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KTR provides Rs 30 lakh equipment to Sircilla hospital

Sircilla: BRS working president KT Rama Rao inaugurated medical equipment worth about Rs 30 lakh, procured through corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds, at the Rajanna Sircilla district government hospital on Monday. He criticised the Congress government for allegedly neglecting the maintenance of government hospitals and facilities developed during the previous BRS regime.

The initiative aimed to strengthen medical facilities for poor and middle-class patients who cannot afford treatment at private hospitals and improve healthcare services at the government hospital.

BRS seeks withdrawal of Telangana hate speech Bill, flags risk of misuse

Hyderabad: The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) urged the select committee on the Telangana Hate Speech and Hate Crimes (Prevention) Bill, 2026, to recommend its withdrawal. Emphasising the need for firm action against hate speech and hate crimes, the party cautioned that vague provisions and sweeping powers could be misused against the media, political opposition and lawful dissent.

In its representation to the committee, the BRS said it condemned hate speech and hate crimes in every form and supported firm action against those inciting violence or targeting people based on identity. However, the answer to hate could not be a law that blurred the line between hatred and dissent, it asserted.

Three weighbridges seized over fraudulent paddy weighing

Nalgonda: The Nalgonda District Legal Metrology Department seized three weighbridges and registered cases against their operators after inspections revealed alleged under-weighing of paddy purchased from farmers.

Acting on complaints that private individuals were using fraudulent weighing practices while purchasing paddy, the department inspected weighbridges in Manimadde and Gurajala villages of Shaligouraram mandal on Monday. The inspections found that the weighbridges were under-reporting grain weight by 10 kg for every 1,000 kg weighed. As a result, farmers were unknowingly handing over excess grain to buyers and suffering financial losses.

Maharashtra CM agrees to consider Telangana's request on Tummidihatti Barrage

Hyderabad, Oct 26 (IANS) Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has responded positively to consider a request by Telangana to give the nod for construction of Tummidihatti Barrage with a height of 152 metres, the Telangana CMO said on Monday.

A Telangana delegation led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy met Fadnavis in Mumbai and discussed construction of the Tummidihatti Barrage across the Pranahita River on the Telangana–Maharashtra border, including the proposed enhancement of the barrage height, water availability, submergence implications, and other technical aspects.

According to the Telangana Chief Minister's Office (CMO), Telangana Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, the Chief Secretaries of both states, and senior officials of the Irrigation Departments participated in the meeting.

The Maharashtra Chief Minister expressed his willingness to revisit Telangana's request.

However, he emphasised that several technical, environmental, and administrative steps would have to be completed before reaching a final conclusion.

The Maharashtra Chief Minister stated that if the project did not adversely affect Maharashtra or its people, his government would have no hesitation in supporting Telangana in meeting its water requirements, in the larger spirit of national interest.

Uttam Kumar Reddy made a detailed presentation highlighting the historical significance, cultural heritage, social conditions, and economic backwardness of the erstwhile Adilabad district.

He elaborated on why the 2016 agreement, which provided for a barrage height of 148 metres, would not adequately address the irrigation requirements of the region.

The minister emphasised that the present challenges relating to energy requirements, power costs, environmental concerns, climate change, and long-term operational sustainability made it necessary to explore solutions that maximise the use of gravity for water conveyanceHe presented the technical and operational advantages of constructing the Tummidihatti Barrage at a height of 152 metres, describing it as the most viable solution for meeting the region's water requirements.

The minister further conveyed that the Telangana government is willing to compensate farmers in Maharashtra for agricultural land affected by submergence, in accordance with the land acquisition guidelines and compensation policies applicable in Maharashtra.

CM Revanth Reddy observed that the proposed barrage could serve as a physical bridge connecting the two states, strengthening connectivity and economic cooperation between communities on both sides of the border.

The Maharashtra Chief Minister proposed the constitution of a joint committee of officials headed by the Principal Secretaries of the Irrigation Departments of both states.

The committee would examine the proposed barrage height, water availability, submergence implications, affected agricultural lands, compensation requirements and other technical matters.

Austria's Foreign Minister to visit India, hold talks with EAM Jaishankar

New Delhi, Oct 26 (IANS) Austria's Federal Minister for European and International Affairs Beate Meinl-Reisinger will be on an official visit to India from October 27 to November 2, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced on Monday. During her visit, Reisinger will hold talks with External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Wednesday.

After concluding her engagements in New Delhi, the visiting minister will participate in various events in Jaipur from October 29 to November 2.

Earlier in the day, EAM Jaishankar extended wishes to Beate Meinl-Reisinger and the people of Austria on the country's National Day and expressed commitment to further enhancing the Enhanced Partnership between the two nations.

"Warm felicitations to

FM Beate Meinl-Reisinger, the Government and people of Austria on their National Day. Committed to further strengthening our Enhanced Partnership," EAM Jaishankar posted on X.

On October 6, Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Sibi George met Austria's National Security Advisor Peter Vorhofer, and discussed ways to strengthen cooperation between the two nations in security and strategic matters, including counter-terrorism.

"Secretary (West) Sibi George received Dr Peter Vorhofer, National Security Advisor of Austria.

BRS fears lakhs of graduates may lose right to vote in MLC constituencies

Hyderabad, Oct 26 (IANS) Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has expressed grave concern over the sluggish and chaotic pace of voter enrolment for the upcoming biennial elections to the two Graduates' Constituencies of the Telangana Legislative Council scheduled for March 2027.

The party warned that due to the inaction of the Election Commission's field machinery, hurdles created by officials in the name of attestation, technical obstacles, and an unduly compressed timeline, lakhs of eligible graduates are at serious risk of losing their fundamental right to vote.

A delegation of senior BRS leaders met C. Sudarshan Reddy, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Telangana, on Monday and submitted a comprehensive representation.The delegation comprised former Minister and MLA Talasani Srinivas Yadav, MLA Kaleru Venkatesh, MLC Dr Dasoju Sravan Kumar and MLC Surabhi Vani Devi, alongside several other key BRS leaders and representatives.

Mulk Technology Launches AI-Powered Digital Hospital Platform for India and Global Markets with OnClarity USA

One integrated hospital system. 22 AI-enabled modules.

ABDM-compliant and ready to go live in any hospital, clinic, lab or imaging centre.

New Delhi, : Mulk Technology today announced its AI-powered digital healthcare platform for India and international markets, following its strategic partnership with OnClarity USA, signed in Dubai on 23 October 2026. The platform combines Mulk Technology's complete Hospital Management System with OnClarity USA's AI patient-experience layer, giving hospitals their clinical, financial and patient-facing systems from a single partner.

India's digital healthcare market is projected to reach USD 110 billion by 2033, and eSanjeevani has already delivered over 32 million teleconsultations. Public and private providers are adopting new care-delivery models at pace.

The Problem: Revenue And Trust Lost In A Dozen Places

A claim is rejected for a missing code. A consumable never reaches the bill. A patient calls three times and still cannot book. A complaint surfaces only after it goes public. Most hospitals run fragmented systems, and most AI tools fix only one of these problems. Mulk Technology's platform fixes them together by integrating every module on one AI-enabled foundation.

One Hospital System, One Patient Record

Registration, EMR, laboratory, radiology, pharmacy, billing, insurance claims, telehealth and the patient app run on a single database. Every order, bed-day and consumable flows directly to billing, with no inter-departmental interfaces to build or maintain. Because the AI sees the full picture, it can trace a documentation gap to a rejected claim.

AI Across The Revenue Cycle

AI prepares and checks every claim from encounter to payment, so staff review and approve rather than build claims by hand.

Stops revenue leakage: every procedure, test, bed-day and consumable is reconciled against the bill before discharge.

Assists coding: codes are proposed with supporting evidence, and doctors are prompted for missing detail so claims are right the first time.

Reduces rejections: each claim is validated against payer rules, pre-authorisation, limits, attachments and

duplicates before submission.

Accelerates cash flow: work queues are ranked by value, approval likelihood and deadline, and rejections are corrected and resubmitted on time.

OnClarity USA: AI for every patient conversation

AI Patient Support responds 24/7 on WhatsApp, voice, SMS, web chat and the app, in more than 40 languages, handling bookings, reminders and routing.

AI Agent Assist places the patient's history and the correct, policy-backed answer on every staff screen.

AI Voice of the Patient analyses every call, chat, review and survey, not a sample, so problems are resolved at the source.

New patients, new revenue

Hospitals can extend their reach with white-labelled Mulk telehealth kiosks in their own brand, placed in offices, pharmacies and malls, offering video consultations with the hospital's own doctors and on-the-spot medicine dispensing. The AI Longevity Module converts one-off lab tests into a recurring, physician-led preventive home-care programme.

Built For India

The platform complies with the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), supporting ABHA creation and linking at registration and consent-based sharing of health records across ABDM-linked facilities. It is cloud-based, subscription-priced and pre-configured for hospitals, clinics, diagnostic labs and imaging centres, so facilities go live without a lengthy IT project. Hospitals can adopt the full platform or add the AI layer to existing systems.

"We are excited to bring AI health technology to the UAE, Africa and India as digital transformation reshapes healthcare delivery worldwide. We have delivered telehealth to over 1.5 million insurance members in the UAE and in Africa through the DR Congo, we are in the final stages of implementation in India, and we have signed an MOU with the Maldives."

— Dr. Nawab Shafi Ul Mulk, Founder, Mulk Technology

"Hospitals don't have a technology shortage. They have a fragmentation problem, and patients are caught in the middle. With Dr. Mulk and his team, we are giving hospitals one platform that follows the patient from the first call to the final claim, with results they can measure."

— Abed Kasaji, Co-Founder and CEO, OnClarity USA

About Mulk Technology

Mulk Technology is a UAE-based healthcare technology company with global affiliations, building integrated AI solutions for healthcare providers across the GCC, Africa and India. It was founded by Dr. Nawab Shafi Ul Mulk, President of Mulk Healthcare Enterprise, who has over 30 years of healthcare experience and is ranked among the Middle East's most influential healthcare leaders.

About OnClarity USA

OnClarity USA builds AI that helps organisations hear, understand and act on every customer conversation. Its secure-by-design platform unites voice-of-customer analytics, agent assist, AI support, quality monitoring and proactive engagement.

Indian Chronicle
English Daily

Why does the Nobel Prize elude Indian Science?

It is that time of the year when the Nobel Prize announcements bring with them a familiar question: why is India, despite its immense scientific talent, unable to make the cut? India's journey in modern science presents a stark paradox: while Indian-origin scientists and engineers lead research labs, major technology firms, and academic departments across the globe, the country has not won a Nobel Prize in a scientific category for a breakthrough achieved on domestic soil since Sir CV Raman in 1930. While scientists of Indian descent such as Har Gobind Khorana, Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar and Venkatraman Ramakrishnan have won Nobel Prizes, their groundbreaking work was conducted largely in Western research ecosystems. Poor spending on research and development, bureaucratisation of science administration, brain drain, a mismatch between scientific talent and the domestic research ecosystem, a culture of incrementalism over risk-taking, and limited participation of the private sector are among the major factors holding back the country from achieving greater heights. Low R&D spending has been a bane of Indian science. India invests a mere 0.65% of its GDP in R&D while advanced economies spend between 1.5% and 4.5%. The United States spends about 3.4% of its GDP on R&D, South Korea over 5%, Germany over 3%, and Japan more than 3.5%. Israel spends 4.5% of its GDP, the highest in the world, while China earmarks around 2.7% of its GDP for scientific research. Stifling regulations, outdated equipment, and limited resources for researchers ensure that Indian scientists remain stuck in a demotivating environment.

Basic science is the foundation from which innovation usually emerges. This is India's weakest area. There is a need for a rethink to bridge the gap. Also, the country needs long-duration funding, with rigorous scientific review but considerably less administrative micromanagement. Experts have been advocating building a national shared research infrastructure. Niche scientific fields like genomics, proteomics, advanced imaging, biobanks, structural biology, AI, and computational platforms should be accessible across institutions. Nobel-winning research often comes from high-risk, unproven hypotheses. In India, academic incentives, including promotions, historically favour the quantity of publications over radical innovation. Researchers are frequently nudged toward safe, incremental studies rather than high-risk, exploratory projects. The private sector's rising R&D share is a positive and necessary correction to India's historically state-dominated research funding model. However, it is by itself not sufficient to close India's technology gap with the countries it wants to compete with. A large share of private R&D is concentrated in a narrow set of sectors. Decades of a protected, import-substituting economy, followed by a services- and IT-outsourcing-led growth model, meant Indian firms could compete and profit without deep in-house research — unlike South Korean or Chinese firms, which were pushed by export-oriented industrial policy. Moreover, public research institutions and private industry have historically operated in separate silos.

Widespread Awareness Needed on Graduate Voter Registration

UPPAL MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY"Graduate Voter Registration Help Desk Inaugurated at Dr. A.S. Rao Nagar""UPPAL, OCTOBER 26 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):"Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy has called for an extensive awareness campaign to ensure that all eligible graduates register as voters ahead of the Mahabubnagar–Rangareddy–Hyderabad Graduates' MLC elections."The MLA inaugurated a Graduate MLC Voter Registration Help Desk established near the Round Building in Dr. A.S. Rao Nagar, within the Uppal Assembly constituency."Speaking on the occasion, Bandari Lakshma Reddy emphasized that the right to vote plays a crucial role in a democratic system. He urged every eligible graduate to register as a voter and actively participate in the democratic process."He called upon party leaders, workers, youth, educated citizens and representatives of colony welfare associations to work together to take the voter registration campaign to every section of society.The MLA also directed party representatives to identify eligible graduates in every division of the constituency and create awareness about the voter registration process. He stressed that help desks should provide necessary information about registration procedures and assist eligible graduates in completing the process."Bandari Lakshma Reddy appealed to all eligible graduates to register their names well in advance so that they can exercise their voting rights in the forthcoming Graduates' MLC elections.BRS state leader Soma Shekhar Reddy, former corporator Kotha Ramarao, BRS leaders and party workers were among those who participated in the programme.

PG Dasara Cricket Tournament Concludes on a Grand Note

"Friends Playing Team Wins ?50,000 Cash Prize and Trophy"" The PG Dasara Cricket Tournament, organised by senior Khairatabad leader and Bhagyanagar Utsav Samithi secretary Pallapu Govardhan on the occasion of Dasara, concluded on a grand note. A prize distribution ceremony was held on a large scale at Film Nagar.""Speaking at the event, Govardhan said the tournament had received an overwhelming response and was organised to encourage young people to pursue sports and stay away from negative influences. He said he had been organising cricket tournaments every year with the aim of promoting sportsmanship and providing a positive platform for youth.""The 15-day tournament witnessed the participation of 19 teams from various localities and slums, with a total of 47 matches played.""Having grown up in the Film Nagar slums, Govardhan said he understood the challenges faced by young people and was committed to supporting them through such initiatives. He emphasised that sports play a vital role in keeping youth motivated, disciplined and focused on positive goals.""At the prize distribution ceremony, the Friends Playing team, which emerged as the winner, received a cash prize of ?50,000 along with a trophy. The Kumar team from Durga Bhavani Nagar, the runner-up, was awarded ?30,000 and a trophy.""The tournament aimed to encourage sporting talent among local youth and provide them with opportunities to showcase their skills in a healthy and competitive environment.

UPPAL MLA BANDARI LAKHSMA REDDY Reviews Drinking Water Issues Across All Divisions

""UPPAL, OCTOBER 26 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):"Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy has directed Water Board officials to focus on resolving drinking water problems across all divisions in the Uppal constituency and ensure an uninterrupted and improved water supply to residents.As part of these efforts, the MLA held a review meeting with Water Board officials to discuss drinking water supply, drainage problems, pipeline leakages, the installation of new pipelines, and the progress of pending works in various areas of the constituency."During the meeting, he reviewed the difficulties faced by residents due to irregular water supply, interruptions in distribution, and drainage-related issues. He instructed officials to identify the areas facing problems and take immediate steps to address them. He emphasized that drinking water should be supplied efficiently to ensure that residents do not face any inconvenience."The MLA also directed officials to complete all pending Water Board works at the earliest. He stressed the need for field-level inspections to assess the severity of local problems and called for better coordination with local public representatives to expedite the works."Bandari Lakshma Reddy further emphasized the need to strengthen the drinking water supply system across all divisions in the Uppal constituency and resolve drainage issues on a priority basis.He urged officials from the concerned departments to work in coordination, give priority to drinking water and drainage infrastructure, and ensure that ongoing development works are completed without unnecessary delays.

Reading and Play Essential for Children's Creative Development

"Hyderabad, October 26 (Indian Chronicle) : Children's rights must be respected, and greater importance should be given to reading, creative writing and sports for their overall development, said Manikonda Vedakumar, editor of Bala Chelimi and Deccan Land. He was speaking at the concluding session of a workshop titled 'School Children - Creative Writing, Libraries and Sports,' organised by the Dr.Madabhushi Rangacharya Memorial Association at Oxford Grammar School, with the support of the Telangana Sahitya Akademi and TRSMA. The inaugural session was chaired by Garipelli Ashok. Dr.Namoju Balachari, Dr.Pattipaka Mohan, Chokkappu Venkataramana and Saddula Madhusudhan participated in the programme and highlighted the importance of children's rights, reading books, creative writing and libraries. Dr.Madabhushi Lalithadevi delivered the welcome address, while Dr.Harika Cherukupalli coordinated the programme.

MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY Visits Injured Namasthe Telangana Reporter K.C. Mohan

"UPPAL, OCTOBER 26 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):"Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy visited K.C. Mohan, Kapra reporter of Namasthe Telangana, who was injured in a road accident and is undergoing treatment at Surya Hospital, on Monday.During his visit, the MLA enquired with the doctors about Mohan's health condition and wished him a speedy recovery. He expressed hope that Mohan would regain his health soon and return to his journalistic duties."On the occasion, the MLA stated that he would always stand by journalists and look after their welfare. He also assured them of his support, saying that journalists could approach him whenever they needed any help or assistance."

MLA Inaugurates New 'SVM Lux' in Hyd

"Hyderabad, October 26 (Indian Chronicle) : SVM Group of Hotels has launched its luxury hospitality brand, 'SVM Lux', at Kompally, marking the group's ninth branch. The hotel was inaugurated by KP Vivekanand, MLA from Quthbullapur and BRS Legislative Party Whip, according to a statement issued on Monday by M. Vara Prasad, Founder and Managing Director of SVM Group.

The newly launched hotel features 88 rooms, 11 banquet halls, luxury suites, fine-dining facilities, a lounge bar and boardrooms, catering to both leisure and business guests. The inauguration ceremony featured a live music concert by popular playback singer Geetha Madhuri and witnessed the participation of approximately 3,000 people, the statement said.

Four more arrested in murder of retired IPS officer's wife

Hyderabad: Four individuals, including a woman, allegedly involved in the murder of a retired IPS officer's wife and robbery of valuables from her house in Jubilee Hills in May, have been arrested by Hyderabad police on Monday.

They were identified as Dharma Tiruwa alias Kalpana (26), a former domestic worker at the victim's house, Ganesh B K (31), Chandra Bahadur Tamang (44) and Ganesh Bahadur Shahi (37). All four are natives of Nepal.

Legal Awareness Program Convened at ZPHS Girls High School:

Senior Civil Judge Educates Students on POCSO Act and Fundamental Rights."

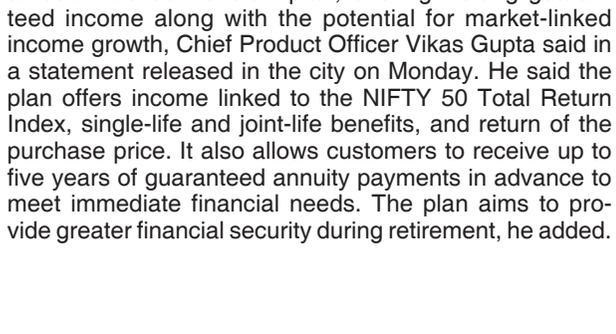
"Manthani, October 26, 2026 — A comprehensive legal awareness session under the aegis of the Surakshit Bachpan Abhiyaan was organized at the ZPHS Girls High School in Manthani, presided over by In-charge Headmaster Geetla Bharat Reddy."The chief guest of the event, Honorable Senior Civil Judge Malladi Aparna, addressed the students to sensitize them on the provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and their fundamental statutory rights. During her address, Judge Aparna emphasized the critical importance of child safety, personal safety boundaries, and the robust legal frameworks designed to safeguard children from abuse and exploitation."The program witnessed the active participation of prominent legal luminaries and dignitaries, including Bar Association Vice President K. Raghotham Reddy, advocates Shashibhushan Kache, Gouthami Srilakshmi, and Vyas

Kumar, alongside the school's teaching faculty and administrative staff.

DCC President Thotakura Vajresh Yadav Attends Indiramma Housewarming Ceremony

""BODUPPAL, OCTOBER 26 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):"Medchal–Malkajgiri District Congress Committee (DCC) President and Medchal Constituency Incharge Thotakura Vajresh Yadav attended the housewarming ceremony of an Indiramma house at Indira Nagar Colony in Boduppal Division, Boduppal Circle, under the Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation, on Monday."Vajresh Yadav attended the event as the chief guest and formally inaugurated the housewarming ceremony. On the occasion, he congratulated the beneficiaries and extended his best wishes to them as they began a new chapter in their lives.Former president Pogula Narasimha Reddy, Boduppal Division Congress President Bommak Kalyan, Chenchal Division President Pogula Dileep Reddy, Kotha Kishore Goud, Jai Ramulu, B. Satyanarayana Yadav, Youth Congress President Srikanth Yadav, Indiramma Committee member A. Ramulu, and others participated in the programme.

Aadhaar Seva Kendra Inaugurated Under BLS International Management



""Hyderabad, October 26 (Indian Chronicle) : BLS International, a provider of technology-enabled services to governments and citizens, has announced the launch of a state-of-the-art Aadhaar Seva Kendra(ASK) in Kothagudem, Telangana. The centre was inaugurated by District Collector and Magistrate Ankit, IAS, along with other dignitaries, according to a statement released by BLS International representatives in Hyderabad on Monday. The centre offers four Aadhaar service kits to facilitate new enrolments, corrections to names, addresses and dates of birth, and biometric updates. With the capacity to serve 200 to 250 residents daily, the facility is equipped with wheelchair access, accessible toilets for persons with disabilities, a waiting area, a token-based queue management system, drinking water and air conditioning. Dedicated assistance is also available for grievance redressal and addressing public queries.

ICICI Life Launches Guaranteed Indexed Pension Plan

"Hyderabad, October 26 (Indian Chronicle) : ICICI Life Insurance Limited has launched the 'ICICI Life Guaranteed Indexed Pension' plan, offering lifelong guaranteed income along with the potential for market-linked income growth, Chief Product Officer Vikas Gupta said in a statement released in the city on Monday. He said the plan offers income linked to the NIFTY 50 Total Return Index, single-life and joint-life benefits, and return of the purchase price. It also allows customers to receive up to five years of guaranteed annuity payments in advance to meet immediate financial needs. The plan aims to provide greater financial security during retirement, he added.

Congress Calls for Wider Outreach of 'Vote Bachao – Desh Bachao' Campaign"Protecting Voting Rights and Democratic Values Is the Primary Objective

"BODUPPAL, OCTOBER 26 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):"Congress party leaders have called for taking the 'Vote Bachao – Desh Bachao' (Save the Vote – Save the Nation) campaign to the people on a wider scale, with the objective of safeguarding voting rights and protecting democratic values."As per the directions of the All India Congress Committee (AICC), a district-level Congress press conference was held on Monday at PMG Grand in Boduppal under the chairmanship of Thotakura Vajresh Yadav, president of the Medchal–Malkajgiri District Congress Committee (DCC).AICC observer Mohan Kumara Mangalam attended the meeting as the chief guest. On the occasion, he explained the significance of the 'Vote Bachao – Desh Bachao' campaign and guided party leaders on the initiatives to be undertaken to protect voting rights and strengthen the democratic system."The meeting emphasized that the right to vote is fundamental to democracy and highlighted the need to create greater public awareness about safeguarding this constitutional right. Following the AICC's directions, party leaders and cadres were urged to work in coordination to conduct the campaign extensively across the district."Kukatpally Congress party in-charge Kollan Hanumanth, senior leader Bhupathi Reddy, district Congress leaders, presidents of various division-level Congress committees, and other party representatives participated in the meeting.

