segment of the society."

'We have no purpose left': Parents of 11-year-old killed in Mumbai tree collapse seek legal action



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Chembur tree collapse, BMC fresh inquiry, Chembur tree accident, Mumbai tree collapse, BMC probe, Vihan tree collapse, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, Mumbai civic body, Chembur road work, Mumbai Mayor Ritu Tawde, Ganesh Khankar, tree collapse investigation, Mumbai civic news Vihan Srivastava and his parents, Juhi and Gaurav Srivastava. "Everything in our life was centred around our son. We planned our daily routine around him, his school and even our holidays. With him gone, we are repurposing the objective of our life." Two weeks after 11-year-old Vihan Srivastava was killed when a tree fell on his school van in Chembur, his parents say they are struggling to rebuild a life that revolved around their only child. Even as the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has ordered a fresh inquiry into the incident, the family says the civic body's first report has only deepened their grief.

Calling the findings of the initial inquiry "shocking" and "unacceptable", the family has demanded an independent probe and warned that it will move court if accountability is not fixed. "When the incident happened, the inquiry committee was formed swiftly and we were relieved to see some quick response. However, the report has shifted the entire onus on the contractors. Even though the department was responsible for not taking adequate measures, there has been no action against anyone. We are in shock and angry," Vihan's father, Gaurav Srivastava, told The Indian Express.

Chembur tree collapse, BMC fresh inquiry, Chembur tree accident, Mumbai tree collapse, BMC probe, Vihan tree collapse, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, Mumbai civic body, Chembur road work, Mumbai Mayor Ritu Tawde, Ganesh Khankar, tree collapse investigation, Mumbai civic news "Vihan dreamt of becoming a cricketer. He loved the new generation of cricketers. He not only watched matches but closely followed the pre- and post-match discussions. He loved sports and was equally inclined towards academics," Gaurav said. Earlier this week, the BMC's three-member inquiry committee gave a clean chit to the civic roads

'ISKCON can bring peace': CM Suwendu Adhikari reiterates veg midday meals in Kolkata schools



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Reiterating the state government's decision to involve ISKCON in the school midday meal programme, Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Thursday said that the organisation has had the experience of ensuring quality nutrition for children and that the government hopes to work with it beyond politics. Speaking to the media after attending the ISKCON Kolkata Rath Yatra, where he inaugurated the festival and joined monks in the celebration, Adhikari said, "ISKCON contributes majorly to health, education, and nutrition. We hope to work with them beyond politics. This organisation can only bring peace." Adhikari said ISKCON would begin distributing midday meals in schools in Kolkata from August 1 before extending the programme to Nadia district and subsequently to the rest of the state. "The objective of the school midday meal programme is not merely to provide food but to ensure proper nutrition for children. Providing a good, nutritious meal is extremely important. The students who depend on the midday meal in our schools largely come from middle-class, lower middle-class and economically weaker families. Most children from affluent families do not depend on this scheme. Therefore, nutritious food is essential to address malnutrition," he said.

'Durga Puja will be peaceful': BJP chief Samik Bhattacharya flags 'radicalisation', draws Bangladesh parallel

Raising concerns over what he termed "tremendous radicalisation" in some districts of West Bengal, state BJP president Samik Bhattacharya drew parallels with neighbouring Bangladesh, saying that this year's Durga Puja will be celebrated peacefully and vowed to restore the sanctity of the festival. Speaking at the Khuti Puja (worship of the pole) for Durga Puja at Kolkata's College Square, Bhattacharya said, "In Bangladesh, the hands of Durga idols are broken and the ghat (sacred pot) is taken away. There has been tremendous radicalisation in some districts in West Bengal which is why it seems like Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, DJ music is blasted right after playing Durga Puja songs. This happens in Murshidabad too. But I want to tell the people of Bengal that this time puja will be held peacefully across the state." Claiming that religious fundamentalism has reached its peak in Bengal, Bhattacharya said, "There are diktats similar to those in Bangladesh. We are hearing that in several places in Bengal, people are being told that they can light lamps but cannot blow conch shells, or that they can cremate bodies but cannot chant 'Haribol' during funeral processions." Recalling the father-son murder during Waqf protests in Murshidabad last year, Bhattacharya said, "We remember how Haragobinda Das

and gardens departments while imposing a Rs 7 lakh penalty on the contractor and consultant executing road works around the tree. The panel concluded that excavation around the tree had weakened its roots, leading to the collapse. Following public outrage, the civic body has now ordered a fresh inquiry. Seeking an independent probe, Gaurav said the family would consider legal action if responsibility was not fixed. "If things don't move in the right direction, we will take legal action," he said, adding that no BMC official has approached the family since the day of the accident. On June 30, Vihan was returning home from Universal High School with 11 other students when a large peepal tree collapsed onto his school van on Road No. 11 in Chembur's Subhash Nagar. While most of the children escaped unharmed, four were injured and Vihan suffered fatal head injuries. For the Srivastavas, every day since has been a reminder of the absence of their only son. "We had recently travelled to Singapore and had already started planning our next trip. Everything we did revolved around him. Now we are trying to repurpose the objective of our life," Gaurav said. Sant Khare, a relative who flew in from London after the accident, said the family's grief continues to surface in the smallest moments. Chembur tree collapse, BMC fresh inquiry, Chembur tree accident, Mumbai tree collapse, BMC probe, Vihan tree collapse, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, Mumbai civic body, Chembur road work, Mumbai Mayor Ritu Tawde, Ganesh Khankar, tree collapse investigation, Mumbai civic news The family now plans to sponsor cricket coaching and education for children from underprivileged backgrounds. "His parents keep looking at the time and thinking that by now he would be at school or would have returned home. They had only one son and wanted to do everything for him. They feel they have no purpose left," he said.

Yet, amid the grief, the family has decided that Vihan's memory should live on through a cause he would have loved. "Vihan dreamt of becoming a cricketer. He loved the new generation of cricketers. He not only watched matches but closely followed the pre- and post-match discussions. He loved sports and was equally inclined towards academics," Gaurav said. The family now plans to sponsor cricket coaching and education for children from underprivileged backgrounds. "We are still reeling from the shock, but we are drawing strength from our friends and family. We hope to carry forward Vihan's dream of becoming a cricketer by supporting children who share that ambition," he added. Welcoming the BMC's decision to order a fresh inquiry, Khare said the family would wait to see whether it leads to meaningful accountability. "We welcome this move of the BMC rejecting the report and calling for a fresh inquiry. However, we are waiting for details such as the composition of the inquiry committee, its timeline and when the report will be made public before deciding our further course," he said.

Hitting out at the previous Trinamool Congress government, Adhikari alleged that the midday meal scheme had witnessed several instances of corruption in recent years. "The kind of allegations of corruption that surfaced in the state's midday meal programme over the last few years are extremely unfortunate. Irregularities involving children's food are nothing short of a sin. In the coming days, ISKCON will discharge this responsibility and ensure that our children receive better quality nutritious meals. That is our duty," he said. The Chief Minister's remarks came against the backdrop of the state's decision to involve ISKCON in the midday meal programme, which has triggered a debate, with sections of society and public health experts raising concerns over the absence of eggs in the menu and its possible impact on children's nutrition. Speaking on the issue of providing Rs 5 lakh to the Rath Yatra committees, Adhikari said, "The money we have given is nothing but just a contribution. There are several old Rath committees that do not have the money to repair the chariots. So the funding is just a contribution to preserve the state's heritage."

"Srila Prabhupada (founder of ISKCON) played a key role in globalising the Rath Yatra and Indian cultural heritage across over 100 countries. Whoever is the Chief Minister of West Bengal comes here. I feel blessed as both a nationalist and a Sanatani, to be kicking off this Yatra in Kolkata, awaited by thousands of devotees, and performing the aarti of Radha Madhav," Adhikari said, adding, "Our government is going to have a Heritage Commission and his house should be declared heritage site." Adhikari took part in the ISKCON Rath Yatra celebrations for the first time after assuming office. Before kicking off the yatra, Adhikari was seen laying flower petals before the chariot and then sweeping the road. He later visited the ISKCON temple, offered prayers before deities Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra, and performed the rituals. Meanwhile, taking part in a separate Rath Yatra, BJP state president Shamik Bhattacharya said, "Best wishes to everyone celebrating Rath Yatra. The festival is being celebrated across Bengal without any disruptions, stone-pelting, firing, or brandishing of weapons."

Surat floods: 54,000 given cash aid, 26K households also got govt help: Officials



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

dead in Surat floods, Surat floods, Surat rains, Surat floods deaths, Gujarat floods deaths, surat deaths, surat monsoon deaths, Gujarat 2006 floods, Ahmedabad news, Gujarat news, Indian express, current affairsIndustry sources said that hundreds of powerloom factories were affected.Till Thursday evening, Rs 18 crore had been given to people affected by recent floods in Surat as compensation, district collector Tejas Parmar said.Out of the total amount, Rs. 4.85 crore cash aid was given to 53,999 people

‘Beef raid’ on UP house: Police arrest four more after ‘encounter’

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Nearly three weeks after it arrested three women after a raid on a house in Kaushambi’s Sarai Akil area over allegations of cow slaughter and cooking of beef, police have made more arrests in connection with the case following an “encounter”.According to police, they received information that the accused were hiding in an orchard. When they reached the spot, the suspects opened fire, police said, and in the exchange, Mohammad Arshad alias Cheddhan sustained a bullet injury to his leg. Three other suspects, Sunne alias Iliyas Khan, Nafees and Fakrul, were arrested, while two of the accused managed to escape, police said.Kaushambi Circle Officer Shivank Singh said a forensic report from a laboratory in Mathura had confirmed that the meat samples seized during the June 24 raid from Arshad’s house in Kaushambi were that of beef. The accused have been booked under various provisions of the Uttar Pradesh Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act at Sarai Akil Police Station in Kaushambi.The three women who were held during the June 24 raid, Shama Parveen, Shaista and Fatima, are related to Arshad, who has six previous criminal cases registered against him, the last of them in 2016. All four are residents of Panara Gopalpur village.The other two held are from the neighbouring villages of Khanpur Pathanpurwa and Khopa. Police said Nafees and Fakrul’s names had come up during the course of the investigation.The absconding accused are the husbands of Shaista and Fatima, identified as Irfan

and the rest to 26,313 households, he added.On July 7, the city recorded up to 14 inches of rain, inundating several of its areas because of flooding in Mithi and Bhedwad creeks in Surat and Tapi districts.Later, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel visited Surat and asked the district administration to carry out a survey and ensure that the flood-affected were compensated.“Areas that were majorly hit are Limbayat, Dindoli, Varachha, Udhna, Sachin, Simada, Laskana, Sarthana, etc. The survey is still going, and the number of beneficiaries may increase,” Parmar said.Also, with the state government announcing a relief package for Surat businesses, the process to ascertain losses by industries in the region was underway, officials at the collectorate said.Industry sources said that hundreds of powerloom factories were affected.Viraj Patel, who owns a powerloom unit at S K Nagar Industries in Limbayat, said, “The creek water entered my factory, which has 60 machines. I have incurred losses worth crores of rupees.”Meanwhile, Federation of Surat Textile Traders Association is likely to meet the collector on Friday. The Federation’s Dinesh Katariya said, “We will request the collector to permit us to collect documents from textile traders whose shops suffered damages.”



and Badkau.Police had announced a reward of Rs 25,000 for information leading to the arrest of the accused.

Officials said they raided Arshad’s house based on a tip-off that beef was being cooked there. When they reached the spot, police said, several men ran out of the house and fled, and they arrested the three women present.Panara Gopalpur is a village of about 6,000 residents with a mixed population, and located around 30 km from the Kaushambi district headquarters.Sushil Pathak, a “representative” of Panara Gopalpur sarpanch Cheedi Lal, said Arshad had previously been accused of cattle smuggling but had recently switched to trading goats. Expressing surprise at the allegations against the family, Pathak said their relatives who also live in the area are caring for the children of the women.

Rs 40 lakh, gold recovered from West Bengal madrasa as ED raids 16 locations

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

HL: ED raids 16 locations in 4 states in ‘terror funding, illegal infiltration’ probe, says seized Rs 40 lakh from Bengal madrasaSecurity personnel seen outside Tahiria Welfare Trust as the Enforcement Directorate carried out a search operation in connection with a money laundering case linked to an alleged terror funding and illegal infiltration network, North 24 Parganas

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Thursday said it recovered Rs 40 lakh in cash and 180 gm of gold coins from a madrasa in West Bengal during searches at 16 locations across Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi, and Haryana as part of a money laundering probe into an alleged terror funding and illegal infiltration network.The recovery was made from Al-Jamiatul Islamia Darul Uloom, in Haroa in North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. “The madrasa management and the staff failed to give satisfactory justification about the legal source of the cash and the coins,” an official said.The findings from the remaining 15 premises are being compiled and will be shared later, the official said, adding that the searches continued till late Thursday night.According to the ED, they have so far seized bank records and digital devices that are being scanned.Action stems from 2023 caseThe searches carried out by the agency’s Lucknow Zonal Office were conducted under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in connection with a case registered based on an FIR lodged by the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) in 2024.According to officials, the ATS had registered an FIR in 2023 against a syndicate that allegedly facilitated the illegal infiltration of Rohingya and Bangladeshi nationals into India.Officials said the ATS uncovered the syndicate after arresting Rohingya and Bangladeshi nationals who were allegedly living in India without valid documents and using Indian identity papers obtained illegally.The ATS said that the syndicate operated across West Bengal, Delhi, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and several districts of Uttar Pradesh, arranging forged Indian identity documents and helping Rohingya and Bangladeshi nationals settle in these states.Money trail under scanner

An official said that based on the ATS inputs, the ED is investigating an alleged financial network involving some charitable trusts, organisations, and groups.These entities, officials claimed, are suspected of having received substantial foreign contributions.These funds, officials said, were allegedly diverted through multiple bank accounts, mule accounts, and layered transactions to facilitate illegal activities, including terror funding and helping Rohingya and Bangladeshi nationals settle in certain areas, find jobs, start businesses, and engage in other trades.The investigation has also indicated the use of cash withdrawals and small-value bank transfers to suspected beneficiaries, the official said.How the probe beganThe searches were the result of the arrest of a Bangladeshi national in Varanasi four years ago.The ATS had arrested one Mohammad alias Adil-ur-Rehman, an alleged Bangladesh national, for “infiltrating the country” and getting fake identity documents like Aadhaar and PAN cards.Officials said during interrogation, Adil reportedly revealed that two other Bangladesh nationals were living in the Deoband area of Saharanpur district.

The duo, Sheikh Najib-ul-Haque and Abu Huraira, also got help from the same alleged syndicate, which facilitated Adil’s entry into the country, the ATS investigation claimed.The ATS, in its investigation, found that NGOs in Delhi and Haryana and madrasas in West Bengal and UP

were part of the syndicate involved in human trafficking and forging Indian identity documents, posing a threat to national security and helping in a conspiracy to disturb communal harmony.The ATS filed seven chargesheets in the next two years after lodging an FIR in October 2023 against the arrested accused, a majority of whom had got bail after their arrest.The FIR was lodged on charges of human trafficking, forgery for the purpose of cheating, conspiracy, and sections under the Foreigners Act & Passport Act.

The ATS, in its chargesheets, alleged that at least Rs 20 crore were transacted, including foreign funding done by the syndicate using hawala routes and mule bank accounts to facilitate infiltration and settle Rohingya and Bangladeshi nationals in different states of India.While opposing the bail plea of one of the accused, Delhi-based resident Dr Abdul Ghaffar, earlier this year, the prosecution said that the National Investigation Agency (NIA) or the ATS had been monitoring and the matter after getting inputs in October, 2021.The investigation found that “anti-national activities” were being carried out by the “so-called” respected persons of the society, and they were allegedly trying to manage to settle Rohingyas and illegal Bangladeshi persons in India to create unrest and disharmony in the country.The agencies put the telephone numbers of suspected persons under surveillance and intensified the investigation. “On the basis of such an investigation, relevant facts, circumstances, and incriminating information came to our notice, which was followed by the UP ATS registering an FIR on October 11, 2023,” a police officer said.“Since the ATS investigation had found various incriminating evidence indicating money laundering, the agency

NSE to launch FPI 150 derivatives from Aug 12

New Delhi: The National Stock Exchange (NSE) on Thursday said it plans to launch derivatives contracts on the Nifty India FPI 150 Index from August 12 after receiving approval from capital markets regulator Sebi.In a statement, the exchange said it will introduce futures and options contracts on the index in the equity derivatives segment.Initially, the NSE will offer three serial monthly index futures and index options contract cycles. The cash-settled contracts will expire on the last Tuesday of the expiry month.The Nifty India FPI 150 Index tracks the performance of the top 150 stocks selected from the Nifty 500 based on six-month average foreign investible free-float market capitalisation.

