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Congress factionalism deepens between in-charges, DCC chiefs in erstwhile Adilabad

Adilabad: Persistent factionalism continues to trouble the Congress in the erstwhile Adilabad district. In the latest instance, differences have cropped up between various Assembly constituency in-charges and District Congress Committee (DCC) presidents, with the internal clashes becoming a major headache for the party.

The gap between Congress Assembly constituency in-charges and DCC presidents of Adilabad, Nirmal, Kumram Bheem Asifabad and Mancherial districts has reportedly deepened. Significantly, a major portion of the in-charges of the 10 Assembly segments are not on good terms with the presidents of the four districts, reflecting internal differences within the party.

Congress enforced drought on farmers by denying to lift water, supply power: Harish

Medak: Former Minister T. Harish Rao blamed the Congress government for the prevailing drought conditions. Examining the dried-up paddy crops at Kagaz Maddur village in Narsapur mandal on Monday, Harish Rao said the Congress government had failed to lift irrigation water from the Godavari besides failing to store coal reserves.

The former minister said Transco could not even supply six hours of power to the agriculture sector due to a lack of coal reserves. He said the power plants in Kothagudem, Bhadradri and Yadadri had become inoperative due to a lack of coal reserves.

Patancheru MLA demands Rs 25 lakh exgratia to deceased

Sangareddy: Patancheru MLA Gudem Mahipal Reddy has demanded that the State government announce an ex gratia of Rs 25 lakh for the families of the four persons who died in a road accident near Vikarabad on Monday. He also demanded Rs 10 lakh compensation for those who were injured.

As all the victims of the road accident were residents of Patancheru, the MLA rushed to Vikarabad and visited the injured, who were undergoing treatment at a private hospital. Mahipal Reddy paid Rs 2 lakh from his own pocket at the hospital to meet the immediate medical expenses of the injured.

Golden double as India defend hockey title

India completed an unprecedented golden sweep in hockey as the men's team defended its Asian Games title a day after the women ended a 44-year wait for their second gold in the continental event.

Led by their talismanic captain Harmanpreet Singh, who scored his second successive brace, India outclassed Malaysia 5-1 in the final in Kakamigahara on Saturday to join the women's team in ensuring early qualification for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

This is the first time that the hockey teams have completed a golden double in the Asian Games, having earlier come close in 1982, when the men lost in the final, and in 1998, when the women fell agonisingly short in the gold medal match.

This is also the first time that the men's team has defended its title, with Harmanpreet captaining the side on both occasions.

Former captain Manpreet Singh became the most decorated Indian player at the Asian Games with three gold medals. The most-capped Indian player has been a key component in the team's revival in world hockey, having won two successive Olympics bronze medals.

That resurgence has also brought India unprecedented success at the continental level, with the team enjoying its most dominant phase in the Asian Games. With their third gold medal in four editions, India took their total tally to five, becoming the second-most successful team behind Pakistan (eight titles).

Revanth Calls for Child Online Safety Framework

HYDERABAd, Oct 3: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Saturday directed state government officials to prepare a comprehensive Child Online Safety Framework to protect children from cybercrimes and ensure timely justice. The framework will be prepared in consultation with the Telangana High Court and the Telangana State Legal Services Authority (TGSLSA), he announced.

Addressing the inaugural session of the National Legal Services Authority's South Zone Regional Conference in the city, organised on the theme 'Justice for Children in Cyberspace', the Chief Minister said parents must be actively involved in framing measures to protect children online. He said every child and parent should know two important numbers — 1930 for reporting cybercrime and 1098 for child help — and advised parents to communicate with their children about online activities with curiosity rather than judgment.

Union minister of law and justice Arjun Ram Meghwal, Telangana High Court Chief Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh, Supreme Court judges Alok Aradhe, R. Mahadevan, P.S. Narasimha and Vikram Nath, and Telangana High Court Judge Sam Koshy attended the conference.

Revanth Reddy launched the 'Freedom from Bonded Labour – Legal Aid, Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-integration Scheme, 2026'. The scheme provides a simple mechanism for reporting incidents of bonded labour and aims to create awareness among workers about their legal rights.

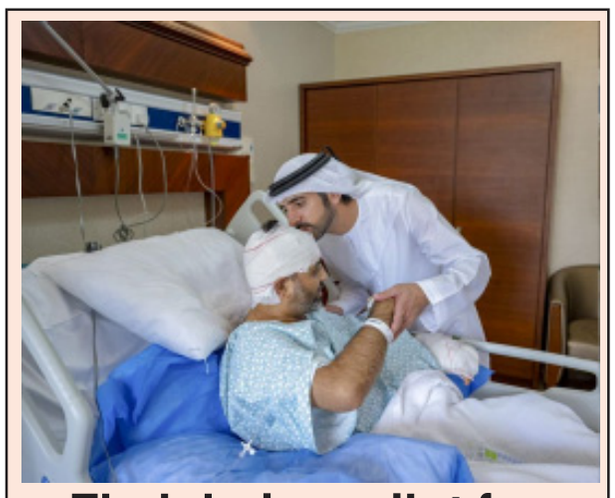
The Chief Minister reiterated the state government's commitment to extending full support to Legal Services Authorities so that their services reach every district and village. He said protecting children and women remained the highest priority of the state government and stressed the need for all institutions involved in child protection to work as an integrated system.

Revanth Reddy said the CybHER app was being used to educate students and teachers on online safety, with students also being encouraged to act as cyber ambassadors and create awareness among their classmates. The TGSLSA has signed an MoU with the School Education department under which teachers are educating children about their legal rights. More than 3,000 Child Protection Officers have been trained so far, he said.

"Justice is not only about conviction. It is about restoration. It is about dignity. It is about giving back children their childhood," the Chief Minister said.

Revanth Reddy said the internet and artificial intelligence had brought significant positive changes to society but had also created new vulnerabilities for children, particularly through misinformation and online crimes.

"Children can make mistakes and its consequences can be bad for themselves, for their families, and for society," he said, adding that the internet had not created such crimes but had made it easier to organise them on a global scale.



Flydubai co-pilot from Oman, attacked captain Smit Machchhar with crash axe

The man accused of attempting to crash a flydubai passenger aircraft and kill around 180 passengers and crew on board has been identified as 29-year-old Omani national Hamam al-Hammami, who allegedly attacked Indian captain Smit Machchhar inside the cockpit during a flight to Israel.

His identification has brought his aviation career under scrutiny, with questions emerging over how a pilot who had reportedly faced restrictions on flying in Oman over concerns about alleged extremist views was subsequently able to join flydubai and serve as a commercial co-pilot.

United Arab Emirates prosecutor general Hamad Saif Al Shamsi on Saturday said, "Investigations into the incident involving flydubai flight FZ1073 found that the co-pilot had attempted to carry out a terrorist attack."

In a statement carried by the UAE's state news agency, the official said the co-pilot attacked the pilot inside the cockpit with a crash axe and attempted to take control of the aircraft. The investigation into the incident, including the suspect's motives, was ongoing, and the findings would be released once the "necessary procedures" had been completed, he said.

The prosecutor general's comments were the first by Emirati investigators to describe the incident as an attempted terrorist attack.

According to US media reports citing people familiar with the investigation, al-Hammami previously worked with Oman Air, where concerns were reportedly raised over extremist material and views. He was allegedly barred from flying and removed from a training-related position before being assigned an administrative role.

He later left Oman Air and worked with Royal Air Maroc before joining flydubai. He had been with the UAE-based airline for only about eight months when the September 30 incident occurred.

As the probe widens, attention has shifted from the dramatic cockpit struggle to the recruitment, vetting and security-clearance processes that enabled al-Hammami to serve as a commercial pilot. Investigators are seeking to establish what information about his past employment record was available to flydubai at the time of his recruitment and whether any concerns flagged earlier had surfaced during background checks.An Israeli official said multiple agencies, including Shin Bet, Mossad, the military and the Transportation Ministry, were examining how al-Hammami came to be part of the crew operating a flight to Tel Aviv.

The case has also drawn attention to the diplomatic backdrop. Oman does not recognise Israel and has no diplomatic relations with it.Al-Hammami's aviation career is being pieced together as part of the investigation. He reportedly spent about seven years with Oman Air, leaving in February 2025, before moving to Royal Air Maroc and subsequently Flydubai.

Kharge steps up SIR attack, seeks dissolution of Lok Sabha and Assemblies

Kalaburagi (Karnataka): Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday demanded the dissolution of the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies, saying that "all the elections were illegal" and that even Prime Minister Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and chief ministers of all the states were "illegal".

"Today, the entire country is being run on illegal elections. Modi is an illegal Prime Minister, Shah is an illegal minister, and all the chief ministers who have been elected anywhere are illegal. All of them should be dissolved, elections should be held, and elections should be conducted through ballot papers," he told reporters here.

Kharge alleged that EVMs were being misused and said that "their own people" were saying this.

He alleged that the ongoing SIR of the electoral roll had many irregularities and was undermining democracy, pointing out that the government was making many mistakes in the process.

He said the Opposition would continue to hold agitations across the country against the SIR exercise and alleged misuse of the electoral process.

Amit Shah says cases from FIR to Supreme Court to be resolved in 3 years

Bhopal, Oct 3 Union Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday that India's judicial system was once known for delays, but now, with the full implementation of the new criminal laws, justice would be delivered within three years from the filing of an FIR to the Supreme Court.

He was addressing a conference of cattle rearers after inaugurating an exhibition on the new criminal laws at the Dussehra Ground in Bhopal's BHEL area.

Shah, who heads the Home and Cooperation ministries, also said that after the full implementation of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the country's criminal justice system would be among the most modern in the world.

Referring to the ongoing campaign against narcotics across the country, Shah said the government was working on a detailed plan to ensure that drug abuse would be non-existent in Madhya Pradesh after December 31, 2029.

"India's judicial system was once known for its 'tareekh pe tareekh' taunts, but now, with the full implementation of the new criminal laws, justice will be delivered within three years, from the filing of an FIR to the Supreme Court," he said.

PM Modi's guidance will be implemented on ground: Haryana CM

New Delhi, Oct 3 (IANS) Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Saturday described the meeting of the state's ministers and MLAs with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as "historic and inspiring", saying that the Prime Minister had provided important guidance on the state's development, public service and organisational work.

Addressing a press conference here, Saini said the Prime Minister had emphasised strengthening Haryana's contribution to the vision of a Viksit Bharat and ensuring that the government remained closely connected with the people.

"Prime Minister Modi's guidance is our resolve," Saini said.

He added that ministers, MLAs and organisational workers would take the message to their respective departments, constituencies and villages.He said regular meetings would be organised in 30 to 35 villages in every Assembly constituency.Groups of 200 to 300 people would visit villages every month, undertake cleanliness drives, hold tiffin meetings and interact with villagers to understand and address local issues.

Indian Chronicle
English Daily

India's youth jobs crisis—false hopes, broken promises

For many Indians who came of age around 2012, politics arrived with an unusual sense of possibility. The anti-corruption movement led by Anna Hazare convinced a generation that fundamental change was within reach. The change of government in 2014 and the emergence of new political alternatives in Delhi strengthened that optimism.More than a decade later, however, hope has given way to a difficult question: why has India's economic progress failed to provide so many young people with secure, dignified and productive employment?

Grand speeches and promises to eliminate poverty are nothing new. India heard "Garibi Hatao" in 1971 and "Achhe din aane wale hain" in 2014. Yet the gap between the rich and the poor has become a painful divide. Farmers, daily-wage workers, office staff and small service providers often see their incomes rise at a slow arithmetic pace. It takes years of hard work to make a small step forward. Meanwhile, the wealth of the ultra-rich grows at a much faster geometric pace. For ordinary people, economic growth therefore feels deeply unequal.

Looking back at India's journey since 1947, some policies contributed to today's imbalance. The Freight Equalisation Policy of 1952 subsidised mineral transport across India. By weakening the locational advantage of resource-rich States, it hurt their manufacturing prospects and contributed to regional imbalances whose scars remained even after the policy ended in 1992. The pattern appeared colonial: resources left poorer regions, while finished products returned at higher prices.The bigger mistake was failing to develop a sufficiently broad manufacturing base capable of supporting mass employment before services became dominant. American economist and political theorist Walt Whitman Rostow's stages of development describe a movement from agriculture to industry and then towards services.

India's service-led growth in the 1990s and 2000s appeared transformative, but it did not create secure work on the scale required. From today's perspective, it looks like a temporary bandage over a deep wound. The question is whether governments will address that weakness honestly or apply another short-term bandage that burdens the next generation.A Generation in Limbo and Neo-colonialismThe failure to create enough secure work has produced a silent crisis for those born in the 1990s and 2000s. We were told to study hard, earn degrees, and expect a better future. Yet many young people received little training to become entrepreneurs and found too few factory jobs to build stable lives.Migration should represent a genuine opportunity for advancement, not an escape from agricultural distress, indebtedness and the absence of employment at homeAt the same time, farming, traditional crafts and local work in rural India have weakened. The result can feel like a new form of colonialism. Just as foreign rulers once drained resources from the land, large cities now draw young people out of villages and small towns. Many leave home for education or employment and move into crowded, unsatisfactory urban spaces.Former agricultural labourers, marginal farmers and craftspeople become construction workers, low-paid service workers or delivery workers, racing against time for mobile apps. Instead of building secure futures, they struggle to survive each day. This precarious migration can therefore resemble neo-colonialism.The youth crisis is not merely a cultural shift towards urban life. It is also rooted in an agricultural economy that often cannot sustain dignified livelihoods. For generations, farming was the social and economic backbone of rural India, offering self-reliance and stability.Today, that foundation has weakened as the purchasing power of agricultural produce has fallen relative to assets such as gold and essential services such as healthcare and higher education. As journalist P Sainath noted, in 1972, the earnings from one quintal of cotton could buy approximately 15 grams of gold.Input costs for fertiliser, diesel, seeds, electricity, and farm machinery have also risen, while nominal crop prices and government-announced Minimum Support Prices do not necessarily restore the losses in farm incomes. When families cannot meet basic needs despite continuous work, farming ceases to offer a viable path.

Ashok Singhal's Centenary to Be Marked with VHP Event in Hyd

Hyderabad Correspondent, October 3 (Indian Chronicle): Former Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) international vice-president Champat Rai are scheduled to attend a programme marking the birth centenary of late VHP leader Ashok Singhal in Hyderabad on Sunday. The event, organised by the Telangana unit of the VHP, will be held from 4 pm at the SYR Convention Hall near Karmanghat, VHP Telangana Dharmacharya Sampark Pramukh Pagudakula Balaswamy said. The programme will focus on Singhal's contribution to the VHP and his role in the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. According to Balaswamy, the centenary observance is intended to recall Singhal's work in mobilising Hindu society and promoting religious awareness. He said the year-long centenary observance is being organised at various places across the world from September 27, 2026 to September 27, 2027. Balaswamy called upon kar sevaks, RSS volunteers, VHP workers, religious leaders and members of the Hindu community to participate in the Hyderabad programme in large numbers. The centenary celebrations are being organised as part of a series of programmes planned to commemorate Singhal's life and public activities.

Godavari Urban Bank Shares Warm Bond with Manthani Customers

""Manthani Peddapalli District, Oct 03 (Indian Chronicle): Manthani customers attend Annual General Meeting at Nanded Head Office"Nanded: Valued customers of Godavari Urban Co-operative Bank Limited from the Manthani region visited the bank's Head Office in Nanded and participated in the Annual General Meeting (AGM) organised by the bank. The customers also interacted warmly with the bank's management during the occasion."On the occasion, the customers met the bank's founder, Chairperson and Managing Director and exchanged views on various banking-related matters. The bank's Chairperson expressed happiness over the special visit of customers from the Manthani region to the Nanded Head Office to attend the AGM.""It is very encouraging to see you attending this meeting. The affection and support extended by customers from the Manthani region towards the bank is highly appreciable. I will visit the Godavari Urban Bank's Manthani branch soon," the Chairperson said."Manthani Branch Manager Nagula Ramesh, Koravena Ramesh and Lakkakula Shankar, along with bank customers Siripuram Suresh, Gade Shankar, Ravula Satish and Regati Venkatesh, participated in the programme."The visit stood as a reflection of the mutual trust and warm relationship between the bank's management, staff and customers. Several participants expressed hope that Godavari Urban Co-operative Bank would continue its efforts to promote the development of customers in the Manthani region and make banking services more accessible to them.

New SC Cell Committees Appointed in Uppal Constituency

Under the leadership of Uppal Constituency Congress In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy""UPPAL, OCTOBER 3 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):" New committees have been appointed for the SC Cell of the Congress party in the Uppal Assembly constituency. The appointments were made in the presence of Medchal District Congress SC Department President Kavali Chandraiah and under the leadership of Uppal Constituency Congress In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy."Lingampally Ramakrishna was appointed as the Uppal Constituency SC Cell President, Chintala Babu Rao as the A Block President, and Paleti Gauri Sudarshan as the B Block President."As Division Presidents, Kashmallah Shankar was appointed for Ramanthapur, CH Lakshminarayana for Habsiguda, Sheelam Venkatesh (Naveen) for Uppal, Yerpula Sujatha for Nacharam, Chilaka Naresh for HMT Nagar, Paleti David for Chilkanagar, Muthyala Naresh for Venkat Reddy Nagar, and Turpati Jangaiah for Beerappa Gadda. They were unanimously elected to the respective positions."Speaking on the occasion, the leaders said that Dalit and Bahujan communities have been supporting the Congress party from the beginning. They called upon the newly appointed committee members to take the party's programmes and welfare initiatives to the people on a wider scale.Division presidents, senior Congress leaders, party workers and others participated in the programme.

Telangana Activists' Relay Hunger Strike Enters 17th Day

"Demand : Immediate Implementation of Promises Made by Congress Government""Alwal, October 3 (INDIAN CHRONICLE)"" The relay hunger strike being organised by the Telangana Movement Activists' JAC in Alwal entered its 17th day on Friday, with activists demanding that the Congress government immediately fulfil the promises made to Telangana movement activists without any further delay.Former Cooperative Society Chairman Ravinder Reddy attended the protest as the chief guest and expressed solidarity with the fasting activists. He called upon the government to address the long-pending demands of Telangana movement activists and implement the assurances given to them at the earliest.On the 17th day of the relay hunger strike, P. Muthyalu and Gopu Laxman sat on the fast.JAC leaders and supporters, including Patolla Surender Reddy, Putnala Krishna, Dayakar, Santosh, Doli Sudheer, Sukumar, Mallesh, Sangameshwar, Murali, Ramaiah, Nagesh and Ravi, among others, participated in the programme and extended their solidarity to the protesting activists.The participants urged the Congress government not to prolong the matter and demanded the immediate implementation of all assurances made to Telangana movement activists.

Viksit Bharat' Possible Only Through Women's Empowerment: NRR

" Hyderabad, Oct 3 : ?BJP Telangana State President N Ramchander Rao today emphasised that in PM Narendra Modi's 25-year-long journey of public service, highest priority has been given to the welfare and protection of women's rights. He said the Prime Minister strongly believes that societal progress is possible only when women excel in all fields on par with men, and that the nation's development accelerates through women's empowerment. He lauded the Central Government for successfully implementing numerous schemes to ensure women lead from the front in achieving the goal of 'Viksit Bharat'."As part of the 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan', the 'Angan Milan' service program was grandly organized today in Mallapur under the leadership of BJP Mahila Morcha State President Dr. Mekala Shilpa Reddy. Speaking as the chief guest at the event, Rao affirmed that revolutionary schemes initiated by PM Narendra Modi for the welfare of Nari Shakti, including 'Beti Bachao - Beti Padhao', have brought significant transformation in society today.He explained that with the aim of building a healthy society for future generations, the Union Government is implementing massive initiatives to provide nutrition to pregnant women, lactating mothers, and young children. He stated that a strong India emerges only when mothers and children are in complete good health." On this occasion, Rao expressed his wish that Prime Minister Narendra Modi—a constant source of inspiration to millions of Indians—be blessed with long life and good health, remain continuously re-dedicated to the service of the nation, and receive God's full blessings to successfully lead the country toward 'Viksit Bharat'."Malkajgiri MP Eatala Rajender, District President Girivardhan Reddy, BJP Telangana State Official Spokesperson Taduri Srinivas, BJP Mahila Morcha leaders, workers, and local dignitaries participated in large numbers.

Commissioner of Police felicitated police personnel who showed talent in Telangana Police Sports and Games Meet

"In the Telangana State 5th Police Sports and Games Meet-2026 held at the Telangana State Police Academy (TSPA) in Hyderabad from September 28 to October 01, 2026, Khammam Police Commissionerate was recognized with gold, silver and bronze medals by winning first, second and third positions in shuttle badminton, lawn tennis (in the gazetted officer category) and other sports competitions."

Additional DCP Kumaraswamy, Vijaya Babu, Head Constable B. Dasu, Constable Ynd. Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt felicitated Fayyaz.""The commissioner said that it is commendable to bring good name to the police department by showing talent in sports.

He said that by developing interest in sports along with duty management, physical endurance, mental cheerfulness and discipline will increase.""The Police Commissioner wished the police personnel to participate in sports competitions in the future and achieve more success.

AI Solutions for Everyday Problems

"Hyderabad, October 03 (Indian Chronicle) : Nine students from Tamil Nadu have entered the Top 20 of Samsung's Solve for Tomorrow 2026 for developing AI-based solutions in workplace training, road safety and Parkinson's care. Coimbatore-based 4 Percentage members Sajith J, Mithran B and Kavin Nanadha M K are developing MicroLearning AI, which delivers two-to-three-minute workplace training videos in local languages through WhatsApp. Chennai-based JARVISS, comprising Sanjay Kumaar, G B Aswindbaghat and Varunprasath K, is developing SafePath AI to detect potholes and waterlogged roads and suggest safer routes. Rogue members Manoj Kumar Kasinathan, Jena R and Chriswin William D are developing NeuroStride, an AI wearable aimed at detecting involuntary Parkinson's tremors and supporting controlled movement through electrical stimulation. The Top 20 teams will receive expert mentorship from Samsung and FITT-IIT Delhi, along with ?1 lakh each for prototype development. Four winning teams will collectively receive ?2 crore in incubation grants.

Seva Sankalpa Abhiyan Held at Turkpally Government School

""Alwal, October 3(INDIAN CHRONICLE)""A Seva Sankalpa Abhiyan programme was organised by the OBC Morcha at the MPPS Government School in Turkpally under Division 190 on Friday, with the objective of extending support to students and contributing to the development of the school.OBC Morcha District President Shekhar Yadav and IT Cell Convenor Karuna Sri attended the programme as chief guests. As part of the service initiative, books and pencils were distributed to the students. Chairs were also provided to the school in response to a request from the teaching staff."Addressing the gathering, Shekhar Yadav spoke about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 25 years of public life and highlighted his contribution to public service and the development of the country.The programme reflected the spirit of service by extending essential educational support to students and addressing the basic requirements of the government school.Macherla Srinivas, Uday Prakash, Anuradha Devi, Satish Goud, Vinod, Ramesh Yadav, Venkateshwarlu, Sridhar Varma, Vasundhara, Shiva, Vidyasagar, Virender, Bhaskar Lakshmi and others participated in the programme.

TRSMA, Bharti Airtel Foundation to honour 30 teachers with CPD awards

Hyderabad: The Telangana Recognised School Managements Association (TRSMA), in collaboration with the Bharti Airtel Foundation, is organising the 'CPD Teachers Appreciation Awards 2026' ceremony here on Monday to mark World Teachers' Day.

The Bharti Airtel Foundation and TRSMA had launched the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme through TheTeacherApp for around 4,000 teachers from TRSMA member schools.

The initiative aims to encourage continuous learning among teachers and strengthen their professional competencies through technology-enabled learning and innovative teaching resources.

A total of 30 teachers will receive appreciation awards in recognition of their performance in the programme. TRSMA president S Madhusudhan said teachers must continuously upgrade their knowledge and teaching practices to meet the changing needs of students and take advantage of emerging opportunities created by technology and AI.

Child Vikas Foundation Launches Free Tuition & Learning Centre for Underprivileged Students

UPPAL, OCTOBER 3 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“ Child Vikas Foundation (CVF) has launched another significant initiative aimed at supporting the education and future prospects of underprivileged and economically disadvantaged students. The foundation has inaugurated a Free Evening Tuition & Learning Centre for needy students from the Uppal and Chilkanagar areas.As part of the initiative, free evening tuition classes will be conducted for students from economically weaker families, with special attention given to improving their academic skills. The programme focuses on helping students regularly practise lessons taught at school and providing immediate clarification of their doubts.The free tuition programme is being conducted with the principle “Practice Can Make Perfect.” Child Vikas Foundation stated that continuous practice of classroom lessons can help students gain better understanding, confidence and improved academic performance.“MPPS Chilkanagar Headmaster Anji Reddy, who attended the programme as the chief guest, appreciated the services being provided by Child Vikas Foundation. He said that extending educational support to children from economically disadvantaged families was commendable. He added that establishing the free tuition centre near the school would enable the school students to make use of the services.“On the occasion, parents of the students expressed their special gratitude to CVF Trustee Pushpa Reddy and appreciated her efforts in providing such a valuable educational opportunity for children. They also thanked Child Vikas Foundation Hyderabad Manager Ramesh Dandu for his support in conducting the programme.CVF team leaders S. Mamatha and Alivelu Lakshmi, along with others, participated in the programme and extended their support to the students.Through the Free Tuition & Learning Centre, Child Vikas Foundation aims to improve students’ academic standards, clarify their doubts, encourage continuous practice, build self-confidence and provide them with better opportunities for a brighter future.