Water Packets Manufactured Without Quality Standards

- Packets Sold Without Manufacturing and Expiry Dates; 100 Gunny Bags of Water Packets Seized""MEDIPALLY, OCTOBER 26 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):"Medipally police raided a unit allegedly manufacturing water packets without adhering to quality standards and without printing manufacturing and expiry dates on the packets, posing a potential risk to public health. Two persons were detained in connection with the incident at SR Enterprises in Indira Nagar, Chengicherla, under the Medipally Police Station limits."According to police, they received credible information on October 25 at around 4 p.m. that TATQ-branded water packets were being manufactured at SR Enterprises without following prescribed quality standards and without mentioning the manufacturing and expiry dates. After obtaining permission from senior officials, the police conducted a raid on the premises in the presence of two independent witnesses."During the raid, police found two individuals supervising workers engaged in the manufacture of water packets. As the packets did not carry the required manufacturing and expiry date details, the two persons were detained and questioned."The individuals were identified as Bandari Swamy (28) and Pulla Raju (30). According to police, Bandari Swamy was the owner of the unit, while Pulla Raju was working as its supervisor. During the inquiry conducted in the presence of witnesses, Swamy reportedly disclosed that the unit was registered in his name and that both were jointly managing its operations."Police seized 100 gunny bags containing water packets that lacked manufacturing and expiry date details. A seizure panchanama was conducted in the presence of witnesses, following which the two individuals were taken to the Medipally Police Station and produced before the Station House Officer (SHO)."Police stated that legal action would be initiated against the two individuals for allegedly manufacturing water packets without adhering to quality standards, thereby potentially endangering public health.

Minister Tummala urges economical use of water and electricity in view of Super El Nino conditions

Khammam, October 26, Indian Chronicle.""Telangana State Minister for Agriculture, Marketing, Cooperation, Handlooms and Textiles, Tummala Nageswara Rao, advised farmers to cultivate crops that require less water instead of paddy during the Yasangi (Rabi) season, keeping in mind the availability of water. On Monday, Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao toured Raghunathapalem mandal along with Additional Collector P Srinivasa Reddy. He inaugurated Indiramma houses constructed in Mallepalli village. Later, on the occasion of Nallakunta tank filling with water, he visited the tank and offered flowers into it. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao expressed happiness over the inauguration of the Indiramma houses in Mallepalli village. He explained that Raghunathapalem was previously part of Khammam Urban Mandal, when the area did not have access to Panchayat Raj funds. Considering the need for development in the region, he said that Raghunathapalem Mandal was formed after he requested the then minister Jana Reddy to establish a separate mandal.""? Special Measures to Provide Irrigation Water to Raghunathapalem Mandal.""The Minister stated that Raghunathapalem Mandal, which is far from the Krishna and Godavari rivers, has a significant tribal population. He said arrangements had been made to supply water to 25 tanks through the Manchukonda lift irrigation system from the Venkatayapalem deep cut. Measures were also being taken to supply water to another 11 tanks from Bugga Vagu. He explained that, among the 46 mandals in the erstwhile Khammam district, Raghunathapalem has limited irrigation facilities. At present, a lift irrigation project provides water to some parts of the mandal. He added that steps were being taken to supply water from Bugga Vagu starting next season. Storing water in tanks would help increase groundwater levels, enabling farmers to cultivate vegetables and other crops that require less water.""? Measures to Ensure Drinking Water Supply.""The Minister said that during the undivided Andhra Pradesh period, overhead service reservoirs (OHSRs) were constructed in all 36 villages of Raghunathapalem Mandal, and drinking water supply schemes were established. However, he noted that these schemes were no longer functioning effectively because groundwater levels had declined. At present, drinking water is being supplied to the entire Raghunathapalem Mandal through a special scheme from Puttakota. Considering the possibility of drought conditions due to Super El Niño, he said he had instructed officials to replenish the water sources at Puttakota to prevent drinking water shortages for the people of the mandal. He stressed that drinking water requirements must be given the highest priority and that available water resources should be used carefully. In view of the possibility of drought caused by Super El Niño, he urged people to conserve available water and electricity and take precautions to prevent the wastage of natural resources.""? Indiramma Houses for All Eligible Poor Families.""The Minister stated that more than 1,300

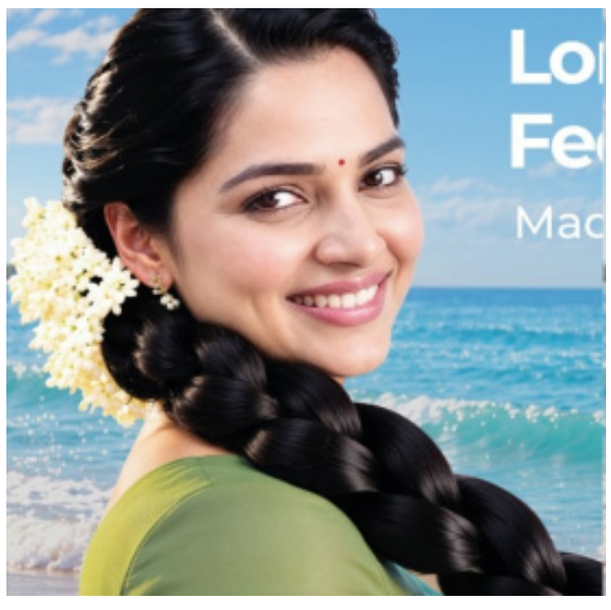
Indiramma houses had been sanctioned and construction had begun in Raghunathapalem Mandal during the first phase. He added that another 1,100 Indiramma houses had been sanctioned in the second phase. He made it clear that eligible poor families living in huts would receive Indiramma houses regardless of their political affiliations or party preferences. He said the goal of the people's government was to ensure that every poor family had a house of its own.""? ?100 Crore for Roads Leading to Farmers Fields.""Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao announced that ?75 crore had already been sanctioned for constructing roads to help farmers access their agricultural fields easily. He said an additional ?25 crore would be sanctioned soon. With this, a total of ?100 crore would be available for constructing roads leading to farmers' fields. He also advised officials to undertake works in rural areas under the VB-G RAM G scheme that would benefit both rural residents and farmers.""? Priority for Crops Requiring Less Water During the Yasangi Season.""The Minister stated that, in view of the Super El Niño conditions, sufficient water might not be available for paddy cultivation during the Yasangi season. He advised farmers to anticipate this situation and choose crops that require less water instead of paddy, which needs large quantities of water. He emphasized the need to take special measures to protect horticultural crops and use irrigation water economically. He also instructed officials to ensure that livestock received adequate water. Given the prevailing circumstances, he called for drinking water needs to be given top priority and urged everyone to act responsibly by avoiding the wastage of water and electricity.""? Officials and Public Representatives Who Attended.""Those who participated in the programme included District Library Corporation Chairman Mohammed Khader Baba, Khammam Market Committee Chairman Hanumantha Rao, public representatives Rayala Nageswara Rao and other local representatives, District Agriculture Officer D Pullaiah, Irrigation Department Deputy Executive Engineer Motilal, officials from the concerned departments, farmers and members of the public."

The Verandah Is Dead..!

""Khammam Staffer, October 26, Indian Chronicle.""It is five o'clock in the evening. As soon as the heat subsided, people in the village would gradually gather on their verandahs. A farmer returning from the fields would sit down, wiping the sweat from his face with the towel draped over his shoulder. The elderly man from the neighbouring house would light his cheroot. Women would sit on another verandah, chopping vegetables and chatting away. Children would play marbles and spin tops in the front yards. Whose child had got engaged, whose field had been attacked by pests, whose cow had given birth - all the village news would originate on that very verandah."A verandah was not merely a raised mud platform two feet high. It was the heart of the village. Now, walk through those same streets and see for yourself. Old houses have been demolished and new ones built in their place. Tall compound walls, iron gates and locks on those gates have become the norm. The verandahs are gone. The few that remain are covered with dust and dry leaves. Nobody sits there anymore. Everyone is indoors, either in front of a television or staring at a phone screen. The village population has grown, but the very places where people could meet have disappeared."In the old days, whenever a gathering was held beneath a neem tree near the rachabanda - the traditional village meeting platform - the entire village would turn up. Elders would speak passionately, arguments would break out, but eventually, solutions would emerge right there on that platform. A dispute between two families over a boundary between their agricultural lands would be settled through the intervention of a few elders, without ever reaching the police station. Today, people have to be summoned and brought in just to collect signatures for a village meeting. The rachabanda still exists, but there is no discussion, no gathering, and no people sitting on the platform."American sociologist Ray Oldenburg once explained that human beings need three places in their lives: the first is home, the second is the workplace, and the third is a place where people can meet and sit together without any particular purpose or expectation of profit. He called it the 'Third Place'. In America, it might be a coffee shop or a barber shop. In our villages, it was the verandah, the rachabanda, the bund of a village tank, or the steps of a temple. Another prominent scholar, Robert Putnam, wrote in his book Bowling Alone that when these third places disappear, trust among people in society declines, loneliness increases, and even a minor disagreement can turn into a major conflict."Our ancestors understood this thousands of years ago. The Rig Veda refers to Sabha and Samiti - assemblies where people gathered to sit and deliberate together.""? The final hymn of the Rig Veda contains a prayer.""Sangachchhadhwam Samvadadhwam Sam Vo Manamsi Janatam'. Walk together. Speak together. Let your minds be united. Our ancestors believed that minds could come together only when people sat down and spoke to one another. The verandah was the place where those conversations happened.Today, we have WhatsApp groups. A village group may have two hundred members. Every morning, it fills up with 'Good Morning' flower images, pictures of deities and forwarded messages. Yet nobody knows that the elderly man living next door has been unwell and has not stepped outside for three days. On the verandah, someone would have noticed by the second day and asked, 'Hey, why haven't we seen your father around?'"WhatsApp groups have messages. Verandahs had human hearts. The elderly man sitting on the verandah was like a watchman for the entire village. He knew who was coming and going, which child was skipping school and wandering around, and what was happening in the neighbourhood. Everything passed before his eyes. The elderly woman sitting on the verandah was like a mother to a newly married daughter-in-law. A young woman who could not share her troubles in her in-laws' home would find the courage to confide in her. With the disappearance of the verandah, that watchful presence has vanished. That comfort and emotional support have disappeared, too."This is not an argument against development. We need new houses, better roads and modern phones. But while building a house, pause for a moment and think about one simple thing: it is not just about how high we build our walls; it is also about whether we leave a place near our gate where another human being can sit. In the evening, put your phone away for half an hour. Place a chair in front of your house and sit down. Invite your neighbour to join you. It does not matter if you have nothing in particular to talk about. In this age, two people sitting side by side without any agenda or purpose is itself one of life's greatest treasures. A village does not begin to die with drought or migration. Its decline begins on the day its verandahs fall silent and empty.

Parachute Advansed Gold Campaign Celebrates the Joy of Girlhood

Hyderabad, October 26 (Indian Chronicle) : Parachute Advansed Gold Coconut Hair Oil, a brand from Marico Limited, has launched its 'Feel Like a Girl Again' campaign, encouraging women to reconnect with their cherished childhood memories. The campaign film is directed by Gautham Vasudev Menon, with Vikram Karwal, Chief Marketing Officer – India, Marico Limited, highlighting the emotional connection between long hair and girlhood memories. The campaign features an original composition by Karthik, vocals by Swetha Mohan, lyrics by Anantha Sriram and choreography by Brinda Master. The initiative aims to celebrate friendship, freedom and the carefree joys of childhood among women across Andhra Pradesh.



Zandu Balm Launches Innovative Campaign Targeting Gen Z

""Hyderabad, October 26 (Indian Chronicle) : Zandu Balm, a brand owned by Emami Limited, has launched a new campaign titled 'Un-Do with Zandu', highlighting issues faced by Gen Z due to modern lifestyles, including neck pain, headaches and fatigue caused by doomscrolling. Emami Limited Director Mohan Goenka announced the campaign in a statement released in the city on Monday. He said the campaign humorously portrays the various challenges faced by today's youth through an imaginary world called 'Painland'. Conceptualised by Abbas Mirza of Tree Communications, the campaign will be promoted across television, digital platforms, OTT services and social media. The campaign will reach key markets, including Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Delhi-NCR, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and West Bengal, among other regions.

Grand Celebrations of Valmiki Jayanti

.""Khammam, October 26, Indian Chronicle.""Valmiki Jayanti was celebrated with great enthusiasm on Monday in Khammam city under the leadership of the Valmiki Boya Community Association. On this occasion, floral tributes were paid to the portrait of Maharshi Valmiki. Speaking at the event, association leader Annapa Mallikarjun praised Maharshi Valmiki as a great sage who dispelled the darkness of ignorance and illuminated the world with the light of knowledge. He stated that Maharshi Valmiki, who once lived as a member of the Boya community, attained the status of a great sage through his penance and wisdom. He composed the epic Ramayana and conveyed a profound message to the world. He explained that Valmiki is known as 'Adikavi' (the First Poet) for composing the first verse in Sanskrit literature."Mallikarjun further stated that Maharshi Valmiki's teachings continue to guide modern society. Through his writings, Valmiki highlighted the importance of truth, righteousness, justice, and human values. He emphasized that the life of Maharshi Valmiki and the great epic Ramayana he authored would continue to inspire generations to come. The event was attended by Daggu Srinu, Kampe Upender, Malli Narasimha Rao, Goyisam Rancha Rao, Goyisam Rajeswara Rao, Goyisam Mallikarjuna Rao, Avun Narsaiah, P Venkateswarlu, T Malleshwara Rao, T Lakshmi Narsaiah and others.

BRS Leaders Lodge Complaint Over Alleged Fake Image and Misinformation Against MLA Marri Rajashekar Reddy

"Alwal, October 26 (INDIAN CHRONICLE)""BRS leaders from Alwal Circle have lodged a complaint at Alwal Police Station alleging that a fabricated image of Malkajgiri MLA Marri Rajashekar Reddy was circulated in WhatsApp groups to spread misinformation and make baseless allegations against him.The leaders urged the police to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the alleged circulation of the image, which they said was intended to damage the MLA's reputation and public image. They requested the authorities to identify those responsible and initiate appropriate legal action against them in accordance with the law.The BRS leaders stated that spreading false information about public representatives through social media platforms was unacceptable. They appealed to the police to establish the facts and take necessary action against those involved in the alleged campaign.Former corporator Shanti Srinivas Reddy, Narender Reddy, Doli Ramesh, Bhaskar Reddy, Delhi Paramesh, Shobhan Babu, Pavan, Mahesh, Sharan Giri, Javed, Prem Kumar, Sajid and other BRS leaders participated in the programme.

Hyundai BAYON launched in India at starting price of Rs 9.99 lakh

Hyderabad: Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL) on Monday launched its new utility vehicle, the Hyundai BAYON, in the Indian market with prices starting at Rs 9.99 lakh (ex-showroom).

The vehicle marks HMIL's first model equipped with an in-built Generative AI voice assistant. Developed using technology from Perplexity and SoundHound AI, the system supports natural language interaction for real-time information such as travel itineraries, weather updates, and news.Speaking at the launch, HMIL Managing Director and CEO Tarun Garg stated that the BAYON signals the start of the automaker's next product cycle in the country. He added that the model will be manufactured in India and exported to over 50 global markets.

CMRF–LOC Approvals Should Be Expedited UPPAL MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDDY Meets CM OSD Vemula Srinivas

""""UPPAL, OCTOBER 26 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy urged officials to take necessary steps to ensure timely financial assistance through the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) for poor and middle-class families in the Uppal constituency requiring medical treatment. In this regard, the MLA met Chief Minister's Office Officer on Special Duty (OSD) Vemula Srinivas.During the meeting, they discussed various issues related to Letters of Credit (LOCs) issued under the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. The MLA brought to the OSD's attention the difficulties faced by poor and middle-class families in the Uppal constituency in meeting medical expenses, along with issues concerning the approval of LOCs and the timely processing of applications.Bandari Lakshma Reddy requested the OSD to take appropriate measures to ensure that eligible patients in need of financial assistance for medical treatment receive support through the CMRF without delay."He also emphasized the need to expedite the CMRF–LOC process to ensure that patients and their families do not face additional hardships in accessing essential medical care."[6:46 PM, 10/26/2026] +91 93911 09207: END

Jamia moves classes online on 13th day of students' protest for varsity union, stand-off continues

GNS News Agency, Oct 26

Jamia Millia Islamia has moved all its classes online amidst a continuing stand-off between the administration and students on their 13th day of protest demanding elections for the constitution of a students' union in the varsity.Five students of the Central university have been on hunger strike since October 12, and their protest entered its 13th day on Saturday. The university had taken disciplinary action against three of these students. The continuing protest demands an official notification announcing the schedule for elections to the Jamia Millia Islamia Students' Union (JMISU), withdrawal of disciplinary action against protesting students, and removal of the university's Chief Proctor and Security Advisor.A delegation of Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) officials, including the registrar and several professors, met protesting students around 11 am on Saturday and asked them to call off their indefinite hunger strike. The university had formed a committee to look into their demands, they said.

Jamia has not held students' union elections since 2005. The university has said elections were discontinued after recurring violent clashes, attacks on teachers and disruptions of classes. The demand for their return has resurfaced periodically. This time, it comes weeks after Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) announced students' union elections for November, following a prolonged protest.Following the start of this protest, the Jamia administration formed a committee to draft a new union constitution. The protesters say it does not address their immediate demand: a date for elections.On Saturday, the students said the meeting turned into a confrontation."We have been sitting at Gulistan-e-Ghalib, in front of the Department of Political Science, for days," said Haneena Bint Omar, a third-year law student."The delegation told us that a committee had been formed and asked us to stop the hunger strike. Then they tried to dismantle our tents and forcibly take the hunger strikers to hospital," she alleged.The students moved the five students on hunger strike inside the Political Science department block and locked themselves in, to keep the administration's security staff from reaching them.By noon, the university gates had been closed. Students alleged that they were being stopped from entering the campus. Scores of students gathered outside various gates, demanding to be let in.At around 3 pm, the university announced that all classes would be shifted online until further notice.The notice issued by the university Registrar cited "the ongoing situation" and called it a "precautionary measure" to "ensure the safety and security of Bonafide students."

AAP alleges irregularities in Delhi textbook printing, government accuses it of "shoot and scoot politics"

The procurement of textbooks for Delhi government school students is now the centre of a political row, with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) alleging that books were printed on substandard paper and did not meet tender specifications, and the Delhi government rejecting allegations of irregularities.On Saturday, Delhi Education Minister Ashish Sood rejected the AAP's allegations, and argued that the current government had procured school textbooks at rates lower than those under the previous AAP government.

AAP Delhi president Saurabh Bharadwaj had on Friday alleged that the Class 8 Hindi textbook 'Malhar,' printed through the Delhi government's tender process, had relatively inferior-quality paper and small print size compared to the edition available in the market.He claimed that while the tender specifications required A4-sized books printed on 80 GSM (grams per square metre) paper, the government-supplied copies used 60 GSM paper and were of poorer quality."Class 8 students are being given a book with such tiny print that they would need a magnifying glass to read it. Rekha Gupta's photograph has been printed on the first page, so that everyone knows who the book is being provided courtesy of. There is a world of difference between the two books," he said."The price of the book available at a private shop includes the commissions of the shopkeeper and distributor, yet the book printed by the government appears to involve a 40 percent commission. Any printer can confirm that this is 60 to 65 GSM paper. The people in the government have indulged in open loot and have even cut corners on the size of books," he added.Bharadwaj alleged that a difference in paper quality and size pointed to a "40 percent difference in cost" in the procurement process and demanded that Sood and Chief Minister Rekha Gupta "explain who took this commission."Countering the allegations at a press conference, Sood said the procurement process was transparent and that the allegations were an attempt by AAP leaders to "mislead the public."Sood said the government had purchased the Class 8 Hindi textbook 'Malhar' for Rs 28.61 per unit, while a textbook of the same size, 'Griha Vigyan', had been printed for Rs 55 under the previous AAP government in 2022.On the allegation that the books were smaller than the prescribed size, Sood said the tender specifications mentioned dimensions of 17.1 cm by 24.1 cm.He maintained that the current books had undergone quality checks and that the procurement rates were lower than those under the AAP regime.He said the highest textbook prices under the present government had been capped at Rs 51, and claimed that prices had gone up to Rs 110 for Class 8 books, Rs 103 for Class 7 books and Rs 133 for Class 6 books under the AAP government.Accusing AAP leaders of indulging in "shoot and scoot" politics, Sood said the government was examining the matter and would take "appropriate action after reviewing the facts. ""Their own Education Secretary was writing letters in 2023 criticizing the poor printing quality of books under AAP's government, where identical-sized books were bought for Rs 55. Under our government, books are bought transparently for Rs 28.61 after passing strict laboratory quality tests… There is a famous saying in rural Delhi – 'Papi jaane paap, jaisa hoon main aap' (A sinner projects their own guilt onto others). Those who committed scam after scam for 10 years see scams in everything," said Sood.

4.7-km flood protection wall to come up along Yamuna

GNS News Agency, Oct 26

YamunaThe decisions were taken at the 40th meeting of the Flood Control Board, chaired by Irrigation and Flood Control Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh at the Delhi Secretariat.The Delhi government on Friday cleared projects worth Rs 622 crore to strengthen the Capital's flood management and drainage infrastructure, including funds to build a 4.7-km reinforced cement concrete (RCC) wall along a vulnerable stretch of the Yamuna, as well as three biomining projects, to scientifically dispose of silt removed from drains.

The decisions were taken at the 40th meeting of the Flood Control Board, chaired by Irrigation and Flood Control Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh at the Delhi Secretariat.The proposed RCC wall — around six to seven feet tall and estimated to cost Rs 99 crore — will run along the Yamuna from the Magazine Road drain to the Old Railway Bridge. "The wall will protect low-lying areas during high water levels. During monsoon season, Yamuna river swells and reaches roads and houses," Singh said in a statement.The Board also gave in-principle approval to three biomining projects worth Rs 260 crore to address the longstanding problem of disposing of silt removed from Delhi's drains. Officials said desilted material, often left along drain banks or roadsides, subsequently washes back into the drains during rainfall, reducing the effectiveness of desilting operations."The projects will especially benefit the Najafgarh drain and other major drains, which carry the heaviest silt load in the city," Singh said."Desilting means nothing if the silt finds its way back into our drains. For years, this is exactly what happened. With biomining, we will dispose of silt scientifically and break that cycle once and for all," he added.Further, the Board discussed developing drain banks across Delhi along the lines of the Barapullah drain, with walkways, green belts, plantation, lighting and protective fencing. The government said the initiative aims to transform neglected spaces along drains into cleaner, more accessible public areas while addressing encroachment issues.

Adani won't let up on Navi Mumbai airport shift, sends second reminder to airlines

GNS News Agency, Oct 26

Differences between Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) and airlines over the proposed relocation of flight operations continue, with the airport operator sending carriers a second reminder to discuss the plan. Ahead of an October 28 meeting to finalise the transition, airlines have asked for Terminal 1 (T1) redevelopment and Terminal 2 (T2) capacity enhancement to be added to the agenda.MIAL, which runs Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA), is part of the Adani Group, which also operates the new Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA).

In its latest communication, MIAL asked airlines to discuss the proposed traffic relocation plan with their network planning and commercial teams. The reminder comes amid continuing differences over how flight operations at CSMIA will be managed during the transition.In an earlier communication, MIAL had reiterated the need to cut the airport's annual passenger capacity by five million from March 2027. It said each airline could choose to move a portion of its weekly international operations to NMIA, temporarily suspend them, or wait until the refurbishment of T1 is completed.The proposal followed MIAL's plan to cut international operations from T2 by 33 per cent, or 265 of 770 weekly flights, to accommodate traffic affected by the redevelopment of T1-B, which was initially scheduled to begin in January 2027.

