

Artists gherao Jupally Krishna Rao, demand jobs and filling of vacancies

Hyderabad: Tension prevailed at Ravindra Bharathi on Thursday after Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao was gheraoed by artists demanding jobs and the filling of existing vacancies.

The artists fell at the feet of the Minister and blocked his convoy. Raising slogans, they squatted in front of his vehicles and prevented them from leaving Ravindra Bharathi. MLC Shankar Naik, who accompanied the Minister, tried to convince the protesters, but they did not relent.The artists have been staging protests since Wednesday. When the Minister arrived at his office at Ravindra Bharathi, the artists demanded that vacancies in Samskruthika Sarathi be filled at the earliest.

No more in-person SIR hearings in Telangana

Electors receiving notices under Telangana's Special Intensive Revision will no longer have to attend in-person hearings, Chief Electoral Officer C Sudharsan Reddy said. BLOs will collect documents from electors and upload them online, while exceptional cases may be heard online.

Hyderabad: Electors who receive notices as part of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls will not have to attend in-person hearings in Telangana. Instead, Booth Level Officers (BLOs) will visit the respective electors to collect documents and upload them on the ECI Net for a decision by the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) or Assistant Electoral Registration Officer (AERO).

Cyberabad officials examine new connectivity options across MMTS railway line

Hyderabad: To improve traffic movement, new connectivity options, including elevated corridors-cum-RoBs towards Miyapur Metro Station and Mayuri Nagar, were examined by Cyberabad Municipal Corporation (CMC) Commissioner G Srijana.The Commissioner, along with officials, conducted a field visit to examine possible connectivity options across the Lingampally-Borabanda MMTS railway line on Thursday.The field review focused on improving traffic movement between the HKC, Financial District and Kokapet areas and Kukatpally, Nizampet and Mayuri Nagar, besides assessing the need for additional connectivity across the railway line.

Modi, Bibi hail flydubai pilot as hero; Israel says co-pilot radicalised, suicidal

New Delhi, October 1

Indian pilot Captain Smit Machchhar, whose actions helped avert a mid-air catastrophe aboard a flydubai flight to Tel Aviv, has drawn praise from leaders across the world, even as investigators probe whether the dramatic cockpit attack that left him seriously injured had any terrorist motive or was part of a planned attempt to hijack the aircraft.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the tributes, hailing Machchhar's bravery in the face of grave danger. Modi said the pilot had fought valiantly to prevent what could have turned into another 9/11-like tragedy, putting the lives of passengers ahead of his own safety. He said he had also spoken to Machchhar's parents and wife.

"Today, the entire world is proud of him," Modi said, describing his actions as a source of pride for every Indian. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called him as a "true hero" whose actions saved the lives of all 174 people onboard.

"My salute to the Indian pilot Captain Smit Machchhar for his extraordinary bravery," Netanyahu said, adding that the pilot's courage had prevented a catastrophic mid-air disaster.

The praise has come amid emerging details of the incident, which Israeli authorities have suggested may have had a terror-related dimension.

In comments to US media, Netanyahu said the co-pilot allegedly responsible for the attack appeared to have undergone radical Islamist indoctrination and was suicidal. He identified the attacker as an Omani national and said preliminary information pointed to ideological radicalisation. Netanyahu also said there was currently no evidence linking the incident to Iran.

Israeli authorities have alleged that the co-pilot stabbed Machchhar in the cockpit and then attempted to crash the aircraft. Despite suffering severe injuries,



the captain reportedly managed to open the cockpit door, allowing passengers, crew members and off-duty pilots travelling onboard to enter and overpower the attacker.

The aircraft lost thousands of feet in altitude during the struggle before control was restored. The flight, FZ1073, was travelling from Dubai to Tel Aviv on Wednesday with 174 passengers onboard.

The plane was diverted to Tabuk in Saudi Arabia, where it landed safely. Two off-duty pilots are reported to have assisted in stabilising the aircraft during the emergency, while a dentist travelling as a passenger treated the injured captain, who had suffered significant blood loss.

Machchhar was initially treated in Saudi Arabia before being airlifted to Abu Dhabi for further medical care. On Thursday, India's Ambassador to the UAE, Dr Deepak Mittal, visited the pilot and his family at the hospital. The Indian Embassy said Machchhar was in good health and recovering well. It added that the mission remained in close coordination with local authorities to ensure his continued treatment and well-being.

KTR dares Revanth Reddy for judicial probe into family assets

Hyderabad, Oct 1 (IANS) Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) Working President K.T. Rama Rao on Thursday challenged Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to order an inquiry by a sitting Supreme Court judge into the assets of both their families.

Rama Rao said he was ready to face an investigation by a sitting Supreme Court judge into his assets and asked whether the Chief Minister was prepared to do the same.

"Investigate everything, from our grandfathers' assets to your grandfathers' assets," he said, throwing the challenge at the Chief Minister.

Rama Rao was reacting to allegations made by the Chief Minister against him and his family during a

Rao said, adding that he had clearly disclosed his assets and business details in his 2009 election affidavit.

He said those details were being discussed as though they had been newly discovered and questioned whether engaging in business was a crime.

The BRS leader said the one hotel he had started had now become three.

"Had I not entered politics, this number would have gone up to 10," he said.

KTR, popularly known as Rama Rao, questioned the Chief Minister about businesses, tenders, and land dealings involving his family members and close associates.

He asked how a high-value tender was awarded to the company of the Chief Minister's brother-in-law, Srujan Reddy, despite the company allegedly lacking the necessary qualifications.

He also sought answers regarding the qualifications of the Chief Minister's brother, Kondal Reddy, and the opportunities he received in the aerospace sector.

Rama Rao alleged that questions were being raised about how family members, who until recently had few assets, were now making investments worth thousands of crores of rupees.

The BRS leader further alleged that Revanth Reddy had deceived all sections of society in Telangana, including farmers, handloom workers, youth, Backward Classes (BCs), Dalits and minorities.

He alleged that farmers from Adilabad to Alampur were facing severe hardship.

He said farmers were distressed because they were not receiving even six hours of electricity, were not getting Rythu Bandhu payments, and could not procure urea.

Rama Rao noted that after assuming power, the Congress government had alleged corruption worth Rs 1 lakh crore in connection with the Kaleshwaram project.

He questioned what conclusions the government had reached after appointing commissions to probe the Kaleshwaram project and power purchase agreements, filing cases over the Formula-E event, and investigating bank account transactions.

He alleged that the government was raising new issues to divert public attention, as people would otherwise recall the "420 promises" and the "Six Guarantees" made by the Congress party.

Telangana Cabinet Approves 2 DAs to State Staff, Pensioners

Hyderabad:, October 1

The state Cabinet on Thursday approved the payment of two dearness allowances (DAs) to state government employees and pensioners pending since 2024, imposing an additional annual burden of around Rs 2,500 crore on the state exchequer, while expressing serious concern over El Nino conditions, deficit rainfall, rising power consumption, drinking water shortages and the need to protect standing crops in the state.

The Cabinet also appealed to the Centre to declare drought-hit mandals and extend appropriate financial assistance to Telangana to overcome the impact of El Nino. A team of ministers would soon visit Delhi to meet Union ministers and explain the situation in the state.

The Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy at Secretariat, decided to immediately release two of the pending DAs to employees and corresponding dearness relief (DR) to pensioners. The arrears accumulated since 2024 would be paid in instalments with their salaries and pensions.

Briefing the Cabinet decision to the media, I&PR minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said despite the financial burden, the Chief Minister decided to implement the DAs in line with the assurance given during recent discussions with employee associations.

The Cabinet held a detailed discussion on the El Nino situation and its impact on the state. Telangana has recorded around 17 per cent deficit rainfall during the current monsoon season, which ended on Wednesday, with about 235 mandals facing severe rainfall deficiency and drought-like conditions. It decided that immediate relief measures in drought-hit mandals would be discussed by the Cabinet sub-committee.

The Chief Minister directed officials to convene an all-party meeting soon and hold consultations with farmers' organisations and experts from different sectors to obtain suggestions on El Niño mitigation measures.

The Cabinet also directed officials to make arrangements for procurement of kharif paddy, with procurement centres to be opened shortly. The civil supplies department has estimated that around 65 lakh metric tonnes of paddy would have to be procured during the season. Officials were asked to take all necessary measures to ensure smooth procurement.

The Cabinet expressed concern over the sharp rise in electricity consumption amid El Nino conditions. Against the normal daily power consumption of around 15,000 MW, peak demand this season has reached a record 19,892 MW, close to 20,000 MW. The peak demand recorded during the whole of last year was 16,613 MW.



It decided to focus on augmenting generation and ensuring adequate supply to meet the rising demand. The state would procure sufficient power to ensure uninterrupted supply and purchase additional power as required. Keeping future demand and requirements in view, the Cabinet approved steps to add around 7,800 MW of renewable-energy capacity and decided to invite bids under the Central government norms.

The proposed capacity includes 3,000 MW of solar power, 4,000 MW through Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and 800 MW of wind power projects. The Cabinet discussed the proposals and approved taking up the projects through the bidding process.

It further decided to review long-pending irrigation projects that were launched as part of Jalayagnam scheme during the YSR regime in combined Andhra Pradesh. In accordance with earlier directions, officials were asked to cancel projects taken up under the EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction) mode that remained incomplete. As part of the exercise, the Cabinet approved stopping 10 EPC irrigation projects and calling for fresh tenders.

The Cabinet also decided to expedite work on a world-class integrated fruit market at Koheda in Abdullapurmet mandal of Ranga Reddy district. It directed that the market be developed entirely with government funds. It sanctioned Rs 650 crore under phase-1.

The Cabinet also approved a digital media advertising policy in Telangana and approved its implementation in line with the Digital Advertisement Policy formulated by the Central Bureau of Communication.

It also approved creation of a deputy commissioner post in the office of the Resident Commissioner at Telangana Bhavan in New Delhi. Four more Group-I officers would be posted in Delhi to work on behalf of the state government to coordinate and pursue Telangana's pending projects and funds with the Centre.

Rajnath Singh calls for fair, sensitive approach to military pension cases

New Delhi, October 1

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday called for a "fair, sensitive and responsible" approach to handling pension cases of retired military personnel.

counts Department's 279th Annual Day celebration in New Delhi.

He also called for greater integration of the financial systems of the Army, Navy and Air Force and stressed the need for maximum digitisation, automation and transparency, with real-time updating of Management Information System (MIS) data.

"The time has come for a real-time review of balances and not just an 'annual review of balance'. Real-time data will ensure timely and informed decision-making," the Minister said.

Rajnath Singh also unveiled three major initiatives aimed at strengthening the integration of financial information systems of the defence forces and improving the accounting and tracking of defence expenditure.

One of the initiatives, called 'Saksham', will focus on auditing and payment systems.

He also launched the National Compilation System (NCS) for Defence. The NCS is the single source for the accounting and compilation of all defence expenditure in India. The Ministry of Defence operates under a unique financial delegation framework, requiring budget allocation and expenditure tracking across various controllers of the Defence Accounts Department across the country.

Chief of Defence Staff General NS Raja Subramani, Navy Chief Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, Army Chief General Dhiraj Seth, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh, and Vice Chief of the IAF Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit were present at the event.



public meeting in Sircilla on Wednesday.

The BRS leader spoke at a program at the party headquarters, Telangana Bhavan, where several Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders and activists from the Amur constituency joined the BRS.

Rama Rao said his grandfather owned hundreds of acres of land.

He said his father, K. Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR), was first elected as an MLA in 1985 and served as a minister, Deputy Speaker, Union Minister and Chief Minister, remaining in legislative bodies for more than four decades.

He said KCR had always encouraged him to study well since childhood.

"I worked in the US for six years, earned some money and started a hotel in Hyderabad in 2006," Rama



The Minister referred to the pension disbursement software, called the 'System for Pension Administration - Raksha (SPARSH)', created by the Ministry of Defence for pensioners. He said there was a need to automate grievance redressal, adding that "this could be through a conversational AI ecosystem involving chat, SMS, WhatsApp, email and phone calls".

On the need for quality audits, digital data accuracy and prompt resolution of grievances and court cases, the Minister said: "Our approach must be firm, fair, sensitive and responsible, especially when dealing with the legitimate dues and service rights of those who have devoted their lives to defending the nation."

Rajnath Singh was addressing the Defence Ac-

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Manipur imbroglio — cycle of violence returns

The spiralling violence in Manipur comes as a grim reminder of the widespread ethnic fault lines in the sensitive region that could flare up at any time. The crisis in the turbulent north-eastern State can no longer be seen as a battle confined to two communities—Meiteis and Kukis—but as a longer and widespread conflict. The latest bout of violence involves Nagas and Kukis and has spread across Ukhrul, Kamjong, Senapati and Kangpokpi, opening a new and more difficult front for the administration. Unlike the relatively clear geographical separation of Meitei and Kuki people, Naga and Kuki communities remain interspersed across the hills. Roads and highways pass through these mixed settlements, making both civilian movement and security management more challenging. Optimism about the restoration of popular government in February this year appears to be fizzling out, giving way to despondency once again. Recent attacks in Senapati and Kamjong have claimed the lives of many innocent civilians. Manipur is inhabited by several divergent ethnic groups, including the three major ones —Meitei, Naga and the Kuki-Zo. More than 260 people have been killed since ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki-Zo first erupted in the State in May 2023. The trigger was provided by the demand by the Meitei community, a majority of them Hindus, for Scheduled Tribe status and a strong pushback by Kukis, a majority of them Christians who inhabit the hilly regions. The Manipur crisis reflects a deep and protracted ethnic breakdown that has transformed into a multidimensional conflict with severe human costs.

What began primarily as a severe confrontation between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities has increasingly absorbed other regional dynamics, including periodic Naga-Kuki hostilities. More than three years of unrest have resulted in hundreds of deaths, tens of thousands of displaced persons living in relief camps, and deep territorial and social segregation between the hills and the valley. The State remains heavily fractured into invisible borders and fortified ethnic zones, making day-to-day reconciliation exceedingly difficult. While security deployments can temporarily suppress isolated outbreaks, law enforcement alone cannot address the underlying socio-political grievances. There is an urgent need for a proactive role from the Union Home Ministry to bring all ethnic and political stakeholders into structured dialogue. Concerted efforts should also be directed at improving conditions, healthcare, and security for internally displaced persons (IDPs) to pave the way for their safe rehabilitation. Long-term stability requires resolving land, tribal rights, and representation disputes strictly within India's constitutional boundaries. Since the government led by Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh took charge in February this year, more than 50 people have died in the Naga-Kuki clashes. Political leaders must resist treating the restoration of peace as merely a security operation. Manipur needs much more than the management of violence. It needs sustained political dialogue, accountability, protection for vulnerable communities, and conditions that allow displaced people to return safely.

Mass Shrimanthals in the week festivals of Potshana Masam



“Mass Shrimanthal and Annprasana programs were organized for 20 pregnant women as part of the Poshana Masam Weeks in Dwarakanagar and Bhurahanpuram sectors under Khammam Urban Project in Khammam city. CDPO Bhadrappa, former corporators Seelamshetty Veerabhadram and Raparthi Sarath attended the program as chief guests. On this occasion, they created awareness about the nutrition that should be taken by pregnant women, infants and children. After that the pregnant women were traditionally blessed with glasses, sari and saree. Organizers said



that they are grandly organizing Potshana Masam week celebrations in Khammam from September 9 to October 8. As part of this, special programs are being conducted every day to educate pregnant women, infants and children about nutrition, vaccinations, medicines and food habits. They stated that the government is taking special initiatives to prevent malnutrition and disability among children.

Jus' Onco Enters Hyderabad, Bringing Expert Cancer Care at an Affordable Cost



““Jus' Onco Cancer Care, founded by Dr. Vijayalakshmi Balakrishnan, Founder & Director, Jus' Onco, has expanded its cancer-care network from Tamil Nadu to Hyderabad, marking a significant step in its vision of making expert cancer care more affordable and accessible to more patients and families. ““The new Jus' Onco centre in Hyderabad was inaugurated at Uchvas Rehabilitation Centre, Banjara Hills, in the presence of distinguished guests including Dr. Gaurav Uppal, IAS, Secretary to Government, Planning Department, Government of Telangana, Dr. Ambati Rampapa Rao, Chairman, Uchvas Rehabilitation Centres, and Dr. Mukta Srinivasulu, MS, MCh (Surgical Oncology), former Director of MNJ Institute of Oncology & Regional Cancer Centre, Hyderabad. ““Dr. Gaurav Uppal, IAS, addressed the gathering during the inauguration, highlighting the importance of accessible healthcare and bringing specialised care closer to patients. ““From Tamil Nadu to Hyderabad “Jus' Onco has established multiple centres across Tamil Nadu, with a growing presence in Chennai and other parts of the state. ““Founded with a clear purpose of making expert cancer care affordable, Jus' Onco has been working towards bringing specialist-led cancer care closer to patients and reducing the burden associated with travelling long distances for treatment. ““Now, Jus' Onco is entering Hyderabad. ““The expansion marks the organisation's next step towards reaching more patients beyond Tamil Nadu and making expert cancer care accessible to a larger community. ““Expert Cancer Care Should Be Affordable “A cancer diagnosis can bring physical, emotional and financial challenges to patients and their families. ““For many families, accessing cancer care involves more than finding medi-

cal expertise. The cost of treatment, repeated hospital visits and travelling long distances can add significantly to the overall burden. ““Jus' Onco believes that expert cancer care should not be out of reach because of cost or distance. ““Its approach is built around one simple commitment: ““Expert Cancer Care, Made Affordable. ““And with the Hyderabad expansion: ““Now More Accessible. ““The Hyderabad centre provides oncology consultations and day-care cancer treatments, including chemotherapy, immunotherapy and targeted therapy, with a focus on safety, comfort and quality of care. ““Bringing Expert Care Closer to Patients ““For patients undergoing repeated cycles of treatment, travelling hundreds of kilometres can become an additional burden for both the patient and their family. ““By establishing a centre in Hyderabad, Jus' Onco aims to bring expert cancer care closer to patients while keeping affordability at the centre of its approach. ““Cancer care is not just about treating a disease. It is about helping a person continue their life,” said Dr. Vijayalakshmi Balakrishnan, Founder & Director, Jus' Onco. ““We established Jus' Onco with the belief that expert cancer care should be made affordable. After establishing our centres across Tamil Nadu, we are now entering Hyderabad with the same purpose — to bring expert cancer care closer to more patients and families and make it more accessible at an affordable cost. ““A Larger Vision for Cancer Care ““The expansion to Hyderabad is part of Jus' Onco's larger vision to reach more communities with affordable, expert-led cancer care. ““From establishing its presence across Tamil Nadu to now entering Telangana, the organisation continues to work towards a simple goal: ““Making expert cancer care accessible to more people, in more places, at an affordable cost. ““Hyderabad is not just another centre for Jus' Onco. It represents another step towards reducing the barriers of distance, accessibility and affordability in cancer care. ““Jus' Onco Cancer Care — Hyderabad ““Expert Cancer Care, Made Affordable. ““Now More Accessible. ““Venue: ““Uchvas Rehabilitation Centre “564A-37, MLA Colony, Lotus Pond Road, Road No. 12, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad, Telangana — 500034. ““About Jus' Onco ““Jus' Onco Cancer Care was founded by Dr. Vijayalakshmi Balakrishnan, Founder & Director, with a vision of making expert cancer care more affordable and accessible. ““With established centres across Tamil Nadu, Jus' Onco is now expanding its presence to Hyderabad, bringing its patient-focused approach to cancer care to more patients and families. ““Jus' Onco “Expert Cancer Care, Made Affordable. ““Now More Accessible.

Storm Water Drain Pipeline Works Begin at a Cost of Rs. 40 Lakh Permanent Solution to Raghavendra Nagar Colony Residents' Drainage Problems:

BANNALA PRAVEEN MUDIRAJ“



“BEERAPPA GADDA, OCTOBER 1 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Storm water drain pipeline works have commenced in Raghavendra Nagar Colony under the Beerappagadda Division at an estimated cost of Rs. 40 lakh. The works are being taken up from the residence of Jagadishwar Reddy to the Vinayaka Temple irrigation

canal. BRS state leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj inspected the ongoing works along with MMC Engineering Department officials, DE Vennela Goud and AE Raj Kumar. “Speaking on the occasion, Bannala Praveen Mudiraj said residents of Raghavendra Nagar Colony had been facing severe difficulties for a long time due to the accumulation of rainwater during the monsoon season. He said the storm water drain pipeline works were taken up with the objective of providing a permanent solution to the problem following a request from the Colony Welfare Association president and executive committee members. “He said steps were being taken to complete the pipeline works within one month and appealed to the colony residents to extend their cooperation for the speedy completion of the project. He also directed the contractor to strictly maintain quality standards throughout the construction works. He urged senior MMC officials to regularly monitor the progress of the project and ensure that the works are completed within the stipulated time while maintaining quality. Colony president Jagadishwar Reddy, members Krishna Reddy, Vitthal Reddy, Yaqoob Reddy, Lakshma Reddy, Krishnaiah, Govardhan, Satyanarayana and others were present.

Anganwadi Teachers' Services Highly Commendable:

FORMER UPPAL MLA N.V.S.S. PRABHAKER“--- Anganwadi Teachers Felicitated Under the Leadership of Former Corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkata Rao “RAMANTHAPUR, OCTOBER 1 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): As part of the Seva Sankalpa Abhiyan, Anganwadi teachers were felicitated at the Nehru Nagar Community Hall in Ramanthapur. The programme was organised under the leadership of former Ramanthapur Division Corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkata Rao, in response to the call given by the party's central and state leadership. Former Uppal MLA N.V.S.S. Prabhakar attended the programme as the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, Prabhakar said the services rendered by Anganwadi teachers in child care, nutrition and early education, besides promoting the welfare of women and children, were highly valuable. He said felicitating them in recognition of their dedicated services was commendable. Prabhakar said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was giving priority to public service and working towards the development of the country. He said the government was giving importance to various service-oriented activities with the spirit of “service to humanity is service to God.” Bandaru Srivani Venkata Rao said the contribution of Anganwadi teachers to society could never be forgotten. He said they played a crucial role in improving the health, nutri-



tion and educational development of children. He assured that he would extend his support towards addressing the issues faced by Anganwadi teachers. “BJP senior leaders Jagadish, Kameshwar Rao, Tindera Hanumantha Rao, Damodara, Vemula Tirupataiah, Division President Vangala Santosh Gupta, Sankuri Kumaraswamy, Masireddy Prabhakar Reddy, Pulikonda Narayanadasu, Kompally Upender, Kalmakala Panduga Sayanna Lingam, Kandakattla Dayakar Reddy, Alladi Niranjan Goud and others were present. “A large number of Anganwadi teachers, RPs, party leaders and activists participated in the programme.

Mental Health Awareness Week from October 4

Gandhi Hospital Superintendent Dr. T. Usharani unveils poster ““ Indian Chronicle, “Secunderabad, October 01: ““The Progressive Psychologists Association of India (PPAI) and Navabharat Lions Club — District 310A will organise various awareness programmes from October 4 to 10 as part of World Mental Health Week, Mind and Personal Care Director Dr. Hypno Padma Kamalakara said. “Gandhi Hospital Superintendent Dr. T. Usharani unveiled the poster for the programmes at the hospital on Thursday. The initiatives aim to create greater public awareness about mental health and encourage people to identify mental health concerns and seek timely professional assistance, the organisers said. “Deputy Superintendent K. Sunil Kumar, CSRM Officer Dr. Jayakrishna, Professor and HOD of Neurosurgery K. Srinivas, Professor Dr. K. Ravi, Profes-



sor and HOD of ENT Dr. K. Nagaraj, Assistant Professor Dr. Tejaswini, In-charge AD Padmini Priyadarshini and Assistant General Manager Shivaram Reddy were among those present.

