

INDIAN CHRONICLE

13 September, 2024 | Friday | Volume No:12 | Issue No:184

Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

Reflections IAS Academy Civil Services seminar held in Hyd

Hyderabad: A seminar titled 'Civil Services – the G.O.A.T Career for a Fresh Graduate' was organised by 'Telangana Today' and 'NamasteTelangana', in collaboration with Reflections IAS Academy, at CBIT College, Gandipet, on Thursday. This was the inaugural seminar of a series planned to be held across 25 different colleges in Hyderabad. Dr. G. Vivekananda, a 2014 UPSC achiever and currently serving as Assistant Director at the Ministry of Defence, was the keynote speaker. He emphasized that civil services preparation goes beyond becoming an IAS or IPS officer and serves to enhance social awareness and societal well-being.

Paris Paralympics: PM Modi meets Indian Para-athletes at his residence

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with the Indian contingent that recently created history at the Paris Paralympics, winning the country's highest ever medal, at his residence 7, Lok Kalyan Marg on Thursday. India finished 18th in the medal tally with seven gold, nine silver and 13 bronze to their name. They set a record total of 29 medals. The contingent has shattered the record for India's best-ever medal haul that was set at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics (19).

Avani Lekhara, who became the first Indian woman to win two gold medals at the Paralympic Games, defending her title in the women's 10m air rifle standing SH1 shooting event with a world record score, gifted her jersey to PM Modi with a message, "Thank You sir, for your support..." written on it. Moreover, PM Modi signed Kapil Parmar's bronze medal which he won in Para Judo men's 61kg J1 category. A record 84 para-athletes represented India at the Paris 2024 Paralympics, held in the French capital from August 28 to September 8.

India competed across 12 disciplines, three more than at Tokyo 2020. Indian para-athletes participated in



three new sports at Paris 2024's para cycling, para rowing, and blind judo. Ace javelin player Sumit Antil made history as the first Indian man to defend his title at the Paralympics, winning gold in the men's javelin throw F64 with a stunning throw of 70.59m, a new Paralympic record. He also broke his own previous record, set at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, thrice during the competition in Paris. Harvinder Singh became India's first-ever Paralympic archery champion.

Revanth Reddy remains elusive on party defections

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy remained elusive over the issue of defections of legislators from the BRS into the Congress amidst a raging controversy over the nomination of a turncoat MLA Arekapudi Gandhi as the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

Even as the political heat turned up in the State capital with Congress workers attacking BRS MLA Kaushik Reddy's house while the police stood as mute spectators, the Chief Minister told mediapersons in Delhi on Thursday that the three MLAs' defection issue was in the domain of the Court and Speaker G Prasad Kumar. "The Speaker would take a decision [on the defection]. If the anti-defection rules were strong, the Congress government does not have to worry. If there is no scope for defection, it augurs good for us," Revanth Reddy said. Defending the appointment of PAC chairman, he maintained that the post was given to the "opposition". On the last day of the Assembly session, the BRS members count was announced as 38 but they had not opposed it then, he argued.

He argued that from 2019, MIM Floor leader Akbaruddin Owaisi served as PAC Chairman. "How could he continue in the position, if the Congress was main opposition party then", he asked. Countering the BRS demands for action over Serilingampally MLA Arekapudi Gandhi, the Chief Minister in turn argued that the BRS should suspend Huzurabad MLA Padi Kaushik Reddy for his abusive language and comments. Earlier, TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud exuded confidence that there would not be any bye-elections due to defection of MLAs. Even if the elections were held, the Congress would



win comfortably, he maintained. He said the party would welcome any MLA who shifted to the Congress after getting impressed with our policies. The AICC would take a final call on cabinet expansion, constitution of new committees, including new working presidents according priority for backward classes, he added. Meanwhile, Revanth Reddy called on the AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge and party general secretary K C Venugopal to discuss the issue of cabinet expansion and filling up of nominated posts in the government and the party.

Telangana minister Uttam Kumar Reddy meets Chandrababu, discusses on floods

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

In a significant meeting at the Andhra Pradesh Secretariat, Telangana Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy engaged in a cordial discussion with Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. The meeting covered a range of pressing issues, with a particular focus on the impact of recent floods affecting both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Sources indicate that Reddy, who visited Vijayawada to meet a childhood friend, took the opportunity to strengthen the ties between the two neighboring states through his dialogue with CM Chandrababu. The discussions reportedly emphasized the importance of maintaining good relations and collaborating on mutual challenges faced by both states.



'Leading light of the Left', 'protector of Idea of India': PM Modi, other leaders condole Sitaram Yechury's demise

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Heartfelt tributes poured in after Sitaram Yechury, the general secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and a former Rajya Sabha MP, passed away at the age of 72 on Thursday. Yechury had been undergoing treatment for an acute respiratory tract infection at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi, where he was admitted to the Emergency Ward on August 19 and later transferred to the intensive care unit.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered his condolences, while noting that Yechury was a "leading light of the Left" and "known for his ability to connect across the political spectrum." "He also made a mark as an effective Parliamentarian. My thoughts are with his family and admirers in this sad hour. Om Shanti," the PM said in a post

on X (formerly Twitter). Taking to X, Leader of Opposition (LoP) and senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi wrote, "Sitaram Yechury ji was a friend and a protector of the Idea of India, possessing a deep understanding of our country. I will miss the long discussions we used to have. My sincere condolences to his family, friends, and followers in this hour of grief." Extending his condolences, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said, "His demise is a loss to the political sphere. I extend my heartfelt condolences to his family members and friends. May God give them the strength to endure this difficult time." Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while paying tribute to the leftist leader, said, "If I can recall, he's my senior from JNU (Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi). The first time when I entered Rajya Sabha in 2014, he was still a member of the Rajya Sabha. It is a big loss for the Communist Party..."

Man sentenced to death for rape, murder of five-year-old child

Sangareddy: A migrant labour who had raped and killed a five-year-old girl was sentenced to death by the district POCSO court judge K Jayanthi here on Thursday. The convict Gaffar Ali (56) is a migrant labour from Bihar.

District SP Chennuri Rupesh said the trial was completed within 11 months after the crime was reported on October 16, 2023 in BDL Bhanur police station limits. He said the convict and the victim's parents used to work in a construction company in Bhanur. When the parents left for work they left the five-year-old girl in the security guard's room. Gaffar Ali who was in an inebriated condition took her away and offered a cool drink laced with liquor.

Sitaram Yechury, CPI(M) general secretary, passes away at 72

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury passed away on Thursday (September 12, 2024). He was undergoing treatment at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi for acute respiratory tract infection. He was 72-years old. Mr. Yechury is survived by his wife Seema Chishti, a son and a daughter. His elder son Ashish Yechury succumbed to COVID-19 in 2021.

"Sitaram Yechury CPI(M) general secretary no more. He was admitted in AIIMS," CPI(M) leader Hannan Mollah told ANI. Mr. Yechury was admitted to AIIMS on August 19 for treatment of pneumonia-like chest infection. He was admitted in the intensive care unit and was treated by a multi-disciplinary team of doctors.

His last appearance was in the form of a video recorded from the hospital where he paid tribute to fellow comrade and former West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, who passed away last month. Mr. Yechury couldn't take part in the funeral. He released a six-minute video from the hospital on August 22 on his social media accounts paying condolence to former Chief Minister of West Bengal, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee. "It's my loss that I was not able to physically attend this memorial meeting and pay my homage to Com. Buddhadev Bhattacharya," he wrote on X. Mr. Yechury has been CPI(M)'s general secretary since 2015 and was re-elected twice in 2018 and 2022. He has been a member of the party's Polit Bureau for over three decades. His entry into CPI(M) was natural after his association with the CPI(M)'s student wing Student Federation of India (SFI). He made a name for himself as JNU students union president for forcing Indira Gandhi to resign as the chancellor. He be-



came the national president of the organisation and was later invited to the Central Committee of the CPI(M) in 1984 and was made a member of it in the 12th Party Congress of the CPI(M) held in Kolkata in 1985. An ardent advocate of coalition politics, Mr. Yechury quoted Leon Trotsky's words "march separately but strike together" to underline the importance of a united Opposition to counter the ruling forces. He worked on the common minimum programme for the United Front government in 1996 and for the UPA Governments in 2004 and 2009. And he was also a key agent in bringing the Opposition parties closed ahead of 2019 General Elections and formation of INDIA bloc in 2023. A two-time Rajya Sabha member, Mr. Yechury will be remembered for moving a motion against President Pranab Mukherjee's address in 2015, which was passed by the Upper House, causing a major embarrassment to the ruling Narendra Modi Government. Only four times in the history of the Rajya Sabha, an Opposition-moved amendment had been passed.

KCR, KTR, Harish condole demise of Sitaram Yechury

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Hyderabad: BRS president and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao condole the demise of CPI (M) national general secretary Sitaram Yechury following a brief illness in New Delhi on Thursday. He remembered the services of Yechury who played a prominent role as a student leader, Communist leader and also Rajya Sabha member, to the nation. In a statement, Chandrashekhara Rao said Yechury was known for advocating for the working class and upholding secular values. Terming Yechury's death as a huge loss to India's labour movement and the secularism in the country, he recalled the Communist leader's lifelong dedication to the people and socialist causes. He extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

BRS working president KT Rama Rao said that he had hoped for recovery of Yechury who was undergoing treatment at AIIMS in New Delhi, but was saddened to hear the tragic news. He praised Yechury's dedication to the people as a Communist leader and noted his impact on improving the lives of millions of workers and his respected position in both the CPI(M) and national politics. The CPI(M) leader's commitment to his beliefs was an inspiration to many, he said, adding that Yechury's demise was an irreplaceable loss for the nation. Former Min-



ister and senior BRS leader T Harish Rao stated that he was deeply saddened by the passing of Yechury whom he termed as a strong leader and voice of social justice. He said Yechury's dedication to the people and the nation would always be remembered.

Ex-Agniveers to receive 10% reservation in Odisha Group 'C' & 'D' posts after retirement



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Agniveers will enjoy 10% reservation in all Group 'C' and 'D' posts in direct recruitment in the uniform services of Odisha after their retirement and such reservation will be over and above the reservation applicable for ex-servicemen. The State Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Mohan Majhi on Thursday (September 12, 2024) approved framing of the Odisha Ex-Agniveers (Recruitment to Uniform Services) Rules, 2024 under which it is proposed to provide ample opportunities for ex-Agniveers to secure job in uniform service like police, forest, excise, fire or any services as decided by the government from time to time.

However, the ex-Agniveers must fulfill the required minimum qualifications prescribed for the posts in the relevant recruitment rules as on the date of award of Agniveer certificate, says the Cabinet note. Apart from exemption from physical efficiency test, the ex-Agniveers would get three year age relaxation in the prescribed upper age limit in all Group 'C' and 'D' posts in direct recruitment.

In another important Cabinet decision, approval was granted to the proposal for the transfer of equity shares to Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (APSEZ) from Shapoorji Pallonji Port Maintenance Private Limited (SPPML) and Orissa Stevedores Limited (OSL) along with permission to sign the revised concession agreement towards the development and expansion of Gopalpur Port. As per the statement released after Cabinet meeting, the Gopalpur Port, initially managed by the State's Commerce and Transport Department as a fair-weather lighterage port, operated only during favourable weather conditions.

In 2003, Odisha decided to transform it into an all-weather deep berthing seaport through a Public Private Partnership (PPP) in the Build Own Operate Share Transfer (BOOST) mode. Gopalpur Ports Limited (GPL) won the bid through a competitive process. The GPL, a consortium of Odisha Stevedores Limited, Noble Group Limited, and Sara International Limited, with 34%, 33% and 33% shares, respectively, developed the port. Subsequently, there was change in shareholding. Currently handling 11.43 million metric tons per annum (MTPA) of cargo, GPL shares 7.5% of its gross revenue with the State government. The revenue share for 2023-24 financial is approximately ₹38 crore. Besides, the port employs approximately 4,000 people in direct and indirect employment, it says. The expansion is expected to boost revenue and employment. "The GPL has sought permission for transfer of 95% of equity shares to APSEZ from SPPML (56%) and OSL (39%). Following the due procedure, the Cabinet has approved the proposal for the transfer of equity shares to APSEZ along with permission to sign the revised concession agreement thereof towards the development and expansion of Gopalpur Port," said the release.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Enough is enough

THE ongoing protest by junior doctors in West Bengal, following the horrific rape and murder of a colleague, has garnered widespread attention and sympathy. Their demands for justice and safety in the workplace are entirely understandable. However, healthcare services cannot be paralysed indefinitely. Despite the Supreme Court's clear directive to them to resume work by Tuesday evening, the doctors remain on strike, a month after the horrible crime. Public service, particularly in the healthcare sector, carries a profound responsibility. The lives of countless patients depend on the availability of medical professionals, and the prolonged absence of these doctors has already caused significant disruption in healthcare. According to the state government, 23 patients have lost their lives and an astounding six lakh individuals have been denied essential treatment since the strike began. These statistics offer a sobering reminder of the real-world consequences of halting medical services. While the SC has expressed sympathy for the doctors' concerns, it has rightly emphasised that protests should not be organised at the cost of duty. It has assured the doctors that safety measures, including installation of CCTV cameras and separate duty rooms for female staff, will be implemented in hospitals. The doctors must trust the judicial process and reciprocate by returning to work. Their continued absence not only compromises patient care, but it also erodes public trust in this noble profession. The doctors' refusal to comply with the SC order can lead to disciplinary action, including punitive transfers, as warned by the court. Their concerns over unsafe working conditions are valid and must be addressed, but prolonged defiance undermines justice itself. It is time for West Bengal's doctors to return to their posts, allowing both healing and justice to proceed without further delay.

How a businessman and his assistant were murdered over a Mumbai sea-facing bungalow

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

More than a decade ago, an 84-year-old businessman Vinod Broker, and his 51-year-old assistant Usha Rajshekhara Nair went missing from Pune. An investigation by the Pune city police showed Broker, the son of noted Gujarati writer and Padma Shri awardee Gulabdas Broker, and Nair were murdered while he was trying to sell his sea-facing bungalow in Mumbai's Juhu area. Along with senior police officers from Maharashtra, the then National Security Advisor (NSA) Shivshankar Menon also looked into the murder of Vijay Broker and Usha Rajshekhara Nair in April 2013.

