

Passive smoking poses severe risks to children's health, experts warn

New Delhi: Passive smoking, also known as second-hand smoke, poses significant health risks to children, who are particularly vulnerable due to their developing lungs and immune systems, experts said on Saturday. Passive smoking in children can result in respiratory problems, Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), ear infections, developmental delays, and future heart disease. Preventing it entails keeping a smoke-free home, avoiding children, and avoiding public smoking areas. Supporting cessation programmes and educating family members can also help to protect children. "Passive smoking in children can cause respiratory issues, SIDS, ear infections, developmental issues, and future heart disease. Preventing it involves maintaining a smoke-free home, avoiding children, and avoiding public smoking areas. Supporting cessation programs and educating family members can also help protect children," Ravi Shekhar Jha, Director and HOD, Pulmonology, Fortis Escorts Hospital, told IANS. "Passive smoking exposes children to harmful chemicals, increasing their risk of respiratory infections, asthma, and SIDS. It can also impair

lung development, leading to long-term health issues," he also emphasised. The consequences of passive smoking are both immediate as well as long-term.

Short-term exposure can irritate the eyes, nose, and throat, as well as coughing, headaches, and difficulty in breathing. Passive smoking over time increases the risk of developing serious conditions such as lung cancer, heart disease, stroke, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). "The side effects of passive smoking are both immediate and long-lasting. In the short term, exposure can cause eye, nose, and throat irritation, coughing, headaches, and breathing difficulties. Over time, passive smoking increases the risk of developing serious conditions such as lung cancer, heart disease, stroke, and COPD," Kuldeep Kumar Grover, Head of Critical Care and Pulmonology, CK Birla Hospital, told IANS. "Particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects of second-hand smoke are infants and children, who are at higher risk for respiratory infections, asthma, ear infections, and SIDS," he also added. Preventing passive smoking in chil-



dren requires a comprehensive approach. Maintaining a smoke-free home and car, avoiding smoking around children, and steering clear of public smoking areas are essential steps. Educating the public about the dangers of second-hand smoke

and encouraging smokers to quit are also crucial measures. By combining legislative measures with public awareness campaigns, experts believe that the harmful consequences of passive smoking can be significantly reduced.

Agriculture faces crisis for Vanakalam amid water woes, lack of investment support



While sowing operations in the erstwhile districts of Adilabad, Nizamabad and Karimnagar have been relatively stable, covering around 80 percent of the normal cultivation area, the situation is dire in erstwhile districts of Nalgonda and Mahabubnagar.

Hyderabad: Agricultural operations have taken a severe hit in Telangana this Vanakalam (Kharif) season. Due to uncertainty over irrigation water and the absence of Rythu Bharosa investment support under the Congress regime, crop production is likely to be affected. With less than 50 days remaining in the season, the cultivation of major crops like paddy, cotton, and pulses is in jeopardy. As of August 10, sowing operations have been conducted in only 84.6 lakh acres, just 65.4 percent of the normal cultivation area of 1.29 crore acres for the current Vanakalam season. This is a stark contrast to the corresponding period last year, when sowing was completed in 99.9 lakh acres, eventually covering 1.26 crore acres for the entire crop season.

The decline marks a significant departure from the previous years under the BRS government, when improved irrigation water supplies and the Rythu Bandhu farm investment support spurred agricultural growth. In comparison, the crop sown area as on August 10, was an estimated 80.24 lakh acres in 2019, 1.13 crore acres in 2020, 1.04 crore in 2021, 1.02 crore acres in 2022, 95.78 lakh acres in 2023. The unpredictability of water supply, coupled with lack of Rythu Bharosa investment support, has discouraged many farmers from planting their crops. Those in dis-

tricts which are largely dependent on irrigation water supply, which has been uncertain, have mostly refrained from cultivation. Compounding these issues is the depletion of groundwater levels, which have dropped by 2.08 metres below ground level (mbgl) from 6.17 mbgl in July last year to 8.25 mbgl this year, only worsening the situation for farmers.

While sowing operations in the erstwhile districts of Adilabad, Nizamabad and Karimnagar have been relatively stable, covering around 80 percent of the normal cultivation area, the situation is dire in erstwhile districts of Nalgonda and Mahabubnagar.

These areas, which depend heavily on Krishna River water, have seen less than 60 percent of land cultivated. The truncated Nalgonda district with the largest cropping area of around 11 lakh acres, has only 6.12 lakh acres under cultivation. Agricultural scientists fear that this could be Telangana's lowest crop sown area for the Vanakalam season in the last five years, resulting in a significant drop in overall crop production. Sugarcane, paddy, pulses, major millets, oilseeds, and cotton are among the worst affected crops. While there is some hope for an increase in paddy crop area due to its short cultivation period, the outlook for other crops remains bleak.

Why Bangladesh chose Yunus to steady the ship

One cannot think of a more qualified person to lead Bangladesh at the moment. Mr. Yunus, a former university professor of economics, is the founder of the Grameen Bank. Dubbed the “Banker to the Poor”, he is better known now as a social entrepreneur and civil society leader than an academic. He assumes charge as head of the interim government of Bangladesh at a time when there is general disgust in the country with political parties. Consequently, civil society groups have come to the fore. Mr. Yunus is undoubtedly the most prominent face of Bangladesh civil society groups. He clearly has the support of the students who shed much blood overthrowing the Sheikh Hasina regime through the mass uprising they led. His name was proposed by the leaders of the student protest with others accepting it enthusiastically. No government, neither its police nor its military, is happy when they kill their own citizens, for reasons that seem not so convincing. It is not surprising then that the Bangladesh Army refused to fire on its own people, asking Ms. Hasina to quit in view of the popular uprising. The globally acknowledged initiative of Mr. Yunus, the Grameen Bank, owes its existence to the inability of the banking system to lend to the poor. Mr. Yunus rebelled against his training in economics, when he found that the poor in Bangladesh work hard but cannot escape poverty because of their debt burden. Paradoxically, it is the poor who need credit, but no bank will lend to them. At first, he borrowed money in his name and lent it to the poor. He found that the poor were indeed credit worthy. Then he experimented with a state-owned agricultural bank with similar results. Finally, when he found that the state was unwilling to scale-up microcredit to the poor, he founded his own social business – the Grameen Bank.