Seed funding of up to Rs 10 lakh for students in Delhi government’s new start-up policy



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

In what has been pitched as a first-of-its kind move on a large scale, students studying in government schools and government-funded colleges and institutions in the Capital will be eligible for seed funding of up to Rs 10 lakh to launch their entrepreneurial ventures under the Start-Up and Incubation policy approved by the Delhi government, officials said “Our government will invest Rs 400 crore in the policy over the next five years. The policy is not just to help people launch start-ups, but to transform Delhi’s youth from job seekers into job creators,” Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said.

The CM said the policy will be implemented across 11 state universities, 13 government-funded colleges, polytechnic institutes, and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and Delhi government schools. She added that the policy aims to build a strong innovation ecosystem across the educational institutions of the Capital. The alumni of Delhi government schools will also be eligible to secure seed funding under this policy.Education Minister Ashish Sood said, “This policy is not for general public...the aim is to help students develop and incubate their ideas at an early level, so that by the time they pass out from schools and college, they become job providers...by handholding students at every stage from guiding them from idea stage to developing prototype till they take patent for their innovation.”Industries Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa underlined that the student-focussed policy promises “Rs 10 lakh fund in different stages of their projects growth.”As per officials, this will be a first-of-its kind policy focused on students with the Delhi government investing on a large-scale. Under the policy, officials added, the government also plans to strengthen incubation centers in schools and colleges. Besides, new incubation centers

will be set up at the colleges and school campuses to nurture ideas among students and help them execute it.The CM said the government will provide one-time financial assistance to eligible institutions for setting up and strengthening incubation centres. In addition, these centres will receive annual operational support for mentoring, networking, innovation activities and the overall development of the start-up ecosystem.“Start-ups associated with these incubation centres will receive financial assistance at different stages of their growth. The support will cover various phases, including prototype development, proof of concept, product development, market validation and commercialisation, enabling promising ideas to grow into successful enterprises,” she said.

Incubation centres will provide young entrepreneurs with modern infrastructure, expert mentoring, business advisory services, intellectual property support, access to laboratories and testing facilities, as well as opportunities to connect with investors and industry, the CM said.Under the policy, the government will also organise an Annual ‘Delhi Start-up Youth Festival’ to bring together young innovators, educational institutions, start-ups, investors, industry representatives and policymakers on a common platform to showcase new ideas, build partnerships and inspire entrepreneurship among the youth.Further, a State Incubation Policy Monitoring Committee (SIPMC) will be set up comprising members from government, educational institutions and industry, to oversee the implementation of the policy.The previous AAP government had also floated a start-up policy but it never took off. However, it implemented Business Blasters scheme in schools for students in 2021 under which students studying in Class XI and XII were to be given Rs 2,000 to start their businesses under Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum.Later, the AAP government announced in the 2024-25 Budget that this scheme will be expanded to universities and ITIs and allocated Rs 15 crore.Attacking the previous government, however, Education Minister Sood said, “

As per the records and files that we have seen, the previous AAP government did nothing but publicity. Its scheme started in 2021 and ended in 2022. The entire budget allocated for the project was Rs 22 crore, whereas our budget for this policy is Rs 400 crore. It is a full-fledged policy that aims to develop and nurture young minds and their ideas, and help them become future business leaders and entrepreneurs.”He added that students can draw inspiration for innovative ideas related to new age technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and drones will be welcome and the government will support them.

Woman calls man home to end relationship as he was unemployed, both found dead

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

suspected murder suicide, delhi suspected murder suicide, delhi Woman murder suicide, murder suicide over break up, murder suicide over relationship, delhi news, India news, Indian express, current affairs“Prima facie, the circumstances suggest a suspected case of murder followed by suicide,” DCP (North) Raja Banthia said.A 26-year-old woman employed with the National Informatics Centre and her alleged boyfriend were found dead inside a rented room that had been locked from inside in North Delhi’s Burari on Wednesday afternoon.Police said it has been alleged that the woman, Shivangini, reportedly called Nikhil (26), earlier in the day to end their six-month relationship because he was unemployed.“Prima facie, the circumstances suggest a suspected case of murder followed by suicide,” DCP (North) Raja Banthia said.

While Shivangini hails from Rae Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh, Nikhil belongs to Pinana village in Haryana’s Sonapat district. Police said Nikhil had earlier worked with the Delhi Development Authority on a contractual basis but was currently unemployed and was reportedly staying at Saran in Punjab.An officer said that Shivangini’s younger sister, Nishangini (21), a teacher at a school in Burari, came from work and found the room — located at Kamalpur — locked from inside. After repeated knocks went unanswered, she sought the help of the building owner and other residents to open the door, following which the two were found lying dead inside.Police said they received information about the deaths around 4 pm. The police and forensic



experts recovered a pistol along with two empty cartridge cases from the room. The exact cause of death, nature of injuries and sequence of events will be determined through forensic examination and the post-mortem report, they added.During the preliminary probe, investigators said they learnt that Shivangini and Nikhil had been in a relationship for around six months. “Shivangini had allegedly called Nikhil earlier in the day to end the relationship, reportedly because he was unemployed,” an officer said, adding that this claim is being verified.Police said they are also examining a message that Nikhil allegedly shared in his family’s WhatsApp group along with his live location shortly before the incident. He also posted a three-second video of both of them sitting on the bed. Police said the contents of the message and other digital evidence are being analysed.The bodies, meanwhile, have been sent for postmortem examination, they added.

New target for Delhi Health Department: 1.49 lakh HPV vaccinations in 100 days

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Delhi HPV vaccinations in 100 days, HPV vaccinations, delhi HPV vaccinations, Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme, delhi news, India news, Indian express, current affairsAccording to officials, combating misinformation in Delhi requires a different strategy than in many other parts of the country because of the rapid spread of health-related rumours through social media.More than four months after India launched its nationwide Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme for 14-year-old girls, Delhi has administered roughly 13,500 vaccine doses, prompting the state government to launch a renewed push in schools with an ambitious target of vaccinating 1.49 lakh girls over the next 100 days, The Indian Express has learnt.Officials said the fresh target comes after the Delhi Health department reviewed the campaign’s progress following its initial 90 days and concluded that deeper engagement with schools would be critical to accelerating coverage.“After the initial 90 days, we reviewed the progress on the ground and decided to re-approach the Education department for its full cooperation at the school level. We are giving this initiative a renewed push since schools have now opened up after summer vacation. We aim to achieve 1.49 lakh vaccinations in 100 days,” a Health department official told The Indian Express.India rolled out its national HPV vaccination programme on February 28 to protect 14-year-old girls against cervical cancer, aiming to vaccinate nearly 1.15 crore girls annually across states and Union Territories.Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among women in India and remains one of the country’s leading causes of cancer-related deaths among women.While Delhi’s coverage has steadily risen from around 11,000 doses reported in May to approximately 13,500 now, officials acknowledged that progress has been slower than anticipated, largely because schools were occupied with examinations before closing for the summer vacation.“We had first written to the Education department in March seeking its cooperation in spreading awareness about the vaccination drive. But soon, examinations started

in schools and then summer vacation began, creating a gap of nearly over a month. That is why the progress slowed,” the official said.With schools reopening, the Health department has once again reached out to Education authorities, holding both virtual and in-person meetings with deputy directors of education (DDEs) across districts as well as school principals.“We are personally and virtually interacting with each DDE in every zone and with principals to push the programme. Doctors from our department are visiting schools on the ground to spread awareness about HPV and the vaccine. We have resent the parent consent forms for the vaccination too,” the official said.Alongside school outreach, the department has intensified its communication campaign to counter vaccine hesitancy, which officials continue to identify as one of the programme’s biggest challenges.“We are actively circulating videos explaining the benefits of the vaccine and myth-busting misinformation. Many people have fears, so we are sharing videos of senior doctors explaining why people should not believe rumours,” the official said.Officials are also using testimonials from women who received HPV vaccines years ago to reassure parents. “We are showing videos of women and their success stories. Several women who received the vaccine in 2009 have now given birth and are healthy and happy,” the official said.According to officials, combating misinformation in Delhi requires a different strategy than in many other parts of the country because of the rapid spread of health-related rumours through social media.“In a place like Delhi, spreading awareness is tricky because the urban population is highly exposed to misinformation circulating on social media,” the official said. “During the summer vacation, we remained closely engaged with ASHA workers, but mobilising government schools has a much greater impact and produces better outcomes.”The renewed campaign will focus heavily on government schools, with health officials expecting classroom-based awareness sessions, counselling of parents and coordinated efforts between teachers and healthcare workers to significantly improve vaccine uptake over the next three months.

US tightens visa regulations for international students, exchange visitors and journalists



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Washington: The US has tightened visa rules for foreign students, exchange visitors and journalists, ending a decades-old policy that allowed them to remain in the country indefinitely without government oversight, a move likely to affect a large number of Indians.The new regulations establish a fixed period of admission for non-immigrant visa holders in F, J, and I classifications, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said in a statement on Thursday.The F category visas are for students, the J category for exchange visitors, and the I category is for journalists.The rule also shortens the amount of time F visa holders have to depart or transfer from school and change status after their graduation from 60 to 30 days.Presently, student visas are permitted to last for the duration of their studies, in addition to a period of up to three years after graduation through optional practical training (OPT).The duration of I visas, for members of the media, will be capped at 240 days by the new rule, and 90 days for Chinese nationals. Under current rules, there is no specific time period for journalists' visas and it can last years.Nonimmigrant students (F visas) and exchange visitors (J visas) will be admitted for the length of their

specific programme, but not longer than four years, the DHS said in a statement.“For decades, foreign students have been admitted into the US indefinitely, allowing thousands to abuse our immigration system by perpetually enrolling in courses to avoid having to leave the US,” DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin said in a statement here.

Mullin said by implementing clear, finite limits on these visas, the US is reclaiming its ability to properly screen, vet, and monitor individuals within its borders.“This final rule ensures that foreign students remain focused on their primary purpose: completing their studies and returning home,” he said.The DHS said the decisive shift restores integrity to the nation's immigration system, combats rampant visa abuse, and strengthens national security through regular vetting.It said a fixed period of admission is currently in place for many other types of non-immigrant visas.Since 1978, foreign students have been admitted into the US for an unspecified period, enabling thousands to become “forever students” by perpetually enrolling in courses to avoid departure.According to the Open Doors 2025 report, there were 363,019 international students from India enrolled at US colleges and universities during the 2024-25 academic year. A 9.5 per cent change from the previous year.Students from India account for nearly 31 per cent of all international students in the US, according to the report.Visa holders requiring additional time to complete an academic programme must formally apply for an Extension of Stay directly through the US Citizenship and Immigration Services.This transitions oversight from university staff back to federal authorities and subjects applicants to biometric vetting, background checks, and fraud screenings, the DHS said.The rule introduces strict limitations on academic changes.Current non-immigrant visa holders residing in the US under the previous “duration of status”



WASHINGTON, - U.S. President Donald Trump declassified documents on Thursday that he asserted showed Chinese interference in U.S. elections, reviving his long-running attacks on election security despite a U.S. intelligence assessment that found no evidence Beijing affected the 2020 vote that he lost.The 25-minute prime-time address underscored Trump's effort to make election security a central political issue ahead of November's midterm elections, when his fellow Republicans will be defending their slender congressional majorities.Jumpstart your morning with the latest legal news delivered straight to your inbox from The Daily Docket newsletter. Sign up here.Trump used his remarks to again press Republicans in Congress to pass legislation imposing new voter identification and citizenship requirements, despite longstanding findings that voter fraud in U.S. elections is rare. The bill has stalled in the Senate amid fierce Democratic opposition.

TRUMP ASSERTS 'SHOCKING VULNERABILITIES'Trump said the declassified material would reveal "shocking vulnerabilities in our election infrastructure." But many appeared to show the opposite, or were not related to U.S. election infrastructure at all.The speech came at a challenging political moment for Trump and Republicans, with his approval rating weighed down by the unpopular Iran war and high energy prices. Trump briefly mentioned the war at the outset, saying the U.S. was "winning big," while listing a series of domestic accomplishments, including tax cuts and his immigration crackdown, before turning to election security.The president said he was declassifying sensitive information that showed China had illicitly acquired 220 million U.S. voter files, including names, addresses and other data.He asserted that members of the U.S. intelligence community deliberately suppressed information about the extent of China's activities.An unclassified 2021 U.S. intelligence assessment found no indications any foreign actor attempted to or succeeded in altering "any technical aspect" of the 2020 presidential election vote, including voter registrations, ballots, tabulations or results.That assessment was conducted under John Ratcliffe, then Trump's director of national intelligence and now ?his CIA director.

The report also found China had pursued an effort dating to at least 2008 to collect information on U.S. voters, public opinion, political parties, candidates and top government officials, likely aiming to use the material to predict election results.Two people familiar with the matter said the U.S. voter data obtained by China was not confidential – voter files are routinely purchased by political consultants – and could not be manipulated.Ahead of Trump's speech, some White House officials expressed concern that disclosing the China information could be misleading, sources told Reuters.Trump's harsh language about China risked rocking a relationship that has steadied following last year's costly trade war. Trump hopes to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping in September about improving trade

relations.China's Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the speech. Before the address, Liu Chang, spokesperson for the Chinese ?embassy in Washington, said: "China has never and will never interfere in the presidential elections of the U.S."Trump has spent years raising doubts about electoral outcomes, falsely asserting that his 2020 loss to Democrat Joe Biden was rigged. He has also ?advanced other false claims, including that mail-in balloting is rife with fraud, voting machines are untrustworthy and non-citizen voting is widespread.Numerous courts and vote recounts found no evidence of large-scale fraud in the 2020 election.Nevertheless, Trump's campaign has gained traction with his supporters. A Reuters/Ipsos poll in ?April found 63% of Republicans ?believe Trump's claim that the 2020 election was stolen, a share that has remained largely unchanged in recent years despite the absence of evidence.

Trump said on Thursday that his administration had uncovered evidence of more than 275,000 non-citizens registered to vote in just four states, but it was not clear how many had actually voted.In some previous cases, systems intended to verify citizenship status have mistakenly flagged some naturalized U.S. citizens as non-citizens. Studies have found that non-citizens casting actual ballots is exceedingly uncommon.Trump also said that the newly declassified documents would reveal serious weaknesses in election security. But many either appeared inconsistent with that assertion or were unrelated to U.S. election infrastructure." One CIA document, prepared last month, concerned Venezuela's election, not America's." "We assess that vote tabulation systems would be difficult to ?manipulate on a wide enough scale to compromise election results," another ?document said." A third document, produced by the CIA, ?detailed efforts by Chinese spies to target Biden's campaign and noted that Beijing "does not currently intend to covertly interfere to try to sway the outcome of the election," although it said China might later decide to do so."Trump's shocking 'bombshells' about China are totally bogus," Democratic Senator Mark Warner, vice chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said in a statement during the speech. "The fact is our intelligence ?agencies unanimously agreed that China did not even try to change a single vote in the 2020 election."While Trump cast U.S. elections as highly vulnerable, he did not provide ?evidence of any actual votes in 2020 ?that were altered or manipulated.Two of the three major U.S. television networks and CNN decided not to broadcast the speech on their primary platforms, eschewing a practice typically reserved for major addresses on issues of national import.Trump again urged Republican lawmakers to advance a bill, the SAVE America Act, that would require photo ID to vote and proof of U.S. citizenship to register and would significantly curtail mail-in voting. Democrats and voting-rights advocates say the legislation is intended to suppress legitimate votes.The bill has passed the Republican-controlled U.S. House of Representatives several times with ?a simple majority, ?but it does not have the 60 votes to overcome a Democratic filibuster in the Republican-controlled Senate.Some Republican leaders have urged Trump to focus on issues ?that matter most to Americans, including high living costs, rather than focus on the 2020 vote.Democrats need to flip only three Republican seats to take a majority in the 435-seat U.S. House. They face an uphill battle to win control of the 100-seat Senate with critical races unfolding in Republican-leaning states.Reporting ?by Nandita Bose in Washington; Additional reporting by David Morgan, Erin Banco, Edmund Lee, Michael Martina, Peter Eisler, Bo Erickson, Raphael Satter, Kanishka Singh, Ismail Shakil, Jasper Ward and Doina Chiacu; Writing by Joseph Ax; Editing by Colleen Jenkins, Don Durfee and Howard Goller

SpaceX aborts Starship launch after engine ignition problem

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Washington: SpaceX's mega Starship rocket came within a second or so of blasting off on a test flight, but some of the engines failed to start, triggering a launch abort.Elon Musk's company said it will have to determine what went wrong before making another attempt to send Starship on a space-skimming flight halfway around the world. It was supposed to be the 13th flight for Starship, which, at 407 feet (124 metres) tall with 33 main engines, is the world's biggest and most powerful rocket.SpaceX's launch webcast on Thursday showed the start of engine ignition three seconds before the planned liftoff, viewed from a drone high above the pad. The engines that fired abruptly shut down, with the rocket remaining anchored to the pad. The launch team immediately began draining the fuel from the rocket.“Next launch attempt hopefully in a few days,” Musk announced on X.