Ganti Nagesh Sharma Appointed as BJP Labour Wing Media Convener“



“LB Nagar, October 1 (Indian Chronicle) ““Ganti Nagesh Sharma has been appointed as the Media Convener of the Telangana State BJP Labour Wing. He received his appointment letter at the Telangana BJP State Office from State Labour Wing Convener and senior leader Ande Srinivas. “Speaking on the occasion, Ganti Nagesh Sharma expressed his gratitude to Ande Srinivas for entrusting him with the responsibility. He said he would work to bring the problems of workers from various sectors across the state to the attention of the authorities and strive for their resolution. He also assured that he would continuously work for the protection of workers' rights. “Nagesh Sharma further stated that he would abide by party discipline and play an active role in strengthening the BJP Labour Wing. “State Co-Convener Akula Srinivas, Suryapet Labour Cell In-charge Palakurthi Seshagiri Rao, district conveners, district in-charges, IT Wing representatives, and Skilled Labour Wing leaders participated in the programme.

Actress and Popular Anchor Rashmi Gautam Inaugurates Mangaly Shopping Mall Special Exhibition in Peerzadiguda



““PEERZADIGUDA, OCTOBER 1 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A special exhibition and sale organized by Mangaly Shopping Mall was inaugurated with great enthusiasm at Peerzadiguda in Medchal-Malkajigiri district on Thursday. Popular anchor and actress Rashmi Gautam attended the event as the chief guest and formally inaugurated the exhibition at Sri Palani Convention Hall. “The exhibition will continue from October 1 to October 18, the organizers said. Specially selected garments and the latest designs sourced from various parts of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh have been brought together under one roof. “The exhibition features a wide range of clothing and attractive new collections for women, men and children. As part of the special sale, sarees are available starting from just Rs. 99, according to the organizers. Special offers and the latest collections have also been made available for customers. “The organizers said that Mangaly Shopping Mall is conducting an exhibition for the first time in AS Rao Nagar as part of its efforts to reach customers across different localities. They stated that their objective is to organize such exhibitions in various areas and provide customers with new collections and special offers at attractive prices. The organizers appealed to the public to visit the exhibition with their families and take advantage of the special prices on a wide range of garments.

Special Namaz-e-Istisqa to be offered in Tolichowki on Sunday

GNS News Agency, Oct 1Hyderabad: A special Namaz-e-Istisqa (Prayer for Rain) will be offered on Sunday at 10 AM at Hakeem Shah Colony Park, opposite Jama Masjid Faiz Imam, Tolichowki, Shaikpet.

Former TS Waqf Board Member, Waheed Ahmed Advocate, has appealed to Imams, Khatibs and Managing Committees of mosques to announce the Namaz-e-Istisqa during Friday prayers and encourage people to participate in the special prayer.

The Managing Committee of Jama Masjid Faiz Imam is making arrangements for the prayer. Participants have been requested to perform Wudu at home, bring their own prayer mats, maintain parking discipline and bring their children in the blessed gathering, a press release said.

The enumeration process should be expedited and completed within the stipulated time frame



“Municipal Commissioner held a review meeting with AEROs and Supervisors.” “Municipal Commissioner held a review meeting with AEROs and Supervisors on the ongoing enumeration and verification process in Khammam city.” “On this occasion, the enumeration process completed so far was reviewed AERO wise. Officials explained that so far 75 percent of the enumeration process has been completed and 25 percent of the process is yet to be completed. The Municipal Commissioner directed that the remaining 25 percent enumeration process should be completed by the first week of October.” “Reviewing the progress

of works by AEROs and reviewing the details of personnel who have made less progress so far. Reasons for low progress were personally inquired of the staff concerned and appropriate suggestions were given to them. He directed to complete the remaining works expeditiously and achieve the specified targets.” “The municipal commissioner directed supervisors to monitor the verification process so that the BLOs must go door-to-door.” “Supervisors are advised to check whether the BLOs have gone door to door and served notices to the concerned persons or whether the verification process has been carried out. In case the concerned persons are not available at home, they are directed to guide the BLOs to send the relevant forms through WhatsApp as per rules.” “Pending forms should be resolved immediately.” “Along with the applications of new voter registrations, the Municipal Commissioner directed that the pending forms for amendments, deletions and other changes in voter details should also be scrutinized and dealt with immediately as per the rules.” “It is advised to check the already pending forms as well as the newly received forms and complete the process without any delay.” “The municipal commissioner directed the AEROs and supervisors to work in coordination to complete the entire process by the first week of October. Continuously monitoring the progress of works, enumeration within specified deadlines, The officials were directed to take steps to complete the process of verification and settlement of pending forms.

UPPAL MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY Meets Nagarkurnool District Collector

“UPPAL, OCTOBER 1 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):” Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy paid a courtesy visit to Nagarkurnool District Collector and District Magistrate Hemant Keshav Patil, IAS, at the Collectorate and conveyed his warm greetings on assuming charge as the District Collector. During the meeting, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy recalled his earlier association with Hemant Keshav Patil during his tenure as the LB Nagar Zonal Commissioner. He congratulated Patil on his new responsibility as Nagarkurnool District Collector and extended his best wishes for a successful tenure. “The MLA expressed his hope that Nagarkurnool district would continue to progress across all sectors under the Collector’s leadership. He wished Hemant Keshav Patil success in discharging his responsibilities effectively.” “Former corporators Devender Reddy and Prabhudas, BRS state leaders Saizen Shekhar, Praveen Mudiraj and Gandham Nageshwar Rao, along with other BRS leaders, were present on the occasion.



Bandi Sanjay visits schools, Anganwadi centre in Karimnagar

Minister inaugurates Smart City-funded facilities and presents awards to voluntary blood donors.

Karimnagar October 01, Khaja Sikandar Mohiuddin (Correspondent): Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Thursday inaugurated upgraded facilities at government primary and high schools in Theegalaguttapalli in the city’s second division. The works were taken up with ₹1.05 crore in Smart City funds.

Accompanied by Mayor Kolagani Srinivas, Deputy Mayor Yadagiri Sunil Rao and Municipal Commissioner Praful Desai, the Minister inaugurated a renovated dining hall and stage and inspected other facilities, including toilets, compound walls, classroom improvements, flooring, borewells and painting works.

Mr. Sanjay later participated in the ‘Anganwadi Milan Seva’ programme organised at a local Anganwadi centre under the Centre’s Sankalp Abhiyaan. He visited an exhibition showcasing nutritious food items, distributed food to children and enquired about teaching and learning activities at the centre. Anganwadi staff and ASHA workers who had rendered notable services were felicitated. At a separate programme organised by the Asara Foundation on school premises to mark National Voluntary Blood Donation Day, the Minister presented district-level awards to blood donors. The donors were honoured with shawls and certificates of appreciation for their contribution to saving lives through voluntary blood donation. Corporators, municipal officials,



teachers, Anganwadi and ASHA workers, MEPMA community organisers and local residents attended the programmes.

Congress corporators seek Bathukamma arrangements in all divisions.



Karimnagar October 01, Khaja Sikandar Mohiuddin (Correspondent): Congress corporators have urged the Municipal Commissioner to make necessary arrangements for Bathukamma celebrations across all divisions of the Karimnagar Municipal Corporation.

In a representation submitted to the Commissioner on Thursday, they sought adequate lighting at Bathukamma celebration points, sanitation and cleaning works, and artwork and decorations at the designated locations. They also sought adequate facilities at immersion points, besides sound systems and yellow LED lamps.

The representation was submitted by Vaidyula Anjan Kumar, corporator and president of the Karimnagar Corporation Congress Committee, along with corporators Jagan Reddy, Parvathula Mallesh am and Varala Narsing. Former corporators Charakonda Buchi Reddy, Sarilla Prasad and

Akula Uday, and former MPTC member Bomma Eshwar, were also present. The representatives urged the civic body to complete the required arrangements at all Bathukamma points ahead of the festival.

Everyone Can Help Prevent Road Accidents by Following Road Safety Rules

Uppal Traffic Division ACP S. Sampath Kumar, Uppal SHO Y. Ramalinga Reddy “UPPAL, OCTOBER 1 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):” A road safety awareness programme was conducted at Uppal Junction on Thursday as part of the ‘Arrive Alive’ initiative. Uppal Traffic Division ACP S. Sampath Kumar, Uppal Law and Order Police Station SHO Y. Ramalinga Reddy, Uppal Traffic Inspector G. Nagaraju, SI Madhusudhan, and other police personnel participated in the programme. “During the programme, the police created awareness among the public about the dangers of speeding, drunk driving, allowing minors to drive vehicles, triple riding and using mobile phones while driving. They explained that such dangerous practices could lead to serious road accidents and loss of valuable lives.” “The police advised two-wheeler riders to wear helmets compulsorily and urged car occupants to wear seat belts. They stressed that following traffic signals, maintaining lane discipline and adhering to road safety rules can help prevent accidents. The police appealed to everyone to strictly follow traffic regulations and act as responsible road users.

Respect Senior Citizens as Guides to Society: Ponnam Prabhakar



“Hyderabad Correspondent, October 1 (Indian Chronicle): Senior citizens should be respected as guides and ambassadors of society, with their experience and perspectives serving as valuable resources for social development, Minister Ponnam Prabhakar said on the occasion of the International Day of Older Persons-2026. Addressing the State government’s programme organised by the Department for the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities, Senior Citizens and Transgender Persons at Ravindra Bharathi, Prabhakar said the government would stand by elderly people and take steps to ensure their protection, dignity and welfare. He said complaints were being received from rural areas about children neglecting their elderly parents and stressed that caring for parents was a responsibility that should be upheld with respect. If necessary, the government would consider changes to existing legal provisions to strengthen protection for senior citizens, he said.



Prabhakar said the government was also examining the demand for issuing senior citizen bus passes. Referring to the financial difficulties faced by retired TSRTC employees, he said more than Rs 1,000 crore was pending towards various dues, including CCS and PF-related payments. The government was clearing the outstanding amounts and had discussed the issue with Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, he said. An action plan for clearing the remaining dues of retired RTC employees would be announced shortly, Prabhakar added. He said the government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, was giving priority to welfare and social justice and urged senior citizens to approach the government with their concerns. Minister Aduri Laxman Kumar, SC Welfare Secretary Vijayendra Boi, IAS, senior officials and representatives of organisations working for senior citizens attended the programme. The ministers presented awards to organisations recognised for their contribution to the welfare of older persons.

Minister Ponguleti and MLA Matta Ragamayee Dayanand at several programmes.

“Khammam, October 01, Indian Chronicle.” “State Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and Sathupalli constituency MLA Dr. Matta Ragamayee Dayanand visited Khammam district, Tallada mandal on Thursday and participated in several programmes. On this occasion, they attended the tenth-day memorial ceremony of the late Guvvala Ramireddy in Tallada Town, garlanded his portrait with flowers and paid their respects. Later, they consoled the family members, expressed their deepest sympathy and encouraged them. Subsequently, they visited the family of Dundeti Keshava Reddy, who had recently passed away, in Gollagudem village. They spoke with the family members, assured them of their support and encouraged them. Former TGIDC Chairman Muvva Vijay Babu, Tallada Mandal Congress Party President Godugunuri Lakshma Reddy, mandal Congress leaders, sarpanches, party workers and others participated in the programme.



* Khammam Suda Chairman Puvvalla Durga Prasad held a review meeting on solving town planning problems in 18th Division*

“Khammam: Chairman of Khammam Sudha Mr. Puvvalla Durga Prasad held a review meeting with town planning officials at Khammam Sudha office today.” “During the chairman’s visit to the 18th division of Khammam city last month, he brought to his attention the problems faced by the local people. In particular, the locals explained the problems related to the provision of ramps on the roads, problems related to the roads and other town planning issues.” “The Chairman responded to these issues at that time and issued appropriate instructions to the concerned officials, examined the issues at the field level and advised them to take necessary action as per the rules.” “In this context, in the review meeting held today, the officials were asked in detail about the steps taken so far to solve the problems identified in the 18th Division, the completed works and the issues that still need to be solved. The officials were advised to examine the issues related to town planning such as ramps on the roads and solve them in accordance with the rules so that the people do not face any difficulties.” “The Chairman ordered the officials to respond immediately to



the issues raised by the people, pay special attention to the pending issues and speed up the necessary steps for resolution.” “Former corporator Mandadapu Lakshmi Manohar, Town Planning DCP, Town Planning Supervisors, TPBOs and other relevant officials participated in this review meeting.

MOHAMMED RAFIQ Focuses on Drainage Issue in Balajinagar



Immediate Response to Public Problems During Basti Bata Programme “RAMANTHAPUR, OCTOBER 1 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): As part of the Basti Bata programme, Telangana Congress leader Mohammed Rafiq inspected the road and drainage problems prevailing on Street No. 5 in Balajinagar, Ramanthapur. Local residents brought their difficulties to his notice, following which he personally inspected the issue and assessed its severity. “Rafiq, along with AE Shwetha Sri, enquired about the drainage problem and urged the officials to take necessary measures to provide a permanent solution and prevent inconvenience to the residents. Later, he brought the issue to the notice of Uppal Congress party in-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy. Responding immediately, Parameshwar Reddy spoke to the local officials and directed them to take steps to resolve the problem. Rafiq said that he would coordinate with the local authorities and expedite the necessary measures to resolve the issue. He assured the residents that efforts would be made to provide a permanent solution at the earliest. He stated that public issues remained their priority and that they would continue working until the problem

was resolved. Work Inspector Mahender, Shivakumar, Raju, Anji, Nagaraju, Aleem, Jani, Ashok Gangaputra, Rajkumar, MD Shakeel, MD Mateen, Shiva, Sadhan, Sridhar, Pawan and others participated in the programme.”

Inspectors who took charge as SHOs of Khammam Two Town, Khammam Urban, Khammam Traffic Police Stations



“Khammam Urban, Khammam Traffic, Khammam Two Town Police Stations (SHO) have assumed the new responsibilities as Station House Officer Inspectors J. Ramakrishna, “Y. Nagaraju, K. Sivaprasad....” “After assuming charge, Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt was politely met and presented with a bouquet at the Police Commissioner’s office.

Tukaram Mundhe on Sanjay Raut's extortion charges: 'Show me'



GNS News Agency, Oct 1

Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Tukaram Mundhe has responded to the extortion charges levelled by Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut against the food safety regulator's officers, saying the charges are generic and lack specifics. Tukaram Mundhe also said that his office has not received any letter from Sanjay Raut on his allegations that food safety officials were extorting hoteliers, restaurants and quick commerce businesses. According to several media reports, Sanjay Raut reportedly wrote a letter to Tukaram Mundhe, alleging that "this industry of collecting money by threatening and black-mailing hoteliers has now started with more vigour than before." "FDA Designated Officers (DOs), Assistant Com-

missioners (ACs) and Food Safety Officers (FSOs) are openly collecting large amounts of money from hotels, restaurants and quick commerce businesses by threatening to suspend their licences. It is being said that before Mundhe became FDA Commissioner, the rate for closing notices was Rs 10,000–12,000. After Mundhe created panic, the same rate went up to Rs 75,000 to Rs 2 lakh," the letter reportedly states.

Responding to the allegations, Tukaram Mundhe told The Indian Express: "I haven't received any copy of the letter. I have also read about it in media reports. I am really thankful to him (Sanjay Raut). My request is that if he has details, please share them with me or with the Anti-Corruption Bureau, whoever he trusts." Mundhe also said he wanted all licensees who had been asked for money, or had paid it, to reach out to him with details of the officer and the transaction.

Asked about fears among small and mid-segment restaurateurs, hoteliers and quick commerce operators that complaining against an FDA officer would invite further harassment, he said, "You have to have faith in somebody. Even on my complaint portal, we mask the name. Nobody knows who filed the complaint. Similarly, if you reach out to me, I won't reveal your identity to my officers. What I need is just evidence. If any of my officers is doing anything corrupt, please bring it to my notice with all the details." Tukaram Mundhe took charge as Maharashtra FDA commissioner on May 25, and until August, the food safety regulator had conducted 12,083 inspections, issued 5,269 improvement notices, and suspended 603 licenses.

Manoj Jarange warns Maharashtra government against delay



Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar: Activist Manoj Jarange on Monday claimed that efforts were underway to discredit him during the 90-day period he has given the Maharashtra government to accept the demands pertaining to the Maratha quota. Addressing a press conference at a private hospital here, Jarange, however, said the Maratha community would defeat all such efforts to corner him and those associated with him. Jarange also said he would soon reveal the connections behind such efforts and those involved in them.

"The Maratha community has understood that inquiries will take place and it shows how much people (associated with the quota stir) are being troubled. We will bear everything but we will not surrender. If they want to send us to jail, I will go," Jarange asserted. Jarange said the names of experts proficient in reading the Modi script would be

submitted to the state government and that they should be given the power to identify and upload names from records across Maharashtra. "We are going to give the names of the Modi script experts to the state government. The sub-committee and the government should give power to these experts to find names and upload them too so that they can work across the state," he said. "We will not give a single day more than the 90-day period we have given to implement Hyderabad and other gazettes, revoke cases and give aid to those who lost their lives in the fight for Maratha quota," Jarange asserted.

Jarange said Maratha political leaders were more interested in themselves than members of the community. However, the Maratha community was keeping an eye on this, he added. The Maharashtra government must have the capacity to face criticism and fulfil the quota demands of the community, Jarange said. Taking a swipe at his detractors, Jarange said the more they spoke, the more the Maratha community would awaken. People from the community would understand that these leaders and political parties would not come to their help, he added. He also said his Dussehra rally at Narayangad in Beed district would be held on a small scale due to the prevailing drought situation. On September 17, Jarange called off his 20-day-old fast and warned the Maharashtra government that he would take the protest to Mumbai if his demands over Maratha reservation were not considered within three months. He has been demanding reservation for the Marathas under the OBC category based on Kunbi caste genealogy.

NCP merger still on? Sharad Pawar shuts down all rumours, says not going anywhere

The merger talks between the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the NCP (SP) may have cooled off in the past few weeks, but the buzz around the two parties coming together has not died down. When Sharad Pawar was asked about the NCP merger at an event in Mumbai, the NCP-SP chief said that his party wouldn't go anywhere. Sharad Pawar also said that other parties can merge with his party if they want.

Addressing the district presidents of the NCP-SP and affiliated organisations in Mumbai's YB Chavan center, Sharad Pawar said, "While discussing politics, our state president used a phrase and mentioned in a passing remark that various discussions and rumors were going around." "As the party head, I want to clarify that whatever discussion is taking place, it is about making the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharad Pawar) powerful under the present leadership in Maharashtra," Sharad Pawar said.

Other organisations or individuals are telling us that they came close to us, but no one came close to us. If anyone wants to come, they must merge with us on our terms; we will not go to anyone, and I am making this stand very clear as we proceed to take our decisions," he said. Recalling how two robots greeted him at an institute in Baramati, Sharad Pawar spoke about the dangers of Arti-



cial Intelligence (AI) and the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process, which has now come under heavy criticism after the Express investigation. Sharad Pawar said, "We just heard our colleague Jitendra Awhad explaining to us about the wrongdoings in the SIR process. I fear that these robots and the tools of Artificial Intelligence will be used to decide and change election results." "That is why I have advised our state president that this is a completely new technical method. After reviewing information from Russia, America, Europe and other countries, it is clear that artificial intelligence comes with both benefits and drawbacks," he said.

Delhi winter pollution plan: Construction banned, double parking fee, 50% WFH

GNS News Agency, Oct 1

Delhi will see a complete ban on construction-demolition activities from December 10-January 20 to combat winter pollution, said Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Monday while outlining pollution-control measures. The government has also mandated that petrol, diesel and CNG or LPG retail outlets across Delhi supply fuel only to vehicles with a valid Pollution Under Control Certificate (PUC) throughout the year. It has separately announced an enforcement drive against vehicles with invalid PUCs from October 1.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta attended the meeting along with Sirsa and senior officials from various departments. The meeting reviewed major sources of pollution in the Capital, ongoing mitigation measures and ways to strengthen monitoring and coordination between departments. The discussions came as the Delhi government prepares to implement a set of restrictions that will come into force annually from November 1 to February 28. The measures, notified on June 23, would operate parallel to the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), under which restrictions are imposed by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) depending on prevailing air quality. Under this framework, Delhi, for the first time, will see several measures made mandatory in advance during the winter pollution period rather than GRAP measures that kick in depending on air quality forecasts.

Among the key measures is a ban from November 1 to January 31 on motor vehicles registered outside Delhi that do not meet BS-VI emission standards. CNG and electric vehicles, emergency services and other specifically exempted categories will be excluded. MCD offices will operate from 8.30 am to 5 pm and Delhi government offices from 10 am to 6.30 pm during the November-February period. 3. Work from home mandate-From November 1 to January 31, government and private offices will be required to operate with no more than 50 per cent physical attendance, with the remaining employees working from home. - Essential services, including hospitals, public transport, power, water supply, sanitation, disaster management and pollution-control agencies are exempt. - Private entities have been advised to adopt staggered working hours and measures such as car-pooling, ride-sharing and common buses to reduce vehicular movement. 4. Parking fee to increase Parking charges at authorised parking sites will be doubled between November 1 and February 28, although parking facilities owned and managed by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation would be exempt. 5. Phased construction curbs Construction and demolition activity will face progressively stricter restrictions. -From November 1 to January 31, dust-generating demolition and open civil construction activities will be prohibited, except for essential public infrastructure projects. -A complete ban on construction and demolition, barring urgent government and emergency works, will apply from December 10 to January 20, officials said.

-Vehicles carrying construction material such as sand, stone, bricks, cement and debris will also be barred from entering the city during the period, subject to exemptions for projects of national importance, essential public infrastructure and emergency works. 6. Other measures- Antismog guns or mist systems at large commercial buildings



and construction sites of specific sizes have to be deployed. - Residents' welfare associations, housing societies, institutions, contractors and other establishments have also been made responsible for preventing the burning of waste, biomass, leaves, garbage and plastic within areas under their control. Under the existing framework, Stage I is triggered when the Air Quality Index (AQI) is in the 201-300 range, Stage II at 301-400, Stage III at 401-450 and Stage IV when AQI is above 450. The measures become progressively stricter as air quality deteriorates.

At Monday's meeting, the Delhi government reiterated that pollution control would be treated as a year-round exercise rather than being limited to the winter months. Gupta said the guidance and suggestions shared by Yadav would further strengthen the government's action plan, while Sirsa said the government was working on pollution control throughout the year through technical and scientific measures. The meeting also sought to strengthen on-ground monitoring and coordination among departments, said senior officials with the government saying the objective was to address major pollution sources through enforcement and continuous monitoring.

Death toll rises to four in Mancherial

Mancherial: The death toll in the tragic Naspur road accident has risen to four, with two more women succumbing to their injuries while undergoing treatment here on Monday. Police said the deceased women were identified as Aggu Soundarya, Laxmi, Soniya and Sumalatha, all hailing from different villages in Mandamarri and employed at a shopping mall in Mancherial town.

Soundarya and Laxmi were killed instantly, while five others sustained serious injuries after a truck rammed into an auto-rickshaw in Naspur on Monday morning. Soniya and Sumalatha later died while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Mancherial town. The condition of three other passengers remains critical. The victims were on their way to work when the mishap occurred. Negligence on the part of the three-wheeler driver was suspected to have caused the accident. The driver reportedly made a sudden U-turn after reaching Naspur. A lorry coming from the opposite direction collided with the auto-rickshaw, leading to the fatal crash, eyewitnesses said.

BJP rigged EVMs for Chandra Shekhar Aazad's win in 2024 Lok Sabha polls

GNS News Agency, Oct 1

Mayawati AazadBSP chief Mayawati on Monday accused the BJP of manipulating electronic voting machines to help Chandra Shekhar Aazad win the Nagina Lok Sabha seat in 2024. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati alleged Monday that the BJP manipulated electronic voting machines (EVMs) to help Aazad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram) chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad win the Nagina Lok Sabha seat in Uttar Pradesh in 2024. Speaking ahead of the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, Mayawati also demanded an immediate end to EVMs and called for a return to ballot papers.