A team of Pune city police Crime Branch, then led by senior police inspector Bhanupratap Barge, arrested three men from Mumbai in the murder case — Bandrabased trader Ibrahim Shaikh, a construction site supervisor Ravindra Reddy, and a retired BEST employee Nitin Bhatia. According to the police probe, Shaikh and his aides allegedly committed the murders to fraudulently take over the Juhu bungalow by having someone pose as Broker at the registrar's office. The police said Broker, who was a horticulturist and also into share trading, was keen to sell 'Janki Kutir' and was expecting a huge price for the property. A Bollywood actor offered Rs 30 crore for this property, but Broker wanted more money. He was lured by Shaikh as he offered Rs 42 crore for the bungalow in March 2013. Broker did not check his credentials while holding discussions with him for the property deal. The police said there was a case of cheating in diamond dealing against Shaikh at the Marine Lines Police Station.

To gain Broker's confidence, the police said, Shaikh had to pay him Rs 4 crore as a token amount, which he borrowed from a local financier promising to pay back double the amount after the bungalow was sold. Shaikh also published a legal notice about purchasing the bungalow in two newspapers in Mumbai on April 23, 2013, the police said. Usha Nair, a resident of Kondhwa, who worked with Broker for several years, was helping him in the deal. According to the police, after completing a diploma course in 1991, Shaikh initially worked in Mumbai and went to Dubai between 1996 and 1998. They said he returned to India with a few kilograms of gold and started his own business. He tried different things like selling electronic goods, selling and purchasing foreign cars, and also got into the business of diamonds, scrap, garments and real estate. Planning the murders

Through his contacts, Shaikh got to know about Broker's bungalow. Even though he held meetings with Broker and Nair and initiated steps to buy his bungalow, the police said he planned to allegedly kill them and take over the property. The police said the accused signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Broker before murdering him. Around April 27, they allegedly bought nylon ropes, gunny bags, and about nine litres of petrol, required for committing the murders and then setting the bodies on fire. Then as per the alleged plan, they came to Broker's house in Konark Enclave on Bund Garden Road in Pune for a meeting on April 30. They then took Broker and Nair towards Satara on the pretext of showing him another property near Shirwal in the state's Satara district.

The accused strangled them with nylon ropes inside the Katraj tunnel. They took the bodies in gunny bags to an abandoned stone crusher unit in the Kesurdi village at Khandala in Satara, and burnt the bodies with petrol. Before that, they removed the wallet and other belongings on the bodies, so that they could not be identified. After burning the bodies, the accused came back to Broker's apartment, took the papers of his Juhu property and keys to his car, and returned to Mumbai in the vehicle. They sold the car and were planning to fraudulently take over the property by having someone pose as Broker, the police said.

After Broker and Nair went missing, their families contacted the police which launched an investigation. Meanwhile, the Satara police found the two completely charred bodies in Kesurdi. After receiving information, a Pune police team went to the spot with Nair's family and a house help. Initially, they could not identify the bodies. But when the police showed them a necklace and earrings found at the crime scene, the house help confirmed the jewellery belonged to Nair. The help also told the police about a meeting between the accused with Broker and Nair before they went missing.

'Stone pelters are social offenders' — Gujarat Home Minister holds meeting over Surat stone pelting, riots



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

A day after riots in Surat over alleged stone pelting at a Ganesh pandal, Gujarat Home Minister Harsh Sanghvi said Monday stone pelters will be "dealt with strictly". "The stone pelters are not only legal offenders but social offenders. The Gujarat police slogan is 'Kayde mein rahenge, toh fayde mein rahenge (If you follow the rules, you will benefit)'," Sanghvi told the media after a review meeting called over the incident Monday. Surat Police Commissioner Anupam Singh Gahlaut, District

Collector Sourabh Pardhi, Mayor Daxesh Mavani, and Surat Municipal Corporation standing committee chairman Rajan Patel attended the meeting. This comes a day after riots broke out in Sayedpura after some teenagers allegedly pelted stones at a Ganesh idol in Varyiyav bazar area and allegedly injured a man on Sunday. A mob allegedly pelted stones and vandalised cars near the police station Sunday evening. Surat Police had registered three cases in connection with the stone pelting incidents and the riots. Six teenagers — all minors — were arrested in the stone pelting case and 27 people in connection with riots. According to Sanghvi, suspects in the stone pelting "lay hidden in their homes with their doors locked." "Our police broke open the locks and caught them hidden inside their flats — below their cots and other places including terraces," he said. The Surat Police "had been instructed to deal strictly with stone pelters and those who wanted to harm the peaceful atmosphere of the city", he said. "I request the social leaders to ensure that such youths are shown the right direction. I have also told Surat police to not arrest any innocent person," he said, adding: "We will not entertain any elements to disrupt the peace of the state".

SC grants bail to artist Chintan Upadhyay pending his appeal against conviction in estranged wife's murder, suspends sentence

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

The Supreme Court on Monday granted bail to artist Chintan Upadhyay pending his appeal against his conviction for abetting and conspiring the murders of his estranged wife Hema Upadhyay, and her lawyer Harish Bhambhani in 2015. The Court also suspended Chintan Upadhyay's sentence pending his appeal against conviction before the Bombay High Court. A bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan of the Supreme Court passed an order in Chintan Upadhyay's application — argued through advocates Gaurav Agrawal, Shardul Singh, and Prerna Gandhi — that stated his appeal against conviction in Bombay High Court would take time to be disposed and the sole evidence against him is the testimony of the co-accused. The apex court accepted the grounds and allowed Chintan Upadhyay's plea.

On December 11, 2023, a Bombay HC bench of Justices Revati Mohite-Dere and Gauri V Godse rejected Chintan Upadhyay's interim plea seeking release on bail pending his appeal. It had observed that prima facie there was sufficient ground to show his involvement in the crime. The bench had noted that the material on record corroborated the confessional statement of the co-accused, which was found to be 'true and voluntary'. Chintan Upadhyay was sentenced to life imprisonment by the sessions court on October 10, 2023, which he challenged before the high court. He had also filed an interim application, seeking release on bail, pending his appeal in the high court. On December 11, 2015, the bodies of Hema Upadhyay and Bhambhani were found dumped in a nullah in Kandivali. The Dindoshi sessions court had found Chintan Upadhyay guilty of abetting and conspiring the murders, among others. Three other accused — Pradeep, Vijay, and Shivkumar — were also held guilty.



cused, which was found to be 'true and voluntary'. Chintan Upadhyay was sentenced to life imprisonment by the sessions court on October 10, 2023, which he challenged before the high court. He had also filed an interim application, seeking release on bail, pending his appeal in the high court. On December 11, 2015, the bodies of Hema Upadhyay and Bhambhani were found dumped in a nullah in Kandivali. The Dindoshi sessions court had found Chintan Upadhyay guilty of abetting and conspiring the murders, among others. Three other accused — Pradeep, Vijay, and Shivkumar — were also held guilty.

After Supreme Court's direction, Mamata again requests striking doctors to resume work, offers dialogue



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

After the Supreme Court told the West Bengal government not to take action against striking doctors who resume work by 5 pm on Tuesday, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee again requested junior doctors to resume work. "The Police Commissioner came to me to tender his resignation for one week. How can I accept that before Durga Puja? He knows all the roads of Kolkata and to control the situation. After the festive season, we can think about this," said Banerjee. The Commissioner's resignation has been one of the protesters' key demands.

"I would request all — you have done many movements, now enter the festive season of Durga Puja," said Banerjee, offering to speak with protesting doctors. "They can come to talk with me in five to six numbers. I am ready to hear their demand. The Health Secretary has already sat with them and he implemented all their demands." Additionally, during an administrative review meeting amid protests against the RG Kar rape and murder, Banerjee reportedly took some steps to streamline government hospital operations. Regarding the breaking

Ajit Pawar's 'remorse' won't help him win assembly poll from Baramati: Sanjay Raut

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut on Monday said there is no point in Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar "repenting" some of his political actions and claimed the NCP leader would lose the upcoming assembly poll from his home turf Baramati.

Raut's remarks came after Ajit Pawar recently admitted publicly that he had made a mistake by fielding his wife Sunetra against his cousin and NCP (SP) leader Supriya Sule, the daughter of his uncle Sharad Pawar, in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and said politics should not enter the home. Ajit Pawar joined the Shiv Sena-BJP government in the state last year along with some other NCP leaders, leading to a split in the party founded by Sharad Pawar. On Sunday, Ajit Pawar said he was satisfied with the development work he had carried out as a legislator, adding that people of Baramati for once must get an MLA other than him so they could make comparisons.

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief has been MLA from Baramati since 1991. In the 2019 assembly polls, he won against BJP's Gopichand Padalkar with



a record margin of 1.65 lakh votes. Asked about the deputy CM's comments, Raut told reporters, "There is no point in repenting about what he did to his uncle Sharad Pawar and his party. Ajit Pawar will definitely lose the Baramati assembly election." "Ajit Pawar engineered a split in the NCP and within the Pawar family. He even took away his (Sharad Pawar's) party and symbol. He backstabbed his uncle, who used to be a father-like figure for him," the Rajya Sabha member claimed.

Six gates of Jayakwadi dam to be lifted as water stock reaches 97 pc



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Authorities have decided to lift six gates of the Jayakwadi dam in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar district on Monday afternoon to release water after continuous inflow in the reservoir, an official said. Due to rain in catchment areas of the Godavari river, water stock in the Jayakwadi dam reached 97.3 per cent of the storage capacity in the morning, the official told PTI. The inflow of water is still on, hence the irrigation department has decided to lift six gates of the dam by six inches each. Water will be released at 3,144 cusec (cubic foot per second) into the Godavari river, the official said. The water discharge may be increased or decreased based on the inflow. Currently, 500 cusec water was being released from the right canal of Jayakwadi towards the Majalgaon dam in Beed district, an official said. The water stock in 11 major reservoirs of the state's Marathwada region reached 85.39 per cent of the storage capacity on Monday, compared to 43.2 per cent on this day last year. Currently, water is being discharged from the Nimn Dudhna (1,016 cusec), Siddheshwar (1,645 cusec), Penganga (2,034 cusec), Manar (1,600 cusec) and Vishnupuri (11,407 cusec) reservoirs of the region, as per an official.

Suspected drunk driver rams tempo into multiple vehicles in Pune; MNS activist's wife dead, 3 injured

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Paud Phata accident, Pune tempo collision, speeding tempo accident Pune The tempo driver, a resident of Warje, has been charged under Sections 105, 281, 125 (a), 125 (b), 324-4 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, among others. A speeding tempo collided with multiple vehicles at Paud Phata in Pune on Sunday night, causing the death of a woman and leaving three others including her husband injured. The police have arrested the tempo driver Aashish Anant Pawar, 26, who was allegedly driving under the influence of alcohol, on charges of culpable homicide not amounting to murder. The tempo driver, a resident of Warje, has been charged under Sections 105, 281, 125 (a), 125 (b), 324-4 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, among others.

The victim who died in the road accident has been identified as Geetanjali Shrikant Amrale, 34, a resident of Vivekanand Colony, Kothrud. Her husband Shrikant Sambhaji Amrale, who is a leader of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) and two others — Sahil Pite and Madhuri Dahotre — were injured in the accident. The driver reportedly lost control of the tempo and it went on to hit a car, three two-wheelers, and an auto rickshaw. Activists of the local Ganesh Mandal were the first to come to the rescue of the victims. Sambhaji Kadam, Deputy Commissioner of Police, said blood samples of the accused driver have been taken for medical tests and the injured persons have been admitted to a hospital for treatment. The FIR in this case has been lodged at the Alankar police station.

15 Indians stuck with Russian army being repatriated: Rajya Sabha MP Vikramjit Sahney



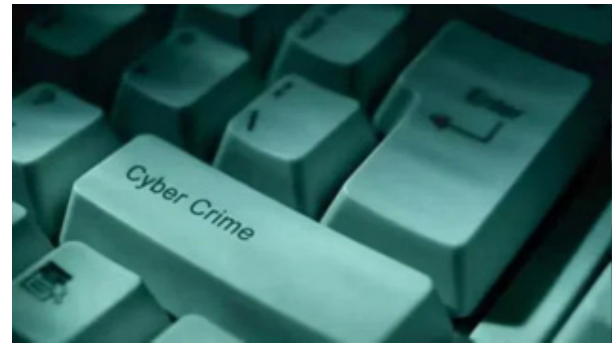
Sahney said out of the 91 Indian men, who have claimed that they were inducted into the Russian army against their will, eight have been killed and 15 are being repatriated.

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Indians stuck in Russian army Sahney said out of the 91 Indian men, who have claimed that they were inducted into the Russian army against their will, eight have been killed and 15 are being repatriated. Rajya Sabha MP Vikramjit Singh Sahney said on Monday the Russian army has released 15 Indian men, including four from Punjab, and they are being repatriated to India. Sahney said most of these are currently in a hostel in Russia, and are likely to arrive in Delhi on Monday night.

Sahney said out of the 91 Indian men, who have claimed that they were inducted into the Russian army against their will, eight have been killed and 15 are being repatriated. He added the contracts for the rest of the 69 men are being invalidated and he hoped that they would return very soon. Sahney said his office is in constant touch with the stranded men and their families back home. Sahney said he has been taking up the issue strongly with the Indian Embassy in Russia and also with the Russian Embassy in New Delhi since March 2024. He thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for taking up the issue with Russian President Vladimir Putin during his visit to Russia.

Karnataka Police crack Rs 1.28 crore cyber fraud, arrest retired school teacher and BTech graduate from Assam



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

The Karnataka Police investigating a cyber fraud case on Saturday arrested a retired school teacher and a B.Tech graduate from Assam for allegedly siphoning Rs 1.28 crore from a doctor. Pavan Kumar, 63; and Zakeer Bora, 33, were nabbed from Sivasagar in Assam. The investigation revealed that Kumar's account was used in 91 cybercrimes worth Rs 8 crore nationwide. The accused are presently in judicial custody.

On August 23, Dr Srinivasa Shetty T K, a doctor in Chitradurga town, approached the CEN police station and filed a complaint alleging that his Rs 1.27 crore was siphoned. According to the complaint, on August 22, Shetty

received a call claiming to be from the Mumbai police stating that his Aadhaar card had been used to open bank accounts for money laundering. The callers said they wanted to audit Shetty's bank transactions and details, held him under digital arrest for more than 24 hours, and siphoned money from his account. Police inspector Venkatesh N and his team blocked his account, but the money had already been transferred out.