Everything had been going SpaceX's way, including the weather, until the partial engine ignition.Twenty of SpaceX's newest and most advanced Starlink satellites were on board Starship for release during the planned hour-long flight. The internet satellites were expected to communicate with Starlinks already in orbit while taking photos of Starship's heat shield. Neither the first-stage booster nor the spacecraft was meant to be recovered, with both end-



ing up in the sea.NASA is counting on Starship to land its astronauts on the moon in the next few years. The space agency has hired SpaceX and Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin to build and fly the lunar landers that will return humanity to the surface of the moon after an absence of more than half a century.Both companies need to have their landers, Starship and Blue Moon, ready to fly by next year so that the newly named Artemis III crew can practise docking their capsule with them in orbit around Earth. The mission after that, Artemis IV, planned for no earlier than 2028, would use one of those landers to take two astronauts to the moon's south polar region.

Afghan police seize hundreds of kilograms of illicit drugs, arrest seven smugglers in Nimroz

Kabul: The counter-narcotics police in the fight against illegal drugs have discovered hundreds of kilograms of materials during a series of operations in western Afghanistan's Nimroz province, the counter-narcotics police commander in the province, Mawlawi Esmatullah Ahmad, said Thursday.The contraband, which includes 84 kg of opium, 130 kg of methamphetamine, and more than 200 kg of other illegal objects used in manufacturing opium and heroin, has been seized over the past week, the official asserted.Police have also arrested seven persons on charges of involvement in smuggling illegal drugs in the province, the official added, XinhuaSimilarly, police in the drive against illegal drugs set ablaze 730 kg of opium publicly in the northern Badakhshan province on Wednesday.

On July 4, Afghan police confiscated 60 kg of illicit drugs and arrested two suspected drug smugglers in a targeted operation in northern Takhar province, a local police official reported.The smugglers had concealed 52 kg of opium and 8 kg of hashish in hidden sections within a vehicle while attempting to transport it to an unknown destination. However, police uncovered the drugs during the raid, said Nizamudin Omir, the provincial police spokesman.

In the fight against illicit drugs, Afghan security personnel thwarted a major drug-trafficking operation on July



2, seizing 215 kg of opium in eastern Ghazni province.On June 30, provincial directorate for Information and Culture said that the counter-narcotics police in the fight against illegal drugs have discovered and destroyed a drug-processing lab in Helmand province south of Afghanistan.The illegal laboratory was spotted in Baghran district, the statement said, adding that police also seized a huge quantity of illegal objects that were used in making illegal drugs from the site of operations.No one was arrested and efforts were being made by police to arrest and bring to justice those involved in the black business, the statement emphasised.

Iran threatens to destroy ‘all infrastructure in region’ as US strikes intensify

Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters warned that regional infrastructure could be targeted if US strikes expand to Iranian power plants and bridges.

Dubai: Iran's joint military command stepped up its threats on Thursday as intensifying US airstrikes target the country, saying it would destroy “all the infrastructure in the region”.The threat from the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters referenced US President Donald Trump's repeated warning that he could launch attacks against power plants and bridges in Iran.

Col Ebrahim Zolfaghari, a spokesperson for the Iranian military's Khatam Al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, issued the warning.“All the infrastructure in the region will be crushed under the steel blows of the powerful armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran” should Trump's threat be carried out, Zolfaghari said.“Under no circumstances and in no way will we allow America, as a foreign and extra-regional country, to interfere in the Strait of Hormuz,” he added. “This is Iran's invincible red line.”



Trump accuses China of 2020 election interference, contradicting US intel



WASHINGTON, - U.S. President Donald Trump declassified documents on Thursday that he asserted showed Chinese interference in U.S. elections, reviving his long-running attacks on election security despite a U.S. intelligence assessment that found no evidence Beijing affected the 2020 vote that he lost.The 25-minute prime-time address underscored Trump's effort to make election security a central political issue ahead of November's midterm elections, when his fellow Republicans will be defending their slender congressional majorities.Jumpstart your morning with the latest legal news delivered straight to your inbox from The Daily Docket newsletter. Sign up here.Trump used his remarks to again press Republicans in Congress to pass legislation imposing new voter identification and citizenship requirements, despite longstanding findings that voter fraud in U.S. elections is rare. The bill has stalled in the Senate amid fierce Democratic opposition.

TRUMP ASSERTS 'SHOCKING VULNERABILITIES'Trump said the declassified material would reveal "shocking vulnerabilities in our election infrastructure." But many appeared to show the opposite, or were not related to U.S. election infrastructure at all.The speech came at a challenging political moment for Trump and Republicans, with his approval rating weighed down by the unpopular Iran war and high energy prices. Trump briefly mentioned the war at the outset, saying the U.S. was "winning big," while listing a series of domestic accomplishments, including tax cuts and his immigration crackdown, before turning to election security.The president said he was declassifying sensitive information that showed China had illicitly acquired 220 million U.S. voter files, including names, addresses and other data.He asserted that members of the U.S. intelligence community deliberately suppressed information about the extent of China's activities.An unclassified 2021 U.S. intelligence assessment found no indications any foreign actor attempted to or succeeded in altering "any technical aspect" of the 2020 presidential election vote, including voter registrations, ballots, tabulations or results.That assessment was conducted under John Ratcliffe, then Trump's director of national intelligence and now ?his CIA director.

The report also found China had pursued an effort dating to at least 2008 to collect information on U.S. voters, public opinion, political parties, candidates and top government officials, likely aiming to use the material to predict election results.Two people familiar with the matter said the U.S. voter data obtained by China was not confidential – voter files are routinely purchased by political consultants – and could not be manipulated.Ahead of Trump's speech, some White House officials expressed concern that disclosing the China information could be misleading, sources told Reuters.Trump's harsh language about China risked rocking a relationship that has steadied following last year's costly trade war. Trump hopes to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping in September about improving trade

Trump's fiery China allegations may threaten superpower truce

WASHINGTON, Donald Trump's renewed accusations that China meddled in U.S. elections could complicate his fragile truce with Chinese leader Xi Jinping just two months before a planned ?summit in Washington.The U.S. president on Thursday revived his long-running complaints about voting systems and election administration as Republicans face challenging congressional elections in ?November. His comments focused heavily on China and included the claim, previously denied by Beijing, that the country improperly acquired data about millions of U.S. voters.The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here."This data loss presents an unprecedented election security nightmare," Trump said.

China's Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the speech. Before the address, Liu Chang, spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Washington, said: "China has never and will never interfere in ?the presidential elections of the U.S."Trump, who frequently boasts of a warm personal relationship with Xi, at times sounded personally aggrieved by China's ?efforts."The Chinese government wanted (the) U.S. president to lose the next election, and the reason they wanted me to lose is because they ?knew I was wise to them," he said.Those comments, delivered in a rare prime-time address, marked a sharp departure from Trump's more respectful recent comments towards Beijing, which Washington ?regards as its biggest international rival.

The speech could also derail the carefully constructed truce that paused last year's trade war between the world's two biggest economies.The White House did not ?respond to a request for comment on the impact of the speech on U.S.-China ties.After imposing triple-digit tariffs on China in 2025, Trump backed off last October amid fears that Beijing's retaliatory block on rare-earth metal exports could hobble U.S. manufacturing. Xi hosted Trump for a lavish state visit in May, during which Trump soft-pedaled disputes over Taiwan and called Xi a "friend."Trump then invited Xi to visit Washington on September 24, ?and he is considering attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in November in China's Shenzhen.China has not yet confirmed Xi's visit to Washington. Beijing has privately told the Trump ?administration that future meetings between the leaders will depend on maintaining positive relations, according to two people familiar with those conversations.

His ?speech was ?seen as calculated to serve domestic political purposes rather than to reorient policy toward China, according to a person familiar with Beijing's initial reading of the speech.Notably, Trump's 25-minute remarks from the White House's East Room did not include any call to punish Beijing. That could temper Beijing's reaction.This was not Trump's first time making allegations about China and election interference, which he has used to support the debunked claim that the 2020 election, which he lost to Joe Biden, was rigged against him. Trump offi-



The U.S. president on Thursday revived his long-running complaints about voting systems and election administration as Republicans face challenging congressional elections in ?November. His comments focused heavily on China and included the claim, previously denied by Beijing, that the country improperly acquired data about millions of U.S. voters.

cials said publicly during his first ?administration that Chinese hackers were targeting election ?infrastructure ahead of the 2020 vote.A 2021 ?U.S. intelligence community assessment found no indications that any foreign actor, including China, attempted or succeeded in altering "any technical aspect" of the 2020 presidential election vote, including voter registrations, ballots, tabulations or results.In his speech on Thursday, Trump blamed unnamed "Deep State" bureaucrats for failing ?to warn him about election-security vulnerabilities.It was unclear if the Trump administration would take any actions against China after the speech, ?though the president directed ?law enforcement to pursue any wrongdoing.Over the last year, his administration has privately warned China that it will protect its national security interests and that it could take actions Beijing dislikes, according to people familiar with the conversations.But the White House has also in recent months closely monitored executive-branch agencies' proposed steps against China and discouraged some new policies that could rile China, ?according to another ?person briefed on the approach."President Trump is using a false claim about Chinese interference to push Congress ?to pass legislation to restrict access to voting," said Mira Rapp-Hooper, a former senior director for East Asia at the White House National Security Council."He must believe that his rapprochement with Xi Jinping, including a visit by ?Xi to Washington in September, will withstand this."Reporting by Trevor Hunnicutt; Additional reporting by Nandita Bose, Jasper Ward and Michael Martina; Editing by Don Durfee, Colleen Jenkins and William Mallard

‘In Hinduism, no matter how much you try to regiment, there are still elements of fluidity’

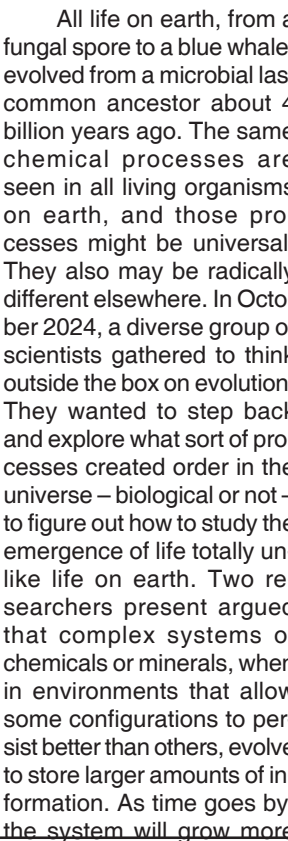


Manu Pillai tells his audience how a Bala Murugan temple deity in Kerala's Alappuzha district acquired the rather catchy moniker, "Munch Murugan." When a small boy in the region fell ill, his parents took him to this Murugan temple to pray for his recovery. "The child had a Munch chocolate in his hand," says the writer and historian to Manasi Subramaniam, Editor-in-Chief and Vice-President, Penguin Press, Penguin Random House India, who he was in conversation with at the 13th edition of the Bangalore Literature Festival. The little boy, as the story goes, put his Munch chocolate bar in front of the deity and miraculously recovered. "Since then, the deity is called Munch Murugan, and everybody who goes to the temple places, not just any chocolate, but Munch in front of this deity," he says. Pillai says it is modernity and colonisation that truly kickstarted the process of creating Hinduism's sense of self. Pillai says it is modernity and colonisation that truly kickstarted the process of creating Hinduism's sense of self. | Photo Credit: ROOP_DEY

Pillai, who was responding to Subramaniam's question on whether the inherent fluidity of Hinduism was lost when the religion began to define itself, uses this anecdote to drive a pertinent point. "Some of these stories may be apocryphal, but these are recent stories, which means that the tendency to change... to retain that fluidity still remains," says the historian and writer, whose latest book *Gods, Guns & Missionaries: The Making of the Modern Hindu Identity*, examines the mutual impact of Hindu culture and Christianity upon each other and how these encounters contributed to the birth of an aggressive, more immutable form of Hinduism. "In Hinduism, no matter how much you try to regiment it, there are still elements of fluidity and change within it." In his session, Pillai discusses the evolution of Hinduism, its encounter with Christianity, and the impact of colonisation and reform on it. He also shares his apprehensions about taking on a subject that could be construed as controversial, admitting that he was constantly worried about being cancelled by both the left and the right as he wrote the book. "Would you rather be cancelled by the left or the right," asks Subramaniam, rather cheekily, to which Pillai cautiously responds. "I think I would not be beaten up if I was cancelled by the left. The chances of getting beaten up are probably higher with the right." The creation of legends as Hinduism evolved, says Pillai, was a creative way of knitting together different ideas without denying them, referring to the religion as a sort of tapestry that's been constantly woven and expanding in different directions. The creation of legends as Hinduism evolved, says Pillai, was a creative way of knitting together different ideas without denying them, referring to the religion as a sort of tapestry that's been constantly woven and expanding in different directions.

Keeping the faith Hinduism, according to Pillai, is a composite framework, something very clear in the Puranas, which "is a way of connecting the local with the pan-Indian and universalising that with the local." He points out that when the Vedic religion came in contact with a whole set of other cultures "a bit of co-option" happened, a marriage of sorts where "each retains much of its original flavour but is also slightly modified to become part of a larger framework...what I would define as Hinduism." There was a conscious effort, at least on the part of Brahmins, to connect everything into that framework, he says, adding that this was often done through stories. This creation of legends as Hinduism evolved, says Pillai, was a creative way of knitting together different ideas without denying them, referring to the religion as a sort of tapestry that's been constantly woven and has been expanding in different directions. "It doesn't have an outer border," he says. In his opinion, the impulse to stitch up an outer border only happened because of external pressures. "In some ways, you do see evidence of this in the Islamic period," he says. "Islam is a big part of the culture of how Hinduism eventually responds and develops a sense of self." But it was modernity and colonisation that truly catalysed the process of creating Hinduism's sense of self. "When you're faced with pressure from the outside... that's when you must figure out how you define yourself," explains Pillai. "I think that rigidity does appear in Hinduism's political manifestation because the political assertion of identity is built on people coming together and asserting a certain muscle." Missionaries and more By most accounts, the arrival of the first missionaries to India did not seem to have threatened Indians in the beginning. "Why were they so unthreatened by the idea of these missionaries, and at what point did they feel threatened?" asks Subramaniam. In his response, Pillai offers insights into early Europeans' perception of Hindu society, which was shaped by their own cultural history as a country that had once been pagan, even though Christianity was now deeply entrenched in it. While Europeans had worshipped trees, sacrificed animals and had deities and idols throughout much of antiquity, by the time they began arriving in India, a deep fear of idols had seeped into their collective

The sample of exoplanets detected so far projects 300 million potential biological experiments in our galaxy – or 300 million places, including exoplanets and other bodies such as moons, with suitable conditions for biology to arise. The uncertainty for researchers starts with the definition of life. It feels like defining life should be easy, since we know life when we see it, whether it's a flying bird or a microbe moving in a drop of water. But scientists don't agree on a definition, and some think a comprehensive definition might not be possible. NASA defines life as a "self-sustaining chemical reaction capable of Darwinian evolution." That means organisms with a complex chemical system that evolve by adapting to their environment. Darwinian evolution says that the survival of an organism depends on its fitness in its environment. The evolution of life on earth has progressed over billions of years from



Of the 1 lakh H-1B applications, only 123 had a proposed salary of \$1 million and above per year. Of them, 96 (78%) were from India. Over 90% of the proposed salaries were in and around the \$1,00,000 range. Chart 2 shows the same information, but only for Indians. Here, female and male applicants are differentiated using colours. Of the 96 applicants from India identified in Chart 1, 25 (26%) were women. As can be seen in both charts, most of the applications with a higher pay — circles on the top — are crowded towards the left of the chart, pointing to the low employee count for those sponsors. Sixty-three of the 96 applicants identified in Chart 1 were sponsored by U.S. companies which had fewer than 1,000 employees in the U.S. In other words, bigger companies — both U.S.-based and India-based — did not sponsor many high-paid H1B applicants. Most of their applicants' proposed salaries were in the lower range, with very few exceptions. Chart 3 shows the proposed yearly wage rate in \$ for H-1B applicants of well-known sponsors (big-sized firms), in the 2021-2024 period. It ignores outlier salaries to find the usual salary range proposed for most applicants. The proposed salary range of U.S.-based employers such as Apple and Google were considerably higher than the proposed salary range of Indian-based companies such as Infosys and TCS.