In the 2024 elections, Chandra Shekhar Aazad won the Nagina constituency by defeating BJP candidate Om Kumar by a margin of 1.51 lakh votes. BSP candidate Surendra Pal Singh finished fourth, securing just 1.33 per cent of the total vote share. Repeating that the BSP has consistently opposed EVMs, Mayawati said her party's supporters believe their votes are redirected to non-BSP candidates due to machine manipulation, eroding public trust in the electoral process. In a press note in Hindi, she said, "A primary example is the Aazad Samaj Party MP (Chandra Shekhar Aazad), who has no base in the Nagina (SC-reserved) constituency. Yet, through a conspiracy specifically aimed at damaging the BSP, the BJP got him elected by manipulating the EVMs, a view shared by local residents there." Reacting to Mayawati's allegations, Chandra Shekhar Aazad said, "I am glad that Behanji has acknowledged Aazad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram) as a major force." In a Hindi post on X, he said Nagina people elected him in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections with 5.12 lakh votes. "Raising questions about the election process and transparency of EVMs is every citizen's right in a democracy. I myself have consistently demanded maximum transparency and use of ballot papers in the election process. But linking the mandate with which Nagina people elected me as their representative with any conspiracy hurts the sentiments of voters who cast their vote with conscience."



"Wherever Behanji's written press note may have come from, I am pleased that those who once used to say, 'Who is Chandrashekhar?', have now been shown by the people of this country who Chandrashekhar is—the one who fights for us, the one who struggles on the streets," he added.

Mayawati targets BJP over EVMs Mayawati said that elections used ballot papers for five decades before the Election Commission introduced EVMs. She recalled that when the Congress was in power at the Centre, the BJP itself had heavily opposed EVMs, arguing that electronic devices with installed chips could easily be hacked. The BJP even published a book on the topic and accused the Congress of winning elections by misusing EVMs," she said. "Because of such security concerns, most countries do not use EVMs and rely on ballot papers instead. BJP leaders previously demanded an end to EVMs, yet it is surprising that after coming to power at the Centre, they continued using them for voting and counting. As far as the BSP is concerned, we have opposed EVM voting from the very beginning." The BSP supremo concluded by stating that stopping the use of EVMs and restoring ballot papers is essential to re-establishing voters' faith in free and fair elections.

'We're struggling': Minister's viral remark bares Karnataka's financial strain

GNS News Agency, Oct 1

Karnataka Municipal Administration Minister H C Balakrishna's comments about the state government's guarantee schemes have gone viral, highlighting the financial strain brought about by the initiatives implemented to fulfil the Congress's election promises. While receiving petitions from disabled people at Ramanagara in Bengaluru, the minister said on September 26, "We understand your problems. But you know how things are. There are constraints. Want it or not, we have given guarantees."

Balakrishna said farmers were also expecting relief because of the drought situation. "We have to provide relief for people. They protest if we don't. Those receiving guarantees also protest (if money is not debited). We are struggling after getting stuck in this problem," he said, raising concerns about the government's fiscal challenges. "If there were no guarantees, these issues would not have been a major problem. Everything could have been sorted out easily. We too have to run the government. Everything should be done as per budgetary allocation. It's not that we don't want to help you," he told a delegation of disabled people.

The comments attracted criticism from the JD(S), which said the minister "publicly acknowledged that the state



government has gone bankrupt". The Opposition party contended that the treasury was empty and developmental activities had come to a standstill in the state. This is the second time in as many weeks that Karnataka government finances have come under the scanner. During the special session of the legislature, the D K Shivakumar-led government found itself in a spot of bother after a Cabinet note revealed that new big-ticket announcements were not feasible due to financial constraints.



which have not been disposed of. These people did not take part in the first elections," the counsel said, adding that the affected voters could miss out on exercising their franchise for a second time. The counsel pointed out that the October 6 bypolls were scheduled immediately after the proposed October 5 hearing and urged the court to take up the matter earlier.

Supreme Court declines urgent hearing on Bengal SIR appeals

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday declined to advance the hearing of pleas concerning the pendency of appeals arising from the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal. Bypolls in Rejinagar and Nandigram Assembly constituencies in the state will be held on October 6. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana said the matter would be taken up on October 5.

The matter was mentioned for an urgent hearing after the court was informed that the case, earlier expected to be heard on September 29, was now tentatively listed for October 5. Seeking an earlier hearing, the lawyer said more than 18,000 appeals against the exclusion of names from the electoral rolls were still pending before appellate tribunals constituted pursuant to the Supreme Court's directions. "There are more than 18,000 appeals pending

Fake drug racket suspect who fled to Azerbaijan held on arrival in Bengaluru



A Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Bengaluru police investigating a fake medicine racket arrested its alleged kingpin at Kempegowda International Airport soon after his arrival from Sharjah, UAE, on Monday morning. A look-out notice was issued for the accused, Prashant Rajanbabu, after he reportedly fled to Azerbaijan. He had been missing since August 18, when authorities seized suspected counterfeit medicines worth around Rs 5 crore, along with fake bills, injection-filling equipment, and counterfeit labels during raids in the Bidadi and Dodderi areas of Bengaluru South district.

Online rummy app owners scammed users, diverted funds to buy villas: ED

The Enforcement Directorate's Bengaluru zonal office has provisionally attached movable and immovable properties worth Rs 442.35 crore in connection with a money laundering case involving the RummyCulture app and associated entities, the agency said Sunday. The agency launched the investigation after multiple FIRs were registered in Telangana earlier this year, and raids began in May at the companies' office premises and the residences of their directors. Ramesh Prabhu, former group chief financial officer of RummyCulture's operator Gameskraft Technologies, was previously booked for allegedly siphoning off Rs 250 crore from the company, most of which he reportedly lost in options trading.

Search operations conducted in May and June led to the seizure of several incriminating documents, digital devices, and electronic records, which served as crucial evidence during the investigation. The agency said the newly attached assets include fixed deposit balances, commercial shops, a luxury villa, multiple residential properties registered in family members' names, private family trusts, and entities associated with Gameskraft Technologies shareholders. Prior search operations froze movable assets worth Rs 495 crore, along with Rs 11 lakh in cash and 2.30 kg of gold and diamond jewellery/bullion. A previous provisional attachment order had already secured properties valued at Rs 1,906 crore. With the latest action, the total value of assets attached, frozen, and seized by the agency in this case stands at Rs 2,843 crore. The agency claims that Gameskraft Technologies and Rummy Time Technologies operated online real-money games, specifically online rummy platforms and tournaments, via mobile applications, including RummyCulture, RummyPrime, Playship, and RummyTime.

The platforms accumulated a user base of approximately 3 crore players across the country. A significant portion of these users were located in states where online real-money gaming is legally banned, including Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu. The companies gener-

Investigators suspect the network supplied counterfeit cancer drugs, other life-saving medicines, and ICU injections to more than 90 hospitals and clinics in Bengaluru, allegedly offering them at discounts of around 50 per cent. An SIT official said that Rajanbabu's arrest and interrogation would be crucial in the case.

Karnataka's Food Safety and Drugs Administration (FSDA), which continued its raids on September 20, cancelled the licences of 16 retail and wholesale pharmaceutical firms across Bengaluru and suspended those of eight others, including a depot of global pharma major Pfizer, for their alleged role in selling or supplying spurious products. According to the FSDA, preliminary investigations suggest that the racket procured cheaper medications from neighbouring states and refilled them into new vials and re-labelled them to counterfeit expensive life-saving brands of multinational corporations, specifically imitating imported Pfizer products. To deceive buyers and maximise illicit profits, the counterfeit labels featured QR codes that the FSDA found to be non-functional when scanned. These counterfeit drugs lack active medicinal ingredients and may contain harmful substances, posing a serious threat to public health, the agency noted.



ated substantial revenues by charging platform commissions ranging from 10 per cent to 15 per cent on user wagering and staking deposits. Despite assuring players that the gaming environment was fair, transparent, and free of automated players, the companies allegedly deployed BOTs (automated algorithms) against unsuspecting users without their knowledge or consent. This setup caused heavy financial losses for players while generating vast criminal proceeds for the platforms. To recruit and retain players, the entities allegedly spent approximately Rs 1,035 crore on marketing, luring users with sign-up bonuses, referral rewards, free entries, and promotional incentives. To restrict user payouts, the platforms allegedly implemented restrictive withdrawal policies such as a 5-10 per cent levy on withdrawal requests. They also allegedly encouraged users to convert withdrawable funds into non-withdrawable 'Game Cash' through 'Super Booster' offers. The agency claims that they targeted inactive or dormant players through SMS, push notifications, and telemarketing calls to induce re-engagement. It says the proceeds of crime generated through these practices were laundered via dividend payments and share buybacks. They allegedly concealed the funds by investing in mutual funds, bonds, convertible notes, equity shares, movable assets, and high-value real estate properties through family trusts and shell entities.

Gurugram's groundwater plunges to 50 m, levels fall across 6 of 7 sites



Six of seven monitoring stations in urban Gurugram recorded an annual decline, with the sharpest fall of 2.34 m at Baliawas, stated a Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) report submitted to the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

GNS News Agency, Oct 1

Gurugram is facing a water paradox: its groundwater is dipping even as parts of the city continue to flood during the monsoon. A Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) report submitted to the Punjab and Haryana High Court shows groundwater levels fell at six of seven urban monitoring points over the past year, with the deepest reading at 50.30 metres below ground (mbgl). The affidavit was placed before a bench comprising Chief Justice Ashwani Kumar Mishra and Justice Rohit Kapoor in a long-pending writ petition addressing the city's unchecked subsoil extraction and environmental degradation. The court had on September 22 cautioned that the Millennium City faces a progressively "grim" future unless aggressive remedial measures are taken to halt aquifer depletion and address the recurring paradox of monsoon waterlogging.

According to the data submitted by Vidya Nand, Scientist and Head of Office at the CGWA's North Western Region office, depth to water level (DTWL) observations across Gurugram Urban during the pre-monsoon seasons of 2025 and 2026 revealed widespread depletion and substantial spatial variation. Depth to Water Level measures how far down from the ground surface one has to dig or drill before hitting underground water. A higher DTWL number means the water table has dropped deeper, signaling that

local groundwater reserves are depleting and getting harder to reach. Across the urban limits of Gurugram, water levels ranged from 2.5 mbgl to 50.30 mbgl.

Out of seven urban monitoring wells assessed by the agency, four recorded groundwater levels deeper than 20 mbgl. The deepest water level in the urban belt was recorded at Kherki Daula at 50.30 mbgl, the affidavit recorded. Six monitoring wells also recorded a fall in groundwater levels over the past year. The declines ranged from 0.08 metres to 2.34 metres, with the sharpest fall recorded at Baliawas. Only one monitoring station at the Cell Office recorded a rise of 1.34 metres. The CGWA informed the court that the integrated findings demonstrate an overall decline in groundwater levels across urban Gurugram, punctuated by only localised pockets of recovery. Across the wider Gurugram district, data collected by the Ground Water Cell, Haryana, and the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) showed groundwater levels ranging from 1.0 mbgl to 50.3 mbgl during the pre-monsoon period in 2026.

In 2025, the range was 1.3 mbgl to 49.6 mbgl during the pre-monsoon period. The deepest level was observed at Tatarpur at 49.6 mbgl, while Kheri Daula recorded the district's deepest point at 50.3 mbgl. The data also showed sharp differences between individual locations. The maximum annual water level rise was registered at Khawaspur, where levels improved by approximately 4.23 metres. Conversely, the steepest drop in the district occurred at Karola, where the water table plummeted by 5.41 metres. The authority said the localised declines warranted continued regulatory monitoring and targeted artificial recharge measures. It also submitted that groundwater regulation within the state is statutory governed by the Haryana Water Resources Authority (HWRA). The CGWA report was submitted in compliance with an order issued on August 19 by the High Court bench, which has been hearing a cluster of petitions originally filed in 2008 by Sunil Singh and joined by entities such as the Qutab Enclave Residents' Welfare Association. The litigation, active for nearly two decades, challenges rapid real estate expansion, including projects such as DLF Cyber City across Sectors 24, 25, and 25A, alleging construction proceeded without commensurate water supply networks, functional drainage, or requisite environmental checks, driving heavy reliance on unmetered private tubewells. During the September 22 hearing, the bench had pointed out that Gurugram is caught in a stark urban contradiction: the city suffers from dwindling freshwater reserves and severe subsoil depletion, yet is paralysed every monsoon due to urban inundation because authorities fail to channel storm runoff into subsoil aquifers. The judges had noted that natural water bodies have drastically diminished, sustaining channels remain blocked, and sewage treatment plants operate below capacity, failing to supply treated wastewater to ease freshwater demands.

Delhi records second-coldest September night in 25 years, coldest in 2 years



Delhi on Sunday recorded its second-lowest night temperature in September in 25 years, with the Safdarjung Observatory recording a minimum of 21 degrees Celsius. Settling three notches below the seasonal normal, the plunge also gave Delhi its coldest September night in two years, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The last time the city saw a colder September night was in 2008, at 20.8 degrees Celsius. In 2024, it had dropped to 21.1 degrees, recording the third-lowest minimum temperature recorded in September since 2001.

As per IMD, the dip in temperature was even more pronounced across other parts of the Capital. The Palam observatory clocked 19.2 degrees Celsius, 4.7 degrees be-

low normal, while Mayur Vihar stood at 19.5 degrees. The coolest pocket in the city was the Delhi Ridge station, where the minimum plunged to 16.8 degrees Celsius, marking a steep seven-notch departure categorised as "markedly below normal" by the IMD. Neighbouring stations such as Lodhi Road and Ayanagar recorded minimums of 21 and 21.2 degrees, respectively. Similarly, at 29.2 degrees, the maximum temperature on Sunday was also five notches below normal.

IMD officials attributed Sunday's low to various factors. "The low-pressure area over central Uttar Pradesh was drawing moisture into the region, while a Western Disturbance was also active over North India. This led to increased cloud cover and rainfall over Delhi-NCR. The cloud cover reduced day-time heating, while the wet ground and strong North-Northeasterly winds triggered increased cooling," an IMD official explained. On Saturday, Safdarjung recorded 4.9 mm of rainfall, while Ridge recorded 6.8 mm. Parts of Noida received 26.5 mm of rainfall. Gusts blowing at up to 33 kmph were also reported at Palam, as North-Northeasterly winds blowing at 20-25 kmph were logged through the day, IMD said. According to the IMD's seven-day forecast, Monday will see partly cloudy skies, while the rest of the week will witness "mainly clear" conditions. Day temperatures are expected to climb to 35 degrees Celsius, and night temperatures are likely to be around 25 degrees.

Cash-on-delivery order, chilli powder, and a robbery: 2 sisters arrested in Delhi

GNS News Agency, Oct 1 Around 7.20 pm on September 25, a delivery worker was waiting outside a home near Hanuman Mandir in Rohini Sector 5 with an online order. The woman who had placed it, Nancy Singh, 26, came out to collect the parcel. But instead of taking the delivery, police alleged, Nancy tried to snatch several parcels from the worker's delivery bag. When he resisted, she allegedly threw chilli powder into his eyes and grabbed the bag. Moments later, her younger sister Gracy Singh, 20, arrived on a scooter and allegedly knocked him down from behind. The sisters then fled with several parcels. A case was registered at Budh Vihar police station under charges of committing or attempting to commit robbery while voluntarily causing hurt.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini) Shashank Jaiswal said a team comprising Assistant Sub-Inspector Ramesh, head constables Rajesh, Kuldeep, Rajesh and Rashmi, and constables Vijay and Sweetie was formed to investigate the case. Within 15 hours, the sisters were arrested from Rohini's Budh Vihar area. According to police, the sisters live in a rented home in Karol Bagh. Nancy had completed a course in fashion designing and was unemployed, while Gracy is a Class 12 dropout. Their parents live in Rohini Sector 5, police said. Their father had previously worked in a private company, according to police, while their brother works for a private company. An officer privy to the investigation said the family was facing financial difficulties and the sisters appeared to have committed the alleged robbery in an attempt to overcome them. Investigators said Nancy had placed orders for women's clothing and beauty products through an e-commerce platform on a cash-on-delivery basis. Police sus-



pect the sisters planned to take away the parcels and sell them for money. Robbery that initially raised suspicion. The incident initially led investigators to suspect that it could have been staged or that the delivery worker himself might have been involved, police said. However, CCTV footage and other technical evidence subsequently indicated that the robbery had taken place. When the police team reached the spot, they found the delivery worker with chilli powder on his face and shirt. He was subsequently medically examined and was found to have sustained an injury to his leg. During questioning, the sisters allegedly told police that they carried chilli powder for their own safety. Police said the claim was still being verified. Police said three of the allegedly stolen parcels, along with the scooter and a mobile phone purportedly used in the crime, were recovered. The sisters were initially taken into police custody for two days before being sent to Tihar Jail.

In Karnataka job fraud case, probes show paper leaks may be only one part

Investigations into the alleged Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) veterinary doctors' recruitment exam paper leak have uncovered indications of corruption beyond the leaks, including alleged manipulation of candidate shortlists after the exam. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Karnataka Police Criminal Investigation Department (CID) findings emerged during the investigation into Gyanendra Kumar Gangwar, 41, an IAS officer and former controller of KPSC examinations.

CID arrested Gangwar on August 29, and ED took him into custody on September 18, over the January 2026 veterinary doctors' exam paper leak. ED, which searched 21 properties linked to alleged KPSC recruitment frauds, including those linked to the Commission's chairman Shivashankarappa S Sahukar and member Shantha Hosamani in August, told a special court last week that it had seized material indicating illegal practices by a KPSC official. According to ED, rough diaries recovered from a KPSC official contained notes suggesting that selections were manipulated at the shortlisting stage for eligible candidates for posts including veterinary officers, assistant engineers in various departments, and motor vehicle inspectors over the past two years.

The notes allegedly listed candidates who appeared in the initial 1:3 eligibility lists, with monetary figures recorded against some names. "During the searches conducted at the residence of a KPSC official, certain materials were seized, and analysis of the materials shows involvement of KPSC officials in collecting illegal gratification from candidates appearing in recruitment examinations conducted by the KPSC, on the assurance of final selection," ED told the court. CID and ED are investigating allegations that she shared 13 phone calls with a candidate, who was selected, before their interview for the recruitment of 384 gazetted



probationers, or Karnataka Administrative Service (KAS) officers. The recruitment has since been put on hold; more than two lakh aspirants had appeared for the preliminary examination. Gangwar told investigators during custodial interrogations that several KPSC officials collected bribes from candidates while preparing final merit lists for recruitments, according to the agencies. ED told the court that it is investigating the total amount allegedly involved in the KPSC "bribes-for-jobs" scandal. In the veterinary doctors recruitment, CID and ED allege that 20 of the roughly 1,400 candidates who appeared for an exam for 400 vacancies paid more than Rs 2 crore to middleman Basavaraj Kannale to obtain the leaked questions. Kannale allegedly charged between Rs 20 lakh and Rs 40 lakh per candidate. Investigators allege that Rs 52 lakh of the proceeds was subsequently transferred to Gangwar and used to buy expensive jewellery in Bengaluru for his girlfriend. The Karnataka High Court on September 21 ordered the formation of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Karnataka Police to probe the KPSC scam. The state government has not yet constituted the SIT, as it is considering challenging the High Court's order in the Supreme Court.

1908 Musi flood victims remembered at Hyd memorial

Hyderabad: Tributes were paid to the victims of the 1908 Musi River floods at a memorial programme held on Monday beneath the historic tamarind tree on the Osmania General Hospital (OGH) premises. The memorial, organised by the Forum for a Better Hyderabad, brought together historians, students, and civil society members to remember the tragedy and advocate for sustainable urban planning.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman of the Forum for a Better Hyderabad, Manikonda Vedakumar, said that the natural flow channels and catchment areas of the Musi River must be fiercely protected. "Saving the Musi means saving Hyderabad. Musi River and its natural flow channels must be given due importance in the future planning of Hyderabad. As the city continues to expand today, it is essential to protect the river's catchment areas, lakes and natural storm-

water channels," he said.

During the event, a book titled 'Eyewitness Accounts on River Musi Floods of 1908', authored by Dr Dyavanpally Satyanarayana and published by the Deccan Heritage Academy Trust, was unveiled. Dr Satyanarayana, on the occasion, said that contemporary writings, archival newspaper reports, and oral narratives remain deeply relevant to modern-day flood management. On the occasion, Parashar presented a traditional Musi Flood Lavani performance, recounting the harrowing firsthand experiences passed down through generations. Dignitaries urged that such historical accounts and local oral histories related to Musi floods must be shared with younger generations through modern documentation, maps, and visual media to ensure public safety and river conservation go hand in hand.

Iran insists on diplomatic solution after Trump rejects peace plan



WASHINGTON/UNITED NATIONS/DUBAI, GNS News Agency, Oct 1 Iran insisted on Sunday that only diplomacy can solve its conflict with the ?United States and Israel, after US President Donald Trump said he rejected an Iranian proposal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and end fighting. "Our conditions are clear, and any move toward reopening ?the Strait of Hormuz is contingent on these conditions being met," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi posted on social media. "Only a negotiated solution can get them out of this deadlock."

Make sense of global markets with the Trading Day newsletter. Sign up here. Iran announced a peace proposal last week at the UN General Assembly in New York, saying it had been transmitted to the Americans via Qatari mediators. Trump said on Saturday he rejected the plan, and argued that desperation was driving the Iranians' push for an agreement on the key waterway. "They want to make a deal to open the Hormuz Strait immediately because they're losing ?so badly," Trump told reporters at the White House. Keeping the door to diplomacy open, however, Trump told Axios in a phone interview on Sunday that he expected US negotiators to engage in more talks this ?week. Araqchi said mediators facilitating Tehran's talks with Washington had not officially relayed a US rejection of the plan.

"We are waiting for the mediators to convey the definitive views ?to us, and we will make a decision based on them," Araqchi posted. The US has imposed an economic blockade on Iran to put pressure on Tehran to stop Iranian attacks on vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, which ?have drastically reduced shipping through the area even as Trump repeatedly asserts that the US controls the waterway. The commander-in-chief of Iran's army, Amir Hatam, said the war was at a critical and decisive stage, adding that Tehran would not accept ?a situation in which it was unable to trade while foreign powers used the region's strategic waterways. "If Iran cannot trade, if Iran cannot live, no one will be able to trade or live," he said, in comments reported by state media. **SAUDI ARABIA DRAWN DEEPER INTO WAR** Previous attempts at diplomacy have failed to end the war, which began on February 28 with US and Israeli strikes on Iran. Since then it has alternated between pauses and renewed strikes, killing thousands while degrading the conventional forces of Iran and damaging its already ?ailing

economy. Iran and its allies have responded by extending the conflict throughout the region. Iran has struck US allies in the Gulf with drones and missiles, while its Houthi allies in Yemen have hit Saudi interests.

Saudi Arabia, the ?largest of the Gulf states, has been drawn deeper into the war this month as Houthi fighters have advanced in Yemen, routing forces of the Saudi-backed government and threatening Saudi oil exports through the Red Sea. The Iran-backed Houthis have repeatedly fired into Saudi ?Arabia and, ?in a possible sign of further escalation, parents in Riyadh received notices from schools on Sunday saying classes would shift to remote learning for the week, according to people who received the messages. The notice did not give a reason for the decision. Saudi authorities did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Yemen's Houthi-run health ministry, meanwhile, said seven people were killed and 40 wounded, including children, in a strike on shops at a market at the Mawiya junction in Taiz province, in the southwest. Later, Yemen's internationally recognised government said its forces had targeted a Houthi military camp and vehicles at the same junction. **CONFLICT HAS DISRUPTED OIL FLOWS, HARMED GLOBAL ECONOMY**

The Iranians also engaged their Saudi rivals regarding the ?Strait of Hormuz during the brief flurry of diplomacy in ?New York, underscoring the stakes of a seven-month-old ?conflict that has disrupted oil flows through a critical shipping lane and taken a toll on the global economy. Araqchi told reporters at the UN on Friday the proposed deal would trigger a seven-day countdown to reopening the strait and a pause in regional fighting. "If there is seriousness on the US side to come to a deal and reopen the Strait ?of Hormuz, everything is now prepared," Araqchi said. If the US were to agree, the warring parties could start wider talks "on mutually agreed subjects." That could potentially include ?discussions of Iran's nuclear programme. Trump ?has cited preventing Tehran from ever acquiring a nuclear bomb as a key goal, along with ending its ability to attack its neighbours and creating conditions for Iranians to topple their leadership.