Mr. Yunus was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for his microcredit revolution that brought women out of their homes to meaningfully participate in entrepreneurial activities. Even though there are disputes regarding the effectiveness of microcredit for empowering the poorest, no one can deny that this is a secular and modern initiative that has empowered Bangladeshi women. It was opposed by conservative Islamists. Pro-market stand

Mr. Yunus’s social entrepreneurship is considered pro-market. Given his international profile, the U.S. and the European Union are likely to play a more significant role in the country than earlier. In her quest to garner developmental funds, Ms. Hasina was more comfortable deftly balancing China and India. The legacy of the estrangement of the U.S. from Bangladesh may now be overturned. The Chinese will try to find a place on the table. Now that India has courted Ms. Hasina, it would do well to remember that it claims to be a strategic partner of the democratic West, which has reasons to worry about the rise of China. It cannot afford to appease the forces that the citizens of Bangladesh have overthrown. The political orientation of Mr. Yunus will be an asset to the interim government. He had first returned to



Bangladesh from an academic position in an economics department in the U.S., in the heydays following the birth of Bangladesh.

He was inspired by the idea of building a new nation led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Despite this orientation, he maintained a distance from both the significant political parties — the Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh National Party (BNP). In fact, the AL regime under Ms. Hasina did not allow him any political room for manoeuvre and attacked him with corruption and tax charges. Given this experience, one can safely conclude that Mr. Yunus will not favour Ms. Hasina, even though he may not be opposed to the AL as a political party. Although avowedly secular in a Muslim-majority nation, Ms. Hasina destroyed the democratic consolidation that catapulted her to power in the first place. The general elections in 2014, 2018 and 2024 did not allow the political opposition any space to contest. The reasons for the collapse and ouster of the Hasina government are to be found largely within the regime.

Autocratisation meant that the representatives of the citizens became quite distant from them. It also did not help that officials intimately involved with supporting the regime at a senior level were targeted for corruption. The Prime Minister and her associates proclaimed that they were fighting corruption, when corruption had become the very basis of the regime. Under such circumstances, even the officialdom may have lost interest in protecting the regime.

As the legitimacy of the regime crumbled from within, empty promises such as 30% reservation in government jobs for the children of freedom fighters of the Liberation War of 1971 sounded hollow. With large scale unemployment staring them in

the face, Ms. Hasina, supporting job reservations, distanced herself from the students who demanded that all job quotas be abolished. It was under these circumstances that the military stepped in after more than 500 men, women and children were killed in the anti-reservation protests. After weeks of turmoil, Sheikh Hasina was forced to flee the country. Her flight to India, unlike her father’s assassination and martyrdom, does not bode well for the AL. It is not clear whether a third major political party can also emerge under the current

circumstances. Mr. Yunus was interested in entering politics, a project that was viciously attacked by Ms. Hasina. It is unlikely, however, that he might revive that project. Previous interim governments have served like an independent election commission under military protection that have facilitated peaceful transfer of power in Bangladesh. This had contributed to democratic consolidation. It is to be seen whether this interim government led by Mr. Yunus will equal or even better the record of the previous ones.

IIIT-Hyderabad's AI tool to detect malnutrition

Hyderabad: Researchers at the International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) – Hyderabad have come up with a new AI-based tool that promises to revolutionise the way malnutrition is detected among children.

The new smartphone-based tool developed by researchers of Raj Reddy Centre for Technology and Society (RCTS) at IIIT-Hyderabad, represents a significant departure from the traditional practice of manual recording of measurement scales, which are prone to human errors.

The researchers have come out with two setups where the measurement can be taken with the web app using the Smartphone. In the first, by placing the smartphone over the child’s head two images are taken i.e., one of weighing scale reading and the other of the region directly in front of the scale (on the floor).

In the second method, with the child standing against a wall with a height chart, a photograph is captured of the child as well as of the weighing scale. Images thus generated are analysed to derive the

height and weight measurements, which are in turn compared with standard growth charts to generate malnutrition estimates.

The web app comes with pictograms, guiding on how to position the smartphone and the child for taking photographs. The app also displays appropriate warnings based on malnutrition and such information is sent to parents and those concerned.

The tool has been developed by the RCTS researchers after they were approached by i-Saksham, a Bihar-based NGO that turned to AI to drive its various initiatives focused on women empowerment and Anganwadi centres. The current UI for the web app is being planned in both English and Hindi.

“We are also exploring the feasibility of using 3D anthropometry, i.e., 3D reconstruction of subjects using 2D images,” said Dr. Arjun Rajasekar, an applied researcher at RCTS. This is part of a larger effort by the RCTS to create an AI solution for reducing morbidity and mortality in newborns via automatic anthropometry measurements, he said.

The Begum who came in from the cold

The story so far: On August 6, a day after Sheikh Hasina resigned as Prime Minister and left Bangladesh, Khaleda Zia, the ailing ex-Prime Minister of the South Asian country of 170 million was released on President Mohammed Shahabuddin's orders. The 79-year-old chief of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has been under house arrest since March 25, 2020, serving a 17-year prison term in two graft cases since February 8, 2018. Ms. Zia was released after a meeting held between President Mohammed Shahabuddin, military chiefs, political parties, representatives of civil society and leaders of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, reported Bangladesh news outlet The Daily Star. The ex-PM has several health issues, including liver cirrhosis, arthritis, diabetes and heart issues. In October 2023, the 17-doctor panel treating the BNP chief had claimed that she was at "high risk" of dying without urgent medical intervention abroad. However, the Hasina government had refused to permit her to leave the country. As per a conditional release sanctioned during a COVID-19 outbreak, Ms. Zia is not allowed to leave her residence in Dhaka's Gulshan area. With the Bangladesh parliament dissolved, the nation is headed for fresh elections to be held under a caretaker government, a mere six months after Ms. Hasina won the last one in a landslide.

After the assassination of her husband and former military president General Ziaur Rahman in a military rebellion, Khaleda Zia entered active politics by joining the BNP and taking charge as vice-president, within a year. Gen. Rahman was replaced by Gen. Hussain Muhammad Ershad, who ruled Bangladesh under martial law for eight years. Opposing military rule, Ms. Zia took to the streets along with her party members to mob the Secretariat building in Dhaka. Taking charge as BNP chief in 1984, Ms. Zia headed several rallies and protests against the Ershad regime, which had imposed a stringent curfew, and scrapped social schemes and secular principles from the Constitution. Stitching a coalition with like-minded Islamic parties, Ms. Zia formed a 'seven-party alliance.' Allying with Sheikh Hasina's Awami League (AL), which headed a 15-party alliance, and the five-party Left coalition, Ms. Zia demanded an end to military rule. She was detained several times by the police and even placed under house arrest throughout the military rule.