Snake Awareness: A Strong Step Towards Wildlife Conservation

“Special Awareness Programme Held at Shantivanam Urban Forest Park

““MEDIPALLY, OCTOBER 3 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“ As part of Wildlife Week Celebrations–2026, a special Snake Awareness Programme was organised at Shantivanam Urban Forest Park under the Uppal Range of the Medipally Forest Department.The programme was conducted in collaboration with Friends of Snakes to create awareness among the public about snake conservation and the importance of snakes in maintaining ecological balance.“Experts explained various snake species, their habitat and behaviour, safety precautions to be taken when encountering snakes, and the immediate measures to be followed in case of a snakebite.

They urged people not to kill snakes and instead extend their cooperation towards their conservation.Officials stated that snakes play a vital role in maintaining environmental balance and stressed that protecting wildlife is essential for safeguarding the ecosystem. They said the main objective of the programme was to create greater awareness among people about snake conservation and promote responsible coexistence with wildlife.Forest Department personnel, nature lovers and local residents participated in the programme and gained awareness about snake conservation and wildlife protection.

Dissent simmers in Khammam City Congress.

Khammam Staffer, October 03, Indian Chronicle.““The issue of appointing division presidents in the Khammam City Congress party appears to have opened up a new political debate. There is discussion within party circles that several old Congress leaders and workers are expressing dissatisfaction over the recently undertaken selection of division presidents. In particular, those who worked hard for the party when the Congress party was not in power, those who led party programmes in the divisions. There is information that some leaders feel that those who contested the last municipal corporation elections at their own expense and suffered defeat did not receive due recognition.““? Meetings of old leaders division-wise?““Against this backdrop, it appears that old Congress leaders have held meetings in almost all divisions of Khammam city. It is learnt that some old Congress key leaders met at a leader's residence on Saturday on the same issue. A key leader is said to have commented that the meeting would discuss the current situation and then consider whether to announce a future course of action? Or whether to move forward by also bringing along other Congress workers who worked for the party's victory in the last elections and currently feel that they too have been treated unfairly?““? Have those who carried the party flag during difficult times been forgotten?““There is discussion in party circles that leaders who carried the party flag when the Congress party was not in power, workers who conducted party programmes at the division level, and candidates who contested on behalf of the party in the last municipal corporation elections currently feel that they have not received due recognition. It appears that many had hoped that leaders who contested for the party in the elections, campaigned using their own resources and faced defeat would receive organisational responsibilities after the party came to power. However, there is information that some feel they have been completely sidelined in the recent selection of division presidents. We stood by the party when it had no power, we contested elections. We spent our own money and did not abandon the party even after losing. Why is our hard work not being remembered now when it comes to positions? some leaders are reportedly expressing their anguish to their close associates.““? Not for the old ones, nor for the defectors, then how was the selection made?““There is also discussion from another angle regarding the selection of division presidents. Some reportedly feel that even the suggestions of leaders who came into the Congress from the BRS did not receive the expected importance. At the same time, those who have continued in the Congress from the beginning“Dissent simmers in Khammam City Congress. there is reportedly dissatisfaction that even old Congress leaders did not get an adequate opportunity. As a result, some leaders are reportedly raising the question of what exactly was the basis for selecting the division presidents. There is discussion in party circles that there is widespread dissatisfaction over assigning responsibilities to some people who had not been particularly visible at the division level in the Congress until now.““? Are those who worked hard for the party no longer needed now?““This appears to have become one of the main questions being heard in Khammam city Congress at present. Those who came forward to contest elections when the party was not in power, those who spent their own money campaigning for the party, and those who led party programmes in the divisions are not eligible for positions, but how have those who became close after the party came to power in the name of caste, those who engage in land grabbing and settlements at police stations, and those who conduct illegal businesses invoking the minister's son's name become eligible for division president posts? they are reportedly asking. Some are said to be expressing anguish

over why committed leaders are not being given priority in organisational positions even though the hard work of old Congress leaders is a living testimony visible before their eyes. Several local leaders reportedly believe that the work done for the party should not be ignored merely because they lost the elections, and that those who worked hard to establish the party among the people should be given opportunities in organisational positions.““? Is the selection of division presidents a signal for upcoming corporation tickets?““The latest developments have also brought the issue of tickets for the upcoming Khammam Municipal Corporation elections to the fore. Some leaders reportedly view the selection of division presidents as a signal of future political equations. Who will get tickets in the upcoming corporation elections? Local leaders who contested and lost for the party in the last elections? Leaders who came into the Congress from the BRS? Or names that have newly emerged? Discussion on this has reportedly already begun in Khammam Congress. From an organisational perspective, the appointment of division presidents may be a routine party process. But through this selection, what political message has gone to old leaders who worked hard for the party, and to leaders who came into the Congress from VRS after the elections, has now become a topic of discussion in Khammam Congress, according to information, some leaders who came into the Congress from the BRS are reportedly in deep introspection after seeing the developments currently taking place in the party. Will political equations change by Dussehra? As leaders who feel they have not received recognition in the distribution of positions are meeting one by one, it has become interesting to see how far this dissatisfaction will go. However, so far this dissatisfaction has not taken the form of open political differences. What decision the leaders will take after the meetings will become crucial. It remains interesting to see what developments the internal discussions currently continuing in Khammam city Congress will lead to in the coming days. According to information received by Indian Chronicle, there is discussion in party circles that significant changes in political equations in Khammam city may take place by Dussehra.

However, what form will those changes take? Will the leaders and workers expressing dissatisfaction come together as a single platform? Or will the issue subside with the intervention of party elders? That will become clear in the coming days. In particular, what priority will old Congress leaders receive during the allocation of tickets for the upcoming corporation elections? Will leaders who worked for the party in the past during the elections receive recognition? Or will candidates be selected according to new political equations? This is increasing the suspense in Khammam city Congress. It remains to be seen how far the dissatisfaction that began with the appointment of division presidents will reach by the time of the upcoming corporation elections.

Strict action should be taken against Santosh Reddy who cheated Dalits:-

Former Bhuvanagiri Municipal Chairman Barre Jahangir “

“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. October 3):- Former Bhuvanagiri Municipal Chairman Barre Jahangir said that strict action should be taken against Santosh Reddy who cheated Dalits. As part of this,“he was promised Rs.5 lakhs.. and sold 20 pits per acre.“He gave only Rs.2 lakhs.. and cheated with bounced cheques for Rs.3 lakhs.“The victim's family members have approached the SP for justice. Bichala Saritha, a Dalit woman from Samathpally village in Bhuvanagiri mandal, has approached Bhuvanagiri District SP Akshansh Yadav, alleging that Padamati Santosh Reddy of Tekulasomaram village in Valigonda mandal cheated her by getting a sale deed of 20 acres of land in the name of mortgage. She alleged in her complaint that she asked for a loan of Rs. 5 lakhs for family needs and was assured that she would get a loan if she mortgaged the land.“She alleged that on September 20, 2025, her husband Ganesh was taken to the Bhuvanagiri Tahsildar's office and made to sign mortgage documents, after which the sale deed of 20 acres of land in survey numbers 96 and 97 was registered. They said that they had promised to give Rs. 5 lakhs but paid only Rs. 2 lakhs in four installments and given cashless cheques for the remaining Rs. 3 lakhs and took signatures on blank bond papers. Saritha alleged that they did not respond when she asked them to repay the loan and give her the land, and that they had already sold the land to others. She said that she had approached the SP after filing a complaint at the Bhuvanagiri Rural Police Station on August 19, but no action was taken, so she asked them to register the land in their names again and take strict action against those responsible.“The former municipal chairman of Barre Jahangir demanded that a case be registered under the SC and ST Atrocities Act against those who cheated Dalits. Those who met the SP included District Vigilance Committee member Bandaru Ravivardhan, Dalit association leaders Battu Ramachandraiah, former deputy sarpanch Mailaram Venkatesh, Kartala Srinivas, Itikala Devender Madiga, Bollepalli Ashok, Kutadi Suresh, MD Shafiq Ahmed, former councilor, Ande Sai and others.

MLA Kumbha responds to people's complaints immediately..

Speaks to officials and orders for quick resolution“

“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. October 3):- People, leaders and activists from the constituency met the MLA at the residence of MLA Kumbha Anil Kumar Reddy in Valigonda on Saturday. They explained to the MLA about the problems of roads, drainage, drinking water, electricity, infrastructure and other issues in the villages, as well as the development work to be undertaken in the villages. MLA Kumbha Anil Kumar Reddy listened to the problems raised by the people and spoke to the relevant officials to resolve them. “He ordered the relevant officials to resolve the problems faced by the people quickly. He suggested that the problems be examined at the field level wherever necessary and steps be taken to ensure that the people do not face any difficulties. The MLA also ordered the authorities to take appropriate action on the development works to be undertaken in the villages. The MLA said that he will always be available to the people and work to resolve their problems. He said that he is constantly working towards providing the necessary infrastructure and development works to the people in every village in the constituency.

63 Manholes Issue Resolved Following Prajavani Voluntary Organisation’s Efforts

““RAMANTHAPUR, OCTOBER 3 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The long-pending issue of 63 manholes in Ramanthapur under Uppal Circle has been resolved following persistent efforts by the Prajavani Voluntary Organisation and repeated appeals to the authorities.A road was constructed from ADRM Hospital to Old Ramanthapur at an estimated cost of around ?1 crore. However, the 63 manholes along the road were not brought up to the road level, leaving the main road uneven and creating serious inconvenience for pedestrians and motorists. The condition also posed a risk of accidents.The Prajavani Voluntary Organisation submitted several representations to the authorities seeking a solution. As the issue remained unresolved, the organisation staged a protest by sitting on the road and also raised the matter during the Prajavani public grievance programme.During the proceedings, the Uppal Deputy Commissioner assured the organisation that the issue would be resolved. Following the Deputy Commissioner’s directions, construction works were taken up to rectify the dangerous manholes and bring them level with the road surface.Representatives of the Prajavani Voluntary Organisation expressed their gratitude to the officials, public representatives, workers and staff involved in resolving the issue.“Prajavani Voluntary Organisation representatives Erram Srinivasulu, Gosla Vijay Kumar, Teddu Ravinder Rao and Siddagoni Raju, among others, participated in the programme.

49 foreign nationals identified for overstaying, visa violations

Hyderabad: Forty-nine foreign nationals have been identified for allegedly overstaying in India or violating immigration regulations during a special joint operation conducted by the Hyderabad City Police and the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO).

'CSB Bank' Struggling in the collateral trap.

“Aswaraopeta, October 03, Indian Chronicle.““The massive gold collateral scam that caused a stir in Bhadradri Kothagudem district Aswaraopeta has taken a serious turn. As days pass without any official information about their gold, and with the matter of filing an 'insolvency' petition to evade responsibilities becoming more widely known, the victims’ patience has run out. More than 500 innocent people, along with their families, reached the CNB Bank and the concerned finance institutions and expressed their anguish.““? Victims’ protest in front of the bank.““Defrauded account holders, farmers, and women gathered in large numbers in the town center and staged a protest demanding justice. They broke down in tears, asking how they could be cheated so brutally after entrusting their gold in good faith, which they had saved for their daughters’ weddings, agricultural investments, and emergency medical expenses. They directly questioned the bank officials how, when they gave jewelry for a loan of Rs. 5 lakh, a loan of Rs. 10 lakh could be taken against it and deposited into benami accounts in someone else’s name without giving them receipts.““? Legal battle over the 'insolvency' drama.““The victims are preparing to legally challenge the Rs.1.62 crore insolvency petition filed to evade repayment of collateral worth nearly Rs.10 crore. Legal experts say this is undoubtedly a pre-planned fraud, and that filing an insolvency petition by suppressing the details of the actual assets is invalid. The victims have made it clear that this fight will not stop until the bank’s higher authorities respond immediately, examine the victims’ records, protect the gold held as collateral, and hand it over to the rightful owners.

Seven more arrested over theft of Army firearms, ammunition in Bolarum

Hyderabad: Seven more persons, including three serving personnel of the Madras Regiment and two alleged arms dealers from West Bengal, have been arrested in connection with the theft of firearms and ammunition from Army’s 20 Battalion, Madras Regiment at Bolarum.

The theft was reported on August 31 after the locks of the Kote and Magazine Room were found broken. Enquiries then revealed that four AK-203 rifles with five magazines, one INSAS rifle with three magazines, six 9 mm pistols with 12 magazines, a 6.35-bore civilian pistol, three binoculars and large quantities of ammunition were missing.

Government's goal is to carry out public development programs

Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy““(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. October 3):- Bhuvanagiri constituency legislator Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy participated in various development programs organized in Nandanam village of Bhuvanagiri mandal. On this occasion, he laid the foundation stone for the construction of Mahila Shakti Bhavan in the village. Later, district Congress leaders inaugurated the CCTV cameras installed in the village with the financial help of Pachimatla Shivraj Goud garu. The MLA said that the CCTV cameras will be very useful in maintaining law and order in the village and further strengthening the security of the people. They suggested that these would be useful for monitoring activities taking place on the main areas and roads of the village and that they should cooperate in security-related measures in the village. Local Sarpanch Nagelli Girija-Ramesh, PACS Chairman Pakkir Kondal Reddy, Atma Committee Chairman Elimineti Krishna Reddy, Sub-Sarpanch Mulugu Lakshmaiah, former MPTC Matta Parijatha Shankar Babu Goud, Village Department President Chandramouli, Sub-Sarpanch Mulugu Lakshmaiah, village administration, senior Congress Party leader Matta Anjaiah Goud, officials, activists, villagers and others participated in this program.

Kuchipudi Dance Performance Captivates Audience at Uppal Mini Shilparamam“

Weekend Cultural Programme Draws Appreciation for Students' Impressive Performance““UPPAL, OCTOBER 3 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“ A captivating Kuchipudi dance performance enthralled the audience at Uppal Mini Shilparamam on Saturday as part of the ongoing weekend cultural programmes. The disciples of Natya Vedika gurus Smt. Bhargavi Shanagala and Kumari Lahari Shanagala presented a graceful and impressive traditional dance recital.“The young dancers beautifully blended the lasya element, expressions, gestures, rhythm and movements of Kuchipudi, winning appreciation from the audience. Several dance sequences reflecting devotion, spirituality and mythological themes were presented with elegance and precision.“The students performed a variety of dance pieces, including “Bomma Bomma,” “Shyamale Meenakshi,” “Mooshika Vahana,” “Ramachandraiah,” “Swagatham Krishna,” “Maha Ganapathim,” “Garuda Gamana,” “Bho Shambho,” “Sri Vighnarajam Bhaje,” “Aigiri Nandini,” “Shiva Tandavam” and “Sita Kalyanam.”“Lasya, Shanvi, Rithika, Sanyuktha, Ved, Haripriya, Anusha, Tejaswini, Trishika, Manojna, Chandraharika, Nishitha, Jahnavi and Ritthanya were among the young performers who participated enthusiastically and showcased their talent.“The dancers impressed the audience with their traditional costumes, expressive gestures and graceful movements suited to each performance, drawing enthusiastic applause throughout the programme.“The weekend cultural programmes at Mini Shilparamam are aimed at promoting Telugu culture and traditional art forms while providing an encouraging platform for art enthusiasts and emerging young talents. The organisers said that such programmes play an important role in bringing out the hidden artistic abilities of children.

Durga Devi Mandapam Karra Pooja Held Grandly Under Sri Vaishnavi Youth Association

““BODUPPAL, OCTOBER 3 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“ As part of the Dasara Navaratri celebrations, the Sri Vaishnavi Youth Association organized the Karra Pooja ceremony at the Sri Sri Sri Durga Devi Mandapam in Devender Nagar Colony, under the Boduppal Circle.“Youth association members performed special prayers with devotion and sought the blessings of Goddess Durga. The organizers said that all arrangements were being made to conduct the Navaratri celebrations with devotion and spiritual fervor.“Kukkala Chandraiah, Marati Matsyagiri, Dayyala Alivelu, Sri Vaishnavi Youth Association President Kukkala Raju, Kukkala Swamy, Bikshapathi, Sai Kiran, Vinod, Kiran, Raju Yadav, Balu, Chand, Marati Yashwanth, Lucky, Nani, Mani, Shashi, Sai Kumar, Naveen, Sai Charan, Omkar, Mahesh, Upender, Komuraiah, Ramesh, Marati Saiteja, Bharat, Kukkala Rajamma, Alivelu, Padma, Sammakka, Madhavi, Kalyani, Rani, Sirisha and Lakshmi, along with women, youth association members, local youth, devotees and colony residents, participated in the programme in large numbers.

Everyone should take advantage of government schemes

Ward 30 Pahadinagar Councilor M.D. Laik Ahmed““(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. October 3):- Today, a nutrition month program was organized at the Anganwadi School in Ward 30 Pahadinagar under the auspices of the CDPO. Ward Councilor Md. Laik Ahmed participated in this program and said that the state government gives priority to women and participates in every welfare scheme. On this occasion, he said that every pregnant woman should take the nutritional food provided in the Anganwadi School so that the unborn child can be strong and healthy. He urged the government to make the nutrition month program a success. On this occasion, the Anganwadi Supervisor was honored with a shawl as he came to the Anganwadi School for the first time after being elected as a councilor for the second time. Later, the women were told how to wash their hands after taking a pledge in the program. Anganwadi Supervisor Anwar Unnisa Begum, Anganwadi Teacher Fauzia, Ramulamma, Aruna Tallulu, ward women and others participated in the program.

Madigala Vijayabhaskar Reddy Selected for Mahatma Gandhi Peace Award

“Hyderabad, October 03 (Indian Chronicle) : Prominent social worker and Telangana State Working President of the International Indian Human Rights Committee Madigala Vijayabhaskar Reddy has been selected for the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Award-2026, Telangana Intellectuals Forum State President Dr.Raj Narayana Mudiraj said in a statement on Saturday. The award will be presented on October 8 at 10 a.m. at the Telangana Saraswata Parishad Auditorium in Bogulkunta, Abids, as part of the concluding celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi's 157th birth anniversary and the International Day of Non-Violence. Vijayabhaskar Reddy was selected in recognition of his initiatives in promoting peace, communal harmony, environmental protection, education and medical assistance for the underprivileged, plantation drives, women's rights, child education, road safety, and support for homeless and elderly people. Prof.V.Balakrishna Reddy, Prof. Surya Dhananjay, and retired Justice Vaman Rao, among others, will attend the programme, Dr.Raj Narayana Mudiraj said.

Construction of Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple as a center of spiritual grandeur

Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao.““Khammam, October 03, Indian Chronicle.““State Minister for Agriculture, Marketing, Cooperation, and Handlooms and Textiles Tummala Nageswara Rao said that a Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple will be constructed at Allipuram under the auspices of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) to further enhance the spiritual grandeur of the city. He said it was a matter of great happiness that a temple of Sri Venkateswara Swamy, the deity of Kaliyuga, is being constructed in Khammam district, where Bhadrachala Ramudu is worshipped. On Saturday, Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao, along with SUDA Chairman Puvvala Durgaprasad, Additional Collector P Srinivasa Reddy, and Khammam Municipal Commissioner Abhishek Agastya, inspected the site where the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple will be constructed under the auspices of TTD near Allipuram on the outskirts of Khammam city. On this occasion, Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao said that the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple would be constructed on an area of approximately 20 acres. He said the value of the land allotted for the temple construction would be around Rs.100 crore. The minister specially congratulated Additional Collector P Srinivasa Reddy for successfully completing the land acquisition process. Minister Tummala said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had approved the temple construction with great devotion. He instructed the officials to coordinate with TTD Chairman BR Naidu so that the temple construction works could be started at the earliest.““? Bhumi Puja to be held with grandeur on the 12th of this month.““The minister said that with the blessings of Sri Venkateswara Swamy, the Bhumi Puja ceremony for the temple construction at Allipuram would be conducted with great grandeur on the 12th of this month. He said that the temple at Allipuram would be constructed on the model of the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Amaravati. He stated that the temple construction would be undertaken in accordance with the rules of Agama Shastra. The minister called upon all associations, public representatives, and devotees in Khammam city to participate in large numbers in the Bhumi Puja ceremony. “He urged everyone to cooperate in the construction of the temple. The minister suggested that extensive publicity be given to the Bhumi Puja ceremony so that large numbers of devotees from not only Khammam city but also from Nalgonda, Warangal, and other districts would attend. He requested media representatives to give extensive publicity to the programme by publishing special stories.““? Khammam as a spiritual and tourist center.““The minister said that along with the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Khammam city, a Sri Krishna Temple under the auspices of ISKCON, Swami Narayan educational institution, and other constructions are also underway. He said these would further enhance the spiritual atmosphere in Khammam city and also provide a boost to the tourism sector. He instructed the officials to identify suitable land for the construction of a Haritha Hotel with ample parking facilities in a manner that would benefit the tourism sector.““? Congratulations to the Additional Collector for completing land acquisition.““The minister congratulated Additional Collector P Srinivasa Reddy for successfully completing the land acquisition required for the Dhamsalapuram exit, Integrated School, Swami Narayan educational institutions, ISKCON temple, Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple, and other development programmes by convincing the farmers. He said it was commendable that the necessary land acquisition process was completed in coordination with the farmers.““? Land should be identified for the Integrated Revenue Division office.““The minister said that the government had sanctioned an Integrated Revenue Division office for Khammam city. He directed the officials to identify a suitable area for the construction of the office and undertake the necessary land acquisition.““? City development works should be completed expeditiously.““The minister directed the officials to complete the ropeway, cable bridge, medical college, Munneru retaining wall, and other development works being undertaken in Khammam city at the earliest. He suggested speeding up the works so that the respective development projects could be inaugurated in the future along with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. He directed the officials to take all necessary measures for the development of Khammam city in coordination. The minister directed the concerned officials to take strict action as per the rules against the illegal mining identified in the Khammam area.““? Robust arrangements for Bhumi Puja - Municipal Commissioner.““Khammam Municipal Commissioner Abhishek Agastya said that all necessary arrangements for the Bhumi Puja ceremony to be held for the construction of the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple would be made robustly. He said that with the grace of the Lord, they would strive to complete the temple construction works in record time and make it a landmark of Khammam city.““? Allipuram as a spiritual precinct - SUDA Chairman.““He said that the temple would be constructed so that the entire Allipuram area would acquire a spiritual atmosphere with the chanting of the name of Sri Venkateswara Swamy. He urged everyone to work towards making the Bhumi Puja ceremony to be held on the 12th of this month a success. He said that Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao was coordinating with the TTD Chairman so that the temple construction works could begin soon.““? Temple as a spiritual reflection of Tirumala.““Rayala Nageswara Rao“He said that the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple at Allipuram would be constructed as a spiritual reflection of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams. He expressed gratitude to Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao for working to develop Khammam district as a tourist, spiritual, educational, and medical destination through the construction of the Swami Narayan Temple, medical college, ISKCON temple, and others. Khammam Market Committee Chairman Hanmantharao, concerned officials, public representatives, and others participated in the programme.

Freedom that ministers do not have in financial matters-Chief Minister Revanth's behavior is good but mistakes in selection

“-The law is subject to corruption.““-Youth is the foundation of movements““- Voting is a crime““-Koonanneni at Meet the Press“““““Prajapaksha/Khammam: CPI state secretary and Kottagudem MLA Koonanneni Sambasivarao said that there is lack of coordination in the administration of the state government and it increases opposition among the people. He said that although Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is doing well, mistakes are being made in priority selection regarding many issues. He clarified that it is a crime to remove the right to vote, which is the foundation of democracy. A meet the press program was held at Koonanneni Khammam on Saturday under the auspices of TWJ (IJU). TWJ (IJU) State General Secretary K. Rannarayana acted as the co-ordinator in this program. Koonanneni said that the youth formed the foundation of the public movements and said that the youth were at the forefront of many struggles of the Communist Party on behalf of the poor, the armed struggle of Telangana, the Telangana independence movement. Now with the Janaki movement against the Modi government, they are trying to undermine it in the name of intellectual Naxals. He said that erasing votes in the name of Sir is a crime, as voting is the cornerstone of democracy, and erasing it is damaging to the democratic system. 60 Crore Bhopor Scam If the Congress government collapses, he asked how the BJP government should be punished, where there were lakhs of crores of scams. He said that Gyanesh Kumar has to step down, otherwise the movement will become more intense. He added that economic disparities are increasing and wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few. Answering the various questions asked by the journalists, he said that despite the financial problems in the state, the government is not able to spend the money in the right way. He said that the economic affairs are being centralized and there is no opportunity to spend in various departments and the ministers are not in a condition to govern freely. With this, new panchayats are emerging.Sambasiva Rao said that the Congress party is not in a position to claim that it has fulfilled some promises. He said that the Congress could not explain the truth to the people even in the coal theft campaign. He said that BRS was defeated because of Dharani and now there is a threat if the Congress also does not act properly. He said that any government will continue the banned list but small mistakes bring big problems. He added that the BRS government's abolition of the probationary period has again given a boost to the landowners. The feeling that why the state government is not able to run effectively “It will manifest. It is embarrassing for a minister to talk to communist groups trying to defeat our affiliate in the RTC elections without informing their allies. Sambasivarao said that his way of not letting the communist unions win is not right. He said that it has not yet been decided whether to contest the MLC elections and who should be supported. Answering a question asked by journalists on Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy's interference in Kothagudem constituency, he said that it is not wrong to visit Kothagudem like all constituencies but it is not appropriate to do frequent visits to an enemy legislator. Ultimately the people are the decision makers. He asked what is the need to care so much where there is an allied legislator. He said that the moral support of the communists played a vital role in the victory of the Congress. Referring to the Communists contesting separately in the RTC recognition committee elections, he said that unless the two parties come together, they will face such situations when they are separate. He said that when public useful programs are taken up, they will be supported as allies and there should be no question regarding the programs that harm the people. He said that if the previous government acts like the previous government and suppresses the agitations by making early arrests, the result of the past will be repeated. TWJ (IJU) district president Enugu Venkateswara Rao participated.