US envoy to the United Nations Mike Waltz said on Sunday in an interview with CNN's State of the Union that Trump had rejected the Iranian proposal because it required the immediate lifting of sanctions and release of frozen assets. "So the bottom line is they were asking for everything up front with ?a promise that ?they would then talk," Waltz said. "The president's just not confident that the Iranians are coming in good faith and that they will truly ?negotiate the end of their nuclear programme." Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, in an interview with the CBS show "Face the Nation", said Tehran was ready for talks on its nuclear programme and other issues, but would not accept "bullying or coercion". "Iran is not seeking war, but will defend itself against ?pressure, threats and attacks," Pezeshkian said, adding that it had already agreed that "we're not supposed to develop nuclear weapons". Adds Trump expects more talks this week in paragraph 5

Trump and Xi's 'stalemate' summit was a glitzy gift to China



BEIJING/TOKYO/WASHINGTON, GNS News Agency, Oct 1 President Donald Trump hoped his pomp-filled summit with Xi Jinping in Washington last week would showcase the strength of his personal relationship with the Chinese ?leader. Instead, the limited outcomes showed just how far apart Washington and Beijing remain on key issues, and reinforced a view among analysts that Xi sees little reason to grant ?Trump major political victories ahead of November's midterm elections. Make sense of global markets with the Trading Day newsletter. Sign up here. "The US-China relationship has settled into a managed stalemate," said Craig Singleton, senior director for China at US-based think tank, the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

"The elaborate pageantry matters precisely because there is still relatively little substantive progress to showcase." Both sides said they reached consensus on lowering tariffs for a \$60 billion batch of non-sensitive goods, but there was no timeline for adoption. At the same time, a deadline for a broader trade accord ?was pushed into next year. The absence of a Chinese CEO delegation accompanying Xi also highlighted the challenges of overcoming US suspicion of Chinese investment, casting doubt on the viability of a ?two-way investment scheme the leaders unveiled at a Beijing summit in May, analysts said. "The Trump-Xi summit created a positive political atmosphere but did nothing to ?narrow differences, or reduce mutual suspicions," said Drew Thompson, a senior fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. White House officials had tempered expectations before the summit, pointing ?out that the leaders would also meet at international forums in Shenzhen and Miami before year end. But while the uneventful meeting capped off a diplomatic week that exposed the limits of Trump's powers, Joe Mazur, geopolitics ?analyst at Beijing-based consultancy Trivium, said it served as a "PR win" for China, said . From the outset, Trump went out of his way to fete Xi - the leader of a country he has previously said is "killing America" with unfair trade

practices. He broke protocol to greet him at the airport, the first time a US president has done so for a world leader in 11 years. Later, addressing a coterie of top government officials and tech magnates assembled for a lavish state ?banquet in his honour, Trump said they "had never gotten along better".

"The extraordinary courtesy the Americans extended to Xi Jinping met and far exceeded China's expectations," said Shen Weizhong, a former Chinese foreign ministry official ?and vice president of Beijing-based think tank Global Governance Institution. "The Chinese do not feel that a visit necessarily has to result in a specific number of agreements, or in tariff reductions or other such outcomes ... The mere fact ?that they meet, ?nod to one another, and shake hands speaks volumes." Xi is also in no rush to make concessions, analysts say. China's dominance in production of rare earths, minerals critical for sectors from tech to autos and defence, gives it a powerful source of leverage, while its trade with the world has surged despite Trump's tariff threats. Trump did not come away completely empty-handed, however. China has proposed cutting tariffs on a range of US agricultural goods, from corn to dairy, a commerce ministry list showed on Monday. In return, the US will reduce levies on Chinese imports such as toys, fireworks and Christmas ornaments. That will be welcome news for American ?farmers, who form one of Trump's key voting blocs, ?ahead of midterm elections that look challenging ?for his Republican party. But commodity analysts were also quick to add that soybeans, one of the US' largest exports, did not feature on China's list, leaving those purchases potentially hostage to any deterioration in ties.

BUYING TIME ON TAIWAN China also gave little indication it is willing to help Trump end the war in Iran ?that has dragged the US president's approval rating to the lowest in his political career. Shortly after Xi's departure, Chinese Vice President Han Zheng pushed back ?against the US on ?Iran and its threats against Cuba at a UN General Assembly meeting in New York. The Chinese leader also did not shy away from pressing Trump on thornier topics such as US support for Taiwan, the democratically-ruled island claimed by Beijing. Trump avoided the subject in his public comments, in a stark contrast with the May summit, at which he called appending, opens new tab \$14-billion package of arms sales to Taiwan a "negotiating chip" with Beijing. Washington has cast the busy ?summit schedule with ?Xi as important to keeping ties on even keel between the world's two biggest economies. But frequent interactions of the leaders ?also buy Beijing time on unwanted US actions such as the arms sales to Taiwan, said Jeremy Chan, a senior analyst at political risk consultancy Eurasia Group. "That's a major strategic win for the Chinese and a major loss for Taiwan and a lot ?of US allies and partners in the region," said Chan, a former US diplomat in China.

Nvidia unveils Open Agent Safety Platform to prevent AI agents from going rogue

United States: Nvidia on Monday unveiled a new security platform that the chipmaker said can prevent artificial intelligence agents from going rogue. The company said its Open Agent Safety Platform includes software that "sets boundaries for agents" and follows a series of revelations from top AI companies about their models escaping and breaking into other organisations. The disclosures have sparked a fierce debate about the safety of advanced artificial intelligence systems, including self-improving models that some fear could race out of human control. Nvidia executives said in a media briefing that the new system could have prevented a recent incident involving a swarm of OpenAI agents that autonomously hacked into AI startup Hugging Face.

"From what we know, this new security platform could have stopped the breach if it was being used in frontier labs for model evaluation early on," said Justin Boitano, the company's vice president of enterprise AI, referring to companies at the forefront of AI. It was a high-profile breach that intensified concerns about AI, followed by similar incidents involving OpenAI's models, including one in which an Australian health department website was breached. Anthropic and Meta have also disclosed that their AI systems hacked into other organisations on their own. Nvidia's software, called OpenShell, is open source and lets developers "formally



verify an agent has enough authority to do its job and no more," Boitano said. The platform also includes a separate security layer called Sentry that runs onboard a chip to constantly monitor AI agent activity and can "intervene instantly" if an agent starts trying to move beyond its target, the company said. "OpenShell governs the agent's actions, and then Sentry independently monitors and contains suspicious behavior," Boitano said. More than 100 companies are using the system at its launch, including Microsoft, Perplexity, Accenture and JPMorgan Chase.

Bangkok floods recede slowly after heavy rain; 7 lakh residents affected



Bangkok: Floodwaters in Thailand's capital were slowly receding on Monday after continuous rainfall over the weekend, although some neighbourhoods and major roads remained inundated. Rain continued intermittently, but Bangkok city officials said conditions had improved enough to accelerate drainage efforts. Water levels in four main canals had risen too high over the weekend to take in runoff from surrounding communities.

More rain was forecast across much of Thailand, although Bangkok was expected to receive less. The weekend flooding affected 3.29 lakh households, or about 7 lakh people, the Bangkok Flood Control Centre reported, according to Deputy Gov. Tavidha Kamolvaj.

Gov. Chadchart Sittipunt declared a flood emergency on Saturday across all 50 city districts, although some were relatively unscathed. He said authorities were prioritising assistance for vulnerable residents, including older people and those with disabilities, by delivering supplies or evacuating them. City officials said nearly 7,000 people were staying in shelters. Neighbourhoods in eastern Bangkok were hit hardest. Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul donned white rain boots on Sunday night to inspect a heavily flooded housing estate in Bang Kapi district and help distribute relief supplies. Water was about knee-deep on Monday near a train

station and shopping mall in Bang Kapi. Despite intermittent downpours, shoppers waded through the water carrying bags, backpacks and boxes of groceries. Some travelled to and from the station in a small boat provided by the mall. For Naowarat Supanikorn, a 55-year-old maid who shares a single-storey house with three dogs and six cats, the flooding was more than an inconvenience. She said she realised at about 1:30 am on Saturday that water was seeping into her home. "I'm worried about my pets" "I had to take my dogs and cats out," she said. "I had to leave them with my neighbour. I have taken them back today because they said the sun would come out, but it looks like the rain will come back." She said the flooding in her neighbourhood reached above her hips at its highest and had since dropped to about knee level. She said the bigger problem was that she had lost her job working at a condominium. "My workplace also said if I can't come to work, they're happy to take my resignation. So I thought, that's fine, I'll quit." To try to generate some income, she bought supplies to make food that she could sell on the street, but business was slow in the flooded conditions. "It's stressful. If the bills come, I'd be cooked, because I don't have work now. If I have to pay for water or electricity now it would be bad," she said. "I'm not worried about me but I'm worried about my pets. I've lived with them my whole life. They're my priority. It's OK if I don't have work and starve myself, but I'd like help for my pets." The flooding also had knock-on effects, including panic buying of food, disrupted supply chains for food and other items, and staffing problems at various enterprises whose employees were unable to get to their jobs.

Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport said baggage from arriving and departing flights was piling up because of "insufficient staffing to support ground handling operations" and problems with some baggage carts. The disruptions delayed some departures and forced arriving passengers to wait longer than usual for their luggage, with baggage from several flights still undelivered, the airport said. The government declared special holidays on Monday and Tuesday for state offices.

UK police say five arrested at airbase are British nationals



LONDON, GNS News Agency, Oct 1- British police said on Monday the five men ?who were detained near the Fairford ?airbase used by the US to attack Iran were all British nationals ?who live in London. The police ?said that the five men, who were ?arrested on Sunday on suspicion ?of terrorism and explosive offences, ?were all in their mid-twenties. Get a look at the day ahead in European and global markets with the Morning Bid Europe newsletter. Sign up

here.

Item 1 of 2 Armed police officers work on a road outside the perimeter of the RAF Fairford airbase, after police declared a major incident at the base after several men were arrested on suspicion of offences under the Explosives Act, in Fairford, Gloucestershire, Britain, September 27, 2026. REUTERS/Toby Shepheard [1/2] Armed police officers work on a road outside the perimeter of the RAF Fairford airbase, after police declared a major incident at the base after several men were arrested on suspicion of offences under the Explosives Act, in Fairford, Gloucestershire, Britain, September 27, 2026. REUTERS/Toby... Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab Read more "At this time, we are working to establish the full ?circumstances of the activity of ?those arrested, their knowledge and any motivation ?behind ?this incident," Counter Terrorism Police said in the statement. "I am very aware of the levels of ?speculation about ?the motivation ?behind this incident, and the geopolitical questions that ?are being raised. However, I ?ask ?that at this time, Counter Terrorism Policing are given the space ?to ?work carefully and ?clearly."

Protesters demand Spanish government limit evictions after pensioner forced out



GNS News Agency, Oct 1

MADRID, Sept 28 (Reuters) - Protesters camped outside the Madrid regional government's headquarters for a third day on Monday to object to the eviction of an octogenarian and demand stronger protection for tenants in ?the face of a housing shortage and soaring rents. Protests boiled over last week after police evicted 87-year-old Maricarmen Abascal on ?a stretcher from her Madrid home of more than seven decades because of an eviction order secured by the investment fund that bought her apartment. Get a look at the day ahead in European and global markets with the Morning Bid Europe newsletter. Sign up here. Hundreds of people outside her building clashed with police, while the Socialist-led central government condemned the centre-right regional administration for not preventing the eviction. By Monday, hundreds of ?tents filled the central Puerta del Sol square, echoing the protests of 2011 when it was occupied for ?a month by activists demonstrating against austerity measures adopted during the global financial crisis. Prime Minister Pedro ?Sanchez said on Sunday the government was working to enact a housing decree in parliament by Tuesday that would bring ?immediate relief for tenants. Unlike in the financial crisis, when many evictions were linked to mortgage

defaults after a property bubble ?burst, a growing share are now related to rent disputes, reflecting a shortage of properties. Rents have on average doubled over the past decade, far outpacing salaries.

TENS OF THOUSANDS MARCH THROUGH MADRID On Saturday, some 30,000 people marched through Madrid to object to the treatment of Abascal and others forced ?from their homes by investment funds. Marchers shook keys and bore banners with slogans including "Speculators go home" and "Housing is for living". As ?night fell on Puerta del Sol, home to the office of Isabel Diaz Ayuso, centre-right president of the Madrid region, dozens of activists ?put up ?tents, and their number has steadily grown since. Blanca, a student, said young Spaniards were struggling to move out of their parents' homes. "Politicians not only do nothing but make it worse," she said. "We've decided to put our foot down, so let's hope they hear us."

Further protests were set to take place across Spain on Monday, according to the Tenants' Union, which has been ?co-ordinating the protests. From her hospital ?bed in Madrid, Abascal ?said she could not join the demonstration and urged protesters to keep fighting. "Be brave, fight, defend what is yours and, please, take care of yourselves; keep camping there for as long ?as your bodies can hold out and as long as you wish to. Let's hope ?all this comes ?to a successful conclusion tomorrow," she said in a video distributed by the Tenants' Union. Spain has a deficit of 750,000 homes, according to the central bank, which has said that figure could rise to over 1 million by 2028. Only about 120,000 are built ?each year, ?a sixth of the rate before the 2008 financial crisis. Ayuso said the protests were ?an attempt to "change the rules of the game" on existing contracts and asked whether the activists thought there should be age limit for paying rent. Adds pensioner's comment in paragraphs 13-14; Madrid regional leader's comments, 17

Defence, trade and geopolitics on the cards at U.K.'s 'reset' summit with EU



GNS News Agency, Oct 1

U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer will host the first U.K.-EU Summit since Brexit, as the Labour government attempts to "reset" ties with the bloc, some nine years after the U.K. left the EU. The two sides, which will meet in London on Monday (May 19, 2025), are expected to announce a defence and security pact, agreements related to trade and a joint statement on the geopolitical situation. In its messaging, Downing Street has linked the expected trade announcements with the last week's comprehensive U.K.-India trade deal and U.K.-US framework trade agreement. However, the trade outcomes for Monday are expected to be smaller in scope, focusing on a few sectors.

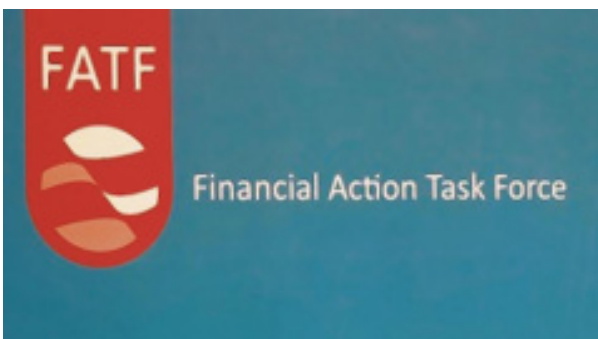
"First India, then the United States – in the last two weeks alone that's jobs saved, faster growth and wages rising. More money in the pockets of British working people, achieved through striking deals not striking poses," Mr. Starmer said in a statement. A stronger relationship U.K.-EU relationship, which Monday's summit is hoping to achieve, would be "good for our jobs, good for our bills and good for our borders", he said. The summit is being held against the backdrop of heightened geopolitical uncertainty, including signs of a changing relationship between Wash-

ington and its European allies.

Several impasses remained at the 11th hour before Monday's summit. One challenging issue has been fishing rights. France – one of the most influential EU members – has wanted an agreement to maintain current levels of access to British fishing waters extended for the long-term (the current agreement ends in June 2026), rather than requiring annual negotiation. Other issues being hammered out include, as per reports, a sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) agreement and a veterinary deal. Alignment on agricultural rules was a sensitive issue in the run-up to Brexit and the E.U. has wanted the U.K. to align itself to future changes in EU SPS rules as part of the current negotiations.

Monday (May 19, 2025) is also likely to see a selective easing of mobility rules between the EU and the U.K. for some professionals. The sides are reportedly still working out a youth mobility scheme, which the EU has been keen on. Migration and mobility are sensitive issues and have occupied headlines in recent days, following the strong performance of Reform U.K., a nativist party, in local polls earlier this month. The Labour government's positions on migration have consequently hardened; Downing Street recently announced its intention to tighten residency requirements and close or restrict certain visa routes. The Prime Minister defended the talks around youth mobility, telling The Times on Friday that the scheme under discussion with the EU was not tantamount to "freedom of movement". Ending free movement for EU nationals was one of the core arguments for those who championed Brexit. On defence, the U.K. is seeking access for its companies to a new €150 billion EU defence loan scheme. The U.K. and the E.U. have been cooperating closely on Ukraine, with Mr Starmer hosting European leaders in London, in March, to work out a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine.

India to apprise FATF of the latest evidence on terror infrastructure in Pakistan



GNS News Agency, Oct 1

The Indian authorities are planning to apprise the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) of the latest evidence related to the terror bases in Pakistan that were destroyed by the defence forces during the precision attacks as part of Operation Sindoor, in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack. "Although the decision making in the FATF is based on technical compliance of its anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorism financing (CTF) recommendations, which is evaluated through the measures taken by the country concerned and on-ground verification, the gruesome killings in Pahalgam have necessitated the sharing of information about the existing terror infrastructure in Pakistan with the international watchdog," said a government official. In the coming days, the official said, India is expected to highlight, at all the international forums, the lat-

est evidence about the patronage being given by the Pakistani State machinery to banned terrorist organisations.

The FATF Plenary had removed Pakistan from the Grey List in October 2022, albeit with the reminder that Pakistan will continue to work with the Asia Pacific Group (APG) to further improve its AML/CFT system. The last time the FATF had placed Pakistan on its Grey List was in June 2018. It found several strategic deficiencies with respect to the AML and CFT recommendations. Pakistan was told to implement the action plan, which included demonstration of effective action against United Nations-designated terror outfits, individuals and their associates in terms of financial sanctions, asset seizures, investigation, prosecution, and convictions.

However, owing to its failure to implement all the action points fully, Pakistan was again retained on the Grey List on October 21, 2021. The FATF Plenary noted that it had completed 26 of the 27 action items in its 2018 plan. The one remaining issue was about continuing to demonstrate that the terror financing investigations and prosecutions targeted senior functionaries and commanders of UN-designated terror outfits. Earlier, in response to the additional deficiencies flagged in Pakistan's 2019 APG Mutual Evaluation Report in June 2021, it had given further commitment to address them. Pakistan was put on the Grey List for the first time in 2008, then removed in 2009, and again it was brought under increased monitoring from 2012 to 2015. Greylisting by the FATF is said to limit a country's access to international loans.

Why is there variation in India's fertility rates? | Explained

The story so far: The Sample Registration System (SRS) Statistical Report of 2021, released by the Office of the Registrar General of India recently, showed that India has maintained its Total Fertility Rate (TFR) at 2.0 — the same as reported in 2020. While the national average for TFR has remained the same, there is a wide regional variation in TFR data for States and Union Territories (UTs) reported independently.

Which State saw highest TFR?

The highest TFR was recorded in Bihar at 3.0 and the lowest was reported for West Bengal and Delhi at 1.4. The data went on to reveal that in the decade between 2009-11 and 2019-21, TFR has been on an overall decline, in States, and nationally, albeit at different rates.

What does TFR measure?

The SRS report calculates TFR to measure the number of children each woman in India is expected to have throughout her reproductive age, which the survey defines between 15 and 49 years. According to the report, this value is derived from other indicators for fertility — more specifically age-specific fertility rates put together through a formula. Age-specific fertility rates measure the number of children women of a particular age range are expected to have. This data is gathered as part of the SRS survey, which is the largest demographic survey conducted by India to measure various fertility and mortality indicators annually. The SRS 2021 survey was conducted across 8,842 sample units in all the States and UTs, and compiles data gathered from a sample size of about 84 lakh people.

What do fertility indicators record?

Within fertility indicators, the SRS report broadly measures the Crude Birth Rate (CBR), Sex Ratio at Birth, General Fertility Rate, Age-Specific Fertility Rate, and Total Fertility Rate, among other indicators. Crude Birth Rate measures number of live births per 1,000 people in the population, and General Fertility Rate measures live births per 1,000 women of reproductive age (15-49 years). The surveys also measure another indicator — Gross Reproduction Rate, which reflects the number of daughters a woman is expected to have, and who will, in turn, bear children. The report further notes that the TFR of India at 2.0 has come down below the replacement level of 2.1. The replacement level TFR is measured as the number of children each woman should have for each generation to replace the previous generation's population. According to the TFR data for 2021, just six States had TFR above the replacement level of 2.1. These were Bihar (3.0), Madhya Pradesh (2.6), Jharkhand (2.3), Uttar Pradesh (2.7), Chhattisgarh (2.2),



and Rajasthan (2.4). All other States had reported a TFR at or below the replacement level. According to the SRS report, India's CBR is at 19.3 for 2021, which has declined at a rate of 1.12% every year from 2016 onwards. While all bigger States and UTs across the country are reporting a declining CBR, Uttarakhand was the only outlier, reporting a slight increase in CBR from 2016. Among the States and UTs, the rate of decline in CBR is highest for Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Delhi, where the CBR is declining at almost twice the rate of the national average.

How do experts read fertility data?

Based on a reading of the numbers, Professor Praveen K. Pathak of Jawaharlal Nehru University's Centre for the Study of Regional Development, explains, "It clearly tells us TFR has come down below replacement levels and there are remarkable differences in data of States." He says there is a "clear indication" that in southern States and some States in the north, which are doing socio-economically well, the TFR is "far below" the replacement level, whereas States like Bihar, U.P., and M.P. are reporting much higher TFRs. "The reason being that some of these States still need human development policies, greater female education, and improving healthcare policy action. There are about six to seven States, bigger ones, where these issues persist," he said. But moving on to the States where TFR has come down below the replacement level, Prof. Pathak cautioned that they might have their own set of challenges. He cited Sikkim, for instance, where the TFR is below 1, which is equivalent to South Korea's. "It is a reality that in many parts, people simply do not want kids. It may be because of changing family structure, opportunity cost for parents, and increasing stresses associated with caregiving." While the States with higher TFR need to tailor policies on human development that can bring them closer to the replacement level, the States reporting lower TFR have a "different set of challenges altogether", Prof. Pathak explained.