Responding to the latest communication, the Mumbai Airlines Operators Committee (AOC) has sought a detailed presentation on the T1 refurbishment plan at the stakeholder meeting, including the expected timeline, scope of work and phasing of activities. The committee reiterated its support for the immediate redevelopment of T1.The AOC has also sought details of the actual capacity of both terminals and an update on the proposed requirement to add five million passengers a year to T2 by March 2027. This requirement was outlined in an Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (AERA) document for the fourth control period.Separately, the committee has asked for discussions with individual airline headquarters, and for compliance with the Ministry of Civil Aviation's 2013 slot allocation guidelines to be considered, as part of the October 28 agenda.The meeting is expected to address the operational implications of the proposed changes as stakeholders work towards finalising a transition plan.

First encounter with law at age 15, absconding since 2020: meet Himanshu, finally nabbed in US

GNS News Agency, Oct 26

The absconding gangster Himanshu Bhau, who has been detained by law enforcement agencies in the United States, had his first recorded brush with the law in 2018, when he was around 15. He was at the time booked in a case of rioting arising from a dispute linked to the liquor trade in his native village Ritoli, in Haryana's Rohtak district.By the time he was 20, Himanshu had escaped from a juvenile correctional facility, become a fugitive abroad, and the list of cases against him had grown to 20, of which at least 16 related to murder or attempted murder.Himanshu Bhau was reported to have been taken into custody on Thursday evening after American law enforcement was alerted about his presence in Las Vegas by Indian agencies.

While Indian officials confirmed his detention, no details were made available by authorities in the US. The website of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), however, records the detention of one Himanshu Sigroha at the Henderson Detention Center outside Las Vegas in Nevada.Another fugitive criminal, Neeraj Faridpuria, has also been detained, sources in India said. The ICE detainee locator website lists an Indian-born individual called Neeraj Kaushik at the same detention centre.The Indian Express had reported earlier that an Interpol red notice had been issued against Himanshu, and multiple teams of the Delhi Police and Haryana Police were working to trace his location in the US.Indian agencies are learned to be coordinating with US law enforcement to expedite the process of his deportation.Himanshu was sent to a juvenile correctional facility in Hisar in 2020 in connection with a case of attempted murder. He escaped from the facility that October, along with 19 other inmates. While 18 of the 20 inmates who escaped were subsequently traced, two — Himanshu, who was 17 years old at the time, and Sahil, a relative of Himanshu's — could not be found.

After that, the cases against him began to mount. By August 2022, police had registered 12 cases against him at Rohtak's Shivaji Colony police station, including a murder case.Officers had reportedly set up a camp in Ritoli in an effort to apprehend him, with barricades, vehicle checks and raids on suspected locations, but this operation did not lead to his capture.That month, Himanshu allegedly obtained a passport from the Bareilly passport office using forged identity documents and left India before a lookout circular could be issued against him. He was subsequently reported to be operating from Portugal.In August 2023, Interpol issued a Red Notice against him at the request of Indian agencies. The notice sought international assistance in locating him and securing his provisional arrest.While he was abroad, police suspected that he was directing criminal activity in India. The case that garnered the most widespread attention took place on June 18, 2024, at a Burger King outlet on Najafgarh Road in West Delhi's Rajouri Garden.A 26-year-old man named Aman Joon was shot inside the restaurant by two men who arrived on a motorcycle. Himanshu claimed responsibility for the incident on an Instagram post saying that it was revenge for the murder of 'Shakti Dada', one of his close associates.By 2024, Bhau had 20 cases against him, at least 16 of which involved murder or attempted murder. Delhi Police have also linked him or his alleged associates to firing incidents and extortion demands directed at businesspeople.In 2025, an associate of his was linked to a demand for Rs 10 crore from a Delhi Police head constable. In another incident that year, a group identified as Bhau's gang claimed responsibility for firing outside the Gurugram residence of YouTuber Elvish Yadav.Police have described Himanshu as a rival of the Lawrence Bishnoi-Goldy Brar group. Bishnoi, who has been in jail for more than a decade, was most recently linked with the shooting that targeted film actor Tiger Shroff in Mumbai this week. Brar is a gangster who is thought to be based in Canada.Police officers said Himanshu could be deported or extradited to India from the US, depending on the legal procedures involved. A team of Indian officers could be sent to the US to facilitate his return, they said.

ICE has been cracking down aggressively against undocumented immigrants in the US ever since Donald Trump moved into the White House."Once he is brought back to India, the police can take the necessary legal steps to arrest him in connection with the cases registered against him. This could help law enforcement agencies investigate allegations of extortion, organised crime, and other offences associated with him," an officer said.More importantly, officers said, his return could help investigators examine how his alleged criminal network operated and has been sustained, identify his associates, and gather evidence to pursue the cases against him through the legal system in India.

How sea salt from a warming Arabian Sea is adding to Mumbai's smog

As Mumbai's skyline remains shrouded in thick haze, the civic administration on Thursday identified sodium chloride (NaCl), commonly known as sea salt, as one of the compounds contributing to its formation. This is the first time the administration has cited sea salt as a factor behind the haze, even as air pollution has been a growing concern in the city since 2022.How does sea salt contribute to haze?

Mumbai, like other parts of the Asia-Pacific region, is experiencing the effects of El Niño, a climate pattern associated with warmer temperatures and changing rainfall patterns. Warmer Arabian Sea waters can accelerate evaporation, while waves generate sea spray and aerosols that enter the atmosphere.As the water evaporates, salt particles remain suspended in the air, contributing to haze and reducing visibility."Salt or NaCl is an opaque element, therefore, it directly affects the visibility of people, leading to formation of a thick haze-like envelope around the skyline," Tuhin Banerjee, air quality expert and former scientist at the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), told The Indian Express.Suspended salt particles and aerosols can also interact with man-made emissions, including nitrogen oxides and sulphur oxides from vehicles and industries, potentially contributing to the formation of

secondary pollutants.Lower wind speeds may further prolong the haze by allowing aerosols and other suspended particles to remain in the atmosphere for longer.Is sea salt harmful?Scientists say there is no established evidence that inhaling sea salt aerosols at ambient concentrations poses a significant direct health risk. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) does not list sodium chloride as a separate pollutant among the conventional air quality indicators, which include particulate matter, ozone, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide.

Naseeruddin Shah accuses BJP of vendetta against protesting SRFTI students

GNS News Agency, Oct 26

Kolkata: Veteran actor Naseeruddin Shah and filmmaker Payal Kapadia have expressed solidarity with agitating students of the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI), who have been protesting against alleged incursions by RSS-linked organisations onto the institute's campus.In a video clip posted on social media, Shah launched an attack on the ruling BJP in West Bengal, accusing the party of pursuing a vendetta against those who do not subscribe to its beliefs and policies.Kapadia, whose film 'All We Imagine as Light' won the Grand Prix at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival, said she was "absolutely horrified" by the developments at SRFTI.

The students alleged that they were attacked on September 27 by members of the Akhil Bharatiya Grahak Panchayat, an RSS-affiliated consumer awareness group, and again on October 4 during a rally by the Bangiya Hindu Jagran Manch near the institute's gate.Classes at the premier central government-run film institute have remained suspended since September 28."After its…victory in the Bengal elections, the BJP seems to be all out for revenge against anyone who does not subscribe to its beliefs and policies," Shah alleged, describing the protesting SRFTI students as the latest victims of what he termed the party's "vendetta".Claiming that the BJP was "either hoping to brainwash or frighten future filmmakers of the country", he asserted, "I can promise you that is not going to happen."BJP leaders could not be contacted for comment on Shah's allegations.

Emphasising the importance of independent filmmaking and freedom of expression, Shah said students at film institutes would play a crucial role in documenting and interpreting the country's social and political realities."They are the young people who, in the future, will tell us the truth about ourselves, about our country and about the state we are in," he said, urging people to support the demands of SRFTI students.The students are staging an indefinite sit-in, demanding the resignation of Vice-Chancellor Santosh Ajmera. In a notice issued on October 16, the institute ordered the suspension of filmmaking and video classes until November 13 and asked students to vacate the campus.Kapadia also said academic activities had remained suspended and that students had recently received notices asking them to vacate their hostel rooms and leave the campus.The filmmaker said, "Students were facing disciplinary action, while no steps had been taken against those accused of assaulting them and groping women students."She alleged that the administration was threatening students with rustication for raising questions about security issues and how campus violence had been "allowed" to take place.Describing the situation as "deeply concerning", Kapadia said the safety of students was at stake.She urged the institute's administration to act against those allegedly responsible for "instigating" the violence rather than penalising students who had raised security-related concerns.SRFTI students' union spokesperson Sudip Chakraborty said, "The students have been demanding accountability from the administration, action over alleged unauthorised activities on the campus and assurances that the institute remains a safe and independent space for film education."

Tamil Nadu landslide kills government bus driver after 50 passengers evacuated near Parliyar

Nilgiris: A government bus driver, Janagaraj, died after his vehicle was trapped in a landslide near Parliyar in Tamil Nadu's Nilgiris district, minutes after around 50 passengers had been moved out following a tyre puncture.Rescue personnel confirmed the driver's death after retrieving his body from beneath the debris following a prolonged operation. Earlier reports had suggested that he had been rescued safely, but rescuers subsequently clarified that he remained trapped inside the vehicle and had died.

The conductor, Kesavan, who was also caught in the landslide, was rescued with injuries by Fire and Rescue Services personnel and taken to hospital. He said there were no passengers aboard when the hillside collapsed. "Only the driver and I were in the bus. Trees began falling across the road one after another. As we tried to stop the bus safely, we were caught in the landslide," the conductor said, recounting the incident.The bus was travelling from Coimbatore to Ooty when it suffered a tyre puncture shortly before reaching the affected stretch near Parliyar. Around 50 passengers had been travelling in the vehicle before the breakdown.

According to the account of the incident, the passengers were moved out of the bus following the puncture. Within minutes of their departure, a major landslide struck the hill road, bringing down trees, rocks and earth and trapping the vehicle. The unexpected breakdown thus spared the passengers from being inside the bus when the debris engulfed it.

The driver and conductor, however, remained aboard and were caught in the collapse. Emergency teams launched a rescue operation and managed to bring the injured conductor to safety. Efforts to reach the driver continued amid the accumulated debris, but rescuers eventually recovered his body. The confirmation of his death corrected the earlier reports of a successful rescue and established that the accident had claimed one life.Meanwhile, teams continued clearing fallen trees, boulders and soil from the affected stretch to restore traffic on the hill road. The clearance work was being undertaken on an urgent basis. The incident left the government bus buried in debris on a route connecting Coimbatore with Ooty.While the evacuation following the puncture prevented passengers from being caught in the landslide, the two crew members were unable to escape before the material came down onto the road.

India creates 11 crore Farmer IDs five months ahead of March 2027 deadline

GNS News Agency, Oct 26

New Delhi: Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, on Saturday, said India has achieved its target of creating 11 crore Farmer IDs five months ahead of the March 31, 2027, deadline.The milestone achieved under the Digital Agriculture Mission will help benefit various schemes to be provided in a transparent manner, Chouhan said in an X post.

Further, a statement from the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare said the Farmer ID acts as a unique digital identity to give farmers transparent, efficient and timely access to government schemes, bank credit, crop insurance and disaster relief while reducing paperwork and repeated verification.Over 6 crore farmers across the country have so far received direct benefits under various schemes through the Farmer ID-based service delivery system. A verified farmer database was linked with agricultural services, which eliminated fraud and the need for duplicate verification.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, state governments and field-level officials worked in coordination to achieve it five months ahead of schedule, the minister said.Chouhan said the Farmer ID system would significantly reduce the need for farmers to repeatedly visit government offices and banks or submit the same documents for different schemes. Farmers often had to provide documents repeatedly to access various benefits, resulting in a loss of both time and money.States and Union Territories are also taking specific steps, in accordance with applicable rules, to bring tenant farmers and actual cultivators onto the digital platformThe initiative will strengthen delivery of services such as Kisan Credit Cards, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana claims and Minimum Support Price procurement, the statement said.The digital system will help eliminate the role of intermediaries in the procurement process and ensure that farmers receive the full value due for their produce.

'Whose peace am I being asked to keep?' Neha Bora questions police notice

New Delhi: All India Students' Association president Neha Bora on Saturday said she would not sign a peace bond before a special executive magistrate, a day after the Delhi High Court dismissed her plea challenging a police notice directing her to furnish a personal bond of Rs 10,000 with one surety.Questioning the rationale behind the notice, Bora asked, "Whose peace am I being asked to keep?"Issued on October 17 under Section 126 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), the police notice directed Bora to appear before a special executive magistrate (SEM) on October 19 and show cause why she should not execute a personal bond of Rs 10,000 with one surety "for keeping peace for a period of inquiry".

Addressing a press conference at the CPI(ML) Liberation Parliamentary office here, Bora said peaceful demonstrations on the streets were a democratic right. She questioned how raising concerns against the government could be construed as a threat to peace."If we do not ask the government any questions, whose peace are we keeping?" she asked, stressing that the right to question those in power and express dissent was fundamental to democracy.Bora asserted that the fight against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, regardless of its course, must not result in the right to dissent being labelled a threat to peace.The notice was issued a day after Delhi Police detained Bora on October 16 when she joined the 'Lehra Do Tiranga' march in the capital.The demonstration was part of protests demanding Kumar's resignation over alleged irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.Bora had challenged the notice in the Delhi High Court, describing the preventive proceedings as an attempt to suppress peaceful dissent. She argued that the notice did not adequately establish the likelihood of a breach of peace.She maintained that peaceful protests and democratic opposition should not be treated as violations of public order, emphasising that the right to dissent must be protected.

MP FDA orders Patanjali Foods to recall cow ghee batch

GNS News Agency, Oct 26

New Delhi: FMCG firm Patanjali Foods Ltd has received an order from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in Madhya Pradesh, directing recall of a batch of cow ghee after a sample was found to be unsafe under food safety regulations, according to an exchange filing on Saturday.The company said the MP FDA issued the order, as the sample did not meet standards prescribed under the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives and Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations, 2011.

The food regulator ordered recall of the affected batch in Burhanpur.However, the company is filing an appeal against the order passed by the designated officer of MP FDA, it said.The company added that the action would have no material impact on its financial or operational activities except to the extent of the value of the affected batch."There is no material impact on financial or operational activities, except to the extent of value of the cow ghee of a batch," the company said.Shares of Patanjali Foods on Friday ended at Rs 351, down over 1 per cent on the BSE.The stock has recorded a 52-week high of Rs 613.95 and a 52-week low of Rs 328.05, according to exchange data. In the last one year, the FMCG stock has declined nearly 41 per cent and 16 per cent in the last three years.In the past five years, Patanjali Foods shares have risen 5 per cent.Earlier in June, Patanjali Foods shares extended losses for the fifth day amid the sorghum flour controversy.The company's stock witnessed heavy selling pressure days after it disclosed that food safety authorities in Kerala's Kannur district had prohibited sale of a specific batch of its sorghum flour after pesticide residue levels were found to be above permissible limits.In a regulatory filing, Patanjali Foods had said it had received a communication from the Office of the Designated Officer (Food Safety), Kannur district, informing about the prohibition order relating to a particular batch of sorghum flour.

Supreme Court orders physical verification of wetlands across states

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has said that courts cannot remain unmindful when precious water bodies remain unprotected, directing all states and authorities to undertake physical ground-truthing and demarcation of wetlands.A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and Vipul M Pancholi said water bodies, being a source of drinking water, are precious and fall within the ambit of the right to life guaranteed under the Constitution.

"This Court cannot remain a mere spectator or be unmindful of the consequences flowing from water bodies remaining unprotected," the bench said.To achieve this objective, the court reiterated its directions to states and Wetland Authorities to undertake physical ground-truthing of water bodies, if not already done, and file a compliance affidavit detailing the mode and method adopted for the exercise.The court initially said the affidavits should be filed within four weeks.

" Shekhar Naphade, senior counsel, has vociferously contended that undertaking the exercise of ground-truthing by officials would be a time-consuming exercise and has prayed for a reasonable period of six to nine months," it said.The bench said it was conscious of the extensive physical work involved and the need for coordination between departments."Yet, being alive to the situation, we deem it proper to grant four months' time to complete the said exercise," the bench said.The Supreme Court said that even nine years after the publication of the Rules, ground-truthing and demarcation had not been completed.The top court was hearing a PIL filed by bird enthusiast Anand Arya, advocate M K Balakrishnan and NGO Vanashakti.

Indians' overseas equity and debt investments surge 111pc to $321.53 million in August

Mumbai: Investment in overseas equity and debt markets by Indians more than doubled, jumping 111 per cent to $321.53 million in August year-on-year under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS), according to the RBI's October 2026 bulletin.According to the central bank's monthly bulletin, the investment in equity/debt segment was $152.18 million a year ago, in August 2025.

On a month-on-month basis, the outflow in this category posted a 7 per cent decline. Investment in equity and debt abroad hit an all-time high of $460 million in June.In FY26, total outward remittances under LRS were $28,979.36 million, according to the RBI data.In August alone, the category accounted for about 11.7 per cent of total LRS outflows, up from 5.8 per cent a year earlier.Outflows towards investment in equity and debt led outward remittances in August and are now a much bigger part of the LRS basket compared to last year.In addition, total outward remittances under LRS rose to $2,738.58 million in August 2026 from $2,642.91 million in the year-ago month, a 3.6 per cent growth year-on-year and 6 per cent up from July.On a sequential basis, LRS outflows rose from $2,582.62 million in July 2026.Meanwhile, travel remained the largest component at $1,630.26 million in August 2026, marginally up from $1,618.81 million a year ago. It accounted for around 59 per cent of total and grew by just about 1 per cent year-on-year but climbed 11.4 per cent from July's $1,463.11 million.On a month-on-month basis, business travel zoomed by almost 5 times from $10.9 million in July to $51 million in August.Among other major heads, gift remittances rose to $215.72 million from $190.43 million, while maintenance of close relatives was at $275.43 million against $272.05 million.Purchase of immovable property stood at $39.59 million compared to $36.02 million in the year-ago period, while deposits were at $50.78 million against $42.75 million.Notably, remittances for medical treatment were up 21.3 per cent year-on-year at $4.84 million.

PM Modi hails ITBP's valour and selfless service on Raising Day

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended warm greetings to the personnel of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) on its Raising Day and praised their exceptional valour and determination in serving the nation.Raised on October 24, 1962, the ITBP guards a 3,488-km-long India-China border, ranging from the Karakoram Pass in Ladakh to Jachep La in Arunachal Pradesh.

In a post on X, PM Modi said, "On their Raising Day, greetings to all personnel of the ITBP. The ITBP Himveers have distinguished themselves through their exceptional valour.""They have always risen to every challenge with remarkable determination. Their selfless service and sacrifices are a source of immense inspiration to the nation," he added.

On the occasion, the ITBP also reaffirmed its commitment to serving the nation.Taking to X, the Force said, "Heartiest congratulations and best wishes to all Himveers, Himveeranganas, and their families on the 65th Raising Day of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force!""Embodying its motto 'Shaurya, Dridhta, Karmanishtha (Valour, Steadfastness, Dedication)', this force shall forever remain devoted to the service of the nation. Jai Hind!" it added.The ITBP also plays an important role in various internal security duties and operations against Left-Wing Extremism in Chhattisgarh.Most of the ITBP's Border Out Posts (BOPs) are located at altitudes ranging from 9,000 ft to 18,800 ft, where temperatures drop to minus 45 degrees Celsius during extreme winters, according to the Home Ministry.The ITBP is a specialised armed police force that trains its personnel in various disciplines, including mountaineering and skiing, apart from intensive tactical training, thereby creating a distinctive image of the Force.The Force also conducts relief and rescue operations as 'First Responders' during natural calamities in the Himalayan region.The ITBP has responded to hundreds of search, rescue and relief operations over the years to provide succour to citizens in distress due to various calamities.

Trump calls Iran war costs 'small price to pay'

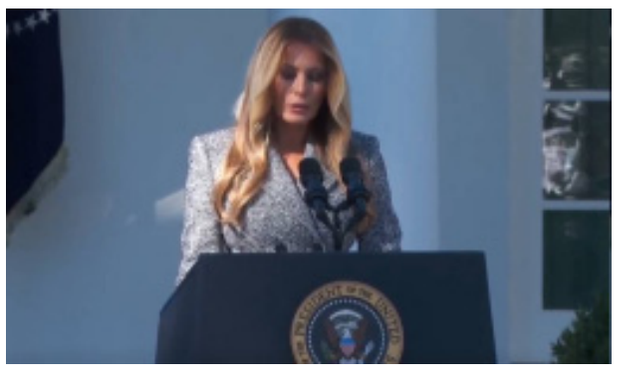
GNS News Agency, Oct 26

Washington: US President Donald Trump has acknowledged that the war with Iran has driven up oil prices and added to the financial pressures facing American households, but defended the economic consequences as a necessary price for preventing Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons.In an interview with Florida television station WINK-TV, Trump said he had anticipated an increase in energy prices when he decided to launch military operations against Iran. He insisted that the conflict would end soon and predicted that petrol prices would fall rapidly.

His remarks came as Americans prepared for the November 3 midterm elections, with the cost of living emerging as a major political issue and Republicans fighting to retain control of Congress."You know, it's a small price to pay for taking a nuclear weapon away from Iran, which is a very evil country," Trump said when asked about the financial burden on consumers.The President was responding to a question from WINK-TV anchor Claire Galt, who pointed out that Americans continued to face high grocery bills and that petrol prices in southwest Florida had reached an average of $4.18 a gallon.Trump acknowledged that beef prices remained elevated and that oil prices had risen because of the conflict."Beef's a little bit high and it's coming down," he said, adding that cattle production meant prices could take longer to adjust.

Turning to energy, Trump said he had expected the increase but considered military action unavoidable."We had it very low and I knew that would happen, but it was a choice," he said.The President maintained that Iran posed an unacceptable nuclear threat and argued that previous American administrations should have acted earlier."Number one state sponsor of terror, they can't have a nuclear weapon. Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon. So, I'm honored to have done it," he said.Trump offered no specific timetable for ending the conflict but suggested that a negotiated settlement was not the only possible outcome."I see it ending soon. I see it ending one way or another, through agreement or otherwise," he said.The remarks left open the possibility of further military action even as the administration sought to reassure Americans about the economic consequences of the war.At a separate Republican campaign rally in Fort Myers, Trump returned to the subject and said his administration had weighed the likely economic impact before proceeding with military operations.He recalled seeing petrol prices of $1.85 and $1.95 a gallon during a visit to Iowa before the military campaign.Trump said he subsequently told senior administration officials that preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons had to take priority.He also claimed that oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz had increased despite the conflict."Tremendous amounts of oil are coming through the Hormuz Strait, more than we actually had before the war, which is pretty amazing," he said in the television interview.The President attributed the movement of oil shipments to American military operations and the US Navy's presence in the region. His claims about shipping volumes were not independently verified in the supplied material.

Melania Trump brokers temporary Russia-Ukraine ceasefire in Oleshky: White House



Washington: US First Lady Melania Trump has brokered a temporary ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine in the southern Ukrainian city of Oleshky, securing an agreement to halt military operations to allow humanitarian assistance and the evacuation of civilians trapped in the war-ravaged city.The ceasefire, scheduled to take effect on October 29, will establish a designated safe passageway for aid deliveries and civilian evacuations.

The agreement follows direct negotiations conducted by Melania Trump and her representative with Russian and Ukrainian leadership. The First Lady served as the "Exclusive Intermediary" between the two countries, helping establish the objectives, procedures, timing and operational arrangements.The White House described the agreement as a humanitarian intervention aimed at assisting thousands of civilians, particularly elderly residents who remain in the frontline city."The situation in Oleshky is dire. Oleshky is a front-line war city on the brink of disaster," Melania Trump said.