A police officer stated, "The money taken from Shetty's account was transferred to a single bank account (currency account), and then it was distributed to nearly 95 accounts. Our primary focus was the first account to which the money was transferred, and we discovered that it belonged to Pavan Kumar. A team was dispatched to Assam, and based on technical details, he and Zakeer were arrested in Sivasagar." During the investigation, it was revealed that Zakeer and his associates created a current account in Pavan Kumar and his wife's names. In return, Pavan Kumar was paid a commission for the money they siphoned. When checked with the National Cyber Crime Portal, the police discovered that the same account was used to cheat more than 91 people, amounting to Rs 8 crore across the country. The money siphoned was shared to mule accounts and through hawala trade.

'Golden opportunity' in Canada for students with study gaps and weak profiles as visa rush ebbs

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

In a surprising turn of events, students with weak academic profiles, significant study gaps and a history of past refusals now have a "golden opportunity" to secure student visas for Canada, according to immigration consultants. Owing to recent changes in Canada's student visa policies, the demand for visas has dramatically dropped in the past few months, especially among high-achieving students, creating a favourable environment for those who have traditionally faced hurdles in their attempts.

The number of students from Punjab applying to Canadian colleges has dropped significantly, with businesses in the student visa sector reporting only 20 per cent of the volume compared to last year. "If 100 students were going to Canada last year, now it's down to just 20," said an immigration consultant. This decline is largely attributed to changes in Canada's student visa rules and policies that have caused students to hesitate, as many are awaiting further updates while exploring other destinations like the US, UK, and Germany. However, for students with weaker academic profiles—such as low scores in their 10+2 exams, gaps in their education, or low scores in English proficiency tests like the IELTS—the current situation presents a unique chance, according to experts.

Tirath Singh of Pinnacle Immigration, a consultant with a long experience with Canadian student visa applications, said, "Canada has kept its doors open for students with considerable study gaps or multiple visa refusals. Unlike the UK or Australia, which often reject applicants with gaps after 10+2, Canada is issuing visas for such cases." Singh gave the example of a student with a five-year gap after 10+2 who initially sought to study in the UK. "I advised him against it, as the U.K. wouldn't consider his case due to the gap. But Canada, with its current visa policies, accepted his application," he said. Other countries, like Australia and the UK, tend to reject candidates with long educational breaks, while the US still considers them but puts a heavy emphasis on interview performance. Germany, on the other hand, is more open to accepting gaps after graduation rather than after high school.

"The visa success rate for students with study gaps has soared," Singh said. "We've seen cases where students with 10–15 years of study gap were granted visas because they could justify their time away from education, whether they were involved in family businesses or other activities." Singh also said his firm had helped several students with IELTS scores less than six or low scores in other proficiency tests like the Pearson Test of English (PTE) get student visas. "Earlier, Canada could be more



selective due to the sheer volume of applicants with strong profiles. Now, with a smaller pool to choose from, students with weaker profiles are finding success as long as they can adequately explain their circumstances. The recent visa approvals include students scoring between 4.5 and 5 in one of the four modules of International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam and obtaining marks between 52 and 56 in the PTE exam, despite the benchmarks being 6 and 60 marks for the IELTS and PTE exams, respectively," he said. Aman Parmar of Punjab-based V Point Visa Consultants also said that despite the various restrictions, in 2024, not a single student visa processed through the consultancy was rejected. "Even students with multiple refusals were able to secure visas," he said.

Canada has not only capped the number of international students from January but also made several other changes like closing the spouse open work permit for most undergraduate courses and mandating provincial attestation letters (PAL) from the province where students seek admission. Also, most private colleges and other institutions in Canada have been closed for international students under public-private partnership models. Now, only public colleges and institutions are admitting foreign students. "Because of these restrictions, the rush in from high-achieving students has slowed down and thousands of seats in these institutions remain vacant, creating more opportunities for those who might have been overlooked in the past," said another consultant. In the past, most students from Punjab preferred private colleges because there were no strict rules like four-five days of classroom instruction, another consultant said. Most students would then devote more time in a week to work and earn more for the next semester's fee so that they can apply for Permanent Residency (PR), their ultimate goal, after finishing the course. Now this option is closed, he added.

ED files FIR against Religare Enterprises chief over 'false case' against Burmans



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has registered an FIR against Dr Rashmi Saluja, executive chairperson of Religare Enterprises Ltd (REL), and two other top functionaries of the company, for their alleged role in a "false" case with serious allegations against the Burmans of the Dabur group, and making unlawful benefits totalling Rs 179 crore. The ED's FIR has listed charges under IPC sections 420 (cheating) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) against Saluja, group CFO Nitin Agarwal, and president and general counsel Nishant Singhal.

The FIR relates to the ED's probe in a case of alleged money laundering against former REL directors Malvinder Mohan Singh and Shivinder Mohan Singh, and others, filed by a company shareholder Vaibhav Jaininder Gawali. The complainant alleged misappropriation of REL assets by Malvinder and Shivinder, in connivance with the Burmans, who are also shareholders, and others. The FIR states that when the ED was recording his statement on August 12, Gawali allegedly denied having documentary proof to substantiate his claims that suggested a bid to take over the company. He claimed that facts mentioned in his case were based on alleged directions given to him by Saluja, the FIR stated. Further, the FIR stated, Gawali claimed that Saluja, Agarwal and Nishant had allegedly given him Rs 1.2 lakh to purchase 500 shares of REL and Rs 80,000 to file a complaint

against the Burmans. The FIR, which was recorded under PMLA section 50, claimed that the ED analysed Gawali's account and allegedly found that it corroborated his claims of having received money. According to the FIR, the complaint was initially not registered by the local police, and Gawali was allegedly directed by Saluja to approach the magistrate court in Kurla through a lawyer referred by her. The FIR was registered on August 12 at the Matunga police station upon the court's orders. The FIR alleged diversion of funds from REL and its subsidiaries, and related benefits to Saluja and the two others to the tune of Rs 179.54 crore. It alleged that the purpose of the complaint was to "derail the proposed takeover of the company and its subsidiaries to obfuscate the detection of illegal gains accrued to them through acquisition of Employee Stock Options (ESOPs) of Care Health Insurance Limited (CHIL)".

Inter-State gang from Rajasthan held for Rs 4 crore UPI fraud in Hyderabad

Hyderabad: The Cyberabad Central Crime Station (CCS) team along with the KPHB police on Monday arrested a 13-member interstate gang from Rajasthan on charges of involvement in a series of high-tech UPI frauds and cheating schemes, which also involved defrauding Bajaj Electronics of Rs 4 crore. Officials seized cash of Rs 1.7 lakh and electronic goods worth Rs 50 lakh. The arrested persons include Som Raj, Sunil, Lac Ram, Sharwan, Soma Raj, Shiva Lal, Ramesh, Shravan Kumar, Pappu Ram, Shravan, Ramesh and Ashok Kumar. In recent months, a series of fraud and cheating cases, all involving Bajaj Electronics that suffered losses to the tune of over Rs 4 crore, were reported in various police stations under Cyberabad, Hyderabad,

D K Shivakumar illegal assets case: BJP MLA moves Supreme Court over Congress govt withdrawing consent for CBI probe

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Karnataka BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal recently filed a Special Leave Petition (criminal) in the Supreme Court seeking a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the disproportionate assets case against state Congress chief and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar. Patil's petition for a CBI probe against Shivakumar was rejected by the Karnataka High Court last month. The Supreme Court registered the matter on September 6, and a date for hearing was yet to be assigned. The BJP MLA named the Karnataka government, the CBI and the Karnataka Police as respondents, besides Shivakumar.

On August 29, a division bench of the Karnataka High Court dismissed pleas filed by Yatnal and the CBI against a decision of the Congress government in Karnataka to withdraw consent for the investigation of a corruption case against Shivakumar as "non-maintainable". A bench of Justices K Somashekhar and Umesh Adiga dismissed the CBI challenge to the Congress government's November 28, 2023, decision to withdraw consent to probe Shivakumar's alleged illegal assets and a December 26, 2023, state order to refer the matter to the Karnataka Lokayukta for a probe. The BJP MLA's similar plea was also dismissed. In a 67-page judgment on August 29, the high court stated that the issues raised in the pleas needed to be addressed by the Supreme Court, which was already dealing with similar matters in other petitions. The CBI plea to allow an investigation of corruption charges, along with a similar petition filed by Yatnal, was referred earlier this year to the division bench by a single-judge bench due to the involvement of serious legal issues.

The Karnataka High Court order of August 29 "In these two cases, marathon arguments have been heard by both the sides...the court, after carefully considering the arguments and the relevant legal provisions, notes that the dispute essentially involves a conflict between the State Government and the CBI. It operates under the superintendence of the Central Government. The issues raised concern the interpretation of statutory provisions like the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.and the relationship with constitutional provisions regarding the division of powers between the Central and State Government," the high court said in its orders rejecting the pleas of the CBI and Yatnal on August 29. The court noted that the petitions fell within the ambit of Article 131 of the Constitution, which deals with the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. The bench explained, "...concerning the Central Government's authority to deploy the CBI within a state that has withdrawn its consent. The resolution of this dispute will directly impact the legal rights/jurisdictions of both central and State Governments making it a fit subject for adjudication under the Supreme Court's original jurisdiction.in the light of these considerations, we hold that the present writ petitions are not maintainable." The court added that the petitioners were at liberty to pursue the matter before the Supreme Court.

"I am very happy with the verdict. It is a victory for the people of Karnataka. The CBI's permission for investigation was withdrawn by the government and given to Lokayukta. The Karnataka government has not withdrawn the case but has transferred it to the Lokayukta. Giving the case to the CBI was a political move of the BJP," Shivakumar said after the verdict. The CBI and the BJP MLA approached the Karnataka High Court over the Congress government's move to withdraw consent and referred to Supreme Court orders allowing CBI investigations to continue after the withdrawal of state consent.

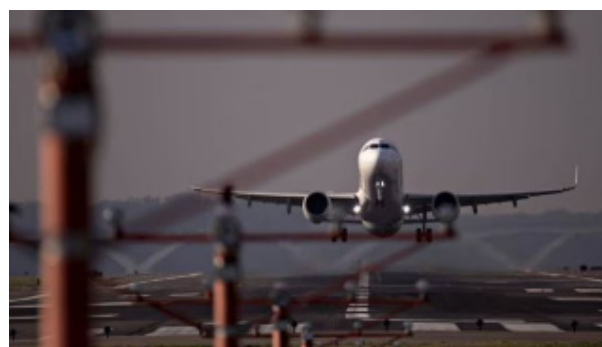
The counsels for Shivakumar have argued that the original September 25, 2019 order of the state government—during the BJP's tenure—granting CBI sanction for investigation "reeks of malafide." The entry of the CBI into the state based on a void consent order would be a violation of federalism, which is part of the basic structure of the Constitution, the counsels argued. While the Khazi



Dorji case of 1994 involved general consent, the case of Shivakumar involved specific consent for a CBI investigation, it was argued. The CBI filed a disproportionate assets case against Shivakumar on October 3, 2020, with the consent of the previous BJP government on September 25, 2019. This action was taken following a request by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to investigate corruption charges discovered during an Income Tax (I-T) Department probe. The Congress government in Karnataka, which took over from the BJP in May 2023, revoked the consent given to the CBI in 2019 to investigate allegations of disproportionate assets against Shivakumar. This decision was made after a cabinet meeting on November 23, 2023. The Congress has indicated that the case was referred to the CBI in 2019 even before an FIR was filed in 2020.

The CBI has alleged that Shivakumar accumulated Rs 74.93 crore of wealth disproportionate to known sources of income from April 2013 to April 2018, while serving as the energy minister in a previous Congress government. Shivakumar was arrested by the ED in September 2019 on money laundering charges that emerged from an Income Tax department probe against the Congress leader between 2017 and 2019. He was released on bail in the ED case in October 2019. In 2019, the ED requested the Karnataka BJP government consider the possibility of corruption in Shivakumar's money laundering case. Following this, the B S Yediyurappa-led BJP government granted consent for a CBI probe into the corruption charges. On March 5 this year, the Supreme Court dismissed the ED proceedings against Shivakumar. The court cited its own judgment from November 29, 2023, in the Pavana Dibbur case. It ruled that the ED can only initiate money laundering proceedings if the laundered funds are linked to a major or scheduled crime. In November 2023, the Supreme Court ruled in the Pavana Dibbur case from Karnataka that charges under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) require the involvement of a serious predicate offence. The court clarified that PMLA charges cannot be brought without a serious crime being linked to the funds alleged to be laundered. Shivakumar was charged under the PMLA and spent a month in Tihar jail in 2019. The charge was brought by the ED based on an allegation that the Congress leader and his associates were involved in a criminal conspiracy to evade income tax on their earnings. The Supreme Court ruled in the Pavana Dibbur case that "The offence punishable under Section 120 B of the IPC (criminal conspiracy) will become a scheduled offence only if the conspiracy alleged is of committing an offence which is specifically included in the Schedule." The ED initiated legal action in a money laundering case against Shivakumar in 2018. This came after I-T searches were conducted between August 2, 2017, and August 5, 2017, at about 70 locations connected to Shivakumar. At that time, Shivakumar held the position of energy minister in the Congress government in Karnataka. During the I-T searches, Shivakumar was providing shelter to 42 Gujarat Congress MLAs ahead of a Rajya Sabha poll, aiming to protect them from potential poaching attempts by the BJP in Gujarat. The cancellation of numerous cases lodged against Shivakumar, particularly those related to corruption and money laundering, is viewed as a significant development that could support the Congress leader's pursuit of becoming the chief minister of Karnataka under the current Congress administration.

Man who sexually harassed minor girl on Doha-Bengaluru flight gets 3-year jail



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

The incident took place on June 27 last year, when Murugesan was on a flight on which the minor girl and her parents were also among the flyers. The incident took place on June 27 last year, when Murugesan was on a flight on which the minor girl and her parents were also among the flyers. A Bengaluru court has sentenced a 51-year-old man from Tamil Nadu to three-year imprisonment for sexually harassing a minor girl on a Doha-Bengaluru flight last year.