In 1986, when the Ershad regime announced elections, Ms. Zia demanded the formation of a caretaker government to hold 'free and fair' polls. However, as the military government did not accede, the BNP boycotted the polls while the AL participated in the elections and emerged as the primary Opposition. The newly-elected Parliament lasted only a year as all AL members resigned and Ms. Hasina demanded free elections under a caretaker government. As the military once again elected Gen. Ershad as the President, Ms. Zia joined hands with Ms. Hasina to launch a nationwide protest demanding an end to military rule. In the face of public outcry, Gen. Ershad resigned in December 1990, passing the charge to acting President Shahabuddin Ahmed to conducting 'free and fair' elections.

1991: First term as Prime Minister

The story so far: On August 6, a day after Sheikh Hasina resigned as Prime Minister and left Bangladesh, Khaleda Zia, the ailing ex-Prime Minister of the South Asian country of 170 million was released on President Mohammed Shahabuddin's orders. The 79-year-old chief of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has been under house arrest since March 25, 2020, serving a 17-year prison term in two graft cases since February 8, 2018. Ms. Zia was released after a meeting held between President Mohammed Shahabuddin, military chiefs, political parties, representatives of civil society and leaders of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, reported Bangladesh news outlet The Daily Star. The ex-PM has several health issues, including liver cirrhosis, arthritis, diabetes and heart issues. In October 2023, the 17-doctor panel treating the BNP chief had claimed that she was at "high risk" of dying without urgent medical intervention abroad. However, the Hasina government had refused to permit her to leave the country. As per a conditional release sanctioned during a COVID-19 outbreak, Ms. Zia is not allowed to leave her residence in Dhaka's Gulshan area. With the Bangladesh parliament dissolved, the nation is headed for fresh elections to be held under a caretaker government, a mere six months after Ms. Hasina won the last one in a landslide.

elections held on February 27, 1991 elected a 'neutral' 'Jatiya Sangsad' (national parliament), awarding BNP a slim victory. Winning 141 of the 300 directly-elected parliamentary seats, Ms. Zia was sworn in as Bangladesh's first woman Prime Minister on March 20, 1991. Under her first term, a bipartisan law – the 12th amendment – was passed by the Parliament to establish a parliamentary system in Bangladesh. Under this law, a House of directly-elected representatives, a council of ministers headed by the Prime Minister accountable to the Jatiya Sangsad, a constitutional head of state (President) to be voted by the Jatiya Sangsad and an independent judiciary was established. Her government also passed laws to make primary education compulsory and establish a coast guard, and also introduced a free market economy.

1996-2001: First term as LoP

However, her government received a jolt in 1994, when Ms. Hasina, along with many AL members, resigned from the Parliament, accusing the Zia government of widespread corruption and rigging of by-elections. Refusing to pass the charge to a caretaker government to hold polls, Ms. Zia proposed a non-partisan advisory council headed by the President to oversee elections. With the AL boycotting the 1996 polls, Ms. Zia was re-elected for a second time in an election which saw only a 21% voter turnout. Amid growing demands for fresh elections, Ms. Zia's government passed the thirteenth Amendment to the constitution, allowing the formation of a neutral caretaker government to allow peaceful transfer of power and provide a level playing field to all political parties during elections. After a short, twelve-day term, Ms. Zia resigned and handed over power to a caretaker government headed by former Chief Justice Mohammad Habibur Rahman.

Bangladesh awarded Ms. Hasina the mandate in the June 1996 polls, with AL winning 146 of the 300 seats, followed by BNP, which won 116 seats, and the Jatiya National Party (JP), led by the then-incarcerated Mr. Ershad, which won 32 seats. Former Bangladeshi Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, left, looks over as new interim leader Mohammad Habibur Rahman speaks with opposition Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina, right, at Rahman's swearing-in ceremony in Dhaka on Saturday, March 30, 1996 [Stitching a four-party alliance with Islamic parties like Jamaat-i-Islami Bangladesh, Islami Oikya Jote and Gen. Ershad's JP, the BNP launched an anti-corruption movement against the Sheikh Hasina government. Ahead of the 2001 elections, JP exited the four-party alliance; a splinter faction headed by Nazir Rahman Manju remained with BNP. In the 2001 elections, the BNP-led four-party alliance won a landslide victory, winning 215 seats. Ms. Zia's term, however, was marred by rising Islamic militancy, unchecked corruption, abuse of power, and erosion of democracy within BNP. According to The Daily Star, Ms. Zia had "stacked her party



leadership and cabinet posts with her sons, nephews and other relatives," promoting widespread nepotism. With her two sons in government, she allowed more radical and criminal members in the alliance government to rule unchecked with minimum accountability, critics alleged. Ms. Zia's reported patronage of Siddique ul-Islam alias Bangla Bhai, who was pivotal in forming the militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), marred her term in 2005. On August 17, 2005, 469 near-simultaneous bomb blasts occurred in 63 locations across Bangladesh, killing two and injuring over a hundred. Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Khaleda Zia wipes her eyes during a meeting with Chinese Vice Premier Huang Ju at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, 17 August 2005. Zia arrived in Beijing just hours after her homeland was rocked by more than 100 small bombs. Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Khaleda Zia wipes her eyes during a meeting with Chinese Vice Premier Huang Ju at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, 17 August 2005. Zia arrived in Beijing just hours after her homeland was rocked by more than 100 small bombs.

Her aligning with the Jamaat-i-Islami, which had opposed Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan, also caused controversy. Further, she has declared August 15 – the day when Mujibur Rahman and most of his immediate family members were killed in a military coup – as her birthdate, which has been considered an insult to the Awami League founder who has been named 'Father of the Nation.' She has also shown no documents backing this day as her date of birth and has been slapped with multiple cases for questioning Bangladesh's independence history. She has also remained skeptical of the number of martyrs in the liberation war. During her last term as PM, she implemented free education for girls, established the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs, the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and conducted free examinations.