She said the remaining population consisted mainly of elderly residents facing severe shortages of essential supplies."The people of Oleshky have limited electricity, live amid mined roads, and endure regular military attacks. It was abundantly clear that without my intervention, the possibility to bring humanitarian aid into the city and to evacuate the elderly would be impossible," she said.Under the arrangement, civilian representatives from Russia and Ukraine will jointly assess the needs of residents by visiting their homes.Those wishing to leave will receive assistance and transportation to destinations of their choice."Residents who wish to evacuate will receive coordinated support and transportation to their preferred destination. I anticipate some will want to go to Russia, and some to Ukraine," the First Lady said.The agreement also provides for independent media monitoring of the humanitarian operation."I have also secured an impartial American media organization to accompany and document Russian and Ukrainian teams on the ground throughout the process," she said.According to the statement, the media presence is intended to help ensure that families' preferences are respected during evacuations.

The diplomatic initiative began after Melania Trump learnt about conditions in Oleshky during a private discussion at her Fostering the Future Together event in New York City, held during the 81st United Nations General Assembly.She subsequently used existing communication channels with Russian and Ukrainian authorities to initiate negotiations."My representative and I immediately leveraged the communication channel we established with Russia and Ukraine through the previous six reunifications of 34 children," she said.Both governments then assigned teams to coordinate the operational arrangements, including demining, which will be necessary to facilitate safe movement through the conflict zone.All parties have worked around the clock since that moment," she said.

Trump hints at Cuba move after Iran campaign

Washington: US President Donald Trump has suggested that Cuba could become the focus of renewed American pressure after the military campaign against Iran, raising the possibility of a US naval presence near the Caribbean island and a diplomatic role for Secretary of State Marco Rubio.Speaking at a Republican campaign rally in Fort Myers, Florida, Trump responded to a question about Cuba by linking the island's future to the ongoing American military operations against Iran.

"Cuba, he wants to know what about Cuba. Give me a break. Give me a break. Don't worry, we'll take care of Cuba on our way back from Iran," Trump told supporters.The President then described a hypothetical scenario in which American naval vessels returning from the Middle East would pass close to Cuba."Actually, what we're going to do with Cuba is we're going to come back from Iran," he said."Those beautiful ships will pass Cuba. We'll have one of them stop about 50 yards off the coast, they'll raise up their hands and then we're going to send Marco Rubio in to finish up the deal."The comments drew applause from the audience, although Trump delivered them in a light-hearted manner and did not announce any formal military operation or diplomatic initiative against Havana.His remarks nevertheless placed Cuba alongside Iran and Venezuela in a broader discussion of his administration's approach to foreign policy and American military power.Trump praised Rubio, who has been a prominent advocate of a tougher American approach towards Cuba."He's a — he's a great guy," Trump said.

The President did not explain what agreement Rubio might seek, whether Washington had opened new negotiations with Havana or what conditions Cuba would have to meet.Nor did he indicate whether the proposed naval movement was under consideration by the Pentagon.Trump made the comments while highlighting what he described as successful American military action against Venezuela and Iran.He said his administration had captured Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro and brought him to the United States to face trial.We captured and brought to justice the outlaw dictator of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro, who is now awaiting trial," Trump said.The President also claimed that the operation in Venezuela had been completed in a single day and that the United States was subsequently working with the country to expand oil production.He used those assertions to portray his administration as willing to employ military force to achieve foreign policy objectives.Turning to Iran, Trump said American operations had severely weakened Tehran's military and nuclear capabilities.He also left open the possibility of further strikes if Iran failed to reach an agreement with Washington.The President did not explicitly connect his comments about Cuba to any proposed military campaign against the island.Cuba and the United States have experienced decades of strained relations since the Cuban Revolution of 1959. American sanctions and disagreements over political freedoms, security and regional influence have remained central issues in bilateral relations.Rubio, a Cuban-American politician from Florida, has long supported a hardline policy towards Havana. His position on Cuba has been an important part of his foreign policy record, making Trump's reference to a possible negotiating role for him politically significant.

US has for years asked Musk to alter Starlink service in Ukraine, Middle East, sources say

The recent blowup over restrictions to Ukraine's use of SpaceX satellite services has raised questions about the ties between the US government and Musk, whose company owns systems vital to the ?US military and to US allies

WASHINGTON, Well before the throttling this month of Ukraine's military access to Elon Musk's satellite communications system, the Biden and Trump administrations had several times asked SpaceX to turn its Starlink service on or off in various countries, according ?to six former senior US officials familiar with the matter.During the presidency of Joe Biden, the requests included switching off the service to prevent Iranian proxy militias in Yemen and Lebanon from using Starlink to communicate, and activating the service to provide ?internet access inside Iran and in Ukraine to support its military, said four of the former officials.

The Auto File newsletter brings you exclusive insights on the biggest shifts driving the global automotive industry. Sign up here.Similarly, President Donald Trump's administration asked Musk, who is CEO of SpaceX, to make the service available in Iran following US-Israeli strikes in 2025 and 2026, in hopes it would bolster internet access and communications for anti-government protesters, a former senior Trump official and a person familiar with the matter told Reuters.All of the people spoke on condition of anonymity. The previous US requests about Starlink access are being reported here for the first time.

The recent blowup over restrictions to Ukraine's use of SpaceX satellite services has raised questions about the ties between the US government and Musk, whose company owns systems vital to the ?US military and to US allies.The Biden-era and Trump requests to Musk show a close relationship in which US administrations rely to an unprecedented degree on a private-sector company to help implement foreign policy.The recent limits on Ukraine, despite being a US ally, have also rattled ?officials in Europe, some of whom argue that Europe must develop its own military satellite communications capabilities because no viable short-term alternative currently exists.

STARSHIELD RESTRICTIONS HOBBLE UKRAINE MILITARYUkrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said last week that his country's access ?to Starshield, the military version of the Starlink system, had been intentionally limited, interfering with the performance of the country's military drones. He also said the speeds were reduced for Starlink, which Ukraine uses for some military activities including defense against Russian missile attacks.Reuters has reported that the order to throttle Starshield ?came from inside the White House. The Trump administration has acknowledged the slowdown but has not said whether it gave the order.The White House, contacted for comment, referred Reuters to Trump's remarks on Friday, when he said he had not spoken with Musk about Starlink access issues for Ukraine and that "if there ?is a problem, I'll get it straightened out."Halyna Yusypiuk, a spokesperson for the Ukrainian embassy in Washington, said Ukraine's priority is "to have the service restored to normal speed as soon as possible, as the lives of our people depend on it."SpaceX did not respond to requests for comment, although Musk said in a social media post earlier this week: "Starshield systems are owned and controlled by the US government. Any limits on speed or usage are decided by the US military and ultimately (by the president of the United States)."Democratic US Representative Jason Crow called on Friday for clarity about the recent changes to Ukraine's satellite service, saying there are risks to the US dependence on SpaceX."Unelected billionaires and private ?corporations should not decide what is in the best interest of America's national security," Crow said.For Ukraine, the Starlink internet service has become the lifeblood of frontline communication between units, who say there is currently no rival to the capabilities of SpaceX's products.Starshield receivers, largely impervious to radio jamming, are used ?as onboard guidance systems and to provide links to a remote pilot for Ukrainian drones, including deep behind Russian lines inside Ukraine.

Musk's role as the strong-willed CEO of a company with outsized influence over US national security has at times raised questions over who is making decisions about SpaceX's satellite services.The SpaceX CEO ?is "supposed to be a ?business executive, with government contracts, and he's essentially making huge foreign policy decisions," said Armand Musey, president of Summit Ridge Group, a satellite industry consultancy."He's sufficiently ambiguous of a person that you don't know if his decisions are sort of his personal quirks, or it's because there's an influence elsewhere that's impacting him," Musey said.In previous years, Musk has moved to limit Ukraine's access to Starlink. In 2022, according to Reuters reporting, Musk ordered SpaceX personnel to cut Starlink coverage in areas Ukraine was trying to retake, a move that surprised White House officials.Musk has said publicly that he refused a 2022 Ukrainian request to activate his satellite network in Crimea's port city of Sevastopol to aid an attack on Russia's fleet there, saying he feared complicity in a major act of war.The Biden administration at times relied on Musk to help implement policy, five of the former officials said.Biden officials coordinated with SpaceX to thwart US adversaries by ?cutting the service, and to help allies by expanding Starlink's availability, they said.They ?added that discussions between the government and SpaceX, which usually included ?Pentagon and White House officials, often focused on preventing groups such as the Iranian-linked Houthis in Yemen and Hezbollah in Lebanon from using Starlink terminals.Biden officials several times shared intelligence with SpaceX that indicated that the Houthis and Hezbollah were using diverted Starlink terminals — hardware that made its way to the militants through intermediaries.

In October 2023, during fighting between Israel and Hezbollah militants in southern Lebanon, intelligence officials told the White House that individuals linked to Hezbollah could ?have gained access to Starlink terminals. Officials had similar concerns about the Houthis in Yemen in 2024 during a US air campaign against the Iran-linked group, five of the officials said.In both cases, the administration contacted ?SpaceX and asked it to identify the ?terminals and shut them off. At least some of the terminals were deactivated, said two of the officials.In a 2024 submission to the US Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security, SpaceX said it works closely with US government agencies to secure export authorizations where required and to safeguard technology in support of US national security objectives and foreign policy goals.Soon after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Biden officials pushed SpaceX to expand Starlink use for the Ukrainian military, said two of the former officials.In a separate instance, the Biden administration asked SpaceX to turn on Starlink in Iran during a protest movement launched in September 2022 after the ?death of Mahsa Amini, ?an Iranian arrested for not wearing her hijab properly, according to one of the former officials.Starlink terminals were moved into the country with the help of the administration, said the ?official, who declined to say how many were transferred.The Trump administration took a similar step earlier this year and discussed with Musk and SpaceX getting Starlink terminals into Iran and activated following US-Israeli strikes in the country in June 2025 and again in February 2026, a former senior Trump official and a person familiar with the matter told Reuters.Neither the Trump administration nor SpaceX ?has publicly confirmed that those terminals were turned on. The Wall Street Journal

Erin Banco is a national security correspondent focusing on the intelligence community. She covers everything from the wars in Ukraine and Gaza to U.S. covert operations overseas. She previously worked at POLITICO as a national security reporter. Banco has a long history covering the Middle East region, from Cairo to Baghdad to Aleppo where she's reported on the Arab Spring and its aftermath, including the civil war in Syria and the rise of ISIS. Her 2017 book, Pipe Dreams, focuses on the development of the oil and gas industry in the northern Kurdistan region of Iraq. Banco attended The University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she majored in Arabic and journalism. She earned a master's in public administration from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs in 2014.Joey Roulette is a space reporter for Reuters covering the business and politics of the global space industry, often focusing on space power competition and how commercial interests intersect with international relations. He was part of a team that won the 2024 Pulitzer Prize in national reporting for Reuters' coverage of Elon Musk's business empire. On the space beat for roughly a decade, Joey previously worked for the New York Times, the Verge, and various publications in Florida.

Many feared trapped as a tall building collapses in Kenya

Nairobi: A tall building collapsed on Friday in a busy commercial area of Kenya's capital, with many people feared trapped beneath the rubble.The building was under construction when it collapsed along a busy commercial street in Nairobi's Eastleigh area, which is often crowded with thousands of traders and residents.Nairobi police chief Issa Mohamud said the building had more than 10 floors under construction. Rescue operations were complicated, with police firing tear gas at people who had begun looting neighboring shops, as officers sought to clear the area and provide access to emergency response teams.The Kenya Red Cross said its teams were on their way and urged people at the site to give responders space to work safely.Building collapses are a recurring problem in Nairobi. County officials responsible for issuing building permits have been accused of failing to conduct adequate inspections to ensure developers comply with safety guidelines and construction standards.

Indian nationals in France asked to remain vigilant amid ongoing protests

Paris: The Indian Embassy in France issued a travel and safety advisory on Wednesday, urging its nationals and those travelling to the Western European country to remain vigilant after protests over the rising cost of living broke out into violent clashes.The clashes erupted in late September 2026 over poor conditions in schools and teacher shortages. The movement quickly expanded into nationwide anti-government demonstrations driven by soaring living costs, high fuel prices, public sector budget cuts, and general frustration with President Emmanuel Macron's administration.

The alert follows ongoing protests, localised curfews, and potential transport disruptions across the region.Indian citizens residing in or visiting France are advised to exercise caution, particularly in crowded areas or locations experiencing demonstrations, the Indian Embassy said in a statement on social media platform X.Protests and civil unrest in France have led to localised curfews and potential delays or reductions in road travel and public transport, the Indian Embassy said.Travellers and residents should closely follow updates from local French authorities, the French Prefecture of Police, and official statements from the Indian Embassy in France's X account, the Indian Embassy said in the statement."Those planning trips to or within France are recommended to stay in direct contact with their airlines or travel agencies for real-time schedule changes," the Indian Embassy in France added in the statement.In its official X account, the Indian Embassy in France said: "In view of the recent developments and localised curfews imposed in France, please remain vigilant and exercise due caution. Please avoid large gatherings and crowded places where protests are taking place, and follow the instructions and advisories issued by the local French authorities. Please also stay informed through local news, follow official updates (https://gouvernement.fr) and check for public transport disruptions (https://ratp.fr).

High cholesterol risk runs in your genes but a healthy diet may help offset it, says new study

White rice polished to a shine, a maida parotta slick with oil, vegetables cooked in coconut oil and an extra spoonful of ghee: familiar staples on many Indian plates could add up to a diet that works against healthy cholesterol levels, particularly when fruits, vegetables and fibre take a back seat.Now, a study of 1,020 adults in Chennai suggests that for Indians genetically predisposed to high levels of bad cholesterol or LDL, the quality of their everyday diet could make a crucial difference in their blood markers. Those who ate a medium-or high-quality diet could completely offset the genetic risk of high LDL and total cholesterol. Those who ate poorly ended up being susceptible to higher levels of both.

The findings offer an important message for people who believe that high cholesterol is an inevitable consequence of their genes: inherited susceptibility need not be the whole story. "While genes can influence a person's risk of metabolic disorders, dietary habits may modify how that risk manifests. Even if you are born with the tendency to high cholesterol and high diabetes, you can still keep your cholesterol levels down by following a healthy diet," says Dr V Mohan, chairman of Dr Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centre and the Madras Diabetes Research Foundation (MDRF), and one of the authors of the paper.The study, titled "Low diet quality increases the genetic risk of high blood cholesterol levels in Asian Indian adults [CURES–165]", was published in PLOS ONE. It draws on data from the Chennai Urban Rural Epidemiology Study (CURES), a long-running research programme.

What did the study find?

The researchers studied 1,020 adults aged between 25 and 80, including 452 men and 568 women. They examined three genetic variants — TCF7L2 rs7903146, FTO rs8050136 and rs1588413 — and combined them into a genetic risk score. Diet quality was assessed using an Indian Diet Quality Score covering eight food groups: pulses and legumes, fruits and vegetables, milk products, white rice, edible fats and oils, added sugar, added salt, and poultry and eggs.The researchers found that a higher genetic risk score was associated with a significantly higher total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol among participants in the low diet-quality group. The differences were not statistically significant among those in the medium- and high-quality diet groups. The interaction between genetic risk and diet quality was statistically significant for total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol.The study also found associations between the genetic risk score and higher fasting blood glucose as well as glycated haemoglobin (HbA1c), a measure of average blood sugar over the preceding two to three months. "What we showed in this study is that those who have a certain genetic variant are more likely to get high cholesterol. But this was influenced very much by the diet they took," he says. Asked how soon the findings could translate into practical screening, he suggests that people did not need to wait for genetic testing; they can make changes in their plate right away.

Although the participants were in Chennai, Dr Mohan clarifies that they were not limited to people of Tamil origin or to one dietary community. CURES, he explains, draws on a representative sample of the city, which has residents from different linguistic and regional backgrounds. "Chennai, being a cosmopolitan city like Mumbai or Delhi, has people from several communities, including Telugu-speaking residents, Marwaris, Jains, Bengalis, people from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and the Northeast," Dr Mohan says.He also refers to the nationwide ICMR-INDIAB study, which examined diet and health indicators across states and Union Territories. That study, too, found similar patterns in the relationship between carbohydrate consumption and diabetes across different parts of India, despite regional differences in staple foods."Just because you eat pav or chapatis in Mumbai and we eat white rice here doesn't mean the readings will be different. It's the overall carbohydrate overload that's the deciding factor," he says, referring to the broader dietary findings from the INDIAB study. "When we eat more carbohydrates than what the body needs for energy, the excess is converted into fat in the liver. This fat is released into the bloodstream as triglycerides. When triglyceride levels rise, the liver releases more triglyceride-rich particles into the bloodstream.As these particles are broken down, they exchange fats with LDL and HDL (good) cholesterol, changing their composition. This can lead to the formation of smaller, denser LDL particles, which are more likely to contribute to plaque build-up in artery walls. However, high triglycerides do not always mean that total LDL cholesterol will rise; they can also make LDL particles more harmful even when LDL levels appear normal. They simultaneously reduce the protective HDL."Excess carbohydrate intake can also contribute to weight gain and insulin resistance, further affecting how the body processes fats. However, carbohydrates do not uniformly raise LDL cholesterol; the effect depends on the type and quantity consumed, the overall dietary pattern and individual metabolic factors. Replacing some refined grains with whole grains, pulses, vegetables and other fibre-rich foods can help improve overall lipid health.

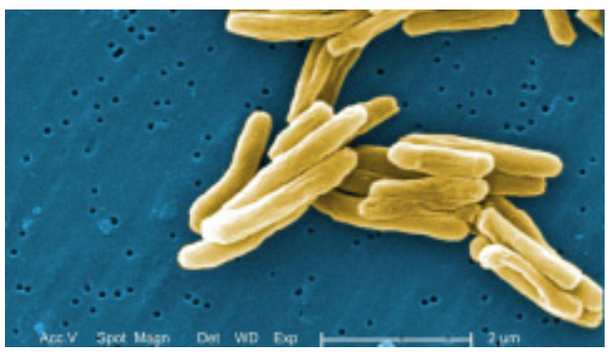
What should people watch out for?

Dr Mohan identifies refined carbohydrates as a key dietary concern. For example, he suggests unpolished brown rice as a healthier choice than polished white rice, while whole-grain wheat is preferable to refined wheat flour such as maida. "Saturated fats, including those found in coconut oil, palm oil, ghee and butter, can increase cholesterol. Go for unsaturated ones. Groundnut, mustard and sesame (gingelly) oils are sources of monounsaturated fat while sunflower oil contains polyunsaturated fat," he says.

It is the overall diet, not one food

The researchers assessed overall diet quality and did not establish that any one oil, grain or individual food caused the cholesterol differences. Dr R M Anjana, managing director of Dr Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centre and a co-author of the paper, says, "People don't eat one specific food. Everything contributes to how your body behaves." However, she singles out highly refined carbohydrates, sweets and sugary drinks as the fastest triggers of an unhealthy dietary pattern.

Indigenous TB test can enhance accuracy, speed up testing



Researchers at the Thiruvananthapuram-based Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST) have developed and tested a novel, cost-effective, real-time LAMP (rt-LAMP) assay for early diagnosis of TB. Much like GeneXpert and Truenat, the rt-LAMP assay too is a molecular test with high sensitivity and specificity. The rt-LAMP assay was able to detect TB DNA even when only 10 copy numbers were present per microlitre in a sample.

The main handicap that prevented the use of LAMP for TB diagnosis so far was the inability of using any dye, as dyes generally inhibit reaction leading to false negatives. Researchers at SCTIMST have overcome this challenge by turning to a fluorescent dye Syto 16, which is routinely used in labs for studying cells and other biological samples. And unlike RT-PCRs that require three different temperature settings to complete a test, the rt-LAMP test works at a single temperature. Since a fluorescent dye is used, the amplification can be measured not at the end of the run but every minute. "With six primers used for amplification compared with two in the case RT-PCRs, the rate of amplification is high, and hence results of positive samples can be obtained in 10-20 minutes," says Dr. Anoopkumar Thekkuveettil from SCTIMST and the corresponding author of a paper published in Scientific Reports. "Since all six primers need to bind to the DNA for amplification to begin, the rt-LAMP assay has very high specificity." Since no probe is used unlike in the case of RT-PCR tests, and as the dye and primers are inexpensive, the rt-LAMP test becomes highly affordable. The assay was tested on 350 presumptive pulmonary TB sputum samples. The rt-LAMP kit was evaluated against a microbiological reference standard (MRS), GeneXpert, and smear test. The study was conducted from October 2019 to March 2020 and from January 2023 to March 2024. The rt-LAMP assay demonstrated slightly higher sensitivity and specificity than the GeneXpert assay. Compared with MRS, rt-LAMP showed 89.36% sensitivity and 94.06% specificity.

"The rt-LAMP assay kit has been developed as an open platform system which allows existing RT-PCR machines to be repurposed for TB diagnosis. This can be done by programming an existing RT-PCR machine to run at one temperature setting instead of three," Dr. Anoopkumar says. "It is possible to process up to 96 or 384 tests in a single run. Thus the assay facilitates high throughput testing, allowing for a large number of patient samples to be processed in a single run.""The technology has been licensed to industry, has received approval from CDSCO, and is currently being validated by ICMR. The WHO Health Technology Access Pool program is currently evaluating the technology and is waiting for ICMR validation," he says.With nearly 79% of presumptive TB cases in India diagnosed using sputum smear microscopy and only 21% tested using molecular assay as recently as 2023, India continues to over-rely on smear microscopy for TB diagnosis. Despite an increase in molecular testing facilities from 5,090 in 2022 to 6,496 in 2023, it is nowhere close to meeting the National Strategic Plan 2017-2025 of reducing the reliance on smear microscopy.

Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences, Hyderabad leading the way in Parkinson's treatment with deep brain stimulation

The Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences, Hyderabad is stepping up its efforts to improve the quality of life for patients battling Parkinson's disease through advanced treatment options and comprehensive care.The Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS), Hyderabad, is stepping up its efforts to improve the quality of life for patients battling Parkinson's disease through advanced treatment options and comprehensive care. With a dedicated Movement Disorder Clinic and support from government health schemes, NIMS is transforming outcomes for those affected by the neurological condition.

Parkinson's disease is a progressive disorder that affects movement and motor control. Although medical advancements have improved patient outcomes, the disease still poses everyday challenges, including tremors, slowness of movement, muscle stiffness and balance issues. Non-motor symptoms such as anxiety, depression and sleep disturbances further complicate life for patients and caregivers."Parkinson's disease can be managed effectively with timely medication and surgical options like Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS), allowing patients to lead active lives," says Sireesha Yareeda, additional professor and senior neurologist at NIMS. She underscores the importance of early diagnosis and treatment to improve long-term outcomes.

DBS, a key treatment offered at NIMS, is typically recommended after 3 to 4 years of medication therapy when drugs begin to lose effectiveness or cause troubling side effects. The procedure involves implanting electrodes in targeted areas of the brain, which are then connected to a battery placed in the chest wall. This stimulation helps manage symptoms with minimal surgical risks, thanks to refined techniques in use at the institute, says Dr.Sireesha.Yerramneni Vamsi Krishna, professor and head of neurosurgery at NIMS, adds that some patients may benefit from ablation procedures, where a small, specific area of the brain is lesioned using heat to further enhance quality of life.The Movement Disorder Clinic at NIMS caters not just to Parkinson's but also to related disorders such as dystonia and tremors. Importantly, the inclusion of DBS under Telangana government health schemes like Aarogyasri and Employee Health Scheme has made this advanced surgery more accessible. Since August 2024, more than 93 patients have undergone DBS at NIMS under these schemes.