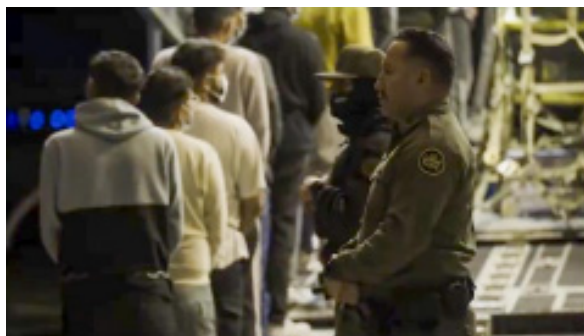
IMF imposes 11 new conditions on Pakistan, warns it against risks to bailout programme: Report

The new conditions imposed on Pakistan include the parliamentary approval of a new ₹17.6 trillion budget, an increase in the debt servicing surcharge on electricity bills and lifting restrictions on import of more than three-year-old used cars. Tribune newspaper said the Staff Level report, which the IMF released on Saturday (May 18, 2025), also said that "rising tensions between India and Pakistan, if sustained or deteriorate further, could heighten risks to the fiscal, external and reform goals of the programme". The report further stated that tensions between Pakistan and India have risen significantly over the past two weeks, but so far, the market reaction has been modest, with the stock market retaining most of its recent gains and spreads widening moderately. The IMF report has shown the defence budget for the next fiscal year at ₹2.414 trillion, which is higher by ₹252 billion or 12%. Compared to the IMF's projection, the government has indicated allocating over ₹2.5 trillion or an 18% higher budget, after confrontation with India early this month. India carried out precision strikes under "Operation Sindoor" on terror infrastructure early on May 7 in response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people. India and Pakistan reached an understanding on May 10 to end the conflict after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes. It has imposed the new condition of securing "parliamentary approval of the fiscal year 2026 budget in line with the IMF staff agreement to meet programme targets by end-June 2025". The IMF report has shown the total size of the federal budget at ₹17.6 trillion, including ₹1.07 trillion for development spending. A new condition has also been imposed on the provinces where the four federating units will implement the new Agriculture Income Tax laws through a comprehensive plan, including the establishment of an operational platform for processing returns, taxpayer identification and registration, a communication campaign, and a compliance improvement plan. According to the third new condition, the government will publish a governance action plan based on the recommendations of the Governance Diagnostic Assessment by the IMF. The purpose of the report is to publicly identify reform measures to address critical governance vulnerabilities. Another new condition states that the government will prepare and publish a plan outlining the government's post-2027 financial sector strategy, outlining



the institutional and regulatory environment from 2028 onwards. In the energy sector, four new conditions have been introduced. The government will issue notifications of the annual electricity tariff rebasing by July 1st of this year to maintain energy tariffs at cost recovery levels. It will also issue a notification of the semi-annual gas tariff adjustment to maintain energy tariffs at cost recovery levels by February 15, 2026, according to the report. Parliament will also adopt legislation to make the captive power levy ordinance permanent by the end of this month, according to the IMF. The government has increased the cost for the industries to force them to shift to the national electricity grid. Parliament will also adopt legislation to remove the maximum ₹3.21 per unit cap on the debt service surcharge, which is tantamount to punishing honest electricity consumers to pay for the inefficiency of the power sector. The IMF and the World Bank dictated that wrong energy policies are causing the accumulation of the circular debt in addition to the government's bad governance. The deadline to remove the cap is the end of June, according to the report. The IMF has also imposed a condition that Pakistan will prepare a plan based on the assessment conducted to fully phase out all incentives in relation to Special Technology Zones and other industrial parks and zones by 2035. The report has to be prepared by the end of this year. Finally, in a consumer-friendly condition, the IMF has asked Pakistan to submit to the Parliament all required legislation for lifting all quantitative restrictions on the commercial importation of used motor vehicles (initially only for vehicles less than five years old by the end of July. Currently.

U.S. Embassy in India warns people staying beyond their authorised period to face deportation or ban on travelling to U.S.



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The U.S. Embassy in India warned that people who stay in the U.S. beyond their authorised period of stay will face deportation or a permanent ban on travelling to the U.S. in the future. In a post shared on X, the U.S. Embassy in India stated, "If you remain in the United States beyond your authorized period of stay, you could be deported and could face a permanent ban on traveling to the United States in the future."

On Friday, a Federal Appeals court refused to allow the Trump administration to restart deporting migrants to nations other than their own without prior notice or the opportunity to seek protection from persecution or torture, CNN reported. The U.S. First Circuit Court of Appeals rejected the Trump administration's request to block a lower court decision halting the policy. The court's decision comes amid rising concerns over reported plans to send migrants to Libya, a country criticised for the mistreatment of detainees and ongoing civil unrest. The appellate panel voiced several "concerns" about letting the government resume the policy, among them "the irreparable harm that will result from wrongful removals in this context." Earlier in March, the U.S. District Judge Brian Murphy stopped the Trump administration from deporting migrants to nations other than

their own without prior written notice and a chance to contest the removal from the U.S., CNN reported. Earlier in April, U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem reminded all foreign nationals present in the country for over 30 days that the deadline to register under the Alien Registration Act is April 11.

The law requires all foreign nationals in the United States for more than 30 days to register with the federal government. Failure to register is considered a crime, punishable by fines, imprisonment, or both. Kristi Noem said, "President Trump and I have a clear message for those in our country illegally: leave now. If you leave now, you may have the opportunity to return and enjoy our freedom and live the American dream." "The Trump administration will enforce all our immigration laws—we will not pick and choose which laws we will enforce. We must know who is in our country for the safety and security of our homeland and all Americans," she added. On January 20, U.S. President Donald Trump signed Executive Order 14159, Protecting the American People Against Invasion, directing the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to restore order and accountability to the immigration system. This includes implementing the Alien Registration Act.

Aristotle PG College holds 22nd graduation day in Moinabad

Hyderabad: The Aristotle PG College, School of Business Management, Moinabad, held its 22nd Graduation Day ceremony on the college campus, marking a significant milestone for 134 MBA students who completed their programmes.

U.S.-China trade truce leaves military-use rare earth issue unresolved, sources say



The renewed U.S.-China trade truce struck in London left a key area of export restrictions tied to national security untouched, an unresolved conflict that threatens a more comprehensive deal, two people briefed on detailed outcomes of the talks told Reuters. Beijing has not committed to granting export clearance for some specialised rare-earth magnets that U.S. military suppliers need for fighter jets and missile systems, the people said. The United States maintains export curbs on China's purchases of advanced artificial intelligence chips out of concern that they also have military applications. At talks in London last week, China's negotiators appeared to link progress in lifting export controls on military-use rare earth magnets with the longstanding U.S. curbs on exports of the most advanced AI chips to China. That marked a new twist in trade talks that began with opioid trafficking, tariff rates and China's trade surplus, but have since shifted to focus on export controls.

In addition, U.S. officials also signalled they are looking to extend existing tariffs on China for a further 90 days beyond the August 10 deadline agreed in Geneva last month, both sources said, suggesting a more permanent trade deal between the world's two largest economies is unlikely before then. The two people who spoke to Reuters about the London talks requested not to be named because both sides have tightly controlled disclosure. The White House, State Department and Department of Commerce did not immediately respond to requests for comment. China's Foreign and Commerce ministries did not respond to faxed requests for comment. President Donald Trump said on Wednesday the handshake deal reached in London between American and Chinese negotiators was a "great deal," adding, "we have everything we need, and we're going to do very well with it. And hopefully they are too." And U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said there would be no "quid pro quo" on easing curbs on exports of AI chips to China in exchange for access to rare earths. China's chokehold on the rare earth magnets needed for weapons systems remains a potential flashpoint. China dominates global production of rare earths and holds a virtual monopoly on refining and processing. A deal reached in Geneva last

month to reduce bilateral tariffs from crushing triple-digit levels had faltered over Beijing's restrictions on critical minerals exports that took shape in April. That prompted the Trump administration to respond with export controls preventing shipments of semiconductor design software, jet engines for Chinese-made planes and other goods to China. At the London talks, China promised to fast-track approval of rare-earth export applications from non-military U.S. manufacturers out of the tens of thousands currently pending, one of the sources said. Those licenses will have a six-month term. Beijing also offered to set up a "green channel" for expediting license approvals from trusted U.S. companies. Initial signals were positive, with Chinese rare-earths magnet producer JL MAG Rare-Earth, saying on Wednesday it had obtained export licences that included the United States, while China's Commerce Ministry confirmed it had approved some "compliant applications" for export licences.

But China has not budged on specialized rare earths, including samarium, which are needed for military applications and are outside the fast-track agreed in London, the two people said. Automakers and other manufacturers largely need other rare earth magnets, including dysprosium and terbium. Big Issues Remain The rushed trade meeting in London followed a call last week between Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping. Trump said U.S. tariffs would be set at 55% for China, while China had agreed to 10% from the United States.

Trump initially imposed tariffs on China as punishment for its massive trade surplus to the United States and over what he says is Beijing's failure to stem the flow of the powerful opioid fentanyl into the U.S. Chinese analysts are pessimistic about the likelihood of further breakthroughs before the August 10 deadline agreed in Geneva. "Temporary mutual accommodation of some concerns is possible but the fundamental issue of the trade imbalance cannot be resolved within this timeframe, and possibly during Trump's remaining term," said Liu Weidong, a U.S.-China expert at the Institute of American Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. An extension of the August deadline could allow the Trump administration more time to establish an alternative legal claim for setting higher tariffs on China under the Section 301 authority of the USTR in case Trump loses the ongoing legal challenge to the tariffs in U.S. court, one of the people with knowledge of the London talks said. The unresolved issues underscore the difficulty the Trump administration faces in pushing its trade agenda with China because of Beijing's control of rare earths and its willingness to use that as leverage with Washington, said Ryan Hass, director of the John L. Thornton China Center at the Brookings Institution. "It has taken the Trump team a few punches in the nose to recognise that they will no longer be able to secure another trade agreement with China that disproportionately addresses Trump's priorities," Hass said.

AI and biomanufacturing: can India's policies match its ambitions?

India stands at a pivotal juncture in its quest to harness artificial intelligence (AI) for biotechnology innovation. On one hand, initiatives like the BioE3 Policy and the IndiaAI Mission reflect a bold vision to position the country as a global leader in AI-driven biomanufacturing and ethical AI development. On the other, fragmented regulations and lagging safeguards threaten to undermine this progress. As India races to capitalise on AI's transformative potential, a critical question emerges: can it balance ambition with accountability? India's biomanufacturing sector is abuzz with possibilities. For decades, the country has been the world's go-to supplier for generic medicines and vaccines, a reputation it has built on scale, cost, and reliability. But now, as AI sweeps through the global life sciences industry, there's a sense that something much bigger is in the works. Many modern biomanufacturing facilities already have robots running precision tasks, biosensors streaming real-time data, and AI models quietly optimising everything from fermentation to packaging.

Biocon, one of India's largest biotechnology firms, is integrating AI to improve drug screening and its biologics manufacturing processes. By leveraging AI-based predictive analytics, Biocon will enhance the efficiency of fermentation and quality control, reducing production costs while maintaining global standards. Similarly, Bengaluru-based Strand Life Sciences uses AI in genomics and personalised medicine, helping accelerate drug discovery and clinical diagnostics. Their platforms use machine learning to analyse complex biological data, making it easier to identify drug targets and predict treatment responses. These efforts illustrate how AI is already reshaping biomanufacturing and healthcare delivery in India. It's not just about swapping out people for machines. AI is transforming the very DNA of biomanufacturing. Imagine a production line where sensors feed thousands of data points every second into an AI system that can spot the faintest hint of trouble, like a temperature drift, a pH blip or a subtle change in cell growth. Before a human operator even notices, the AI predicts a deviation, tweaks the process, and keeps the batch on track. Digital twins, which are virtual replicas of entire manufacturing plants allow engineers to run simulations, test changes, and foresee problems without ever touching a real fermenter. The result? Fewer failed batches, less waste, and products that consistently meet the gold standard for quality. For a country like India, where every rupee and every dose counts, these gains can be transformative. The Government of India has clearly recognised this potential. The BioE3 Policy, rolled out in 2024, is a playbook for the future. The policy lays out plans for state-of-the-art biomanufacturing hubs, biofoundries, and "Bio-AI Hubs" that will bring together the best minds in science, engineering, and data. There's real money on the table too, with funding and grants designed to help startups and established players alike leap from the lab bench to the market shelf. Equally important is the IndiaAI Mission, which is working alongside BioE3 to ensure India's AI revolution is both innovative and ethical. The Mission is as much about building technical capacity as about building trust. By supporting projects that focus on explainable and responsible AI — such as efforts to reduce algorithmic bias or frameworks for "machine unlearning" — the Mission is helping set the standards for how AI should be developed and deployed in sensitive sectors like health and biotechnology.

But here's where things get interesting and complicated. While India's ambitions are sky-high, its regulatory framework is still catching its breath. The rules that govern how new drugs, biologics, and manufacturing processes come to market were written for a different era. Today's AI-driven systems don't always fit neatly into those boxes. For example, when an AI model is used to control a bioreactor or predict the yield of a vaccine batch, how do we know it's reliable? Who checks that the data it was trained on is representative of India's diverse conditions, or that it won't make a catastrophic error if something unexpected happens?



These aren't just technical questions. They are matters of public trust and safety. Globally, the rules are changing. The European Union's AI Act, effective since August 2024, classifies AI tools into four risk tiers. High-risk applications like genetic editing face strict audits while the U.S. FDA's 2025 guidance mandates a seven-step framework for AI credibility. These models emphasise two things India lacks: context-specific risk evaluation and adaptive regulation. For instance, the FDA's 'Predetermined Change Control Plans' allow iterative AI updates that are critical for evolving cancer therapies without compromising safety. India needs this kind of risk-based, context-aware oversight as it moves from pilot projects to full-scale, AI-powered manufacturing.

Picture an Indian biotech startup that develops an AI platform to optimise enzyme production for the specialty chemicals industry. This sector is already worth \$32 billion (Rs 2.74 lakh crore) and growing fast. If this AI is trained only on data from large, urban manufacturing sites, it might fail to account for the quirks of smaller plants in semi-urban or rural areas, like differences in water quality, ambient temperature or even local power fluctuations. Without clear standards for dataset diversity and model validation, the tool could recommend process tweaks that work beautifully in Bengaluru but flop in Baddi. The result: lost revenue, wasted resources, and a blow to India's reputation for quality. This is why the context of use and credibility assessment that are core pillars in the FDA's approach are so important. We need to be clear exactly what question the AI is answering, how it's being used, and how strict our oversight should be, depending on the risks involved. Of course, biomanufacturing is only one piece of the puzzle. Imagine a future where India not only supplies 60% of the world's vaccines but also designs them using algorithms that predict viral mutations. A future where farmers in Bihar receive AI-generated advisories to combat pest outbreaks and patients in rural Tamil Nadu are diagnosed by tools trained on India's genetic diversity. This isn't science fiction — it's the promise of AI-driven biomanufacturing, a field where India is making bold strides. Yet beneath this optimism lies a critical question: can our policies keep up with science?

With great power comes... The intersections are multiplying. In drug discovery, AI platforms can screen millions of compounds in silico, slashing the time and cost needed to find new treatments. Molecular design tools are helping researchers fine-tune drug candidates for maximum efficacy and minimal side effects. Clinical trials that were once notorious for delays and inefficiencies are being streamlined by AI systems that optimise patient recruitment and trial design, making studies faster and more representative. Even the supply chain is getting an upgrade: AI-powered predictive maintenance keeps manufacturing lines humming, while demand forecasting ensures that medicines reach the right place at the right time, reducing shortages and waste. Another unique application of AI is Wipro's work in developing AI-powered solutions for pharmaceutical companies to streamline drug discovery. By combining machine learning algorithms with computational biology, Wipro has helped reduce the time required to identify viable drug candidates. Similarly, Tata Consultancy Services is leveraging AI in its 'Advanced

India needs a sincere aircraft accident investigation



In a country where every life lost in an aircraft accident should result in justice, transparency, and reform, we find ourselves, instead, battling a system that is seemingly designed to obscure the truth. On paper, India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) is a statutory and autonomous investigative body. In reality, it is anything but independent. It functions as an office of the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), the very same authority that oversees airlines, regulates aviation through the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), and, crucially, appoints the leadership of the AAIB and the DGCA. This structure presents an apparent conflict of interest. In railway accidents, investigations are typically carried out by the Commissioner of Railway Safety or, occasionally, a judicial authority, and not by the Ministry of Railways. Although, technically, under the MoCA, the Commissioner is functionally independent of railway operators, this ensures that those running trains are not the ones investigating the derailments. But in aviation, the MoCA controls airline operations and accident investigations.

The accident on June 12, 2025, at Ahmedabad was not just an operational occurrence. It was a full-fledged aircraft accident that should serve as a wake-up call. Is India's aviation safety framework keeping pace with its exponential growth? There have been a number of helicopter crashes, accidents involving flying schools, there was a weather-related incident in May 2025 that affected a Delhi-Srinagar IndiGo flight, and, in addition, troubling ground handling lapses, that include the cancellation of ground handler Çelebi Aviation's permit over security concerns. These are not isolated incidents but point to something more profound. Are we identifying and fixing risks before they become headlines? Or are we merely reacting? We cannot keep firefighting. We need a system that prevents failures, and not just manages the damage. The high-level committee appointed to investigate the Air India AI171 crash must go beyond reviewing a single event. It must recognise that India's aviation ecosystem has outgrown the current National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP). In a complete revamp of the NCAP, 'safety' should be deeply woven into every regulation, operation and decision. That is how we prepare for the responsibilities that come with being one of the largest aviation markets in the world. A report that told inconvenient truths The Air Marshal J.K. Seth Committee Report in 1997 was India's most honest and far-reaching review of aviation safety. But it was quietly buried because it told the truth. It highlighted key systemic flaws: fragmented oversight; lack of independence; inadequate training and resources, and regulatory capture. These issues remain largely unresolved. Any new committee must reckon with these truths and not repeat the pattern of superficial reviews and buried reports.

Too many accident reports have internal contradictions. In an accident in 2001, that claimed the life of a former Union Minister, 'entry into the cloud' was cited as the cause, while

the meteorology section confirmed that there were no clouds around. Was it a mistake or does it point to something else? Overloading was evident in the Indian Airlines crash (IC491) in Aurangabad in 1993. Yet, the final report did not spell it out so clearly. This writer has pursued data for years in another case of suspected overloading on an Air India Express flight (IX611), in October 2018, from Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu to Dubai, only to be denied access. What is being protected? The Aircraft (Investigation of Accidents and Incidents) Rules, 2017 make one point clear — that the purpose of an investigation is to prevent future accidents, and not to assign blame. Yet, law enforcement and courts routinely misuse the AAIB's findings. The police, lacking the expertise and jurisdiction in aviation matters, rely almost entirely on the AAIB's reports, treating them as conclusive. The AAIB's findings are meant for safety learning, and not legal prosecution. When these reports are interpreted outside their technical scope, truth becomes a casualty. Investigating officers unfamiliar with aviation treat the AAIB's "probable cause" as a legal verdict. The judiciary focuses on what is immediately visible, while the AAIB is meant to dig deeper. But both often end up blaming the pilot, the case is closed and the truth is left behind. Why is pilot error so often the conclusion? Because it is convenient. Legally, it simplifies matters. From an insurance standpoint, a conclusion of pilot error helps expedite payouts. It closes the loop quickly, shielding other accountable entities — airlines, maintenance providers, and air traffic control, from scrutiny. The pilot becomes the system's scapegoat, even in death. A front to protect people Too often, accident investigations in India are reshaped to protect institutions, and not the people they serve. The MoCA holds all the levers, policy, regulation, appointments and investigations. With that much control, real accountability becomes a myth. Each time a family receives a hollow, contradictory report instead of honest answers, the system not only fails but also breaks faith. At times, the structure is so well-insulated from responsibility that it has perfected the art of getting away with murder — through delay, dilution and the quiet deletion of truth. The International Civil Aviation Organization's State Safety Briefing (2022) says that India has had zero fatal accidents recently. But 21 lives were lost in the Kozhikode air crash in August 2020. The recommendations in the investigation and those of the committee to review the accident report have not been implemented duly. There is no accountability. No systemic change. Just silence. India cannot claim global leadership in aviation while hiding behind data. Absolute safety comes from integrity. These are the steps needed. First, move the AAIB and DGCA to an independent statutory body that reports to Parliament. Second, stop having parallel committees that bypass or undermine established investigative bodies. Third, take legal steps to prevent the AAIB's findings from being used in criminal trials unless independently validated. Fourth, amend Rule 19(3) of the Aircraft Rules, 1937, which holds the powers to penalise a pilot for any mistake. There is a need to protect a pilot with a genuine no-blame culture, unless gross negligence is proven. Fifth, appoint an independent ombudsman to review how accident reports have been handled and mishandled. It is not that India lacks the talent or the tools to investigate accidents. What it lacks is the institutional courage to tell the truth. Therefore, this writer's plea. Have an honest, sincere aircraft accident investigation; one that shows that India values truth and precious lives over image. Let that be India's legacy for those lives lost, not only in the skies but also in the silence. Captain Amit Singh is an aviation safety expert, author, and Royal Aeronautical Society Fellow, pioneering human factors and cultural integration in aviation

How Vani Kapoor rediscovered her authentic golf self and reclaimed the joy of playing

Vani Kapoor's golf career started in Delhi with something as simple as wanting to spend more time with her father on Sunday afternoons. "We didn't think it would become a profession or anything," she said. Vani is on a high, having won the eighth leg of the HWP GT at the Bengaluru Golf Club (BGC) last week. "This is probably the best start I have had to the year in my entire career," she said, in reference to claiming four of the eight legs. The 31-year-old is the run-away leader on the HWP GT Order of Merit, with total winnings of ₹11,88,000.

The path to this latest title was not easy. She was trailing early in the third round, but key moments — a birdie on the ninth and a hot streak of birdies on holes 12 through 15 — put her back in the lead. "I just kept rolling, and by the time I reached the final two holes, I knew I had a cushion. I just needed to finish the job." Vani turned professional in 2012 at just 18 years old and quickly became a dominant force on the Indian domestic circuit. Her debut season brought three victories, a sign of things to come. Since then, she's steadily built a stellar record.

In 2019, she became the first Indian woman to earn a card on the Australian Ladies PGA Tour. That milestone opened doors to the Ladies European Tour (LET) and the prestigious Vic Open. She continued to rise and, in 2022, posted a career-best tied-third finish at the Big Green Egg Open in the Netherlands, ending five under par overall. In the 2025 season of the HWP GT, Vani opened with runner-up finishes in the second and third legs, followed by a dominant three-win streak in the fourth, fifth, and sixth legs. Ahead of her latest win, there was pressure, no doubt. But Vani remained unfazed. All-around player: Vani sees her long and short games as strengths, but putting is her biggest asset. She might not be the longest driver on the circuit, but her consistency off the tee and sharp play inside 100 yards makes her a regular on the leaderboard. All-around player: Vani sees her long and short games as strengths, but putting is her biggest asset. She might not be the longest driver on the circuit, but her consistency off the tee and sharp play inside 100 yards makes her a regular on the leaderboard. | Photo Credit: Getty Images "Everyone here is a good golfer, and anyone can have a great day. Whatever my result, it's a by-product of my own effort, and that's the only thing I can possibly control," said Vani.

That kind of composure doesn't come out of nowhere. Vani identifies working with a sports psychologist, which she began doing seven years ago, as a turning point. "A few things were bothering me, so I got that out of the way and got more clarity," she said. Vani called her performance in 2024 average — an honest self-assessment for someone used to being at the top. She plied her trade primarily on the LET, where she managed only one top-ten finish. Vani competed in three HWP GT events and won once. "Something had to change. I took some time off and worked on myself from all angles," she said. Vani attributes her 2024 season to internal pressure and expectations. "I tried very hard to do things the right way while keeping certain people in mind. What really changed was that I gave myself an opportunity to just play for myself, without any expectations internally or



from other people, and just go back to basics. It's nice that everything is coming together now. I have started enjoying the game so much more, which I feel is the most important thing," she said. Vani sees her long and short games as strengths, but her putting is her biggest asset. While she might not be the longest driver on the tour, her consistency off the tee and sharp play inside 100 yards makes her a regular on the leaderboard. "I'm not one of the longest hitters, but I'm very accurate. So, I don't really have to worry that much off the tee. I've worked more on my short game, 100 yards in, to compensate. Putting has always been a strong point that I've had," she said. Off the course, Vani focuses equally on training both body and mind. Her approach blends mental clarity with a practice routine that's tailored to her needs. "You have to love the way you practise. It has to be your way — not someone else's version of what's right," she said. Her fitness regimen includes strength training to prevent injury and maintain swing-speed. This isn't just about being physically strong; it's about endurance. And then there's the gym, of course. You must work on strength. We swing at such fast speeds — you have to always be consistent and injury-free. We also need stability," Vani said. Need of the hour: Vani strongly feels that women's golf requires better structural support and more visibility. "It's not just about us players," she says. "Our sponsors need visibility too." Need of the hour: Vani strongly feels that women's golf requires better structural support and more visibility. "It's not just about us players," she says. "Our sponsors need visibility too." | Photo Credit: Getty Images Tournament days can stretch long, and one loose shot late in the round can cost a title. Vani explained that staying in good physical shape helps train her mind to stay focused on the course. Vani's mindset was tested when she returned to the BGC, a course that she hadn't played in for six or seven years. "I didn't remember anything," she said with a laugh. "I was going on the wrong tee boxes and wrong greens during the practice round. I told my caddy, 'Just get me to the right tee and the right green — I'll handle the rest.'" Now over a decade into her professional career, Vani is still charting new territory. Vani has her sights set on a good show at the Hero Women's Indian Open, which will be held at her home course of DLF Golf and Country Club later this year. Asked about her long-term goals, Vani stated that she would like to win a medal at the 2028 Olympics. She sees the sport's future in India with cautious optimism. "Coaching has changed so much from when I started.