Ahead of the 2006 polls, the BNP and AL failed to agree on a candidate to head the caretaker government. Ending the stalemate, President Iajuddin Ahmed declared himself as caretaker PM and announced elections to be held in January 2007. With the AL accusing the caretaker

government of a bias towards the BNP government, Sheikh Hasina announced a boycott of the polls and Bangladesh was placed under a state of emergency. The military-run government headed by then-Army Chief Gen. Moeen U. Ahmed initiated a 'fight against corruption' and arrested both Ms. Hasina and Ms. Zia for alleged bribery and corruption. After months of incarceration along with other members of the Zia family, Ms. Zia was released in September 2007. In the following elections held in December 2008, the BNP only managed to secure 29 seats – marking the start of the fall of BNP.

2009 onwards: Sheikh Hasina wins four consecutive terms. In 2009, Sheikh Hasina began her second term as Prime Minister with an absolute majority of 263 seats. She passed the fifteenth amendment which scrapped the thirteenth amendment, ending the constitutional need for transferring power to a 'neutral caretaker government.' This ensured her continuous wins in consecutive elections in 2014, 2019 and now 2024. Ms. Zia and BNP have boycotted all the above elections, insisting that a 'neutral caretaker government' was necessary for free elections. In 2010, the Sheikh Hasina government cancelled the allotment of late Gen. Rahman's house in Dhaka's Cantonment area to his widow. Vacating the palatial Army bungalow, Ms. Zia retained her residence in the city's Gulshan area. Prior to the 2014 polls, Ms. Zia was first put under house arrest. Later in February 2018, Ms. Zia was sentenced to a five-year imprisonment term for embezzlement of funds meant for an orphanage trust. The term was then increased to ten years by the court. Later in October that year, she was also sentenced to seven years in jail in a case involving a charity fund named after her late husband. The BNP claimed that the cases were politically biased, but failed to gain public support to pressure the Sheikh Hasina government. Due to her conviction, Ms. Zia has been barred from contesting polls, as the Constitution prohibits the participation of a convicted person sentenced to over two years in prison. In the wake of the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020, Ms. Zia was conditionally released from jail for six months, but told to remain at her Gulshan residence.

Poverty-free village is my dream: Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan



Union Minister for Rural Development and Agriculture & Farmers Welfare launches the online course for Gram Rozgar Sevak (GRS) at NIRD & PRHyderabad, 13th August 2024. "Poverty-free village is my dream" said Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Agriculture & Farmers Welfare. The Minister was addressing the gathering after attending the 66th General Council meeting of the National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj today. Two MoUs with JNU, New Delhi, for the Ph.D. program and Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi, were signed in the presence of the dignitaries. Shri Chouhan also launched the online course for Gram Rozgar Sevak (GRS) "Nobody should be poor in villages, and everyone should be employed. Mahatma Gandhi's vision was Gram Swaraj; when we talk about the development of villages, infrastructural development takes the front seat. Villages need proper road connectivity, potable water, strong and spacious school buildings, Panchayat Bhawan, health facilities, etc. Recalling that the late Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee had launched Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) in 2000, he said that the projects are taken forward by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

Shri Kamlesh Paswan, Hon'ble Minister of State for Rural Development; Dr Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, Hon'ble

Minister of State for Rural Development and Communications; Shri Shailesh Kumar Singh, Secretary, Rural Development; Dr G. Narendra Kumar, Director General, NIRDPR; Ms Tanuja Thakur Khalkho, JS & FA, MoRD; Ms Caralyn Khongwar Deshmukh, Additional Secretary, MoRD; Prof. Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit, Vice Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and Prof Nupur Tiwary, Professor, Indian Institute of Public Administration, were also present.

Referring to the Aajeevika scheme, the Hon'ble Minister said due to the training and capacity building given to women across India, they are emerging as leaders. "Women play a key part in contributing to the economy of the nation by performing a multitude of roles. We are striving hard to bring all the necessary facilities to villages. Apart from the significant role played by NIRDPR in the form of a think tank to the Ministry, more capacity building and training activities are needed," he said. Later in the day, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan visited the Rural Technology Park on the campus and inaugurated the PMAY-G Model House (Double Bedroom). The house was constructed in 409.5 sq.ft. at a cost of Rs.4.04 lakh, which comes to Rs.987 per sq.ft. The house is constructed using the technologies such as random rubble stone for foundation, brick columns and RCC beams, Bamcrete walling using chemical

treated bamboo strips, conical tiles roofing, locally available stones for flooring and painted with cow dung based paint. The

Hon'ble Minister and other dignitaries planted saplings at RTP and also visited the Mud Block making unit in the Park.

Telangana govt seeks Ramsar tag for five sites

Sangareddy: The State government has proposed five wildlife sanctuaries in the State including the Manjeera and Pocharam Wildlife Sanctuaries here to be tagged as Ramsar sites under the Ramsar Convention for Wetlands of International Importance. The government had placed the proposal before experts during a meeting held in Hyderabad on Tuesday. Meanwhile, the team of officials including Leena Nandan (Additional Secretary, Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change), Vani Prasad (Principal Secretary, Tourism and Youth Affairs) and Ahmad Nadeem (Principal Secretary, Forest and Environment) and other officials will visit the Manjeera Wildlife Sanctuary on Wednesday early morning. During a two-day regional workshop held on conservation and wise use of wetlands for southern States and union territories under Mission Sahbhagita, State officials proposed the five wildlife sanctuaries at Manjeera,

Pocharam, Kinnarsani Lake, Pakhal Wild Life Sanctuary and Ramappa Lake seeking the Ramsar tag. Following this proposal, the officials decided to visit Manjeera on Wednesday to examine the wildlife sanctuary. While Manjeera had 300 bird species, Pocharam, Pakhal, Kinnarsani, and Ramappa had 246 bird species, 261, 157, and 126 species respectively. A record 116 bird species out of the 300 bird species sighted at Manjeera by wildlife photographers were migrant bird species. Though there were 80 Ramsar sites in India, none of them were from Telangana so far. Seasoned wildlife photographer Sriram Reddy, who was helping the Telangana Forest officials in preparing the proposals, hoped that they would certainly get the Ramsar site tag for at least two wildlife sanctuaries in the State this year because these sites were fulfilling all the eligibility criteria. Both Manjeera and Pocharam wildlife sanctuaries.