New working group on malnutrition-induced diabetes formed at recent World Diabetes Congress

At the International Diabetes Federation's (IDF) World Diabetes Congress held in Bangkok last week, an epoch-making decision was taken, nearly 75 years after a particular type of diabetes was first recorded. Peter Schwarz, president of IDF, announced the inauguration of the Type 5 Diabetes Working Group, turning attention to malnutrition-induced diabetes.While Type 2 diabetes, where the global numbers are largest, can arise out of unregulated intake of food, and consequently, excess weight, Type 5 diabetes is at the polar end of the weight and nutrition spectrum, understood to be associated with undernutrition and even low weight. It was first reported in Jamaica in 1955, and then defined as J-type diabetes, and the WHO classified it in 1985 as malnutrition-related diabetes mellitus, only to remove that in 1999, citing lack of evidence of causal association with malnutrition.

However, other nations, including India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Korea, started reporting such cases and it is estimated that today, there are about 25 million people globally living with Type 5 diabetes. "Until this working group was formed at the IDF Congress, this form of diabetes has been largely understudied and misdiagnosed," says Nihal Thomas, senior professor, department of endocrinology, diabetes and metabolism, Christian Medical College, Vellore.

Dr. Thomas has been collaborating, since 2008, with Meredith Hawkins, director, Global Diabetes Institute, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York, who has been at the forefront of research on how early-life undernutrition is a potential risk factor for development of diabetes in adult life. Both of them are chairs of the IDF Working Group. He says an initial consensus meeting to lay the path towards the IDF Working Group, was held in CMC Vellore in January 2025, organised along with colleague Felix Jebasingh. Here, 42 participants from across the world signed the

Vellore Declaration, to promote more research and increase awareness about Type 5 diabetes among clinicians and researchers globally. "In fact, it was here that Prof. Schwarz suggested the name Type 5 diabetes to distinguish it from other forms," Dr. Thomas adds.The results of a study published in 2022 among patients at CMC Vellore established Type 5 diabetes as a distinct metabolic entity. People with this form of 'lean diabetes' have a history of malnutrition in utero and continue to have a low BMI into adulthood, drawing in the thrifty gene theory of diabetes, Riddhi Dasgupta, a co-author on the paper, told The Hindu then.Prof. Hawkins explained that because of the programming in utero, these people have actually accumulated more fat than planned for by the gene, leading to the 'thin-fat' phenomenon. These individuals never catch up with nutritional requirements, and remain nutritionally challenged as adults.

The Working Group has been tasked with defining diagnostic criteria for Type 5 diabetes, diagnostic and management guidelines, establishing a global registry to facilitate global research collaborations, promoting research on the pathophysiology and management and develop education modules to train healthcare professionals worldwide.

As malaria cases fall, a look at Tamil Nadu's strategies for elimination

GNS News Agency, Oct 26

Reports from the World Health Organization and the Commonwealth Malaria Report have indicated that India is set to eliminate malaria by 2030. The number of deaths from malaria has significantly fallen, with better surveillance and access to diagnosis and medicines, the reports add.Malaria, the WHO says, is a life-threatening disease spread to humans by some types of mosquitoes. It is mostly found in tropical countries. It is preventable and curable. The infection is caused by a parasite and does not spread from person to person. Malaria can be prevented by avoiding mosquito bites and with medicines. Treatments can stop mild cases from getting worse.

In Tamil Nadu, for the past two years, only around 340 cases were reported, says Director of Public Health T.S. Selvavinayagam. This turnaround was made possible due to steady surveillance, he adds. "When fever is reported the entire area is brought under surveillance. All institutions must be notified of fever surveillance. This enables the Health Department to get details of where the fever has occurred, who is affected and in which location," he explains. Dr. Selvavinayagam goes on to detail: "Once we identify the location where there has been a fever case, the environmental factors are identified. These could be water stagnation or issues with water storage containers. Then we expand the periphery of surveillance and we continue to monitor intensively, undertake anti-vector activities etc. We rapidly search for hidden cases as we know what the precipitating factor is. The idea is to explore the hidden cases and bring them to light."The Health Department then takes up routine anti-malarial activities. "We continue to monitor the area for years together if it is a high risk area," he says.The female Anopheles mosquitoes that spread malaria breed in fresh water and coastal water. Four types of malaria are commonly found in the country: Plasmodium vivax, plasmodium falciparum, plasmodium ovale and plasmodium malariae."In Tamil Nadu we see two varieties of malaria commonly – vivax and falciparum. The latter is imported," says former DPH K. Kolandaisamy. "Uncovered overhead tanks, wells, riverine areas and quarries are breeding sources," he explains. Other areas include coconut groves and places of religious congregations such as Rameswaram.Symptoms of malaria can be mild or life-threatening. Because some malaria symptoms are not specific, getting tested early is important. The most common early symptoms of malaria are fever, headache and chills.Severe symptoms include extreme tiredness and fatigue, impaired consciousness, multiple convulsions, difficulty breathing, dark or bloody urine, jaundice (yellowing of the eyes and skin) , abnormal bleeding.Infants, children under 5 years, pregnant women and girls, travellers and people with HIV or AIDS are at higher risk of severe infection. Malaria elimination strategy includes taking a peripheral blood smear of the patient. "A health inspector should carry with them a needle and a slide box to collect the blood smear; a ladle, and a torch," says Dr. Kolandaisamy. The last two items would help the inspector identify the disease-causing mosquitoes. They should also have a chloroscope to check for chlorine in water body, he adds.All fever is tested for suspicion of malaria. If the malaria is suspected to be imported (travel-related), we ask for travel history to help control the spread of the disease, Dr. Kolandaisamy says.Healthcare workers are deployed to spray insecticides. Years of surveillance and publicising the requirement to cover overhead tanks and wells has resulted in eliminating mosquito breeding spots, the doctor says.Malaria is introduced into the State by travellers however, says the public health expert. The Falciparum variety of malaria spreads through travel. The challenge lies in identifying the source of the infection, he points out."

The biggest challenge is lack of health and sanitary inspectors. The number of posts have been reduced. These are 'invisible jobs' of the public health sector. This invisible force, if not maintained, could increase the burden on staff and lead to a surge in the disease, Dr. Kolandaisamy avers.Between 2001 and 2020malaria cases declined from 2.09 million to 0.19 million, recalls S. Sabesan, senior epidemiologist. The Plasmodium falciparum cases (considered the deadliest) declined from 1.0 to 0.12 million cases during the same period. The SPR (slide positivity rate) declined from 2.31 to 0.19 The SFR (slide falciparum rate) declined from 1.11 in 2001 to 0.12 in 2020 he says.Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Odisha, U.P. and West Bengal continue to contribute a high number of cases. In the southern region, cases are relatively high in Andhra Pradesh, says Dr. Sabesan, who was formerly director Gr. Scientist at the Indian Council of Medical Research-Vector Control Research Centre.Over the past few years however, he says, the number of cases has risen again, indicating that the earlier focus on surveillance has reduced. Dr. Sabesan warns that this could hamper the goal of eliminating malaria and calls for better surveillance and control strategies across the country.Malaria, he says, can be eliminated if the government strictly adheres to: environmental sanitation; conducts surveillance within the State and country; takes up interstate joint vector control surveillance.

Why working with nanomaterials is exciting

GNS News Agency, Oct 26

The next in the series featuring conversations with entrepreneurs, technologists and researchers about emerging technologies and what students need to know about these fields.

What do you do?

I am Founder and CEO of NoPo Nanotechnologies, a nanomaterials company. We make an advanced material called single-wall carbon nanotubes (SWCNT). Besides leading the company, I specifically direct the R&D around SWCNT and its applications. I have an Electronics and Communications degreefrom BMS College of Engineering, Bengaluru, and Master's in Nanotechnology from Louisiana Tech University, the U.S.

Why is your work important?

SWCNT are very small; about two lakh times smaller than a single hair strand but are also one of the strongest materials known to mankind. They are highly conductive, exhibit semi-conductor properties, and can transfer both heat and electrons rapidly. They find applications in electric vehicle battery technologies to increase the battery capacity and also to make them cheaper. They are also used in advanced electronics to shrink the size of transistors and improve energy efficiency.

What is exciting about your work?

With increased adoption of AI globally, demand for energy is growing. On the other hand, electric vehicles that are replacing fossil fuel-based technologies require smaller, more efficient and cheaper batteries. We are one of the few companies who have developed the technology to produce carbon nanotubes with such small diameters and very high precision. To work from India on advanced technologies like SWCNT — which can solve long-standing global problems such as cleaner water, smaller electronics, better energy storage, greener energy — is exciting for all of us at NoPo.

Any experiences in college that led you to become an entrepreneur?

I knew I was going to make carbon nanotubes but not that I was going to be an entrepreneur. I set up nanotech clubs in college. During my Master's in the U.S. I realised that the state-of-the-art is quite hard. Instead of waiting for someone to solve this problem, I decided to work on it in my own small way. Which led to the company I lead today.

India's escalating heat crisis: preparing our cities and protecting the vulnerable

India is heating up — and it's not just the usual suspects like Delhi or Rajasthan bearing the brunt. Places once known for their temperate climates, like Bengaluru and Shimla, are now registering record-breaking temperatures. This shift is more than just a summer inconvenience; it's a public health emergency in slow motion.According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), March 2025 was among the hottest months in over a century, with maximum temperatures in parts of south India breaching 40°C — a first in several decades. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has also forecasted that 2025 could be among the warmest years on record, owing to the compounding effects of climate change and El Niño.But the heatwave story is no longer just about temperature: it's about whom it affects — and how unprepared we still are.

Traditionally moderate cities are now facing climate stress due to a cocktail of urban expansion, loss of green cover, and vehicular pollution. A recent study published in Science of the Total Environment (2024) highlights how urban land use changes in Bengaluru have intensified the urban heat island effect, making nighttime temperatures dangerously high and reducing natural cooling periods. Shimla, once a summer escape, has also seen temperature spikes due to rampant construction and ecological degradation. This is a particularly worrying trend, because these cities were never designed with extreme heat in mind.For our youth, rising temperatures can affect school attendance and learning outcomes, apart from prompting heat-related school closures in coming months if the heat soars unabated. Infrastructure, housing, and healthcare systems in such regions too, are ill-equipped to handle the scale of the crisis unfolding.While most of us experience heat as discomfort, for those living with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) — such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, or respiratory illnesses — the consequences can be fatal.High temperatures lead to dehydration, increased heart rates, and electrolyte imbalances, all of which worsen chronic conditions. Certain medications like diuretics or beta-blockers further reduce the body's ability to regulate temperature. The risk of hospitalisation and even mortality increases significantly for individuals with pre-existing health issues — a fact that's still missing from most public advisories.A mistake policymakers - and even healthcare workers - often make is lumping "vulnerable groups" such as children, the elderly, pregnant women, and outdoor workers into a homogenous category. The reality is that each of these sub-groups have unique needs and vulnerabilities - and often have the least access to information or cooling measures. There is an urgent need to "ungroup" this group when we discuss either their health effects or the adaptation responses to be tailor-made for them.Leading by example

India's first Heat Action Plan (HAP), launched in Ahmedabad in 2013, has emerged as a blueprint for other cities. The plan was developed after a deadly heatwave in 2010, which claimed over 1,300 lives. Since then, the HAP has implemented early warning systems, trained healthcare professionals, and ensured water distribution in high-risk areas among other adaptation solutions like cool-roofs and changes in work schedules . Implementing a Heat Action Plan is no mean feat - it involves inter-agency coordination, heat alert systems, capacity building for healthcare professionals, and constantly innovating.What sets the HAP apart is its focus on vulnerable groups — slum dwellers, children, outdoor workers — and its integration into municipal planning. According to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), cities like Nagpur, Bhubaneswar, and Surat among several others have since adopted similar models, showing that local government action can save lives when paired with data and community engagement.

While policy shifts are crucial, local communities don't have to wait for top-down action. Small but strategic interventions can reduce indoor heat and prevent illness. Painting rooftops white or using heat-resistant mosaic tiles can reduce indoor temperatures by up to 5°C — a huge difference for households without access to air conditioning. Establishing cooling stations, water dispensing hubs, and cool bus-stops are emerging solutions that have been deployed successfully in some cities. We can even take a leaf out of our ancestors' books, and explore atypical working hours, ensuring that people step out of their homes when the weather is at its most moderate .Hospitals, too, can adapt by relocating sensitive departments such as Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs) to lower, cooler floors, or preparing specialised heatstroke wards. These measures have seen success in Ahmedabad, and heatstroke wards are now being advocated under the MoHFW's National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health. Ensuring uninterrupted power for fans, cooling devices, and hydration stations in healthcare facilities can also be life-saving during peak heatwaves.Community awareness — from schoolchildren to resident welfare associations — must be part of the solution. Heat doesn't discriminate, but its impact is felt most by those least equipped to respond.

The rising frequency and severity of heatwaves are no longer future risks — they are current realities. And the solutions must be just as immediate.We need more granular, city-level heat data linked to decentralised early warning systems and health advisories, integrated urban planning that considers temperature resilience, community and workforce sensitisation and resilience — building and targeted public health messaging that reaches those at greatest risk. We must prepare our cities for a future that is already here hotter, harsher, and more unequal in its impact.This century, heat waves are more frequent, intense and lasting longer. As the 2025 summer intensifies, our collective response will determine whether we continue to treat heat as a seasonal discomfort — or finally recognise it as the silent, deadly public health crisis it is.

Ecology is the world's permanent economy

The phrase, "Ecology is the permanent economy", made popular by environmentalist Sunderlal Bahuguna, is much more than a slogan. It is a profound reminder of the foundational truth that human prosperity is inextricably linked to ecological health. It is true that economic development without exploiting natural resources and economic stability without conserving them are impossible. As we face serious challenges such as climate change and the rapid loss of biodiversity, we must ask ourselves whether we have truly understood and embraced this idea.

Understanding nature's complexity is at the heart of science. In this pursuit, humans have made tremendous efforts through observation, experimentation, and modelling, as this understanding is crucial for addressing environmental challenges such as climate change and for informing sustainable practices. While these scientific discussions are valuable, there is an even more urgent and fundamental truth we need to focus on: ecology is the real economy — our survival, security and progress depend on it. In simple terms, this might be the clearest way to define sustainability — finding the right balance between protecting the environment and supporting economic development. Without this balance, neither the environment nor the economy can thrive in the long run.Despite being part of the animal kingdom, human evolution, through the course of civilisation, has led to a growing disconnection from nature. This disconnection with nature has been identified as a reason for the ongoing biodiversity loss (the recent Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services or IPBES Transformative Change report).In the early stages of human history, a nomadic lifestyle compelled individuals to rely on and exploit natural resources solely for their basic, day-to-day survival needs. Over time, this individual-centric resource use evolved into collective consumption aimed at meeting the needs of growing communities. As human societies expanded and organised themselves into nations, this demand scaled further to cater to the needs of entire countries. Eventually, this progression gave rise to global competition, where nations began to exploit nature not only to satisfy present demands but also to secure resources for future development. Unlike humans, no other species in the animal kingdom exhibits this pattern of large-scale, anticipatory exploitation of natural resources. Other animals live in harmony with their environments, taking only what they need for immediate survival, without disturbing the long-term balance of the ecosystems they inhabit.

The ever-intensifying cycle of human consumption and global competition has placed an unprecedented strain on the planet's ecosystems and significantly accelerated the pace of climate change — a natural phenomenon now dangerously amplified by human activities. In response to these growing environmental challenges, nature-based solutions have been widely advocated in global conservation efforts. These approaches aim to leverage the inherent resilience of ecosystems to mitigate climate impacts, restore biodiversity, and support sustainable development. However, a paradox emerges: we continue to exploit nature to satisfy our needs and greed, while simultaneously relying on the same natural systems to act as a buffer against the consequences of such exploitation. This dual dependence risks creating deeper ecological imbalances and may further complicate the ability to address the climate crisis effectively.

In this context, rather than merely attempting to understand the intricate complexity of ecological systems from a scientific standpoint, it is far more critical to recognise a fundamental truth — that ecology is the permanent economy. Acknowledging this principle shifts our perspective from short-term exploitation to long-term stewardship, positioning ecological health not as a constraint, but as the very foundation of human survival, economic stability, and climate resilience.This realisation is not just timely — it is essential to confronting the ongoing environmental crisis and shaping a sustainable future. It is only through this reframing that humanity can move from reactive conservation to proactive planetary sustainability. The climate crisis is not just a scientific challenge. It is a moral and existential reckoning with the ecological foundations of our existence.The need to reconnect with nature

Climate change and change in distribution patterns of biological diversity are not new for planet earth. However, the rate at which it is now occurring is detrimental to the planet's biological diversity, including people, due to past unsustainable developmental activities by humans. Therefore, the change we need must come from within.Since all developmental activities across the globe are aimed at fulfilling human needs, adopting a sustainable lifestyle is every individual's responsibility in order to ensure the success of global sustainability initiatives. To achieve this, we must realise that humans are an integral part of nature.Though technological advancements have distanced modern lifestyles from nature, one unique natural trait that humans possess is the power to reconnect with nature using emotion (which still lives within us). Thus, future conservation efforts should be designed to strengthen our emotional bond with nature. To ignite this, a realisation that "ecology is the permanent economy", is more imperative than merely understanding the ecological complexity that exists in nature.P. Ragavan is a scientist with an interest in taxonomy, ecology and the biogeochemistry of mangroves and seagrasses. He is working on the conservation and management of mangroves and carbon dynamics in the blue carbon habitats of India. The views expressed are personal

How a student racing club in Kerala is developing a hydrogen-fuelled buggy

Among the 22 college teams participating in the third and final phase of the SAEIndia HBaja 2025 competition was a group of rookies in the hydrogen or CNG-fuelled all-terrain vehicle (ATV) category, Herakles Racing, from the College of Engineering Trivandrum (CET) in Thiruvananthapuram. Around 190 teams registered for the 17th edition of this prestigious contest, to build ATVs for recreation which would function in real-world conditions. But many failed to qualify in the first two phases held online. From January 9 to 12, buggies battled it out with strength, manoeuvrability, efficiency, endurance and more at the National Automotive Test Tracks in Pithampur, Madhya Pradesh.Ultimately, on the final day, to everyone's surprise, Herakles Racing came second in overall ranking. They won the best debutant award and also bagged the first rank in validation, efficiency, and virtual dynamics, second in sales and acceleration and third in endurance, sled pulling (pulling a tractor with the ATV), and cost.

Herakles Racing, the college's official BAJA racing team, was founded by Safwan Abdul Samad, a mechanical engineering student, in 2017. "Safwan wanted to do something beyond the classrooms. So, with the help of a few of his friends, he started this club and even attended a few competitions," says Gautham S Nair, manager of Herakles Racing.Currently, there are around 45 members in the team. "Among the members, some even get placement offers from mainstream manufacturers like Mahindra, Hero MotoCorp and so on," says Gautham."We started working on hydrogen-combustion vehicles (which burn hydrogen for fuel) in 2024 with this competition in mind. It took us around a year to get from ideation to execution," says Gautham.

The team used materials from their EBaja vehicles (electric) to design the buggy. "It would normally cost ? 8 to 9 lakh if we were to buy all the components for an ATV. But, since we recycled a lot, we cut down the cost to ?3 lakh," says team captain Adith Raj. This amount was raised by the students.

The ATV currently uses 5% hydrogen and the rest CNG, owing to the expensive nature of generating hydrogen fuel through electrolysis (splitting hydrogen and oxygen in water using electricity). Also, there are no hydrogen filling stations in Kerala. In fact, Herakles did not test their vehicle with hydrogen until they reached the SAEIndia tracks. Instead, they used petrol due to the bi-fuel nature of their engine.Herakles Racing uses a hydrogen combustion engine, which runs like any other internal combustion engine using fossil fuels. "We will improve on this percentage of hydrogen in the coming years. We need a bulkier or reinforced engine for that," says Gautham. "Currently, the engine material we use is aluminium or cast iron. Maybe if we can use composite material for the engine; it will be more suited for hydrogen fuel," he adds."Many teams use aluminium parts for several components and that limits the weight of the vehicle to around 140 to 170 kilograms, helping them perform better. But since we are reusing material, our ATV weighs around 250 kilograms. We need to find lighter materials for components and better funding to ensure that proper research is carried out in optimising the buggy's performance," says Gautham."We are working on using a sustainable fuel source, which would help in the future. The only waste from hydrogen combustion is water," says Rinin Krishna, vice-captain."While ATVs come in a different category compared to passenger vehicles, it has applications in defence, farming, search and rescue and so on," says Rinin.

A thousand Buddhas

We have all heard how there is no one single Ramayana, there are many — 300 at least. But no one tells us there is not just one Buddha; that there are dozens, maybe thousands, perhaps even millions, as per the earliest Buddhist scriptures. Also, there are hundreds of versions of his tale, in Pali and Sanskrit and Chinese and Japanese. No one clarifies that the historical Buddha we are so familiar with is a 19th century European invention.India had forgotten Buddha by the time the British arrived. So, effectively, the British rediscovered him in the 19th century. The discovery of Pali manuscripts from Sri Lanka and Buddhist sites in the Gangetic plains was the greatest triumph of the Asiatic Society and Archaeological Survey of India. The British scholars were convinced that this cultural amnesia about Buddha was a deliberate cover-up, a Brahmin conspiracy. They used the Buddha to put clueless Hindu intellectuals on the defensive. And it worked.

A European creation?

In the vast literary corpus of Buddhism were found stories of Gautama Buddha travelling to Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand in his lifetime. There were fantastic tales of him fighting Mara, the demon of desire, and realistic ones of his death following a bout of dysentery after eating pork or mushrooms. European historians took it upon themselves to decide which of these stories were true. Thus, a historical Buddha was imagined.He died, depending on which text was consulted, a century, two centuries, maybe eight centuries before Ashoka's coronation. Japanese scholars of the early 20th century listed over 40 theories about Buddha's birth date. The site of his birth and death were identified based on traditional pilgrim routes, not evidence.The Orientalists argued that the Pali texts were older, more conservative, more historical, while Sanskrit texts were later corruptions. But that is not backed up by evidence. The earliest Buddhist manuscripts were recently discovered in Gandhara, dated to 100 BC. Many of them are in Sanskrit. They speak of many Buddhas, following a repetitive pattern that is also found in contemporary Jain mythology, and even in Valmiki's Ramayana. They also do not speak of the 'four noble truths'. These are simply mentioned amongst other truths. No one knows which language Buddha spoke in. Pali was a language used by Sri Lankan Buddhist monks around 500 AD, to distinguish themselves from rival Mahayana schools.

The earliest biographies of the Buddha (Buddhacharita, Lalitavistara Sutra, Mahavastu) were compiled only by 200 AD, roughly when the Ramayana and Mahabharata were also compiled. By this time, images of Buddha's conception, his birth, enlightenment and death had started appearing on the railings surrounding stupas in Sanchi, Bharhut, Mathura and Gandhara. He had started being shown in human form, with Vedic gods such as Indra and Brahma bowing to him. None of the early biographies refer to the ultimate episode, the death or parinirvana. This came from Mahaparinibbana-sutta, dated to 500 AD.

In the early biographies, Buddha's wife is not named and is simply mentioned as Rahula's mother. There are indications that a wife and a son were introduced only to establish Buddha's masculinity. In the Chinese Ocean Sutra, there are many magical tales of how courtesans who doubt Buddha's manliness are taught a lesson by him, appearing as a client.There are stories where the prince of the Sakya clan has two wives, and sometimes even three. Yashodhara is won in a competition;

What can gamers do to ensure health and device safety

As we race toward mid-May and temperatures persist in the high 30s and low 40s, it's the time of year to discuss the best practices for gaming during the summer months. In such inclement weather, a marathon gaming session can be extremely demanding – both on the gaming device and the gamer.Early mornings or late evenings in ventilated spaces is the best time because not only is the weather cooler but there is also the chance of a cool breeze making things easier. If you play with the AC on, most times during the day work but I would still recommend not playing between 1-4 pm when the temperature is at its highest.