Researchers have explored alternatives to terrestrial biochemistry. All known living organisms, from bacteria to humans, contain water, and it is a solvent that is essential for life on earth. A solvent is a liquid medium

that facilitates chemical reactions from which life could emerge. But life could potentially emerge from other solvents, too. Astrobiologists William Bains and Sara Seager have explored thousands of molecules that might be associated with life. Plausible solvents include sulfuric acid, ammonia, liquid carbon dioxide and even liquid sulphur. Alien life might not be based on carbon, which forms the backbone of all life's essential molecules – at least here on Earth. It might not even need a planet to survive. Advanced forms of life on alien planets could be so strange that they're unrecognisable. As astrobiologists try to detect life off Earth, they'll need to be creative. One strategy is to measure mineral signatures on the rocky surfaces of exoplanets, since mineral diversity tracks terrestrial biological evolution. As life evolved on Earth, it used and created minerals for exoskeletons and habitats. The hundred minerals present when life first formed have grown to about 5,000 today. For example, zircons are simple silicate crystals that date back to the time before life started. A zircon found in Australia is the oldest known piece of Earth's crust. But other minerals, such as apatite, a complex calcium phosphate mineral, are created by biology. Apatite is a primary ingredient in bones, teeth and fish scales. Another strategy to finding life unlike that on Earth is to detect evidence of a civilisation, such as artificial lights, or the industrial pollutant nitrogen dioxide in the atmosphere. These are examples of tracers of intelligent life called technosignatures. It's unclear how and when the first detection of life beyond Earth will happen. It might be within the solar system, or by sniffing exoplanet atmospheres, or by detecting artificial radio signals from a distant civilisation.

Developed countries prioritise fossil fuels over climate aid

New Delhi: Developed countries spent \$378 billion subsidising fossil fuels in 2023, surpassing the \$ 300 billion they have collectively committed to provide annually to the developing world by 2035 to tackle climate change, according to the latest data. An analysis by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) showed that government support for fossil fuels reached at least \$ 1.5 trillion in 2023, the second-highest annual total on record, after 2022 when the Russia-Ukraine war triggered a global fossil fuel price crisis. The 10 largest subsidisers of fossil fuels in 2023 included Russia, Germany, Iran, China, Japan, India, Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands, France, and Indonesia. The data revealed that 23 developed nations (Annex II countries) — mandated under the UN climate convention to provide climate finance to the developing world — spent \$ 378 billion on fossil fuel subsidies. At the UN climate conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, last month, these nations committed to providing \$ 300 billion to developing countries by 2035 to help them tackle climate change — a far cry from the \$1.3 trillion that the Global South needs annually to cope with the

Another worldview in India, the Europeans were in for a rude shock as they were confronted with fierce gods like Narasimha and Kali, often depicted as somewhat blood-thirsty. They couldn't help but see them as demonic forces since "they came out of a certain world view and applied their cultural lenses to make sense of what they were seeing," believes Pillai. According to him, these early European missionaries had arrived convinced that they would bring the light of the Bible and everyone would wake up. "But that did not happen. The Hindus seem to be perfectly happy to continue with their so-called demonic gods." Therefore, Pillai claims, the missionary also had to reinvent himself in interesting ways. Soon, a certain Hinduisation of Christianity happened, with missionaries, including the Italian Jesuit Roberto de Nobili, who even began eating and dressing like an Indian, having to study the former to engage in philosophical discussions and debates with the Hindus of that time, who didn't take them very seriously. For starters, Indians, too, had their perceptions of white people, including a belief they were cannibals who liked to fry their children in butter and eat them. And yes, many Indians, including the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, appear to have been disgusted that white people did not use water to clean themselves after using the toilet. "That sentiment still prevails," laughs Subramaniam. Additionally, "Europeans didn't rule here yet except in pockets like Goa where there has been violence by now," says Pillai. "So the Hindus are amused by these white people trying to destabilise their sense of god." The inherent pluralism of the Hindu faith with "so many forms... a conglomerate... a composite of so many traditions" meant that though many people were willing to accept that Christianity was a way to God and even recognised the value of the Bible, they refused to accept that it was "the only way to God," says Pillai, referring to a rather amusing analogy used at that time. "Just as a trader brings different customers to his shop by having multiple products on his counter, God has also created multiple options for humankind." Colonisation, however, seems to have significantly impacted how the faith evolved. "The conflict begins when the power equation changes," says Pillai. As the British Raj became more dominant and began directly ruling over different parts of the country, "pressure starts building up home in Europe," with the prevailing feedback being this: "Your job is not to promote Brahmins, support temples and take Hindu deities on processions. Your job is to support the missionary enterprise." As the power dynamics changed, people started becoming more and more nervous about their encounters with European powers since "it's no longer a debate between the equals. Now you feel that the white man is in government... sweeping up all these territories... controlling the temples... paying the salaries of the Brahmins," says Pillai. "So suddenly, the white man, in his religion, is a very conscious, serious person." Pillai also talks about how Hindus often came up with stories to explain this advent of Christianity and rebelled against it in different ways: dressing up the effigy of Ravana in the clothes of British administrators, for instance, during Ramlila performances. "At this point, these debates become very negative... very polemic," says Pillai. Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy contributed to these debates. "Even as he promotes Advaita Vedanta and this esoteric idea of a metaphysical, formless kind of God and a pure Hindu monotheism, in some ways, he's borrowing the Western structure," says Pillai. Just like how in the West, the prevailing narrative was that Catholicism corrupted Christianity and the Protestant Reformation was about restoring pure Christianity, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the founder of the Brahmo Samaj, believed that there was pure Hinduism, which got corrupted into the Puranic form. "So you're essentially taking that Western framework and applying it to Hinduism to develop a kind of Renaissance," believes Pillai. "The Western gaze sort of comes into play, and how we define Hinduism is also afflicted by this." This eventually became a more rigid Hindu identity and was later taken up by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and then Vinayak Savarkar, says Pillai. Despite this and repeated attempts at homogenisation of the faith, Pillai believes that Hindu culture is inherently pluralistic, with an innate capacity to accept, incorporate and move on. "This is also a form of evolution. We may not like it, but maybe this is how it's evolving at this juncture," he says. Am I Hindu? The session ends with Subramaniam asking another "cancellable" question: does Pillai identify as a Hindu? "I would say yes, but not in the conventional way where I think firstly that there is a god out there for us," he says, admitting that he does often go to a Shiva temple in Kerala that his family has been connected to for almost a thousand years. "I don't necessarily go there and look at the lingam and think, 'Oh, this is God,'" he says. Instead, what draws him to this tradition is the continuity of culture, the fact that so many people from the agrarian community he has descended from have looked at that same object for a millennium. "Frankly, our lives on the earth are like cockroaches... we are here, we die, and I don't think there's any further meaning to it," he says. "But by stepping into a sacred space that's been around for long enough time, I think we're able to somehow transcend the limits of this place and see something that people before us have seen."

rapidly warming world. India, Bolivia, Nigeria, and Malawi, speaking on behalf of a group of 45 least developed countries (LDCs), severely criticised the new climate finance package for the developing world. India argued that \$ 300 billion is insufficient to implement ambitious national climate plans known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and pointed out that when adjusted for inflation, it falls short of the previous \$ 100 billion goal agreed in 2009. IISD researchers said developed countries spending \$ 378 billion on fossil fuel subsidies shows that public funds are available but are being "directed in the wrong direction". They suggested that fiscal space freed up through fossil fuel subsidy reforms could be redirected to meet climate finance commitments. Fossil fuels — coal, oil, and gas — are the largest contributors to climate change, accounting for over 75 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions and nearly 90 per cent of all carbon dioxide emissions. Although many governments have taken steps to reduce the carbon intensity of their economies, certain policies still encourage fossil fuel production and consumption.

Beat the Blues with your plate: Can a fibre-rich diet fight depression?



Feeling down? What is on your plate might be playing a bigger role in your mood than you think. Depression is a growing concern in India, and while therapy and medication are essential tools for treatment, emerging research confirms that food profoundly impacts mental well-being. A recent meta-analysis of 18 studies, published in the journal Nutritional Neuroscience, found that a high-fibre diet significantly reduces the odds of depression, with five times greater benefits for adolescents than adults. A team of researchers led by Faezeh Saghaian from the Department of Community Nutrition, School of Nutritional Sciences and Dietetics at the University of Medical Sciences in Tehran, Iran, conducted a systematic search of electronic databases, up to May 2021.

Data from 18 publications (12 cross-sectional, five cohort and one case-control studies) on dietary fibre consumption in relation to depression or anxiety were included. For depression, 15 studies were conducted on adults and three others on adolescents. The review concluded that high intake of dietary fibre was protectively associated with depression in adults, in a dose-response fashion. The study showed that the total dietary fibre intake was associated with a 10% lower odds of depression in adults and a 57% lower odds in adolescents. Dose-response meta-analysis revealed an inverse linear association between total dietary fibre intake and odds of depression in adults; such that each 5-g increase in total dietary fibre intake was associated with a 5% reduction in risk of depression. An inverse significant association was observed between intake of fibre from vegetables and soluble fibre and odds of depression. However, cereal fibre, fibre from fruits and insoluble fibre were marginally associated with a reduction in depression, according to the study.

Depression in IndiaAccording to the 2016 National Mental Health Survey one in every 20 people in India suffer from depression. Conducted by the NIMHANS, depression was reported to be higher in women in the 40 to 49 age group and among those residing in metros. Equally high rates were reported from among the elderly with 3.5% of the population affected. The survey, conducted in 12 States, said that common mental disorders that include depression, anxiety and substance use are a huge burden on society affecting nearly 10% of the population. Hemant Bhargav, Associate Professor of Integrative Medicine at NIMHANS, said with depression on the rise in India, especially in adolescents, it is time to harness the power of the Indian diet, naturally abundant in fibre. "To boost your mood with your meals, it is essential to embrace the power of fibre while prioritising whole foods. Fill your plate with fresh, seasonal fruits and vegetables, whole grains like brown rice and oats, and protein-packed legumes like lentils that provide a variety of nutrients and fibre to support mental health," Dr. Bhargav said.

Rainbow on your plate"The more colourful your meals are, the better. Leafy greens, vibrant gourds, and salads that are boiled and fresh promote mental clarity and balance. Oats, barley, apples, and citrus fruits that are rich in soluble fibre are shown to have a strong connection to lower depression rates," the doctor explained. "It is essential to choose freshly cooked meals that are light, easy to digest (you should feel light in the stomach within four hours of eating), and leave you feeling energised, not sluggish. Ignite your digestive fire by adding warming spices like tur-

meric, cumin, and coriander to your meals. These spices not only enhance flavor but also offer mood-boosting and anti-inflammatory properties. Consider enjoying a comforting kashayam (herbal decoction) with these spices before meals to enhance digestion and absorption," he said. Besides, it is very important to create a peaceful eating environment. "Savour each bite with gratitude, and avoid overeating. Taking care of your mind starts with taking care of your body. However, if you are struggling with depression, it is essential to seek professional help. Talk to your doctor or a registered dietitian for personalised advice on dietary changes," he added.

Nutrient-rich dietRebecca Kuriyan Raj, Professor and head of the Division of Nutrition at St John's Research Institute in Bengaluru, said there have been no studies from India that specifically indicate dietary fibre as a standalone solution for preventing or managing depression. However, there is evidence suggesting that a nutrient-rich diet, of which fibre is an integral part, can play a significant role in the prevention and management of depression. "Our traditional diets naturally provide a diverse array of nutrients in one meal. A traditional Indian thali, for instance, often includes a mix of whole grains, pulses, vegetables, curd, delivering fibre, probiotics, and micronutrients. These nutrients support physical health and also contribute to mental well-being by improving gut health and reducing inflammation, both of which are linked to mood regulation," said Prof Raj. Shift towards ultra processed foodsHowever, with rapid urbanisation, there has been a significant shift towards ultra processed and convenience foods such as instant noodles, sugary beverages, and packaged meals snacks. These foods are typically high in refined carbohydrates, low in fibre, and often stripped of essential nutrients, she said. The shift from nutrient-dense traditional Indian meals to calorie-dense, nutrient-poor options may exacerbate mental health issues. Promoting the inclusion of fibre-rich traditional foods in modern diets, such as whole grains (millets, bajra), pulses (dal, chana), and fermented items (curd), could help address these challenges. Alongside, addressing lifestyle factors like physical activity, sleep, and stress management is crucial for a holistic approach to mental health, she added.

The gut-mind connection"Mental and gastrointestinal (gut) health possess a bidirectional connection. Poor gut health can lead to depression and vice versa," said Meenakshi Bajaj, nutritionist with the Government Omandurar Multi Super Speciality Hospital in Chennai. The gut microbiota houses trillions of beneficial and harmful bacteria. An imbalance in the ecosystem, known as dysbiosis, decreases production of neurotransmitters regulating mood. Recent research indicates that the gut functions as a "second brain," releasing mood-regulating chemicals (neurotransmitters) like serotonin, dopamine, and GABA that play a key role in mental health, she explained. Pro-inflammatory bacteria such as Eggerthella and Bacteroides, are linked with consumption of ultra processed foods (junk), encouraging growth of harmful bacteria, negatively affecting both gut and mental health.

Dysbiosis also causes a leaky gut. Chronic, low-grade inflammation in the gut is linked to depression. Items such as french fries, fried, processed chicken and meat, promote their growth. Diets low in fibre deteriorate gut health. Artificial additives such as artificial sweeteners in diet sodas and preservatives in packaged snacks, exacerbate gut dysbiosis. Poor blood glucose control (dysglycemia) due to diets rich in glycemic index and load and poor in dietary fibre, also create an inflammatory gut environment, increasing the risk of depression. Ms. Bajaj explained that beneficial gut bacteria ferment dietary fibre to produce Short Chain Fatty Acids, possessing anti-inflammatory properties that support brain health. Regular consumption of probiotics fermented rice-based beverages (Pazhyadu - leftover cooked rice soaked in water overnight) in the south, and fermented carrot, beet based Kaanji in the north help increasing the diversity of gut bacteria reduce inflammation and promote the production of mood-regulating neurotransmitters.

Rohtak cardiologist dies of cardiac arrest at 45: What's triggering young deaths?

The death of 45-year-old Dr Aditya Batra, a prominent interventional cardiologist from Rohtak and director of Holy Heart Hospital, after reportedly suffering a cardiac arrest (sudden stoppage of the heart's electrical rhythms) at his home, has once again spotlighted sudden cardiac deaths among the young. According to reports, he had performed two surgeries during the day before returning home. Later that night, he felt some pain in his chest and immediately ran to the bathroom, where he fainted. He was rushed to the hospital, where efforts were made to save his life by giving CPR for three hours, but he could not be revived. This raises an uncomfortable question: why are the very people trained to recognise heart disease so vulnerable to it themselves? "The answer," says Dr Ranjan Shetty, lead cardiologist and medical director, Sparsh Hospital, Bengaluru, "lies not in a single trigger but in the cumulative burden of chronic stress, sleep deprivation, burnout and delayed self-care that has become almost endemic in the medical profession."

A profession that normalises stressDoctors routinely work 24- to 36-hour shifts, make life-and-death decisions under constant pressure, skip meals, lose sleep and often neglect their own health checks. According to Dr Shetty, "the combination of long duty hours, irregular eating habits, chronic sleep deprivation and burnout creates a sustained inflammatory state in the body. Over time, this damages blood vessels, accelerates cholesterol plaque formation and raises the risk of coronary artery disease. Stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol also keep blood pressure elevated and increase the workload on the heart. Over time, this can raise blood pressure, increase inflammation, damage the inner lining of blood vessels and accelerate the build-up of plaque in the coronary arteries. The irony is that doctors frequently dismiss early warning signs in themselves." Symptoms such as unexplained fatigue, mild chest discomfort, nausea, palpitations or light-headedness are often attributed to exhaustion after a demanding shift rather than investigated as possible cardiac warning signals. Why are even fit doctors not immune? Many of the doctors who have died suddenly were physically active and appeared healthy. But, says Shetty, heart disease is multifactorial. "Regular exercise alone cannot eliminate risk if other factors — including family history, hypertension, diabetes, prolonged stress, poor sleep and long periods of inactivity during work — remain unchecked. A person may complete a daily workout yet spend the rest of the day sedentary in operating theatres, clinics or offices."