Discover the Power of Two with Philips' latest Dual Basket Air Fryer featuring Rapid Air Technology

Versuni India, a leader in the domestic appliances industry and home to legacy brands Philips Domestic Appliances and Preethi, has launched its latest innovation: the Philips Dual Basket Air Fryer – 3000 Series. As the first to introduce air fryers to the Indian market in 2010, Philips has consistently led with cutting-edge innovations that transform everyday consumer experiences. Aligned with its commitment to creating consumer-inspired innovations, the new Philips Dual Basket Air Fryer – 3000 Series emerges as the ultimate cooking companion with two baskets of different sizes, designed to help cook a full family meal. This latest innovation underscores the brands commitment to making healthy cooking accessible and convenient. Featuring Philips' patented starfish design, rapid air technology, and new advanced features, the new air fryer ensures perfectly cooked, flavorful dishes every time. This empowers consumers to embrace a healthier lifestyle without compromising on taste or convenience.

In today's fast-paced world, where healthy eating is a priority for individuals and families alike, the new air fryer stands out with its ability to prepare nutritious and flavorful meals swiftly. Its innovative design allows users to cook larger quantities of food in one session, catering perfectly to busy households. With the launch of the Dual Basket Air Fryer – 3000 Series, Philips reaffirms its position at the forefront of enhancing everyday life through intuitive, state-of-the-art products.

Commenting on the launch, Pooja Baid, Chief Marketing Officer of Versuni India, said, "In 2010, when we introduced air fryers in India, we recognized the burgeoning interest in healthier eating habits. Over the past 14 years, we've witnessed a significant shift toward adopting healthier lifestyles, particularly after 2020. Amidst this trend, convenience remains pivotal in today's fast-paced digital landscape. Understanding these consumer needs and pain points, we've developed a single product solution that addresses diverse requirements.

Whether it's cooking larger portions or preparing multiple dishes simultaneously, our latest Dual Basket Air Fryer is designed to enhance everyday convenience and comfort for consumers. At Versuni, our commitment to understanding and meeting evolving consumer needs is unwavering. Our newest innovation stands as a testament to this dedication, reflecting our ongoing commitment to enriching the lives of our consumers and helping them turn houses into homes."

The Philips Dual Basket Air Fryer – 3000 Series is designed to elevate your cooking experience with a range of user-friendly features. It boasts two asymmetrical baskets with a total capacity of 9 liters, allowing you to cook larger portions or two different dishes simultaneously, whether vegetarian and non-vegetarian options or sweet and savory treats. The asymmetrical design helps you better proportion your ingredients, with the large basket perfect for mains, fries, and your favorite dishes, while the smaller basket is ideal for sides, veggies, and snacks.

The Synchronized Cooking Option

automatically syncs the cooking time in both baskets, so even if your ingredients require different cooking times, they will finish simultaneously. This feature, along with the TIME function, ensures all ingredients are perfectly cooked together, making the cooking process convenient and hassle-free. Equipped with Philips RapidAir Plus Technology and a patented starfish design, this air fryer ensures excellent air circulation, meaning the food is perfectly cooked every time, without the risk of undercooking or overcooking. With 8 preset settings, consumers can easily prepare a variety of dishes such as French fries, frozen snacks, chicken, veggies, fish, and even cakes – all with just one appliance.

What sets this air fryer apart is its dual basket design, a unique feature in the market. It also connects to the HomeID app, offering access to a range of recipes tailored for quick meals under 30 minutes. Consumers can now enjoy cooking with ultimate ease and convenience, making healthy and delicious meals effortlessly.



Himanshu Entertainment Pvt Ltd Launches New Head Office in Hyderabad



Himanshu Entertainment Pvt Ltd, a leading production and entertainment company, today announced the launch of its new head office in Hyderabad. The office was inaugurated by Bollywood actors Ritesh Deshmukh and Genelia along with Mr. Sanjiv Puri, MD of Himanshu Group. The new office, located in the heart of Hyderabad's High-Tech City, will serve as the company's central hub for various activities, including advertisement-related shoots, big-budget movie productions, direction, and other label-related activities.

"We are thrilled to inaugurate our new head office in Hyderabad, which will serve as the nerve center of our expanding operations," said Mr. Himanshu Devkate, Founder of Himanshu Entertainment Pvt Ltd. "This move aligns with our commitment to strengthen our presence in the industry and deliver exceptional entertainment experiences to our audiences." Himanshu Entertainment Pvt Ltd is currently working on several exciting projects, including the production of crime-related web series for the popular OTT platform, Netflix, as well

as several Telugu movies featuring megastars.

"The launch of our new head office marks a significant milestone in the growth of Himanshu Entertainment Pvt Ltd," added Mr. Himanshu Devkate. "We are excited to leverage this new facility to drive further innovation and excellence in the entertainment industry." For more information about Himanshu Entertainment Pvt Ltd and its upcoming projects, please visit their website at www.himanshuentertainment.com.

Iran is accelerating cyber activity that appears meant to influence the U.S. election, says Microsoft

Iran is accelerating online activity that appears intended to influence the U.S. election, in one case targeting a Presidential campaign with an email phishing attack, Microsoft said Friday, August 9. Iranian actors allegedly have spent recent months creating fake news sites and impersonating activists, laying the groundwork to stoke division and potentially sway American voters this fall, especially in swing States, the technology giant found.

The findings in Microsoft's newest threat intelligence report show how Iran, active in recent U.S. elections, is evolving its tactics for another election likely to have global implications. The report goes a step beyond anything U.S. Intelligence officials have disclosed, giving specific examples of Iranian groups and the actions they have taken so far. Iran's United Nations mission denied it had plans to interfere or launch cyberattacks in the U.S. Presidential election. The report doesn't specify Iran's intentions besides sowing chaos in the United States, though U.S. officials have previously hinted that Iran particularly opposes former President Donald Trump. U.S. officials also have expressed alarm about Tehran's efforts to seek retaliation for a 2020 strike on an Iranian general that was ordered by Mr. Trump. This week, the Justice Department unsealed criminal charges against a Pakistani man with ties to Iran who's alleged to have hatched assassination plots targeting multiple officials, potentially including Trump. The report also reveals how Russia and China are exploiting U.S. political polarization to advance their divisive messaging in a consequential election year.