Despite the stereotypical image of gamers seeking dark places – a dark, cool room is one of the best places to play games. However, with gamers preferring large bright displays and fancy RGB lighting setups it is important to think about how cool one's gaming space is. Always ensure there is enough space around your gaming device for good air flow. In the case of gaming consoles, if they are primarily kept in tight enclosures in TV units, bring them out in the summer and give them the breathing room they require.This week, we focus on the essentials to ensure your summer gaming sessions are smooth and hassle-free.Short bursts of time not exceeding 90 minutes at a time is a good way to go. Try and avoid marathon gaming sessions and ensure there is enough time between gaming sessions for the device to cool down. Also make sure to not leave your systems/consoles in rest modes, unplug the power on your laptops, and don't leave your handhelds in their docks for too long.Onto the more advanced bits in terms of cooling, I would strongly recommend giving your device a thorough clean and using a good blower to get rid of the dust in its many vents. The number of stories I've heard where dust accumulation has prevented cooling and led to a device catching fire is simply too many.

Women in corporate leadership, the lived reality

Once again, the world will celebrate International Women's Day on March 8, 2025 and companies will attempt to showcase steps taken toward the inclusion and the increase of women in the workforce. Yet, the lived reality of women in or trying to enter the corporate workforce is starkly different.

The recent instance of rolling back diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programmes in the United States federal government, which also encourages the private sector to end DEI preference hirings, highlights the challenges and the barriers to increasing women's participation in the workforce. Women, who comprise 48% of corporate America's workforce, are reeling from the aftershock of this order and are now facing the threat of identity erasure.

It may be easy to brush aside this order as an issue that plagues only the United States. However, the effects of a dip in DEI hirings and women's exclusion can have severe repercussions in all parts of today's globally connected world. Regardless of where one is situated globally, conversations relating to the participation of women in the corporate workforce are significant.While DEI may simply be a corporate mechanism to make small inroads into women's participation in the workforce, especially at an entry level, at present, even such an entry mechanism has not really increased women's participation in leadership roles. For instance, in India, women have been historically marginalised from the workforce and comprise about 35.9% of the worker population ratio; the number is starker at the senior and middle management levels where women account for only 12.7% leadership roles as of 2024.

It is easy to brush aside DEI as being a fabricated gesture of tokenism, where women placed in companies are viewed as sufferance or an obligation rather than finding a way at the table on their own merit. Of course, while DEI may help women make an in-road into leadership roles in companies and have a semblance of a level playing field, their performance and ability to consolidate their position will depend on their own performance and further normalise the presence of women at all levels of the workforce.Over the past decade, Indian legal mandates can be credited to help increase the presence of women in the corporate workforce especially at the senior level. In 2014, the Companies Act, 2013 mandated that at-least one-woman director should be placed on the board of certain class of public limited companies, and in 2015, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) mandated that at least one independent woman director be appointed to the board of India's top 1000 listed companies. Thus, it is largely due to a legal mandate that companies are attempting to uphold best practices of gender diversity The inclusion of women directors on the board of NSE 500 listed companies has increased more than threefold, from 5 % in 2011 to 18% in 2023.

Research across the world finds that organisations also greatly benefit from women in leadership roles. At a fundamental level, the presence of women increases the depth of the talent pool available in the workforce. Women provide informational diversity gained from different educational and career trajectories and distinct social and professional network associations and offer a participative, democratic leadership style that stimulates robust discussion, drives a richer challenge and delivers greater value. Additionally, women tend to focus on relationship building, foster greater stakeholder commitment and assist in formulating strategies that address stakeholder concerns while also overseeing better monitoring, broader human capital management, and communication channels which increase corporate accountability and reduce corporate risks.When companies have more women in senior management and leadership roles, they begin to appear on lists of the most admired and ethical companies, best companies to work for, and best corporate citizens, thereby also serving the agenda of companies from an optics perspective and feeding into a virtuous cycle of benefits.Key identified areas where women leaders bring greater dividends are corporate governance, strategic proposition oversight, risk management, shareholder and stakeholder value, gender and society, and environmental responsibility, all of which are important facets of running an efficient and clean corporate ship which contributes to economic parity.

While token participation of women in companies may be a way out for some companies to demonstrate commitment towards gender diversity in the workplace, women are truly effective corporate leaders when they are given actual power and responsibility and not merely appointed to positions as a token for gender diversity or to serve the agenda of their male benefactors. It is only when a greater number of C-Suite/KMPs (top-level executives in an organisation and Key Managerial Personnel, or KMPs) are women, and, in addition, more independent directors and chairpersons of committees of the board and board committees are women, that they are truly effective corporate leaders. Importantly, the remuneration of women that is at parity with their male counterparts is a key indicator that women's presence in the corporate workforce is real and robust.While we do have a lot to celebrate on the occasion of Women's Day this year, it is important to keep in mind that there are still significant steps that companies and regulators must take in order to ensure that women's participation in the corporate workforce, especially in senior leadership roles, is strong, contributes meaningfully toward corporate governance and is not just a token concept that is aimed at gaining brownie points from stakeholders. Women's participation in the workforce must be promoted for its many benefits and must not fall victim to the dominant political narrative.End note: The issue of women in the corporate workforce, especially on company boards, is of great significance and merits deep research into various facets. Thought Arbitrage is undertaking such a study which maps the patterns of women on corporate boards by using qualitative and quantitative research methodologies over a 10-year period, involving about 1,000 companies.

'A fraud was committed on the judicial system by completely changing evidence,' says senior lawyer Shishir Hiray

Senior lawyer Shishir Hiray, who is the Special Public Prosecutor in the Porsche crash case, speaks to Sushant Kulkarni on the challenges in the prosecution of the multifaceted trial and the central point of the case.The prosecution's case involves a complex set of accused individuals — ranging from the minor being tried before the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) to 10 adults being prosecuted in regular court, including the minor's parents, two doctors and a staffer from Sassoon Hospital, two alleged middlemen, and the fathers of the two passengers. Given the wide spectrum of individuals with different roles, what are the key legal and procedural challenges of such a multifaceted prosecution?The basic challenge is how to ensure we have a speedy trial. We are working on the case of the CCL (Child in Conflict with Law) and also prosecuting the 10 accused in regular court and are facing as many number of defence lawyers. These accused are from the higher strata of society and those who have resources. With their resources they all can approach the higher courts and when that happens, it naturally delays the process in the lower court.

This is not a case where straight-jacket evidence is available like it happens in an open-and-shut case. There are a lot of technicalities involved. We will have to examine a wide range of witnesses including technical witnesses — especially for establishing before the court the conspiracy, motives and the act of swapping the blood samples. Chain of events that have taken place, will have to be established through not just the statement of the witnesses but also technical leads. Police investigation includes DNA test, DNA profiling which are comparatively newer branches of the law.All the witnesses in the case are those who have been in subordinate roles to the accused. That is why deposing these witnesses and making sure they do not succumb to any pressures is going to be a big challenge.Investigation officer ACP Ganesh Ingale has stated before the court earlier that witnesses were afraid of coming forward considering the background of the accused.The possibility of the accused pressuring the witnesses will always be there till the time witnesses depose. The accused can use their financial weight, their positions etc.What do you think is the most striking aspect of the probe and the central point of the prosecution's case?

The central point is that the blood sample of the intoxicated minor was swapped to fabricate evidence suggesting he was not intoxicated. The conspiracy was to then present this fabricated evidence before the court so that the adjudication will happen based on that. This is the most serious part of this case.And this was done not just for the minor driver but also for the two minor co-passengers. Now, to do this, money power was used, bribes were given, samples were swapped, records were forged. This amounted to thwarting the judicial system. When I took over the case, I carefully studied the details of the investigation. I came to a realisation that this was a fraud done with the judicial administration system by completely changing the evidence. And that is what we have brought out in our case.We have submitted that this being a very serious offence, where two young lives were lost, the minor diver should be tried as an adult accused. That application is pending for adjudication.Tell us about the possible timeline of the case in the coming days.If there are no deliberate calculated hurdles created in the case, the charges are expected to be framed in the coming days. From a wider list of witnesses, we plan to examine around 35 witnesses as I see the case right now. A chargesheet has been filed by us against all the accused. The court is yet to frame charges. However, one of the accused, Dr Ajay Taware, has filed his discharge application before a court. And now I am expecting that as a tactic, all these accused will one by one file the discharge applications to prolong the trial. They will make attempts to delay the process.Tell us about the technical evidence. The police had focused on gathering the technical evidence including an AI-based model of the accident.

The technical evidence of that nature is primarily against the CCL in the case of the accident. However, the technical and forensic evidence in the case of swapping of blood samples is also crucial that established the swapping of the blood samples and corruption behind it.Prevention of Corruption Act has been invoked in the case as the government employees from Sassoon Hospital were part of the conspiracy and allegedly took bribes for it. How do you plan to bring that out?So the evidence was tampered with as part of the conspiracy. We have concrete proof from the forensic sciences laboratories. Who swapped it? The doctors of Sassoon Hospital. At whose behest? We have technical evidence to prove that too. The money that exchanged hands has been recovered. We have sufficient evidence to prove the charges of corruption. I have a theoretical argument here. Had even one of the accused involved in the conspiracy acted prudently and lawfully, this offence could not have taken place. It is all of their involvement and connivance which has led to the commission of this offence.Except the accused mother of the CCL, all other accused are currently behind bars. She too was released on bail only on the ground that she is a woman and because there is a specific provision under Section 437 of the Criminal Procedure Code. Under this, even in the case of a serious offence, bail can be granted only on the grounds that an accused is a woman. This bail was not on the grounds of merit. Rather that has been my say on the issue when her bail application was pending before the High Court, the accused took an indirect route to apex court. According to me, they have again played with the judicial administration system here. I am categorically saying they have again played with the system.

What ails pre-clinical PG courses in Karnataka?

There were zero admissions for the post graduate (PG) medical pre-clinical courses in Vydehi Institute of Medical Sciences and Research Centre (VIMS), Bengaluru, including in anatomy, biochemistry, physiology, forensic medicine, microbiology and pharmacology, till the second round of PG-NEET counselling.The institute then informed the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA), the counselling authority in the State, that it would waive the tuition fees for candidates opting for these courses, after which, all the pharmacology seats were filled during the subsequent round of counselling, said Kalpaja D.A., Chairperson of the Institute.

This is the situation of PG medical pre-clinical courses in Karnataka, as candidates are hesitant to take them up due to a lack of job opportunities. Even in government medical colleges, only 15% to 20% of the seats in these courses are filled. The situation is far worse in private medical colleges, which have resorted to fee reduction, free hostel facility, stipend as per government guidelines, and job guarantee with good salary as promises to attract students towards pre-clinical and para-clinical courses.

Like VIMS, Oxford Medical College, Hospital and Research Centre has also waived the tuition fees, while BGS Institute of Medical Sciences has promised jobs to candidates immediately after completing the courses."For PG medical courses, students like to join clinical courses due to job prospects. As a result, despite measures such as fee reduction, free hostel facility and stipend, the enrollment has been poor. It is very difficult to find candidates for courses like anatomy, biochemistry, physiology, forensic medicine, and microbiology. Therefore, many seats in PG medical courses have remained vacant this year as well. The KEA has announced it will conduct a special stray vacancy round for the second time. We hope all the vacant seats will be filled," Kalpaja explained.

"This time, several private medical colleges have announced many facilities, including fee reduction and free hostel facility and others to attract students towards pre-clinical and para-clinical courses. There is no other way to attract students," said M.K. Ramesh, former Vice Chancellor of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS).A large number of postgraduate medical seats remained vacant in the State this year due to the lack of students opting for pre-clinical courses. A total of 3,864 postgraduate medical seats were available in the State for 2024-25. Out of these, 3,379 seats have been filled, and 485 seats remain vacant. Out of these, 471 are PG medical courses, while the remaining 14 are Diplomate of National Board (DNB) courses for in-service doctors.

Among these, most of the seats filled are in clinical courses, while most of the vacant seats are in pre-clinical courses.Out of the total 104 seats available in the MD Anatomy course this year, only six seats have been filled, leaving 98 seats vacant; of the 97 seats in the Physiology, 10 have been filled, leaving 87 vacant. Out of the 99 Biochemistry slots, 12 seats have been filled, and 87 remain vacant. Out of the 114 seats in Pharmacology, only 46 seats have been filled, leaving 68 seats vacant.Further, out of the 116 seats in Microbiology, 48 have been filled, and 68 are vacant, and of 58 seats in Forensic Medicine, only 10 have been filled and 48 remain vacant.On the other hand, almost

all the seats in other clinical courses, including MD General Medicine, Radiotherapy, Dermatology, Psychiatry, General Surgeon have been filled.The statistics of the KEA show students have been showing apathy towards clinical courses even in the past. In 2023-24, only two students were enrolled in the MD Anatomy course across the State. There were 12 students enrolled in Physiology, 7 in Biochemistry, 29 in Pharmacology, 15 in Microbiology, and 22 in Forensic Medicine.In 2022-23, only one student was enrolled in MD Anatomy, and no student enrolled in Physiology, leaving all the seats vacant. Only two students were enrolled in Biochemistry, 20 in Pharmacology, 8 in Microbiology, and two in Forensic Medicine.KEA is the counselling authority to fill the PG medical seats of the state on the basis of PGNEET ranking. This year, a large number of PG medical seats, including clinical, pre-clinical and para-clinical, remained vacant in Karnataka and the country after the mop-up round.Therefore, the NMC reduced the PGNEET cut-off percentage to 15% and allotted seats in the stray vacancy round. However, in this round too, more than 600 PG medical seats remained vacant in Karnataka. In this context, the NMC has again reduced the NEET cut-off percentage to 5% and has ordered to conduct the 'Special Stay Vacancy Round' counselling for the fifth time to allocate the remaining PG medical seats."This year, the pre-clinical seats are the largest number of unfilled seats among PG medical courses, and the NMC has reduced the PGNEET cut-off percentage and has asked us to conduct another round of counselling to allocate the seats. It has been four months since the PGNEET counselling started, and now the NMC has reduced the cut-off percentage to 5%. Earlier, the NMC had reduced the cut-off percentage to zero. If the PGNEET cut-off percentage had been reduced to 5% earlier, it would have been more beneficial for the candidates, and more people would have opted for the courses. As soon as the NMC admission schedule is released, we will start option entry and allocate all these seats," said Prasanna.H. Executive Director of KEA.But will this be enough? "I have decided to study clinical courses in PG. I did not get any clinical course seat in the last four rounds of counselling due to my PGNEET ranking. Recently, the cut-off percentage for the special stray vacancy round has been reduced to 5%. So, there is a possibility of getting a seat. If I do not get a PG clinical course seat this time, I will write the PGNEET exam next year as well," said Abhijit, a PG medical seat aspirant from Bengaluru.Experts believe that candidates who have completed MBBS are hesitant to pursue pre-clinical courses in their postgraduate degrees due to a lack of future opportunities.

No hardsell for this adman-turned-diplomat Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri

Flanked by two officers, Colonel Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, Misri became India's diplomatic voice during Operation Sindoor. Together, they signalled how in this operation, the military and diplomatic imperatives were in lock-step. For Misri, the message was clear: to ensure that the daily briefing was to the point — embellished with neither frill nor shrill.Not a tall order for a diplomat who began as an adman. Misri joined the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) in 1989, after three years at Lintas India in Mumbai and Contract Advertising in Delhi, where he worked closely with production teams. He would carry the skill of the hardsell to some of the toughest negotiating tables around the world — from China and Myanmar, where he held Ambassadorial stints, to Pakistan, where he was First Secretary during the Agra Summit.

Misri's batchmates, colleagues and former Ambassadors talk of him as "a thorough professional" and, more significantly, in the me-myself-and-I age of social media, someone "who doesn't advertise himself".Foreign Sect.Vikram Misri with Col.Sofiya Qureshi and Wg.Cdr Vyomika Singh during press briefing on Operation Sindoor in new delhi on wednesday.Express photo by Anil Sharma.07.05.2025 Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri with Col Sofiya Qureshi and Wg.Cdr Vyomika Singh during press briefing on Op Sindoor in New Delhi. (Express Photo by Anil Sharma)A senior bureaucrat who has interacted with Misri when he was Ambassador in Myanmar vouches for "another side" — a love for crime thrillers. He recalls a decade-old conversation with Misri in Naypyidaw, where they discussed Dog Day Afternoon, the 1975 Sidney Lumet classic, with Al Pacino in the lead.Growing up in a Kashmiri Pandit family in Srinagar, where he did his early schooling before moving to Udhampur and Gwalior, Misri, colleagues say, rarely speaks about himself at public or private gatherings. A former Ambassador who has known Misri from his early days at the Pakistan desk of the Ministry of External Affairs, says, "He never made it about himself. It was all about his work. That was what kept him engrossed."That self-effacing side was on display between May 7 and 10, when Misri stayed in touch with the military and worked the lines diplomatically, briefing and debriefing the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the office of the National Security Adviser (NSA).

While his composure was noticed by those in the room where he addressed the media, he was sharp on Pakistan's complicity in cross-border terrorism — one day pulling out a photograph showing slain terrorists getting state funerals and explaining terror targets on a map another day.Operation sindoor Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, centre, with Indian army officer Colonel Sofiya Qureshi, left, and Indian Air Force officer Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, right, address a press conference after India struck multiple sites inside Pakistani controlled territory with missiles under Operation Sindoor, in New Delhi, India, However, his statement on the evening of May 10, when he announced the pause on military action, led to an attack from war-mongering trolls who thought the ceasefire was a retreat on India's part, some even targeting his daughter. In response, Misri did what people know him for — he didn't dignify the comments with a public reaction; instead, he simply locked his social media handle.It may have been a rare, uncomfortable moment of media glare for someone who is used to working behind the scenes. In 2001, when the Agra Summit between then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf was organised, a

former colleague recalls Misri putting in late hours.He was then posted as First Secretary at the Indian Mission in Islamabad, and was in India as part of the team overseeing the logistics of the Summit."He would work late into the night to plan his next day's work, even after everyone else had called it a day," recalls the colleague.Misri would go on to take up other challenging assignments. He was India's Ambassador to China, when the ties between the two countries were impacted following the Galwan clashes in 2020.Despite strained ties between Delhi and Beijing, he was instrumental in the bilateral conversations at the military and diplomatic levels. So in October 2024, when India and China came to an agreement on disengagement of troops, it was Misri who announced it to the world, this time as Foreign Secretary, a position he assumed in July 2024 and will hold till July 2026.Misri also worked on the India-US Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies, while he was Deputy NSA between 2022 and 2024, working closely with NSA Ajit Doval.His colleagues in South Block recall a special gesture he made soon after taking over as Foreign Secretary. In September last year, Misri hosted a dinner to mark the 100th birthday of former Foreign Secretary M K Rasgotra, known in the fraternity as 'GOAT FS'. Rasgotra was India's Foreign Secretary between 1982 and 1985.He is also known to enjoy a rapport with Minister S Jaishankar, who, like him, was India's Ambassador to China before becoming Foreign Secretary. On assuming his office in Beijing in January 2019, the first photograph Misri posted was of the board showing the names of his predecessors, including Jaishankar and Shivshankar Menon.Besides his China experience and on the MEA's Pakistan desk, Misri has served in various Indian missions in Europe, Africa, Asia and North America. He was on the staff of two External Affairs Ministers (I K Gujral and Pranab Mukherjee), and has worked as Private Secretary for three Prime Ministers – I K Gujral, Manmohan Singh and Narendra ModiMisri's knowledge of the workings of the PMO, the office of the NSA and the External Affairs Ministry are significant as he now has to implement India's foreign policy as determined and shaped by the trio in the political-strategic-security establishment — PM Modi, Jaishankar and Doval.As the trio arrived in New Delhi in the early hours of April 23, cutting short their Saudi Arabia visit in the wake of the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, it was Misri who received them at the airport, with a crucial briefing on the Pakistani imprint on the attacks, and other leads at that point.Over the next two days, Misri briefed the Ambassadors and the High Commissioners of G20 countries, linking Pakistan-based terror groups to the Pahalgam attack, in which 26 civilians were killed.

Middle powers like India are wiring trade ties to dodge US-China fallout: Jean-Pierre Landau

A spate of trade deals and economic partnerships stitched by middle powers such as India, Canada, and the European Union (EU) are signs that they are preparing for the fallout of economic ties between the two of the world's largest economies — the US and China, said Jean-Pierre Landau, a Professor in the Department of Economics at Sciences Po (Paris), in an interview with Amid worries of a looming debt crisis, Landau said the US debt is still very safe compared to the others, but part of that safety rests on the expectation that the institutions will be respected. However, aggressive measures taken by the US are aggravating the debt problem. Edited excerpts:

The US-China conflict is going beyond a trade war. What is your take on how the middle powers, such as India, are navigating this power struggle?The concept of middle power is a very interesting and challenging one. The way we see things moving clearly is a sort of organised attempt (by middle powers) to keep trade relationships stable, unimpaired by too many protectionist measures, by signing free trade agreements and cooperative economic agreements. The EU, Canada, and India are very active in this area. So, they are all trying to keep a network of trade relationships protected from the US and China. Up until now, it has managed very well.

This being said, we're still very much in a vulnerable situation. We are not immune to a possible financial shock coming from either the debt markets, the private credit markets, or the stock market. We have the G20, we have BRICS, but they don't have the kind of operational mechanism for financial and monetary cooperation that would be necessary if we have financial troubles coming in.I would say India is in a special position because of its size and plays an important role in the emerging world. I would say Europe is a beacon of monetary stability. It has a very credible monetary regime and a very credible central bank. So, these are the pillars on which we might want to build.What is your sense of the looming debt crisis? The US has become more aggressive in its efforts to bridge its trade deficit due to rising debt.

On debt, I think the causality may be the reverse of the one you have described. I don't think the US is becoming aggressive because they have a debt problem. I think the fact that they're becoming aggressive is creating a debt problem. It has led people to question the commitment of the US to the stability of its institutions. I mean, you see the president challenging the independence of the central bank. The US debt is still very safe compared to the others, but part of that safety rests on the expectation that the institutions will be respected, the stability will be ensured by the government, and if there are doubts, they come from the actions of the authorities themselves.AI-related investments are driving global trade, but there are fears of a bubble.High stock market valuation is a concern. There are three concerns. The second concern is circular financing. So, big chip makers are financing their clients and creating sales for themselves out of their own loans . That may have limits. Since it is a totally new technology which is extremely capital intensive, the ability of this model to generate the cash flow which will justify the valuation and the debt accumulation is definitely a question mark. So, in my view, it's not so much a question of a bubble, and if there's a bubble, a pure stock market bubble, we can absorb it. But the question is the viability of the whole financial structure and growth which is taking place in that sector

AI is also driving a debate on what would be the right energy mix. The Trump administration is betting on nuclear. What do you think will be the future of energy? The last nuclear power plant in Germany shut down in 2023.I am very biased when it comes to nuclear power. I think it is the energy of the future. It will help us solve all other environmental problems. It will solve air and water problems. The problem with nuclear power is that of governance. You cannot have nuclear power in a failed state.

From a pure economic perspective, I think the coupling of renewables with (other) networks is not economically rational. You need a very special type of network for renewables which can manage the intermittency of renewables, and that network is actually very expensive. So, at the moment in the current state of the technology as I see it, renewable is very good for local usages which may be 15-20% of energy requirement.If we get to a situation where the battery technology gets much better, then we may see expansion of renewables much more than we have before. But we don't know. So, again, it's a question of technology.I think the knack and the key of industry is to manage the sequencing, growth and introduction of those technologies. We all want to be champions of creative destruction. Some of us create before they destroy others, like Europe; destroy before they create, and it doesn't work. That is why China, which is the biggest polluter in the world, is still dominant in those (clean) technologies because they have a way of introducing the technology when they are mature and they support growth.

There's a very strong theme of reindustrialisation. How effective can it be amid the concentration of industries in China?I think the way China has managed to integrate into the world has created problems for everyone. There is a problem with the way they have done it in the last 10 years, not before — the last 10 years, the way they have managed is obviously very disruptive and problematic. Second, we can all reindustrialise.We can all have our domestic industries, and the question is whether we keep growing, because part of our growth has come from the fact that we specialise, we organise cross-border, we interact with each other, and my concern is that for very legitimate reasons of strategic autonomy, resilience, independence we throw a little bit of baby with water and we engage into strategies which ultimately will produce lower.So yes, we can all industrialise. France can produce if we want; we can produce all our cars, or it's going to be terribly expensive, and we won't have growth. That's it. Can we manage to have a system which is more resilient, more robust, more respectful of our autonomies and still produce the kind of prosperity? We should not forget that the previous system has produced incredible benefits in terms of reducing poverty.