Stress also affects the cardiovascular system in ways that routine tests may not immediately reveal. Chronic in-



flammation can destabilise arterial plaques, while surges in stress hormones increase heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen demand, potentially triggering an event in someone with underlying disease. "In susceptible individuals, a surge in stress hormones during or after an intense work period can increase the heart's oxygen demand and, if a significant blockage already exists, trigger a heart attack. In severe cases, the heart attack can lead to fatal rhythm disturbances and sudden cardiac arrest," explains Dr Shetty. The two terms are often used interchangeably but describe different conditions. A heart attack occurs when blood flow to part of the heart muscle is blocked, usually by a clot in a narrowed coronary artery. Sudden cardiac arrest, on the other hand, is an electrical malfunction that causes the heart to stop pumping effectively. A severe heart attack — particularly one involving the left main coronary artery or the left anterior descending artery — can trigger dangerous rhythm disturbances that culminate in sudden cardiac arrest. This is why some patients collapse suddenly despite receiving immediate medical attention. Survival depends on minutes. Even inside hospitals, survival from sudden cardiac arrest is not guaranteed. "Immediate, high-quality CPR and rapid defibrillation remain the cornerstones of treatment. Survival improves substantially when resuscitation begins immediately, although outcomes still depend on the extent of heart muscle damage and the underlying cause," says Dr Shetty. He feels that managing cardiovascular risk among healthcare workers is as much about institutional changes as much about individual responsibility. Protected sleep, reasonable work hours, regular preventive health screenings, stress management, healthier food options during shifts and a culture that encourages doctors to seek care for themselves are increasingly being viewed as essential rather than optional. "I have noticed doctors talking about sleep deprivation as a badge of honour.

A trip down chocolate lane



When my wife returned from her Europe trip not long ago, she brought back an exquisite collection of chocolates. Dark, milk, white — the spectrum seemed endless. Yummy doesn't even begin to describe them. I found myself in a private chocolate haven, savouring each piece in treasured moments. From the bitter notes of dark Belgian chocolate to the sweet, caramel undertones of a Swiss milk bar, each bite was a story waiting to be told. The first bite was sheer bliss. Each nibble was a journey through rich, velvety flavours that melted in my mouth, sending waves of euphoria through my senses. The chocolate bar quickly vanished, leaving me craving more. The house was filled with laughter, the air thick with the intoxicating aroma of cocoa. It was a day to remember, a testament to the fact that chocolate is meant to be shared, to bring people together. But truth be told, I am, at 67, quite possessive about my full bar.

And isn't there a touch of romance in every bite? I fondly recall the first box of chocolates I gifted to my wife on our anniversary. The way her eyes lit up was magical, as if each piece was a promise of joy wrapped in shiny foil. It was love at first bite! Luxurious, passionate, and exciting, chocolate is the universal language of love and indulgence. As my centenarian mother used to say, "Chocolate doesn't need a reason or season to be eaten." Even at 99, she rel-

In Kerala, declining fertility levels push up maternal mortality ratio

Kerala's maternal mortality ratio, currently the lowest in the country at 19 per one lakh live births, is now climbing steadily, much to the consternation of the Health Department. And the reasons for the increase may be beyond the control of officials. Except during 2020-21, when Kerala lost many mothers to COVID-19, the State has consistently maintained a firm grip over maternal mortality. Ironically, the State's MMR is now spiking not because more mothers are dying in Kerala, but because there are fewer child births than ever in the State.

The State, which used to have an average of 5-5.5 lakh live births annually, has now hit an all-time low of 3,93,231 births, according to latest data of the State's Department of Economics and Statistics. The full Vital Statistics Report (VSR, 2023) is expected to be published by the end of the month. The Health Department puts live births in the State between 3.4 lakh and 3.9 lakh currently. And it is this dip in the denominator that is pushing the State's MMR up and not necessarily an actual spike in maternal deaths. The decline in fertility levels and changing demographics, many fear, are having an irrevocable impact on the State's social fabric, and have been at the heart of many policy-level discussions in Kerala, especially the past three years. From an average of 5.5 lakh annual births since the 1980s, the graph went below the five-lakh mark for the first time in 2016, when 4,96,262 live births were recorded.

Since 2018, the figure has been plummeting steadily, never going above the five-lakh mark again. The last published VSR (2021) recorded the total number of live births in Kerala as 4,19,767. According to the last Sample Registration System (SRS) special bulletin on Maternal Mortality in India (2018-20), brought out by the Registrar General of India, Kerala had an MMR of 19. However, while SRS depended on a sample survey to arrive at the figure, the State Health Department's actual estimates of maternal deaths - Kerala has near 100% institutional deliveries - put the MMR at 29.

"As part of the Sustainable Development Goals, Kerala was targeting an MMR of 20 by 2030. However that looks quite unlikely now, given that birth rates are falling steeply. We reckon the State's MMR in 2024-25 has already climbed to 32," says V.P. Paily, a senior consultant in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. "It would now be a herculean task to hold the MMR at 20. Because, while we have successfully addressed all major medical causes of maternal mortality, the issues that are impacting the State's MMR now are not something essentially within our control. We are seeing the impact of demographic changes like low fertility rates, immigration and changing societal attitudes towards marriage and childbirth in Kerala much earlier than we thought we would," says Dr. Paily. "It has been three decades since the birth rate began falling in Kerala and the steep fall in the number of children born now is part of a larger trend. But the problem is that once the fertility rate comes down, the graph rarely goes up because demographic transition is hard to reverse," says S. Irudaya Rajan, Chairman of the International Institute of Migration and Development (IIMAD). First to achieve replacement fertility levels

Kerala led the demographic transition in the South, attaining the replacement level fertility rate of 2.1 in 1987-88. Replacement level fertility is the average number of children a woman needs to have to replace herself and her generation, so that the population is stable. The State's total fertility rate (TFR) went below the replacement level in 1991 and remained stagnant at 1.8-1.7 for years, before

ished her bite. Young or old, we all fall prey to its irresistible charm. A few years ago, I had the ecstatic experience of visiting the Philip Island Chocolate Factory in Melbourne. It was like stepping into a modern-day wonderland. The factory was a marvel, brimming with an array of delectable selections and free samples that would make any chocolate-lover swoon. One section allowed visitors to make their own chocolate designs and recipes, adding ingredients such as nuts, fruits, and even spices, and glossily wrap it like a ready-to-market stuff. I felt like a true chocolatier, crafting my personal masterpiece and eating it on the spot.

Chocolate there was more than just food; it was a culture. The tour was a delicious adventure, complete with a river of melted chocolate and intricate chocolate sculptures that seemed too enticing to eat. But eat we did, with child-like glee and sticky fingers. It was an experience that underscored chocolate's magical ability to spark joy. Trust me, World Chocolate Day may offer an extra excuse for a treat, but for a true chocoholic, the longing is a daily temptation. I recall an afternoon working from home, feeling the familiar tug of chocolate desire. I reached for my hidden stash and indulged in a couple of pieces (or five?). Now, how do you eat chocolate? Do you let it melt slowly on your tongue, savouring every nuance, or take quick bites, eager for the next piece? Or perhaps you prefer a big bite, letting the flavours explode? Those moments when chocolate gets a little messy — a smear on your lips or a slurp from your fingers — add to the charm. For me, there's no wrong way to eat chocolate. Each method has its own delight, and every bite is pure, unadulterated joy. As I conclude this chocolate journey, let me share a truth: chocolate has a magical ability to uplift spirits. As the saying goes, "Nine out of 10 people like chocolate. The tenth person always lies." Even celebrities aren't immune to its charms. Oprah Winfrey, the famous American talk show host, once said, "My idea of heaven is a great big baked potato and someone to share it with; of course, chocolate for dessert."



touching 1.5 in 2020. The current TFR of Kerala (2021 VSR) is 1.46. This means that a couple of reproductive age in Kerala mostly have only one child and sometimes none. It is possible that the TFR will drop to 1.35 once the latest data on live births are accounted for. "Already, the impact of migration, especially the fact that a chunk of those in the reproductive age group are going abroad for higher education or jobs and choosing to settle down there; and the economic impact of the loss of a young workforce and changing attitudes regarding marriage and fertility are hurting us. In the next 10 years, the proportion of elderly population in Kerala is expected to go above that of children and the magnitude of the issues related to the care and welfare of this population is likely to overwhelm us, even though we have been anticipating it," Dr. Rajan said.

But the birth rate is expected to plummet further and the consequences would be starkly evident in the next two decades itself. Not just declining birth rates, the State is also beginning to see the consequences of a higher age at marriage and delayed childbearing. The proportion of older mothers and the increase in pregnancy-related morbidities in this group and their reproductive health issues are emerging concerns, though the State is yet to adduce hard evidence to substantiate this.

"It has been over 35 years since we attained the replacement level fertility rate and the cohort of those women in the reproductive age of 15-49 years we had then has now been replaced by a new cohort. The fertility is low in this new cohort of women, either by will or by nature, so naturally the number of childbirths will go down. Many in this group choose not to get married or not to have children. And even the number of women in this cohort has begun to dwindle," points out Sajini B. Nair, Social Scientist, Population Research Centre. According to the last Census in 2011, the female population in the reproductive age group of 15-49 years in Kerala was 93,32,494 and the Registrar General of India's projected figure for 2021 was 92,23,500. Meanwhile, the State had not published the VSR after 2021, claiming that there are reporting errors. There is also an ongoing debate whether Kerala is registering its births properly and on time and the actual data of child births in the State collected by various official agencies are not available in the public domain now. "The demographic transition in the State has been so fast that no long-term projections are possible. We do not know how much abortions contribute to the declining number of live births because we have absolutely no data on this. It would also be interesting to study if our youngsters settling down abroad are choosing to have their children there for reasons of obtaining citizenship and how much this has contributed to the declining birth rate," Dr. Sajini says.

River interlinking, the fount of environmental disaster

On December 25, 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the Ken-Betwa River Link Project, which aims to solve the water scarcity in the Bundelkhand region that covers parts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The project also includes the construction of a dam located within the Panna Tiger Reserve, raising concerns about its submergence. Upon completion, this project will link the supposed water surplus Ken river with the Betwa in drought-stricken Bundelkhand — an area that had 58% forest cover in 1938. A misplaced model This project, which costs around 745,000 crore, was launched despite the objections raised by experts, including members of an empowered committee appointed by the Supreme Court of India, and by circumventing the law that has strict terms for allowing hydroelectric power projects. Models of grandiose technological fixes as the solution to all water-related problems have gathered momentum. Politicians are now touting the concept of river interlinking for

inter-basin water transfers as a geoengineering solution to continued water depletion in India. The concept of inter-basin transfer was proposed 130 years ago by Sir Arthur Cotton, who designed irrigation dams in the Godavari and Krishna river valleys. M. Visvesvaraya, an early icon among Indian engineers, further refined this idea. K.L. Rao and Captain Dinshaw J. Dastur subsequently expanded the scope of this concept in 1970 and 1980. Initially termed the 'National Water Grid', this concept re-emerged as the 'River-Interlinking Project' (ILR) from the Ministry of Water Resources to transfer surplus waters from the Ganga and the Brahmaputra to water-deficient regions in central and southern India. Following this, the National Water Development Agency (NWDA) was established in 1982 to conduct surveys and investigations, and to prepare feasibility reports for links under the National Perspective Plan. The NWDA identified 30 links for feasibility studies, divided into 14 Himalayan and 16 Peninsular river links.

Vessels to and from India among top applicants for Strait of Hormuz passage



MERCHANT VESSELS to and from India were among the top applicants for passage through the Iran-recommended routes to cross the Strait of Hormuz in the three weeks following the June 17 US-Iran peace MoU, as per Iranian data. According to Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA), set up by Iran to regulate the flow of maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, over 200 non-Iranian vessels coordinated with it to receive passage permits and insurance coverage during the three week period.

Among the transit requests to exit the Persian Gulf received by the Islamic Republic's PGSA set up recently by Tehran, those bound for India had a 20% share, second only to China's 21%. The share of the rest of Asia was 29%, while that for intra-region (in the Persian Gulf) movements was 22%. The share of the rest of the world was 8%. To enter the Persian Gulf, of all transit requests, India topped the list of origins with a 21% share, followed by China at 19%. Other Asian countries had a combined share of 20%, intra-region movement requests accounted for 24%, while the rest of the world had a share of 16%. The PGSA didn't provide the absolute number of transit requests received. This data also doesn't include vessels that crossed or attempted to cross the strait without seeking Tehran's permission. Vessels to and from India among top applicants for Hormuz passage Source: Persian Gulf Strait Authority

Post these three weeks after the MoU, tensions resurfaced in the region, leading to a significant drop in maritime traffic. While vessel movements have not completely stopped, they are sharply down following the resurgence of conflict around the critical trade artery. On its part, Iran and the PGSA maintain that the strait is closed. The data is in line with trade patterns considering India and China have traditionally been the major destination for cargo, particularly energy shipments, exiting the strait, with the rest of Asia making up a bulk of the remaining traffic. Around 40% of India's crude oil imports, 60% of its LNG imports, and a whopping 90% of its LPG imports came from West Asia through the strait. The country's dependence on imports stands at over 88% for oil, 60% for LPG, and about 50% for

natural gas, which is imported as LNG.

Before the war broke out late February, the Strait of Hormuz usually accounted for a fifth of global oil and LNG flows. Given the high dependence on West Asia for energy and other imports like fertilisers, it was expected that vessel traffic between India and the Persian Gulf would pick up. What is now playing out in the Strait of Hormuz is a battle between Iran and the US to effectively control the waterway. The US and its allies have been encouraging vessels to use the strait's waters hugging Oman as an alternative to Tehran-designated lanes. The stark differences in the MoU's interpretation and the vagueness in its terms have now emerged as the flashpoints between Tehran and Washington. Maritime data shows that ever since last week's fare-up, which followed Iran's targeting of a few vessels taking the Omani route through the strait, even the vessels crossing the strait are mostly doing so using paths designated by Iran. During the war, Iran actively regulated the flow of vessels through the strait, allowing only a handful to pass, that too using routings dictated by it. Following the June MoU with the US, Iran continued to insist that vessels cross the strait only through the routings designated by it, and that too after seeking permission from the PGSA. Tehran also plans to impose a service fee for transits, but at a later date. Earlier this week, US president Donald Trump even proposed a 20% charge by the US Navy to facilitate safe passage of commercial ships through the strait, only to backtrack the very next day. According to the data released by the PGSA, of the 200-plus transit applications it received in the three weeks following the MoU, 53% were for exiting the Persian Gulf, while 47% were to enter the Gulf. The PGSA said that it approved 79% of the applications, while 14% were under process as of July 14. It said that the average time taken to process the transit applications was 50 hours. As for requests by type of vessels, tankers had the highest share at 41%, followed by bulk carriers at 27%. Container ships, LNG carriers, and service vessels accounted for 18%, 2%, and 1%, respectively, with other vessel types accounting for an 11% share. According to vessel tracking data from commodity market analytics firm Kpler, there were just 14 vessel crossings on Sunday (July 12), down from 24 on July 11 and 19 on July 10. As per data from S&P Global, the last time ship transits were lower than this level was on June 14, three days before the US and Iran inked their peace deal MoU. There are reports that transits have grown slightly over the past three days, but most pertain to Iran-linked vessels. Since mid-June, vessel movements through the strait had risen meaningfully, even crossing 90 on June 24, with the average being between 40 and 50 on most days in the three weeks that followed the MoU, industry data shows. But these were still lower than the pre-war levels of up to 140 daily transits.

In a first, EPFO interest for FY26 credited in one go to 35 crore accounts



EPFO interest for FY26 credited in one go, EPFO interest credited in one go, EPFO interest credited, EPFO interest, epfo, Employees Provident Fund Organisation, Indian express news, current affairs EPFO's assets under management are estimated to be Rs 32 lakh crore of assets for around 35 crore accounts, out of which roughly 8 crore are active contributing accounts. For the first time, the retirement fund body Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has credited the interest for its nearly 35 crore member accounts by July 15, way ahead of the last year's disbursement completion in September. This marks the wrapping up of the interest crediting process by the EPFO after having migrated its 123 databases spread across its regional centres into a centralised national database, a senior official told

Last week, Labour and Employment Minister Mansukh Mandaviya had said that the annual interest of Rs 1.44 lakh crore for the financial year 2025-26 was going to be auto-processed on the new portal and verified by field authorities before being credited to the EPF accounts by July 15. Of the nearly 35 crore accounts in total, the EPFO had credited the interest rate for 30 crore verified accounts till Tuesday, and the verification and interest credit for the remaining 5 crore accounts was set to be completed on Wednesday, the official said.