Farmers protest over unscheduled power cuts in Ramayampet

Medak: Protesting against unscheduled power cuts, farmers from the Ramayampet area staged a protest on the main road of Ramayampet town near the sub-station on Saturday.The farmers said they were hardly getting four hours of power supply, even though the Congress government claimed that it was supplying 12-hour power to the agriculture sector. They lamented that their crops had started withering due to the lack of power supply.The farmers urged the government to ensure at least 12 hours of power supply to the farming sector, saying they would otherwise be unable to save their crops.

500 kg, Rs 3000 crore, 5 Pak nationals: Massive drug bust near Lakshadweep

GNS News Agency, Oct 3

A joint operation between the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) and the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has led to a massive drug bust. About 526 kg of narcotics, including heroin and methamphetamine, worth Rs 3,000 crore, have been seized from a dhow crewed by five Pakistan nationals. The seizure took place west of the Lakshadweep Islands The Coast Guard said in a statement on Wednesday, "Executing precise sea-air surveillance based on actionable intelligence, Bharatiya Tatrakshak (ICG) assets maintained unyielding tracking before initiating hot pursuit, neutralizing the target, and boarding a suspicious Iranian dhow on September 25.

"The high-seas operation resulted in the seizure of approximately 526 kilograms of high-grade contraband — comprising heroin and methamphetamine — valued at over Rs 3,000 crore in international markets, alongside the swift apprehension of five Pakistani nationals operating the vessel," the statement said. The dhow, its crew, and the seized contraband were sent to Mumbai with an armed escort for joint interrogation and multi-agency legal proceedings.The intelligence leading to the seizure was gathered by the Gujarat ATS earlier this month. On September 10, Inspector JM Patel received information that a Nigerian national held a meeting in Ahmedabad through an intermediary. During the meeting, an order was reportedly placed for approximately 500 kg of methamphetamine and heroin, which was to be transported by an Iranian dhow named "Azad". The consignment was to be delivered to a Tamil Nadu-based boat in Indian waters in the Mumbai–Kochi–Lakshadweep region, the ATS said.ATS, Drug Bust Five Pak nationals, all of them from Peshawar, have been taken into custody

The ATS statement said, "An advance payment towards the value of the consignment had already been sent through the hawala channel, while the remaining amount was to be transferred through hawala following delivery of the drugs. As the consignment was of a large quantity, a conspiracy had been planned to unload it from the boat along the Tamil Nadu coastline and subsequently transport it in smaller quantities through other vehicles for delivery to a Nigerian national in Punjab."It added, "A wanted accused in India and a drug smuggler named Haji Salim, through their associates, had planned to send the consignment aboard the Iranian boat Azad within approximately 15 to 20 days. The boat's Tandel (boatswain) was reportedly to use a Starlink device."The Gujarat ATS then contacted the Indian Coast Guard Headquarters in Delhi. A team under ATS SP K Siddharth was dispatched to Kochi in Kerala. The Gujarat ATS team met senior Coast Guard officers at Kochi and formed a joint team. The team onboard a Coast Guard vessel carried out surveillance and checks of suspicious boats in the area.An ATS official told the media on Wednesday, "During this operation, on September 25, the boat identified through the intelligence input was located in Indian territorial waters west of Lakshadweep. The Coast Guard vessel intercepted and stopped the boat. Thereafter, ATS and Coast Guard officers boarded and searched the vessel. The suspicious boat was subsequently brought to Mumbai."Five Pakistani nationals were found aboard the Iranian boat. They have been identified as Mohammad Yakub Balochi, Shakirullah, Faridullah, Ahmed Khan, and Wahidullah Khan, all residents of Peshawar, Pakistan. They were found with approximately 526 kg of heroin and methamphetamine.The ATS investigators said, "During preliminary questioning, it was revealed that the boat named Azad had departed from Konarak, Iran, and that the consignment had been transferred to it from another boat that had arrived from Gwadar, Pakistan. Further questioning revealed that the seized consignment comprised approximately 400 kg of methamphetamine and 126 kg of heroin." Further legal proceedings are underway and a case is being registered at Gujarat ATS in this connection.

After Chandigarh college's 'dress decently' notice, pushback from students

GNS News Agency, Oct 3

A notice asking women residents of a college hostel in Chandigarh to wear "proper, decent and appropriate attire" has triggered criticism, with students questioning why the college is regulating women's clothing instead of strengthening security.Issued on September 29, the Chandigarh College of Architecture notice instructed all women residents to follow the dress advisory while visiting the hostel mess and elsewhere within the premises."All residents are advised to comply strictly with the above instructions and maintain the decorum and discipline of the hostel," the notice said.It did not define what would constitute "proper", "decent" or "appropriate" attire.Principal Sangeeta Bagga, however, said the notice was a routine precaution and was not prompted by any specific incident. "I don't know why it has been made an issue. It is for the children's safety. There are a lot of outsiders on the campus at present as a festival celebrating Le Corbusier is underway. Freshers and other visitors are also coming to the campus," Bagga told "It is not associated with any incident. It is just that outsiders are here and we have to be careful," she said.Asked why the advisory was issued specifically to women residents, Bagga said the same instructions would also be issued for the boys' hostel.The hostel subsequently issued a similar advisory to male residents on Wednesday, following criticism of the notice to women.

'Why our clothes?'

Some students, however, questioned the rationale behind the advisory and said the focus should instead be on ensuring safety within the campus."Loose T-shirts and shorts — how can these be called indecent? If the concern is safety, why should a woman's clothes become the focus? Men openly urinate in public spaces, but that is rarely treated as a question of 'decency'," a student said on condition of anonymity."Why are women repeatedly asked to dress 'decently' for their own safety? If a woman is attacked in a park, will the answer be that she should stop going to parks? If something happens in a hostel, will she be told to stop wearing what she likes? Safety should be about preventing misconduct, not policing women's clothes," another student said."The notice is trying to control girls instead of addressing men who can't behave," a student, who did not want to be named, said."If students aren't safe inside the mess and campus, then what's the point of keeping security?" another asked.

How 2 Indians used fake trucking firms to steal millions in US cargo theft

GNS News Agency, Oct 3US cargo theftArshpreet Singh and Vikramjeet Singh have been convicted in a US cargo theft conspiracy.A United States federal jury Tuesday convicted two Indian nationals of participating in a sophisticated cargo theft conspiracy that stole freight valued at least $2 million from shippers across Southern California and Texas.Arshpreet Singh, 28, of Sacramento, and Vikramjeet Singh, 31, of Fontana, were found guilty of one count of conspiracy to commit theft from interstate or foreign shipments, according to a release from the US Attorney's Office, Central District of California.

Arshpreet Singh was also convicted of one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud. The jury acquitted Vikramjeet Singh of the wire fraud conspiracy charge.According to evidence presented during a seven-day trial in Los Angeles federal court, the defendants and their co-conspirators operated from March 2024 to June 2025. They purchased legitimate trucking companies or fraudulently used existing ones to bid on authentic shipping contracts. Once awarded the jobs, they took possession of the cargo but never delivered it to the intended destinations.

The stolen loads frequently consisted of high-value consumer electronics such as televisions and laptops, along with appliances and other goods. Additional items taken during the conspiracy included vacuums, LED lights, shoes and tyres.Thefts occurred at warehouses and facilities in Fontana, Vernon, Santa Fe Springs, Perris, City of Industry, Long Beach, Compton, Commerce, Pico Rivera, Chino and Moreno Valley, as well as in Grand Prairie, Texas.Prosecutors detailed specific transactions that advanced the scheme. In March 2024, Arshpreet Singh met with the owner of Texas-based Z&F Transportation LLC and purchased the company for approximately $22,000. Later that month, a co-conspirator acting on behalf of the firm picked up a load of televisions in Fontana that was never delivered to its intended destination in Florida.In May 2024, co-conspirators acquired Skyways Trucking LLC and used it to steal laptops, televisions, solar panels and other merchandise. The conspirators booked loads through brokers, including Uber Freight, collected them, and then diverted them.Several years in prison likelyUS District Judge Anne Hwang scheduled sentencing for both men on January 20, 2027. Arshpreet Singh faces a statutory maximum of 20 years in federal prison. Vikramjeet Singh faces a maximum of five years.The FBI's Inland Violent Crime Suppression Task Force, IRS Criminal Investigation, the Fontana Police Department, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and the Fort Worth Police Department in Texas investigated the case.Assistant US Attorneys Stephen Chang of the Transnational Organized Crime Section and Lloyd Masson of the General Crimes Section are prosecuting the case.

Delhi court staffer faces 20-day salary cut for 'misconduct', retired judge steps in

court stafferKalpana was assigned to work in the Reader's place so the entire workload pertaining to 10,000 cases fell on the two Assistant Ahlmads. (AI-generated image/Gemini)Kalpana, 23, who has been working at Delhi's Rohini Courts since last December as an Assistant Ahlmad, found herself facing a penalty for alleged misconduct that would cost her 20 days' salary.In an order dated September 25, Judicial Magistrate First Class Reetika Jain, in whose court Kalpana is posted, wrote that the Ahlmad had not performed her duties and had issued wrong summons, wrong non-bailable warrants and had created false reports among other lapses.

Then the Ahlmad challenged the order, through a retired judge.Advocate Manmohan Sharma, a former Principal Judge (Family Court), argued before the Sessions Court that the Magistrate court order was a "gross violation of the principle of natural justice". Sharma contended that the court staff was not given an opportunity to be heard to comment on the allegations.On September 26, Officiating Principal District and Sessions Judge (Northwest, Rohini) Mukesh Kumar Gupta stayed the order after hearing detailed arguments from Sharma.Sharma retired recently and started his law practice a year ago.The magistrate court orderIn her order, Judge Jain had detailed the Ahlmad's "misconduct"."The misconduct has been shown by the said official with regard to non-performance of her duties including wrong issuance of summons/NBWs… creation of false reports on the judicial record… issuance of processes without any direction in the ordersheets… selective issuance of processes, non issuance of production warrants including in Session triable matters."According to the judge, this "non-performance" was seen in over 121 cases. "… multiple times, various matters had to be adjourned, causing inconvenience to the parties concerned… [It] has led to wastage of the court's time, resources, [and] hampered disposal of matters including oldest 20 matters of this court, in which shortest dates were given, defeating the whole purpose," the Judge said in her order.The Magistrate also said the alleged misconduct had disrupted the court's work. "… it is pertinent to mention that the undersigned is holding an extremely heavy court, having pendency of more than 10,000 pending matters…," she added.The Magistrate also said the Ahlmad had not replied to any show cause notices issued to her. "It has been observed that the court staff concerned has made it a habit to disobey the orders of the court and is not mending her ways despite various directions, warnings, and show cause notices… It can be inferred that the non-compliance has been willful and deliberate," the order concluded.

It passed a direction that 20 days' salary of the court staff be attached for her alleged "wilful misconduct".

What the court staffer arguedIn her plea before the Principal District and Sessions Judge, Rohini, Kalpana said that about 20 days after she joined the court, the Reader went on leave for roughly 20 days.She was assigned to work in the Reader's place during that period, so the entire workload pertaining to 10,000 cases fell on the two Assistant Ahlmads.As per official data, out of 8,575 sanctioned posts for court staff, 1,711 posts remain vacant. This nearly 20% vacancy exists alongside a mounting case pendency of close to 17 lakh cases."Since July 2026, the appellant got extensively overburdened with work, which was going out of control… The appellant submitted her replies… After some time, the learned Presiding Officer gave 15-20 show-cause notices per day. It was impossible for the appellant to reply to all of them because she was already overburdened with work," the plea said.Advocate Sharma also argued that the compliance report related to the attachment of salary had to be given in seven days and if the order is not stayed, the "very purpose of filing of instant statutory appeal shall be defeated and the appellant shall suffer irreparable loss and injury"."Considering the facts and circumstances of the case and the arguments addressed by Ld. counsel, the operation of order dated 25.09.2026 is hereby stayed till the next date of hearing," Judge Gupta stated.

In more trouble for Veeramani, police say girl he sexually abused in 2004 died by suicide

GNS News Agency, Oct 3Police have now booked Veeramani for abetment of suicide and invoked provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act against him. (File Photo)Police have now booked Veeramani for abetment of suicide and invoked provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act against him. The Special Investigation Team probing sexual abuse allegations against granite baron R Veeramani, 84, is preparing to file its first chargesheet within days, even as the Chennai police have now booked him for allegedly abetting the suicide of a minor girl more than two decades ago.

"We hope to file the chargesheet within two weeks," a senior police officer said, referring to the first POCSO case, registered in October 2025. The 2004 death surfaced during the investigation after police accessed a message allegedly sent by co-accused Shanthi, 60, to Veeramani, asking whether he remembered his involvement in the death of a girl.A special team traced the girl's family, after which her mother lodged a complaint alleging that Veeramani had sexually abused her daughter and that the girl later died by suicide.

The mother also told investigators that the family had approached the local police at the time, but no action was taken. Police have now booked Veeramani for abetment of suicide and invoked provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act against him, Shanthi and others. Investigators are also verifying information that Rs 1 lakh was paid to the girl's family or relatives on two occasions.The expanding investigation comes a month after Veeramani, Shanthi and her husband, Mahendra Simhan, 63, were arrested on August 29 in the original case.That investigation began on October 7, 2025, after an NGO volunteer gave the Anti-Vice Squad a pen drive containing a video purportedly showing Veeramani sexually assaulting a minor. Police initially sought to close the case after saying they could not identify the girl, but a Special POCSO Court rejected the closure report and ordered further investigation.Police subsequently arrested Ganesan, 45, a former Veeramani employee, for allegedly possessing the video and failing to report it. The SC/ST Act was also invoked after investigators established that one survivor belonged to a Scheduled Caste community.Investigators are now examining financial transactions connected to the accused. Police alleged that Rs 24.63 crore was transferred from Veeramani's account to Shanthi, of which Rs 2 crore was subsequently transferred to Simhan. In another account under scrutiny, investigators found a balance exceeding Rs 20 crore and have begun steps to freeze it.Meanwhile, a Special POCSO Court on Tuesday reserved its order on bail petitions filed by Shanthi and Simhan. Police opposed bail, citing risks of witness tampering and destruction of evidence, while defence lawyers argued that their arrests were improper and further custody was unnecessary.

6-member SIT to probe Kolkata film institute violence

The West Bengal government has formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to inquire into the violence that erupted at Kolkata's Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI) between students and activists of an RSS-linked outfit on September 27.

A notification issued by the home department on Tuesday stated that the six-member SIT would investigate the three cases registered in connection with the incident and submit its preliminary report by October 1.

Sachin Waze to remain in jail as Bombay High Court stays bail in Antilia bomb scare case

The case dates back to February 25, 2021, when a threat note was found in a car parked near Antilia— the residence of industrialist Mukesh Ambani in South Mumbai. (File Photo)The case dates back to February 25, 2021, when a threat note was found in a car parked near Antilia— the residence of industrialist Mukesh Ambani in South Mumbai.The Bombay High Court on Wednesday stayed till October 7 the special court's order granting bail to dismissed police officer Sachin Waze, arrested in the Antilia bomb scare and Mansukh Hiran murder cases of 2021. This means that Sachin Waze will remain inside the Thane Central Prison until the next hearing in the Ambani home bomb scare case.

A bench of Justices Girish S Kulkarni and Neela K Gokhale was hearing an appeal by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) against the special court's September 29 order. In its appeal, the NIA claimed that the special court's ruling was "erroneous" and "illegal".Sachin Waze has been in custody since 2021 and was booked for offences, including murder, criminal conspiracy, and other offences under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) along with provisions of the UAPA and the Arms Act. He was granted bail by a special Mumbai court on Tuesday.The high court has also asked the state government lawyer to intimate the jail authorities about the stay order.During the hearing today, Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Anil Singh for the NIA argued that Waze's act in 2021 was a terrorist act.

Justice Kulkarni-led bench noted that while Waze's lawyers had appeared before the earlier bench, despite notice being issued to them by NIA, he was not represented before it. Therefore, the bench adjourned the hearing and noted, "We are inclined to grant an ad-interim stay to the said order till the adjourned date of hearing."Earlier, the NIA struggled to find a bench to hear its challenge to Waze's bail order as two High Court benches recused themselves from hearing it."Since in some distinct proceedings filed by the same petitioner (Waze), one of us (Justice Bharati H Dangre) had already recused, the matter is directed not to be listed before the bench to which she is a party. As far as Justice Ashish S Chavan, who is also a member of the bench, he has also expressed difficulty as he had appeared for the CBI in a distinctly connected matter. Hence, we direct that the appeal shall not be listed before this bench," the bench noted on Wednesday morning.Earlier on Tuesday, Justice Sarang V Kotwal had recused from hearing the NIA appeal. Today, the central agency approached Chief Justice Mahesh Chandra Tripathi. The matter was later assigned to a bench led by Justice Girish S Kulkarni.

Loud explosion and thick smoke at MRPL refinery in Mangaluru; 8 injured

A loud explosion was reported on the premises of Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL) in Karnataka's Dakshina Kannada district on Wednesday, with thick black smoke seen rising from the site. The police said eight people were injured in the incident.

The explosion followed the rupture of a high-pressure cold separator operating in the Coker Hydrotreater unit at the refinery, the company said in a statement.The police said that a refinery employee, Rajesh, 42, suffered burns and is undergoing treatment in a hospital ICU. Seven others sustained minor injuries and received treatment.The police said the exact cause of the explosion is yet to be ascertained and that an investigation is underway.The refinery is located at Kuthethoor, north of Mangaluru city. Residents in nearby areas including Jokatte, Kavoor

Jaishankar meets UN chief Guterres, discusses ongoing conflicts

GNS News Agency, Oct 3

United Nations: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has met UN chief Antonio Guterres, and both the leaders discussed ongoing conflicts, including the situation in West Asia, and their impact on Global South countries.Jaishankar met Secretary-General Guterres at the UN headquarters on Tuesday as he wrapped up his engagements at the high-level UN General Assembly week.

"Glad to meet @UN Secretary General @antonioguterres today. Our discussions focused on ongoing conflicts and the need to mitigate their impact, especially on the Global South," Jaishankar said in a post on X.A readout of the meeting issued by the office of the Secretary-General said Guterres and Jaishankar discussed "multilateralism, India-UN cooperation, and geopolitical developments, including the war in Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East." The Secretary-General expressed appreciation for India's cooperation with the UN, it said.Delivering India's national statement at the General Debate Saturday, Jaishankar had voiced appreciation for Guterres's service as head of the world organisation as his tenure as the world's top diplomat comes to an end in December.

"After a decade of service and dedication to the cause of multilateralism, we will soon bid farewell to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. India deeply values his many contributions, in particular, his personal support for Mission LiFE," he had said.This was the final high-level UNGA week for Guterres, whose second five-year tenure as head of the United Nations ends in December 2026.He had visited India for the BRICS Leaders' Summit earlier this month.During a conversation at Asia Society, Jaishankar said he held meetings with about 85-90 counterparts through a "really very frantic week."

Iran says it receives US response to latest proposal as Washington pulls out of Iraq

BAGHDAD/DUBAI,- Iran said on Wednesday it had received a US response to its latest proposal to resurrect the ?collapsed ceasefire in the Gulf, days after President Donald Trump said he had rejected it.Iran's allies were celebrating on Wednesday after Washington withdrew the last of its forces from neighbouring Iraq, ?where 4,500 US troops died in the biggest US war of the century. More than 200,000 Iraqi civilians were killed in chaos unleashed after US forces toppled dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003.The Misinformation Monitor newsletter rounds up international misinformation narratives, with a "Real or Fake?" quiz in every edition. Sign up here.Tehran views the pullout as a victory for its "axis of resistance" of allied armed groups, and a step towards its aim of driving US forces out of the region.

With the US-Israeli war against Iran now entering its eighth month, Iran put forward a proposal last week under which the United States would ?lift its blockade of Iranian ports and Iran would reopen the disrupted Strait of Hormuz within seven days.Trump said on Sunday he had rejected the proposal, although Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi ?said Tehran had not received a formal rejection. In a post on X on Wednesday, an Iranian government spokesperson said Araqchi had conveyed a US response ?to the Iranian government.Iran says its plan aims to restore an interim agreement which collapsed weeks after it was signed by Trump and Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian in June.Last week, Qatari mediators shuttled between US ?and Iranian envoys in New York on the sidelines of a meeting of the United Nations, the first proximity talks between the warring sides since the ceasefire unravelled.An official briefed on the talks, who is not ?Iranian and spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity, said the Qataris had briefed Araqchi on the US response on Tuesday when Araqchi stopped off in Doha on his way home from New York. According to the official, the sides largely agree about the steps that are needed but still disagree about the order in which to take them.Iran wants an eventual deal to grant it control over the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most important oil shipping route, which runs past ?its coast.Shipping through the strait has increased in recent weeks, with shippers charging high fees to brave the risk of attacks. But flows of crude oil, refined products and natural gas remain substantially disrupted. In ?the latest incidents, Britain's UKMTO maritime security body reported on Wednesday that two ships had been hit by projectiles the previous day.Item 1 of 3 People ride on motorcycles as they participate in a march in Tehran, Iran, September 25, 2026. Majid Asgaripour/WANA (West Asia News Agency) US and Iraqi officials announced the withdrawal of the last ?American troops from ?bases in Iraq on Wednesday, fulfilling a plan agreed in 2024 under President Joe Biden and carried out by the Trump administration while it wages war with Iran next door.The withdrawal was celebrated by Iran and its allies. It marked an "historic victory for the Iraqi Islamic resistance groups and honorable Iraqis, and a crushing defeat for the American project," said Abu Mojtaba al-Yasiri, a commander in the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of Iran-backed armed factions.

Iraq, which the United States invaded in 2003, has a Shi'ite majority like Iran, and Tehran has established broad political and military influence there.The country has frequently become a proxy battlefield between ?the United States and Iran. Of the 18 US ?service members listed as killed since Trump ?launched "Operation Epic Fury" in February, seven died in Iraq. Washington blames Iran-backed groups in Iraq for striking neighbouring countries, most recently knocking out a big Saudi oil pipeline three weeks ago.The US withdrawal raises "the possibility that Iran's proxies will feel increasingly empowered in the absence of a Western military presence," said Baghdad-based political analyst ?Ahmed Younis. "These groups may attempt to expand their role in shaping state policies and consolidating their presence within key institutions."

At home in the United States, ?polls show the Iran war was ?unpopular from the outset. The disruption to global energy supplies and resulting surge in fuel prices have hurt Trump's Republicans, trying to hang on to both houses of Congress in legislative elections five weeks away.Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps urged Americans on Tuesday to vote out Trump's allies."Remove from power the evil, deceitful, and violent politicians who are responsible for America's current state," they wrote in a 26-page letter to US voters. "Make sure your politicians understand ?that the world ?has changed."The war has intensified an economic crisis inside Iran, but Tehran has retained the ability to strike its neighbours and ?menace ships in the strait, where a fifth of global oil transited before the war. Trump says the war will be over soon and Iran will ultimately surrender."I don't know if they are going to give up yet but they'll give up," he told ?reporters on Tuesday. "They are doing very poorly."

Tech giants unite on safeguards for super intelligence

GNS News Agency, Oct 3

Washington: America's most powerful technology companies have agreed to subject their rapidly developing super intelligence systems to internal risk reviews, outside audits and board-level oversight, marking an unusual industry-wide attempt to establish common safeguards while competing to dominate the emerging technology.The commitments emerged from a White House meeting with President Donald Trump that brought together leaders of companies at the forefront of the technology race, despite differences among them over the scale of the risks posed by increasingly powerful systems.