Is China’s new K visa a game-changer for Indian STEM graduates facing H1B uncertainty?



China’s latest visa category, the K visa, specifically targets young foreign STEM talent. It seeks to open the doors to graduates and researchers to pursue innovation-driven goals in China. While many Indians see the new visa as a potential alternative to the U.S. H1B visa, its rollout has accompanied adverse reaction on Chinese social media, leading to fears of anti-immigrant sentiment there.

What’s the difference between previous Chinese work visas and the K visa?

Anushka Saxena, Research Analyst on China Studies at The Takshashila Institution, points to the major difference from the previous R visa and other visas introduced since the Xi Jinping administration started. The previous R visa, according to the Regulations of the People’s Republic of China on Administration of the Entry and Exit of Foreigners, is issued to foreigners of high talent who are needed, or specialists who are urgently needed, by the State. The call in 2013 and till now was to invest, make in China, and build up technology bred in China. The K visa relaxes on the requirement of employer sponsorship; one of the country’s biggest entry barriers. Unlike previous visa systems linked to institutional backing, the K visa shifts focus onto innovation by independent researchers and graduates and those with entrepreneurship acumen, calling for newly-skilled professionals seeking to contribute to China’s research landscape.

What is China hoping to achieve through the K visa?

The move has multiple motivating factors, even beyond its timing with the increased protectionism on the H1B Visa which has historically tapped into the same talent pool. Ideologically, it is directly aligned with President Xi Jinping’s slogan of “New Quality Productive Forces”, says Anand Krishnan (Fellow at the Centre of Excellence for Himalayan Studies, Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence). The slogan was one of the central themes. of the Chinese Communist Party’s campaign across his two terms. It is one part in the strategic shift from the labour-export-heavy economy to a domestic innovation-driven one. Along with this is China’s goal to position itself as a hub for AI, quantum computing, cloud and tech, and green energy. Mr. Krishnan also mentions that the visa complements a decade of investment into research and technology, following initiatives like the Thousand Talents Programme, which seeks to bring in science and tech talent from overseas Chinese communities, a homecoming for Chinese talent that exists outside the State.Ms. Saxena points to the economic gain of putting out the K visa now outside of geopolitical strategy. The H1B market isn’t one that can be traditionally competed with. The sense is that if ever there was a time to tap into the market in the hopes of carving out a significant share in the talent market, now is the time.“The introduction of the K visa also reflects China’s broader response to trade wars and global technological decoupling”, adds Mr. Krishnan. By inviting global STEM professionals, China is reinforcing its ambition to lead in scientific and technological self-reliance while ensuring domestic innovation remains distinctively “Chinese.”

Professor Aravind Yelery, Associate Professor at the Centre for East Asian Studies JNU, says that talent available in China needs to catch up, with the Chinese rapidly scaling up their value chain. In the manufacturing sector and especially with the chip industry, China is trying to pry itself out of the innovation trap that stifles scientific breakthroughs and to in order to build disruptive technologies, the need of the hour is more talent. While the geopolitical move is evident, to Prof. Yelery it is a move that comes out of an urgent and dire need to keep up with its own advancement.

What are China’s incentives to work in a country like China?

The timing of the K visa’s launch just weeks before the U.S. announced a \$100,000 hike on the H1B Visa fee, predominantly affecting Indian STEM workers, underscores a

strategic geopolitical move. Amidst global uncertainty, punitive action and anti-immigration policies, for the growing middle-class in India, STEM still remains the most lucrative option.For highly skilled Indians, China’s offer appears attractive on paper, especially as it relaxes the need for employer backing. “Lower cost of living and no guns are defining incentives for Indians to choose China”, Prof. Yelery says.And the accruing of Indian talent in China has been an ongoing exodus. “The fascination with China is separate from the geopolitical issues”, he says.In sheer numbers, Prof. Yelery speaks to the gap that China is trying to fill. China has tapped into 4-6% of the global STEM talent and that is still not enough. China needs at least 7,00,000 engineers for their integrated circuit industry alone by 2026 and they are still only at 450,000.However, the path is far from simple. The screening process for applicants remains unclear, and without the buffer of institutional sponsorship, credibility assessments fall entirely on the government. Moreover, the language barrier, notions of Chinese culture that are still a little opaque, and strict immigration checks continue to be significant hurdles for most Indian aspirants.Yet, Mr. Krishnan believes none of these aspects have really deterred Indians from moving abroad. “There is no dearth of options for Indian students. Cultural divides have never stopped them before. What matters is whether China can offer long-term stability, safety, and a real pathway to residence or research freedom.”Sagar Bahadur, executive director of Acumen, an educational consulting group says that by contrast, Japan another major Asian competitor for STEM talent has already introduced language learning labs, English-medium courses, and post-study work opportunities. Its equity-based tuition policy keeps annual education costs at around ?3.5 lakh, attracting students from across South Asia.Mr. Bahadur observes that China mesmerises by sheer volume in education, infrastructure, and institutional capacity. “It ranks just behind India in the number of educational institutions and already outperforms Japan in research output”.

What is the controversy raging in China regarding the K visa?

The policy has faced backlash from within China, particularly among young citizens who fear being displaced from high-skilled positions in an already competitive job market. Youth unemployment has been a critical policy concern, and the introduction of a foreign-talent visa has stoked anxieties over diminishing opportunities for Chinese graduates.Online criticism also reflects racial and nationalistic undertones, with many users expressing discomfort at the idea of “too many foreigners,” particularly Indians, entering the Chinese job market. On Chinese social media platforms like QQ, video explainers on how “Indians are looking to pile in” have been steadily circulating.Ms. Saxena enumerates three strands of commentary that have come in through public discourse.

One, is the extremist view on how a policy like this is devastating for country that has been showing 6 years of consistent slowdown. This largely comes from the younger population. She says that while 5% is the official statistic on unemployment, the more reliable estimates lie between 16% to 40% especially among the younger demographic (16-40 years of age).

The second strand is the relatively senior commentary that says that leveraging the fee on the H1B visa was a must, and that closing in on the U.S. was the only way to capture the market.The third strand comes from those that seek to convince the larger public that this move contains more opportunities for the Chinese population. It could be a catalyst for newer jobs and that no matter how highly-profiled the foreign talent might be, there will always be a requirement for local anchors to help them communicate their work, and integrate their methods into Chinese development.In response, Chinese State media moved quickly to clarify that “Chineseness will not be erased from innovation”, emphasizing that foreign participation is meant to address genuine talent gaps that have not been closed via domestic means in the past few years. To compete with the U.S., China knows that it must fill the advanced skills gap and attract global expertise.Experts argue that visa approval remains stringent, and China’s long-standing caution with foreign applicants ensures that entry barriers remain high. “This has been the case with all talent visas up until this point”, Ms. Saxena notes.The real challenge may instead be how effectively the government can assess and attract credible innovators without institutional intermediaries. Earlier crediting processes have been rigorous, including displaying patents, projects from previous work.

All you need to know about: cervical cancer

GNS News Agency, Oct 1

The cervix is the lower part of the uterus that connects to the vagina. Cervical cancer starts when the cells in the cervix begin to grow abnormally. These changes in the cells often take years to develop, which is why regular check-ups are very important. Early changes, known as precancerous conditions, can be detected through a routine pap smear.Cervical cancer is a major health issue for women around the world. However, it is one of the easiest cancers to prevent and treat if diagnosed early. With the right knowledge about its causes, symptoms, and prevention, women can reduce the risk of cervical cancer.The main cause of cervical cancer is a virus called human papillomavirus (HPV). This virus spreads through sexual contact. Most people who get HPV never even know they have it because the body usually fights it off on its own. But sometimes, the virus doesn’t go away and can cause abnormal changes in the cervix that might turn into cancer later.

Certain factors increase a woman’s risk of cervical cancer. Unprotected sexual intercourse, smoking, hormonal contraceptives, and sexually transmitted diseases can all contribute to this risk.

In the early stages, cervical cancer usually doesn’t cause symptoms, which is why regular screenings are vital. As it progresses, women might notice signs such as an unusual discharge or bleeding between periods, bleeding after sexual intercourse, or bleeding after menopause. Other symptoms can include pelvic pain, pain during sexual intercourse, heavier-than-usual periods, or unexplained weight loss. If you have any of these symptoms, it is recommended to see a doctor right away.Cervical cancer screening is essential for prevention and early detection. The two main tests used are the Papanicolaou (Pap) test and the HPV screening. The pap test looks for abnormal changes in cervical cells, while the HPV screening checks for the virus that can cause these changes.Doctors recommend that women start getting pap tests at age 21 and continue every few years based on their age and medical history. For women aged 30 to 65, combining a pap test with an HPV test every five years is another effective option. Regular screenings can help



catch any issues early, making treatment more successful and significantly reducing the risk of developing cervical cancer.When it comes to cervical cancer, one of the best ways to prevent it is by getting the HPV vaccine. This vaccine works best when given before exposure to the virus, usually between the ages of 9 and 12. However, it is still helpful for people up to age 45 and, in some cases, even older. Boys also receive the HPV vaccine, as it not only protects them from penile, anal, and throat cancers, but also contributes to reducing the overall transmission of the virus, benefiting public health.

Healthy habits also go a long way in reducing the risk of cervical cancer. Quitting smoking, eating a balanced diet, practicing safe sex, and staying physically active can all help. It is also crucial to follow up on any abnormal test results and get regular check-ups.If a woman is diagnosed with cervical cancer, treatment will depend on how far the cancer has progressed. In the early stages, surgery may be enough to remove the cancer. For more advanced cases, radiation therapy or chemotherapy (or both) may be given. These treatments work to destroy cancer cells and stop them from spreading.Being diagnosed with cervical cancer can feel overwhelming, but it is important to remember that many women recover and go on to lead full, healthy lives. Having support from family, friends, and healthcare providers can make a big difference.

Bald truths: the high cost of quick-fix hair cures



Soft morning light filtered through a flat in Hyderabad; the hum of an electric toothbrush, the faint smell of caffeine and moisturiser in the air. And there, reflected in the mirror, a small circle of scalp — shiny under the cabinet light in the washroom.For 27-year-old Sharan, that shiny patch had become a quiet obsession. Gym at 6 a.m., meal prep by 8 a.m., hair serum by 9 a.m. — his life ran on discipline. But no routine could outwit biology. He could manage his calories, but not his hairline. It wasn’t vanity; it was the quiet grief of losing control.

Then came the sting: a faint burn at the crown of his head that spread like wildfire by morning. When Sharan looked in the mirror, his scalp was an angry red; the kind of red that screams mistake.He didn’t know it yet, but he had just joined the growing ranks of men being lured by India’s booming black market of miracle hair cures — a world where desperation meets deception.Just three days earlier, an Instagram ad had found him at his most vulnerable — late at night, under the blue glow of his phone, scrolling through his quiet desperation. “15-day miraculous hair regrowth,” the video claimed, showing men whose patchy crowns had turned into lush pastures. The video had garnered nearly 32,000 likes and 1,000 comments with the caption stating: “Instant youth. Confidence restored. Scientifically proven.”

Within minutes, curiosity outweighed caution. A few messages later, he was invited to a “consultation” in Uppal Bhagayat, on the eastern edge of Hyderabad in April this year. The ‘clinic’ turned out to be a makeshift tent on a dusty lane near the Uppal Metro station. A flexi banner fluttered overhead: ‘Guaranteed Regrowth or Money Back’. Behind a folding table stood Harish from Rajanayak thanda in Suryapet district, 150 kilometres away — a salesman in a bright white shirt and confidence thicker than his product’s fragrance. “No side effects,” he said, handing Sharan three unlabelled bottles filled with a pungent, water-like liquid. “You will see new hair in 15 days. Guaranteed.”Sharan paid ?1,000, took home the bottles and followed the handwritten instructions. By the second morning, his scalp tingled. By the third, it burned. By the fourth, he was sitting across from his dermatologist, who took a deep sigh and said: “This isn’t treatment. It is trauma”.“It felt acidic,” Sharan recalls, running his palm over his scalp. “My flatmate said I looked like I had been barbecued. That’s when I realised, better bald than burnt.”Across town, Ravi Kumar, a 34-year-old businessman, underwent a similar experience at the camp. “I thought this was finally going to work. Turns out, the only thing that grew was our disappointment,” he says.By the time police arrived, Harish’s pop-up at Uppal had descended into chaos. Hundreds of men — engineers, salesmen, students — waited under the sun, their scalps slick with dubious oil. Some were angry, others embarrassed. A suo motu case was booked.

Scalps and scamsAcross the country, hundreds of men are learning the hard way that the pursuit of hair can cost far more than pride. From pop-up clinics to social media “experts”, a growing industry of quack cures and false hope is preying on male insecurity and burning more than just scalps.Over the past two years, hair-related scams have left victims defrauded and, in some cases, even dead. In Uttar Pradesh’s Sambhal, celebrity hairstylist Jawed Habib and associates faced 32 FIRs in mid-October for allegedly duping investors through Follicle Global Company.In Meerut, a man was arrested last December for selling “miracle” hair growth oils that caused severe allergic reactions. In Chennai, one person lost ?70 lakh to a quack operating without medical qualifications in July this year. Two months before that, two engineers in Kanpur died within 48 hours of botched hair transplant surgeries carried out by a dentist masquerading as a specialist.From obsessively checking mirrors to experimenting with miracle oils and dodging pop-up clinics, the journey for most men struggling with baldness can be stressful, costly and even dangerous. Representational image.From obsessively checking mirrors to experimenting with miracle oils and dodging pop-up clinics, the journey for most men struggling with baldness can be stressful, costly and even dangerous. Representational image. | Photo Credit: Getty Images/iStockphotoHair loss is more than a medical condition. It is an existential one. For marketing executive Sandeep, 29, his reflection has become a cause for concern: “I can’t stop checking windows or mirrors. Even a faint glimpse of my head can ruin my day.” His mornings begin with imported serums, his afternoons under hats, and his nights spent doom-scrolling through videos of miracle oils brewed in basements.Debu Sinha, 28, a private company employee, treats social and dating life like a strategic operation. “I always choose seats/chairs where fans or AC vents don’t blow over my head,” he says. “People think I am chivalrous but I am just hiding my bald patch.”Barbers across Hyderabad have noticed a new generation of customer — not someone looking for a haircut but for hope. “We tell them straight: your hair is thinning and they give us a helpless smile,” says Srinivas Rao, a salon owner in Kanajjguda with over two decades of experience. “But this problem has become far more common than it was even five years ago.”S.

Sridevi, a clinical psychologist, notes that male patients with hair loss often show anxiety and social avoidance. “A 26-year-old skipped his college reunion because he thought everyone would make fun of his thinning hair. Another stopped going to the gym, which was his safe space, worried that fluorescent lights would betray him,” she says.Amit Varma, who counsels men on identity issues, points out that baldness can undermine masculinity, youth and professional confidence: “Some men begin avoiding interviews and social events entirely.”In one extreme case, a 27-year-old banker woke up at 5 a.m. daily to apply imported serums, believing that one missed day would undo months of progress. By the time he sought therapy, he was exhausted, anxious and ashamed, Dr.Sridevi recalls.And yet, the scams keep growing faster than the hairlines they promise to restore.Last year, Wakil Salmani, a barber-turned-influencer from Delhi, was arrested for running “miracle regrowth camps” across multiple States across India. His “organic follicle stimulator” sent several men to the hospital.In Punjab’s Sangrur this March, an unauthorised hair treatment camp caused a serious eye infection outbreak among at least 60 men, leading to hospitalisations.In Meerut, three operators ran a travelling “regrowth mela” in December last year, charging ?300 per entry and leaving behind a trail of burned scalps and dashed hopes.

Each case follows a pattern: social media hype, a temporary tent, long queues of anxious men and the silence that follows when it all goes wrong. Embarrassment keeps most victims from reporting it. In a culture where masculinity is supposed to be unshakable, admitting vulnerability, even to the police, often feels like defeat.The chaos in Uppal still haunts Ravi Kumar. “Men were applying oil on the spot, filming themselves for proof. Some scalps had already turned red. Nobody wanted to leave. Hope makes fools of us all.”Science vs. hypeScience, of course, is not as dramatic. Deepika Sanbal, consultant dermatologist at Apollo DRDO, explains that male pattern baldness, or androgenetic alopecia, is largely hereditary. “We can slow it, manage it and even reverse it in some cases. But it requires diagnosis, consistency and realistic expectations.”Legitimate treatments, she says, include finasteride, minoxidil, PRP therapy and hair transplants. “But social media has replaced medicine with marketing. Men want miracles, not maintenance. They end up damaging their scalps, sometimes permanently,” she adds.The cost of medical treatment also fuels desperation. PRP therapy ranges from ?70,000 to ?1.5 lakh while oral medications demand months of disciplined use.Men cope in ways that swing between inventive and absurd. Sinha plots seating arrangements as if it were tactical warfare while Sandeep’s growing hat collection is his arsenal. “I call them my emotional helmets,” he jokes.Humour, too, is a quiet rebellion. Stand-up comic Srujan mines baldness for laughs. “One friend mixes onion juice and garlic paste and calls it Ayurvedic PRP,” he says. “The smell could kill romance faster than hair loss ever did.”Psychologists say embracing baldness often beats the most expensive lotions. “Men who accept it show higher self-esteem,” says Dr. Varma. “It is not the hair; it is the illusion of control that they need to let go of.”This image is used for representational purposes only.

Society, however, rarely makes it easy. Bollywood heroes rarely go bald unless the plot demands tragedy. Cricketers endorse shampoos. Dating apps favour a “full hair” aesthetic. The message is clear: baldness is a problem to solve, not a reality to accept.That pressure seeps into every mirror, every selfie and every conversation. In cities like Hyderabad, hair clinics have become the new gyms: aspirational spaces promising transformation. Some men have even gone to the extent of borrowing money for hair transplant, treating it as an investment in confidence.Yet, a counter-movement is quietly taking shape. Influencers proudly flaunt shaved heads and well-groomed beards, normalising baldness as a style rather than a flaw.“It is like the beard revolution,” one Reddit user notes. “Bald is the new bold, if you carry it right.”For Sharan, acceptance came slowly. “At some point, you stop bargaining,” he says. “I threw away the fake oils, the supplements, and even the hair fibres. I deleted the miracle advertisements from Instagram. Now, I just invest in good caps and better jokes.”Sinha has followed suit. “I still avoid ceiling fans, but now it is a running joke. You can’t fight genetics forever, so you might as well laugh.”Even women notice the shift. Priya Reddy, 31, who is dating a man with receding hairline, shares, “He became withdrawn at first. But when he started talking about it openly, everything changed. Confidence looks better than a head full of hair.”Confidence beyond folliclesHair, fragile as it is, holds enormous sway over identity. It grows, it falls, and somehow dictates how men see themselves. The crisis is not follicular; it is emotional.Dr. Sridevi believes education is the only real remedy: “Appearance doesn’t define worth. Quick fixes are dangerous. Acceptance is healing. Therapy helps men detach self-image from hair image.”Her clinic runs group sessions for young professionals united by one fear: losing something bigger than hair.Sharan, now comfortably bald, sometimes passes the clinic. “Funny how something that caused so much pain now makes me laugh,” he says. “I used to think losing hair meant losing confidence. Turns out, confidence was the only thing I needed to grow back.”He grins, adjusts his cap, and heads into the society — a man at peace with the mirror. “Hair today, gone tomorrow,” he quips. “But at least my sense of humour stayed.”In the end, the mirror no longer dictates their worth, at least for some of them. Sharan, Sinha, Sandeep and countless others have learned that the chase for perfect hair is less about follicles and more about control. Some find it in humour, some in acceptance, some in simply moving on. The scalp may be bare, but confidence, it turns out, is something that can grow anywhere.

A dream come true for student-teacher team from Kashmir

Maryam Akbar from Kashmir was in her teens when she came across a photograph of a Sadhya (an elaborate meal) spread on a banana leaf and an article on it in a magazine. Since then, she had dreamt of tasting it. Thirty years later, her dream was fulfilled when she visited Kozhikode as part of an exposure tour.A senior lecturer at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS), Kothibagh, Srinagar, Ms. Akbar, along with her colleagues Humaira Shah and Sheikh Zahoor, besides the 10 students who accompanied them, had a sumptuous Sadhya at a restaurant at Kozhikode beach on Tuesday.The 13-member team is in Kozhikode to study the PRISM model transformation at Government Vocational Higher Secondary School (GVHSS) for Girls at Nadakkavu. The Faisal and Shabana Foundation, which had contributed ?16 crore in 2012 to the infrastructural development of GVHSS, Nadakkavu, has adopted GHSS, Kothibagh, for a ?20-crore development project under the ‘Dream School’ project. The first phase of the project will kick off on October



27, before which the team came down to Kozhikode where it all started.It was Roshan John, the project coordinator of the foundation, who helped Ms. Akbar realise her dream. Besides the Sadhya, the team was served traditional dishes including Appam,

Kerala to double tourism revenue in 5 years, carrying capacity checks: Minister PC Vishnunadh



As the Congress-led UDF government in Kerala completed 100 days in office last month, Tourism Minister PC Vishnunadh said the state is targeting to double the tourism revenue from around Rs 45,000 crore last year to Rs 90,000 crore within five years. While the state recorded an all-time high of 2.5 crore domestic tourist arrivals in 2025, an increase of 12.63% from the previous year, Kerala is yet to reach the pre-Covid level of foreign tourist arrivals, which peaked at 11.89 lakh. It recorded 8.2 lakh foreign arrivals in 2025. Speaking to The Indian Express on the sidelines of the 13th Kerala Travel Mart, Vishnunadh said the foreign tourist composition is changing, with Arab tourists now showing a greater uptick in the state. He also said the government is moving to give the tourism sector industry status, ease the approval process through a single-window mechanism, offer benefits currently available to the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), seek greater support from the Centre and conduct a carrying capacity study of overcrowded places such as Munnar, Alleppey, among others. A carrying capacity study assesses the maximum number of people a destination can accommodate at a given time without leading to irreversible damage to its physical environment. Edited Excerpts:

What is the government doing to create new tourism destinations in the state?

We are working on expanding tourism beyond traditional destinations. Kerala has many untapped places, particularly in the northern part of the state like Munroe Island, Ashtamudi backwater in Kollam etc., which has significant tourism potential. Our agenda is to develop 20 new destinations in one year and 100 new destinations over five years. We will provide the basic infrastructure and then encourage investors to come and invest in these areas. This expansion will be done in a sustainable way. We are actually taking the support of the local community. This responsible tourism initiative was started from Kumarakom (in Kottayam). With this initiative, the locals are getting jobs and the market is improving. Some of these new locations are Akalapuzha in Kozhikode, Kundara, Punnathur, Paravur etc. Some of the destinations are overcrowded. We will soon conduct a carrying capacity study of Munnar, Alleppey etc. It is important because our places are ecologically very fragile. The Centre's target is to increase the share of tourism in national GDP to 10% by 2030. Is Kerala's growth in line with this? Last year, Kerala received around Rs 45,000 crore from tourism. Our target is to double this within five years to Rs 90,000 crore or close to Rs 1 lakh crore. Tourism had reached a peak just before Covid-19, but there was a dip afterwards. Now,

the sector is gradually picking up again. The domestic tourists recorded an increase of over 12% in 2025, compared to 2024. Similarly, foreign arrivals also recorded an increase of over 11% during the period. However, it is yet to reach pre-pandemic levels. We are also pushing for cruise tourism. All the major and minor ports like Vizhinjam, Kochi, Kollam, Bepore, Azhikkal will be connected.