Microsoft's report identified four examples of recent Iranian activity that the company expects to increase as November's election draws closer. First, a group linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guard in June targeted a high-ranking US presidential campaign official with a phishing email, a form of cyberattack often used to gather sensitive information, according to the report, which didn't identify which campaign was targeted. The group concealed the email's origins by sending it from the hacked email account of a former senior adviser, Microsoft said. Days later, the Iranian group tried to log into an account that belonged to a former presidential candidate, but wasn't successful, Microsoft's report said. The company notified those who were targeted. In a separate example, an Iranian group has been creating websites that pose as U.S.-based news sites targeted to voters on opposite sides of the political spectrum, the report said.

One fake news site that lends itself to a left-leaning audience insults Trump by calling him "raving mad" and suggests he uses drugs, the report said. Another site meant to appeal to Republican readers centers on LGBTQ issues and gender-affirming surgery. A third example Microsoft cited found that Iranian groups are impersonating U.S. activists, potentially laying the groundwork for influence operations closer to the election.

Finally, another Iranian group in May compromised an account owned by a government employee in a swing State, the



report said. It was unclear whether that cyberattack was related to election interference efforts. Iran's UN mission sent The Associated Press an emailed statement: "Iran has been the victim of numerous offensive cyber operations targeting its infrastructure, public service centers, and industries. Iran's cyber capabilities are defensive and proportionate to the threats it faces. Iran has neither the intention nor plans to launch cyber attacks. The U.S. Presidential election is an internal matter in which Iran does not interfere." The Microsoft report said that as Iran escalates its cyber influence, Russia-linked actors also have pivoted their influence campaigns to focus on the U.S. election, while actors linked to the Chinese Communist Party have taken advantage of pro-Palestinian university protests and other current events in the US to try to raise US political tensions. Microsoft said it has continued to monitor how foreign foes are using generative AI technology. The increasingly cheap and easy-to-access tools can generate lifelike fake images, photos, and videos in seconds, prompting concern among some experts that they will be weaponized to mislead voters this election cycle. While many countries have experimented with AI in their influence operations, the company said, those efforts haven't had much impact so far. The report said as a result, some actors have "pivoted back to techniques that have proven effective in the past — simple digital manipulations, mischaracterization of content, and use of trusted labels or logos atop false information." Microsoft's report aligns with recent warnings from US intelligence officials, who say America's adversaries appear determined to seed the internet with false and incendiary claims ahead of November's vote. Top intelligence officials said last month that Russia continues to pose the greatest threat when it comes to election disinformation, while there are indications that Iran is expanding its efforts and China is proceeding cautiously when

it comes to 2024. Iran's efforts seem aimed at undermining candidates seen as being more likely to increase tension with Tehran, the officials said. That's a description that fits Trump, whose administration ended a nuclear deal with Iran, reimposed sanctions and ordered the killing of the top Iranian general. The influence efforts also coincide with a time of high tensions between Iran and Israel, whose military the US strongly supports. Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines said last month that

the Iranian government has covertly supported American protests over Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza. Groups linked to Iran have posed as online activists, encouraged protests and provided financial support to some protest groups, Haines said. America's foes, Iran among them, have a long history of seeking to influence US elections. In 2020, groups linked to Iran sent emails to Democratic voters in an apparent effort to influence their votes, intelligence officials said.

Sundar Pichai saddened by death of Ex-YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki

New Delhi: Susan Wojcicki, once a key figure in Google's history, passed away after a two-year battle with cancer, Alphabet and Google CEO Sundar Pichai informed on Saturday.

Wojcicki played a foundational role in shaping Youtube's trajectory. "Unbelievably saddened by the loss of my dear friend @SusanWojcicki after two years of living with cancer. She is as core to the history of Google as anyone, and it's hard to imagine the world without her," Pichai posted on X social media platform. Pichai further said that she was an incredible person, leader and friend who had a tremendous impact on the world.

"I am one of countless Googlers who is better for knowing her. We will miss her dearly. Our thoughts with her family. RIP Susan," the Google CEO posted. She was one of Google's earliest employees and had received a 'Google Founders Award' for making AdSense, which helped tremendously in Google's advertising.

Her tenure as CEO of YouTube saw the platform's growth into a global power-



house, impacting millions of content creators and billions of viewers. Wojcicki's legacy is not only in the products sector she helped develop but also in her advocacy for women in tech, making her a role model for aspiring leaders worldwide. Indian-American Neal Mohan was appointed the new YouTube CEO after Wojcicki in February 2023 announced to step down after 25 years at the Google-owned company. Wojcicki managed marketing, co-created Google Image Search, led Google's first Video and Book search, as well as early parts of AdSense's creation, worked on the YouTube and DoubleClick acquisitions and served as SVP of Ads.

How to actually fix your sleep cycle

Studies show that 1 in 4 Indians suffers from insomnia, and nearly half of the population experiences sleep-related issues. There are two kinds of people: those who can fall asleep the moment their head hits the pillow, and those who spend endless hours doomscrolling, unable to drift off. If you're reading this, chances are you belong to the second category or know someone who does. Disrupted sleep patterns and insomnia are growing problems in India and should be a major concern, as a lack of sleep can lead to a range of physical and mental health issues (we will get into the details in a bit). 1 in 4 Indians suffer from sleep issues. There is no doubt that Indians are suffering from sleep debt - the difference between how much sleep your body needs and how much you get. Let's look at some numbers: In 2023, the Agewell Foundation conducted a study involving over 5,000 individuals across 20 states revealing that more than half (around 52 per cent) experience difficulty achieving deep sleep. Additionally, 69.8 per cent of participants reported sleeping for less than six hours per day, and 51.68 per cent struggled to attain restful sleep. A 2023 paper available on ResearchGate, reviewed 100 sleep studies in India and found that 1 in 4 Indians suffers from insomnia, and nearly half of the population has sleep-related issues. Another survey conducted by the social media platform LocalCircles in 2024, which included 41,000 participants from 309 districts over 12 months in India, found that 61 per cent of respondents slept fewer than six hours in the previous year. Studies show around 52 per cent of Indians experience difficulty achieving deep sleep. Photo: Unsplash. This represents a 6 per cent increase from their 2022-23 survey.