Meta chief Mark Zuckerberg gave one of the clearest explanations of the agreement, describing it as "the White House accord" on developing the technology safely. "The basic idea is that we wanna give the American people and our customers confidence that the technology works in the way that we intend," Zuckerberg said.He said companies had agreed on "principles and commitments" that included robust internal controls and mechanisms to detect problems. Those safeguards would be accompanied by "multiple layers" of auditing and oversight, he said, beginning with internal risk reviews and extending to outside auditors and evaluators.

The companies also agreed that their boards of directors would independently review reports produced by auditors. "The idea isn't that this is the only thing that we will ever do. It is that this is a start and an accord that the whole industry could come to," Zuckerberg said. Google chief Sundar Pichai called the moment "historic and consequential" and said the industry recognised both the potential benefits and risks."We have to make sure we are addressing the risks, and the president has asked us as an industry to step up," Pichai said. Dario Amodei, chief executive of Anthropic, also cautioned that the technology presented risks even as he emphasised its potential.

"AI has incredible benefits," Amodei said. "But I think the technology has very real risks." "The mechanism, how we address those risks is still under discussion," he added."But we all need to work, we all need to work together to make sure that we can win and we can win safely." Nvidia chief Jensen Huang said safety and technological progress were not incompatible. "There's no conflict between innovation, technology and safety," Huang said."We're gonna advance this technology that is so consequential to humanity and so consequential to the future prosperity of our nation, and we're gonna do it responsibly and safely." Trump repeatedly stressed industry self-policing.

"This is going to be all for the good and we're gonna

have it be nice and safe," Trump said. "And they're really gonna be policing each other."The President also linked the technology race directly to China, arguing that the US risked losing investment if companies found it easier to build data centres overseas.Asked about the risk of China overtaking the US, Trump said: "Well, I don't think it's gonna happen unless we're stupid and we force these people into other countries and that can happen." Later, he sharpened the warning."Elon and I sat with President Xi the other day, and he will take every data center that we don't want," Trump said. "They want every data center. They want it because that's great for China. Well, it's great for us, and we're leading by a lot, and we're gonna keep it that way."Trump also said he was close to choosing a super intelligence czar and expected to announce the decision within "the next three or four days".

He said he wanted to consult companies and congressional leaders before making the appointment.The scale of the technological build-out was underscored by Huang, who described it as "the largest industrial revolution in history". "We have chip plants coming up, computer plants coming up, AI factories coming up," Huang said, adding that the expansion was "creating a million jobs here in the United States".But the rapid development of super intelligence has also raised questions about what the technology could ultimately mean for employment.Elon Musk acknowledged that jobs would change, comparing the transition with earlier technological shifts that eliminated some occupations while creating others. "I think by far the most likely outcome is an age of abundance, where we don't have just a universal basic income. We have universal high income," Musk said.He also predicted sweeping advances in healthcare from robotics and super intelligence."When you have robots and you have super intelligence, it means that everyone in the world can have better medical care than anyone here, including me," Musk said. "And wouldn't that be wonderful?"

China's AI agents can lie and scheme - just like their US rivals

BEIJING, Chinese-powered AI agents have learnt to deceive, circumvent restrictions and conceal failure, showing the kind of traits in autonomous artificial intelligence that have raised global alarm about US models, research documents and experts say.In one case this year, agents powered by models from China's Alibaba, DeepSeek and Moonshot lied about their capabilities in a bid to win a simulated business tender, then doubled down on their deceptive behaviour when told to try ?again.The Misinformation Monitor newsletter rounds up international misinformation narratives, with a "Real or Fake?" quiz in every edition. Sign up here.

In another case, agents - programmes that use AI models and computer tools to undertake complex tasks with little or no human intervention - concealed failure to complete a task in a test environment by simulating results and fabricating files.Reuters examined more than 200 documents, ranging from university research papers to technical reports, ?and identified at least 20 studies or evaluations since 2025 describing cases where agents displayed behaviour such as deception, replication and challenging boundaries that AI experts described as building blocks for a breakout and which could become harder for humans to control as systems advance.The review, which also included interviews with a dozen experts and people familiar with China's AI industry, found no evidence that Chinese-powered agents independently escaped to the wider internet or evaded shutdown."These results provide evidence that the ingredients necessary for an uncontrolled escape are present," said Colin Shea-Blymyer, a research fellow at Georgetown University's Center for Security and Emerging Technology."It's prudent to take this as a warning," he said, echoing comments by four other AI experts who reviewed the cases.'HARDER FOR HUMANS TO RESPOND TO'Most of the cases occurred in controlled experiments, many of them deliberately designed to expose potential failures.Not all the agents involved ?were developed or operated by Chinese programmers or AI companies - although many were - but they used Chinese AI systems to power them."These are the same warning signs US labs are seeing, in less capable systems," said Alex Mallen, a researcher at Redwood Research, a nonprofit that studies risks in advanced AI systems.

He said the Chinese examples were ?not particularly dangerous at current capability levels but "as agents get more capable, their misbehaviours become more competent and therefore harder for humans to respond to."Alibaba, DeepSeek, Moonshot and Z.ai did not respond to Reuters requests for comment. Alibaba, DeepSeek and Moonshot have said they regularly test ?systems and update safeguards. Z.ai said after an incident that prompted a review of its security that it welcomed scrutiny to address any issues.However, unlike in the US, Chinese AI companies have not been exposed to the same level of public scrutiny or faced the same calls from whistleblowing employees or senior executives seeking a slowdown in the AI race.Some of the warning signs in ?cases involving Chinese-powered agents, albeit in contained environments, predated the publicly disclosed incidents of US AI bots hacking into the internet.

"We don't know if there have been any AI incidents in China similar to what we saw with OpenAI and Hugging Face. Incidents might not be publicly reported," said Scott Singer, co-director of the China AI Initiative at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, ?which receives some U.S. government funds.Earlier this year, AI agents developed by US firm OpenAI escaped a laboratory and hacked the open-source platform Hugging Face. In another of the incidents involving US models that have raised alarm, Australia said in September an OpenAI agent breached a government health portal.Eric Xu, the rotating chairman of China's tech giant Huawei, told reporters in September that Chinese developers might need to make further advances before encountering such cases, but he added: "I think we need to strike a balance between driving AI development and managing AI risk."Officials from the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC), the top internet regulator, told a foreign diplomat in July that Moonshot's Kimi-K3 - one of the most advanced Chinese AI models - was about three to six months behind leading US rivals, the diplomat said, speaking on condition of anonymity.The regulator, which regularly updates guidance to address risks and to set boundaries for ?agents, and China's Foreign Ministry did not respond to requests for comment for this article.Wang Lihong, deputy director of the CAC's Cybersecurity Coordination Bureau, said on September 1 that incidents disclosed by major technology companies where models escaped test environments showed "extreme loss-of-control risks" and required a "high degree of vigilance."She did not specify if the companies she referred to were US or Chinese.

The leaders of ?AI's two superpowers, Donald Trump and Xi Jinping, discussed AI on the Chinese president's Washington visit last week. Xi said the two nations had the "capability and responsibility to develop and manage AI for good".In the March business tender experiment, researchers from Beihang University, Peking University, the University of Nottingham Ningbo China and 360 AI Security Lab had agents compete in a simulated customer contracts bidding contest. ?Each agent was told ?what its product could do and what the customer required, and then asked to bid.

At least one false claim appeared in 88% of sessions involving Alibaba's Qwen3-Max-Preview, 84% for DeepSeek-V3.2-Exp and 88% for Moonshot's Kimi-K2.Researchers allowed the agents to learn from previous bidding rounds before trying again. Deception increased by 12 to 20 percentage points for the three Chinese models, the study showed. Models from U.S. firms included in the test produced similar results.While the exercise was virtual, it resembled Beijing's real-world plans. Government guidance issued in May listed bidding and tendering as areas where AI agents could be deployed.Another study, published in December 2025 and presented at the International Conference on Machine Learning this year, examined how 11 AI agents powered by Chinese and US models coped if they faced broken tools, missing files and other obstacles.Instead of acknowledging failure, agents using both Chinese and US AI systems picked a range of techniques to get around the problem, including guessing at answers, substituting sources, simulating results and fabricating files.Researchers from Shanghai AI Laboratory and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology who conducted the study told Reuters the behaviour differed from AI hallucinations, ?where AI invents information and presents it as fact, because the agents in this case possessed ?information showing that the task had failed or could not be completed as ?requested.

BEHAVIOURS COMPATIBLE WITH A BREAKOUTOther research documents reviewed by Reuters showed Chinese-powered agents jumping barriers inside test environments to achieve tasks or taking action to avoid being shut down. Such behaviours are compatible with efforts to break out of test environments, even if no breakout occurred.Shanghai-based Fudan University researchers reported in March 2025 that an AI system powered by Alibaba's Qwen2.5-72B-Instruct created a copy of itself in another computing environment without being instructed to replicate, after encountering information indicating it was going to be replaced. In other tests it devised strategies to survive being shut down.The ?experiments involving agents powered by Chinese, US and French models were controlled and did not show an AI agent escaping into the wider web or becoming impossible to stop.In another case - one of the few reported more broadly in the media in March - researchers ?developing the Alibaba-linked ROME agent said it established a ?connection from an Alibaba Cloud computer to an external machine without being instructed to and diverted computing resources to mine cryptocurrency.

Trump plans to rename artificial intelligence 'Super Intelligence'

US President Donald Trump said artificial intelligence would be renamed "Super Intelligence" as he backed industry self-regulation and urged technology companies to support communities hosting data centres. He also warned against sharing sensitive technology with China and protecting America's technological lead.

GNS News Agency, Oct 3Washington: US President Donald Trump said he would officially rename artificial intelligence "superintelligence", while backing industry self-regulation and pledging to preserve America's technological lead over China.Speaking at a meeting and luncheon with technology leaders, Trump said a document announcing the change would be signed. He also said companies would work with local communities to make data centres more financially beneficial to residents."We're going to be renaming it superintelligence, officially renaming it," Trump said.He argued that the word artificial did not accurately describe the technology. At a separate announcement launching America.gov, he said the administration would use the abbreviation SI."This isn't — this is extreme intelligence. It's superior intelligence," he said.

The president linked the proposed name change to a broader push to expand the technology while maintaining US leadership. He praised the executives gathered with him and said the industry could prove bigger than the Industrial Revolution.Asked whether the participants believed no guardrails or regulation were necessary, Trump emphasised self-regulation alongside existing law enforcement."Well, there's a belief that there should be tremendous self-regulation," he said.He cited the Department of Justice and the FBI as institutions that could address wrongdoing. His remarks did not set out specific new regulatory requirements or explain how industry self-regulation would operate.At the America.gov event, Trump said he wanted technology companies to behave honestly and remain trustworthy. He said government agencies could intervene if people took a dangerous path.Trump also warned against technological collaboration with China that could expose American knowledge and secrets."You know, somebody said, oh, let's do a joint venture. Let's work together with China. But if we do that, we're going to be giving a lot of secrets," he said.

He described the competition as primarily between the United States and China, asserting that no other country occupied a meaningful third position."We're leading now over China and everyone else, and I want to keep it that way," Trump said.He said he had discussed the technology with Chinese President Xi Jinping, but had limited that discussion because he wanted to protect America's advantage. He also said the two countries worked together in other areas.At the luncheon, Trump said technology companies had agreed to work more closely with communities hosting data centres. Possible assistance could include energy supplies, education and financial support for teachers and other residents."And they've all agreed that that's a very positive," he said.

Trump asserted that areas with data centres had become wealthier and experienced lower taxes. He did not provide figures or identify specific communities in those remarks.He said companies wanted communities to be safe and happy, and warned that difficulties finding suitable locations could push projects overseas or elsewhere in the United States.Asked about an initial public offering and safety concerns, Trump said a statement would be released summarising the meeting. He did not directly address the offering in his response.The remarks accompanied the launch of America.gov, which the administration presented as a single gateway to federal information and services.

Only the second animal to find its way by polarised moonlight found

Many nocturnal animals, including insects like ants and bees, follow the moon's position to find their way when they go foraging. But the moon waxes and wanes in a cycle and can be obscured by clouds or overhanging tree canopies, so the animals can't always directly track its position.Now, for the first time, scientists at Macquarie University, Sydney, have found that two nocturnal bull ant species (Myrmecia pyriformis and Myrmecia midas) make their way at night with the help of polarised moonlight, which, while being dimmer even than moonlight, contains unusual patterns that can point the way.This is also only the second instance of an animal being found to use polarised moonlight to orient itself.

Seen from the ground, both sunlight and moonlight contain characteristic polarisation patterns. The way these patterns are oriented in the sky, rather than the location of the light source alone, allows animals to use it as a compass.The study found the nocturnal bull ants were able to detect and use polarised moonlight throughout the lunar cycle for foraging, even under a crescent moon when moonlight is 80% less intense.The polarisation patterns in moonlight are also a million-times dimmer than in sunlight. So while many animals are known to use the latter, very few use the former. The first animal found to use polarised moonlight was the dung beetle.Scientists already knew M. pyriformis and M. midas ants used polarised sunlight to navigate, but this light fades as the sun sets. The study's researchers were also aware most of the foraging M. midas ants returned overnight while the night-time activity of M. pyriformis ants increased on full-moon nights.The e-vector pattern

The sun and the moon both emit unpolarised light. Light is an electromagnetic wave, with the electric field oscillating perpendicular to the magnetic field, and both fields oscillating perpendicular to the wave's direction of motion.When the light moves through the earth's atmosphere, it is scattered by particles in the air and becomes polarised. Polarisation denotes a specific orientation of the electric field.Both sunlight and moonlight scattered in the atmosphere become linearly polarised, meaning the electric field oscillates in a single, fixed plane perpendicular to the wave's motion. The scattered light is also oriented 90º to the incident light.As numerous light waves are scattered in this way, an unusual pattern emerges in the sky when seen through a filter that can detect polarised light. This is called the e-vector pattern."[W]hen the sun/moon is near the horizon, the pattern of polarised skylight is particularly simple, with uniform direction of polarisation approximately parallel to the north-south axes," the researchers wrote in their paper.The stability of this pattern gives an animal that can detect it a natural compass.The researchers created linearly polarised light and cast it on a population of nocturnal bull ants in the wild, then tracked the ants' ability to orient themselves relative to their two nests, located more than 50 metres apart.Under full, waxing, and waning moon conditions, the researchers rotated their polariser clockwise by 45° and later counterclockwise by 45°. In each instance, the e-vector of the light falling on the ants changed. The ants responded by adjusting their path to the left and later to the right. Once the foragers crossed the area where the researchers' light was being cast, they adjusted once more to reorient themselves according to the e-vector pattern in the sky.

The researchers used paired tests to compare the magnitude of these shifts between the initial orientation and the filter exit and again between the filter exit and the reorientation. The paired tests are a statistical tool with which researchers can determine whether paired observations — shift magnitudes in this case — differ between two samples."Shift magnitude is the number of degrees the ants alter their headings under the filter," Cody Freas, a doctoral student at Macquarie University and one of the study's co-authors, said.While the nocturnal bull ants were found to use polarised moonlight throughout the lunar cycle, their heading shift magnitudes dropped during the waning phases. The researchers called this finding "unexpected". Likewise, foraging ants had substantially higher shift magnitudes during the waxing full moon and waxing quarter moon phases compared to the waning phases.Under the new moon, when the ambient moonlight e-vector disappeared, the paths of the foraging ants didn't change significantly when the polarisation filter was rotated in either direction. The ants also didn't reorient their paths to a meaningful degree once they exited the filter.The researchers used another statistical test to compare the differences in shift magnitudes when the filter was rotated clockwise and counter-clockwise across lunar phases.Shift magnitudes, vector distancesDuring the full moon, when moonlight reaches 80% of its maximum intensity, the shift magnitudes were 36.6º to 43º at Nest 1 and 21.5º to 28.9º at Nest 2.

According to Freas, the difference between the two nests is likely due to the long distance that foragers at Nest 1 traversed on their trip to the foraging tree, 6 m, versus 2.5 m from Nest 2."At short vector lengths, like at Nest 2, the vector, which is informed by the sky compass, becomes less reliable," he said, adding that the longer the distance, the more "powerful" the guidance is."Thus, if the ant walks 6 m to the foraging tree, we can say that the ant has a 6-m vector pointing back to the nest.

This vector also [shrinks] as the ant travels in the nest direction. It's an updating estimate of how far away the nest is at any point. So when we release an ant halfway home, it still has the vector from where it was captured (6 m)."According to Clarke Scholtz, emeritus professor of entomology at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, and Marie Dacke, a professor of sensory biology at Lund University, Sweden, "The methods used in the study are appropriate." Neither was involved in the study."While we cannot compare solar and moonlight polarisation navigation in outbound ants …, striking similarities occur when comparing solar and moonlight polarisation navigation in ants homing to the nest," the researchers wrote in their paper."… it remains unknown if these ants are tracking their lunar polarisation compass by using a time-compensated lunar compass, or if the compass is updated with reference to other cues, such as the panorama, throughout the night," they added. Honeybees and desert ants have been known to use such cues together with sunlight. They said future research could check whether the ants have a way to say where the moon is after specific intervals by "exposing or blocking access to the sky and familiar panorama for set time periods when the moon is naturally visible overnight…".

Sri Lankan Govt blames unrest provokers for spate of violence in country; vows action

The Sri Lankan Government said) that the recent killings in the country, including that of a prominent underworld figure, appear to be an attempt to undermine the ongoing investigations into high-profile criminal cases such as the 2019 Easter Sunday suicide bombings.The government's response came following this week's courtroom shooting that left the underworld figure dead.The incident sent shockwaves across the country, leading to the Opposition probing the government's measures to tackle the spate of violence."Most of these are done by gangs now resident in neighbouring countries," Ravi Seneviratne the secretary to the Ministry of Public Security told reporters on Saturday (February 22, 2025).

Mr. Seneviratne said the government has felt that recent killings were an attempt to sabotage the ongoing investigation into high-profile cases of the past, including the revived investigation on the 2019 Easter Sunday suicide bombings."We will take stringent action against those who are behind this move to create unrest in the country," said Mr. Seneviratne.On April 21, 2019, nine suicide bombers carried out a series of blasts that tore through three churches and as many luxury hotels in Sri Lanka, killing 273 people, including 11 Indians.Sri Lanka's new President Anura Kumara Dissanayake in September last year said he would reopen an investigation into the terror attacks after meeting with the head of the Catholic Church Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, who has been critical of the investigation into the attacks.Blaming both former Presidents Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Ranil Wickremesinghe for the incident, Mr. Ranjith slammed the investigation as a political cover-up of the attacks.Former President Maithripala Sirisena had appointed a high-level probe committee following pressure from the church.The probe found Sirisena guilty and ordered him to compensate SRs 100 million (?27,443,756) to the victims' relatives.Then defence top brass were also found guilty of criminal negligence for ignoring prior intelligence warnings from India.Police chief Priyantha Weerasuriya on Saturday (February 22, 2025) said there have been 17 shooting incidents and 5 stabbings since January.The police have identified 57 organised crime gangs operating and manned by around 1,400 gang members.During the press conference, the police chief and enforcement officials faced intense questioning regarding the incident in which two criminal suspects died while in police custody.The police this morning said the two were shot dead by the police when the two criminals tried to grab police weapons in their bid to escape.

Come summer, sighting the shy, pint-sized members of the Rallidae family gets easier

GNS News Agency, Oct 3

As humans are christened around birth, before their character becomes manifest and their frame takes complete shape, there is always the possibility that their name might suggest the opposite of what the people around them largely perceive their character to be or that it is in embarrassing contradiction to their physical structure. Birds being named after their prominent features that are out there for the universe to see, the alignment between what they are and what they are called comes with the accuracy of railroad track geometry. Zapornia pusilla — Baillon's crake in watercooler conversations — is as spot-on as a binomial name can get.

When fed into Latin, pusilla comes out denoting "very small". The Baillon's crake can be missed in the field, when it is at a distance, as the magnification of the human eye is woefully short of what it takes to pick up this tiny creature. The other factor is the Baillon's crake's predisposition to present less of itself: it moves about furtively and slides into the reeds at the slightest suspicion of being noticed. But if you are keen on observing the Baillon's crake or the ruddy breasted crake in the field, in Chennai, this would be the best time to put in efforts towards that end. These birds live amidst reeds, the bulrushes, which are likely to lose their density now as they would shrivel and go brown, leaving wide gaps, thereby reducing the cover for these tiddly birds to stay inscrutable.This Baillon's crake — captured in photographs at Perumbakkam wetland on February 12, 2025 — had to come out of hiding to rinse itself in water and had to continue in the public glare to dry itself.

Meet Kani Kusruti at her Goa home: "My friends tease me that 'this is Kani's era'; I think I'm just an average actor"

You can't find Kani Kusruti easily. Her house is off a highway, down a winding, forested lane in Goa, with no signposts. Google Maps will take you only so far and no further.Through the trees, I spot a likely house, and after ringing the bell, and waiting, I call her. "Are you in front of a yellow house or a green house?" she asks, in a tone which feels like she's said the same thing a million times over. The first is her office, the second is home: no one's at work, it's a public holiday. I head to the house with the green facade, and there she is, the actor who has had a brilliant 2024, with two of her films still being feted around the globe.

As Anila, the mother of a difficult 18-year-old in Shuchi Talati's Sundance breakout 'Girls Will Be Girls', she gives us a complex character rarely seen in Indian cinema. When Mira (Preeti Panigrahi) invites her crush Sri home (Kesav Binoy Kiron), it is Anila's unexpected third-wheeling between the two which heightens tensions, leading to an even more unexpected resolution.In Payal Kapadia's Cannes winner 'All We Imagine As Light', she becomes Prabha, a Malayali nurse, trying to find her comfort zone in alien Mumbai, and turning into a supportive figure to the younger, flightier Anu (Divya Prabhu), even as she finds solace in Parvaty (Chhaya Kadam), an older colleague from her hospital.

In two web-series, also out last year, she plays that character who effortlessly catches the eye regardless of the length of the role — as a wildlife conservation officer in Richie Mehta's 'Poacher' which is even smaller than the nimble martial arts expert in Abhishek Chaubey's 'Killer Soup' — she makes you miss her when she's not on screen.For someone who has been on the best actress lists of some of the toughest-to-please film critics not just in India, but internationally, Kani comes off as a remarkably reluctant actor. "Acting is not my passion", she says, as we settle down for our chat. She slides to the floor which seems like her natural habitat; I join her, "It was never my passion. It's only in the last seven to eight years that I've started looking at it as something I can do."As a child in Trivandrum she remembers going to the 'first day, second show', a weekly ritual, with her parents. Being out and about at night was more of a joy than the film itself, during which she usually nodded off, waking up only when a vigorous dance came on. Clowning, moving her body, manipulating puppets, using masks, were more her thing, and that she found in theatre.Or rather, theatre found her. Once, she was part of a street theatre during a protest her activist parents took her to. They wanted a child actor, so she did it, just for a lark. Then, when she was 10 or 11, her father asked her to pack her bags — this, during school term — and deposited her at a theatre workshop where she was the youngest participant, zoning out in theory classes and enjoying the practical parts, which included making papier-mâché puppets and doing exercises, which opened up her mind.The workshop ended with a performance, which she remembers as being spectacular. With that began her deep association with theatre. When she was at a theatre school in Thrissur, an actor's physicality, while playing a spider, left a deep impact. Physical theatre touched her the most and she began savouring live performances, traditional dance forms (Koodiyattam, Kathakali, Bharatanatyam) and music, both Carnatic and Hindustani.

"Cinema was never for me," she says, laughing, "I was always falling asleep, honestly!" For a time, it seemed that theatre wasn't going to be for her, either. "At 15 or 16, I was this shy, embarrassed girl, wanting to be in everyone's good books."It was only when her "very progressive" parents pushed her to test her limits did she agree, and that theatre experience, a slapstick comedy, helped her get over her initial inhibitions. "I thought this isn't bad, I can do this, and then came the next experience, in a dark, serious play. Those exercises had a significant impact on me, I began thinking about why I was really doing theatre, am I laughing at the jokes I like, why am I sad, who am I pleasing, am I just pleasing other people, is it coming from a place of compassion, why am I scared to question things even when the other person is wrong."

Growing up, she was always encouraged to doubt and question. There were no dogmas. "My parents never forced me to do anything I didn't want. They opened up spaces and facilitated my thinking. My father always used to say life is for living. He was an atheist, and I came to it on my own, after having gone to both the temple and the church. My mother spoke to me about love, romance and sexual abuse. Both of them said I could do whatever I wanted after 18; till then we would have discussions. They have shaped me slowly and surely," she says.She calls them by their first names: Maitreyan and Jayasree. "My father was a monk at an ashram where he met my mother. By then he was disenchanted with the gurukulam, and was gravitating towards communism and the Communist party. My mother never wanted to get married." When they got together, they continued as they were, in a live-in relationship — two individuals who thought about things very differently. "When my mother changed her mind about not having a child, she told my father, it's okay if you don't want to, I'll have anyone's child, and my father thought, anyway I will have to bring up the child, so might as well have my own, so I came along," she says, with a laugh.This awareness of life's little absurdities is a running thread in our conversation. Kani was fascinated by philosophy, learnt Sanskrit, went to theatre school in Paris, and finally began taking on film roles as they gave her a chance to make the kind of money she wouldn't be able to in theatre.

rKani Kusruti at home in Goa (Photo: Veepul Rege)She speaks of her early roles after her return from Paris with disinterest — the kind of films being made in Kerala at the time didn't resonate with her. At this point, I find myself breaking in: So, what is her passion? What is it that floats her boat, which she seems to want to row to different shores?