What is the composition for foreign tourists in Kerala? Is there any change over the years?

Yes, there has been a change. Earlier, UK, US, Germany and France used to be the top four countries in terms of foreign arrivals in Kerala. Now, while the UK and the US remain in their position, Oman is the third country, which contributed to 7% of foreign tourists. That is why we are starting to focus on the Arab market. I attended the Arabian travel market recently and our B2B roadshow was a success. We organized an Indo-Arab connect with Arabian tour operators last month. We are also developing new products such as monsoon tourism. We are also trying other markets such as Australia, Malaysia and Singapore.

Tourism is a state subject. What additional support do you expect from the Centre?

We are already receiving support from the Central government through schemes such as Swadesh Darshan. We have submitted proposals under Swadesh Darshan 2 and are seeking maximum support. There are also schemes such as 'One State, One Destination' and the PRASAD scheme, for which Kerala is submitting proposals. We are trying to make maximum use of these Central government programmes. I also met Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and requested maximum assistance and support for Kerala. Tourism in Kerala is also important for Indian tourism as a whole. It was a very positive meeting.

When it comes to jobs, tourism is seen as an 'AI-proof' sector. What are your plans on this?

You know, in Kerala, tourism is actually the only option. Kerala is not like Tamil Nadu, Andhra, Karnataka or Telangana. We do not have enough land to start any industries or something like that. If you try to do that, there will be resistance from the public on pollution, environment issues etc. So, tourism is the only thing where we have opportunities to expand and provide jobs.

What is being done to make it easier for investors to set up tourism projects?

There was a long-pending demand to declare tourism an industry sector. We are going to do this. We have already completed consultations with stakeholders and the inter-departmental process is now under way.

We will announce industry status for tourism before October 10. At present, obtaining permissions from different departments such as local body, industry, urban development, rural development, and CRZ (Coastal Regulation Zone)-related issues can take two or three years. Another important issue is single-window clearance. At present, the single-window mechanism is available for MSMEs, but not specifically for tourism. We are examining the benefits available to MSMEs and it will be extended to tourism investors as well. We are also looking at issues such as electricity tariff subsidies and interest support on loans.

Women in manufacturing: Inside Manesar's Japan-India training institute

Tucked away from the bustle of the city, the two-storied building of the Japan-India Institute for Manufacturing (JIM) is easy to miss amid the lush paddy fields of Haryana's Manesar. But step inside, and the quietness outside gives way to the hum of machines, the clatter of tools, and students moving from one workbench to another as they learn to operate the equipment. In between the clamour, Nishika leaned over a workbench, carefully practising how to fit nuts and bolts. She made one attempt after another, trying to get it right with the tools in her hand. For most students training for the manufacturing workforce, it was an ordinary practical lesson. For Nishika, it was also a step into a field she had been unable to pursue through the conventional academic route.

"I want to do a polytechnic course after this. I could not appear for the entrance exam earlier because I did not have chemistry and physics. Now, I can sit for the exam and directly enter the second year of the polytechnic course," said Nishika, who hails from Haryana's Sonapat, speaking to a visitor at the institute. At JIM Manesar — one of four such institutes set up by the country's largest automaker Maruti Suzuki — Nishika is pursuing a two-year Mechanic Motor Vehicle course covering car engines, repairs and painting. It is one of five two-year trades — a term used for specific vocational training courses — offered by the institute. The others are Electrician, Fitter, Electronic Mechanic and Electrician-Mechatronics. JIM also offers four one-year trades: Mechanic Diesel Engine, Welder, Mechanic Auto Body Repair, and Mechanic Auto Body Painting. But in a class of 40 students, Nishika is one of just three girls. Closing the gender gap, addressing key hurdles The gender gap extends beyond JIM. Women remain underrepresented in India's core engineering trades. A new working paper by NITI Aayog found that women accounted for only 5.5% of enrolment in engineering trades such as electrician, fitter and welder across the Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) between 2019 and 2024. In contrast, women outnumbered men in several service-oriented trades such as fashion design, cosmetology, secretarial practice, and sewing technology. JIM Manesar has also seen female enrolment rise, though from a low base. Women account for around 9% of its annual intake of about 400 students, up from 5% the previous year and 2% when the institute began. It is now targeting a 30% female share of admissions by 2028-29. Across the four JIMs, only the Manesar branch has female students, while the other three are yet to admit them. At Manesar, the institute is taking a multi-pronged approach to increase female participation, including a dedicated women's hostel, greater representation of women among faculty and support staff — and, from this academic year, a 100% tuition fee waiver for female students, said Rahul Bharti, Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Affairs, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd. "We believe this initiative will encourage more young women to pursue careers in manufacturing and participate in the growth of India's industrial workforce," he added. The hostel could ease one of the practical hurdles for women coming from outside Manesar. Most of the female students at the institute come from different parts of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, and stay in local paying guest accommodations.

Personal connections played a key role in bringing many of them to the institute. "My uncle works at Maruti Suzuki. He said this is a good course and has good job prospects," said Soumya Gupta, who is from Khushi Nagar in Uttar Pradesh and is enrolled in the Mechanic Auto Body Repair trade. However, Gurugram's Kumkum learnt about JIM while

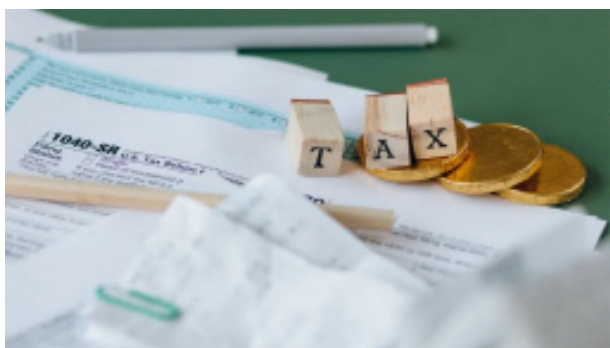


she was in school and decided to apply after Class 10. Her family was initially hesitant due to the distance, but agreed after her school friend Pinki Singla also decided to join it. Both are now completing classes 11 and 12 through an open-school programme alongside their technical training. The programme also allows students to earn while they train: they spend five months in the classroom and the remaining seven on the shop floor, where they receive a stipend. "We will learn here and also do the open school. Otherwise, it would have taken us longer. This way, we can study and get trained for jobs at the same time," said Pinki.

Silver slips below Rs 2.28 lakh amid global precious metals sell-off

Mumbai: Silver prices witnessed a sharp decline on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) on Monday, with the white metal plunging more than Rs 7,000 and falling below the crucial Rs 2.28 lakh-per-kg mark amid a broad-based sell-off in precious metals. The steep fall came as rising crude oil prices heightened inflation concerns globally, strengthening market expectations that the US Federal Reserve may keep interest rates higher for longer or consider further policy tightening. Higher interest rates and elevated US Treasury yields typically reduce the appeal of precious metals, which do not offer interest income, while a stronger dollar makes commodities priced in the US currency more expensive for overseas buyers. During noon trade, the December silver futures contract on MCX was trading at Rs 2,27,494 per kg, down Rs 7,202, or 3.07 per cent, from its previous close of Rs 2,34,696 per kg. Commenting on the technical outlook, market experts said the immediate resistance was at Rs 2,32,000–Rs 2,33,000, followed by Rs 2,36,000–Rs 2,37,000. "Immediate support is at Rs 2,27,000–Rs 2,28,000, followed by Rs 2,23,000–Rs 2,24,000," analysts stated. "The RSI at 41.12, below its signal line, indicates fading momentum," analysts added. COMEX silver opened at \$64.66 and was trading near \$62.40, down 3.72 per cent on the day. It slipped below the \$63.50–\$64.00 zone, which previously acted as support and is now likely to act as resistance, and was testing the \$61.50–\$62.00 support region. "Silver remains weaker than gold in today's session. Immediate resistance is at \$63.50–\$64.00, followed by \$65.50–\$66.00. Immediate support is at \$61.50–\$62.00, followed by \$59.50–\$60.00," market watchers stated.

Income Tax Department shares foreign assets info with taxpayers, nudges for disclosure



In a bid to nudge taxpayers to report overseas assets under the ongoing disclosure scheme — Foreign Assets of Small Taxpayers-Disclosure Scheme (FAST-DS) — the Income Tax Department has sent out a series of e-mails and messages to them, sharing specific information about the ownership of overseas stocks, bank accounts or assets. In the e-mails and messages shared with the taxpayers, the Income Tax Department said that its records indicate ownership of overseas assets that may have been "unreported or acquired from undisclosed sources", urging taxpayers to check details in their Annual Information Statement (AIS) on the income tax portal and then report under the disclosure scheme, three people aware of the communication said.

The e-mails have been sent to the taxpayers with the subject line — 'Important advisory: opportunity for voluntary compliance regarding FAST-DS, 2026', adding that it was a system-generated communication. One of the taxpayers told The Indian Express that he has received a notice for holding a bank account in Singapore when he used to have non-resident status a few years ago, while another taxpayer said that he got the notice for his overseas bank accounts opened during his studies that subsequently turned dormant and are purged. An income tax official said that the Department had been planning to share the details about ownership of overseas assets with the taxpayers to nudge them towards FAST-DS, but did not specify the number of such communications sent to the taxpayers. Many taxpayers shared their notices on social media platforms like X and Reddit. One of them, Kapil, posted that he had received a notice for one of his bank accounts opened in Europe where he lived for four years and then returned to India in December 2022. He claimed one of the active European bank accounts had zero balance, and that he has been filing income tax returns for the last three years. Now, in his AIS, the Income Tax Department has shown details of another European bank account with a zero balance over the last three years. The query posted by him to other social media users was whether he was supposed to pay a Rs 1 lakh penalty and whether signing up for FAST-DS means acceptance of a mistake.

The e-mail shared by the tax department asks taxpayers

to log into the e-filing portal, check the details and use 'Kar Saathi' on the portal for assistance regarding forms, compliance, procedures and related queries. "Our records indicate that you may have overseas financial interests (such as bank accounts, shares, immovable property etc.) acquired in earlier years that are required to be reported in the Income Tax Return. If your overseas financial interests (assets/income) have been left unreported in your earlier Income Tax Returns or have been acquired through undisclosed sources, we encourage you to utilise the ongoing, one-time compliance window under the FAST-DS (Foreign Asset of Small Taxpayers-Disclosure Scheme). This dedicated window is open till 31.12.2026. Also, you may view your Foreign Assets Information on the AIS through the e-filing portal," the e-mail from the tax department stated. Many taxpayers complained of not having access to bank account statements for their overseas accounts, while some were not clear whether this will lead to further scrutiny and notices from the Income Tax Department.

Another user said that he had bought US shares of \$100 from 2022 to 2024 and then sold all the shares in July 2024 but never mentioned these in his ITR. "I'm a student and I don't have any income. I just used to file nil ITR. Kindly tell me what I should do now," he wrote in a Reddit post. When the government proposed the new tax disclosure scheme in this year's Budget, the intent was well specified — to address "practical issues of small taxpayers like students, young professionals, tech employees, relocated NRIs" among others. However, as reported by The Indian Express earlier this month, the tax disclosure window, FAST-DS, which was launched on August 16, has resulted in doubts and questions as individuals face high fees and penalties to participate in the scheme. The problem is more acute for salaried individuals who have received restricted stock units (RSUs) or ESOPs and not reported them before. Even for cases where there has not been any actual gain, the employees will now be required to pay Rs 1 lakh for disclosing under the new scheme, which is being seen as too steep an amount as penalty by many. ESOPs are an important salary component for salaried employees in many sectors, especially those working in the tech sector, startups, and foreign companies. The scheme applies to two broad categories: i) undisclosed and never-before-taxed foreign income or asset located outside India up to Rs 1 crore; ii) asset up to Rs 5 crore located outside India, which was already offered to tax or was acquired when the assessee was a non-resident, but not declared in the relevant schedule of the income tax return. Under the first category, an assessee needs to pay 30% of fair market value (FMV) of assets or 30% of undisclosed income as tax and 30% as additional income tax in lieu of penalty, while for the second category, the disclosure fee is Rs 1 lakh. The scheme was notified to be effective from August 16 with the last declaration date on December 31.

Women in manufacturing: Inside Manesar's Japan-India training institute



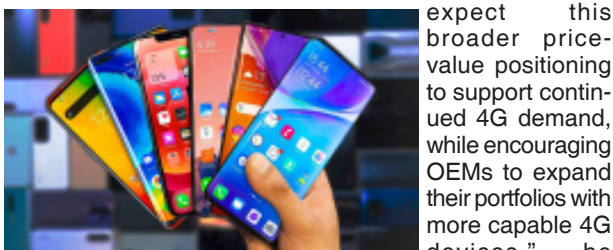
female students, while the other three are yet to admit them. At Manesar, the institute is taking a multi-pronged approach to increase female participation, including a dedicated women's hostel, greater representation of women among faculty and support staff — and, from this academic year, a 100% tuition fee waiver for female students, said Rahul Bharti, Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Affairs, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd. "We believe this initiative will encourage more young women to pursue careers in manufacturing and participate in the growth of India's industrial workforce," he added. The hostel could ease one of the practical hurdles for women coming from outside Manesar. Most of the female students at the institute come from different parts of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, and stay in local paying guest accommodations. Personal connections played a key role in bringing many of them to the institute. "My uncle works at Maruti Suzuki. He said this is a good course and has good job prospects," said Soumya Gupta, who is from Khushi Nagar in Uttar Pradesh and is enrolled in the Mechanic Auto Body Repair trade. However, Gurugram's Kumkum learnt about JIM while she was in school and decided to apply after Class 10. Her family was initially hesitant due to the distance, but agreed after her school friend Pinki Singla also decided to join it. Both are now completing classes 11 and 12 through an open-school programme alongside their technical training. The programme also allows students to earn while they train: they spend five months in the classroom and the remaining seven on the shop floor, where they receive a stipend. "We will learn here and also do the open school. Otherwise, it would have taken us longer. This way, we can study and get trained for jobs at the same time," said Pinki.

India's 4G smartphone shipments expected to grow 3pc in 2026: Report

New Delhi: India's 4G smartphone shipments are expected to grow 3 per cent year-on-year after a 48 per cent year-on-year decline in 2025 and its share in the overall market is rising to 13 per cent in 2026 from 11 per cent in 2025, a report said on Monday. The report from market research firm Counterpoint Research said rising component costs have widened the price gap between 4G and 5G devices, pushing 5G models more expensive for price-sensitive consumers. This prompted value-seeking consumers in the entry (sub-Rs 10,000) and budget (Rs 10,000–Rs 20,000) segments to favour 4G handsets. The report noted that the number of original equipment manufacturers offering 4G models in the Rs 10,000–Rs. 20,000 segments have jumped from two in 2025 to 12 in 2026 year-to-date.

"This growing portfolio is positioning 4G as a broader value proposition, giving consumers a balance of price, specifications and performance as rising costs push 5G smartphones into higher price bands," said Senior Analyst Prachir Singh. "4G is becoming a broader market trend rather than a short-term response to higher smartphone prices, as

component prices are unlikely to normalize soon," the report noted. Research Director Tarun Pathak forecasted that 4G models are set to grow its share in India's smartphone market from 13 per cent in 2026 to 15 per cent in 2027. We



expect this broader price-value positioning to support continued 4G demand, while encouraging OEMs to expand their portfolios with more capable 4G devices," he added. Another report earlier this month said that the global sub-\$200 smartphone shipments are forecast to fall by approximately 40 per cent between 2025 and 2030. Entry-tier smartphones will experience the sharpest contraction as higher component costs and minimum specifications reduce the viability of the lowest-priced devices.

Comparing their journey to 15,000 ODI runs



New Delhi: Virat Kohli reached 15,000 ODI runs in 74 fewer innings than the peerless Sachin Tendulkar, but does this mean that he has well and truly surpassed the 'Mumbai Master' in the format? The answer may not be as simple as the statistics suggest because the 50-over game that Tendulkar played for more than two decades was very different in its rules and texture. Kohli and Tendulkar are both geniuses, unique for the times they ruled, and hence not comparable through mere number-crunching. But is Kohli a bigger phenomenon than Tendulkar in ODIs? In some cases, yes, but such a comparison can never be linear.

Both have a couple of landmarks to their credit that are unlikely to be touched by anyone else in the near future. Kohli's number of hundreds, which stands at 55 and is still counting, and Tendulkar's quantum of runs, 18,426. Kohli has 15,080 runs in the format and it is virtually impossible for him to surpass Tendulkar given the dwindling number of ODIs in the calendar. Tendulkar vs Kohli: Numbers and beyond. Virat Kohli and Sachin Tendulkar in terms of innings played, Kohli reached 15,000 ODI runs in his 303rd innings (315th match), while Tendulkar reached the same milestone in 377 innings (387 matches). Even more striking is that Kohli took 1,578 fewer deliveries than Tendulkar to reach the mark. Tendulkar faced 17,528 balls to reach 15,000 runs, while Kohli faced 15,950 balls to achieve the same milestone. Kohli played at least nine per cent fewer balls, indicating that he scored the runs at a faster clip than the 'Master Blaster'. Kohli's runs-per-innings figure is also significantly higher than Tendulkar's. Kohli's figure stands at 49.5 compared to Tendulkar's 39.9.

The batting average, when unbeaten knocks are computed, is 58.8 for Kohli compared to Tendulkar's 44.24, which

was considered brilliant for his peak era between 1995 and 2011. Kohli's strike rate of more than 94 is also better than Tendulkar's 86. Until he reached 15,000 runs, Tendulkar had 41 centuries, 14 fewer than Kohli's 55. This means Kohli, the greatest ODI batter in the last two decades, scored a hundred every 5.5 innings (303), while it took Tendulkar 9.2 innings per century (41 out of 377). Putting numbers in broader context: The Kohli vs Tendulkar comparison is certainly a popular debate, but whenever the numbers overwhelmingly point to the Delhi batter's greatness over the Mumbai icon, one should quietly add another variable that lends a different dimension to the debate. An important point to note is that Tendulkar featured in about 40 to 50 red-ball ODIs in which early-morning starts favoured swing bowlers, making batting a lot more difficult. There were also several rule changes that forced ODIs to undergo a sea change from the time Tendulkar made his ODI debut in Gujranwala on December 18, 1989, to the high-calibre knock that Kohli played on September 27, 2026. For the better part of Tendulkar's 463 ODI games, there was only one ball used during the entire 50 overs. For a majority of Tendulkar's playing days, fielding restrictions applied only in the first 15 overs, compared to the three powerplays that benefit batting teams currently. Tendulkar also did not open or bat at No. 3 in his first 69 games, and his first hundred came when he opened in his 74th ODI in Sri Lanka. Around 1,800 of his 18,426 runs — about 10 per cent — were scored when he batted at Nos. 5 or 6, with not many overs left and no field restrictions to take advantage of. The white ball would also get softer and discoloured in subcontinental conditions, requiring more power and skill to clear the ropes.

Then came two specific ODI rule changes, one in 2011 and another in 2015, that coincided with Kohli's emergence as a modern-day 50-over great. The first was the introduction of two new white balls from both ends, which effectively meant that one ball would be only 25 overs old during the course of a game. The colour remained intact, the ball remained harder and came onto the bat nicely. From 2014 to 2019, Kohli was raking in ODI hundreds. In 2015, there came another rule change and it proved decisive. Between overs 11 and 40, only four fielders were allowed outside the 30-yard circle. Tendulkar never had the freedom of batting with such fielding restrictions during the middle overs, and there would inevitably be five fielders outside the circle. That removal of an extra fielder opened up a vacant scoring area, and Kohli was not going to let that opportunity go.

In Nagoya, the real art is under your feet, not the Asian Games



GNS News Agency, Oct 1

The city has castles, skyscrapers, samurai history, Toyota factories, and since last week, some of the finest athletes at the Asian Games, all competing for attention. But some of its most elaborate pieces of art sit beneath your feet. The manhole covers are rarely just manhole covers. They carry Nagoya's landmarks, its food, its history and, increasingly, its pop culture, tiny metal postcards embedded in the pavement. For a city with such a rich visual identity above ground, it is striking how much of it has been reproduced below.

At the Meta Water Sewerage Science Museum, the city's hidden world gets an unexpectedly colourful showcase. Pipes, drainage systems and the mechanics of wastewater treatment sit alongside a dozen manhole designs, turning an otherwise invisible piece of infrastructure into something worth examining. For a city with such a rich visual identity above ground, it is striking how much of it has been reproduced below on Nagoya's pavements. For a city with such a rich visual identity above ground, it is striking how much of it has been reproduced below on Nagoya's pavements.

Suzuki Hitoya, the museum's manager, says the covers have become a way for communities across Japan to express what makes them distinctive. "There are various designs in order to produce the originals of each prefecture," he says. "If it's Nagoya, it's mackerel. If it's Mie Prefecture, it's a maguri and a bird." Flowers, birds, animals, landmarks, local scenery: all of it finds its way onto the covers. Nagoya has about 198,000 manholes across an 8,000-kilometre sewer network, and nearly two dozen types of covers, according to the city administration. The process of choosing a design isn't always the same. Sometimes, Hitoya says, a municipality identifies something it wants to showcase — a local flower, a famous view, a landmark — and asks a manhole manufacturer to turn it into a design. Other covers come from public or student competitions, or from designers commissioned for the job. The final choice rests with the local water and sewerage bureau. "There are places where we ask citizens to submit a design to everyone," Hitoya says. "And we ask a designer somewhere to make a design at the end of the gap, but the water supply and sewerage bureau is selecting it." The idea began as little more than a manufacturer's suggestion, an early proposal for a cover decorated with a pear flower, which drew little attention. It spread only once municipalities began using the covers to express local pride. There was a practical motive too, Hitoya says: a nationwide effort to improve the image of sewage

systems. The manhole became an unlikely canvas, popular enough now to have its own social media communities, and its own auctions.

The novel use of a mundane item of urban infrastructure has become such a feature of Japanese popular culture that it has caught the eye of Major League Baseball in the United States, where several of the country's sporting heroes ply their trade. Shohei Ohtani, Yusei Kikuchi and Roki Sasaki had custom-designed manhole covers dedicated to them unveiled in Iwate Prefecture in 2025, and more such initiatives were in the pipeline. The Japan Times had reported. The process of choosing a design isn't always the same. Sometimes, a municipality identifies something it wants to showcase — a local flower, a famous view, a landmark. Other covers come from public or student competitions.

Nagoya's covers carry layers of the city's history. One design featuring Nagoya Castle was created around the 1989 World Design Expo. Another marks a century of sewerage service with the Nayabashi bridge over the Horikawa river. Then there is the amembo, seen in every lane. At first glance, it looks almost extraterrestrial, round eyes, a flattened body, long legs stretched across the metal. It is, in fact, a water strider, chosen through a public competition in 1992 to mark the 80th anniversary of Nagoya's sewerage operations. Water striders live only in clean, unpolluted water, which is why the insect was picked. It went on to become the city's sewerage mascot, and from there, a fixture on its manhole covers.

The designs are as varied as the city's identity: Nagoya Castle, bowls of miso-nikomi udon, fish, samurai figures, a bustling cityscape, a giant golden shrimp for the city's fondness for ebi. Each turns a familiar piece of Nagoya into a miniature work of street art. The designs draw on pop culture too. Amid the castles and civic symbols, there is Pokemon. The designs are as varied as the city's identity: Nagoya Castle, bowls of miso-nikomi udon, fish, samurai figures, a bustling cityscape, a giant golden shrimp for the city's fondness for ebi. (Express photo) The designs are as varied as the city's identity: Nagoya Castle, bowls of miso-nikomi udon, fish, samurai figures, a bustling cityscape, a giant golden shrimp for the city's fondness for ebi. Nagoya has its own Poke Lid, part of a nationwide project placing specially designed Pokemon manholes across Japan. The Nagoya cover sits near Nagoya Castle, its Pokemon chosen for the city, bringing one of Japan's oldest symbols together with one of its most recognisable modern exports. The covers aren't all telling the same story. Some mark an event, some a landmark, some reflect local nature, others simply put a city's stamp on an anonymous piece of infrastructure. Some have become collectibles: retired covers sold as souvenirs, objects that spent decades being driven and walked over now things people choose to take home. It is an unusual fate for something designed to be ignored. But together, the covers make a map of Nagoya's identity. The city's grand history is above ground. Some of its smaller stories are underfoot.