"This is for the first time in the history of EPFO that the interest has been credited by July 15. Last year, the interest crediting process was fully completed in September (2025), after having credited the interest for 80-90% of the member accounts till July-end. In the previous year, the process of interest credit disbursement went on till Novem-

ber. This time interest crediting has happened in one go," the official said. What set apart this year's interest crediting process at the EPFO was the retirement fund body's move towards a revamped portal with a centralised database by merging information across all regional offices. Earlier, every regional office had its own database which made the process of verification before crediting of the interest a challenging process. The official said the EPFO first merged "123 databases into one single national database". "It involved migration of nearly 1,400 crore transactions and also of employer records. In total, 1,700 crore records were migrated as part of the exercise," the official elaborated when asked about the transition process.

Since the centralised database meant merger of financial data, the EPFO carried out additional steps to ensure verification of accounts and their balances for a complete matching of details before and after the migration process. "We finished the migration on June 30. We did interest calculations and credit on July 1 and July 2. We wanted our field officers to verify whether the migration from the old legacy system to this was properly done. So, they had a view of the old member ledger and the new member ledger, and they compared the opening balance with the closing balance plus interest. They checked whether it was all matching. We wanted to carry out this exercise so that everyone is assured and there is confidence that the entire migration process went off smoothly," the official said. EPFO's assets under management are estimated to be Rs 32 lakh crore of assets for around 35 crore accounts, out of which roughly 8 crore are active contributing accounts. The EPFO has rolled out its new revamped portal that enables automated processes, including crediting of interest, claim verification and informing members about the amount they are eligible to withdraw, aimed at reducing claim rejection rates. The EPFO portal was shut from June 26-28. Now that the portal has resumed, the EPFO has settled nearly 11 lakh claims in one go amounting to Rs 3,000 crore, the official said, adding that all the backlog of claims and current cases of advances will be cleared shortly. The Ministry of Labour and Employment has revamped the EPFO portal under the CITES (Centralised IT Enabled Services) project, an initiative to modernise EPFO's service delivery through automation and rule-based processing.

Tech Mahindra shares climb over 3 per cent after strong June-quarter results

New Delhi: Shares of IT company Tech Mahindra on Friday climbed over 3 per cent after the firm reported a 28.4 per cent rise in consolidated net profit for the June quarter to Rs 1,465 crore and expressed confidence about the demand environment. The stock gained 3.41 per cent to Rs 1,562.90 on the BSE. At the NSE, the stock climbed 3.48 per cent to Rs 1,562.90.

India's fifth-largest IT services firm on Thursday said growth in the June quarter was broad-based, led by manufacturing and financial services, with strong momentum also in healthcare and retail. Tech Mahindra's management expressed confidence about a "sustained" performance through the rest of the year, provided the macroeconomic situation does not change dramatically. The company said its strong order book, long-standing client relationships and robust first-quarter performance give it confidence in sustaining growth through the remainder of the year and outperforming the peer average. Tech Mahindra's revenue from operations rose 17.7 per cent to about Rs 15,712 crore during the quarter ended June. In dollar terms, the Q1FY27 revenue at USD 1,660 million was up 2.2 per cent sequen-

tially and rose 6.1 per cent year-on-year in reported terms.

"We have delivered an extremely strong quarter, clearly industry-leading growth, way ahead of our consensus estimates. So clearly, we're seeing a positive demand environment from the company perspective... all the hard work that has gone into capability building, hiring talent, winning new clients, winning consolidation deals is paying off for us," Mohit Joshi, CEO and Managing Director, Tech Mahindra, said during the Q1 results briefing. Tech Mahindra cited the three-year turnaround plan it had presented in April 2024 with clear goals and measurable markers for success and said it is seeing increased benefits from the investments and actions taken over the past few years.



Rohtak cardiologist dies of cardiac arrest at 45: What's triggering young deaths?



The death of 45-year-old Dr Aditya Batra, a prominent interventional cardiologist from Rohtak and director of Holy Heart Hospital, after reportedly suffering a cardiac arrest (sudden stoppage of the heart's electrical rhythms) at his home, has once again spotlighted sudden cardiac deaths among the young. According to reports, he had performed two surgeries during the day before returning home. Later that night, he felt some pain in his chest and immediately ran to the bathroom, where he fainted. He was rushed to the hospital, where efforts were made to save his life by giving CPR for three hours, but he could not be revived. This raises an uncomfortable question: why are the very people trained to recognise heart disease so vulnerable to it themselves? The answer," says Dr Ranjan Shetty, lead cardiologist and medical director, Sparsh Hospital, Bengaluru, "lies not in a single trigger but in the cumulative burden of chronic stress, sleep deprivation, burnout and delayed self-care that has become almost endemic in the medical profession."

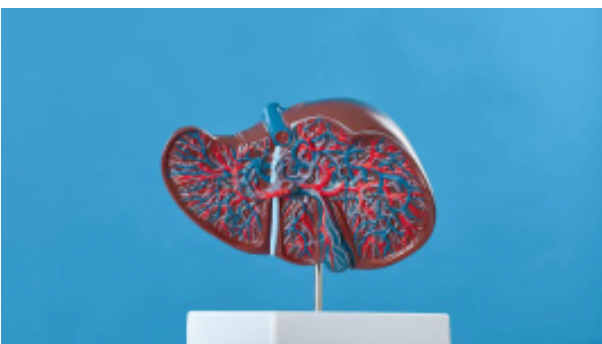
A profession that normalises stress Doctors routinely work 24- to 36-hour shifts, make life-and-death decisions under constant pressure, skip meals, lose sleep and often neglect their own health checks. According to Dr Shetty, "the combination of long duty hours, irregular eating habits, chronic sleep deprivation and burnout creates a sustained inflammatory state in the body. Over time, this damages blood vessels, accelerates cholesterol plaque formation and raises the risk of coronary artery disease. Stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol also keep blood pressure elevated and increase the workload on the heart. Over time, this can raise blood pressure, increase inflammation, damage the inner lining of blood vessels and accelerate the build-up of plaque in the coronary arteries. The irony is that doctors frequently dismiss early warning signs in themselves." Symptoms such as unexplained fatigue, mild chest discomfort, nausea, palpitations or light-headedness are often attributed to exhaustion after a demanding shift

rather than investigated as possible cardiac warning signals. Why are even fit doctors not immune? Many of the doctors who have died suddenly were physically active and appeared healthy. But, says Shetty, heart disease is multifactorial. "Regular exercise alone cannot eliminate risk if other factors — including family history, hypertension, diabetes, prolonged stress, poor sleep and long periods of inactivity during work — remain unchecked. A person may complete a daily workout yet spend the rest of the day sedentary in operating theatres, clinics or offices."

Stress also affects the cardiovascular system in ways that routine tests may not immediately reveal. Chronic inflammation can destabilise arterial plaques, while surges in stress hormones increase heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen demand, potentially triggering an event in someone with underlying disease. "In susceptible individuals, a surge in stress hormones during or after an intense work period can increase the heart's oxygen demand and, if a significant blockage already exists, trigger a heart attack. In severe cases, the heart attack can lead to fatal rhythm disturbances and sudden cardiac arrest," explains Dr Shetty. The two terms are often used interchangeably but describe different conditions. A heart attack occurs when blood flow to part of the heart muscle is blocked, usually by a clot in a narrowed coronary artery. Sudden cardiac arrest, on the other hand, is an electrical malfunction that causes the heart to stop pumping effectively. A severe heart attack — particularly one involving the left main coronary artery or the left anterior descending artery — can trigger dangerous rhythm disturbances that culminate in sudden cardiac arrest. This is why some patients collapse suddenly despite receiving immediate medical attention. Even inside hospitals, survival from sudden cardiac arrest is not guaranteed. "Immediate, high-quality CPR and rapid defibrillation remain the cornerstones of treatment. Survival improves substantially when resuscitation begins immediately, although outcomes still depend on the extent of heart muscle damage and the underlying cause," says Dr Shetty.

He feels that managing cardiovascular risk among healthcare workers is as much about institutional changes as much about individual responsibility. Protected sleep, reasonable work hours, regular preventive health screenings, stress management, healthier food options during shifts and a culture that encourages doctors to seek care for themselves are increasingly being viewed as essential rather than optional. "I have noticed doctors talking about sleep deprivation as a badge of honour. Chronic overwork is eroding your body and eating into your quality of life. If you aren't fit yourself, how will you take care of patients?" asks Dr Shetty.

Early signs of liver disease: 5 symptoms you should never ignore



The liver quietly performs hundreds of essential functions every day, from processing nutrients and filtering toxins to producing proteins and aiding digestion. Because it can continue working even when damaged, liver disorders often develop gradually, with symptoms that may be subtle or mistaken for everyday health complaints. Recognising these early warning signs can help people seek medical care before the condition progresses. In an Instagram post, Dr Kunal Sood highlighted five early signs that could point to an underlying liver disorder. He wrote, "?? Feeling tired all the time. Fatigue is one of the most common symptoms of chronic liver disease. It may reflect changes in brain signalling, inflammation, muscle loss, poor sleep, anaemia, or reduced exercise tolerance rather than liver enzymes alone."

He also noted, "?? Frequent nausea or loss of appetite. The liver produces bile to help digest fats, and liver disease can disrupt normal digestion. Delayed stomach emptying, inflammation, altered taste, abdominal bloating, and reduced appetite are all recognised contributors to nausea

and poor food intake." Another sign he mentioned was "?? Yellowing of the eyes or skin. Jaundice occurs when bilirubin builds up because the liver cannot properly process or excrete it. It may result from liver disease, excess red blood cell breakdown, or bile duct obstruction. New or worsening jaundice always deserves prompt medical evaluation." He further highlighted "?? Easy bruising. The liver makes many of the proteins needed for normal blood clotting and also helps regulate platelet production. As liver function declines, bruising and abnormal bleeding can become more common, especially when accompanied by nosebleeds, gum bleeding, or black stools." Finally, he pointed to "?? Swelling in the legs or abdomen. Liver scarring can increase pressure in the portal circulation, causing fluid retention and swelling in the legs or abdomen. Low albumin levels may worsen this because albumin helps keep fluid inside blood vessels." But how specific are these symptoms to liver disease, and when should they prompt medical attention? We asked an expert to explain. When common symptoms may signal liver disease

Dr Palleeti Siva Karthik Reddy, MBBS MD general medicine, FAIG, Consultant physician at Elite Care Clinic, tells indianexpress.com, "While fatigue, nausea and loss of appetite are common and often temporary, they warrant medical evaluation if they persist for more than two weeks, progressively worsen, or occur alongside symptoms such as yellowing of the eyes or skin, dark urine, pale stools, unexplained weight loss, or abdominal swelling." Liver disease rarely presents with a single symptom. Dr Reddy states that it is usually the combination, persistence and progression of these signs that should raise concern. Individuals should avoid self-medicating and seek timely medical advice, as early diagnosis can significantly improve outcomes.

Why some lean and healthy people still experience blood sugar spikes

Blood sugar is often thought to be closely tied to body weight and eating habits. Many people assume that those who are lean, physically active and eat a balanced diet are unlikely to experience significant blood sugar spikes, while people with less healthy lifestyles are expected to have poorer glucose control. However, real-life experiences and emerging research suggest that the picture is far more complex. Some healthy, lean individuals experience unexpectedly high blood sugar spikes after meals, while others on diets that appear less nutritious maintain relatively stable glucose levels. This raises important questions about the many factors that influence blood sugar beyond food choices alone. Could genetics, muscle mass, sleep, stress, hormones, the gut microbiome or differences in insulin sensitivity help explain these contrasting responses? We asked an expert to unpack why blood sugar regulation varies so widely from person to person and what it means for everyday health.

Blood sugar spikes in healthy, lean people Kanikka Malhotra, consultant dietician and certified diabetes educator, tells indianexpress.com, "Body weight is a poor proxy for metabolic health. A person can be thin outside and metabolically obese inside, a condition often called TOFI, thin outside, fat inside, where visceral fat sits quietly around the liver and pancreas even when BMI looks perfect. Add to this genetic variation in insulin secretion, receptor sensitivity and beta cell reserve, and you get two people eating identical thalis with very different glucose curves." She adds that some lean individuals inherit a smaller first-phase insulin response, meaning their bodies release insulin slightly later after a meal, allowing glucose to climb before control kicks in. "Meanwhile, someone heavier but physically active and muscular may be shuttling glucose efficiently into muscle glycogen stores, blunting the spike entirely. Muscle,



not weight, is often the real metabolic currency. This is why glucose stability should never be assumed from appearance alone, and why every lean person is not automatically a metabolically healthy person," notes the expert.

Post-meal glucose is not decided at the plate; it is decided by the state of the body receiving that plate. One poor night of sleep can reduce insulin sensitivity by nearly a third the next day, Malhotra says, making an identical breakfast spike higher simply because you slept badly. Cortisol from unmanaged stress pushes the liver to release stored glucose even without eating anything, so a stressful morning meeting can spike sugar as much as a sugary snack. "Muscle mass matters enormously since muscle is the largest glucose storage site in the body, meaning two people with the same weight but different muscle mass can have very different curves. Gut microbiome diversity influences how quickly carbohydrates are broken down and absorbed. Even meal sequence matters; eating vegetables and protein before rice or roti can meaningfully flatten the curve. Glucose control is really a 24-hour lifestyle report card, not a single meal decision," mentions Malhotra.

Lord's ODI could be Rohit Sharma's last match for India



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

The third and final ODI against England at Lord's on July 19 could be Rohit Sharma's last match for India. The BCCI's senior selection committee is learnt to have informed him that they have decided to "move on" from him after the England series. The panel is learnt to have spoken to Sharma, along with coach Gautam Gambhir, last week. According to sources, the selection committee wants to give youngsters like Yashasvi Jaiswal, who has been waiting in the wings, a chance, and has made it clear that it doesn't

see a role for Sharma in the 2027 World Cup. "The selectors have informed Rohit that he does not figure in their scheme of things after the England tour and they are moving on from him after this series. He wanted to continue, especially after working on his fitness. The selectors have left the ball in Sharma's court," said a source in the Indian board. It is learnt that Sharma spoke to a few BCCI officials on the sidelines of the England series, and the opener wasn't happy with the decision. Sharma has already retired from T20s, stepping away on June 29, 2024, hours after leading India to the World Cup title, and from Test cricket on May 7, 2025, a decision announced on Instagram ahead of India's tour of England that summer. The selection committee removed Sharma as ODI captain last year, replacing him with Shubman Gill. The panel, in consultation with the team management, is learnt to be keen on giving younger players a chance, keeping the future of Indian cricket in mind. Sharma's ODI captaincy record includes leading India to the 2023 World Cup final, where the team's all-out attacking approach from the top of the order redefined how India batted in the format. The following year, that same bold, aggressive template was carried over to India's triumphant 2024 T20 World Cup campaign, also under his leadership.

Enzo Fernandez begged Messi to stay in 2016. Now he carries him

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Go back and watch Enzo Fernandez when the English boos drown out the Argentine national anthem in Atlanta. Notice the ironclad grip he has on the shoulders of Alexis MacAllister and Nahuel Molina. Not one Argentine singing, all of them screaming. Screaming back. Eleven against all. Themes of the Falklands, memories of every battle against England wrought in their minds. And there is Enzo, an able conductor, now a midfield general, guiding them through that hailstorm of emotion, and later, skill. He is neither Riquelme, nor is he Redondo. But in a minefield surrounded by Harry Kane, Jude Bellingham, Declan Rice and Elliot Anderson, four astute English ball-winners, Enzo had only one request: pass me the ball. Enzo asked for the ball 75 times in a 90-minute war, the most of any Argentine, Messi included.

At 25, this is his second World Cup campaign. He is arguably Argentina's second-most influential player behind Messi. That Enzo-to-Messi link is the lifeblood of Argentina's football transitioning from its midfield to its offense. On Wednesday, he did it all. Just like he did back in Qatar when Scaloni, running out of options on making Argentina tick, brought him on against Mexico, a decision that skyrocketed Messi's international trajectory and brought a South American team to the forefront of world football again. Enzo Fernandez celebrates after scoring his side's first goal during the World Cup semifinal against England. (AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell) Enzo Fernandez celebrates after scoring his side's first goal during the World Cup semifinal against England.