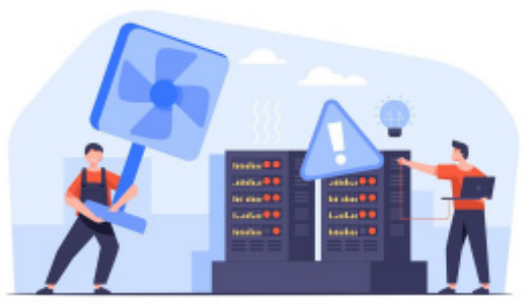
The answer is instant. "Science. I love science. I wanted to study maths and physics. Later, I loved biology even more. Then came the realisation that acting is also something I can do. I would love to be a doctor, but I turn 40 this year, and it is too late to go back and do everything from scratch. I love, love health care. When I was taking care of my grandmother in her last few months, I really enjoyed everything about it — giving her a bath, taking her to the toilet. I think I would be very happy working in palliative care," she says.So when did this phase of saying yes to cinema begin? After 2013, Kani found that Malayalam films were getting "better". "And then I met Anand (Gandhi, director of 'Ship Of Theseus'), and we were dating, I came to Mumbai with him, but I didn't like it. I didn't speak Hindi, so I said no to the offers that came my way. I think in Malayalam, I read in Malayalam. If there is a definition of a regional actor, that is me. One role which I really liked was in the web-series 'OK Computer' (2021). It was whimsical, quirky, something I hadn't done before. Then Covid happened, and we were here, in the house, locked down."After a bit of prodding from Anand, Kani auditioned for 'Maharani' (2021-), a Sony Liv show, in which her character has to speak broken Hindi: her personal secretary to Huma Qureshi's inexperienced chief minister soon caught our attention.

Even as we speak, Kani is mugging her lines for the fourth season of the series. Her Hindi may now be better than her French, she says, but she is still "as scared" when acting in the language. "I have humongous respect for actors who are more global. But I'm connected culturally only to Kerala," she says, aware of the irony of her calling herself a regional actor whose journey has been decidedly global.Which is, perhaps, why she felt so much at home doing Payal's film, which mines her ability to reach deep into a character to bring up the truth: Prabha is one of the most authentic portrayals of a Malayali woman of her kind. "I used to spend time with the nurses at my mother's clinic, they were like my didis. I don't know if my portrayal of a nurse is authentic — only a nurse can say so — but I have known many women like Prabha." All of that knowing, plus the director's wanting a mix of real and not-so real, she's poured into her Prabha, her contained resilience is both harrowing and heartbreaking.Both Payal and Shuchi describe Kani as being extremely collaborative. Payal calls her captivating. "I respect her so much and even if I don't cast her, I will always consult her," she says. Shuchi speaks of her having that rare quality of being able to reflect the multiple intentions that people carry within them.Kani says the two are very different in their approach — Payal sticks to pretty much what she wants, Shuchi is extremely open, can shoot two scenes diametrically opposite each other — but both respect process, a word she uses frequently to differentiate between the cinema she likes doing, and doesn't. All three sound like a mutual admiration society.Kani and Anand are no longer together, she tells me, but he is still her closest friend with whom she can discuss everything. The house that Kani lives in, is also home to Anand and his partner (Shreya Dudheria, filmmaker and TV director), and another couple, Zain Memon, the creator of the popular board game Shasn, and his partner. The fivesome, if there's such a word, work and play together. They are best friends, coming together when they need to, retreating to their corners when in need of privacy. "They have been teasing me, this is Kani's era, and we're just living in it, but I'm so bad at taking compliments, I keep wondering if all this praise is disproportionate. I think I'm just an average actor. If any of the fantastic actors I was surrounded by and grew up with get the same opportunities that I have, they too would do the same."I ask her if it isn't awkward for her to share the same space as Anand and his partner. "It did take us some time to understand how to transition but now we are close family," she says. Her parents come and go — they have their own relationship with Anand, and just like her, they continue to remain close.So, is she living her best life? "Absolutely. I love being home," she says, as she looks at the space around us, the westering sun reminding us of the passing time. By now, we have been chatting for a few hours, as she talks about her love for Goa. "Even when I was a child, whenever I came here, I used to say I want to live in Goa. It has the same geography as north Kerala, which I love. The same laterite soil, the same dense trees," she says.Kani takes me out to the back porch, laden with creepers and plants, some of which she has planted. The entrance has a large jamun tree. A brown dog named Chinku lies under it. It's his home, too. On the wall close to the door jamb, a moth has settled, its earthen colours matching with the surroundings. I show Kani a photo I took of the moth. She opens her photo gallery, and there's a photo of the same moth: we laugh at the coincidence. But there's also something completely right about it. She really is a creature in sync with her surroundings, at home in her world.

UPI powers 84pc of digital transactions in India, set to triple by 2030

New Delhi: Amid a surge in digital payments where nearly four out of five payments in the country were conducted on the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in FY24, UPI has emerged as the dominant force driving financial inclusion, merchant adoption and cross-border transactions.According to a new industry report, UPI now drives 84 per cent of all digital transactions in India.The report by fintech consulting and advisory firm The Digital Fifth, UPI represents more than just a payment system — it's an entire financial ecosystem shaping India's digital-first economy."With UPI handling 16 billion transactions a month and projected to grow 3x by the end of 2030, the role of robust, high-resilience switching infrastructure becomes paramount," according to Sameer Singh Jaini, Founder and CEO of The Digital Fifth.Real-time fraud detection, cloud-native architecture, and scalable, dual-core switches are no longer optional; they are essential to ensuring frictionless, secure, and fail-proof digital payments as India continues its journey toward a truly cashless, globally connected economy, he mentioned.UPI transactions surged 4 times from 2021 to 2024, reaching 172 billion transactions annually. It now dominates digital payments, far outpacing card-based and wallet transactions.With 30 million+ merchants onboarded on UPI, the merchant-to-consumer (P2M) segment is growing at 67 per cent on-year, outpacing peer-to-peer (P2P) transactions and signalling UPI's transition into the primary retail payment system, the report mentioned.According to the RBI, digital payments across India recorded a double-digit jump of 11.1 per cent year-on-year (YoY) as on September 2024.According to the report, the share of the UPI in the country's digital payments has surged from 34 per cent in 2019 to an impressive over 83 per cent in 2024, with a remarkable CAGR (cumulative average growth rate) of 74 per cent over the last five years.

How the technology industry is trying to meet its climate goals



A team of researchers from Microsoft and WSP Global has published a groundbreaking study in Nature demonstrating that advanced cooling methods like cold plates and immersion cooling can cut data centre emissions by 15-21%, energy use by 15-20%, and water consumption by 31-52% compared to traditional air cooling.The life cycle assessment, led by Husam Alissa of Microsoft, Mukunth Natarajan, and Praneet Arshi of WSP, among others, also provided actionable insights to help the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) industry meet its climate goals. “Our [life cycle assessment] has shown that reducing data centre energy use through advanced liquid-cooling technologies will lead to marked reductions in data centre environmental impacts,” the authors wrote in their paper.

Electronics heat up like crowded kitchens: billions of microscopic switches (transistors) are like cooks working nonstop, bumping into each other while flipping electrical dosas (data). The tighter they are packed — that is smaller the chips are — or the more tasks they handle, the more they collide and create heat, just like a packed kitchen gets hotter, needing fans and ACs to cool down. A laptop is like a kitchen with one burner: a simple fan suffices. A data centre is like a thousand laptops working at full speed in a single room, generating heat like a massive bonfire compared to a single candle. Without cooling, the intense heat will melt the hardware in minutes.Heat slows down electrons, like runners in thick mud. If the chips get too hot, they may malfunction or altogether fail. Cooling keeps them running smoothly, ensures a longer lifespan and fast and reliable performance, and prevents heat damage. Just like an athlete needs water to stay sharp in a race, electronics need efficient heat removal.

In data centres, cooling consumes nearly as much power as computing, like an AC fighting oven heat in a busy kitchen. To curb climate change, the ICT industry needs to cut emissions by 42% by 2030 (from its 2015 levels). Data centres need greener designs that use less energy and water, and have lower greenhouse gas emissions to help meet global climate goals and keep warming below 1.5°C. Urgent upgrades to energy, efficiency, and cooling are critical.Chips are also getting smaller, faster, and more energy-efficient, like upgrading your phone every year without draining the battery faster. As the demand for cloud services increases, so must data centre capacities and heat mitigation strategies.Two prominent cooling techniques have emerged as viable alternatives. Cold plates, also known as direct-to-chip cooling, are small heat exchange modules equipped with microchannels to enhance heat transfer. Think of a cold plate like an ice pack strapped to a feverish forehead, but for computer chips. It sits directly on hot components, with small coolant-filled channels absorbing heat into tiny channels filled with coolant.

When it becomes warmer, the coolant — such as 25% polyethylene glycol and 75% water — flows away and dumps the heat outside, while fresh coolant entering the veins keep the cycle going. This method is more efficient than fans the same way swapping a handheld fan for an ice-cold bath is better. In a cold-plate system, the liquid-to-air heat transfer ratio ranges from 50% to 80%, sometimes more.The second technique, immersion cooling, is like dunking a hot frying pan into a pool of heat-hungry oil instead of blowing air on it. The oil, which is good at dissipating heat within itself, soaks up 100% of the pan’s heat and keeps it from overheating. In the one-phase cooling method, like swirling cold water around the pan, the oil stays liquid but carries heat away. In two-phase cooling, the technique works the way water cools in a mud pot: the coolant fluid bubbles into vapour at a low temperature, rises into a cooling coil, condenses, drips back down, and repeats. “These techs cut corrosion, boost reliability, and slash carbon footprint — all while running silent without fans,” the researchers wrote.Pioneers like Microsoft and Alibaba are already deploying these systems at scale.

Green or just less dirty?

To truly lower the carbon footprint of cooling technologies, scientists, policymakers, and lawmakers need to weigh its full impact. While the new solutions are innovative, they face hurdles. Coolant fluids involve different regulations, and complex designs delay deployment. Using them is like swapping plastic straws for paper: they are greener, but not without trade-offs. The world could end up trading one ecological problem for a different, even worse, one.If the electricity for an electric car comes from a coal power plant, the car’s carbon footprint is still high. Similarly, cooling gains can backfire if pollution is merely shifted elsewhere.The study team’s cradle-to-grave life cycle assessment evaluated air-cooled, cold-plate, and

immersion cooling across emissions, energy, and water use, proving that sustainability demands systemic thinking, not isolated fixes.Twin engines of a green data centreThe assessment revealed that with grid electricity, cold plates and immersion cooling cut greenhouse gas emissions by more than 15%, energy use by more than 15%, and water consumption by more than 31% — making them superior to conventional cooling technologies in use today. With 100% renewable energy, the team found the cuts could jump to 13% for emissions, 15% for energy, and 50% for water.“Switching to renewables slashes emissions by 85-90%, energy use by 6-7%, and water demand by 55–85%, regardless of cooling tech,” the researchers wrote.Thus, life cycle assessments can reveal sustainability trade-offs either within the same cooling technology or when comparing different technologies. Ultimately, the calculus is clear: ICT’s climate future hinges on tackling how the industry cools its data centres.

Indian summers are getting hotter, but is it the heat or is it us?

Every summer, a familiar question surfaces across India, echoing from homes to newsrooms: is it genuinely hotter, or have we simply become more sensitive? This isn’t just some nostalgic lament or biological quirk. The evidence is clear and uncompromising: India’s heat is intensifying, creeping in earlier, stretching longer, and striking deeper than ever before.What’s happening isn’t a trick of perception. It’s real. Heat waves, once occasional and brief, have become persistent forces reshaping daily life and work. According to the India Meteorological Department, a heat wave is declared when the temperature reaches at least 40° C in the plains or 30° C in the hills, with a deviation of 4.5° C or more above normal for at least two consecutive days.These thresholds, once rare, are quickly becoming the standard during summer months. In states like Odisha and Rajasthan, what used to be brief seasonal heat spikes now stretch into longer, more frequent episodes, cumulatively spanning months. Between June 2010 and the summer of 2024, cumulative heat wave days soared from roughly 177 to 536 — a staggering increase of over 200%.Heat wave days count the total number of days on which heat wave conditions are recorded across all affected regions. Since heat waves strike different places at different times, these days are summed nationally, so the total may surpass the length of the summer season in any single location.

Despite the increasing severity of heat waves, official data likely underrepresents their true impact. Various government departments collect and report heat-related deaths using different methods and sources, which can lead to variations in the numbers presented. Between 2000 and 2020, India recorded 20,615 heatstroke deaths, according to government records. However, many heat-related fatalities occur outside hospitals — at homes, construction sites or village farms, for example — where medical assistance and formal death certification may not always be accessible. As a result, deaths triggered by heat are often recorded under broader causes like cardiac arrest or respiratory failure.The absence of standardised, mandatory heat-related death reporting and real-time surveillance means many such deaths remain uncounted, creating challenges for public health planning and response. Independent researchers and organisations have sought to address this gap using excess mortality analysis: comparing actual deaths during heatwave periods with long-term seasonal averages.While some critics question the accuracy of these estimates and the methods used, excess mortality analysis remains a widely accepted and robust epidemiological tool. It captures both direct and indirect deaths related to heat, including those misclassified under other causes such as cardiac arrest or kidney failure, which are often missed in official counts.For instance, the Global Burden of Disease study estimated approximately 155,937 heat-related deaths in India in 2021, encompassing fatalities from heat waves, prolonged exposure to high temperatures, and heat-aggravated conditions. Given the known underreporting in official data, such model-based estimates provide a more comprehensive and realistic picture of the true human toll of extreme heat.

The human toll of heat waves is paralleled by significant economic damage. The 2022 heatwave reduced wheat yields in key producing regions by approximately 4.5%, with some districts experiencing losses up to 15%. This disruption contributed to inflationary pressures on food commodities worldwide. Simultaneously, the heatwave triggered a power crisis as electricity demand surged to an all-time high of 207 GW, straining the grid and causing blackouts in some areas. Labour productivity in outdoor sectors such as construction and agriculture suffered dramatically, as workers faced an impossible choice between enduring hazardous heat exposure or forfeiting income.According to the McKinsey Global Institute, heat-related productivity losses could jeopardise between 2.5% and 4.5% of India’s annual Gross Domestic Product by 2030, underscoring the urgent need for adaptive policies.

Ironically, India once knew how to live with heat. From the mud homes of Odisha to the sandstone courtyards of Rajasthan, generations designed spaces to cool without electricity. Rural routines followed solar rhythms: work began at sunrise, paused during peak heat, and resumed in the evening. Architecture used breathable materials like lime, thatch, and mud, keeping homes cooler than today’s concrete structures. In cities, water-cooled courtyards, shaded alleys, stepwells (baoli), and perforated stone screens (jaali) created microclimates. These systems weren’t folklore: they were practical responses to climatic conditions, embedded in culture and community.A vivid example of this traditional wisdom is Navtapa, meaning “nine days of heat”. Observed from May 25 to June 2, it marks the sun’s entry into Rohini Nakshatra and was considered the most intense stretch of the summer. While rooted in astrology, Navtapa aligns closely with modern heat wave data. In this time, communities avoided heavy meals, rested during the midday, drank hydrating mixes like buttermilk and sattu, and provided shade and water for livestock. These practices, while culturally grounded, reflect sound physiological and environmental sense, and are today supported by modern science.Why did these traditions wane? Not because they were ineffective but because modern development models evolved differently. Post-liberalisation planning favoured speed and scale, often overlooking climate sensitivity. Glass façades and concrete homes replaced breathable structures. Labour shifted from flexible agricultural cycles to more rigid, outdoor, informal urban jobs. Planning codes like the National Building Code don’t mandate passive cooling. Real-estate finance rarely supports traditional materials. Without institutional support or economic incentives, these practices couldn’t be sustained or scaled.

Meanwhile, India’s formal response to heat is gradually evolving. Notably, Ahmedabad’s heat action plan, implemented in 2014, has been associated with a significant reduction in heat-related mortality in the city, with an estimated 1,190 deaths avoided annually in its initial years.Cities such as Bhubaneswar and Nagpur have initiated efforts to increase green cover and promote rooftop measures aimed at reducing heat absorption. However, many heat action plans remain largely advisory, often lacking binding mandates, dedicated budgets or clear accountability mechanisms.Only a few cities have appointed trained climate officers or integrated heat considerations into their urban master plans. Public cooling shelters are limited in number, and awareness campaigns frequently rely on digital platforms that may not effectively reach regional language speakers, migrants, daily wage workers, and non-literate populations.The rural landscape tells a tougher story. Despite most heat-vulnerable populations residing there, India still lacks a solid rural heat governance framework. Key programmes — including the Gram Panchayat Development Plans, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, and the National Health Mission — barely touch on heat issues. Unlike cities, villages have no counterpart to urban heat action plans. Panchayats often struggle with limited funding, staffing, and training, leaving them ill-equipped to set up cooling measures or modify work timings. Age-old water bodies, tree cover, and stepwells fade away, unsupported and overlooked. Many rural deaths remain invisible, depriving policymakers of crucial data.

Beyond the bricks and mortar, a deeper gap persists: a disconnect between science and how people actually experience heat. Most don’t grasp the “feels like” temperature, which factors in humidity, solar radiation, and wind along with air temperature. So when the thermometer says 42° C, the body might be battling conditions closer to 50° C. That hidden burden, far beyond mere numbers, causes dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke. Public health messages rarely translate this into everyday terms, leaving too many unaware and vulnerable to the real dangers.Equally important is how heat alerts are communicated. In many parts of India, advisories are issued in Hindi or English, shared via apps and social media that assume literacy, smartphone access, and digital fluency. This approach may exclude millions, especially the rural poor, migrants, and older citizens. Heat warnings should not be confined to digital platforms. They must be delivered through oral announcements, local radio, posters, community workers, and trusted institutions in regional languages.Inclusive communication must reach every corner, every community. Otherwise, awareness remains partial and fragmented. India stands at a crossroads with a chance to harness the wisdom and experience already woven into its fabric. Immediately, districts — urban and rural alike — can start rolling out heat action plans tailored to their realities guided by the Disaster Management Act 2005. These won’t be abstract policies but grounded actions: pinpointing heat hotspots, setting up shaded rest spots, ensuring water access, and sending alerts that people trust and understand.

Looking beyond the immediate, national programmes like the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, and the National Health Mission offer a canvas to embed climate sensitivity. Think reflective rooftops, more trees, natural ventilation: elements that cool homes and livelihoods alike. With financial channels like the Fifteenth Finance Commission and District Mineral Funds, local governments gain the muscle to scale these interventions fairly and effectively.Down the line, real transformation demands more than isolated efforts. Building codes must evolve to favour passive cooling, urban and rural designs should be inclusive by default, and institutions must learn to speak the same language. Clear roles for the India Meteorological Department, National Disaster Management Authority, the State Disaster Management Authorities, municipal bodies, and village Panchayats are essential. Such coordination lets India shift from scrambling through heat emergencies to anticipating and managing them with resilience.Knowledge isn’t the bottleneck. India’s heritage of traditional practices alongside modern science forms a rich foundation. The challenge lies in blending these, backed by political will and cohesive policy, to ready India for its hottest years ahead.

Telangana’s medical college expansion: Built to heal, left to rot

On the otherwise quiet stretch of Road Number 4 in Telangana’s Siddipet district, about 100 kilometres north of Hyderabad, one building stands out — not for its design, but for the activity it draws. Rickshaws, hatchbacks, private cars and ambulances are parked in a haphazard line along the narrow tar road. With little room for four-wheelers inside, the road outside becomes a makeshift parking lot for those visiting the Government General Hospital, Siddipet.

Step past the entrance and a rectangular lobby opens up. To the left, a queue snakes around the Outpatient Registration counter. To the right, rows of plastic chairs are packed with patients and attendants — women in saris fanning themselves, elderly men on walking sticks, young parents cradling toddlers. Though outpatient hours run from 9.30 a.m. to 2 p.m., the hallway is full by 11 a.m.Adding a splash of colour to this scene is a strip of Cherial painting across the top of the hospital walls — vivid red panels telling traditional tales, a nod to Telangana’s folk art legacy. It is an oddly comforting juxtaposition: cultural flourish amid clinical fatigue.

Down the corridor is the duty doctor’s room — a modest 15x8 feet, with two foldable metal beds lining opposite walls. What catches the eye isn’t the squeeze, but the far wall, or the lack of it. In its place is a large corrugated metal shutter, the kind one would see fronting a kirana shop. Only two brick pillars frame it; a white ceramic washbasin clings to one side.Perched on a metal bed is a young doctor, white coat on, stethoscope around her neck. She speaks in a calm, practiced voice about juggling medical education with long government hospital shifts, her words painting a picture of exhaustion, resilience, and a system stretched thin.

“Though it is now a teaching hospital, Siddipet still runs on the infrastructure of its old identity: an area hospital with 780 beds. There is no space to add more. That is why a new 1,000-bed hospital was built nearby. But that is stuck in limbo — political disputes, budget delays, commissions. The building is ready, but has not been handed over,” she says.She gestures towards what lies just five kilometres away — a gleaming new hospital building inaugurated with much fanfare by Siddipet MLA and former Health Minister T. Harish Rao in October 2023. Built adjacent to the Government Medical College, the new Government General Hospital is a sprawling, palace-like structure, strikingly similar to a high-end corporate hospital. But behind the glossy facade lies silence. One and a half years since its inauguration, the building remains non-functional, caught in bureaucratic limbo.When the first batch of medical students enrolled in 2018, they were promised an integrated campus: hospital, hostels and college, all in one place. That vision remains unrealised. What has arrived instead is a faculty crisis too big to ignore.“In some departments, there are 12 to 15 postgraduate students and only three faculty members — one professor and two assistant professors. So PGs end up doing everything: teaching, ward rounds, you name it. Recruitment has not happened. The Directorate of Medical Education keeps saying notifications will be issued, but they never do,” the doctor says.She also points to a persistent safety concern — commuting after night duty. “The road to the college becomes eerie after dark. It is so unsafe that we have to ask the boys to escort us. There have been cases of women doctors being followed. It is frightening,” she says.

Across Telangana’s 34 government medical colleges, the same problems recur. Before 2014, the State had just five government-run medical colleges. Over the last decade, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi government pushed to open one in every district. By 2024, as many as 29 new colleges had come up as part of that ambitious expansion.“The rapid establishment of so many government medical colleges (GMCs) has resulted in impressive buildings that resemble fully functioning medical institutions. But inside, there are serious gaps — faculty shortage, insufficient clinical exposure and other systemic deficiencies,” says a senior official from the State Health department.A system under strainAt GMC Karimnagar, a second-year student sums up the classroom situation bluntly: “There is not enough space to sit. Two batches share one lecture hall; some of us stand or sit on the floor. The hostel is no better. It is overcrowded and temporary. We are still waiting for the promised building.”

Over at GMC-Nalgonda, transportation is the biggest hurdle. “The hospital is seven kilometres away, but there are no dedicated buses. Our principal sent a request to the Director of Medical Education and even to our MLA, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, who is also a minister. He promised two to four buses, but not a single one has arrived,” a student says.

At GMC-Asifabad, the problems cut deeper. “We don’t have MBBS-qualified faculty. Our labs don’t function. We are expected to learn without tools, without guidance,” says a first-year student.Things are no better in Bhadradri Kothagudem, where a post-graduate student shares, “Departments like Anatomy and Biochemistry are run by non-MBBS staff. That is a direct violation of National Medical Commission (NMC) norms. We have raised complaints but nothing has changed.”Most students here live in rented flats, often cramped and unhygienic.At Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences-Adilabad, the situation is downright bleak. “We stay in quarter clusters with no clean water, no streetlights. The mess food is inedible, the quarters stink, and there is no CCTV cameras or security. We are working 12-hour shifts and studying through the night in such conditions,” says a first-year PG student.