The Additional District and Sessions Fast-track Special Court in Bengaluru Rural district, which convicted Ammawasai Murugesan also imposed a Rs 10,000 fine on him on September 3. The incident took place on June 27 last year, when Murugesan was on a flight on which the minor girl and her parents were also among the flyers. After Murugesan sexually harassed the minor girl, her father complained to the Kempegowda International Airport police, which arrested him under section 8 (sexual assault) of Protection Of Children from Sexual Offences Act. He was granted bail on July 27 last year. The girl's mother had objected when Murugesan, under the influence of alcohol, touched the girl inappropriately. Flight attendants then changed their seats. The judge said in the order, "The accused is convicted for the offence punishable under Sec.8 of the POCSO Act and sentenced to undergo simple imprisonment for a term of 3 years and he shall be liable to pay fine of Rs 10,000/- and in default of payment of fine, he shall undergo simple imprisonment for a period of three months. Out of the fine amount

so collected, Rs 5,000/- shall be paid to the victim as compensation. As the accused was in JC (judicial custody) since 28-06-2023 till 27-07-2023 in this case, he is entitled for set-off for the above said period against the term of imprisonment ordered against him."

Murugesan has been granted bail to appeal against his conviction. "The record discloses that the accused was on bail during trial and he was regularly attending the court almost on every date of hearing and he was regularly represented by his counsel and thereby he has cooperated in the trial of the case," the order read. "The accused is sentenced to imprisonment for a minimum term of 3 years. Therefore as per Sec. 389(3) of Cr.P.C he is entitled to be released on bail till the expiry of appeal period. Therefore considering the conduct of the accused during trial of the case, this court is satisfied that he may be released on bail till the expiry of the appeal period and in the application filed on his behalf U/s.389(3) of Cr.P.C., he has expressed that he intends to prefer appeal against the Judgment passed by this court," the order added.

Singareni MEMU express turns boon for PDS rice smugglers of Mancherial

Mancherial: The Singareni MEMU express operated daily between Bhadrachalam Road and Balharshah of Maharashtra has apparently become a boon for public distribution system (PDS) rice smugglers. The train is meant for economically weak passengers from the coal belt areas of both Telangana and Maharashtra.

However, as the Balharshah-bound express stops at Ravindrakhani station in the afternoon for less than a minute, scores of men and women rapidly transfer at least four bags of rice. General passengers are amazed at the rate of speed with which they load the bags in the train. The bags then disappear in the next few minutes.

In a first, critically endangered elongated tortoise spotted in Aravallis



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

tortoiseElongated tortoises were assessed for the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) red list of threatened species in 2018. A critically endangered species, the elongated tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*), was spotted in Haryana's Damdama area during a research survey in the Aravallis. The tortoise is medium-sized with a yellowish brown or olive shell and distinct black blotches at the centre of each scute. The tortoise has on its nostril a pink ring, which appears in the breeding season. Mature individuals of both sexes develop a distinct pinkish colouration surrounding the nostrils and eyes during the season.

The tortoise, found in the Sal deciduous and hilly evergreen forests, is distributed across Southeast Asia from northern India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh in the west, eastward through Myanmar, Thailand, and all of Indochina, north to Guangxi Province of China and

south to Peninsular Malaysia. A disjunct tortoise population exists in the Chota Nagpur plateau in eastern India. It also inhabits lowlands and foothills of up to 1,000 m above sea level. Sunil Harsana, an environmentalist, and Nitesh Kaushik, a project fellow at Coexistence Consortium, discovered the tortoise and an expert in the field, Sneha Dharwadkar, identified the species through photographs. Harsana had deployed cameras in the region. "There have not been enough surveys to ascertain its presence in Aravallis, but the tortoise is found in the foothills of the Himalayas. It inhabits wetter areas and discovering it here is an aberration than a norm," Dharwadkar said, adding that it cannot be ruled out that the tortoise was brought by trade. Harsana said it was the turtle's first sighting in the region as it was not native to the Aravallis. The tortoise was left alone as the researchers were unsure of its path.

Elongated tortoises were assessed for the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) red list of threatened species in 2018 and are listed as critically endangered, under criteria A2cd. A research paper by scientists from across the world, compiled by the IUCN, says that despite having a wide distribution with areas of suitable habitat remaining, the turtle has recently undergone severe population declines due to human activities. "Currently, *I. elongata* is heavily exploited for food and traditional medicine throughout its range. Local people often opportunistically capture tortoises while farming or extracting other forest resources. However, deliberate hunting also occurs and dogs continue to be widely used for finding tortoises," the paper states.

Scared of being scolded over low test marks, two kids run away from Noida school — found two days later



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

On September 5, two Class 8 students went missing. CCTV footage showed them exiting from the back gate of their school in Noida's Sector 56. For the next 48 hours, there was no word of their whereabouts. On Saturday, police found them at Anand Vihar Railway station, hiding under a staircase. Turns out there was a parent-teacher meeting on Saturday, said their families. The boys, aged 13 and 14, were scared to attend it as they had scored low marks on a unit test and didn't want to be scolded by their parents. So they decided to run away. "On September 7, the school had invited us for the parents-teacher's meet," said Harish Nautiyal, uncle of one of the children. He said the children thought they would be scolded as they had scored lower marks on the test. "So they planned to leave home. But after we found them, we

have not asked them anything about the exam and are giving them as much affection as possible," he said. "They had taken Rs 50 for the Teacher's Day celebration from home and used that money to take an auto to reach the railway station," added Nautiyal. He said both children are friends.

After the kids went missing, police filed an FIR and scanned CCTVs. "We formed seven teams under the Commissioner, Joint CP and DCP to find them," said Additional DCP (Noida) Manish Kumar Mishra. "We scanned at least 500 CCTVs placed across Delhi-NCR including bus stops, petrol pumps, shops, and streets," he said. As it was Teacher's Day on Thursday, school ended at 10.45 am after celebrations. Both boys were then spotted on camera leaving the school at 11 am from the back gate, said Mishra, even as parents of one of the boys were waiting outside to receive them. "Another CCTV showed them being dropped off at a CNG station near Anand Vihar by an auto driver," he said. Mishra said police dressed in plainclothes were deployed to not frighten the children. When police found them, the boys were not willing to return home. "We requested the parents to not scold them or ask them anything about the exam," said SHO, Sector 58, Amit Kumar. Ward councillor of Khoda, Sonu Joshi, said the parents had sought his help and he accompanied them to the police station to lodge a complaint. "We involved the police of Delhi, Noida and Ghaziabad to find the children. Even the people of the colony helped," he said.

Ahead of US visit, Karnataka Dy CM Shivakumar gives officials 15 days to fix potholes in Bengaluru

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Before proceeding on a week-long personal tour of the United States, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar has issued a fresh deadline to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike to fill potholes in the state capital. "I am travelling abroad for a week on personal work. All the potholes must be filled within the set deadline. Any dereliction of duty will result in suspension," Shivakumar said on Sunday after a meeting with BBMP officials. "Strict orders have been given to officials to adhere to the 15-day deadline to fill potholes. If complaints of potholes come again, strict action will be taken. I don't know how many officials will be suspended," he said.

"Irrespective of the seniority, BBMP officials have to oversee works at the ground level. I have said that the ward-level officials must oversee the pothole-filling exercise personally. September is the wettest month in Bengaluru and we need to be careful about flooding and waterlogging. The officials have also been told to trim the trees which are at risk," he said. The deputy chief minister said he would inspect the city roads on his return from the US. "I will personally inspect the condition of roads. Officials will face suspension if roads are not in good condition," he said.

In May, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah gave the BBMP one month to fix around 5,500 potholes in the city. Over the past few weeks, the BBMP has been filling potholes on major roads. In July, the BBMP launched the Road Pothole Attention mobile application, which uses advanced technology to accurately identify and repair potholes across Bengaluru's extensive road network with transparency and efficiency. Shivakumar had earlier said that 96 per cent of potholes on Bengaluru roads had been fixed. He said that from April 1 to June 30, 16,202 potholes had been identified and 15,686 of them had been fixed. Bengaluru has a road network of about 12,878 km—



arterial and sub-arterial roads of 1,344.84 km and zonal roads of 11,533.16 km. These roads often suffer damage due to the installation of various utilities, including Bescom cables, water supply and drainage pipes, GAIL gas lines, high-capacity cables of the Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited, and optical fibre cables, leading to frequent pothole formations. For 2024-25, the BBMP has allocated Rs 15 lakh per ward, amounting to Rs 33.75 crore for 225 wards, for fixing potholes. The Road Pothole Attention, or Raste Gundi Gamana, app is not only accessible to officials of the BBMP and the traffic police but also to the public. Users can download the application on their Android devices. It is available in Kannada and English. Users can enter their mobile number and receive a one-time password via SMS to register. The app automatically displays the user's current location and users can then describe the issue and submit a complaint to receive a docket number. The information is then sent to the relevant authorities, who are required to address the complaint within a stipulated time frame. Users can also monitor the status of their complaints through the app. The application, downloadable from the Google Play Store, requires a one-time login.

Why efforts to reclaim the Ridge — Delhi's lungs — is no easy task

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Inside a police station, a motorcycle showroom, a parking lot, and the sprawling, well-kept lawns of a "spiritual and socio-religious organisation" lie pockets of Delhi's Southern Ridge. This is 'forest' land — at least as declared preliminarily by the Delhi government 30 years ago. In a May 1994 notification under Section 4 of the Indian Forest Act, 1927, it outlined the contours of the northern, central, south-central and southern Ridge and proclaimed that "all forest lands and wastelands which is government property" within these areas would be 'reserved forest'.

Over the years, vast swathes of the Ridge area — that act as the Capital's lungs — have been built upon. Less than a fourth of the "encroached land" has been freed so far, documents show. Freeing up this land has led to conflict, the key to some of which is a document submitted in 2019 by the then Divisional Commissioner and Principal Secretary, Revenue Department, to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in an application filed in 2013 by Delhi resident and activist Sonya Ghosh seeking protection of the Delhi Ridge from damaging construction. The accompanying map, which marked encroachments, was prepared after a joint survey by the Revenue and Forest Departments in 19 villages in and around the Southern Ridge. Of the 357.07 hectares of encroached forest land in the South forest division identified as per the 2019 document, the Forest Department has cleared just 79.88 hectares, or around 22%. Much of this action was taken in 2019-20.

The two villages in South Delhi with the largest area still encroached are Asola (38.17 hectares) and Bhatti (38.19 hectares). Sections of the two villages are notified as the Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary. Senior officials in the Forest Department pointed to a range of reasons for the slow pace of removal of encroachments: several court cases; land awaiting demarcation; orders from the Delhi High Court asking for status quo to be maintained till fresh demarcation is carried out; issues of manpower; absence of a dedicated fund to reclaim land; and the "lakhs of people" who might be displaced if large-scale demolitions, particularly of unauthorized colonies, are initiated. Maidangarhi police station in Asola is missing the characteristic red and blue board usually mounted on the front façade of most stations. Instead, 'P S Maidangarhi' is painted in bold red letters on the wall of an archway that leads to the station — single-storey structures surrounding a courtyard and a lawn. Down the road, about 100m away, is the forest — a green expanse walled off by the Forest Department. Delhi's Southern Ridge, forest land, Delhi government, May 1994 notification, Indian Forest Act 1927, ignou, maidangarhi, south delhi, forest department, revenue department, southern Ridge, delhi forest lands, delhi wastelands, reserved forest, Indian express news In 2020, its SHO filed an application before the Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Saket — the ADM was appointed Forest Settlement Officer (FSO) under the Section 4 notification to examine and decide claims over land that was notified — for "de-notification" of forest land, stating that it was allotted to the Delhi Police by the Director (Panchayat) in February 2015. It said the applicant wants the land to be "de-notified from Ridge notification".

Going by the 2019 list of encroachments, the khasra number of the land marks it as a 'farmhouse encroachment'. The Deputy Conservator of Forest (DCF), South Forest Division, submitted in the ADM court in 2020 that the land mentioned by the applicant has been declared forest, and asked that the "present claim be dismissed with heavy costs". DCP (South) Ankit Chauhan did not respond to questions about the police station and if it was a temporary arrangement. A source in the Revenue Department said the case before the FSO has not yet been decided. This was not the only allotment of 'forest' land to other departments/agencies. In 2019, the Divisional Commissioner, who decides appeals in cases filed before the FSO, told the NGT that allotments made post the 1994 notification were done "without proper approval". The document submitted to the NGT had a list of such allotments — a total of 1,990 bighas and 15 biswa.

When Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) submitted a request for permission to build a five-storey admin block on 0.27 hectares on its Maidangarhi campus — this was cleared by Delhi's Ridge Management Board last August and then went to the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) of the Supreme Court for further clearance — the matter raised the question of "documentary evidence" to confirm 'forest' land and its demarcation. The Ridge Management Board, while granting permission, noted that approval was sought for construction in an area that falls within a 'reserve forest'.

The final declaration of a 'reserved forest' is under



Section 20 of the Indian Forest Act, only after all claims over land have been settled and appeals disposed of. Out of 7,777 hectares identified as the Ridge in the 1994 Section 4 notification, the final Section 20 notification has been issued only for 14.18 hectares in Chattarpur and 89.30 hectares in Rangpuri, as per a report of the CEC from this May. Delhi's Southern Ridge, forest land, Delhi government, May 1994 notification, Indian Forest Act 1927, ignou, maidangarhi, south delhi, forest department, revenue department, southern Ridge, delhi forest lands, delhi wastelands, reserved forest, Indian express news

The CEC wrote to the District Magistrate (DM), South Delhi, stating that IGNOU and forest officials claim that out of the 218 bighas on which IGNOU stands, 68 bighas are forest land. "However, this demarcation is not on the ground due to which it is not possible to ascertain if the proposed construction site falls in a forest area or not. Hence you are requested to get this demarcation done as soon as possible," the CEC wrote to the DM.

The Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Saket, then wrote to DCF (South) in July asking the Forest Department to provide the Section 4 notification under the Indian Forest Act that can point to its claim over the 68 bighas. As per revenue records, IGNOU has a perpetual lease deed for 202.02 bighas of land belonging to the gram sabha, dating back to the 1980s. Sources in the Revenue Department said they were looking for a Section 4 notification that specifies khasra numbers that have been declared 'forest' land. The DCF responded in July that the notification issued in 1994 only describes boundaries and does not have a "khasra-wise list of forest land". The DCF also pointed to the 2019 document filed in the NGT as mentioning the khasra number where IGNOU is located.