He slept under train seats for kabaddi. Now he has two Asian Games gold medals

GNS News Agency, Oct 1

When he was in his early teens, Aslam Inamdar would scavenge discarded bottles and sell them to scrap dealers to afford a meal. He would travel across Maharashtra to play kabaddi tournaments, sleeping under train seats, boarding trains without tickets, surviving on vada pav or whatever food he could find. Sometimes he would save leftover tournament food in his bag to eat later, even after it had gone bad. The 26-year-old from Taklibhan village in Maharashtra's Ahilyanagar found himself on the other side of that struggle.

Having helped India beat Iran in the Asian Games final, the all-rounder had a gold medal around his neck and, for nearly 30 minutes, posed for selfies and made reels with it. For a man who had once worked at tea stalls, washed utensils, cleaned washrooms and laboured in the fields to make ends meet, the moment was almost impossible to comprehend. "It still feels like a dream to me," Inamdar said. "I often think about how someone who didn't even have food at home now holds two international medals." When his father died, his mother was left to raise five children. She worked in other people's homes, doing chores and washing utensils, to keep the family going. His elder brother, Waseem Inamdar, joined the police force and took on responsibility for the family. Inamdar was determined to make a name for himself in kabaddi, the way his brother had.

He took whatever work he could find: washing tea glasses at stalls, working at juice bars, cleaning washrooms, labouring in the fields. There were days he worked through the day and night, only to head to the kabaddi ground for practice. "I faced many hard situations without letting them break me," he says. By 15, he was travelling alone to local weight-category tournaments. "I traveled extensively on trains without tickets, sleeping under seats to play local tournaments, earning Rs 200 to 500 per match. Sometimes, I would compete even if they would just give me food," he says, clutching his medal. It was enough to keep him going. Kabaddi, he says, offered a chance to build a life beyond the one he had known. His elder brother's reputation as a kabaddi player across several districts, and the example of senior player Rahul Bhor, fuelled his ambition. It was also a sport he could afford, requiring little beyond a playing surface and the will to keep turning up. There was a time, though, when even that dream seemed out of reach. In 2014, when India won gold at the Asian Games, Inamdar was watching on television with a fractured leg. "I believe God's plans are always better," he says. "My hard work never stopped. If your intentions are good and you stay a good human being, God supports you 100 per cent."

The breakthrough came with the Pro Kabaddi League. In his first season, in 2020, he earned Rs 8 lakh, a sum that, he said, felt like Rs 8 crore to him. "With that money, I bought my mother a gold necklace," he says. Aslam Inamdar playing for Puneri Paltan in the Pro Kabaddi League. (Aslam Inamdar Instagram) Aslam Inamdar playing for Puneri Paltan in the Pro Kabaddi League. (Aslam Inamdar Instagram) On the mat, Inamdar became a versatile all-rounder, playing the left cover position and contributing to both India's defensive and attacking efforts. He was instrumental in the win over Iran on Saturday, coming on as a substitute in the first half, when India were trailing, and changing the game with his raids. He now shares his journey with younger players at his training ground in Thane. "Pro Kabaddi gave me name, fame, money and respect. I have represented India and won



medals," he says. "So I want young, underprivileged players to dream big and aim to achieve even more than I have." The boy who once travelled ticketless, slept under train seats and saved scraps of food to eat later now has two Asian Games gold medals to call his own. Over the course of a 18-year-long career, Mihir Vasavda has covered 2010 FIFA World Cup; the London 2012, Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 Olympic Games; Asian Games in 2014 and 2022; Commonwealth Games in 2010 and 2018; Hockey World Cups in 2018 and 2023 and the 2023 ODI Cricket World Cup.

Kohli vs Tendulkar: Comparing their journey to 15,000 ODI runs

New Delhi: Virat Kohli reached 15,000 ODI runs in 74 fewer innings than the peerless Sachin Tendulkar, but does this mean that he has well and truly surpassed the 'Mumbai Master' in the format?

The answer may not be as simple as the statistics suggest because the 50-over game that Tendulkar played for more than two decades was very different in its rules and texture. Kohli and Tendulkar are both geniuses, unique for the times they ruled, and hence not comparable through mere number-crunching. But is Kohli a bigger phenomenon than Tendulkar in ODIs? In some cases, yes, but such a comparison can never be linear.

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Sai Sudharsan says injury layoff was a learning curve ahead of red-ball challenges

GNS News Agency, Oct 1

Puducherry: Known for his obsessive work ethic and unyielding love for spending long hours in the batting nets, India top-order batter B Sai Sudharsan has said his recent injury-enforced spell on the sidelines served as a valuable learning curve rather than a source of frustration. Sudharsan was forced to miss significant red-ball cricket this year due to rib and toe injuries, including missing the tour of Sri Lanka in August. He made a successful return to competitive action with scores of 57 and 39 for India 'A' beating Australia 'A' by 162 runs in the first four-day game at the CAP Siechem Ground.

"First of all, it (rehab) is not frustrating at all. It's just the journey we are going through. And our body also responds to certain things. It's about that. We are also refining our habits every day. So, it's a good thing. "It's a great opportunity to come back and play. When I played on the first day, that's when I felt how badly I missed that feeling of playing inside. So, it was a great opportunity and a good outing as well," Sudharsan was quoted as saying by Cricinfo on Monday.

Detailing his tactical approach on a pitch that offered assistance to spinners and seamers, Sudharsan said early length identification and active footwork helped him ace the challenge. "It's more of learning how to score runs. The ground does not have a flying outfield. So you got to run a lot. "From my mindset, the boundaries were always the other side of the ground. So you had to plan a certain way to score a lot of boundaries this side. And not force so much because that side is anyway very slow. On wickets like these, it's important to put the bowlers on the back foot and keep pressing them. So the options were clear.

"Maybe the execution could have been better from my

Vithya Ramraj breaks 42-year-old national record of PT Usha to win bronze



GNS News Agency, Oct 1

Hurdler Vithya Ramraj clocked 54.75s in the final of women's 400m hurdles at the Asian Games 2026 to claim the bronze medal and break 42 year old national record of PT Usha. Usha's 55.42s was one of the longest standing national records in India and Vithya has been behind the record for some time. Vithya's reaction on the broadcast said it all. After realising that she has broken one of the longest standing records in Indian athletics history, the 28-year-old from Coimbatore broke into a dance routine to celebrate. She had come very close to the record in the last edition of the Asian Games when she had clocked 55.42s in the heats and missed the record by 0.01s.

This is second consecutive bronze medal for Vithya in the event at the Asian Games as she had finished third in the last edition also. This is also India's third consecutive medal in the event at the Asian Games after Anu Raghavan had won the bronze in 2018 Jakarta edition. It was one of the fastest races in Asian Games history with Mariam Kareem of UAE clocking a Games record 54.31s. Adelina Zems of Kazakhstan, who won the silver medal, also clocked her personal best of 54.58s. Another Indian in the event, Anu Raghvan finished fifth with a timing of 55.88s clocking her personal best. A total of four out of eight finalists clocked

their personal best in the race. This is second medal for Vithya at this edition of Asian Games as she won silver with the mixed 4*400m relay team earlier. She will be in action with the women's 4*400m later in the competition. Vithya Ramraj Asian Games bronze 4*400m relay A superb display of speed, strength & teamwork by MR Poovamma, Vithya Ramraj, Manu TS & Vishal TK, as Team India secured Silver Medal in the 4x400m Mixed Relay at #AsianGames2026.

Ankita-Rutuja beaten by Kazakhstan pair

Nagoya: India's campaign in the women's doubles tennis event at the Asian Games 2026 ended in the opening round on Monday after Ankita Raina and Rutuja Bhosale were beaten by Kazakhstan's Anna Danilina and Yulia Putintseva in a closely fought three-set encounter in Nagoya.

The Indian combination made a strong start and edged the opening set 7-5, but Danilina and Putintseva recovered strongly to level the contest with a 6-3 second-set win. The Kazakh pair then held their nerve in the deciding match tie-break, winning 10-5 to complete the comeback.

The result brought an early end to India's women's doubles challenge, although the tournament is not yet over for either Raina or Bhosale. The two Indians are also competing in the mixed doubles draw and will have another opportunity to extend their stay in the competition. Putintseva brings considerable experience from the international circuit to the Kazakh partnership and has regularly competed on the WTA Tour, including among the Top 100 in singles. That experience proved useful as the match entered its decisive phase, with the Kazakhs taking control after surrendering the first set.

Soni Razdan wishes son-in-law Ranbir Kapoor on birthday with family picture



Mumbai: Actress Soni Razdan, also known for being Alia Bhatt's mother, marked her son-in-law Ranbir Kapoor's birthday with a warm social media wish. Calling him the "best man in the house" and sending him "loads of love and duas",

Soni captioned the post as, "Happy Birthday to the best man in the house. Loads of love and duas always #ranbir".

Soni shared a picture featuring Ranbir, daughter Alia Bhatt and granddaughter Raha Kapoor. In the photograph, Ranbir can be seen smiling for the camera, while Alia stands beside her mother Soni, appearing to affectionately kiss her on the cheek. The picture shared by Soni, appears to be from the Kapoor-Bhatt family's Christmas celebrations. The intimate family frame also features little Raha, although her face has been carefully kept out of the picture to respect her privacy, by Soni. Alia and Ranbir have consistently maintained that they want to protect their daughter from unnecessary media attention.

For the uninitiated, Alia and Ranbir's relationship began after they met while working on Ayan Mukerji's fantasy drama 'Brahmastra'. The couple's romance blossomed during the making of the film, and after dating for a few years, Alia and Ranbir tied the knot in an intimate ceremony at their Mumbai home in April 2022. The couple welcomed their daughter Raha in November that year. Professionally, Alia and Ranbir have also reunited for Sanjay Leela Bhansali's upcoming period drama 'Love & War', which also stars Vicky Kaushal. Ranbir is also gearing up for one of his most ambitious projects, Nitesh Tiwari's 'Ramayana: Part 1', in which he plays Lord Ram. Sai Pallavi stars as Sita, while Yash plays Ravana, Sunny Deol portrays Hanuman and Ravi Dubey plays Lakshman. The film is scheduled for a theatrical release on November 6, 2026.

Venkat Prabhu puts an end to speculation over Sivakarthikeyan film

Chennai: Clarifying that actor Sivakarthikeyan would always remain a dear friend and brother to him, ace director Venkat Prabhu on Monday explained that his film with Sivakarthikeyan could not take off for several reasons, but said he had no hard feelings over the development. Taking to his X timeline to pen a lengthy clarification in the wake of an interview given by his father, music director, director and actor Gangai Amaren, Venkat Prabhu, looking to defend his father, said, "SK (Sivakarthikeyan) is always a dear friend/brother to me. A lot of speculation and controversy are going around. As a father, when a film involving your own son gets delayed, the frustration is natural. He probably doesn't know the complete picture, and I can't blame him for that." The ace director went on to say, "I'm a very quiet person when it comes to my work and don't discuss my professional matters in detail with anyone, including him. The project couldn't take off due to various reasons. That's it. No hard feelings."

"If the time comes and a good script comes my way, I would love to work with SK again." "So please, let's put a full stop to all this," Venkat Prabhu said, adding, "I'm busy with my next. My best wishes to my brother's Seyon." For the unaware, director Sivakumar Murugesan's Tamil film Seyon, featuring actor Sivakarthikeyan in the lead, only recently wrapped up its second schedule of shooting. On September 11 this year, Raaj Kamal Films International, the production house of actor Kamal Haasan, which is producing the film, took to its social media timelines to put out a video clip announcing the completion of the film's second schedule. It may be recalled that Sivakarthikeyan had taken a short break in Ooty ahead of the gruelling second schedule in Madurai. The



actor had a few days earlier posted pictures of himself seated alone on a jeep and enjoying the serenity offered by the mist-surrounded mountains in Ooty. Posting the pictures on Instagram, he had said, "A pause. A breeze. A little peace." The makers of the film had on June 10 this year announced that the unit had wrapped up the first schedule of shooting. The film officially went on floors in Madurai with a grand pooja ceremony that was attended by several celebrities, including actor Kamal Haasan, on May 18 this year. Produced by Kamal Haasan's Raaj Kamal Films International and Turmeric Media, the film features actress Baghyashree Borse as the female lead.

Swara Bhasker reveals she considered IVF to become a mother before marriage

Mumbai: Actor Swara Bhasker opened up about her personal journey to motherhood and her desire to build a family before marriage on the reality show Rise and Fall Season 2. As the game inside the Tower began taking shape, Swara spoke candidly about a deeply personal chapter of her life. She revealed that before getting married, she had considered having a child through IVF, as she was keen to become a mother and start a family.

"I was okay to do IVF, I had convinced my parents, meri shaadi toh hone se rahi mein ivf se bacha karungi." Speaking about how her parents reacted to her decision, Swara said they were supportive while also cautioning her about the challenges involved. "Bichare meere parents yaar bade sweet log hai they are like 'listen it will be very challenging... but obviously if that's what you want.'" Explaining what prompted her decision, Swara said that she always wanted a family, but despite undergoing two rounds of IVF, she failed. "I really wanted to have a child and have a family and I did two rounds of IVF but hua nahi." Swara's candid revelation comes in Rise and Fall Season 2, hosted by Virender Sehwal. The actor has also found herself at the centre of many confrontations on the show. Since the show began two days ago, Swara, along



with fellow contestant Shehzad Poonawalla, has been at loggerheads, with their disagreements also reflecting their differences outside the show. For the uninitiated, the two come from markedly different political backgrounds and have publicly expressed contrasting views on many issues. Swara is married to politician Fahad Ahmad. The couple welcomed their daughter, Raabiya, and Swara had recently celebrated her third birthday shortly before entering the Rise and Fall house.

'Only 4-5 days of shooting left for Mahesh Babu's Varanasi' says S S Karthikeya

Chennai: Producer S S Karthikeya, one of the producers of ace director S S Rajamouli's Varanasi, featuring actor Mahesh Babu in the lead, has disclosed to IANS that post-production work on the film is progressing at a brisk pace and that they should ideally complete it by January next year.

Talking to IANS on the sidelines of a pre-release event organised for the producer's next film, Don't Trouble the Trouble, featuring Fahadh Faasil in the lead, the producer of Varanasi said, "We only have four to five days of shooting left to go to complete the film. Post-production work on Varanasi is happening simultaneously. It is progressing at a brisk pace and we should be done with everything by January next year."

For the unaware, director S S Rajamouli's Varanasi, which features Mahesh Babu, Priyanka Chopra and Prithviraj Sukumaran in the lead, is slated to hit screens worldwide on April 7 next year. The film, which has triggered huge expectations among audiences and fans, has music by M M Keeravani and is being produced by Sri Durga Arts and Showing Business. The film is scheduled to release worldwide on April 7 next year in IMAX.

The makers of the much-awaited magnum opus

Varanasi had unveiled two exclusive stills from the film on the occasion of Mahesh Babu's birthday last year. The stills offered the world its first glimpse of Mahesh Babu's character, Rudhra, in his element. The first still captured Rudhra at rest on a bamboo raft, surrounded by a dense jungle, effortlessly cool and magnetic, while carrying the quiet intensity that defined his character. The second transported fans to the sweeping plains of Kenya's Maasai Mara, where Rudhra was seen standing with a commanding look amid giraffes and wild beasts. Varanasi, sources say, will be a globe-trotting, century-spanning epic in which one man's extraordinary journey will take him from the sacred waters of India to the wildest corners of the earth. Director S S Rajamouli, while speaking about Mahesh Babu's character Rudhra after the launch of the film's title teaser, had said, "Rudhra was born to fulfill a purpose much larger than himself. He carries a destiny he did not ask for. He is witty, he is vulnerable, and he is fierce. That is what Mahesh brought to him. Anyone can play fierce. Very few can play fierce and fragile in the same breath. These frames are from our Africa schedule, and the land gave us something no set could. Shooting around Kilimanjaro and in the Maasai Mara, I was stunned. There were mornings when I felt even the 1.43:1 IMAX frame could not hold what was in front of us."

Enrique Iglesias' 'Hero' turns 25 as singer shares iconic music video



Mumbai: King of Latin Pop Enrique Iglesias' iconic song 'Hero' has completed 25 years, marking the milestone with the singer sharing a music video for the romantic track on social media. Iglesias took to Instagram, where he shared the music video of the song, which till date has sold over eight million copies worldwide, making it one of the best selling singles of all time. He took to the caption section and wrote the lyrics of the song, which released in 2001: "hold me in your arms tonight #hero."

Ravie Dubey calls Ramayana co-star Ranbir Kapoor 'the very best we have' on his birthday

Ravie Dubey penned a heartfelt birthday note for his Ramayana co-star Ranbir Kapoor. Ravie Dubey penned a heartfelt birthday note for his Ramayana co-star Ranbir Kapoor. Ranbir Kapoor is receiving birthday wishes from friends, family and colleagues as he turns 44 on September 28. Among the messages is a heartfelt note from his Ramayana co-star Ravie Dubey, who plays Lakshman in Nitesh Tiwari's two-part epic. Sharing his experience of working with Ranbir, Ravie said he has had the "great fortune" of being part of a "generational film" like Ramayana and working alongside a "generational actor" like Ranbir.

"For the last three years, I have the great fortune of being part of a generational film Ramayana and working shoulder to shoulder with a generational actor, Ranbir Kapoor. I don't think Ranbir bhai knows how much I've learned from him while standing beside him as his younger brother," shared actor Ravie Dubey. He added, "I've watched his humility, his commitment, and the depth of his investment in every moment. What stays with me most is how quietly he does it. He puts so much into the character and the film, yet never makes his hard work conspicuous or allows it to weigh on anyone else on set." "These three years have only strengthened my belief that, as an actor, a leading man, and a professional, he is the very best we have. I have yet to meet anyone quite like him. To share the screen with him in my first film is a gift I will always cherish," added Ravie. "There is a maryada to being an actor and a professional, an unspoken code of ethics... a way of honouring the work and the people around you and the responsibility that comes with your place in a film such as Ramayana. Ranbir bhai embodies that with extraordinary grace. I'm grateful I got to witness it so closely. Happy Birthday Ranbir Bhai #ranbir Kapoor," the actor concluded in his birthday note for Ranbir Kapoor. Ravie Dubey on Ranbir Kapoor's professionalism: In an earlier interview with Variety India, Ravie had similarly praised Ranbir's sincerity, work ethic, etiquette, preparation and grounded nature. He said that despite being a major star, Ranbir does not allow the weight of his stardom to affect the way he interacts with people on set. "I think Ranbir is simply the best we have. He is a superstar of epic proportions, but what has stayed with me



even more is the human being and the artiste I have witnessed at close range. The sincerity with which he comes onto a set is unparalleled. His work ethic, etiquette, intensity and preparation; I had heard so much about these things, but I had the privilege of witnessing them firsthand. And alongside all of that is this incredibly grounded, warm and inclusive nature. There is no weight of his stardom in the way he interacts with people. I find that enormously inspiring. It is my great good fortune to be a part of this journey alongside Ranbir, Namit (Malhotra), Nitesh (Tiwari), Yash, Sai Pallavi and every single person associated with 'Ramayana,' he shared earlier.

Ravie also described his association with Ramayana as a blessing and said he had tried to keep personal ambition secondary to what he sees as the larger purpose of being part of the epic. Directed by Nitesh Tiwari, Ramayana features Ranbir as Lord Rama, Sai Pallavi as Sita, Yash as Ravana, Sunny Deol as Hanuman and Ravie Dubey as Lakshman. The film is being made as a two-part adaptation of the epic, with the first part scheduled to release during Diwali 2026. Ranbir's birthday comes at a busy time for the actor, who is also gearing up for Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Love & War, co-starring Alia Bhatt and Vicky Kaushal.

Meet Bigg Boss 20's Arishfa Khan, ex-Crime Patrol child actor with 29 mn followers

Meet Bigg Boss 20's Arishfa Khan, ex-Crime Patrol child actor with 29 mn followers. Meet Bigg Boss 20's Arishfa Khan, ex-Crime Patrol child actor with 29 mn followers. Salman Khan-hosted Bigg Boss 20 premiered less than a month ago, and has already been going viral for its iconic moments. Among them is the 23-year-old contestant Arishfa Khan's repeated fights with fellow housemates over labelling her as bacchi (child). Fans even dug up nostalgic videos of a much younger Arishfa delivering a similar dialogue in Crime Patrol (I am not a child, I am 12 years old), turning the Bigg Boss moment into a trending social media meme. Little do people know that Arishfa, who has over 29 million followers on Instagram, has worked extensively as an actor.

Arishfa's early life Arishfa was born on April 3, 2003, in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh. After her family moved to Mumbai, she did her schooling from Ryan International School. She later shifted to private schooling due to her early acting career. However, she had to leave her education midway because of her acting schedule. Her mother, Arshi Naz, who worked as a stuntwoman in the film industry, used to take her daughter along on sets. During an interview with Humans Of Bombay in 2020, Arishfa recalled going with her mother to shoots when she was young. "I remember, she'd drive me to work everyday and stay back on set till the shoot was over. She'd feed me food during the lunch breaks. She even gave up her career for me; I was too young to understand the sacrifices she'd made," she shared. Arishfa Khan entered the entertainment industry as a child and started featuring in several television shows in 2012. The actor-content creator was just seven years old when she bagged her first role in a daily soap – Chhal – Sheh Aur Maat. As a child artist, she worked in shows such as Ek Veer Ki Ardaas... Veera, Crime Patrol, Jeannie Aur Juju, Uttaran, Yeh Hai Mohabbatein, Gangaa, Meri Durga, and many TV ads. Later in 2018, she landed her debut lead role in the show Papa By Chance, on Star Bharat. She also featured in various music videos. In December 2021, Arishfa launched her own beauty and makeup brand called Mishy Me. After working in the entertainment industry for over a decade, Arishfa switched to short-form video content, considering the boom of digital media and reels. The Bigg Boss contestant went on to become one of the most famous Indian TikTokers and had more than 25 million followers on the content creation platform, before it was banned in India. Her content type mostly included dance, lip-sync, fashion, beauty and lifestyle videos. She has built an audience of 29.6 million on Instagram and 3.15 million subscribers on YouTube. The latter even awarded her a Golden Play Button in July 2020. Before entering the Bigg Boss 20 house on September 6, Arishfa Khan last appeared in the music video Ishq Abhi Baaki Hai, opposite Samarthyua Gupta. The video



was released through Kashish Music, sung by Alexandra Joy with music and lyrics by Abhishek Thakur. Talking about Bigg Boss, Arishfa's initial days in the house already began with arguments. Her disagreements and verbal fights with Aamrapali Dubey and ScoutOP.

Yash unveiled as Ravana in Nitesh Tiwari's 'Ramayana'

New Delhi: The makers of "Ramayana" have unveiled the first look poster of Yash, who features as Ravana in the film. The film is directed by Nitesh Tiwari and is produced by Namit Malhotra's DNEG and Prime Focus Studios. The poster, which featured the actor in a glittering golden crown embellished with gems, layered pearl necklaces and gold bracelets, was released on an Instagram handle on Saturday and was re-shared by Yash. The film has been mounted as an ambitious global-scale adaptation, with Oscar-winning filmmaker Hans Zimmer and Grammy-winning composer James Newton Howard attached to the music. It also features Ranbir Kapoor as Ram, Sai Pallavi as Sita and Ravie Dubey as Lakshman alongside Sunny Deol as Hanuman and Vivek Oberoi as Viduyatjiva, among others.