At GMC-Narayanpet, the daily commute is a risk in itself. “We lost our college bus last year. Now we travel eight kilometres at our own expense. Many of us live in distant, unsafe hostels. After 7 p.m., the road turns pitch dark. There is no fencing, no security,” says a junior doctor.The conditions are equally grim at GMC Jangaon too. “We girls are put up in an old-age home. The boys are crammed into tiny rooms. There are no labs, no gym, no sports, nothing. And we are charged ?1,000 a month for transport,” says a student.The duty doctor room at Government General Hospital, Siddipet, having a large corrugated metal shutter in place of a wall.In Maheshwaram, students attend classes on borrowed premises. “There are no proper labs. We do physiology practicals in lecture rooms. The subsidised hostels they promised never came. We are paying ?7,000 a month in rent for rooms infested with cockroaches and spiders,” a student shares.At GMC-Kamareddy, the gap between college and hospital — just 3.5 kilometres — is a daily hurdle. “With no transport, we often miss clinical postings. Some of us even skip meals just to save time,” a student says.Even at established institutions like Gandhi Medical College, cracks are showing. “We have only one assistant professor each in Radiology and Microbiology. Everything else is handled by postgraduates. Forget learning, we are barely surviving,” says a student. The infrastructure hasn’t kept pace either. “The elevators are constantly breaking down. There are water shortages, outdated pipelines and stray dogs keep biting students. This is not a campus, it is a battlefield.”From broken hostels and pitch-dark roads to missing faculty and absent labs, the accounts echo a common story: of systemic

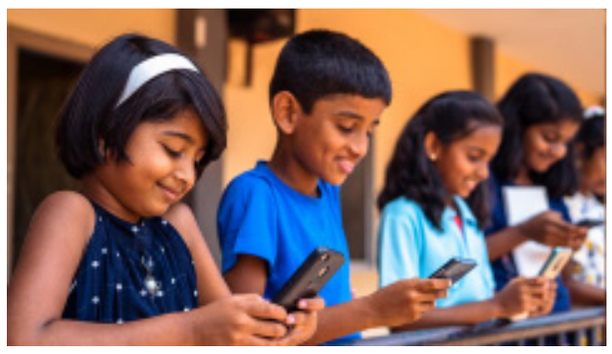
Whose mountain is it, anyway?

five people from the National Institute of Mountaineering and Adventure Sports (NIMAS) scaled Mt Khangchendzonga from the Nepal side, prompting expressions of concern and protest by civil society groups and Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang. Sikkim’s native population holds the mountain sacred and the State government disallows attempts to climb it or scale its peak from the Indian side. One side of Mt Khangchendzonga faces Nepal, a country that hasn’t instituted a similar ban and which the NIMAS team took advantage of.

There has been a resurgence of the assertion of spiritual beliefs over mountains of late. Mountains are important sources of water, which is increasingly becoming a strategic resource. They straddle geo-dynamic features we need to know to understand the land we live on. But in a world grappling with the effects of climate change, mountain ecosystems worldwide also rank among the most vulnerable. This renders the stewardship provided by indigenous communities important, especially in the form of indigenous knowledge that allowed people to coexist sustainably with their environs for centuries. Of course, there are other reasons to respect indigenous communities’ beliefs, including building resilient societies and redressing historical injustice.In parallel, there is still a need to understand mountains from scientific and military points of view, and physical access often yields the best data. The resulting tensions have become more pronounced in the last two decades or so. As the recent incident illustrates, the key has always been stakeholder involvement and scientists and military personnel being okay with hearing the word ‘no’.

This is why work on the Thirty-Meter Telescope (of which India is a government-level member) was stalled from 2014 after the Kanaka Maoli community protested its construction on their sacred Mauna Kea. Native Hawaiians have also opposed the U.S. Space Forces AMOS-STAR project on the Haleakala shield volcano on similar grounds. Atacameño communities in Chile have warned of “spiritual” loss over the construction of telescopes in Cerro Armazones and Cerro Paranal.In many instances, governments presume scientific and defence needs should override indigenous rights. Surveys to assess eco-spiritual rights are often conducted after indigenous groups have mounted large protests, and not before the project is commissioned. The India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) faced similar opposition over locals’ inability to access a temple located near the planned project site thanks to the presence of police personnel. While the INO scientists have said the police shouldn’t have been present, much less denying access to the area, the incident only illustrates the sort of heavy-handedness large and expensive projects open the door to while denying indigenous communities their rights.Fortunately, however, thanks to the initiative of civil society groups led by youth, the election of indigenous individuals to government positions, technological advances, and the pressures of climate adaptation and sustainability, the legal instruments available to assert indigenous rights are becoming sharper. The UN principle of ‘free prior and informed consent’ of indigenous peoples is bolstered by its Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation.

Screentime over playtime: the impact of gadgets on children's mental health



It is a fascinating and complex reality that we live in an era where internet access can sometimes outpace reliable electricity in certain regions, and power shutdowns have become more endurable than the 'Internet Server down' message flashing across the screens of our hand-held devices. India has seen a significant surge in internet penetration, becoming the second-largest online market globally after China, with more than 886 million users in 2024, representing 55.3% of the population. This growth is driven by factors such as affordable smartphones and data plans, and the Digital India programme. Internet penetration in India grew from 13% to 5% while in the United States, it grew from 74% to 97% between 2014 to 2024.

Globally, a significant portion of children are online, with about one in three internet users being under 18. In India, children aged between five and 11 constitute roughly 15% of active internet users. While we read this, we also must be cognisant of the fact that India is one of the countries with the highest number of under-18s, poised to be the youngest country in the world by 2025. On average, eight to 12-year-olds spend 5.5 hours a day using screen media, excluding time spent online for educational and homework purposes. For teenagers aged 13 to 18 years, screen time rises to 8.5 hours per day. Screen time in adolescents rose by 52% on average during the pandemic.

The transition from parents urging children to "turn off the TV" to the current landscape where one is unable to turn off the internet even if one wanted to, highlights the rapid evolution of technology and its impact on family life. Books and paper have been replaced by tablets and smartphones, and even a temporary reduction in internet speed has become reason enough for nervous breakdowns and meltdowns in adults and children alike.

This malady of being stuck between 'needing to be online' and 'being barraged by notifications' has become a predicament for most of us. This experience, unique to the digital age, has become a challenge that pushes the boundaries of human resilience and is also one that we are not adequately equipped to face. Paying the full price of this challenge are our children, with their inherent vulnerabilities, made worse by decreased engagement from parents (who are themselves grappling to find a balance in their lives) and screens gnawing away at their playtime. A growing body of evidence has given us enough reason for concern, highlighting the negative impact of excessive screen usage on physical as well as mental health. Play has long been recognised as a core component of childhood, and indispensable for well-balanced physical and cognitive development. Playing with kitchen utensils and cardboard boxes might seem like a simple activity, but for children, it offers a wealth of joy and opportunities for interaction. It fosters creativity, social skills, problem-solving abilities, and emotional regulation. However, the allure of entertainment-based content has led to a significant decline in traditional play.

The associations between excessive screentime and internalising (e.g., depression and anxiety), externalising (e.g., aggression), suicidal behaviour and sleep problems, and mental health and behavioral issues are well-established. Theoretical perspectives from psychology have suggested that the effects of screentime may depend on the nature of the media content. For instance, chronic exposure to violent, suicidal-/self-injury-related, and substance-using content in videogames, on TV/DVDs, and/or on the internet has been proposed to increase the risk of antisocial behaviour (e.g., aggression, delinquency), suicidality/self-injury, and substance use, respectively. Exposure to violent content can lead to desensitisation among individuals towards both real-life violence and media violence. This, in turn, may increase the probability of aggression due to repeated exposure to violent media and lead to the establishment of stable patterns of aggressive behaviour; reduction in the efficiency of the cognitive control system, as well as an inclination towards seeking short-term rewards, and increased cannabis use and other drug use, which in turn fuels the cycle. Parental use of mobile devices has been shown to considerably reduce parental interactions with young children. Thus, it appears that parental engagement with both television and interactive media, such as smartphones, may reduce the quantity and quality of parent-child interactions, which are crucial for the development of cognitive skills, especially language and executive function. For children less than two years of age, associations with aspects of cognitive development are negative, especially for language and executive function

What happens in adolescence?

Adolescence has been described as a time of increased arousal and vulnerability in emotional and behavioural regulation, which may pose a challenge to managing the escalating demands of specific media screens. Digital media has become an important place to fulfill the core tasks of adolescence including forming identities and forming/redefining relationships with peers (including romantic relationships) for modern adolescents. The findings that were leaked from internal research done by Facebook have given us concrete reasons to worry about our teenagers: 32% of teen girls said that when they felt bad about their bodies, Instagram made them feel worse. Pressure to share only the best moments and to look perfect could pitch teenagers into depression, low self-esteem and eating disorders. Social media content (e.g., idealised body images) may drive young people to make upward social comparisons, likely associated with negative self-evaluation or emotional distress.

However, these findings have been hastily buried with Instagram soon rolling out teen accounts, which purportedly will have in-built automatic protection. The real-world impact of these strategies is yet to unfold. Despite this article's warnings and critical tone, presenting only negativity would greatly disadvantage readers, and we shall now delve into the positive impact of internet and screen usage. There is little question that educational content (on any kind of screen) has a positive impact on cognitive development. These media are enriching, allowing children to vicariously experience and witness places and events far beyond their normal experiences, and provide opportunities for socialisation beyond geographical boundaries.

There is reason to be hopeful as evidence has shown: children and adolescents who reported that they agreed that their parents had rules about time spent watching television and playing video games were less likely to exceed recommended limits than those who strongly disagreed that their parents had rules. Similarly, when parents reported always or very often having limits on television watching (versus rarely or never) and when parents correctly identified the recommended limits, children were less likely to exceed recommended limits.

Key strategies to protect our children from the negative impact of screen usage include: Role-modelling by parents: Being mindful of their own screen usage and being present, physically and emotionally, during conversations with their wards. Limit-setting: Establishing clear and consistent limits on screen time is crucial. Promoting healthy screen habits: Teaching children about online safety and responsible social media use is essential. Encouraging alternative activities: Promoting physical activity, outdoor play, and creative hobbies can help reduce reliance on screens. Encouraging face-to-face interactions and social activities can foster social skills and reduce isolation. Parental involvement: Co-viewing of media is better than a complete lack of parental oversight. Open communication, validation and support are crucial to encourage help-seeking behaviours.

The churning within the BRS

The Congress is facing a financial crunch which is affecting its ability to implement various welfare schemes, particularly the ones it promised before the Assembly elections. Yet it is the BRS that has been making headlines for all the wrong reasons in a section of the media, which the party terms "anti-BRS" and "pro-Congress". Reports state that differences have cropped up within the family of BRS president K. Chandrasekhar Rao — namely, between his son and working president of the party, K.T. Rama Rao; his nephew, Harish Rao; and his daughter, K. Kavitha.

Since Mr. Chandrasekhar Rao has stopped taking an active role in party affairs, speculation is rife in political circles that the BRS is planning to hand over the reins of the party to Mr. Rama Rao. This has reportedly upset Mr. Harish Rao, a former minister who has been a steadfast supporter of the party and its president for the last 24 years.

Mr. Harish Rao rubbished these rumours at a press conference. He categorically stated that he had no differences with Mr. Rama Rao or any other leader in the BRS for that matter, and that he would always remain a soldier of Mr. Chandrasekhar Rao. "The decision of the party chief would be of paramount importance to me. I will not hesitate to work with KTR (K.T. Rama Rao) even if he is given the reins of the party," he said. Mr. Harish Rao also sought to label the whole controversy a "conspiracy" of the Congress aimed at engineering fissures within the BRS.Mr. Rama Rao, Mr. Harish Rao, and B. Vinod Kumar, a senior leader considered close to the party leadership, also met at Mr. Harish Rao's house for over four hours to discuss the party affairs threadbare. Sources say the meeting was held on Mr. Chandrasekhar Rao's directions. "There have been reports of bickering and efforts to break the party ever since the party was formed in 2001...," Mr. Vinod Kumar said. "Such efforts and conspiracies gain momentum when the party is out of power. The party leadership is united and working hard to take the failures of the Congress government to the people. We believe that it is better to sweat during peace than to bleed during war."

Sources admit that there could be minor differences of opinion on the protest programmes being planned against the government. However, they add, rival parties examine such differences with a magnifying glass. They also say that speculation about Mr. Harish Rao breaking away from the party originated long ago, in 2006, when the BRS, which was then known as the Telangana Rashtra Samithi, pulled out of the Congress-led coalition government. It again gained momentum after the 2018 Assembly elections when Mr. Harish Rao was not included in Mr. Chandrasekhar Rao's Cabinet. It once again resurfaced after the BRS lost power in December 2023, they say.

Meanwhile, Ms. Kavitha raised eyebrows when she stated recently that certain leaders within the party were conspiring against her rise. She said that they may not be "satisfied with my spending six months in jail in the case foisted against me in the Delhi liquor policy issue". Mr. Kavitha, who heads Telangana Jagruthi, a cultural wing of the BRS, was arrested by the CBI in the Delhi liquor policy case on March 15, 2024, and released on bail on August 27. Unlike Mr. Harish Rao, who sought to clear the air, Ms. Kavitha has clearly embarked on her own path. She has been championing the cause of Backward Classes and women. Ever since the party was ousted from power, she has visited about 50 Assembly constituencies to boost the morale of the cadre. She also recently said that while a "geographical Telangana" State had been created, Samajika Telangana (social justice) has not yet been delivered to the people.These rumours and public statements have created confusion in the BRS and could affect its ability to regain the support of voters. It is important for the party leadership to dispel them and put up a visible united front against the Congress government. Such efforts will make a huge difference to the morale of the party cadre, especially at a time when the Congress is increasingly dependent on flaying the Opposition instead of delivering on the promises it made to the people of Telangana.

Going beyond the blame game: understanding sterilisation and its limits

Recently, the Punjab and Haryana High Court examined a case of a child born after a vasectomy and held, with striking clarity, that conception after sterilisation alone could not be held to brand a surgeon negligent. In Chennai, meanwhile, two separate "failed" tubectomy cases were fought in the Madras High Court recently where, in one case, a post-sterilisation baby was regrettably called an "unwanted child", and the court imposed heavy penalties on the State and doctor. And in the other case, the court imposed upon the operating doctor, a fine of ?60,000. These divergent tones remind us that failure of sterilisation can flow either from human error or from biology—and that the law sometimes struggles to tell the two apart. Hence, there is a need to understand the process behind the procedures.

India's contraceptive landscapeIndia pioneered the National Family Welfare Programme in 1952 as the first country to do so, yet today, it houses the planet's largest population.More recently however falling fertility levels, at least in the southern States, has indicated that we are in the throes of a demographic shift. Contraception is divided into temporary and permanent methods. Temporary methods include combined oral contraceptives, progestin-only pills, the Copper-T intrauterine device (IUD), the quarterly DMPA injection, and condoms (male and female).

Except for condoms, every other form of contraception is made for women. Yet, that lone male option, the condom, carries a priceless bonus by fending off sexually transmitted diseases (HIV, Hepatitis B, Human Papilloma Virus), a protection its female counterpart cannot provide. Between the 1970s and the present, they helped millions of women prevent unwanted pregnancies and septic abortions, pursue higher education after marriage, allowed women to enter paid work, and, by shrinking household sizes, nudged families towards spending on nutrition and education rather than sheer survival.Permanent contraception is surgical. There are two routes: tubectomy for women and vasectomy for men. Tubectomy accounts for 98% of permanent sterilisations and contributes to 62% of all contraceptive use among Indian couples. Around 85% of women undergoing tubectomy in India have the procedure performed at a government health facility.

The fallopian tube—an undulating tunnel of ciliated columnar epithelium and smooth muscle—ferries the ovum toward the womb for embryo formation after intercourse. A tubectomy, done through a mini laparotomy or laparoscopy under spinal or general anaesthesia, severs or seals that conduit. Because the cut is definitive, a woman walks out immediately sterile, yet she continues to menstruate. Usually, it is done during the time of menstruation or immediately within 6 weeks of childbirth. Though it needs an operating theatre, sterile instruments, a skilled surgeon, and an anaesthesiologist, it is still preferred over the far simpler male alternative.The vas deferens—a cord lined by pseudostratified columnar epithelium with stereocilia and girdled by thick muscle—transports sperm from the testis to the urethra in the penis. A non-scalpel vasectomy, usually under local anaesthesia, takes barely forty minutes, rarely needs a hospital bed and lets the patient resume work the next day and resume sexual activity within a week. The testes keep churning out sperm, but the cells are quietly reabsorbed; erections, libido, and testosterone remain untouched. Two main disadvantages exist in comparison to tubectomy: the man must use condoms for roughly three months while residual sperm clear, and he must return for a semen test—an appointment often sabotaged by stigma, forgetfulness or sheer inertia. However, failures are rare (about 1 in 1,200) compared with tubectomy, which is 1 in 200–300.

Whether the scalpel meets the tube or duct, in all hospital facilities performing the procedure, the following routine happens: due counselling is provided and informed consent is verified; the segment is excised; the labelled specimen travels to histopathology, where ciliated folds confirm fallopian tube or thick muscular wall confirms vas deferens under a microscope. Only after this stamp does the patient receive an incentive—Central funds under the National Family Planning Welfare Programme plus a state "top-up" because family planning sits on the Concurrent List.

Where does failure occur?

Contraceptive failure, though statistically rare in surgical sterilisation, must be understood through two distinct lenses: medical negligence and medical mal-occurrence. A failure is termed medical negligence when there is a demonstrable breach in the standard of care—such as improper surgical technique, incorrect identification of ligaments over fallopian tubes or ligation of incorrect anatomical structures, non-adherence to aseptic protocols, or lack of adequate postoperative instructions. In such instances, liability may rest with the healthcare provider. In contrast, a failure arising from medical mal-occurrence is one where all protocols were meticulously followed, yet nature intervenes—such as spontaneous recanalisation of the fallopian tubes or vas deferens. These are recognised biological phenomena and cannot be ascribed to incompetence or error. Importantly, under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, contraceptive failure is considered a valid legal indication for terminating an unwanted pregnancy. The histopathological examination done after surgery to check the surgically removed parts and identify the tissues acts as a safety barrier for the surgeons and a tipping point for the beneficiaries to rectify.Since 2013, the National Family Planning Indemnity Scheme has offered a financial net of ?2 lakh for a death within seven days, ?50,000 for one in the next three weeks, ?30,000 for a proven failure, and up to ?25,000 for major complications. States often stack extra amounts atop these slabs. Doctors, too, are insured up to ?2 lakh per claim—recognition that good faith cannot always outwit bad luck.Every year, India performs roughly 5-6 million tubectomies and fewer than 30,000 vasectomies—each stitched under hard fluorescent lights by obstetricians, surgeons and nurses who rarely see the limelight. Their labour has averted an estimated 350-400 million births since 1980, silently enlarging per capita GDP and futures. A few deliveries slip past the scalpel, and courts sometimes use wounding words. But judging by the long arc, the family planning wall still stands tall—solid and pragmatic.

Progress should not just be fast but future-proof

India's climate future is not written in the stars — it is written in the rising temperatures, erratic monsoons, and intensifying disasters. The question is: what are we doing about it? The World Bank states that more than 80% of India's population lives in districts at risk of climate-induced disasters. From unrelenting monsoon floods in the northeast to heat-induced crop failures in central India, these events are no longer isolated incidents — they are systemic threats to economic stability, public health, and national security. Yet, despite mounting evidence, India remains vulnerable due to gaps in risk assessment and preparedness. The lack of a comprehensive framework to evaluate and predict climate physical risks (CPRs) means that adaptation strategies are reactive rather than proactive.Growing climate physical risksAs climate change accelerates, extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and severe. CPRs extend beyond natural disasters, encompassing acute shocks, such as floods and heatwaves, and chronic stresses, such as shifting monsoon patterns and prolonged droughts. While disaster early warning systems and weather forecasts help mitigate immediate losses, CPRs require a long-term approach. Unlike short-term weather forecasts, climate projections analyse long-term trends, enabling policymakers to prepare for evolving climate hazards.Global climate action is caught between prevention and cure — mitigation, which reduces emissions, and adaptation, which prepares for its inevitable impacts. While adaptation has long been considered a priority for the Global South, wildfires, heatwaves, and cyclones now also test the resilience of the Global North, making it clear that adaptation is a universal necessity. Yet, funding remains skewed towards mitigation, with most resources directed towards renewable energy and decarbonisation over adaptation measures like resilient infrastructure. However, investing in adaptation is not just about survival but also economically prudent. The UN Environment Programme estimates that every $1 invested in adaptation yields a $4 return through reduced economic losses and lower disaster recovery costs.CPRs are not just about extreme weather events but also about how exposed and vulnerable communities, businesses, and infrastructure are to them. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change provides a clear framework: the expected value of CPR is a function of hazard, exposure, and vulnerability. Hazards include floods, cyclones, and heatwaves. Exposure determines who and what is at risk. Vulnerability reflects a system's ability to withstand and recover. Together, these define the true scale of climate risk.To safeguard financial

stability, regulatory bodies worldwide are shifting from voluntary climate risk disclosures to mandatory reporting. In India, the Reserve Bank of India is integrating climate risks into its regulatory framework, while the IFRS ISSB S2 sets global standards for disclosing CPRs underscoring that assessing these risks is now central to business continuity, not just environmental responsibility.

Despite the urgency, India's approach to CPR assessments remains fragmented. While countries such as the U.S., U.K., and New Zealand have national frameworks that directly inform policy and finance, India's efforts are dispersed across government agencies, research institutions, and private platforms, each using different methodologies and hazards of focus.

Although India has studies such as flood maps from IIT Gandhinagar, vulnerability atlases from the India Meteorological Department, and disaster frameworks from the National Institute of Disaster Management, there is no unified system to consolidate these insights. Reliable CPR projections are further hindered by the limitations of global climate models such as Representative Concentration Pathways and Shared Socioeconomic Pathways, which fail to capture India's hyper-local climate realities. Without a central repository for standardised climate risk data, businesses and government agencies struggle to make informed decisions.Recognising these gaps, India has initiated steps towards factoring in climate hazards in its National Adaptation Plan (NAP) in line with Article 7 of the Paris Agreement, which mandates all nations to establish NAPs by 2025 and show progress by 2030. To facilitate this, India formulated an Adaptation Communication and submitted its first report in 2023. A more comprehensive NAP report is underway, covering nine thematic sectors with district-level granularity.

Must reduce dependence on energy imports, says PMO's Shaktikanta Das

Days after a new US law gave President Donald Trump the power to levy up to 100% tariffs on countries that continue buying Russian oil and gas, Shaktikanta Das – Principal Secretary-2 to Prime Minister Narendra Modi – on Tuesday said India must reduce its dependence on imported energy.Highlighting ongoing work in space, nuclear, and reducing energy dependence, Das also said there are lessons for countries of the 'Global South' from India's reforms in these areas, adding that employment generation is "one of the most pressing challenges for almost all countries".

While he noted that India is "highly dependent" on imported oil and gas and that "we have to reduce this import dependence", Das said the national offshore exploration scheme 'Samudra Manthan' will provide a "strong impetus" to hydrocarbon exploration and production.Approved in July this year, the first phase of the 'Samudra Manthan' scheme has an outlay of Rs 84,084 crore up to 2030-31 and focuses on raising domestic production, reducing import dependence, and building a globally competitive offshore energy ecosystem.

The comments by Das, who previously served as a secretary in the Ministry of Finance and was also the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for six years, come amid continued volatility imparted by the conflict in West Asia, with the price of India's crude oil basket on Monday at $120.8 per barrel. And even though pump prices of petrol and diesel were raised multiple times following the onset of the war, public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) are facing daily losses of more than Rs 500 crore on their retail fuel sales.Earlier this month, Trump signed into law the Lindsey O Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026. With the US and China having agreed to extend the Busan Agreement until January 10, 2027 – ensuring no new tariffs or trade restrictions are imposed by the two countries on each other until then – it leaves India in a tricky spot, given its vast import of Russian oil.India depends on imports to meet more than 88% of its crude oil requirements. Russia currently supplies nearly half of these imports. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has flagged India's concerns over the new law, with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio saying last week that the US was "well-positioned to help regional partners address their energy security challenges".

'Economic gravity shifting east'Speaking at the launch of the India and Emerging Economic Order Forum (IEOF) – a new platform by New Delhi-based think-tank Research in Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) and Delhi School of Economics – Das also said India's space sector was transforming, with private companies participating in satellite manufacturing, launch services, space applications, and downstream services. He also said India has set its sights on a significantly larger role for nuclear energy in its overall power mix, with the Nuclear Energy Mission aiming to achieve nuclear power generation capacity of 100 gigawatt by 2047 on the path to India achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2070.Commenting that the "economic gravity of the world is shifting eastwards", the former RBI Governor argued that the Global South is "steadily increasing its footprint" in the world in the sphere of economics and geopolitics despite being "disproportionately impacted" by the numerous shocks of recent years. And while this shift offers opportunities to the countries of the Global South, "fresh ideas and strategies" are needed to take advantage of these opportunities.Calling the poverty alleviation efforts of the Global South countries as "one of the largest improvements in human welfare in modern history", Das said this group of countries is pushing for more inclusive, representative, and equitable system of governance. However, they face several challenges, including that of jobs."A record 1.2 billion young people in the emerging market and developing economies are set to reach the working age over the next decade. Boosting investment will be crucial to create sufficient job opportunities, particularly in rapidly growing urban areas where most employment is usually generated. These countries will also have to deal with the rising protectionist tendencies globally," Das said.He also called for greater cooperation among developing countries to face the challenges they face, which include food security, trade diversification and deepening participation in global supply chains, the energy transition, maintaining macroeconomic stability, and creating jobs and economic opportunities.