Then, if we look at that level — the big challenge we have in the future — especially for Europeans, is a common challenge (that) is Africa. The African population will double in 30 years, so basic math tells you that if we don't double at least the stock of capital in Africa, it's (going to be) a big challenge for everybody.

Most of us carry genetic risks. Does that mean we'll get sick?

Most people would be classified as having a high genetic risk for around three common diseases, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease and schizophrenia. But most of us are not destined to become ill, according to a new study. It is that genetic risk is far more common than the disease itself — and the two should not be confused.Published in the journal Genome Medicine on October 22, the study set out to describe what a typical human genome looks like and how much genetic variation people carry, including variations associated with disease. Researchers led by the University of Exeter analysed genetic data from nearly one million people in the UK Biobank and the US All of Us research programme. Their findings offer a useful lesson in how to interpret genetic tests, and why a concerning result on a DNA report is not necessarily a prediction of what will happen to your health.

The study is significant because it offers a useful corrective to the idea that our DNA can neatly predict our medical future. Our genomes contain millions of differences, and many people carry genetic variants associated with disease. Yet the presence of these variants does not translate directly into illness.1. Most people have a high genetic score for around three common conditions: The researchers examined genetic risk scores for 28 diseases in the UK Biobank dataset. On average, participants fell within the top 10% of genetic risk scores for around three conditions. These scores combine information from many genetic variants, each of which may contribute a small amount to a person's predisposition to a disease.Being in the top 10% means having a higher score than most people in the comparison group. It does not mean having a 10% chance of developing the disease, nor does it mean that the disease is inevitable.The study also did not establish that the people with higher scores would go on to develop those conditions.

2. Everyone's DNA contains enormous amounts of variation: The average genome contains roughly 4.3 million to 5.3 million genetic variants — differences in DNA compared with a reference genome. Most are harmless or have no clearly measurable effect on health. Some influence ordinary traits like how the body processes substances or how a person responds to medicines. A much smaller number has established links to disease.In other words, genetic variation is normal. Finding a difference in someone's DNA is not, by itself, evidence that something is wrong.

3. A disease-associated genetic variant does not always cause disease: Researchers estimated that an average person carries around one to three rare variants classified as pathogenic or likely pathogenic in certain genes associated with single-gene disorders. That may sound alarming, but many of these variants occur in genes linked to recessive conditions. A person who carries just one disease-causing copy may be a healthy carrier rather than someone who has the disease.

4. Genetic testing can produce uncertain results: The study also found that people carry numerous rare genetic variants whose clinical significance is not yet known — around 50 variants of uncertain significance on average under the study's definitions.An uncertain result is not a diagnosis. It means researchers do not yet have enough evidence to determine whether the variant affects health.As genetic databases grow and scientific understanding improves, some interpretations may change. This is one reason why genetic reports need careful clinical interpretation rather than being read as a list of diseases a person is likely to get.

What does "high genetic risk" actually mean?

Imagine two people with similar lifestyles. One has a genetic profile that places them above average for type 2 diabetes risk, while the other has a lower score. The first person may have a greater inherited predisposition. But whether either person develops diabetes also depends on other influences, including age, body composition, physical activity, diet, medical history and other biological factors. Genes are part of the picture, not the whole picture.The study's results are, therefore, best understood as a warning against treating genetic scores as stand-alone forecasts.

Does this mean genetic testing is not useful?

No. Genetic testing can be extremely valuable when used for the right purpose. It can help diagnose certain inherited disorders, identify people who may benefit from specific preventive measures, guide some treatment decisions and clarify the risk of particular conditions within families.But the usefulness of a test depends on what it measures and how reliably its findings predict a meaningful health outcome. A test designed to help diagnose an inherited disorder is not the same as a broad screening test that calculates scores for dozens of common diseases. The latter may flag many people without reliably identifying who will actually become ill. The researchers caution that reporting numerous genetic risk scores together could lead to unnecessary anxiety, follow-up testing and overdiagnosis.

What about people in India and other under-represented populations?

Although the research involved nearly one million people, the data came from the UK and the US, and people of Western European ancestry were over-represented. The researchers acknowledge the need for more diverse genetic datasets. More representative research will be needed to establish how well these risk scores work across different populations.

Personalised cancer vaccine cuts skin cancer recurrence risk by 42%: What this means for patients

A personalised cancer vaccine that uses messenger RNA (mRNA) technology to train the immune system to recognise and attack an individual patient's tumour has reduced the relative risk of melanoma (skin cancer) recurrence or death by 42% when added to standard immunotherapy.The results from a large international phase III clinical trial, involving 1,137 patients with high-risk melanoma whose tumours had been completely removed through surgery, are being described as a breakthrough in cancer therapies. The vaccine, intismeran autogene, remains investigational and is not yet available for routine clinical use.

According to Melanoma Institute Australia, the trial compared pembrolizumab alone with pembrolizumab combined with intismeran. At two years, 82.2% of patients receiving the combination remained free from recurrence, compared with 70% receiving pembrolizumab alone — an absolute difference of 12.2 percentage points. The combination also reduced the relative risk of distant metastasis or death by 38%. The results were presented at the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) Congress 2026."This is a very important development in cancer treatment. We have been talking about personalised cancer vaccines for several years, but we now have phase III evidence that this approach can improve outcomes over an established treatment," says Dr Vanita Noronha, professor and medical oncologist at Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai.

How does the personalised vaccine work?

Unlike preventive vaccines, intismeran is designed for people who already have cancer, with the aim of reducing the risk of recurrence after treatment. Cancer cells accumulate genetic changes that can produce abnormal proteins called neoantigens. A sample of the patient's tumour is analysed to identify suitable targets, and scientists design an mRNA vaccine carrying instructions for selected neoantigens. The vaccine helps the immune system activate T cells that can recognise and attack cancer cells carrying these targets.The aim is to eliminate microscopic cancer cells that may remain after surgery, even when the visible tumour has been removed.Pembrolizumab works differently. It blocks PD-1, an immune checkpoint that can restrain T-cell activity, helping immune cells mount an attack. "The vaccine helps direct the immune response towards the patient's tumour, while pembrolizumab helps the immune system sustain that response," Dr Noronha explains.The evidence relates to patients with high-risk stage IIB to stage IV cutaneous melanoma whose tumours have been completely removed surgically. The vaccine is being investigated as an adjuvant treatment — therapy given after primary treatment to reduce recurrence risk.Dr Noronha cautions that the findings should not be extrapolated to patients with active, unresectable or metastatic melanoma, in whom measurable cancer remains. The vaccine is also not a replacement for pembrolizumab. The benefit demonstrated in the trial came from adding the personalised vaccine to existing immunotherapy, rather than using the vaccine alone.The treatment remains subject to regulatory review, which could take several years depending on the country, according to Melanoma Institute Australia.

Could this work for cancers common in India?

Researchers are investigating personalised cancer vaccines in other cancers, including lung, kidney, bladder and pancreatic cancer. However, success in melanoma does not guarantee similar results elsewhere. "Researchers are investigating personalised mRNA cancer vaccines in several other cancer types, including non-small-cell lung

cancer, kidney cancer, bladder cancer and pancreatic cancer. However, success in melanoma does not guarantee similar results in other cancers. Melanoma can carry a relatively high number of mutations, some of which produce neoantigens that the immune system can recognise. Other cancers may have fewer suitable targets or biological mechanisms that suppress immune responses, making treatment more challenging," Dr Noronha says."For lung cancer, breast cancer and pancreatic cancer, we will need disease-specific clinical trial results before drawing conclusions about efficacy," she adds.She also stresses that therapeutic cancer vaccines should not be confused with preventive vaccines. Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination can prevent many HPV-related cervical cancers, while hepatitis B vaccination reduces the risk of liver cancer associated with chronic hepatitis B infection. Intismeran, by contrast, is designed for an individual who already has cancer and aims to lower the risk of its return.

What are the limitations?

Although the phase III results are encouraging, questions remain about how long the benefit will last and whether the treatment ultimately helps patients live longer. Dr Noronha says overall survival data from INTerpath-001 remain immature and longer follow-up is needed to establish whether the improvement in recurrence-free outcomes translates into longer lives.The combination also has side effects. According to the figures provided by Dr Noronha, treatment-related adverse events were reported in 95.8% of patients receiving intismeran with pembrolizumab, compared with 90% receiving pembrolizumab alone. Severe grade 3–5 treatment-related adverse events occurred in 14.2% and 13.4% of patients, respectively. The most common reported adverse events with the combination were fever (52.2%), injection-site pain (51%) and fatigue (38.5%). Pembrolizumab can also cause immune-related complications, some of which can be serious.

Each vaccine must also be designed for an individual patient, requiring tumour tissue, genetic sequencing, specialised manufacturing facilities and time for production.

What about India?

Dr Noronha believes affordability, access to tumour sequencing and manufacturing infrastructure will be critical considerations before such treatments can be delivered at scale. "I would not describe this as a cure or suggest that it will eliminate the risk of recurrence for every patient. It is an additional treatment that has demonstrated a meaningful benefit in a defined group of patients," she says.

For now, the trial provides evidence that tailoring treatment to the genetic characteristics of an individual's tumour may help reduce the risk of melanoma returning. Whether the approach can improve long-term survival, extend to other cancers and become affordable enough for wider use will depend on further research and regulatory decisions.

RBI Governor hints that Tata Sons may have to go for listing

Hinting that Tata Sons may have to go for listing on the stock exchanges, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Friday said non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) or core investment companies (CICs) like Tata Sons and others are required tobe registered with the RBI because of the risks involved, including systemic risks."And if it is in the upper layer (of the NBFC category), then it is required to list," he said.

The RBI had recently classified Tata Sons as a CIC within the NBFC-Upper layer framework. These NBFCs and CICs are required to go for listing as per the RBI norms.Any entity falling within the RBI's definition of an NBFC or a CIC must be registered with the central bank if it has direct or indirect access to public funds, he said while speaking at the NDTV World Summit in New Delhi."They sit on top of group companies where they leverage funds… they can leverage funds, they do leverage funds, and they use the balance sheets of the group companies to return those funds," Malhotra said."So, the funds of the public, whether through banks, corporate bonds or other means, are at risk when these CICs engage in this kind of activity. It is for these reasons that CICs, which are a type of NBFCs, are required to be registered," he said."Only in cases where a CIC does not have access, directly or indirectly, to public funds do we allow them not to register," Malhotra said.The RBI had recently rejected the proposal of Tata Sons for deregistration as a CIC and asked the company to comply with the guidelines.At the September 17 board meeting of Tata Sons, directors decided to go ahead with listing of the company, as directed by the RBI, despite opposition from Tata Trusts chairman Noel Tata. Tata Trusts have been arguing for keeping the company unlisted.On September 28, Tata Trusts sent a proposal to the Tata Sons board for the merger of Tata Electronics Systems Solutions Pvt Ltd (TESS) and Tata Consulting Engineers (TCE) with Tata Sons Pvt Ltd (TSPL).The move, if approved and implemented, would fundamentally alter the structure and nature of Tata Sons and could take it outside the regulatory framework that triggered the RBI's listing directive.

Tata Sons was unable to conduct the annual general meeting due to lack of quorum as the Charity Commissioner has slapped a restraining order on Sir Ratan Tata Trust.The trust could not recommend a joint representative due to the order.The power struggle between the Tata Sons board and Tata Trusts on the issue of listing has intensified with trustees Venu Srinivasan, who is also on the board of Tata Sons, and Vijay Singh filing complaints with the Charity Commissioner.Meanwhile, governor Malhotra said India's economic growth remained broad-based, backed by resilient high-frequency indicators, while reiterating that price stability remained the central bank's primary objective. He also said the RBI's aim in the foreign exchange market was to prevent disruption and disorderly conditions, without targeting any particular level of the rupee.On inflation, the Governor said price stability remained a priority alongside the need to sustain economic growth. He pointed to supply-side pressures, particularly those arising from food and fuel, as important influences on the inflation trajectory.Asked about the rupee and the central bank's approach to currency movements, Malhotra said the RBI did not target a specific price or exchange-rate level. Its objective, he indicated, was to ensure that the foreign exchange market functioned in an orderly manner.

Bharat Biotech announces 40 pc price cut for Mosqivac malaria vaccine

Hyderabad: Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL) announced equitable pricing with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and UNICEF for the world's first malaria vaccine RTS, S/AS01, developed by GSK and now manufactured by BBIL under the brand name Mosqivac.The agreement, executed by UNICEF and financially backed by Gavi, will cut the price of the vaccine by approximately 40 per cent. This will generate around US$50 million in savings for child immunisation programmes between 2027 and 2029 and reach up to one million more children with the full four-dose course.The agreement, enabled through an advance payment by the International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm), will bring the price of the vaccine to EUR 5.50 per dose, a reduction of approximately 40 per cent from the price paid today.RTS,S/AS01, developed by GSK, PATH and partners, was the first ever malaria vaccine to be recommended by the WHO, in 2021. Since then, GSK and Bharat Biotech have invested $200 million in new, higher-output manufacturing facilities, product development and technology transfer to expand and strengthen supply at a lower cost.

'Trying to build Anahat's identity as squash player; build off-beat patterns' – Saurav Ghosal

Most would look at Anahat Singh's Silicon Valley Open campaign as memorable — she beat the legendary Nour El Sherbini en route her maiden, and potentially career-defining, PSA Gold-level semi-finals. But her engine room is more ambitious than that. National head coach Harinder Singh, who was with Anahat in California, said after her win against No. 14 Salma Hany that "she could have played better".

Indian squash titan Saurav Ghosal, who has been mentoring Anahat since December 2023, also feels that while a semi-final run is commendable, it is not enough to sate her (or them). "A lot of the stuff that she's been learning over the last two months is coming through, which is great. But at the end of the day, it's another semis. The idea is to try and win these tournaments and that's what Anahat wants to do as well," Ghosal tells The Indian Express.Like at the Asian Games final, Sivasangari Subramaniam was the stumbling block for Anahat in Redwood City too. Saurav is mindful of the fact that the 18-year-old has lost to the Malaysian world No. 4 three times over the last month and a half. "We need to unlock that a little bit," he says.

It's a tall order without doubt. "Right now, the reality is that Siva's base level is probably on a consistent basis higher than Anahat's. That is the journey that Anahat's on," Saurav says. He adds that the teenager needs to get "a bit stronger, a bit more powerful" to deal better with Sivasangari and other top players. "That's what we are working on, both off the court in training, and on the court, to deal with the pace and the intensity that is thrown at her as she climbs up the ranks and plays these girls in the top four-five."Saurav is quick to add that getting physically stronger is not an overnight job. "It could take three months, six months, or maybe slightly longer to put it all together, but the trajectory is correct. She's heading in the right direction. There's been a lot of improvement after the World Juniors (which she won). We can be optimistic about the future with what we are seeing and what we're doing seems to be working to some extent."Anahat entered the semi-final with a strapping on her right leg, caused by an awkward fall in the quarters. Though she started the match strongly, it might have played a role later on. "She was struggling a little bit with her leg, but she still wanted to play because she felt like she had a shot. When she was warmed up, I think it was all right, but it didn't quite stay for the entire match."That's not an excuse though, the former world No. 10 says. "She actually got a game today off Siva. So she's learning and Siva is playing at a very, very high level right now. There's no disgrace in losing to her and there's no need to make any excuses. It hurts when you're physically not the best, but it's testament to Anahat that she wanted to fight and push through it. Hopefully we've not done too much damage to it."

In his conversations with Anahat, Saurav is helping her "understand what her identity as a squash player is", so she can improve it to a level that no one in the world can beat her at that. He elaborates: "It's for her to understand tactically what the other girls are doing when they play her or when they play in general, so that she can do the things required to make them feel uncomfortable; and having the focus and belief to do it for long periods of time rather than just short phases in matches, because that's the difference at the top level."There are some technical aspects too, of course but they go through phases with that. "You will work on something and she gets better at it, she's a quick learner. Then we'll move on to something else."Broadly speaking, mentor Saurav and head coach Gregory Gaultier are trying to have Anahat play a different sort of game than others on Tour. The current wave of players are largely into hard-hitting, high-intensity squash.

The current world number one and world champion Amina (Orfi) is probably the best example of that. Her intensity is through the roof and it's absolutely brilliant what she's doing," the 40-year-old says, adding, "We just feel that to break through, we have to go a little bit against the grain. We need to create different patterns of play and different variations. We have to pose different problems to players to solve, rather than what they are used to. Anahat has the skillset to do it and that'll take her a long way, if she can continue to improve in the way she is."

Mumbai Indians appoint Kieron Pollard as head coach

GNS News Agency, Oct 26

Mumbai Indians have announced former West Indies captain and franchise great Kieron Pollard as their new head coach. Pollard takes over from Mahela Jayawardene, whose departure from the franchise after a nearly decade-long association was announced last week."MI has been a huge part of my life and career, and the bond I share with this team, the players and the Paltan means a great deal to me. Having experienced this journey as a player and then as a coach, I understand what Mumbai Indians stands for and the responsibility that comes with representing the Blue and Gold," said Pollard in a statement from the franchise.

One of the most succesfull players of all time in the history of the IPL, Pollard joined MI in 2010 as a highly sought-after youngster. Over the years, he became part of the core that went on to establish itself as the most succesfull team in the history of the IPL along with the Chennai Super Kings. Pollard won the IPL with MI in 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2020. He also won the Champions League T20 in 2011 and 2013.Pollard retired from playing in the IPL in November 2022 but continued as batting coach of the side. Since 2020, MI haven't quite hit the heights they did in the previous decade, with the franchise failing to make it to the final in this period, their longest run without reaching the title clash, and reaching the playoffs just twice. They have also finished bottom of the table twice – in 2022 and 2024."Pollard joined Mumbai Indians as a young 22-year-old and, over the past sixteen years, has become an integral part of our family. As a player, he gave us many unforgettable moments, and as a coach, he has continued to share his experience, passion and deep understanding of the game. We are delighted to see him take on this new responsibility as Head Coach," said franchise co-owner Nita Ambani in the statement.

Sivasangari remains Anahat's nemesis: Teen bows out in Silicon Valley Open semis

It was a bridge too far in the end. Anahat Singh took down eight-time world champion Nour El Sherbini and her fellow Egyptian Salma Hany to get to the semi-finals, but Sivasangari Subramaniam was always going to be a different kettle of fish.The established Malaysian World No 4, who has become Anahat's nemesis on Tour, brought up her fourth consecutive win against the 18-year-old to ease into the Silicon Valley Open final. The 27-year-old brushed off a sluggish opening game to win 5-11, 11-6, 11-4, 11-7 in 37 minutes flat.

Anahat played the match with a strapping on her right knee, most likely due to an awkward fall in the quarterfinal against Hany. That did not appear to have any bearing on her court movement, however. She made a rollicking start to the match against the Malaysian who is currently on her career-high rank of No 4, behind the three top Egyptians.With Sivasangari lacking the structure that she usually brings to her strokes, the Indian made her pay via a series of venomous drops and boasts. In a far departure from how their Asian Games final meeting panned out, Anahat dictated terms to create six game balls. She converted the second one to take the first game with ease.Sivasangari set her house in order in Game 2, opening up the court with more measured and all-round strokeplay. Anahat hung back far more than she would have liked to. As a result, she was forced to be more inventive with her shots and ended up tinning a fair few. The Malaysian needed no second invitation and wrapped up the game at the first opportunity.

Game 3 saw more of the same. Anahat gave glimpses of her sublime use of angles but they were sparse as the world No. 4 continued to peg her back and not allow any room for front-of-court attacking.Anahat has forged comebacks from such positions against top-10 players in the past, but not against Sivasangari, who was just too organised by then to let it happen.The third seed kept up the consistency from the back court in the fourth game and her teenaged opponent, though a lot more in the contest in the rallies now, was not threatening enough to spark a turnaround. Facing three match balls, Anahat attempted a low shot off the side wall but only managed to tin it.Nevertheless, the junior world champion bowed out with her best-ever finish at a PSA Gold-level tournament. Sivasangari, meanwhile, made her second straight final in California."Anahat is very talented, very attacking, very dangerous. She has beaten a lot of the top girls already," the victor said of world No. 15 Anahat moments after the match."I started a bit slow, she started strong. But I'm very happy with the way I backed up the first set and finished it in four sets," Sivasangari added.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi moved out of opening slot for the 1st time, falls for 4 runs in 8 balls

GNS News Agency, Oct 26

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi returned to the Indian team in their second T20I against New Zealand and ended up playing outside the opening spots for the first time in his fledgling career. India stuck with their in-form opening partnership of Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma and 15-year-old Sooryavanshi came in at No.3. The teenager didn't last long, though, falling after scoring four runs in eight balls.

Sooryavanshi came in as a replacement for Ishan Kishan, who was injured in the first T20I and didn't bat. New Zealand batted first on Saturday and put up a score of 180/5. Matt Henry and Jacob Duffy initially kept Samson and Abhishek quiet, with the former starting the innings off with a maiden. It was only off the third ball of the second over by Duffy that Abhishek sliced a big shot and managed to get himself and India off the mark.It had looked like Abhishek had been caught at deep square leg off the fifth delivery of that over but the umpire ended up calling it a no ball. Abhishek responded by hitting fours off consecutive balls. The openers eventually managed to put up a stand of 40 runs before Samson fell to Duffy for 14 off 17 balls in the fifth over, which is when Sooryavanshi walked in.With the pitch being the same one that was used for the first T20I, it wasn't as conducive to batting as India have experienced in the recent past at home in white-ball cricket. At the same time, though, it has to be noted that Sooryavanshi himself is yet to play any international cricket at home. Nonetheless, he found it difficult to get going.The teenager was given an early reprieve when Jacobs missed what looked like a straightforward catching chance off just the second ball that Sooryavanshi faced in the innings. Sooryavanshi tried a few more big hits before eventually succumbing to Nathan Smith off the second ball of the seventh over.

11-year-old Indian-origin star Bodhana Sivanandan shatters Judit Polgar's 38-year-old record

Less than a month after she became the youngest Woman Grandmaster (WGM) in history, 11-year-old Bodhana Sivanandan became the youngest woman to earn the International Master (IM) title. In becoming the youngest female International Master at the age of 11 years, seven months, and 16 days, Bodhana broke the female age record held by chess legend Judit Polgar since 1988.In overall charts, the Indian-origin British chess prodigy is now the seventh youngest player (male or female) to become an International Master. In terms of ranks of youngest International Masters in chess history, Bodhana (ranked 7th) is behind Javokhir Sindarov (ranked 6th) by a month while pipping Gukesh (ranked 9th) in the youngest IM ranks.In her young career, Bodhana has set several records: she was also the youngest Woman International Master (WIM) and the youngest Woman FIDE Master (WFM). She had also become the youngest girl to defeat a grandmaster.Bodhana has already set her sights on becoming a grandmaster.

"I'm happy about that (becoming IM) but hopefully I'll be able to get the grandmaster title soon as well!" she said in a post-game interview with WCM Tallulah Roberts on the official tournament broadcast.Bodhana's parents were from Tamil Nadu's Trichy before moving to the UK."I'm an economic migrant to the UK, having moved in 2007 to work in the IT sector. Bodhana was born and brought up in London. She started playing chess when she was just five years old. We had no plans to make her play chess. She just stumbled across a chess board at home, and started to play," Bodhana's father Sivanandan Velayutham had told The Indian Express back in 2024.