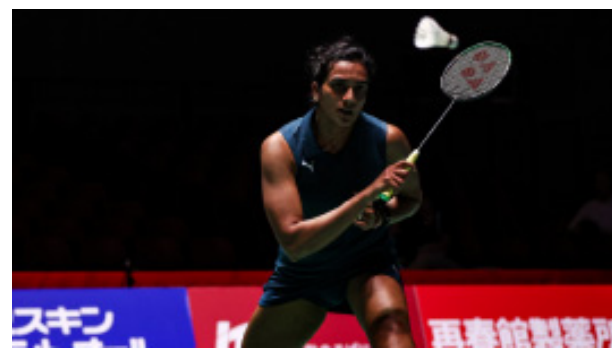
Back then, Enzo was known as one of the best products to come out of River Plate. Born to Raul and Marta Fernandez, his name itself set his destiny up. There is a coincidence that Raul Fernandez and Zinedine Zidane both named their sons Enzo based on the same footballer, Uruguayan legend Enzo Francescoli. The attacking midfielder won three Copa titles for Uruguay but it was his exploits for River that elevated his legendary status in Argentina. The long-time River supporting father had no option. Enzo's childhood was not easy. His father was a construction worker, always on the lookout for jobs. His mother worked as a cleaner. With four brothers to feed, football needed to be more than passion. River Plate spotted his talent. One of the first scouting reports on him came back with a line that stands true today: 'He was so young, but you could see how intelligent he was.' This was at the age of 5. The teenage years were tough. He was called 'fatty', for being short and putting on some weight. He fell behind in age-group football but at the age of 17, coaches started to notice his



on-ball talents, particularly in that no-man's land between a midfield and offense. Soon a push to the first team happened. From there, Enzo's rise has been mercurial, first landing in Benfica, then winning the 2022 World Cup and then moving to the Premier League with Chelsea. Now there are talks of Real Madrid and Chelsea in a desperate tug-of-war over him. The England semi-final performance showed why. All through a volatile evening, Enzo tested the scope of his rifle. The first shot came in the 37th minute. Messi tried his luck first and the rebound fell to Enzo who took a pop from far out. The ball flew over Pickford's crossbar. It wouldn't be the last of the night. In the 60th minute, Enzo went for it again. This time it was from the right side, outside the English box. Gordon had already scored and Argentina were down a goal. To most it may have seemed like a wasteful attempt; but Enzo was one of the few calibrating their right foot. The last of those adjustments came in the 84th minute. Pickford was finally called into action, with Enzo's third long-range shot of the evening needing to be parried out of danger. And then came the goal. Eerily similar to a guided missile that he had launched against the Netherlands in Qatar in 2022. Only that shot hit the post. Against England, he timed it better, and struck it harder.

The ball sailed in and the comeback was on. Minutes later, Lautaro Martinez headed the ball in and a trip to the World Cup final was complete. In 2016, when Messi decided to take a premature retirement from international football, Enzo, then a teenager, was one of the many young Argentines who wrote to Messi begging him not to give up on his World Cup dream. Then in Qatar, Enzo became the final piece Messi and Argentina needed to complete their fairytale. In a powder-keg that is a World Cup semi-final against England, the midfielder ended the night hoisting Messi on his shoulders as the capacity crowd in Atlanta chanted the legend's name. One more final to go. One more World Cup to win for his idol.

Sindhu makes Japan Open semifinal after Nozomi Okuhara withdrawal



PV Sindhu might fancy making headway towards a title, as she reached the Japan Open semifinals after a withdrawal from Nozomi Okuhara on Friday. The Indian World No 10 thus makes her third semifinal of the season – a Super 750 semis Last 4 entry, after Malaysian Super 1000 and Australia Super 500. The 31-year-old will face

Chinese Chen Yufei, whom she trails 6-8. But relatively fresh and moving well, Sindhu will back herself to beat an opponent she hasn't defeated since her 2019 World title, that's for near 7 years now. Yufei has been the most consistent player this season, and is top ranked on the World tour race, though her official ranking is No 4.

However she is vulnerable in third sets in semis, if Sindhu can push her into a decider. The 28-year-old Olympic champion from Tokyo 2021, won Indonesia Masters this year, and made finals at couple of Super 500s in Thailand and Malaysia Maaters. She also consistently logged semis at Super 1000s Malaysia Open and All England, as well as at Super 750s in India and Singapore. Sindhu is chasing her first title of the season, which has looked like one in which she threatens to go the distance but comes up against any of the Top 4. An Se-young also retired from her Japan Open engagements nursing niggles, and most top shuttlers wouldn't risk injury so close to the World Championships.

erations of athletes and strengthen the city's position as a global sports destination. Sandilya also explained in detail to Azharuddin The Nikola Tesla Smart City AI Multi-Sports & Entertainment Complex which is a next-generation sports ecosystem designed to develop world-class athletes while creating an integrated destination for sports, health, wellness, education, entertainment, and community engagement.

"Originally conceptualized for the United States market, the platform can be customized for India, with a major emphasis on cricket excellence, supported by AI-driven athlete development and international-standard multi-sport facilities," Sandilya said. Interestingly, Sandilya's father BAV Sandilya and his trusted advisor Dr KK Rao were instrumental in getting the then AP State Government policy defined for cricket public infrastructure and funding approvals for both Uppal and the Vizag stadia in 1990s by the then Chief Minister M. Chenna Reddy's administration. And Azhar's response was positive too. "

New Zealand beat West Indies to take 2-1 lead in ODI series



Providence (Guyana): West Indies collapsed from 67-1 to be all out for 140, handing New Zealand a six-wicket win in the third one-day international on Thursday and a 2-1 lead in the five-match series. The collapse mirrored that of the second match, in which the West Indies fell from 63-0 to 138 all out as New Zealand won by five wickets, levelling the series after losing the first match by seven wickets. New Zealand's run chase was cautiously paced at 3.5 runs per over and ended in the 40th over at 141-4, with 63 balls remaining.

Henry Nicholls made 24 and Will Young 23 in a solid partnership for the first wicket. Daryl Mitchell made 28 in the middle of the innings, while Tom Latham and Dean Foxcroft saw New Zealand home in an unbroken partnership of 52 for the fifth wicket. Latham again was reliable, making 31 from 53 balls, while Foxcroft made 22 from 28. Left-arm wrist spinner Vitel Lawes put some pressure on the Kiwis with three early wickets, but the target was too small to maintain that pressure. West Indies lost eight wick-

ets in just over 20 overs in the face of excellent spin bowling from left-armers Jayden Lennox, who took 4-52 to go with his 5-19 in the second match of the series. Mitchell Santner took 2-15 from 8.1 overs and Michael Bracewell 2-33 on another turning pitch at Providence Stadium. Lennox has been player of the match in the last two internationals. All of his nine wickets have been bowled or lbw. "There's obviously no secret to it. It's about keeping the stumps in play," Lennox said in a post-match television interview. "You have to let the pitch do what it does. We can't control that, but if we put the ball in the right area, we're obviously going to get some rewards." West Indies opener Campbell injured

Things began to go awry for the West Indies when opener John Campbell was carried from the field on a stretcher in the sixth over after tearing a hamstring while running between the wickets. The West Indies were 25-0 at that point and 38-1 when Campbell's opening partner Akeem Auguste was brilliantly caught by Santner off the bowling of Jacob Duffy to provide a rare wicket for the seamers. Lennox bowled West Indies captain Shai Hope (8), and Mitchell Santner removed Sherfane Rutherford (4). Keacy Carty looked dangerous for New Zealand, making 48 from 77 balls before being trapped lbw by Bracewell. When he was out, the total was 121-4, but the last five West Indies wickets fell for 19 runs, and Campbell was unable to return and resume his innings. "It's always challenging batting first in Guyana," Hope said. "I'm not being a good captain when it comes to winning the toss." "We still have to find ways of scoring in tough conditions. I still felt they bowled really well, but we have to find ways to score in these challenging conditions." The series now moves to Bridgetown, Barbados, where the fourth one-day international will be played on Sunday.

NRAI launches dedicated travel portal for athletes through Balmer Lawrie partnership

Hyderabad: The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) on Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Balmer Lawrie & Co. Ltd. The partnership introduces a customised Self-Booking Tool (SSBT) to streamline domestic travel logistics for athletes, members and technical officials.

The initiative marks the first time an Indian sports federation has established a dedicated corporate travel system for its members. The digital portal covers both official and personal domestic travel, giving shooters complete autonomy over their travel schedules. The system is designed to directly support the federation's base of around 80,000 registered shooters, particularly during national and state tournaments conducted across the country. Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo, President, NRAI, said, "Managing domestic travel logistics during a packed season of state and national tournaments can be a major distraction for athletes. By launching this dedicated portal, we want to remove that operational burden entirely so our shooters can focus solely on their sport. This is a unique step for a sports federation in India, and we are proud to partner with Balmer Lawrie to make travel efficient." The online platform grants users exclusive access to discounted corporate fares on domestic routes, along with complimentary meals and preferred seat selection. Crucially, all corporate discounts and service privileges are extended to the personal bookings of athletes under a single login framework. For family support, the tool features a dependent management module, allowing users to add up to six family members. The agreement also guar-



antees a zero service fee structure, with only standard payment gateway fees applicable and minimal cancellation charges aligned with domestic airline policies. Pawankumar Singh, Secretary General, NRAI, said, "This partnership is another step towards creating a more athlete-friendly ecosystem. The dedicated travel portal will simplify domestic travel, provide cost-effective corporate benefits, and reduce the logistical burden on our athletes and officials. Our objective is to let shooters focus on performance while NRAI continues to improve the support systems around them." The NRAI and Balmer Lawrie's Travel & Vacations division are currently integrating the secure database to enable the immediate rollout. The certified digital system fully complies with industry standards, ensuring transparency and up-to-date domestic flight information.

India batting coach on Rohit Sharma's poor form: 'Doesn't make any difference'



India batting coach Sitanshu Kotak brushed aside concerns over Rohit Sharma's lean run in the ODI series against England, insisting the veteran opener was under no pressure and attributing his lack of runs to challenging batting conditions. Rohit made 26 off 43 balls in the second ODI at Cardiff and looked scratchy for much of his innings before Will Jacks dismissed him attempting a sweep.

"I don't think that a player as big as Rohit (Sharma) can feel any pressure. He's too good a player to feel that. Yes, he didn't get runs. I don't think that makes any difference. Today also, it looked like he'll probably get a good innings out. But that's okay," Kotak said in the post-match press conference on Thursday. "I have played a lot of cricket, and I have seen a lot of cricket. On a day, there are a lot of batters who don't get the momentum they are looking for, and that can happen. You might see a completely different innings from Rohit Sharma at Lord's. So, I wouldn't use the word "struggling". Maybe the shots he normally plays on the up, because of the double bounce, he probably felt they were not comfortable." "Shubman (Gill) got a quick start, then Virat got a quick start, but Rohit probably didn't get balls in his areas or didn't get going. That's what I felt. So I wouldn't say he was struggling because you could definitely see a completely different innings from a player like Rohit. I have seen that happen to a lot of batters. So it's not just Rohit. I wouldn't use the word "struggling", he added. On batting first on the Cardiff surface, Kotak said that Virat Kohli had sent a message across to the dressing room about the short deliveries not going through on the surface and admitted that Washington Sundar's injury, followed by the quick dismissals of Axar Patel and Shivam Dube, derailed India's innings.

"When there is double pace or double bounce, it's more about adapting better. Everybody knew because Virat, while he was batting, sent a message to us and also told the head coach that the short balls were actually not going through. So, we knew. Personally, I felt that Washington's injury happened when he ran the first run towards mid-off. It looked like a hamstring injury, and it looks like a bad injury. Then, the next ball, he got out. From there, we again wanted a partnership, but unfortunately, we lost Axar and Shivam." "That is the only thing I feel. In the second half, the

wicket may have gone a little slower, and Joe Root just stayed on the wicket. But I think 233, which is around five and a half an over, if one batter gets 100, I don't think it's a big score to chase. If we would have got Root out, it would have been interesting. Or if we had got another 35-40 runs, it would definitely have been interesting," Kotak said.

Root sets up high-stakes finale versus India, Rohit Sharma's future in focus

In the age of power-hitting and escalating scoring rates in white-ball cricket, Joe Root on Thursday showed why a batsman of his kind remains priceless to any side. His unbeaten 99 off 133 balls took England home by four wickets in Cardiff on a dicey surface and set up a decider in the series against India at Lord's on Sunday.

The right-hander's innings, straight out of the 90s ODI playbook, has now set up a potential blockbuster final ODI at Lord's on Sunday, which could well be the international farewell for former India captain and batting talisman Rohit Sharma. The 39-year-old's future is bleak beyond the England trip with the selectors ready to look beyond him for their next one-day assignment. As reported by this masthead on Thursday, the selectors have informed the former India skipper of the decision to rope in Yashasvi Jaiswal for their next series, which will be at home against the West Indies in September. Having won the first ODI at Edgbaston, there was an opportunity for India to close the series at Sophia Gardens. Put in to bat, when they were 103/1 with Virat Kohli (65) in his full majestic form. Shreyas Iyer, batting at number five, complemented Kohli with a 71-ball 66.

The turning point was Kohli's untimely and uncharacteristic dismissal – playing a loose shot across the line and top-edging the delivery – which prompted a mini collapse. The three left-handers to follow – Washington Sundar, Axar Patel and Shivam Dube – managed just 2, 1, & 0 respectively as India ended up with 233 in 44 overs, which proved to be well below par. And despite a spirited effort from the bowling unit, which had just five options with Washington missing out in the second innings with a hamstring injury, it left Shubman Gill to rely on other options to take the game deep. If Edgbaston was the first glimpse of a revitalised Jasprit Bumrah, then Cardiff gave more evidence of a bowler who seems to have found his mojo back. The 32-year-old put England on the back foot straightaway by dismissing Ben Duckett off the first delivery of the chase – the new ball angling away and kissing the edge en route. And when Prasidh Krishna had Jacob Bethell edge to Ishan Kishan in the fourth over, India were right in the game.

Missing actor Raj Kiran's daughter is a jewellery designer; husband made Drake's jewellery



Actor Raj Kiran, who appeared in over 100 films during a career spanning nearly two decades, has remained missing since 2003. Over the years, several attempts have been made to trace him, but none have yielded any confirmed answers. Multiple reports have offered conflicting theories about his whereabouts, but no definitive information has emerged. While the search for the actor continues, his daughters, Rishika Mahtani and Mannat Mahtani, have built successful lives of their own, even as they continue to remember their father. Rishika has carved a niche for herself in the jewellery business and is married to jewellery designer Ravi Shah, whose creations have been worn by several international celebrities, including rapper Drake.

Raj Kiran's son-in-law designed Drake's diamond-studded pendant in 2021, Rishika proudly shared on Instagram that her husband's company had created a custom medallion for Drake. She wrote, "D R A K E!! D R A K E!! D R A K E!! Ravi's latest custom creation was for none other than the Artist of the Decade himself. Ravi and his incredibly talented team from India and Chicago engineered Drake's signature OVO owl into a breathtaking bespoke medallion. It was handcrafted at his factory in India in less than two weeks. Made of 372 grams of gold and set with dazzling diamonds weighing 40 carats, the wings of the owl even flap." Although the price of the piece was never disclosed, based on the weight of the gold and the diamonds, it is estimated to be worth several crores of rupees, depending on the quality of the stones and craftsmanship. Rishika and Ravi have been married for over 12 years. Despite moving on with her life, she frequently remembers her missing father through emotional posts on social media. The couple recently welcomed a baby girl, while Raj Kiran's younger daughter Mannat has been happily married since 2020. Their mother also remarried after waiting several years for Raj Kiran to return.

Where is Raj Kiran?

Raj Kiran made his acting debut in 1975 with B.R. Ishara's Kaagaz Ki Nao. Over the next two decades, he featured in several successful films and became a familiar face in Hindi cinema. He gained widespread recognition after starring alongside Rishi Kapoor in Karz (1980), followed by acclaimed performances in films such as Arth (1982). As film offers gradually declined during the 1990s, Raj largely

disappeared from public life. Film star Raj Kiran and Simi Garewal in film KARZ. Express archive photo *** Local Caption *** Film star Raj Kiran and Simi Garewal in film KARZ. Film star Raj Kiran and Simi Garewal in film KARZ. archive photo According to a report by Deccan Herald, he was once detained and lodged at Bengaluru Central Jail after allegedly attempting to trespass into Sathya Sai Baba's Puttaparthi Ashram. The report claimed he had hired a tractor and a ladder in an attempt to enter the premises at night. Reports from that period also suggested that Raj later spent some time in the United States with his brother, Govind.

Filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt has claimed that he met Raj Kiran years later at Mumbai's Masina Hospital, where the actor was reportedly undergoing psychiatric treatment. Speaking to Rediff in 2011, Bhatt recalled, "Many years ago, when he was in the psychiatric ward of Masina Hospital, he was not the Raj Kiran I had known. He looked somber and depressed, and spoke with great difficulty. There was none of the energy or enthusiasm that we associated with him." Bhatt added that after Raj was discharged, he tried to help him find work. "We tried giving him roles here and there, but once people believe you're mentally unstable, nobody wants to touch you with a barge pole." According to Bhatt, Raj later left for the United States to stay with his brother.

Conflicting reports about his whereabouts Years later, reports emerged that Raj Kiran had gone missing. In 2011, Rishi Kapoor, while visiting the United States, tried to trace his Karz co-star and contacted Raj's brother, Govind. Speaking to journalist Subhash K Jha, Rishi claimed, "I was relieved when Govind told me Raj was alive. But he was confined to an institution in Atlanta because of health issues." Rishi further said that Raj was working at the institution to support his treatment and was financially secure because of investments made during his acting career. However, Raj Kiran's daughter Rishika later denied these reports. Speaking to Mid-day, she clarified, "He is not in Atlanta. We have been looking for him for over eight years. We have involved the New York Police and hired private detectives to find him, but he has not been found." Remembering her father, she added, "He was the most loving father. Yes, he suffered from some mental health issues before he disappeared. We wanted to deal with this privately, but the false reports forced me to speak out. It was unfair to my mother." Actress Deepti Naval Raj Kiran in film HIP HIP HURRAY. Express archive photo Actress Deepti Naval Raj Kiran in film HIP HIP HURRAY. Express archive photo

Following those reports, actor Dipti Naval also appealed on Facebook for information about Raj Kiran, mentioning reports that he had allegedly been seen driving a taxi in New York. The mystery deepened when then Leader of the Opposition Sushma Swaraj publicly stated that Raj Kiran had been found at a mental health institution in the United States and urged the Indian government and the film industry to help bring him back. Despite these claims over the years, none have been conclusively verified. More than two decades after his disappearance,

Varavu movie review: Joju George shines in an otherwise dull revenge saga

There was a time when a Shaji Kailas film meant a specific thing in Malayalam cinema. It meant a larger-than-life hero, a powerful villain with a backstory worth caring about, heavy dialogues delivered with chest-thumping conviction, and action sequences that shook the single screens of Kerala. From Ekalavyan and Commissioner to Narasimham and Araam Thampuran, the director built a filmography across the 90s and early 2000s that defined what mass cinema looked like in the state. Then the industry moved on. New-wave filmmakers changed the grammar. Audiences changed their expectations. And Shaji Kailas seemed like a man out of time. Varavu, his new film with Joju George, is an attempt to prove that the old grammar still works. It does, but only in parts.

The film is set in the tea plantation country around Munnar, Marayoor and Kanthalloor, where land ownership and estate politics are not just business but instruments of generational power. At the centre of it is Paulson, played by Joju George. He is a man whose family was torn apart decades ago by the local land-owning cartel, led by Medayil Kochettan, played by Murali Gopy. Paulson was cast out as a child, displaced from his ancestral land, and left to build himself up from nothing. He did. And now he is back. The setup is familiar, almost comfortably so. A wronged man, a powerful cartel and buried truths. Shaji Kailas has told this story before in different forms, and Sajan knows how to lay the pieces on the board. The first half does this competently, establishing the geography of the hills, the economics of the plantations, the hierarchies of the town, and the simmering anger Paulson carries under his silence. There is a patience to the buildup that works in the film's favour. You understand the world and what makes Paulson dangerous. And you understand that when he finally makes his move, it is going to hurt.

The problem is that patience, at 143 minutes, starts to feel like indulgence. The film takes its time getting where it needs to go, and not all of that time is well spent. There are subplots involving secondary characters that slow the momentum without adding enough to the central conflict. Scenes that establish atmosphere in the first half start to feel repetitive in the second. There are roughly six major action sequences in the film, and while each one is staged with real skill, the connective tissue between them sags. The screenplay needed a tighter edit. Joju George, however, is not the problem. He carries the film with a physical presence that few actors in Malayalam cinema can match right now. He does not play Paulson as a conventional mass hero. There are no theatrical monologues or four-page dialogues. He plays him with a heavy, quiet restraint, moving through the frame like a man who does not need to raise his voice to make people uncomfortable. His eyes do more work than most actors' dialogue. When the violence finally comes, it feels like an inevitability rather than a set piece. This is comfortably one of the strongest performances of his career, and it is worth the ticket price on its own.

The film's other major asset is Murali Gopy as Medayil Kochettan. There is a depth to his arc and a logic to his cruelty that makes the central conflict feel like more than just good versus evil. His scenes with Joju George crackle with a tension that the rest of the film does not always sustain. If Varavu has one element that rises above the template, it is this pairing. Vani Vishwanath's return to the screen is a genuine highlight. The actress, with perhaps the most commanding presence in 90s Malayalam and Telugu cinema, has been away from the spotlight for years. Here,



Then the industry moved on. New-wave filmmakers changed the grammar. Audiences changed their expectations. And Shaji Kailas seemed like a man out of time. Varavu, his new film with Joju George, is an attempt to prove that the old grammar still works. It does, but only in parts.

she walks back in as though she never left, commanding every scene with an authority that the younger cast members cannot match. It is not a large role, but it is a memorable one. Arjun Ashokan, as Williams, brings a grounded energy to a supporting role that could easily have been forgettable in lesser hands. Deepak Parambol as Seban, Shammi Thilakan as Yohan and Kottayam Ramesh as Appachan make their presence felt within the space they are given. Baburaj, Baiju Santhosh and Saniya Iyappan round out a large ensemble, though not everyone gets the screen time their characters deserve. When you have this many names in a cast, someone is going to be shortchanged.

On the technical side, S. Saravanan's cinematography captures the misty, claustrophobic beauty of the hill country effectively. The plantations feel vast and oppressive at the same time, which is exactly what the story needs. Sam C.S.'s background score is effective without being overbearing, adding weight to the action and pulling back during the quieter stretches. Shameer Muhammed's editing is competent but could have been braver, particularly in the second act where the film most needed trimming. Sabu Ram's art direction grounds the film in its setting with convincing detail. But the old-school treatment that gives the action sequences their weight also holds the film back in other departments. The dialogue, while occasionally sharp, sometimes tips into theatrical declarations that feels out of step with the performances the actors are delivering. The treatment of female characters beyond Vani Vishwanath is thin. And the film's pacing, particularly in a bloated second act, tests the audience's patience in a way that a tighter two-hour cut simply would not have. Varavu is not a reinvention. It is Shaji Kailas doing what Shaji Kailas does, with a lead actor who brings enough weight and nuance to elevate the material beyond its template. If you walk in wanting a grounded, well-acted mass thriller with strong action and a slow-burn revenge arc, it fumbles here and there but delivers. If you walk in expecting the kind of storytelling economy that the best of contemporary Malayalam cinema has taught audiences to expect, you will feel the extra minutes. Joju George deserved a film that matched his performance beat for beat. Varavu gets close, but misses the mark.

What to watch on OTT: Maa Inti Bangaaram, The Secret Agent and more



What to watch on OTT: From action spectacles and historical epics to intimate to emotionally charged family stories, this week's streaming slate spans continents, languages and genres. The lineup offers everything from prestige cinema and star-led entertainers to heartfelt dramas and high-concept thrillers. Here's our pick of the titles. Headlined by Samantha Ruth Prabhu, Maa Inti Bangaaram is created by Raj Nidimoru, directed by B. V. Nandini Reddy. The film follows a former assassin who is forced to return to her ways after her new family is threatened by past figures. The film, which has emerged as the highest-grossing female-led Telugu film, also features Gulshan Devaiah and Digant Manchale.

One of the most talked about movies of 2025, Oscar-nominated The Secret Agent is directed and written by Kleber Mendonça Filho. The movie follows Marcelo (Wagner Moura), an academic and technology expert, who moves to Recife under an alias to escape a complicated past. He discovers that his new refuge is teeming with corrupt police, tracking neighbors, and state-sanctioned hitmen, leaving him relying on the underground resistance to help him

Jana Nayagan reworked after CBFC battle: Producer reveals new songs, CM Vijay title card

Jana Nayagan is not just releasing. It is releasing as a different film from the one that was originally submitted to the CBFC at the end of last year. Producer K Venkata Narayana of KVN Productions has confirmed that the version of Jana Nayagan audiences will see in theatres on July 23 has undergone significant changes since the certification battle began in January, including the addition of new songs, multiple modifications to existing footage, and a title card change that credits Vijay not as an actor but as the Honourable Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Speaking about the theatrical release in an interview with NDTV, Venkata Narayana said the team is targeting a release across 7,000 to 8,000 screens in more than 30 countries. "We announced the poster only yesterday, and by tomorrow we will have the final screen count in India. The film is releasing in almost all major cities and across more than 30 countries worldwide. We are targeting a release on 7,000 to 8,000 screens globally," he said. If that number holds, Jana Nayagan would be among the widest releases ever for a Tamil film, reflecting both the scale of anticipation around Vijay's farewell and the commercial confidence the producers are placing on the title despite the months of delays and the nationwide leak.

Advance bookings for Jana Nayagan have already opened in several states, while ticket sales in Tamil Nadu are scheduled to begin on Sunday. Karnataka opened bookings on Wednesday morning, with the earliest shows listed for 6 am on July 23. Bookings in other states and international markets are also expected to ramp up over the coming days as the final screen count is confirmed. Venkata Narayana also revealed that the film audiences will watch is substantially different from the version that was at the centre of the censor controversy. "There have been a lot of modifications and additions to the film. What audiences are going to experience in theatres is very different, with the addition of some songs and several changes. This movie has gone through many challenges since the beginning of the year to reach where it is today," he said. The producer did not specify how many songs were added or what other changes were made, but the implication is clear: the six months between the original planned release and the July 23 date were not spent simply waiting for a certificate. The film was actively reworked during that period.

Vijay to be credited as 'Honourable Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu' One of the most talked-about changes is the title card. Venkata Narayana said the decision to credit Vijay as the serving Chief Minister came in response to requests from fans and the general public. "There have been requests

escape escape Brazil with his young son during the height of the military dictatorship in 1977.

The miniseries tells the moving story of Greta (Alicia Falcó), who claims she was born with the purpose of saving her sister Lucy (Georgina Amorós), who suffers from leukemia, through her stem cells. However, events take an unexpected turn and Lucy passes away, leaving Greta with a deep existential void. Before departing, Lucy creates "The map of longing," a game that challenges Greta to face her grief and discover her own path. On this journey, Greta will meet Will (Pablo Alvarez), an enigmatic young man with a haunting past. The series arrives on July 17. The series follows lifelong best friends Debbie (Octavia Spencer) and Judith (Hannah Waddingham), whose seemingly ordinary friendship is upended when Debbie discovers that Judith has secretly been working as an international assassin. After a mission goes disastrously wrong, the two are forced to go on the run across Europe, pursued by dangerous criminals, fellow assassins, and law enforcement. The emperor's decree is simple: every princess in Arabia belongs to him. When Princess Hind flees into the desert with her father, she hunted by a merciless imperial army and forced to place her trust in a legendary bandit who works only for money. Set in seventh-century Arabia and inspired by the real Battle of Dhi Qar, a clash that sent shockwaves through the Sassanid Empire, Desert Warrior is the most expensive film ever produced in Saudi Arabia. The film is directed by Rupert Wyatt and the cast features Aiysha Hart, Anthony Mackie, Ben Kingsley and Sharlto Copley. The story of Nick Nelson (Kit Connor) and Charlie Spring (Joe Locke) returns as a feature film. The couple is inseparable. But, Nick prepares to leave for university and Charlie finds new independence at school. The reality of a long-distance relationship begins to weigh on them. Doubts take hold, and their relationship faces its biggest challenge yet. Meanwhile, Nick and Charlie's friends too are navigating the ups and downs of love and friendship. The film is written by Heartstopper creator and graphic novelist Alice Oseman. The film arrives on July 17.



from various sections of fans and the general audience to change the title card to 'The Honourable Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu' in and as Jana Nayagan. Even the poster featuring that change received a phenomenal response," he said. "It is historic for a currently serving Chief Minister to have his film released, so we have made some changes. See it in theatres. No sitting Chief Minister in Indian history has had a theatrical film release during their tenure. MGR stopped acting after becoming Chief Minister. NTR's last film came before he took office. Jayalalithaa's final film released years before her political career began in earnest. The fact that Jana Nayagan opens with a title card acknowledging Vijay's current political office makes the release unprecedented in a way that goes beyond box office numbers. Venkata Narayana also confirmed that he has been in direct discussion with Vijay about the release plans. "I have discussed the release date and plans with CM Vijay. He and the entire team have put in a lot of hard work and emotion behind this film. People will witness the effort that everybody has put into it," he said. On the audience response he expects, the producer sounded confident. "I'm sure once it releases, the audience will embrace it and celebrate it because cinema is a shared experience. At the end of the day, it's the last film of Vijay sir, and they will create lasting memories and experiences for themselves in theatres," he said. "Thalapathy Vijay shares a great bond with audiences, from Tamil Nadu to across the globe and across generations." Directed by H. Vinoth, Jana Nayagan stars Vijay alongside Pooja Hegde, Bobby Deol, Mamitha Baiju, Gautham Vasudev Menon, Prakash Raj, Narain and Priyaman, with music by Anirudh Ravichander. The film releases worldwide on July 23.

'I am an actor, not a politician': Vivek Oberoi reacts to Sonam Wangchuk's hunger strike

With education reformer and activist Sonam Wangchuk's hunger strike entering its 20th day, the nation's attention remains fixed on the ongoing protest organised by activist platform Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) over the NEET-UG question paper leak earlier this year. After several celebrities, including actors Sonakshi Sinha, Imran Khan, Fatima Sana Sheikh, Shabana Azmi, Zeenat Aman, Prakash Raj, and Naseeruddin Shah, recently extended their solidarity with him, many citizens have begun condemning stars who have been "conveniently" turning a blind eye to the protest. Amid all the clamour, actor-businessman Vivek Oberoi has reacted to Sonam and CJP's protest, albeit without directly addressing their demands. Calling himself "an actor, not a politician," Vivek said he doesn't closely follow political matters but believes every voice deserves space in a healthy democracy. Must Read | 'I am not Phunsukh Wangdu': Why Sonam Wangchuk distanced himself from Aamir Khan's 3 Idiots

"I don't pay much attention to political matters" "Yaar main abhineta hu, neta nahi hu. Toh main political cheezon pe dhyaan nahi deta hun. Hum toh observe karte hai, seekhte hai. Life mein bohut kuch dekhne aur seekhne ko mil raha hai (Look, I am an actor, not a politician. So, I don't pay much attention to political matters. I simply observe and learn; there is so much to see and learn in life)," he told the media. He added, "Observe ye kiya hai ki ye bhi ek nayi cheez thi aur mujhe lagta hai ek healthy democracy mein

har awaaz ko apni jagah milti hai. Ye logo ne agar apni awaaz vyakt ki hai toh ye healthy democracy ka sign hai (What I have observed is that this was a new experience, and I believe that in a healthy democracy, every voice finds its place. If these people have expressed their voice, then it is a sign of a healthy democracy)." Vivek's veiled reaction to Sonam's protest came days after several of his colleagues individually extended support to the activist. Actor Imran Khan wrote on Instagram, "Following the conversations around the NEET scandal these past few weeks has been quite a ride... as the philosopher Mugatu so eloquently said, 'I feel like I'm taking crazy pills.'" He added, "This isn't a political debate... or at least, it shouldn't be. If we expect students to take exams with integrity, then they are also owed the same degree of accountability from the bodies which oversee the process. Surely this notion is true regardless of which football team (sorry... political party) you cheer for." Imran concluded, "From the millions of students whose honest efforts were invalidated with barely a shrug; to the millions more who stood up and continue to stand against injustice... I see you. You raise your voices for the best in us, and it is my honour to stand beside you." Fatima Sana Sheikh calls current situation 'heartbreaking' Calling the episode "heartbreaking," actor Fatima Sana Sheikh noted, "It's now been 19 days! We cannot keep waiting until it's too late to start listening... Someone like Sonam Wangchuk, who has given so much to this country, shouldn't have to risk his health just to be heard."