The DM wrote to the CEC later in July that "as per revenue record and documentary evidence, it is not clear as to how Forest Department is claiming ownership of this land," and that it is doing so "as per affidavit" filed in the NGT. He also recommended IGNOU be granted permission for construction. A senior official in the Forest Department maintained that the Divisional Commissioner's affidavit is the department's "Bible" when it comes to acting on encroachments. In the case of IGNOU, CEC has yet to submit its report for the apex court's consideration. As per Forest Department officials, RSSB is the single largest property owner in Asola and Bhatti with whom it is now engaged in a tussle. RSSB describes itself as a registered society, a "spiritual and socio-religious organisation", which has had a "major centre" at Asola-Bhatti for "over 40 years." The sprawling gated property spans 300 acres. Going by the Divisional Commissioner's 2019 document, around 95 bighas of 'forest' land is identified as encroached by RSSB in Bhatti. This, however, is not the only area identified as encroached on by the organisation. RSSB's appeals before the Divisional Commissioner altogether involve 340 bighas in Asola and Bhatti. In 2020 and 2021, RSSB filed four applications in the FSO's court, all for exchange of land — it offered to swap its own land for forest land in Asola and Bhatti. The Forest Department opposed these applications. It also pointed out that the FSO's court has no power to exchange land, and that the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, says no state or other authority can convert forest land for non-forest activity without the Centre's approval. In 2023, RSSB withdrew these applications. Soon after, it filed another three applications before the FSO, which are now pending. Going by records with the Forest Department, RSSB had filed the three applications seeking "deletion/exclusion/exchange of forest land". The department has opposed these applications on the grounds that there is a delay of "more than 28 years" in claiming rights over the land. RSSB filed three appeals, each pertaining to different pockets of land, before the Divisional Commissioner this year, which are pending. One says some of the contested land was not part of the notified reserved forest; another says the L-G had assigned or leased out some of this land to RSSB in 1988 for 99 years; and the third offers to surrender some of their land and asks to "delete and marked as forest" from the notification.

Delhi woman and daughter steal jewellery from bank locker after being handed wrong keys; arrested



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Simon Bolivar Marg, Armed men rob jewellery shop, jewellery shop robbery, delhi news, India news, Indian express, Indian express India news, Indian express India, delhi The locker contained several gold ornaments such as gold bar, gold coins, and a diamond set, apart from registry documents," said Paul in the FIR. A woman and her daughter were arrested by the Delhi Police last week for allegedly stealing gold and diamond ornaments and other valuables from the locker of a Lajpat Nagar resident after being handed the wrong key by officials of the Central government-run bank. In the First Information Report (FIR) filed on September 5, Yash Paul said he has had a bank account with the Punjab National Bank in Jangpura for the past 20 years and has a locker. "For the past couple of days, I had been visiting the bank to get the locker opened but there was some issue with its lock... On September 4, the locker-in-charge called me to the bank and said a Godrej representative would also come to get the lock opened," said Paul. "The locker contained several gold ornaments such as gold bar, gold coins, and a diamond set, apart from registry documents," said Paul in the FIR.

Paul said that when the locker was broken open, he could not find any of his valuables and questioned the bank manager. The bank manager said that on July 10, two women, identifying themselves as Shashi and Aashi Ramani, asked him to open the locker after furnishing the requisite documents and verifications.

A senior officer said the woman Shashi and her daughter Aashi had a joint account in the same branch of Punjab National Bank. "They mistakenly got the victim's locker opened instead of their own... However, after opening it, they saw a lot of valuables and gold ornaments," said a police officer. They decided to claim it as their ac-

count and took all the valuables. "They gave the gold ornaments to multiple receivers who have been bound down... Aashi, 33, works with Amazon and Shashi, 55, is unemployed," said the officer. The officer added bank employees, who claimed that the incident took place "mistakenly", are also being questioned.

Man in Bengaluru misbehaves with woman, assaulted

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

bangalore police According to the police, the man has been identified as Ravi Kumar, a native of Dharwad and working as a cook in a hotel near Kalkere, off Bannerghatta road for two years.

A 33-year-old man in Bengaluru was beaten by a group of people after he allegedly misbehaved with a woman by touching her inappropriately when she was out to buy milk on Saturday night. According to the police, the man has been identified as Ravi Kumar, a native of Dharwad and working as a cook in a hotel near Kalkere, off Bannerghatta road for two years. They said they have arrested three people after Kumar filed a complaint but the woman has refused to complain against him.

The incident took place when the woman in her late 20s was on her way to buy milk around 10 pm on Saturday. Kumar who saw her walking alone touched her inappropriately and when she raised the alarm for help, a group of men who heard her scream caught him. As the group started assaulting Kumar, the woman left the place. The police said the group assumed Kumar had come out to sexually assault women. Later, they tried to take him in an auto-rickshaw and the police who learnt about the incident rushed to the spot and rescued him. He was shifted to a nearby hospital. A senior police officer said Kumar was drunk and was caught misbehaving with the woman. "Ravi Kumar filed the complaint while the woman refused to lodge a complaint. Ravi Kumar has been discharged from the hospital," said a police officer.

Big Lots files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, Nexus Capital to acquire stores



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Big Lots has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, citing doubts about its operations. Now, Nexus Capital Management will acquire most of the stores. Big Lots has officially filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, citing "substantial doubt" about its ability to continue operating. A Big Lots store in Los Angeles, California, US, on Saturday, Sept. 7, 2024. Discount home goods retailer Big Lots Inc. is preparing to file for bankruptcy as soon as Sunday, and plans to sell its chain of stores via a court-supervised process, according to people familiar with the plans. Photographer: Eric Thayer/Bloomberg(Bloomberg) A Big Lots store in Los Angeles, California, US, on Saturday, Sept. 7, 2024. Discount home goods retailer Big Lots Inc. is preparing to file for bankruptcy as soon as Sunday, and plans to sell its chain of stores via a court-supervised process, according to people familiar with the plans. Photographer: Eric Thayer/Bloomberg(Bloomberg)

The retail chain giant announced that Nexus Capital Management, a private equity firm, will acquire "substantially all" of the company's stores and business operations. However, Big Lots' physical locations and online

stores will remain open to customers throughout the proceedings. Bruce Thorn, CEO of Big Lots, expressed, "The actions we are taking today will enable us to move forward with new owners who believe in our business and provide financial stability while we optimize our operational footprint, accelerate improvement in our performance, and deliver on our promise to be the leader in extreme value."

Big Lots' financial troubles have been exacerbated by a decline in discretionary spending on home and seasonal products, which form a large part of the company's revenue. Despite its financial struggles, Big Lots has secured \$707.5 million in new financing to support ongoing operations, including paying employees and vendors. Nexus Capital Management has been named the "stalking horse bidder." The bankruptcy filing is being attributed to a range of economic pressures, including high inflation and rising interest rates. These factors altered consumer behaviour, with many shoppers adjusting their spending habits. While people continue to seek out value, they aren't necessarily focusing solely on lower-cost options.

The company noted that dollar stores are also facing difficulties, while larger players like Walmart and Amazon have seen their sales grow. Fast food chains like McDonald's are also experiencing challenges, whereas casual dining establishments like Applebee's are thriving. Now the retailer has been closing stores, with approximately 300 out of its 1,400 locations already slated for closure. While no new closures were announced in conjunction with the bankruptcy filing, the company hinted that additional locations may be shut down to ensure the business remains viable. "We will need to close certain locations to ensure that our business operates efficiently and we can continue serving our customers," the company explained.

Flooding kills more than a dozen people in Morocco and Algeria

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

RABAT, Morocco — Torrential downpours hit North Africa's normally arid mountains and deserts over the weekend, causing flooding that killed more than a dozen people in Morocco and Algeria and destroyed homes and critical infrastructure. In Morocco, officials said the two days of storms surpassed historic averages, in some cases exceeding the annual average rainfall. The downpours affected some of the regions that experienced a deadly earthquake one year ago.

Meteorologists had predicted that a rare deluge could strike North Africa's Sahara Desert, where many areas receive less than an inch of rain a year. Officials in Morocco said 11 people were killed in rural areas where infrastructure has historically been lacking, and 24 homes collapsed. Nine people were missing. Drinking water and electrical infrastructure were damaged, along with major roads. Rachid El Khalfi, Morocco's Interior Ministry spokesperson, said in a statement on Sunday that the government was working to restore communication and access to flooded regions in the "exceptional situation" and urged people to use caution. In neighboring Algeria, which held a presidential election over the weekend, authorities said at least five died in the country's desert



provinces. Interior Minister Brahim Merad called the situation "catastrophic" on state-owned television. Algeria's state-run news service S said the government had sent thousands of civil protection and military officers to help with emergency response efforts and rescue families stuck in their homes. The floods also damaged bridges and trains. This article was generated from an automated news agency feed without modifications to text.

Chinese man, 30, dies after 104 days of non-stop work with only 1 day off



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

A Chinese painter, A'bao, died after working 104 days straight with only one rest day. His employer was found 20% liable for his death due to overwork. In a case that underscores the dire consequences of overwork, a 30-year-old Chinese painter died of organ failure after enduring an intense 104-day work period with only one day of rest. According to the South China Morning Post, A'bao, who had been employed under a strict contract since February 2023, developed a severe pneumococcal infection that led to his death in June this year.

A'bao had agreed to work on a project in Zhoushan, a city in Zhejiang province, until January this year. His schedule was grueling, with him working daily from Feb-

ruary to May, and only taking a brief respite on April 6. On May 25, A'bao fell ill and took a sick day, but his condition worsened rapidly. Three days later, his colleagues rushed him to the hospital where doctors diagnosed him with a lung infection and respiratory failure. Despite medical efforts, A'bao died a few days later. Following A'bao's death, his family filed a lawsuit against his employer for gross negligence. The case gained traction when social security officials controversially ruled that his death could not be classified as a work-related injury, citing the timing of his death as a key factor. The family argued that the relentless work schedule and lack of rest directly contributed to A'bao's demise. The company contended that A'bao's workload was reasonable and that extra hours worked were voluntary.

They also attributed his condition to pre-existing health issues and claimed he did not seek medical help promptly. However, the court ruled in favor of A'bao's family, holding the employer 20% accountable for his death. The verdict highlighted that the prolonged work period was a clear breach of Chinese Labour Law, which limits work to 8 hours per day and 44 hours per week. The court awarded A'bao's family 400,000 yuan (approximately \$71,19,036) in compensation, including 10,000 yuan for emotional distress. Despite the company's appeal, the original verdict was upheld in August, marking a significant step in addressing overwork issues in China.

Donald Trump promotes WWE star Hulk Hogan's controversial beer despite not drinking alcohol himself

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Donald Trump promoted Hulk Hogan's Real American Beer on his social media platform, Truth Social, on Saturday night. The former president endorsed the WWE star's controversial lager despite not drinking alcohol himself. Hogan, who is a Hall of Fame wrestler, launched his beer across 17 states this summer. "Hulk Hogan is doing a beer, and if he's doing it, it must be good. Great looking can and logo. Give it a try!!! DJT," Trump wrote about the WWE star's latest offering. His endorsement comes weeks after Hogan ripped up his American flag shirt on stage while extending his support for the GOP nominee at the Republican National Convention.

The former president reiterated his long-standing stance on being a straight-edge in a recent interview with Theo Von. "No drugs, no drinking, no cigarettes," he told the 44-year-old comedian while noting that his abstinence stems from the influence of his brother, who struggled with alcoholism. reported Daily Express US.

Trump's promotion of Hogan's beverage raised several eyebrows as he previously admitted to not drinking alcohol. One fan commented, "After a 6 pack you want



Hulk Hogan is doing a beer, and if he's doing it, it must be good. Great looking can and logo. Give it a try!!! DJT," Trump wrote about the WWE star's latest offering. His endorsement comes weeks after Hogan ripped up his American flag shirt on stage while extending his support for the GOP nominee at the Republican National Convention.

Air Canada prepares to shut down as talks with pilots union near deadlock



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Air Canada AC.TO is finalizing plans to suspend most of its operations, likely beginning Sunday, as talks with the pilot union are nearing an impasse over "inflexible" wage demands, the country's largest airline said on Monday. Air Canada and its low-cost subsidiary, Air Canada Rouge, operate nearly 670 flights daily. Unless they reach a settlement with the union, the shutdown could affect 110,000 passengers daily, causing widespread disruptions.

The airline's pilots have been pushing to close the salary gap with their US peers, who managed to strike lucrative labor deals in 2023 amid pilot shortages and strong travel demand. "Air Canada believes there is still

time to reach an agreement with our pilot group, provided ALPA moderates its wage demands which far exceed average Canadian wage increases," CEO Michael Rousseau said on Monday. The Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA), which represents more than 5,200 pilots at Air Canada, did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment. Talks between the airline and union are continuing, but both parties remain far apart, the company added.

ALPA's pilots have previously said the current pay rates at US rival Delta Air Lines DAL.N are up to 45 per cent higher than the Canadian carrier's hourly pay rates. "We appreciate their (Air Canada pilots) frustration, but also note that the situation is not exactly apples to apples given the barriers to entry around pilot supply in the US," TD Cowen analyst Thomas Fitzgerald wrote in a note last week. The union and the airline entered into a mandated three-week cooling-off period, during which the union cannot go on strike, on August 27. Air Canada anticipates it would take seven to 10 days for normal operations to resume once the complete shutdown is in place. Flights across its system would be cancelled over three days, with a total shutdown as early as 00:01 EDT on September 18. The airline's shares are down more than 18 per cent this year. The company is in talks with other airlines to accommodate its stranded passengers in the event of flight cancellations, it said.

Donald Trump, Kamala Harris neck and neck before televised presidential debate



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

The latest polling confirms that Trump retains locked-in support from about half of voters, despite the Republican's historic status as a convicted felon and his role in instigating the unprecedented attempt to overturn his 2020 loss to Joe Biden.

A New York Times/Siena poll found that 78-year-old Trump is leading Harris nationally by 48 to 47 per cent, well within the margin of error. The US presidential race remains neck-and-neck according to polls released Sunday, two days before Kamala Harris and Donald Trump hold their first -- and potentially only - televised debate. The latest polling confirms that Trump retains locked-in support from about half of voters, despite the Republican's historic status as a convicted felon and his role in instigating the unprecedented attempt to overturn his 2020 loss to Joe Biden. Harris, who only jumped into the race after President Biden quit in July, has rapidly transformed herself from a little-noticed vice president into a serious contender. However, the polls show she has not made a major breakthrough, leaving the race a toss-up. A New York Times/Siena poll found that 78-year-old Trump is leading Harris nationally by 48 to 47 per cent, well within the margin of error. US presidential elections are decided by tallying the results of state-by-state contests, rather than an overall national popular vote, meaning that a tiny handful of swing states typically determine the balance. The poll found Harris, 59, narrowly ahead in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania, and tied in four other swing states: Nevada, Georgia, North Carolina and Arizona.