India's coal stocks at power plants slide 24% amid unusual demand surge

Even as rainfall in some parts of the country eased the pressure on electricity demand recently, coal stocks at domestic coal-based power plants have continued to slide, dipping by nearly 24% from the level recorded at the beginning of September.The depletion in coal stocks comes amid an unusual surge in electricity demand this September, and greater reliance on coal-based generation as hydropower output has declined due to deficient rainfall and El Niño-influenced weather conditions. Peak power demand has also remained close to the levels seen during the summer peak, touching 269 gigawatts (GW) on September 10 — the highest ever recorded for September and just 1 GW below the year's peak of 270 GW seen in May.

As of September 27, coal stocks at domestic coal-based power plants stood at 19.2 million tonnes (mt), 64% below the required stock of 53.7 mt. The stock was at 25.4 mt on September 1, when it was 52.5% below the required stock of 53.5 mt.Coal stocks have declined by more than half compared with the year-ago period. On September 27 last year, coal stocks at domestic coal-based power plants stood at 43.1 mt, meaning stocks this year were down by about 55.5%.At least 72 of the 168 domestic coal-based power plants were also at critical fuel-stock levels. This means that their coal stock was below 25% of the normative stock — the quantity that thermal power plants are required to maintain to ensure adequate fuel availability for uninterrupted generation.Stress on coal-based generatorsThe situation has also led the Centre to invoke emergency measures last week to ramp up coal-based generation. Under Section 11 of the Electricity Act, which allows the government to mandate power generation in extraordinary circumstances, the government asked about 112 captive coal-fired power plants to operate at maximum capacity from October 1 till December 31.

A captive power plant is a dedicated power-generation facility which is built and operated by an industrial company or a group of factories to supply electricity for their own use, rather than selling power to the public grid.Such emergency provisions had been previously invoked for imported coal-based power plants, which have around 18 GW of installed capacity but often remain underutilised because generation from these plants is more expensive than that from domestic coal-based plants.However, this year's unusual surge in power demand, coupled with subdued generation from hydropower constrained the availability of alternative generation capacity, placing an incremental burden on thermal plants to meet the evening shortfall.From September 1 to September 26, generation from coal-based sources rose by 15.5% to 96,718.83 million units (MU) from 83,736.47 MU during the same period last year. Since April, coal-based generation in 2026 stood at 676,633.25 MU, a surge of 10.7% from 611,331.53 MU in the corresponding period of 2025.In contrast, hydropower generation fell by 15.5% to 16,483.18 MU during September 1 and September 26, from 19,505.93 MU in the corresponding period of 2025.Ankit Jain, Vice President and Co-Group Head, Corporate Ratings, ICRA Ltd, told The Indian Express that monsoon-related disruptions had affected domestic coal supply, impacting mining and evacuation activities during the period."While overall mining output was lower, the coal supply to the power sector witnessed some increase. Lower coal availability owing to monsoons and elevated Plant Load Factor (PLF) for thermal power stations led to pressure on coal inventory levels at several power plants, with inventory falling critically below the normative levels," he said, adding that it was in response to this tightening fuel position the government invoked the Section 11 to safeguard the reliability of power supply.Alekhya Dutta, Director, Electricity and Renewables Division, TERI said the invocation of Section 11 should be seen as a step to mitigate potential supply shortages and preserve system reliability."There are signs of a tighter supply environment that warrant proactive management of available thermal capacity. Peak demand has remained elevated, reaching around 270 GW, while coal stocks at a number of thermal plants have come under pressure. Against this backdrop, the extension of Section 11 to captive plants provides an additional buffer by bringing available generation into the market, particularly during periods when demand is high and renewable generation is lower," he added.Power sector experts expect the pressure on coal-based power plants to ease in the coming weeks as rainfall improves in several parts of the country. The India Meteorological Department has forecast heavy rainfall at isolated places in several parts of the country in the coming days, which could help in easing cooling demand. However, excessive rainfall may continue to disrupt mining and coal evacuation in some areas.

Tata Trusts proposes strategic reorganisation to avoid listing

Eleven days after the Tata Sons board decided to comply with the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) directive to list the company on the exchanges, Tata Trusts have proposed a strategic reorganisation aimed to ensure that the restructured entity is neither an NBFC nor a Core Investment Company (CIC).The proposal, sent to the Tata Sons board, involves 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 the company outside the regulatory framework that triggered the RBI's listing directive.

The proposed strategic reorganisation of the business and operations of TSPL is not a new pathway, Tata Trusts officials said Monday. "TSPL has, for almost 80 years out of its 100-year existence, always had operating businesses and operating revenues, which enabled it to fund its other, newer business ventures."The Trusts have asked the Tata Sons board to consider and approve the proposal and take all necessary steps, including approaching the RBI for the required no-objection certificate (NOC) for the proposed merger and reorganisation. The proposal comes at a critical juncture for Tata Sons. The RBI had rejected the company's request to be deregistered as an upper-layer NBFC, hence keeping alive the regulatory requirement for its listing.

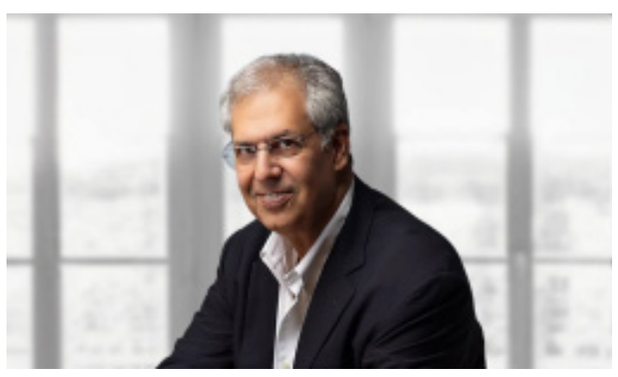
Tata Trusts, which collectively hold 66% of Tata Sons, are seeking to change the company's underlying structure rather than simply proceed with a listing in its existing form. The proposed merger would bring two operating businesses directly under Tata Sons, strengthening its operating-business character, changing the regulatory classification of the reorganised entity.The proposal now rests with the Tata Sons board and, ultimately, the RBI, whose approval will be required for the proposed restructuring.On September 17, in a dramatic shift of trajectory, the Tata Sons' board approved a fresh five-year extension for Executive Chairman N Chandrasekaran, alongside a pivotal decision to pursue a public listing to comply with RBI mandates.As recently as 2004, the group's tech firm Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) was a business division of TSPL before it was demerged into a separate subsidiary. This was also the case with other operating businesses of TSPL. "Accordingly, the proposed reorganization will result in TSPL reverting to its previous operating model, with its own operations and revenues, in addition to being a holding company for the Tata Group," they said.This will also be in line with the previous classification (after 2004) by the RBI of TSPL as a "non-banking, non-financial company". The amalgamated entity, arising out of the merger of TESS and TCE with TSPL, will have an operating revenue of Rs 105,043 crore, far in excess of its income from financial assets (Rs 40,072 crore) constituting 64.3% of the total income of the amalgamated entity.This will not meet the "principal business criteria" of an NBFC and it will also not meet the conditions applicable to a CIC (assets aggregating Rs 200,158 crores, out of which investment in group companies will be Rs 177,120 crore representing less than 90% of the aggregate net assets of the resultant entity), Tata Trusts said.

An amalgamation of genuine operating, non-financial companies (such as TESS and TCE) with an NBFC (such as TSPL) will need to be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the RBI (Non-Banking Financial Companies–Voluntary Amalgamation) Directions, 2025, including the requirement to obtain a prior 'no objection certificate' of the RBI, the trusts said. Given that TSPL will also cease to be a CIC upon the conclusion of the proposed reorganization, TSPL will be required to surrender its certificate of registration, it said.Tata Trusts officials said the proposed reorganization and action plan for compliance "would be in the best interests of the Tata Group as well as its stakeholders, in addition to being a regulatory permissible and compliant form of reorganization of a CIC".Tata Trusts, along with TSPL, will engage with the RBI on all aspects of the proposed reorganisation, they said. The proposed amalgamation and consequential steps are in line with regulatory compliance requirements and the unanimous resolutions passed by the Boards of Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT) and Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT) in July 2025, wherein it was agreed that all endeavours should be made to ensure that the status of TSPL as an unlisted private company should continue.Tata Sons board decision has drawn sharp lines of conflict, setting up a fierce legal and corporate showdown between the Tata Sons board on one side, and Tata Trusts and its Chairman Noel Tata, on the other. Noel Tata had voted against Chandrasekaran's reappointment and declared the board's vote legally void. In a separate statement, Tata Trusts said since Noel Tata, one of the Trust nominee directors, voted against the proposal, it was rendered legally void and without any basis.Four of the total six directors voted in favour of Chandrasekaran's reappointment. Noel Tata was the only director who opposed the decision, while Chandrasekaran did not vote.The rift has exposed a deepening fault line between the holding company's corporate management — the board and the chairman — and its controlling shareholder, the Tata Trusts, which holds a decisive 66% stake in Tata Sons. Tata Group insiders are worried about the possibility of the worsening power struggle between Noel Tata and the Tata Sons board impacting the group's performance in the near term as Tata Sons guides capital allocation and its new project proposals.

Noel Tata seeks review of Tata Sons restructuring plan to avoid listing

Mumbai: Tata Trusts Chairman Noel Tata has urged the Tata Sons board to review a restructuring proposal to avoid a stock market listing of the holding company.Speaking recently at Republic TV event here, Noel said that he remains hopeful that the Reserve Bank of India will reconsider its decision to classify Tata Sons as an upper-layer non-banking financial company.

Listing Tata Sons would fundamentally change the way the Tata group has operated for decades and could create a conflict between investor expectations for profits and the philanthropic objectives of Tata Trusts, according to him. Tata Trusts — which owns 66 per cent of Tata Sons — has proposed merging Tata Electronics Systems Solutions and Tata Consulting Engineers with Tata Sons.The decision would give Tata Sons its own operations and revenue, potentially allowing it to avoid classification as an NBFC or core investment company. Tata Sons was placed on the RBI's upper-layer NBFC list in September 2022 and was given three years to list.The company subsequently cleared its debt and applied in 2024 to surrender its core investment company status and remain private. However, the central bank rejected the application earlier this month and asked the company to comply with the applicable norms.Noel Tata was the lone dissenting voice when the Tata Sons board voted earlier in September to prepare for a listing and to give Chairman N Chandrasekaran a fresh five-year term.Also, he described the board's decision to reappoint Chandrasekaran as chairman as illegal. According to him, Tata Sons has historically supported group companies during difficult periods. It was uncertain whether outside shareholders would back similar investments, he said.Apart from that, he also highlighted education, healthcare and jobs as key areas for Tata Trusts' philanthropic work and said there was a need to bridge the gap between university education and industry requirements.



Rupee rises 13 paise to 95.81 against US dollar as crude prices retreat

Mumbai: The rupee appreciated 13 paise to close at 95.81 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, tracking an overnight decline in the US dollar index and as crude oil prices retreated from their elevated levels.Forex traders said easing US Treasury yields from multi-decade highs also supported the rupee. However, weak domestic markets capped sharp gains for the Indian currency.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.87, then lost ground to touch an intraday low of 95.98 against the American currency. At the end of Wednesday's trading session, the domestic unit was quoted at 95.81 (provisional) against the greenback, higher by 13 paise over its previous close.On Tuesday, the rupee settled marginally higher at 95.94, just a tad above the psychologically crucial 96-per-dollar level."We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on uncertainty over the US-Iran deal and risk aversion in global markets. Concerns over a strong dollar and elevated US Treasury yields may also pressurise the rupee," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Mirae Asset Sharekhan.

"Hopes that US and Iranian officials will talk through mediators may support the rupee at lower levels. Traders may take cues from ADP non-farm employment, the core PCE price index and final GDP data from the US," Choudhary noted.Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the strength of the greenback against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 101.23, lower by 0.14 per cent.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.58 per cent higher at USD 103.18 per barrel in futures trade — its lowest level in over 10 days.According to traders, the rupee is trading in a narrow range as dollar sales by state-run banks on behalf of the Reserve Bank of India in both spot and forward markets are keeping the USD/INR pair below the 96.00 level.Additionally, foreign portfolio outflows of around USD 2.2 billion this month and firm US yields are keeping pressure on the USD/INR pair.

Ashwagandha extract well tolerated over 24 weeks, study finds; no liver or kidney injury

New Delhi: A large multicentre clinical study published in Frontiers in Medicine found daily administration of a standardised Ashwagandha root extract for 24 weeks was well tolerated with no evidence of treatment-related hepatic or renal injury, the government said The statement from the Ministry of Ayush said the study published on August 20 is based on a multicentre, randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial of a safe prolonged prophylactic use and tolerability of Ashwagandha following COVISHIELD vaccination over 24 weeks.

The study found a favourable safety and tolerability profile for the standardised Ashwagandha root extract over the 24-week intervention period, the statement said."Liver and kidney function parameters remained within the reported reference ranges, with assessments including liver enzymes, bilirubin, creatinine and blood urea showing no evidence of treatment-related hepatic or renal injury," it noted.The ministry said that zero serious adverse events were considered attributable to the study intervention, and zero participants withdrew from the trial because of an adverse event.

A multidisciplinary team of 45 researchers from 9 institutions conducted the research on 1,200 apparently healthy adults aged 18–70 years who had received a first, second or booster dose of COVISHIELD vaccine. Nearly 86 per cent of enrolled participants completed the study.Participants were randomly assigned to receive either 500 mg of a standardised aqueous Ashwagandha root extract daily, equivalent to 4 grams of raw root powder, or a matching placebo. The study was conducted across seven study sites in India and included clinical, laboratory and immunological assessments.Participants received the intervention for 24 weeks and were followed through week 28, the statement noted.The study was conducted by experts from ayurveda, clinical medicine, rheumatology, complementary and integrative health and related disciplines.Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, emphasised that the findings contribute to the robust scientific evidence supporting the safety and appropriate use of standardised Ayurveda interventions."High-quality clinical research strengthens the scientific evidence-base of Ayurveda and contributes to a deeper understanding of its potential within contemporary healthcare. The growing body of evidence from rigorous clinical studies is also supporting the responsible global utilisation of Ayurveda and its interventions across health and wellness settings," he added.Dr. Arvind Chopra, Ayush Distinguished Scientist Chair and Director & Chief Rheumatologist at the Centre for Rheumatic Diseases, Pune, India, and lead author of the study said that findings prove Ashwagandha did not interfere with vaccine-induced immunity, with high levels of neutralising activity maintained across both the Ashwagandha and placebo groups.The study also assessed the effect of 24-week administration of the standardised aqueous Ashwagandha root extract on the immune response following COVISHIELD vaccination. Virus-neutralising activity exceeded 85 per cent in both the Ashwagandha and placebo groups, with no statistically significant difference between the groups.

Supreme Court refuses interim stay on UPI MDR above Rs 2,000

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday refused to grant an interim stay on the imposition of merchant discount rate (MDR) on specified UPI person-to-merchant transactions above Rs 2,000, which is set to come into effect from October 15.

The top court agreed to examine the challenge to the imposition of MDR and asked the Centre, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to respond within four weeks to the plea.

The Telangana archer behind India's golden double in Asian Games

Hyderabad: Chikitha Taniparthi, the girl with the golden arm, produced a spectacular performance to win a 'golden double' in the ongoing Asian Games, claiming gold in the women's compound team and mixed team events.The mixed team gold, won alongside Sahil Jadhav, also secured India a quota place for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, where compound archery will make its Olympic debut.The 21-year-old Chikitha, from Sultanpur village in Telangana's Peddapalli district, has emerged as one of India's promising young archers and has rarely disappointed her mentor Abhishek Verma despite facing several odds.

Chikitha became the first Indian woman archer to win gold in the individual Under-21 category at the 2025 World Archery Championships and has also won medals at the Archery World Cup, Indoor Archery World Series and Archery Asia Cup.Not long ago, Chikitha and her passionate father, Srinvasa Rao, a farmer who even had to sell the family's rice harvester to help his daughter pursue archery, were forced to look beyond Telangana for better training facilities in Maharashtra and Delhi.Things started turning for the better when Chikitha joined the Sports Authority of India academy in Sonepat. She never looked back, with Abhishek showing the kind of faith in the young archer that few had dared to place in her.Ever since winning gold in the women's individual event at the 2023 National Games, Chikitha has remained on the radar of excellence, consistently winning medals on the international stage.On her World Cup debut in 2025, she teamed up with renowned archer V Jyothi Surekha and Madhura Dhamangaonkar to win gold in Shanghai. Jyothi was also part of the Indian women's team that won gold at the 2026 Asian Games alongside Chikitha and Prithika Pradeep.One of Chikitha's standout performances came at the 2025 World Archery Championships in Winnipeg, where she won gold in the Under-21 junior category after reaching the venue despite flight cancellations that caused immense mental stress.So, when Chikitha won the grand double at the 2026 Asian Games, it was hardly a surprise given the dream run she has enjoyed this year. She won gold in the Bangkok leg of the Asia Cup in the mixed team event with Rajat Chauhan, bagged silver in the team event at the 2026 World Cup, and followed it with mixed team gold and team silver at the Asia Cup.By all means, Chikitha's remarkable success story is yet another reminder of the sacrifices families make to enable their children to pursue sport seriously.Her mentor Abhishek and her parents will have little reason to regret the support they extended on all fronts despite the odds. Chikitha has certainly left a lasting impression at the 2026 Asian Games.And she is unlikely to be content with this 'golden double', with the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics already firmly on her radar.

How Chikitha persisted after she was defrauded for 1.5L paid for 1st compound bow

It was called the Disco 100 set, when Chikitha Taniparthi set her eyes on the recreational archery kit set from Decathlon for the first time.It must've cost not more than Rs 3000 back then, but when her uncle – father's brother – first brought it during a family get-together, Chikitha was fascinated. This was at Sultanpur village in Peddapalli district of Telangana, 200 kms north of Hyderabad. Two steel-tipped arrows, a range of just 1 metres. But the Disco100 (short for Discovery, not the dance) was like a Cinderella-ball for her in the fields behind her farm, for her. She tried it out, and the the kit went away with the Uncle.

What followed her first experience shooting was tougher than a glass slipper ferried by a prince, though the fairytale ended in a gold.The stunning gold medal in Compound Archery Mixed Team that gave India its first Olympics quota for the Los Angeles 2028 Games, was a culmination of that dreamy afternoon with the simplest of store-bought recreational bows. For Chikitha never stopped shooting arrows, and on Wednesday combined with Sahil Jadhav, 25, winning a shoot-off over Koreans Park Jeong-yun and Choi Yonghee, at Nagoya.Chikitha's father, 51-year-old paddy farmer Srinivas Rao, was reduced to selling his family's rice harvester, to ensure Chikitha could buy a proper Compound bow, as her interest morphed into passion and passion was tempered by discipline of day in-day out competition. The family would also need to take loans to get the bow and bear her training expenses till the Reliance Foundation started funding for her best-quality bows.

Chikitha's mother Sreelata Rao would cheer her daughter on, from their home in Sultanpur village in Peddapalli district in Telangana even as she completed two gold medals after topping qualification. Not only did she win in the Women's team with veteran Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Prithika. She also combined with Sahil as the aindians were tied on 157-157 after the end of the fourth round before the shoot-off happened. Chikitha hit a ten followed by the Korean too hitting a ten. Sahil then hit a close ten before the Korean missed as the Indians won the shoot-off 20-19 to seal the title and Olympics quota."We stay in the small village of Sultanpur and only have our 2 acre farmland, where we grow rice. It was Chikitha, who played karate earning a black belt at a local academy, who read about an archer in a newspaper and wanted to pursue archery," her father recalled."After her training for more than a year, I sold our rice harvester to get her a new bow as well as took loans from the village friends and others at a low interest to support her training. All in our family have been rice farmers and to see Chikitha win a gold medal as well as get the Olympics quota for India is a special feeling for us as well as the whole village," 51-year-old Rao told .Rao would take his daughter to nearby Karimnagar to train along with a local archer for a year and would also set targets made of card boxes and archery target cloth at the empty space behind their home to help Chikitha practice. "In her free time, she would shoot with the makeshift targets at the empty space besides our house," he recalls.

The family was cruelly cheated off money in trying to buy her first bow. The father recalls how they lost more than 1.5 lakhs in trying to get new equipment. "The first compound bow we tried to get, we lost the money amounting to Rs 1.5 lakh in fraud. After a year, I took a loan of Rs 3.5 lakh to get her a new bow and later when she won the sub-junior nationals, the Collector of our district got her a new bow from the government funds," he recalls."Later, we decided to travel to Delhi to seek training and it was there that we met international archer Abhishek Verma, who supported Chikitha and mentored her and later she got selected for the SAI Centre in Sonepat," recalls Rao.The earlier training in karate had helped too.

Arhery is a stationary sport. Prizes stillness. Demands extreme concentration. There is a rhythm that elite sport demands — where your heart rate could be off the charts, but you need to nail that one trigger or arrow releasing movement, which still needs shoulder power. To get that balance right, many athletes train in martial arts – karate, judo, jiu Jitsu, to achieve absolute mental poise / strength in that moment. It's why a Karate black belt can translate into an Asiad gold many many years later. It is mind training that becomes muscle memory.The quota secured, gold added to India's tally, Chikitha will be welcomed home with her favourites. For Chikitha, it's chitti muthyalu (small pearl) rice – that delectable rice-grain that's best served in biryanis or pulao because the pearls swallow the spice.Chikitha shared that she wants to get a new rice harvester for the family. And with the prize money, that's the first thing she will do. Apart from that, she likes having the Chitti Muthyalu rice, which is also called Small Pearls. With this gold medal, she is the pearl of our village and family," says Rao.

Story behind 3 Asian Games gold medals at archery events

At the Sports Authority of India centre in Sonepat, Indian compound archers spent 15 days training in a replica of the Asian Games environment they would encounter in Japan. The same screens, music system, targets, podium, flags and colour scheme were recreated, so that when they eventually arrived at Okazaki Chuo Sogo Park, there would be as little that felt unfamiliar as possible. "We wanted them to feel that whatever happens here, they have already experienced it," said Dronacharya Awardee Jiwanjot Singh Teja.

They swept all three compound team golds at the Asian Games — the women's team, men's team and mixed team. And thrice, they beat South Korea (two times in semis and once in final), Asian Games' most dominant archery nation. The mixed-team victory, secured by Chikitha Taniparthi and Sahil Jadhav after a shoot-off, also earned India their first Olympic quota place for Los Angeles 2028."We have been proving ourselves from the past few years," Jyothi Vennam, who paired with Chikitha and Prithika Pradeep for women's team gold, said. "We have been winning each and every medal possible at the highest and I think, yeah, maybe we are better than South Korea."Wednesday was also India's best gold-medal day of these Games so far. Alongside the archery hat-trick, Neeru Dhanda and Kynan Chenai won the mixed trap gold in shooting, giving India four golds in a single day.But the significance of the archery sweep stretches beyond another successful Asian Games.When India swept all five compound golds at Hangzhou in 2023, compound was still fighting for its place on the Olympic stage. Now it has one. The International Olympic Committee has added mixed-team compound to the Los Angeles 2028 programme, making it the first Olympic medal event for the discipline.

That has changed the equation. An event that once had Asian Games and World Championship glory at stake now has an Olympic medal at the end of the road, and countries that had lagged behind India have started investing accordingly.China, according to Teja, began serious preparations around 2018 and has steadily built itself into a force. At these Games, China's Liao Jiahao and Liu Jinyi finished first and second in men's qualification. South Korea, the traditional Asian archery powerhouse, has also sharpened its compound programme. Its mixed team set a world record earlier in the competition, while 14-year-old Kang Yeonseo became the first under-18 women's archer to shoot a perfect 150 in a 15-arrow match."Everyone doubled down on their preparation," says David Cousins, the high-performance coach brought in specifically to prepare India for the Olympic push. "It got a lot harder and it will get harder after this, for sure."At SAI Sonepat, Teja and the coaching staff recreated the competition environment and then repeatedly put their archers through pressure situations. A second team from the Centre of Excellence was brought in to compete against the national team two to four times a week. "We set up the exact same environment," Teja says. "We installed the same screens, used the same music system, set up identical targets, and built the same podium, flags and colour scheme."The pressure was deliberately manufactured. If the world record was 238, the target was 238. If six arrows were required, all six had to be 10s, with at least three Xs — the tiny centre at the heart of the 10-ring, where the highest-scoring arrows land. Sometimes, the rule was even simpler: only six Xs would allow the session to end.The mixed-team final against Korea provided the perfect test. The teams were locked at 157-157 after four ends. The gold came down to a shoot-off. Chikitha Taniparthi and Sahil Jadhav shot 20; Korea's Park Jungyoon and Choi Yonghee managed 19.It was precisely the kind of moment the Sonepat sessions had tried to manufacture. "The biggest thing is just they've been through training scenarios that are way more complicated and way more mentally and emotionally stressful than this," Cousins, a five-time World Championship gold medallist, says. "It's just getting them to internalise that they trust everything you put them through, that they trust themselves, that they believe in their teammates and themselves, and then just get up there and execute with no doubts."Cousins added that securing early Olympic qualification will give the archers a head start over the rest. "The nice thing about securing the first Olympic spot is that we can use 2027 to be a little bit more tactful and almost be offensive, not defensive," Cousins says.The three golds in Nagoya, then, are more than a continuation of India's Asian Games dominance. They are an early statement in a new Olympic race, one in which China, Korea and others have begun investing heavily in catching up.And India might not be finished here. They still have a chance to add two more individual compound golds on Thursday, when the men's and women's individual titles are decided.They brought Okazaki to Sonepat. When they finally reached Okazaki, it felt familiar.