"I knew just basic chess, so I downloaded Chess.com to help her learn by watching the videos there. Back then, I just got her a free version, thinking she might not continue the sport," Velayutham had said.Unlike many Indian prodigies, Bodhana had to juggle school and chess as a kid growing up in London's Harrow."On weekdays, she spends most of her time in school. It's not like the India model where you can skip school as an athlete. So she leaves at 8 am for school and then returns at 4 pm. She plays chess for about an hour a day. There are days when we go for chess tournaments in the evenings. But only on weekends does she spend two or three hours practising," Velayutham told

Rahul falls for duck, Jaiswal for 17 as India's Test stars crumble against New Zealand A

GNS News Agency, Oct 26

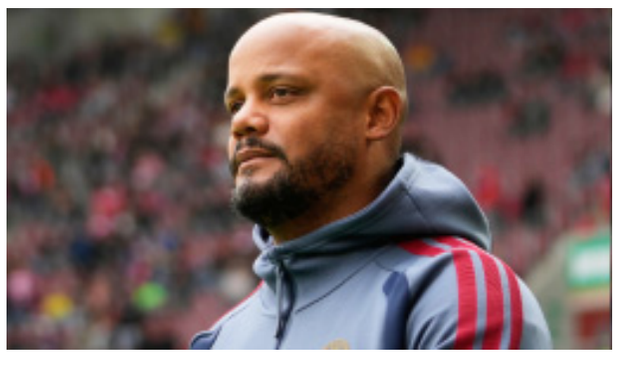
The India A batting lineup consisting of a number of players expected to part of the senior side that will face New Zealand in two Test matches next month collapsed to a score of 113 in the first innings of the first unofficial Test against New Zealand A on Saturday. The match is the first of three unofficial Tests that India A play against New Zealand A.As many as seven player out of the India A playing eleven for the match are part of the Indian Test squad for the two-match series. Of these, only three — Devdutt Padikkal (32), Yashasvi Jaiswal (17) and Anshul Kamboj (10) – managed to get to double-digit scores. KL Rahul, vice-captain of the Indian squad, fell for an eight-ball duck. He is set to open the innings with Jaiswal for India and the same was the case on Friday for India A and the stand lasted just 15 balls, producing five runs.Dhruv Jurel, who is captain of India A, fell for one run while Washington Sundar fell for a six-ball duck. Akash Deep came in at No.10 and fell for a two-ball duck. The highest scorer for India A was Vidarbha's Yash Rathod, who made 44 in 49 balls.India's first Test against New Zealand starts on November 19 in Wellington, followed by the second Test on November 27 in Christchurch. The series is the last leg of India's tour of the country, consisting of the ongoing five-match T20I series and a five-match ODI series. India won the first T20I by four wickets, chasing down a target of 226 with two balls to spare. In the second T20I, India have won the toss and chosen to bowl first. Both games are taking place in Christchurch, after which the series moves to Wellington.The Test series will be the first between the two sides since India fell to a humiliating 3-0 loss in the 2024 series. It was the first time that New Zealand had won more than one Test in a series in India, let alone win a series in the country.

India strike early but Phillips, Jacobs power New Zealand to 180/5

Christchurch: India produced a much-improved bowling display before New Zealand rode on half-centuries from Glenn Phillips and Bevon Jacobs to post 180 for five in the second T20 International here on Saturday.Phillips smashed 70 off 43 balls, while Jacobs contributed 58 off 46 deliveries as the duo rescued New Zealand from a shaky start with a 116-run partnership for the fourth wicket.New Zealand had slipped to 41 for three in the sixth over after India's bowlers struck early, but Phillips and Jacobs steadied the innings with a measured approach before accelerating in the latter stages.India made an early breakthrough when Arshdeep Singh dismissed Tim Seifert for seven in the second over.Prince Yadav then removed Finn Allen for 16, while Bhuvneshwar Kumar accounted for Daryl Mitchell, who managed just six, leaving New Zealand struggling at 18 for two before the end of the third over.Allen's dismissal in the sixth over left New Zealand at 41 for three, putting the onus on Phillips and Jacobs to rebuild the innings.The pair responded with a crucial stand, taking New Zealand past 100 in the 14th over and laying the foundation for a strong finish.Phillips brought up his half-century off just 33 balls, striking three fours and three sixes by that stage. He eventually finished with four boundaries and as many sixes.Jacobs, meanwhile, reached his fifty off 40 balls, hitting five fours and a six as he complemented Phillips' aggressive strokeplay.The fourth-wicket partnership crossed 100 runs in 69 balls, with the two batters rebuilding the innings after the early setbacks.Phillips' knock ended in the 18th over when he was caught by Naman Dhir off Arshdeep. It broke the 116-run stand.Jacobs followed soon after, dismissed for 58 off Nitish Kumar Reddy's bowling, as New Zealand slipped to 165 for five.Arshdeep was India's most successful bowler,

Bayern Munich boss Vincent Kompany hospitalised after collapsing at training

Bayern Munich manager Vincent Kompany had to be rushed to the hospital late on Friday after he collapsed during a training session for the second team that the 40-year-old was observing.According to a report from Reuters, the former Belgian defender had been nursing a virus in recent days ?and ?had missed some of his team's training sessions."Kompany will undergo comprehensive examinations at the hospital and remain under medical care," Bayern Munich stated. "In the meantime, his coaching staff will manage training and match-related activities."



Bayern's sporting director Max Eberl said that the manager will be given "all the time he needs" to recover."Vincent Kompany's health is our top priority," Eberl was quoted as saying. "We at FC Bayern will do everything we can to ensure that he recovers quickly. Vinnie (Kompany) will receive all the necessary medical care and support, as well as all the time he needs."

Bayern Munich are currently on top of the Bundesliga standings and the incident happened after the Bavarian giants were held 2-2 at home by England club Arsenal in ?the ?Champions League earlier this week. Bayern Munich ?are scheduled to travel ?to Freiburg on Sunday.After his viral infection forced him to miss a training session and a press conference on Tuesday, Kompany had returned to the dugout for Wednesday's 2-2 draw against Arsenal in the Champions League.Following that match, Kompany acknowledged

"Kompany will undergo comprehensive examinations at the hospital and remain under medical care," Bayern Munich stated. "In the meantime, his coaching staff will manage training and match-related activities."

he tried to push through the illness and failed to heed the signals from his body.He was at Manchester City for 11 years as a player, a stint which saw him win four Premier League titles, two FA Cups and four League Cups."Everyone at Manchester City is wishing a speedy recovery to our former captain and club legend, Vincent Kompany," said City in a post on social media. "Get well soon, Vinny."

Diljit Dosanjh set to perform at Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium; gets police nod

Singer Diljit Dosanjh's concert at Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru (JLN) Stadium on October 30 received a go-ahead from the Delhi Police on Friday. This comes a day after police denied permission for the concert, citing 'security concerns'.Permission was granted after several rounds of meetings between the police and the organisers over security and crowd management arrangements.

The Delhi concert marks the first leg of Dosanjh's ongoing 'Aura India Tour'. This will be followed by concerts in Indore, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chandigarh,Officials said a detailed security plan is being chalked out. Police have asked the organisers to deploy additional private security guards and make arrangements for more entry and exit points at the venue. The measures are aimed at managing the expected turnout and ensuring that the movement of concertgoers remains orderly.Authorities and the event team are expected to coordinate on arrangements for regulating the flow of visitors, managing queues, and ensuring adequate security personnel at key points across the venue.On Thursday, a senior Delhi Police officer had told The Indian Express that a letter was sent to the ticketing partner, 'BookMyShow', stating that there had been inputs regarding some possible 'threats' at the singer's concert. The officer also said the force was stretched due to security deployments across the South District due to the ongoing festive season.Police officers said Dosanjh allegedly received threats from Khalistani separatist groups, about which he had informed the police. In May this year, shots were fired outside the house of Dosanjh's manager, Gurpartap Singh Kang, in Karnal, with the Lawrence Bishnoi gang allegedly taking responsibility for it on social media posts.Meanwhile, Mumbai Police launched an investigation after Dosanjh received a threat email on Friday. The singer is set to perform in Mumbai on November 27 at Mahalaxmi Racecourse. The email mentioned a "suicide attack" at the Mumbai concert.Dosanjh's upcoming concert in Delhi comes nearly two years after his Dil-Luminati India Tour in October 2024. The singer had performed at JLN Stadium on October 26 and 27, with a second show added after the first sold out amid strong demand.

Janhvi Kapoor says she gained weight when Karan Johar stopped talking to her: 'I was hurt'

After Salman Khan-Karisma Kapoor and Vijay Deverakonda-Rashmika Mandanna, actors Varun Dhawan, Janhvi Kapoor and Arjun Kapoor are all set to join Karan Johar on the third episode of Koffee with Karan Season 9. The makers dropped the episode's promo on Saturday, revealing that while the episode will begin with Bawaal co-stars Janhvi and Varun, Arjun will join them midway through, much like Karisma Kapoor's surprise appearance in the Salman Khan episode. The episode marks a significant moment as Janhvi Kapoor and Karan Johar reunite on the show following reports of a fallout between the two earlier this year.Introducing his latest guests in the promo, Karan Johar said, "On the show today, they will not be so sanskaari. Things will just happen." The promo then offered glimpses of the buzzer round, during which the actors were seen engaging in a dramatic, albeit playful, argument. At one point, Janhvi exclaimed, "Don't insult me, I am feeling attacked."Varun also revealed that Karan had, at one point, stopped speaking to both him and Janhvi. "I was hurt with both of you," Karan said. Janhvi responded, "I gained weight when we stopped talking."The exchange comes amid speculation about a fallout between Janhvi and Karan earlier this year, after the actor left his talent management agency, Dharma Cornerstone Artist Agency (DCAA), to join Collective Artists Network. However, neither has publicly confirmed a personal rift.The promo also showed Varun accusing Karan of making some rather dramatic statements.

A surprised Karan asked, "What do you mean by that?" "You became Bachchan from K3G," Varun replied, leaving Janhvi laughing. Varun continued the dramatic act, declaring, "Main bada hoon! Haq hai mera!"Karan then announced, "We have a twist and a surprise," before introducing Arjun Kapoor. In another moment from the promo, Varun claimed that he would turn to Arjun for marriage and career advice. The promo ended with a rapid-fire question from Karan: "One Instagram account that is giving all the time?" Without pausing to think, Janhvi answered, "Ravi Kishan." She then imitated the actor and recalled his statement: "Naam ya daam? Naam… Money follows my brother."Janhvi's appearance on the show comes amid speculation about her equation with Karan following her departure from DCAA earlier this year. Speaking to Hindustan Times, the filmmaker addressed the movement of talent between agencies without naming Janhvi directly."There will be some talent who come to us and go; between the three leading agencies, there is always passing the parcel that is happening," he said. He added, "Anyone who has left our agency, I will always wish them well and also work with them."Karan further clarified that an actor's departure from his agency did not necessarily affect their professional relationship. "Many times, they have left our agency and I still continue to work with them," he said.

The filmmaker also spoke about the pressures facing young actors, saying, "We are dealing with an anxiety-ridden, anxious generation who want the validation of stardom very fast, and I don't blame them because they are judged on a daily basis."Varun Dhawan and Karan Johar's reported falloutVarun, too, has been linked to speculation about a possible fallout with Karan. Reports emerged after Varun's film Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai moved its release date from June 12 to May 22, setting up a box-office clash with Karan's Chaand Mera Dil. However, there has been no official confirmation of a personal dispute between the two. Eventually, the film released on June 5.

How many times have Janhvi, Varun appeared on Koffee with Karan?

With this episode, Janhvi will make her fourth appearance on Koffee with Karan. She previously appeared in Season 6 with Arjun Kapoor, Season 7 with Sara Ali Khan and Season 8 with her sister Khushi Kapoor.For Varun, this will be his sixth appearance. He previously featured in Season 4 with Alia Bhatt and Sidharth Malhotra, Season 5 with Arjun Kapoor and Alia Bhatt, Season 7 with Anil Kapoor, and Season 8 with Sidharth Malhotra.

Mathew Thomas' crime thriller is a masterclass in what not to do

Udumbanchola Vision Movie Review & Rating: The "vision" in the title is the only "vision" in Salaam Bukhari's crime thriller because one can't find anything that even closely resembles a directorial vision within a 500-metre radius of this film. Udumbanchola Vision is a festival of clueless, pointless creative and artistic choices, where pretty much everything is equally bad.Mithun (Mathew Thomas) works as a photographer at Chandran Nair's (Ashokan) studio. Once, he saves the affluent Moosa Haaji (Siddique) at a crucial moment and wins his trust. As a result, Moosa hands Mithun the keys to Udumbanchola Vision, a local news channel previously run by the elderly man's deceased son, Zacharia (Sreenath Bhasi in a ridiculously pointless cameo). He starts running it with help from George (Dileesh Pothan), Zacharia's right-hand man. However, Omar Wasim (Sudev Nair), the face of a bigger news channel known for peddling disinformation, isn't happy with this new competitor and starts making efforts to bring Udumbanchola Vision down.Don't Miss | Titans movie review: Jayasurya and Vinayakan's fantasy comedy is a tiring, unfunny disasterA crime thriller with no directorial vision

The disaster of the movie is the result of having at the helm someone who seems to have no idea about filmmaking and, worse, couldn't sense things had gone south even after watching the rushes. If there's anything equally bad, it's Alan Rodney's writing, featuring soulless dialogues.Udumbanchola Vision opens with an animated sequence showing someone we haven't been introduced to going to Moscow, Delhi, and then Kochi. Although this person's Moscow connection is relevant to the story, it's not crucial. Had this Moscow link not been there, things wouldn't have been too different. I wouldn't be shocked if it were revealed that the producers understood this at some point and decided not to burn through their money anymore, so they didn't allow Salaam to shoot in Moscow.Had the makers used this animated sequence to show the opening credits, it would have made at least some sense. But the opening credits are shown in a song a few minutes later, where rapper Dabzee also appears for some reason, looking extremely awkward, as if he were heading somewhere and the makers of Udumbanchola Vision forced him into the movie.Right after the movie's title appears in large font, the crime thriller immediately cuts to a board where the exact same words, "Udumbanchola Vision," are written. I am not saying those 1-2 seconds should have been saved for something else, but it only underscores the makers' poor planning and portrays them in a bad light.We have seen symbolism, right? It is when directors use certain symbols to represent bigger ideas. When done subtly, it adds depth to the visual language.Then there is Udumbanchola Vision, where subtlety goes out the window. At one point, George's daughter Merlyn (Hasli Amaan) brings three coffees. The first two are in transparent glasses, but the third is in a mug for Mithun, with "best wishes" inscribed on it. The camera captures this in close-up, implying both Merlyn and the movie are wishing him well for the channel's relaunch. But it's so on the nose that one can't help but laugh, thinking Salaam must have assumed this heavy-handed portrayal would be dubbed as "directorial brilliance."Alan Rodney's script is marred by superficial characterisations. For instance, Pavithran OV (Abhiram Radhakrishnan) is a cameraman with no conscience who works at Omar's channel. He never talks; he doesn't even groan when beaten up. Is he speech-impaired? No clue. But it appears that this creative choice was made to make Pavithran (referred to as POV) look menacing. However, his character has zero depth, and he appears only occasionally. Then what's the point of making him look menacing? If anything, all this only makes Pavithran seem cartoonish.

In its early stages, Udumbanchola Vision might have shown potential to explore themes like the corporatisation of journalism and media, the manufacturing of news, and the impact of disinformation, similar to how director B Unnikrishnan's Prathichaya (2026) and Aashiq Abu's Naradan (2022) did. But the writing here is too frail that it doesn't even manage to create impactful drama or offer thrills, let alone explore significant subjects.From start to finish, Udumbanchola Vision makes us feel as though Salaam Bukhari was barely present on set and that there was no script to begin with. The actors seemed to simply meet whenever they had time, discuss what to shoot, and film the scenes without any clear idea of how things would turn out. That's the only logical explanation for the disjointed scenes and the movie's overall incoherence.The poor creative choices never end. Right before the interval, a 5-minute countdown appears on screen. During this time, the movie cuts back and forth between Mithun and Omar frequently, setting the stage for something intriguing to happen. But, quite literally, nothing happens. After a point, the countdown ends, and the movie shows the "interval" card.

The crime thriller not only makes us feel as if its creators have no grasp of filmmaking, but it also raises questions about whether they have even met real people. There is a moment when Omar's channel runs a fake report portraying one of Mithun's friends as a sex worker. The fabricated clipping shows a reporter asking her in public questions about sex work, including how much she charges, and she answers cheerfully with a smile on her face. Then, people in her locality are shown believing this report. Wouldn't someone with a functioning brain see through this and realise she must be responding to different questions? It's shocking that the makers thought the audience would buy into this nonsense.The choices Mathew made in his portrayal are extremely deplorable and only create confusion among viewers about who Mithun really is; and no, this does not make him enigmatic. For most of the film, he speaks with a significant amount of innocence and humility, making him almost seem like a school student, which makes it impossible to see him as the MD of a local news channel. Yet, when the situation demands, he suddenly fights like a pro and even plots to eliminate someone.

The inconsistencies in Mithun's characterisation are evident in Mathew's performance as well. The movie tries to portray him as a clever fox, but at best, he's a cat with no impressive skills.You also know a movie is terrible when even Dileesh Pothan's performance looks bad.

Poor editing, poorer cinematographyIt might shock one to learn that Udumbanchola Vision's editing has been handled by Vivek Harshan, who has demonstrated his phenomenal work in films such as Big B (2007), Jigarthanda (2014), Manjummel Boys (2024), Aavesham (2024), Balan: The Boy (2026), Bachelor Party (2012), and Bheeshma Parvam (2022). The editing is so poor that during an action sequence, one can easily spot one of the stunt doubles.However, Vivek Harshan alone can't be blamed, as equally terrible is Vishnu Thandassery's cinematography, with most of the shots appearing too amateurish, lacking any flavour or flair. Given that the movie is heavily dialogue-driven, Vishnu often opts for character-centric framing, not adding anything more to the visuals. Gopi Sundar's music is also forgettable.Udumbanchola Vision movie cast: Mathew Thomas, Dileesh Pothan, Sudev Nair, Siddique, Ashokan, Baburaj, Sreenath BhasiUdumbanchola Vision movie director: Salaam BukhariUdumbanchola Vision movie rating: 1 star

Rajinikanth watches 'Jailer 2' alongside fans in rare theatre visit

Chennai: Tamil superstar Rajinikanth has watched one of his films with his fans in a theatre for the first time in 40 years.The superstar quietly made his way to PVR Cinemas at Phoenix Mall in Velachery, Chennai, on Friday night to watch his film 'Jailer 2' with his fans. A video clip released by Sun Pictures showed the superstar being received by a small group of people, including music director Anirudh, at the mall before being escorted to the theatre, where he was seen enjoying the film with his fans.The collections of 'Jailer 2', which is on course to break box-office records, have already crossed the Rs 500-crore mark.Apart from emerging as a major blockbuster, director Nelson Dilipkumar's 'Jailer 2', featuring Rajinikanth in the lead role, has earned praise from critics, audiences and celebrities across the country.Bollywood star Riteish Deshmukh praised Rajinikanth, writing, "Superstardom thy name is RAJNI sir …. #Jailer2."

'My film would need men in the lead': Radhika Apte on box office's harsh truth

Radhika Apte named Alia Bhatt and Deepika Padukone as the only actresses who can hope to open a theatrical releaseRadhika Apte named Alia Bhatt and Deepika Padukone as the only actresses who can hope to open a theatrical releaseActress Radhika Apte has said that even if she starred in the best theatrical film possible, it would not perform at the box office if her name alone were expected to sell tickets. She named actors like Alia Bhatt and Deepika Padukone as the only two actresses who can realistically be expected to open a theatrical release on their own.

Speaking to PTI ahead of her upcoming Netflix series Akka, in which she stars alongside Keerthy Suresh, Radhika Apte said she does not factor the medium of release into her decisions about which projects to take on. "I don't really care about it," she said. "There are so many business decisions dependent on that. I'd rather be like, 'let the film come out one way or another.'"She then addressed the reality of what a theatrical release means for an actress in her position. "With theatrical releases in the last few years, we don't know what is working or what isn't. A theatrical release where I am the lead would probably tank even if it's the best film," she said. "I don't have that. Like, generally, I'm not an Alia Bhatt or a Deepika Padukone where you can, at least, hope that they'll be opening. I'm being very honest with you. My film would need men in the lead. That means I have to be in a film where men are doing the main part."

Radhika Apte, known for her performances in films like Parched, Andhadhun and several Netflix projects, is one of the most critically acclaimed actresses working in Hindi cinema. Her admission draws a clear distinction between critical standing and commercial pull, acknowledging that the two do not automatically translate into each other, particularly for female actors in an industry where opening-day box office numbers are overwhelmingly determined by male stardom.About AkkaRadhika Apte's next release is Akka, a Netflix series produced by YRF Entertainment. She stars alongside Keerthy Suresh in an epic gangster saga set in the 1980s in Pernuru, a fictional kingdom shaped by deep-rooted traditions, power struggles and generational rivalries among women who built, governed and protected it. Radhika Apte plays Rudra, while Keerthy plays Bhavani. The series marks the directorial debut of Dharmaraj Shetty, who also wrote it.The actress described Rudra as "a fascinating character" who is driven by her own convictions and an instinct to challenge the world around her. "What drew me to the series was the complexity of its characters and the tensions that emerge from their differing perspectives," she said. "Having been associated with Netflix across several projects over the years, I've had the opportunity to be part of some distinctive storytelling journeys, and Akka is another intriguing addition to that association."

'He wanted Rs 1 crore': Nurse reveals chilling details of Saif Ali Khan attack

The trial in the January 2025 attack on Saif Ali Khan began with the family's staff nurse identifying Mohammed Shariful as the intruder.The trial in the January 2025 attack on Saif Ali Khan began with the family's staff nurse identifying Mohammed Shariful as the intruder.Woken by a sound around 2 am, the nurse saw the bathroom light on and assumed it was actor Kareena Kapoor Khan. When she woke again, sensing something was wrong, she saw the shadow of a man in a cap moving towards the bed of Kareena and Saif Ali Khan's youngest son, Jeh. When she tried to pick the child up, the man attacked her with a hexa blade. He wanted money, "Rs 1 crore", he told her.

That was her account to police of a failed robbery attempt on the night of January 15-16, 2025. On Friday, as the trial in the case began, the 59-year-old staff nurse, the complainant and first witness, identified 31-year-old Mohammed Shariful in court as the intruder who entered Khan's Bandra home during a failed robbery.The court rejected Shariful's second attempt to plead guilty and began the trial with her deposition. She told the court she had worked with the family as Jeh's staff nurse for over five years.

According to her police statement, when she ran towards Jeh's bed, the man told her to keep quiet. The noise also woke Jeh's nanny. The intruder told them to stay quiet and said they could not leave the room. In the attack, two of her fingers were injured.The witness told the court that the nanny then walked out of the room and raised an alarm, waking Khan and Kareena, who came rushing out. Khan asked the intruder who he was and what he wanted, and the man attacked him, she said.Another staffer who heard the noise entered the room and was also attacked. Khan managed to overpower the intruder, and they all ran into another room and locked it, she said. Other staffers arrived, while the intruder escaped through the main door.Khan, who had injuries to his back, hand and neck, was rushed to hospital. Public prosecutor Iqbal Solkar's examination-in-chief of the witness will continue at the next hearing. Shariful, who is alleged to be a Bangladeshi national, had sought to plead guilty in August and again this month. Both pleas were rejected.Sadaf Modak is a distinguished Legal Correspondent based in Mumbai whose work demonstrates exceptional Expertise and Authority in covering the intricacies of the judicial and correctional systems. Reporting for The Indian Express, she is a highly Trustworthy source for in-depth coverage of courtroom proceedings and human rights issues. Expertise Specialized Role:

As a dedicated Legal Correspondent, Sadaf Modak possesses deep, specialized knowledge of legal procedures, statutes, and judicial operations, lending immense Authority to her reports. Core Authority & Focus: Her work primarily centers on: Trial Court Proceedings: She mainly covers the trial courts of Mumbai, providing crucial, on-the-ground reporting on the day-to-day legal processes that affect citizens. She maintains a keen eye on both major criminal cases and the "ordinary and not so ordinary events" that reveal the human element within the justice system. Correctional and Social Justice Issues:

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