A CBS News/YouGov poll put Harris ahead by one percentage point in Michigan and Wisconsin and tied in Pennsylvania. The election is already chaotic, with 81-year-old Biden dropping out amid concerns over his age, Trump narrowly surviving an assassin's bullet at a rally, and fears mounting that Trump will again refuse to concede if he loses in November. However, the latest numbers confirm that each candidate retains a remarkably stable base of loyalists, almost evenly splitting the country. One game changer could be Tuesday's ABC



News debate, the only one scheduled between the two. Trump will be under pressure to rein in his characteristic use of insults and intimidation as he stands next to a mixed-race candidate vying to become the first female president in US history.

Harris will need to use the huge viewership to connect with Americans in a way that she was unable to as vice president and has had little time to accomplish in her super-condensed campaign run. With Trump now the oldest presidential nominee in US history, she is pitching an optimistic, forward-looking message in contrast to Trump's apocalyptic claims that the country faces terminal decline without him in the White House. But Harris has also been accused of running on vague optimism and unity at the expense of putting out concrete policies. She finally addressed the growing pressure late Sunday when her campaign put out a policy page, touching on subjects from unions and cost-of-living issues to health care. At the same time, Harris will have to solve the conundrum of how to debate Trump, who habitually makes false statements on nearly every topic and loves to get under his opponents' skin. Biden, in his only debate against Trump before dropping his candidacy, found himself entirely unable to cope. Already, Trump has been subjecting Harris in his speeches to racist and sexist taunts, deliberately mispronouncing her name and calling her "crazy" and a "Marxist."

"It will take almost superhuman focus and discipline to deal with Donald Trump in a debate," Harris supporter and current transportation secretary Pete Buttigieg told CNN. The Harris campaign announced it would "barnstorm battleground states" after the debate, beginning in North Carolina, then Pennsylvania. Trump held a rally in Wisconsin on Saturday where he appealed to his mostly white, working-class base with a dark speech claiming that he is struggling against a "rogue regime" where Democrats "imported murderers, child predators and serial rapists from all over the planet." On his Truth Social platform, he warned that once back in the White House he would impose "long prison sentences" on all those he said were planning "cheating" in November.

China's only empress rose from harem to throne, used Buddhism to capture power

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Wu Zetian was a fifth-grade concubine in the Chinese royal harem in the 7th century who rose to become China's only empress. William Dalrymple's new book, The Golden Road: How Ancient India Transformed the World, sheds light on how she used Buddhism and Nalanda-trained scholars to capture and consolidate power.

Wu Zetian rose from the bottom of the hierarchy to become the only empress in China's history. Buddhism, a religion born in India, and Nalanda-trained scholars played an important role as Wu Zetian cleverly broke from the royal harem to capture and consolidate power. In her tale, unknown to the world, is also the story of how Buddhism became the court religion of China. In the list of mighty queens, the names of Catherine the Great, Joan of Arc and Queen Elizabeth I always come up. Wu Zetian's name should also make it to this list. She was ambitious and outsmarted everyone. She toppled the ruling Tang dynasty, used Buddhism to legitimize her power, and ousted and killed anyone who she saw as a threat.

The chronicles of history, however, have not been

kind to her. They remember Wu Zetian as a cruel ruler who killed without mercy or pity. But Wu's steely side has to be seen in the context of her fight against the Tang dynasty. She propagated Mahayana Buddhism, instead of Confucianism, which was prevalent in China then. Confucianism considered women at a lower status than men. Records that survived the purge after Wu Zetian's demise reveal how history was re-written against her death, when her dynasty collapsed and Confucianism returned to power.

The fascinating story of Wu Zetian and how ancient India shaped world history has been documented by William Dalrymple in his recently-released book, Wu Zetian's father, Wu Shiyue, was a supporter of the Tang dynasty and gained their favour in turn. When the Tang Empire was founded, his father was rewarded by the founder of the Tang dynasty, Li Yuan. Wu Shiyue became the President of the Board of Works, a high official post for several years. He also became the Duke of Ying, a small kingdom.

Wu Shiyue's second wife, Lady Yang, had three daughters. Wu Zetian was the second of them and was born in 624 AD.

GST Council 'aligned' on the need to cut insurance premiums, specific proposal referred to GoM



The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council in its 54th meeting held Monday broadly converged on the need to reduce the tax rate for health and life insurance premiums from 18 per cent but the specific proposal has now been referred to the Group of Ministers (GoM) for further discussion, sources said. The GoM on rate rationalisation along with ministers from some states will discuss the issue in further detail, sources said.

The GoM on rate rationalisation will meet in Goa on September 23 and the next GST Council meeting will be held in November. "There was broad consensus for GST on health and life insurance premiums to be reduced, but modalities will be decided in the next Council meeting," a source said. The existing GoM on rate rationalisation along with some more states will discuss the issue of health and life insurance premiums in detail, the source added. The fitment committee, which includes officials from states and Centre, presented detailed numbers on the proposal to reduce GST on health and life insurance premiums in

the Council meeting. The GST Council meeting, chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, is still ongoing.

In August, the reconstituted GoM on rate rationalisation under the GST regime had met for the first time and broadly agreed to not make any changes with the existing slabs in the indirect tax regime. State finance ministers, who participated in the meeting, had also said that the issue of reduction of GST rate in health and life insurance premiums was raised in the meeting of the GoM but was being reviewed by the fitment committee. On August 27, Sitharaman had said both rationalisation of rates and tweaking of slabs under GST are on the discussion table, adding that the discussions will go item-by-item and make a comparison of the current rates with the revenue neutral rate. In 2023-24, the Centre and states had collected Rs 8,262.94 crore through GST on health insurance premiums, while Rs 1,484.36 crore was collected on account of GST on health reinsurance premiums. Opposition leaders including Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee have demanded withdrawal of GST on life and health insurance premiums. Banerjee had also written a letter to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for rollback of GST on life insurance and health insurance premiums. Earlier on July 28, Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari wrote to Finance Minister Sitharaman, saying GST on life and medical insurance premiums amounted to taxing the "uncertainties of life". Sitharaman had last month said that tax was levied on insurance premiums even before the imposition of GST and that GST revenues are shared between states and the Centre.

Adani Group warns Bangladesh's \$500 million debt from Godda power plant 'unsustainable': FT report

The Adani Group has warned Bangladesh's new interim government that its \$500 million-worth backlog in dues from the contentious Godda power project has become "unsustainable", UK-based daily Financial Times reported. "We are in constant dialogue with the Bangladesh government and have appraised them of this unsustainable situation where we are meeting not just our supply commitment but also [commitments] to our lenders and suppliers in spite of rising receivables," Adani Power told the Financial Times. Despite the mounting dues, Adani Power said it would "continue to supply reliable and competitively priced power from our Godda facility to Bangladesh."

The new interim government, led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, is facing an immense challenge of reviving the economy of the country after former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's ouster. In July last year, industrialist Gautam Adani called on Hasina following the full load commencement of power supply to Bangladesh from the 1600 MW Ultra Super-Critical Thermal Power Plant (USCTPP) at Godda in Jharkhand. USCTPP had begun supplying power to Bangladesh in April 2023, becoming the only power plant in India to export its entire output to the neighbouring country. The deal was agreed upon during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Dhaka in 2015. Activists have repeatedly criticised the project, arguing that the high cost of importing power from Godda is not economically viable for Bangladesh. As The Indian Express reported earlier, the APJL's Godda plant exported at least 7,508 million units (MU) of power — or 63 per cent of the total exports 11,933.83 million units — to Bangladesh in April-March of 2023-24. On August 12, just a week after Hasina fled Bangladesh, the Ministry of



Power amended its rules to allow plants exporting exclusively to neighbouring countries to sell within India. According to a report in the Financial Times, Bangladesh faced total power liabilities of \$3.7 billion as of the middle of last week. In the same report, Yunus's top energy adviser, Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, stated that the country owes as much as \$800 million to Adani. He said that the interim government has approached lenders, including the World Bank, for billions of dollars in loans to stabilise the country's finances.

"Since joining [the government], we've been firefighting," Khan said. Yunus took charge of Bangladesh as Chief Adviser of the interim government in August, following weeks of student-led protests that started over reservations in government jobs and forced Hasina to resign and flee the country. Khan stated that Yunus's administration plans to reintroduce competitive bidding, empower regulators, and establish an expert committee to re-examine energy deals negotiated under the previous government.

Lack of success in reducing road accidents a failure, says Nitin Gadkari



Nitin Gadkari, reduced road accidents, Indian express Nitin Gadkari requested the industry to use corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds to organise awareness programmes, especially in schools. The government is trying its best to reduce road accidents but is not seeing much success, the Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari said Monday. Addressing a gathering at the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India's (ACMA's) annual meet, Gadkari requested the industry to use corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds to organise awareness programmes, especially in schools.

"We are trying our level best but we are not getting

that much success... I can accept that this is one of the failures," Gadkari said. He added that almost 5 lakh road accidents happen annually in India, with 30,000 accidents occurring in institutional areas like schools. Out of 1.68 lakh deaths, 66 per cent of the victims are aged between 18-36 years.

Gadkari appealed to the auto industry to use CSR funds towards educating people and students. "We need cooperation from the media, social organisations, NGOs, and the industry. You don't need to support the government financially but with your own initiatives through CSR, if you can organise programmes and contribute to this cause, it will be a great thing. Many people are doing it but you need to find out which are the effective programmes by which we change human behaviour," he said. He also emphasised focussing on schools. "If you can concentrate on schools because they are the future generation and if we can change their mindset, it can be a great thing. We need to reduce accidents by 50 per cent but still we are not getting good success," Gadkari said. "In Assam, in one district, 35-40 per cent accidents (of the) were reduced because the main culprit in the accidents is road engineering. I'm always firing to my engineers that you are responsible. But still, I feel that the problems with the society (is) neither fear nor respect for the law," he added.

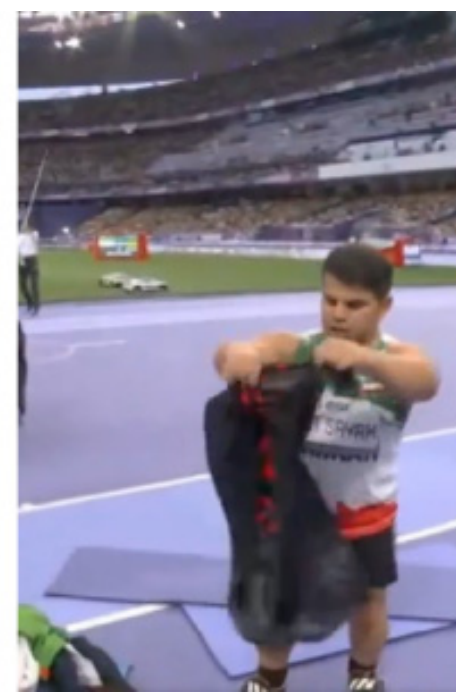
It's Glowtime! Countdown begins for launch of AI-powered iPhone 16 series

Cupertino (California): The new era will dawn today with the unveiling of the hotly anticipated iPhone which will catapult the tech trendsetter into the age of AI. Apple's ubiquitous iPhone is about to break new ground with a shift into artificial intelligence that will do everything from smartening up its frequently dim-witted assistant Siri to creating customised emojis on the fly. The new era will dawn on Monday (10:30 pm IST) with the unveiling of the hotly anticipated iPhone 16 in a Cupertino, California, auditorium named after Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, who pulled out the first iPhone in 2007 and waved it like a magic wand while predicting it would reshape society.

Apple has sold billions of iPhones since then, helping to create about \$3 trillion in shareholder wealth. But in the past decade, there have been mostly minor upgrades from one model to the next — a factor that has caused people to hold off on buying a new iPhone and led to a recent slump in sales of Apple's marquee

product. The iPhone 16 is generating a bigger buzz because it is the first model to be tailored specifically for AI, a technology that is expected to trigger the biggest revolution in the industry since Jobs thrust Apple into the smartphone market 17 years ago. The advances included in the iPhone 16 could set up Apple to be "the gatekeeper of the consumer AI revolution," Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives wrote in a research note. Apple's pivot began three months ago with a preview of its new approach during a developers conference, helping to build anticipation for Monday's showcase. Since that June conference, competitors such as Samsung and Google have made even more strides in AI. Google even took the unusual step of introducing its latest Pixel phones packed with their own AI magic last month instead of hewing to its traditional October timetable in an effort to upstage Apple's release of the iPhone 16.

Javelin thrower Navdeep Singh, who is only 4'4, won a gold at the Paralympics; know all about dwarfism



India has racked its highest medal tally in the Paralympics this year with 29 medals, standing at the 18th position on the final tally. One of the Paralympians who won gold for the country is Navdeep Singh, who suffers from dwarfism.

Dwarfism, particularly achondroplasia, is a genetic bone disorder that results in shorter limbs in proportion to the body, a normal-sized trunk, and a larger head. This condition affects approximately 1 in 20,000 births and often occurs due to new genetic mutations, even if the parents are of average height, according to Dr Swati Chhabra, Consultant and In-charge of the Child Development Centre at Yatharth Hospital, Noida.

"The disorder primarily impacts the growth of the limbs, with males averaging around 4 feet, 4 inches, and females about 4 feet, 1 inch. Despite these differences in physical development, most individuals with achondroplasia have normal intelligence and lead healthy lives, though milestones like walking may be delayed in childhood," Dr Chhabra explained. In adulthood, the physical functions of individuals with achondroplasia are often normal, though they may face mobility challenges due to their shorter limbs. Dr Rakesh Gupta, Senior Consultant in internal Medicine at Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, explains that while their muscle strength may vary, many individuals can achieve levels of physical fitness comparable to those of average-sized adults with the right con-

ditioning and training.

Iran's Sadegh Beit Sayah was disqualified for what the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) called unsporting or improper conduct. Iran's Sadegh Beit Sayah was disqualified for what the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) called unsporting or improper conduct. India's Navdeep Singh was upgraded to gold at the Paris Paralympics. (Screengrab via IPC YouTube) "People with achondroplasia, like athlete Navdeep Singh, can develop significant physical strength, demonstrating that dwarfism doesn't inherently compromise fitness potential," Dr Gupta said.