Why can't you fall asleep? Dr Satish Ramaia, the executive director of psychiatry services at Sukoon Health, Bangalore, tells India Today that there are various underlying causes why someone can't fall asleep. "Sleep is an extremely complex process, and there are multiple factors - physical, mental and environmental - that impact it," says Dr Ramaia. Knowing what disrupts your sleep is very important, as it can help you sleep better. Dr Vibhu Kawatra, a pulmonologist, sleep expert and allergy specialist in Delhi, lists the various reasons: 1. Screen time. The blue light from phones, tablets, and computers can interfere with melatonin production, a hormone that regulates sleep. Using screens before bed can make your brain think it's still daytime. 2. Stress and anxiety. High levels of stress and anxiety can make it difficult to relax and fall asleep. Stress can cause insomnia. Photo: Pexels. "Worries about work, finances, or personal relationships can keep your mind racing," says Dr Kawatra. 3. Irregular sleep schedule. Dr Dixit Kr Thakur, a sleep expert from Apollo Spectra Hospital in New Delhi, says, "Sometimes you are going to sleep at 11, and sometimes you are going at 1. So your internal body is not able to understand your sleep cycle," says Dr Thakur. This disruption of sleep patterns, such as varying bedtimes and wake-up times, can disrupt your body's internal clock



(circadian rhythm), making it harder to fall asleep. PS: Your body's rhythm, also known as the circadian rhythm, is a natural, internal clock that regulates the sleep-wake cycle and repeats roughly every 24 hours. 4. Caffeine and stimulants. Consuming caffeine or other stimulants in the afternoon or evening can interfere with your ability to fall asleep.

Studies show that caffeine consumption reduces total sleep time by 45 minutes. Photo: Unsplash

A systematic analysis released in 2024 that went through 24 studies shows that caffeine consumption reduced total sleep time by 45 minutes and sleep efficiency by 7%, with an increase in sleep onset latency of 9 min and wake-after sleep onset of 12 min. 5. Poor sleeping environment. Dr Ramaia says factors like an uncomfortable mattress, excessive noise, or an inappropriate room temperature can negatively impact your ability to fall asleep. 6. Lack of physical activity. If you have a sedentary lifestyle, falling asleep might be difficult. A 2021 study showed that physical exercise produces melatonin and reduces stress, which can help in sleeping better. 7. Diet and eating habits

"Eating large meals or certain types of food close to bedtime can lead to discomfort and make it harder to fall asleep. Heavy or spicy foods can cause indigestion that disrupts sleep," says Dr Kawatra. 8. Mental health issues. Conditions like depression and anxiety can significantly affect sleep patterns. Poor mental health can lead to insomnia or other sleep disorders. 9. Medications. Some medications, including certain antidepressants, stimulants, and medications for high blood pressure, can have side effects that impact sleep. 10. Chronic health conditions. Issues like sleep apnoea, restless leg syndrome, or chronic pain can make it difficult to get restful sleep.

What can sleep debt do to your

body? We often deliberately disrupt our sleep schedule for that latest movie or one more episode, but sleep loss can have profound effects on the body, influencing both physical and mental health. Experts say if sleep is consistently inadequate, it can lead to cognitive impairment, making it difficult to concentrate, learn, and make decisions. Hormonal imbalances can also occur, particularly stress and appetite-regulating hormones, like cortisol, which can contribute to weight gain and increased stress levels. The cardiovascular system is similarly affected, with an elevated risk of hypertension and heart disease. Cortisol can contribute to weight gain and increased stress levels. Photo: Unsplash. The immune system becomes less effective, leaving the body more vulnerable to infections. Over time, chronic sleep deprivation is linked to serious health conditions such as diabetes, obesity, and even neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's, underscoring the critical role of sleep in maintaining overall well-being.

How to actually fix it?

The internet is filled with various tips on how to fix your sleep cycle. Additionally, the Indian market is flooded with supplements and gadgets claiming to help. So, we asked experts for practical advice on how to actually improve your sleep cycle, and here are some of the best methods: 1. Figure out what is causing the disruption

As we told you, various factors can be responsible for a disrupted sleep cycle. Once we figure out what is causing the disruption, it is easier to fix the sleep cycle. If stress or anxiety is causing sleep disruption, it's important to seek help to manage it, which can, in turn, improve your sleep. 2. Build a proper sleep cycle. Dr Chandril Chugh, the director of Good Deed Clinic and a senior consultant neurologist, says that going to bed and waking up at the same

time every day, even on weekends, is important to maintain your body's rhythm.

3. Control your waking-up time. Dr Ramaia says that since people who have disrupted their sleep cycle can't control the time they go to sleep, he advises them to wake up early, which can then force them to sleep on time. "Try waking up half an hour earlier every week. Don't make any drastic changes, as they won't last long," says Dr Ramaia. 4. Limit light exposure before bedtime. Melatonin is released when there is very little or no light, which helps promote sleep.

The circadian rhythm of our body is influenced by environmental cues like light and darkness, aligning our body's functions with the day-night cycle. Dr Chugh suggests using blackout curtains or shades to eliminate external light sources and installing dimmer switches or low-wattage bulbs in the bedroom to create a calming atmosphere before bed. This also means avoiding screens and using blue light filters on devices at least an hour before bedtime.

5. 'Don't try too hard'. Dr Manvir Bhatia, the founder of Neurology and Sleep Centre in Delhi and the vice president of the Indian Society of Sleep Research, tells us that new research shows that, the more hard you try to fall asleep, the more difficult it will be to fall asleep.

Chronic sleep deprivation is linked to serious health conditions such as diabetes, obesity. Photo: Unsplash. "People today try various methods to fall asleep, like drinking milk, using aromatherapy, or taking hot showers. But the more you let go and stop worrying about falling asleep, the easier it will be," says Dr. Bhatia. 6. Manage little things. Don't overlook the small details that can impact your sleep, such as room temperature, comfortable clothing, or the right bedding. These factors can significantly influence your sleep cycle too.

How two cloudbursts in Shrikhand Mahadev led to death and destruction in Himachal

The epicentre of two of the five cloudbursts in Himachal Pradesh that caused the maximum devastation at Nirmand block in Kullu and Samej Khad in Shimla's Rampur division was the Shrikhand Kailash mountains. The water level in the Samej Khad rivulet rose by 35 to 45 metres and its width expanded from approximately 40 metres to 180 metres after the cloudbursts. The cloudbursts that wreaked havoc at Bagipul in Kullu and Samej Khad in Shimla occurred simultaneously. These were some of the findings of the State Disaster Management Authority's (SDMA) preliminary assessment of the five cloudbursts – three in Kullu, one in Shimla, and one in Mandi – that occurred between 11.30 pm on July 31 and 1.15 am on August 1. While 27 bodies have been recovered so far, around 55 people are still reported missing, and more than two dozen structures, including houses, two hydro project buildings, a school, and nine small bridges connecting hills at various locations, were among the approximately Rs 760-crore worth of properties damaged in the devastation.