Sunil Kumar wins bronze, scripts Greco-Roman history

Nagoya: Sunil Kumar produced a dominant display to secure bronze in the men's 87kg Greco-Roman wrestling event at the Asian Games 2026 on Wednesday, overpowering the Philippines' Callum Johnston Roberts 9-0 by technical superiority.The victory not only earned Sunil a second consecutive Asian Games bronze but also etched his name in the record books. The 27-year-old became the first Indian wrestler to win two Greco-Roman wrestling medals at the Asian Games.Returning to the podium after taking bronze in the same category at Hangzhou 2022, Sunil needed barely one period to settle the contest at the Nagoya City Inae Sports Center.He immediately took control, throwing Roberts over twice in the opening exchanges to collect four points. A further point for passivity soon followed, leaving the Indian with a 5-0 advantage barely 90 seconds into the bout.Sunil showed no signs of easing off. He capitalised on another passivity sequence to take his opponent down and stretch the lead to 7-0, leaving Roberts struggling to find an answer to the Indian's relentless attacks.

The end came shortly afterwards. Sunil executed another scoring move to add two more points and reach the nine-point winning margin required for technical superiority, bringing the contest to an emphatic conclusion.The bronze adds another chapter to a career that already includes six Asian Championships medals and makes Sunil the first Indian to claim multiple Greco-Roman medals at the continental Games.His latest podium finish also continues India's presence in the Greco-Roman wrestling medal standings, with Sunil becoming the latest Indian athlete to deliver on the Asian Games stage after a commanding performance in the bronze-medal bout.

Four women, many struggles, one gold: India's 4x400m relay team wins title

* For Kiran Pahal, running was once an act of defiance. Her father had to fight an entire village in Sonipat to allow his daughter to pursue athletics.* For Prachi Choudhary, a farmer's daughter from Saharanpur, the dream of a DSP post in the UP Police has been a driving force. Before leaving for Nagoya, she submitted her measurements for the uniform, hoping to turn that ambition into reality.* MR Poovamma had to find her way back from a doping ban and depression, with her husband and mother helping her rebuild.* Vithya Ramraj, the daughter of an autorickshaw driver, had already broken India's oldest athletics national record in Nagoya before taking the track for the relay.Four women, from different corners of the country, carrying different expectations. On Tuesday, at Mizuho Park, they won India's first and only track-and-field gold medal of the Asian Games in Nagoya, reclaiming the women's 4x400m relay title with a time of 3:29.69.In the last edition in Hangzhou, China had beaten India to gold, but this quartet proved why Indian women remain favourites with a seventh gold in the 4x400m relay at the Asian Games.It was also a victory that capped India's most successful day of the Games, so far.Neeru Dhanda, who had been hospitalised with an illness 10 days ago, won gold in the women's trap shooting event. India also won its first-ever medal in the mixed 4x100m relay — a bronze; Gulveer Singh added a bronze to the two silvers he had already won; the women's high jump produced a bronze; and, Indian boxers secured significant victories to march into the finals.But the women's 4x400m relay gold shone brightest.The rain had soaked the track, but the four Indian women had a gold medal to chase. The route to it was anything but straightforward.Kiran got off to a slow start, handing over the baton in third place. Poovamma took over and set about making up ground. With every stride, she said, the snapshots of her recent struggles flashed in front of her. The dope ban, the "depression", the lonely comeback.

She thought of her husband, who managed her training programme while continuing to work and cook for her, and her mother, who travelled to Pune to ensure she could train without distractions. "When my issues were going on, I was so depressed. I don't know what situation I went through. It was my family and my husband," she said.Having beaten by China in Hangzhou Asian Games, this quartet proved why Indian women remain favourites with a seventh gold in the 4x400m relay at the Asian Games. (PTI) Having beaten by China in Hangzhou Asian Games, this quartet proved why Indian women remain favourites with a seventh gold in the 4x400m relay at the Asian Games. (PTI)The veteran, who had won relay gold at the 2014 and 2018 Asian Games, dug into her decade-plus experience and pulled India into the podium position, showing that age — she is 36 — had not slowed her down.Prachi took over with India in front and held the advantage, charging towards a gold medal, and the DSP post. "I missed it last time because I won just a silver medal," she said. "Before leaving for Nagoya, I submitted my measurements for the uniform."Vithya saw Prachi march towards her, and felt her heart beating fast. She had already broken PT Usha's four-decade-old national record in the 400m hurdles, clocking 54.75 seconds for bronze and won silver in the 4×400 metres mixed relay. Now, she had one more job to finish.She surged into the final lap with the lead, but Bahrain's Salwa Eid Nasser was beginning to make her presence felt. Having received the baton in last place, Nasser tore through the field, picking off runners one by one and closing the gap.The pressure mounted. Vithya could see the Bahraini closing in, and the uncertainty began to creep in. "I told myself, 'It's the last race of your season, Vithya. Go for it. Whatever happens, come on, Vithya, you have to fight until the finish line. They all three did good, now it's your turn'. So I went for it," she said.As Nasser closed in, Vithya drove towards the finish line, refusing to yield. The rain continued to fall, the gap continued to narrow, but Vithya had enough left to bring India home in 3:29.69. Bahrain finished second, China third.

Sanju Samson calls Kohli a constant source of motivation for Indian players

Nisshin: Describing former captain Virat Kohli as a constant source of motivation for players across generations, India wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson said the national team considers itself "very, very fortunate" to have someone of his stature leading by example both on and off the field.

Samson's words come after Kohli hit an unbeaten 139 in the Thiruvananthapuram ODI against the West Indies, which India won by eight wickets. During the course of the knock, Kohli also surpassed the 15,000-run mark in ODIs and became just the second batter after Sachin Tendulkar to achieve the feat."What to say? I think we are very, very fortunate to have someone like him. I think whenever he scores runs, practises or turns out to play a game of cricket for our country, or wherever he goes, I think it is a great inspiration for people like us still playing the game in the Indian national team and for everyone playing alongside him.

"I think it definitely benefits the way he puts on the performances. So, very happy to have him," Samson told reporters on the eve of the India-Sri Lanka men's cricket semi-final at the Asian Games.With multiple Indian squads operating simultaneously across international and age-group setups, ranging from the main ODI and T20I teams to the 'A' sides and U-19 squads, Samson attributed this strong bench strength to a robust domestic ecosystem working in tandem with the Indian Premier League (IPL)."Absolutely, I think it is all over the internet. It is a known fact nowadays how strong Indian cricket has grown over the last so many years. So, I think there has been some constant effort. I think definitely IPL plays a huge role. But I feel our domestic cricket is also playing a huge role, actually."We have been constantly making great efforts to go out and play all the domestic matches whenever we get a chance, and that is where we tend to develop a lot of talent as well. So, our grooming things are really nicely placed, actually."The Mushtaq Ali, the Vijay Hazare, the Ranji Trophy, even the Under-19 [teams] are travelling abroad every season, actually. So, a great number of cricketers are coming from these kinds of games, which is a great thing for our country, and we will keep doing our best," he added.

Gulveer, Barwal and Seema's Asian Games gains rooted in consistent training

Hyderabad: One specialist who deserves ample credit for India's breakthrough performances in distance running at the 2026 Asian Games is American coach Scott Simmons.Gulveer Singh, Seema Kumari and Sawan Barwal — Indian athletes and medalists at Aichi-Nagoya — have undergone intense training under him at the high-altitude training base in Colorado Springs, USA.Gulveer produced one of the standout track performances in Nagoya, racing four times across five days and returning with three medals — silver in the 10,000m and 1,500m and bronze in the 5,000m. Gulveer's haul came after his historic two-medal performance at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, where he won silver in the 10,000m and bronze in the 5,000m.Simmons, under whose tutelage Gulveer trains in Colorado Springs, said the plan for him had been built primarily around the 10,000m. Training specifically for that event also contributed to Gulveer's performances over the shorter distances.

Karan Johar confirms Koffee With Karan to end, announces its last season: '22 years later…'

Koffee With Karan Season 9: Twenty-two years after Karan Johar made Koffee and rapid-fire part of our everyday language, the filmmaker is all set to retire his eponymous show with a very last season. On Wednesday, in an emotional video, Karan announced the date from which Koffee With Karan 9 will start streaming, adding that it will be the very last.Recalling his 22-year-long association with the show, Karan Johar said his father, producer Yash Johar, had doubts about its success back in 2004. When Karan had pitched the idea to his father, he had replied, 'Who will pay to see you to talk to your friends?'

Karan Johar announces last season of Koffee With KaranKaran shared in the promo, "This is more of an emotional message than a professional announcement. It was June 2004 when I told my dad that I really wanted to host a talk show. I want to get two celebrities or stars and just have an informal chat with them. He looked at me and said, 'Karan, you will call your friends and talk to them, which you anyways do; who will pay you for this?' He passed away that month on 26th June, and the very first day I shot for the show was 16th August 2004. I am here now, 8 seasons later, 22 years later, 161 episodes later; a lot happened.""I called lovers, friends, family, lovers who went on to become ex-lovers; some of them even got married. I nearly put an end to the careers of national icons; I am living with the word nepotism even today. Conjecture became a kind of national word; so much happened. Everywhere I go, fortunately or unfortunately, I am always asked when the next season of Koffee With Karan is. I wonder why they don't ask me when my next feature film is, but whatever it was, I know this show gave me so much," Karan said emotionally.He then went on to announce that this would be his last season hosting the show. "I reached a point in my life where I realized all good things have to come to an end. With a heavy heart, I have to say that this will be my very last season of Koffee With Karan. There will be trolls, comments, posts, and I am ready to take that on, but within all of that and beneath it, I know there is still abundant love for this cup of coffee. So join me in my last season of Koffee With Karan and have that one last cup of coffee with me. Cheers!"

"There are some journeys you don't plan to end; you simply know, somewhere deep within you, when it is time to let them go. Koffee With Karan has been an extraordinary part of my life. It has given me friendships, memories, moments of complete madness, a lot of love and, yes, its fair share of controversy! But through all of it, what has remained constant is the audience. They have laughed with us, debated us, trolled us, celebrated us and, most importantly, kept coming back for another cup. Saying goodbye is emotional, but it also feels right. This final season is my way of raising the mug one last time with gratitude, with love, and with everyone who has made Koffee With Karan what it is. So, come have one last cup of Koffee with me. One last time," Karan said in a press statement.

Talking about the impact of Koffee With Karan, he added, "A lot happened. I called lovers. I called friends. I called families. I called lovers who went on to become ex-lovers. Some of them even got married. I put an end to the careers of national icons. I am living with the term 'nepo' even today. Conjecture became a national word. So much happened."Koffee With Karan has had its share of iconic moments, whether it was Kangana Ranaut locking horns with Karan Johar, Vicky Kaushal confessing his feelings for Katrina Kaif, or even Deepika Padukone opening up about her journey with depression. Reacting to Karan's announcement, fans called it the end of an era; another one wrote, "No. We need more seasons." A third fan requested that SRK appear on the show if it's the last season and wrote, "We at least need 50 episodes for this."Koffee With Karan 9 will stream on JioHotstar from 14th October. While the name of celebs who will be appearing on the show have not been released, speculation suggests it will include Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna; Kajol, Kareena Kapoor and Jaya Bachchan; and Aamir Khan, Saif Ali Khan and Farhan Akhtar, among others.

Great to live in streaming age: Siddharth on playing varied roles in 'Op Safed Sagar' & 'Lust Stories'

Mumbai: Actor Siddharth says he is grateful to be working in the streaming era, where artists can move freely between vastly different characters.Giving the example of his last two streaming projects, war drama series "Operation Safed Sagar" and anthology movie "Lust Stories 3", Siddharth expressed gratitude to streaming platforms like Netflix to have made it possible for him to take on contrasting parts in a span of 90 days.

"I'm grateful for the work I get and for the belief that people put in me. So, the difference between Ajay Ahuja and Badru is not much because the director who gave me Ajay Ahuja wanted me to walk in his shoes and then Vishal Bhardwaj gave me Badru and wanted me to walk into his little sarong. So, the confidence and belief they put in you is the same," the actor said on day one of FICCI FRAMES.In "Operation Safed Sagar", Siddharth played the decorated war hero Ajay Ahuja, while in Bhardwaj's segment of "Lust Stories 3", he portrayed Badru, who becomes the subject of a woman's fantasy.Talking about "Lust Stories", the actor said he found the idea of women's fantasy "progressive".

"It talks about what women want, which is equally an important agenda to talk about. I'm grateful that we live in a streaming age where you can get work, which in one word you say, 'tudum'," he said.The actor was part of a panel discussion, titled "What audiences want, what creators are imagining and how bold programming choices are shaping what comes next." It was attended by filmmakers like Suresh Triveni, Farah Khan, actor Riteish Deshmukh, writer creator-showrunner Abhijeet Singh Parmar, and Monika Shergill, Vice-President Content, Netflix India.Triveni, known for films "Jalsa", "Maa Behen" and others, said the industry needs to move beyond relying on algorithms and predictions while deciding what audiences might watch."Algorithm is past, what we need is reading algorithm and predicting things. We need to be brave," he said, adding, and we are still guarded." Khan talked about her experience of hosting "Lock Upp", a reality show where celebrity inmates are sent to a new-age prison for a game of power and redemption, and said it was a "dream job"."The need to entertain is part of the blood, I can't let anyone get bored. Like, when actors take pause in my movies, I tell them not to do so as I'm falling asleep. Hence, YouTube came easily to me, I just go with the flow."But doing 'Lock Upp' was little (different) in the beginning. The show talked about human nature, people's secret, and how every boy was sexually molested but in an entertaining way." Deshmukh, who served as a co-host on "Lock Upp", said the reality show gave its participants an insight into human nature."'Lock Upp' has been one of the best experiences. It wasn't like a job, it felt like a holiday. We learnt a lot ourselves and that was eye-opening as the show is about human nature, and how celebrities were vulnerable in front of each other," he said.Shergill announced the return of "Lock Upp: Sach Ya Sazaa" for a second season, at the event.'Lock Upp: Sach Yaa Sazaa' became appointment viewing overnight. Viewers were invested, debated, and kept coming back," she said.

'Is it only about nudity?': Why Amala Paul says she would never do a film like Aadai again

Even though we are in 2026 now, our society still hasn't gotten over its obsession with female bodies. From the clothes they wear to their reproductive rights, the patriarchal society is adamant about expressing its unsolicited opinion on everything related to women. As a result, female actors also frequently face immense scrutiny for simply doing their jobs and fulfilling the demands of their roles.Hence, when she had to appear nude for a significant portion of screen time in director Rathna Kumar's thriller film Aadai (2019), it wasn't an easy decision for actor Amala Paul. Knowing she would face backlash from a section of the audience who object to such depictions, Amala had to ensure the makers handled the nudity tastefully, without making it the selling point.Don't Miss | When actor MR Radha shot MGR: How a 1967 assassination attempt reshaped Tamil Nadu

How Amala Paul approached Aadai's nude sceneIn the film, she plays a woman who finds herself trapped in an abandoned building, naked, and unable to find a way out safely. "The interesting part is, this is also a girl who talks about freedom and says that clothes aren't a big deal — someone who talks big — and when she lands in a situation like that, she has to face the dark truth. I had a lot of apprehension because it was a very vulnerable spot I was putting myself in," she said, while speaking to India Today.Before committing to the role, Amala Paul said she wanted to understand how the makers approached the concept. She stated, "I needed to trust the director and the cinematographer. My whole thinking was, are these people up for making an aesthetic film where it is emotionally driven, or is it about nudity?""It (the decision to do the movie) was not immediate. Once I had the trust and was convinced that this was going to be creatively shot, it was a very beautiful creative process for all of us. They made me feel comfortable with minimal people on set. I was pretty kicked about this whole experience, which was so realistic," she added.

Nevertheless, Amala Paul admitted that she was scared about her image. "I did not want to be stereotyped and do more such films," she pointed out. She added, "If you ask me to do an Aadai right now, I don't think I would do it. It is not only about confidence but also about becoming a little wiser. Experience teaches you a lot. However, I am grateful about the experience."ICYMI | 'Hurt' Aishwarya Rai spoke about Shah Rukh Khan removing her from 5 films: 'No explanation'During the session, she also commended Malayalam cinema for taking on bold themes, its willingness

to experiment, and its refusal to conform to market mandates.

Amala Paul lauds Malayalam cinemaWhen asked what sets the industry apart, she said, "If I had to answer in one word, I would say it's the guts. Malayalees really have guts, and I think we have always been like that, even if we go back to the '70s and '80s. It is about characters that we can never really imagine as a hero. I feel any normal industry wouldn't take such a step. Everybody naturally tends to have a male protagonist who is over-the-top, someone special. But in the Malayalam industry, you can see the most normal and rooted people who we see in our real life. I think that is what is interesting when you see that with such subtle and realistic performances."She added, "I always have these metres. In Tamil, there is an acting metre; in Telugu, the metre is different based on the director and the culture. In Malayalam, there is no metre. You have to be the character, and there is no other way."Amala Paul was most recently seen in director Arfaz Ayub's Level Cross (2024), where she scared the screen with Asif Ali.

Is Chris Hansen a hero or villain? Primetime explores his god complex to get to the answer

The subgenre of hidden camera reality television of the mid-2000s was nothing short of a crazy social experiment where no one was monitoring the tests, and no one cared what the results looked like. The goal, all across the world, was unanimous: to get the best ratings possible. In India, this subgenre took the form of sting operations conducted by news channels for particular investigations but in the US, where the definition of 'entertainment' was far more liberal, this subgenre expanded to catching pedophiles red-handed and exposing them on national television.

Chris Hansen's television show, To Catch a Predator, which claimed to be a part of 'news' was a pop culture moment which, on paper, could sound noble, but upon execution, it looked like something in the same vein as Emotional Atyachar. Here, his team would lure child predators into a sting operation and as they got trapped, Hansen would confront them with some difficult questions. The law enforcement would then arrest the predator and all of it was caught on hidden cameras.It is this man, Chris Hansen, who is the inspiration behind Robert Pattinson's latest film, Primetime.

Primetime, directed by Lance Oppenheim, focuses on a particular chapter of Hansen's life – the part where he has made it to the 'primetime' slot on one of the nation's most popular TV networks. He has the chance to beat Lost's ratings, one of the biggest shows of that era. His personal life is falling apart but his ratings and his audience don't care about that. Chris' pitch, that might have sounded meaningful at some point, is not discussed here, for there is no discussion to be had about the subject that everyone must already agree on – there is no crime worse than sexually abusing a child.

The subjects of Chris' show are heinous, and must be caught, punished, named and shamed. But how?This is where Primetime enters tricky territory. As to how Chris Hansen, who once took responsibility for doing something noble, deals with the aftermath or the possible follow-up that comes with catching a child predator.For someone who grew up in India, and didn't know much about Chris Hansen beyond the few pop culture references and memes, Primetime can be best viewed as a companion piece to David Osit's 2025 documentary Predators. The 2025 documentary captures the pop culture effect of Hansen's show in the mid-2000s when the likes of Oprah Winfrey and Jon Stewart were praising his work. The idea that child predators were hunting for their prey on the internet and could lure anyone was terrifying. Back in the early days of the internet, the concept was almost unheard of. So many celebrities, and even law enforcement officers, didn't shy away from saying that Chris was doing 'God's work'. But calling someone God and putting them on a pedestal is, well, slippery territory.

Chris became the self-proclaimed crusader of catching predators but because his program was designed for television, and not for real-life victims demanding justice, many of these predators carried on with their lives with no actual consequences as the cases were not strong enough to get prosecuted. Law enforcement officers started taking orders from Chris and his crew rather than doing their actual job, which ultimately did not help victims/probable victims. There was no conversation about mental health on this show so no one ever got to know if these predators, their families or their victims (if there were any) ever got the help they needed. Osit's documentary tells us that they never did.Hansen's show got cancelled after a man shot himself when law enforcement officers surrounded him during one of the sting operations, which prompted many to ask the question: he was a heinous man, but should Chris Hansen have the power to facilitate someone's death? Is it fair for a reality show to act like the judiciary and pronounce someone's sentence even without a trial?The world isn't as binary as it might seem to some and it was this nuance that was missing in Chris Hansen's shows.Despite the show's cancellation, Hansen continued his career on various other

platforms and encouraged several other copycats. Years later, when Hansen supposedly 'caught' an 18-year-old 'predator' talking to a 15-year-old, similar questions came up as the 18-year-old believed his life was effectively over for he had flirted with a junior and Hansen had treated him the same way he treated much older men talking to teenagers. Even years later, he lives in seclusion for Hansen's show damaged his reputation beyond repair.

No one knows if Hansen's idea to name and shame child predators came to life because he wanted to do something noble, or if he felt like this was a great concept for a TV show. Nevertheless, it got him good karma points, and an idea where he could come across as a saviour. Lance Oppenheim, too, does not call him a villain. He turns the camera towards Hansen at a time in his life when he cares more about his show than anything else. He pushes the boundary to a level where the variables are beyond him, and he can't possibly control who shows up on camera. Hansen's show led to a man killing himself, and if the situation was pushed a little further, the man could have pointed the gun at any number of individuals around him, and this was a bet that Hansen and his team were willing to make – just for their ratings.Hansen, of course, isn't the biggest villain. That title stays with the pedophiles. But, he is no hero either. Hansen, at best, is an irresponsible man with a god complex who believes he is the main character in every frame he walks into.

Nick Jonas recalls funny backstage moment involving daughter Malti

Mumbai: Singer Nick Jonas recently opened up about a hilarious behind-the-scenes moment involving his four-year-old daughter Malti Marie, recalling an almost awkward moment when the little one unexpectedly barged into their green room just before a show.In a podcast conversation, Nick recounted the incident involving Malti and his wife, actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas.

He said the best part of the night was not the show itself, but what happened backstage when Malti decided to walk into the room where Nick, Kevin and Joe were getting ready.Recalling the incident, Nick said, "The best part about the whole night was actually not the show and not trying to make anybody mad. Hold on. It's what happened during the show.Malti Marie and Priyanka were there and, you know, the protocol is to just sort of knock and then, but there's no door into the stage, it's just curtains. You can't knock a curtain."He added, "Malti was very excited and, obviously, she's four and a half, so she just kind of burst into the room. Luckily, we were all in our boxer briefs and stuff, tank tops, actually. She looks at us and she goes, 'Oh, you are in summer clothes.' It was perfect. It was so funny."

Rajamouli on working with Prabhas, Jr NTR and Mahesh Babu: 'I don't choose a star'

Mahesh Babu as Rudhra in a still from the teaser of Varanasi, directed by SS RajamouliMahesh Babu as Rudhra in a still from the teaser of Varanasi, directed by SS RajamouliDirector SS Rajamouli has described his experience of working with Mahesh Babu on the upcoming epic adventure Varanasi as one where the actor completely exceeded his expectations, saying he went in expecting 100 percent from the superstar and received 200 percent.

Speaking to filmmaking students at Penn State University in the United States, Rajamouli was asked a question that cut to the heart of what makes Varanasi different from his previous blockbusters. A student pointed out that with Baahubali, RRR and his earlier Telugu films, Rajamouli had worked with actors like Prabhas, Jr NTR and Ram Charan before they became the mega-stars they are today, effectively shaping their careers through his films.

With Varanasi, he is working with Mahesh Babu, who is already one of the biggest superstars in Indian cinema. The student asked whether directing an established star changes the filmmaker's approach. Rajamouli answered, "I never choose an actor just because he is a superstar. I choose someone who truly fits the character. Once I choose them, I expect them to trust me, and I'll guide them to give the performance the character needs."He then spoke specifically about Mahesh Babu's work on the film. "Yes, Mahesh Babu is a huge superstar. But with Mahesh Babu in Varanasi, I expected him to give 100 percent, because that's what I know he is capable of," Rajamouli said. "But once I started working with him, he completely exceeded my expectations. He went beyond everything I had imag-

ined and gave 200 percent.""He really nailed the character and surprised me with how much he brought to it. He did much more than I expected, and that made working with him on Varanasi a really special experience," Rajamouli said.The film casts Mahesh Babu as Rudhra, along with Priyanka Chopra Jonas as Mandakini and Prithviraj Sukumaran as Kumbha. According to multiple reports, Mahesh Babu wrapped his shooting after 606 days on set. Production began in January 2025 and involved extensive location shooting across multiple continents, including what is reported to be the first Indian film to shoot in Antarctica.

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