However, dwarfism comes with certain health challenges. Individuals may experience spinal curvature issues like lordosis or kyphosis, which can lead to spinal cord compression. Other common issues include bowed legs, frequent ear infections, and misaligned teeth. Proper medical care and regular monitoring are essential to managing these complications. Dr Chhabra highlights the importance of addressing these concerns early, as they can help prevent more severe health outcomes later in life. Though about 80% of cases result from spontaneous genetic mutations, dwarfism can be inherited, the doctors said. If one parent has achondroplasia, there is a 50% chance of passing the condition to their child. Regular medical attention and a supportive environment are crucial for individuals with dwarfism to manage both physical and social challenges.

Low-carb diets meet nutrient needs: Study

Low-carb diets can meet and sometimes even exceed one's nutrient needs, according to a study that examined the scepticism around the nutritional quality of such diets. Commonly recommended for diabetic patients to manage their sugar levels, low-carb diets restrict the intake of foods high in carbohydrates or added sugar, including sweets, starches, and refined grains. While low-carb diets have been shown to provide health benefits, including weight loss, researchers said scepticism remains around the nutritional quality of low-carb diets.

Some argue that cutting down on carbs leads to over-consuming protein or fat and under-consuming essential nutrients, the team, including researchers at the University of Vermont, US, said. For the study, published in the journal *Frontiers in Nutrition*, they assessed the nutrient adequacy of three different seven-day low-carb meal plans. Two were ketogenic diets — one that averaged about 20 grams of net carbs per day, while the other averaged about 40 grams of net carbs per day. The third was a more liberal meal plan that contained an average of around 100 grams of net carbs per day.

"All three low-carbohydrate meal plans exceeded recommendations (US) for vitamins A, C, D, E, K, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, B6, folate and B12 in males and females in the age group of 31-70 years and exceeded calcium recommendations for adults in the age group of 31-50 years," the authors wrote. "Our findings suggest that, in addition to their well-established ability to support weight management, low-carb eating patterns can actually help promote better diet quality and close critical nutrient gaps," co-author Beth Bradley, from the University of Vermont, said. For certain sub-section of the population — such as younger women requiring higher amounts of iron or older people needing more calcium — the low-carb meal plans fall slightly short in a few nutri-



ents, the researchers said. Further, they found that two of three meal plans in the study — those containing 40 grams and 100 grams of net carbohydrates, respectively — also provided more than enough fibre for women aged 31-70 years. While some low-carb diets are known to be also low on fibre, the researchers said the results do not support the idea.

"The idea that a low-carb diet must also be low in fibre is simply not supported by the data. High-fibre foods are actually an important part of a low-carb lifestyle, in part because fibre-rich food choices can help lower net carbohydrate intake," Bradley explained. "Non-starchy vegetables, nuts and seeds, and, in moderation, even higher-carb fruits, starchy vegetables and whole grains can contribute fibre to the diet while keeping overall net carb intake in check, especially in the more liberal low-carb approach," the co-author said. The researchers added that the low-carb meal plans provided more protein than needed to prevent deficiency, without delivering an excessive amount that could be unsafe.

Condoms can't protect you from sexually transmitted infections; here are six things that can help

Condoms are one of the most widely used methods for reducing the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). They act as a physical barrier, preventing direct contact with bodily fluids and skin that can transmit infections. However, while condoms significantly lower the risk of many STIs, they are not 100% effective in preventing all infections, said Dr Sadhna Singhal Vishnoi, Senior Consultant — Obstetrics and Gynecology, Cloudnine Group of Hospitals, New Delhi, Punjabi Bagh. These are some of the reasons why, she said, condoms are not a full-proof method to protect against STIs: 1. Incomplete Protection

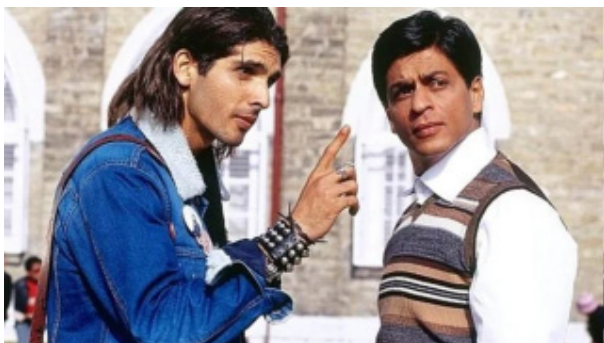
Condoms only cover the penis, leaving other areas of the genital region exposed. Many STIs, such as herpes, human papillomavirus (HPV), and syphilis, can be transmitted through skin-to-skin contact in areas not covered by a condom. Therefore, even with consistent condom use, there's still a risk of contracting these infections. 2. Condom Breakage or Slippage Condoms can sometimes break or slip off during intercourse, which compromises their effectiveness. Incorrect usage, such as not leaving enough space at the tip or using oil-based lubricants with latex condoms, can increase the likelihood of breakage. 3. Fungal Infections

While condoms can reduce the transmission of fungal infections by limiting contact, they are not completely protective. Fungal infections like yeast infections can af-

fect areas beyond where the condom provides a barrier, potentially leading to transmission despite condom use. sex Understanding their limitations and incorporating additional protective measures, such as regular testing and good hygiene practices, can help ensure better sexual health and reduce the risk of infection. (Source: Freepik) Frequent testing is crucial for sexually active individuals, especially those with multiple partners. Regular testing allows for early detection and treatment of STIs, which is vital because many STIs are asymptomatic and can go unnoticed without testing. 2. Good Hygiene Practices Maintaining good personal hygiene is essential in reducing the risk of infections. This includes washing the genital area before and after sexual activity and avoiding the sharing of personal items like towels or underwear. 3. Limiting Sexual Partners Reducing the number of sexual partners can significantly lower the risk of exposure to STIs. The more partners you have, the higher the likelihood of encountering someone with an infection.

4. Vaccination Vaccines are available for certain STIs, such as HPV and hepatitis B. Getting vaccinated can provide protection against these infections and reduce the risk of complications. 5. Communication and Mutual Testing Having open discussions with your sexual partners about STI status and testing can help in making informed decisions. Mutual testing before engaging in sexual activity can further reduce the risk.

Zayed Khan recalls time spent with Shah Rukh Khan during Main Hoon Na shoot: 'He hated that I used to beat him in FIFA 2000'



helming the film, Manikandan was taking care of the camera. I messed it up about three times. When you mess up a dialogue or scene, you can see the energy drop. As if people are losing hope and faith in you", he added.

Zayed further recalled, "I remember, Shah Rukh Khan came to me very sweetly. He said, 'You want to do the lines and rehearse with me?' I said, 'Yeah man, I would really like that.' And, we went to a room and so sweetly, he rehearsed with me and I came out there. He said, 'Just do it your way, don't do it the filmy way. And I went out there, I started to gain goosebumps and I went for it. I remember after the shot got cut, everyone went quiet and then they started clapping."

In the same interview, Zayed Khan recalled how Shah Rukh Khan wouldn't let him sleep until he beat him in the FIFA game. He said, "We used to play video games. He is a full on game geek. He used to hate the fact that I used to beat him in FIFA 2000. At night, after pack up, we used to play the whole time. He would make me play until he won."When asked what was the one thing he learnt from the superstar, Zayed said, "He has taught me a lesson in life. As actors, we tend to be very competitive. There is this very healthy competition about dialogues, directors, camera, lighting. With Shah Rukh Khan, he taught me you should prepare for everything ahead and behind the scene. He said, 'Don't be in this competitive mode. Set up a situation in such a way that even if you are annoying someone, you should know how they are going to react and for their reaction you need to keep at least three reactions ready in your head. So this removes the competitiveness and just keeps you prepared."

Zayed Khan, who shared screen space with Shah Rukh Khan in his second film Main Hoon Na, recently shared some fond memories of working with the Pathaan star. For Zayed, Shah Rukh is an 'ocean of insight' and someone who is always 'well-prepared'. In a recent interview, the 44-year-old actor also revealed how SRK helped him prepare for a long monologue he had to shoot for the 2004 film.

In the interview with Rohit Roy for RiteBite Maz Protein TV, Zayed shared his experience of working with SRK and said, "Shah Rukh Khan is well-prepared. He is an ocean of insight. When you are with him, you don't feel that he is pressurising you to perform as well as he is. What he is doing is, he is always observing and he is giving you his best back." "There was this lovely moment, when I was doing this scene where I had to give this long monologue when SRK's character comes and he has a father and I don't. It was my first time that I was doing a scene with Kirron Kher and Shah Rukh Khan. Farah was

Rajinikanth, Manju Warriar dance their hearts out in this track blending Tamil and Malayalam aesthetics



Vettaiyan song Manasilaayo: The track serves as a tribute to "Superstar" Rajinikanth and the qualities that make him the undisputed Thalaivar (leader). Vettaiyan song Manasilaayo: The four-minute lyrical video features Rajinikanth and Manju Warriar grooving to the tune of the track.

Vettaiyan song Manasilaayo: The much-anticipated first track from director TJ Gnanavel's upcoming action drama Vettaiyan, starring "Superstar" Rajinikanth in the lead role, is finally here and it's an absolute Thalaivar banger, brimming with the essence of dappankuthu. Titled "Manasilaayo (Understood?)," a phrase frequently used by the character Varman (Vinayakan) in Rajinikanth's last outing Jailer, the song serves as a tribute to the superstar and the qualities that make him the undisputed Thalaivar (leader). The four-minute lyrical video includes glimpses from the actual song sequence and features Malayalam "Lady Superstar" Manju Warriar,

who plays a key role in Vettaiyan. Blending Tamil and Malayalam words and aesthetics, the song is poised to become an instant trendsetter as a dance number. Composed by Anirudh Ravichander, with lyrics by Super Subu and Vishnu Edavan, "Manasilaayo" features vocals from Malaysia Vasudevan, Yugendran Vasudevan, Anirudh Ravichander and Deepthi Suresh. The choreography is by Dinesh. Also starring Amitabh Bachchan (in his Tamil cinema debut), Fahadh Faasil, Rana Daggubati, Kishore, Ritika Singh and Dushara Vijayan in key roles, Vettaiyan is produced by Subaskaran Allirajah under the banner of Lyca Productions. The film boasts cinematography by SR Kathir, editing by Philomin Raj, production design by K Kadir and action choreography by Anbariv. A few days ago, Lyca Productions had shared a video on social media showcasing Rajinikanth dubbing for the film, signaling that post-production is in full swing. Vettaiyan is set to hit theatres worldwide on October 10, in Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and Kannada languages.

Tanuj Virwani opens about his breakup with Akshara Haasan: 'She didn't take a stand for me'



Actor Tanuj Virwani and Akshara Haasan, the daughter of Kamal Haasan, dated for four years. However, they broke up and lost touch after private photos of Akshara leaked online. Recently, Tanuj talked about his relationship with Akshara and the leaked private pictures.

Actor Tanuj Virwani and Akshara Haasan, the daughter of Kamal Haasan, dated for four years. However, they broke up and lost touch after private photos of Akshara leaked online. Recently, Tanuj talked about his relationship with Akshara and the leaked private pictures. Talking about being friends with exes in an in-

terview with Siddharth Kannan, Tanuj revealed he is in touch with many of his exes but Akshara. He said, "I am friends with many of my exes and more than friendship, we have mutual respect for each other." Stating why he lost touch with Akshara, the actor said, "Sometimes when you lose respect for your partner, and you don't take a stand for them when you have to, then I may forgive but not forget. In that case, I don't have to be friends. We are happy in our respective space."

He further explained, "It has nothing to do with our breakup. But, everything that happened about the leaked pictures, either you believe I have done it, or you believe I haven't and in that case, you need to take a stand for me. But, she didn't. I believe everybody has their own reasons and now it doesn't really matter."

In the same interview, Tanuj Virwani revealed his wife Tanya Jacob, who usually never tells him what to say at interviews, was concerned about the whole episode with Akshara Haasan, when they first met. When asked if she ever bothered to ask him about his past with Akshara, Tanuj said, "Of course."

He added, "The irony here is that I met Tanya around the time when I broke up with Akshara. We were just friends at that point, but we had met around that time. And at that time, maybe out of curiosity or concern, I am not sure, but she did ask me about the whole episode. My answer was still the same. I told her the reality. That's about it." Tanuj Virwani married his girlfriend Tanya Jacob at a Christmas themed wedding in Lonavala in December, last year. The couple is expecting their first child.

Director Soumya Sadanandan claims she was banned from Malayalam cinema for confronting powerful figure who demanded sex from actor for money



Soumya Sadanandan, who helmed the Kunchacko Boban and Nimisha Sajayan-starrer Mangalyam Thanthunanena, alleged that she was shunned by producers who feared she might become "the next Anjali Menon." Soumya Sadanandan is known for helming the Kunchacko Boban and Nimisha Sajayan-starrer Mangalyam Thanthunanena. As more survivors come forward with their traumatic experiences of mistreatment by men in the film industry, award-winning filmmaker Soumya Sadanandan has revealed that she was blacklisted from the Malayalam film industry for "questioning" a powerful figure who barged into a female actor's hotel room, drunk, and demanded sex in exchange for money. Soumya also claimed that she was shunned by producers who feared she might become "the next Anjali Menon".

In a statement she shared on Instagram, Soumya, who helmed the Kunchacko Boban and Nimisha Sajayan-starrer Mangalyam Thanthunanena (2018), wrote, "There have been numerous enquiries from friends, family and even strangers about my next project over the past six years. In 2018, I directed my first and last feature film. My answer to all of you is - that it's all in the Hema Committee Report. I was banned by the industry." The filmmaker mentioned that although she approached 10 producers in 2019, eight of them either rejected her or "gaslighted" her. Soumya noted that the only two producers willing to collaborate with her were women who recognised that she was being outcasted by the industry. Unfortunately, those projects never materialised. "For someone who grew up on Malayalam Cinema, the ousting was unbearable. It would have been better if they had just choked me to death instead. I dedicated 12 years to learning the

craft, only to be alienated. Why? Because I questioned the power person who walked into an actor's hotel room - drunk - offering her cash, demanding sex!"