The Samej Khad, a tributary of the Sutlej River that divides Shimla and Kullu districts, witnessed the most significant devastation as 33 people were washed away from the Samej and Kanradar villages located on opposite banks of this rivulet. This area lies within the catchment of the 1,500 MW Nathpa-Jhakri Hydropower Project, the largest in northern India. Himachal cloudburst In Mandi, a cloudburst occurred near Tikkar village while the cloudburst in Shimla was reported near the Jhakri hydro project, leading to flood-like conditions in Samej Khad.

"Although we are yet to obtain satellite images of the cloudburst-affected areas from that time, initial findings suggest that the Shrikhand Mahadev mountains were the epicentre of two cloudbursts out of five, which caused the most devastation. These occurred over villages Jaon and Bagipul and at Jhakri, which significantly increased the water level in the Samej Khad. The timing and location of the other three cloudbursts, including two reported at Sainj and Malana in Kullu and one in Tikkar in Mandi, differed from the first two," DC Rana, Director of Disaster Management, Himachal Pradesh, said. Rana, who also serves as the Director of the Department of Environment, Science, Technology and Climate Change, added, "There is a reason why so much devastation occurred around Samej Khad compared to other areas. This particular area is lower than other cloudburst-affected regions. The water's velocity, understandably, increased as it travelled downstream. The presence of giant boulders, never seen before in Samej Khad, suggests the tremendous force of the water when it struck the area. On the Kullu side, Malana Dam-1 near Malana village was completely destroyed, along with the famous Malana bridge that connected the village to the Jari tehsil." The three cloudbursts in Kullu occurred at Jaon, Bagipul near the Singhbad Base Camp of Shrikhand Mahadev, Sainj, and Malana villages. In Mandi, a cloudburst occurred near Tikkar village while the cloudburst in Shimla was reported near the Jhakri hydro



project, leading to flood-like conditions in Samej Khad. Himachal cloudbursts The cloudburst that occurred near the Shrikhand Mahadev mountains fell into Sechi Khad, about 35 km upstream from the confluence point. (PTI) "You can gauge the velocity of the overflow in Samej Khad from the fact that at least 15 bodies were found approximately 50 to 85 km away from Samej village. Six of these bodies were discovered in the reservoir area of Sunni Dam, buried under debris, scattered wood, and other materials. Another location where four bodies were recovered is about 50 km from Samej village. An intensive inspection of the cloudburst-affected areas suggests that the water level in Samej Khad rose by 35 to 45 meters, sweeping away houses, trees, bridges, and anything else in its path," Praveen Bhardwaj, a Disaster Management Specialist (DMS) with the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA), Shimla, told The Indian Express.

Bhardwaj and his team were tasked with studying various aspects of the calamity. "Field inspections suggest that the width of Samej Khad was only 35 to 40 metres on July 31. By the time rescue teams reached the spot on the morning of August 1, this had expanded to 155 to 185 metres," he said. Sources said that to thoroughly investigate the tragedy, the government is in the process of procuring satellite images from the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) in Hyderabad. "The government has also approached the Electronics and Radar Development Establishment (LRDE) of DRDO to acquire ground-penetrating radars (GPRs)," a source added.

However, locals in Samej have their own understanding of what happened on that fateful night. Ram Lal, one of the first responders to the disaster, said, "Samej village is situated at the confluence of two rivulets: Muhali Khad and Sechi Khad. The stretch between the confluence point of these two rivulets and the point where they

meet the Sutlej River is known as Samej Khad. The cloudburst that occurred near the Shrikhand Mahadev mountains fell into Sechi Khad, about 35 km upstream from the confluence point. There was panic that night." "The next morning, we observed traces of water coming from Sechi Khad. A building of the Greenko hydro project, where two families consisting of eight people lived, was situated near Muhali Khad. The building was washed away, and all its occupants are still missing," Lal added. Himachal cloudbursts Search for all the missing persons has proven to be a herculean task for the authorities. (Saurabh Parashar) A visit by The Indian Express to the cloudburst-affected area of Samej a day after the tragedy revealed that Muhali Khad and Sechi Khad flow down from two different directions. It was found that some two-storey structures remained intact despite mud entering the lower portion. Locals said these structures were built decades ago, and later occupants constructed new houses further downstream. The two old structures were being used as cowsheds, from which two cows were rescued. Environment activist Guman Singh of the Himalayan Niti Abhiyan (HNA), an NGO that works to defend the ecology of the state, visited the cloudburst-affected area, particularly Samej. "Whatever the experts say, I believe that human factors cannot be ruled out as a contributing cause

of this tragedy," Singh said. "The human settlement on one of the banks of Samej Khad, which was completely washed away emerged about two decades ago when a concrete road was constructed at the point where the two rivulets meet.

The original village is situated at a higher elevation, away from the area where many houses and a school building now stand. People moved closer to the rivulet without assessing the risks. Cloudbursts have been reported in this area before, but their intensity was never as severe as this time, particularly the one that hit Samej Khad. Climate change and global warming factors indeed cannot be ruled out as contributing causes behind these incidents," he added. However, search for all the missing persons has proven to be a herculean task for the authorities. Anupam Kashyap, Deputy Commissioner, Shimla, said, "On the first day of the rescue operation, after observing the water level's rise on the night of July 31, we concluded that the missing people would have been carried many kilometres away from where their houses were located. Our assessment was confirmed when a mutilated body was found near the Sunni Dam, around 85 km from Samej village. So far, 15 bodies have been found on the Shimla side, all recovered at distances of 50 to 85 km from Samej village."

'Furnestry' unveils a state-of-the-art Experience Studio

Hyderabad: Furnestry, the Delhi and NCR-based brand known for its exquisite custom-made premium furniture and art pieces, unveiled its maiden state-of-the-art, Furnestry Experience Studio in Hyderabad.

The one-of-its-kind Hyderabad cen-

ter, located in Banjara Hills, spans an impressive 5,000 sft and showcases a curated selection of customized loose furniture, elegant wall arts, and sophisticated Japandi, Mediterranean and several other grandeur style home décors, a press release said.