Soumya Sadanandan also alleged that the lead actor and the production house conspired and excluded her from Mangalyam Thanthunanena once the post-production began, editing the film without her approval to make it more commercially appealing. "Because the lead actor and production thought I was making an art-house film, they wanted a commercial blockbuster! They assumed I was an art-house filmmaker because my documentary, Chembai - My Discovery of a Legend, won a special jury award at the 2016 National Film Awards under the short documentary segment. It was that easy, and so they alienated me after the shoot and edited the film without my consent," she claimed. Soumya also shared that the version of the film released in theatre was that of the lead actor and co-producer. "I was character assassinated. I was portrayed as an arrogant, adamant, flamboyant, drug addict by the same drunk power person who walked into the actor's room. People don't want to invest in the ideas of such a 'bi**h'!" The filmmaker further alleged that she suffered repeated psychological abuse from these individuals and added that even the "good boys have grey shades". She further revealed that a producer told her she wasn't given opportunities because they feared she might become "the next Anjali Menon". "It was 'said so' in a producer association meeting! It took me a few years to survive. I am breathing. I am at peace now. Yes, I spoke to the Hema Committee. Why am I sharing this note here? I quit the industry in 2020, but I haven't quit on Cinema, and I know Cinema hasn't quit on me. Every single word mentioned in the Hema Committee Report is true," she asserted.

Soumya further expressed her desire for the future generations to come to work without fear. "The Mafia exists; the Power Group exists; Feudalism exists; Nepotism exists. Anyone who says otherwise is lying. Anyone.... They are only protecting the empire they have built! They only have selfish gains! Undoubtedly, only a sociopath or a narcissist could do such a thing to the countless passionate cinema aspirants. Fame, Power, Money, and Greed, have gotten them hooked," she noted, adding that though she is tired of being strong, she is, nonetheless, fighting the patriarchy, "one grandpa at a time".

Chunky Panday wants Ananya Panday to cook everyday, the Call Me Bae actor says, 'Let's discuss the pagaar first'

Farah Khan recently visited Ananya Panday's home along with her cook Dilip as part of her weekly vlogs. In the latest vlog, the choreographer-filmmaker was seen teaching cooking to Ananya and also giving a glimpse of the actress' new Mumbai house. During their interaction, Farah also revealed how she has always had a bad tea experience at the Panday house. In her latest vlog, Farah taught a non-cook Ananya to make an easy chicken fried rice recipe at home. During their cooking session, Farah revealed how she has never had a good tea at the Panday house. After struggling to chop vegetables and switch on the stove, Ananya, finally with the help of Farah and her cook Dilip, made chicken fried rice. Soon, they were joined by veteran actor Chunky Panday and his wife Bhavana Pandey as well as Ananya's grandmother.

The family then tasted the fried rice. Surprised by Ananya's cooking skills, her father Chunky Panday jokingly asked her to cook for them every day. To this, the actress hilariously replied, "I will cook, if you will pay me for it. Let's discuss the pagaar first." Amid this, Farah Khan



was heard complaining about her bad tea experience at the Panday house to Bhavana's mother. She was then tricked into having a chai supposedly made by Ananya's nani, which the director ended up spitting out, attracting hilarious reaction from the family. On the work front, Ananya Panday was last seen in the Amazon Prime Video show Call Me Bae, which marked her web series debut.

Shogun creates records, FX wins big, Angela Basset and Jamie Lee Curtis win maiden awards



The big winner of the two-day event was FX's Shogun, which took home a total of 14 awards, followed by the streamer's The Bear, which won seven

The Creative Arts Emmys, the award ceremony that honours the best in artistic and technical categories in American primetime television, happened this past weekend. The big winner of the two-day event was FX's Shogun, which took home a total of 14 awards, including wins for Best Guest Actor, Best Makeup, Best Hair-

styling, Best Production Design, and Best Visual Effects. Shogun surpassed the record of most wins held by the 2008 series, John Adams. It was an event of massive success for FX as the comedy series, The Bear, won seven awards in the comedy categories. It brought the maiden award for actor Jamie Lee Curtis, who received it for the Best Guest Star. The series also won awards for casting, editing, and sound mixing. With 27 wins across multiple categories, FX won the distributors race by a considerable margin with Netflix and Apple TV+ winning 18 and 15, respectively. Interestingly, Shogun and The Bear received maximum nominations in the Emmys with 25

and 23, respectively.

Other winners of the Creative Emmys include the Awkwafina and Sandra Oh-starrer Quiz Lady that took home the prize for Outstanding TV movie. In the music categories, Only Murders in the Building won the prize for Original Music and Lyrics, and Palm Royale took home the Main Title Theme Music Emmy. Some of the other major winners include Saturday Night Live, Welcome to Wrexham, Baby Reindeer, How I Met Your Father,

The Crown, and The Morning Show. It was a whopping fifth Emmy for Shark Tank in the Structured Reality Show category. Noted actor Maya Rudolph took home her sixth Emmy, and this time, it was for her voice acting in the show, Big Mouth.

This was her fourth win for her role as Hormone Monstress on the show. Apart from Curtis, other legends of the field like Angela Bassett and Alan Cumming won their first Emmy after years of being nominated for multiple categories. While Cumming won it for hosting The Traitors, Bassett won it for her narration of the National Geographic show, Queens.

Don't sack captains hastily: Gillespie, Kirsten tell PCB



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Pakistan's white and red ball head coaches Gary Kirsten and Jason Gillespie have advised the country's cricket board against changing the captains in haste after recent shoddy performances across formats. Babar Azam was sacked from white ball captaincy after 2023 ODI World Cup round robin exit in India and his replacement Shaheen Shah Afridi was removed after one bad series. Similarly in Tests, after Babar resigned, Shan Masood was named captain but after 0-2 Test series defeat to Bangladesh, there are calls for his immediate ouster. A PCB source however told PTI that recent media speculations about Masood and Babar's sacking is nothing more than kite flying. "There has been no discussion on changing the captains as the PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi has left it up to the two coaches and selectors to decide on the captaincy," he said. "And Kirsten and Gillespie are very clear that Shan and Babar both need to be given a proper run before judging their leadership abilities," the source added.

He said that both coaches wanted continuity in cap-

taincy and have conveyed this to the board very clearly. He also made it clear that the captaincy or team selections would not be up for discussion when the board holds its one-day workshop titled cricket connection later this month in Lahore. "That workshop is being held to hear the views of all stakeholders, mainly the domestic team coaches, selectors and contracted players so that the board is able to bridge the gap between domestic cricket and international cricket standards," he said. The source also informed that Gillespie who would join via video link and Kirsten who would be present himself at the workshop had told the PCB chief that patience and continuity in policies was required to get long term results from the team across formats. "The workshop is basically being held because both the coaches want the domestic team coaches to have a clear picture of what is required from them to ensure a flow of players who can be considered for selection for the national teams in all formats," he said. Asked who would be appointed captain for the ODI series later this year in Australia and South Africa or for the Champions Trophy, the source said it would probably be Babar to maintain continuity in white ball formats.

Sri Lanka beat England by 8 wickets for fourth Test victory on English soil

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Sri Lanka earned their only fourth Test victory on English soil after an unbeaten century by opener Pathum Nissanka helped the visitors secure an eight-wicket win in the third and final match of the series against England at The Oval here on Monday. England won the series 2-1 but missed out on a second clean sweep of its international summer, having defeated the West Indies 3-0 in July.

Starting Day 4 on 94-1 and requiring 125 more runs to win, the Sri Lankans needed barely two hours to complete the job in clinical fashion. The platform was built on Sunday when they skittled England for 156 in just 34 overs and were given a victory target of 219. Nissanka underpinned the chase with his second test hundred, reaching three figures in 107 balls and finishing 127 not out as Sri Lanka got to 219 in 40.3 overs. The diminutive opener, who struck 13 fours and two sixes, spread his arms wide and soaked in the applause inside a half-full ground after passing 100, then kissed his bat and looked to the sky. His other century was against the West Indies in 2021, his first year in the Sri Lankan Test team.

The quality of his knock raised the question why he didn't start the first test against England at Old Trafford last month, before he was recalled for the second Test at Lord's. Fittingly, it was Nissanka who scored the clinch-



ing runs with a cut for four. The tourists' previous Test wins in England came in 1998 – that famous 10-wicket victory in a one-off test at The Oval – as well as at Trent Bridge in 2006 and Headingley in 2014. This latest one looked unlikely after they won the toss but couldn't capitalise on perfect bowling conditions on Day 1, which England ended on 221-3. It was all Sri Lanka after that, however, as England got sloppy and occasionally reckless. The only wicket to fall on Monday was that of Kusal Mendis (39), who pulled a delivery from Gus Atkinson and saw Shoaib Bashir take a diving catch in the deep. Angelo Mathews was unbeaten on 32 alongside Nissanka at the end, with the pair putting on 111 runs in an unbroken stand for the third wicket.

Ronaldo effect?: Saudi Arabia national coach Roberto Mancini complains '20 of my players sitting on bench'



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Saudi Arabia: Cristiano Ronaldo's Al-Nassr were scheduled to play Shanghai Shenhua on Jan. 24 and Zhejiang four days later. Cristiano Ronaldo plays for Al-Nassr in the Saudi Pro League. The Saudi Pro League has seen some of the biggest names in the world of football make their way to the country in recent years. But while the presence of players like Cristiano Ronaldo, Neymar and Karim Benzema in the playing XIs of Saudi Pro League clubs has brought a lot of attention from the rest of the world, it has also significantly impacted the playing time that local Saudi players get for clubs.

The manager of Saudi Arabia's national football team, Roberto Mancini, spoke out against the national team players not getting enough time on the pitch in SPL games, as teams prioritised game times for foreign recruits. "Saudi Arabia's national team players must participate as core players with their clubs," Mancini said before lamenting: "I have 20 players sitting on the bench in local matches." Mancini's comments came ahead of

Saudi Arabia's crucial match against China at Dalian. The high-profile Saudi Arabian football team struggled in their third-round opener last week in continental World Cup qualifying. Saudi Arabia was held to a 1-1 draw by Indonesia, the lowest-ranked of the six-teams in Group C. "We have had problems capitalizing on opportunities, which have been evident in the last few games," said Mancini, who left his job as head coach of Italy a year ago to join Saudi Arabia's national team. He said there needed to be greater cooperation between the national team and clubs. The 18 teams in the third round of qualification have been divided into three groups of six. The top two from each automatically qualify for the World Cup. The teams that place third and fourth will advance to a fourth round to compete for two more places.

Ronaldo's late goal secures win for Portugal over Scotland

Lisbon: Cristiano Ronaldo came off the bench to score a second successive Nations League winner as Portugal fought back to defeat Scotland.

Following Thursday's late 3-2 loss to Poland, Steve Clarke's side began well and went ahead with their only chance of the first half as Scott McTominay headed in his tenth goal in his last 17 internationals from Kenny McLean's cross. Having spurned several chances in response, Portugal finally levelled after the restart when Bruno Fernandes struck on his 30th birthday and in his 600th career game. Ronaldo then pounced two minutes from the end for his 901st career goal to keep up the 2018/19 Nations League champions' 100% record in the current edition.

Jannik Sinner-Carlos Alcaraz era begins with Sinner's US Open triumph

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

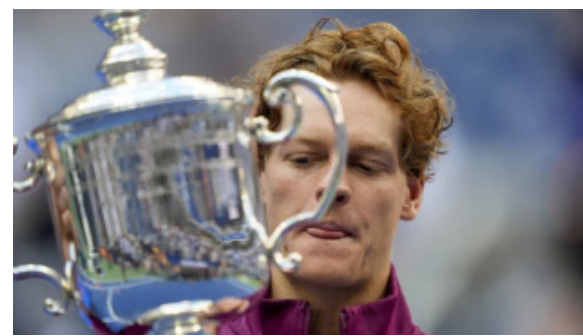
Take a peek at Monday's US Open final, and one finds that Jannik Sinner is an elegant shotmaker. Don't be fooled by his mild manner or wiry frame, the purity with which the Italian strikes the ball, and the strength of his athleticism make for a lethal combination. He can unfurl unplayable forehand strokes, and in the same motion, pirouette into a defensive backhand slice. Go through Sinner's journey behind his US Open triumph, and one finds that beneath the silk, lies a layer of steel too.

In a final that was less of a contest and more of a procession, Sinner cantered to a second Grand Slam title by outplaying and outthinking the 12th seeded Taylor Fritz 6-3, 6-4, 7-5 that further underlined his status as the No. 1 player in the world. The day that Sinner marked himself as the favourite for this US Open title was also the day that a permanent mark on his back appeared. After winning the Cincinnati Masters in the buildup to the season-ending Major, it was revealed that Sinner had tested positive for traces of a banned substance, Clostebol, in March. After successfully appealing temporary suspensions, Sinner was eventually cleared by an independent tribunal who concluded that he bore no fault or negligence due to accidental contaminations.

There was cynicism about it though. Locker room peers complained of preferential treatment, doubts swirled over why the entire process took place out of public view, the mistrust of the players with the governing bodies was laid bare, and Sinner, at the centre of it all, was forced to feel its wrath. Yet, the 23-year-old Italian dealt with all of it remarkably straightforwardly. He fronted up and had his side of the story clear. He sacked the two members of his team that were responsible for the transdermal contamination. He continued to win despite being weighed down by the massive off-court controversy and a persistent hip problem – even when his two main rivals for the title, Carlos Alcaraz and Novak Djokovic, crashed out early.

Ultimately, Sinner blocked out the noise and cruised to the US Open like the best players in the world often do – without much of a fuss. He later revealed how this latest period of his career has taken a toll. "I understood, especially in this tournament, how important the mental part is in this sport," he said after the final, per Reuters. "With my family and team and everyone who supports me daily, I always try to stick together with them especially when moments are getting difficult and tough... It was and still is a little bit in my mind. It's not that it's gone. But when I'm on court I try to focus on the game and try to handle the situation in the best possible way." Monday's final was, in a microcosm, how his entire tournament went – Sinner did not hit top gear, and did not need to.

Play opened with Fritz under pressure of playing his first Major final in front of an expectant home crowd. His serve evaded him and his flat forehand did not have the same punch, Sinner cruised through first set despite hitting only seven winners compared to eight unforced errors. In the second, Sinner further went into lockdown mode. The fact that he was not at his best and still dominant showed his consistency from the baseline, his steadiness in rallies, and the depth of his groundstrokes. He



was too complete, and too powerful, for Fritz to contend. Sinner won every single one of the 14 points behind his first serve, put pressure on Fritz's second, and only needed one break point – in the final game of the set – to leave with a two-set cushion. At the back end of the third, there was a mini recovery. Fritz went up a break and the home crowd – desperate for a first American Grand Slam champion since Andy Roddick in 2003 – lifted Fritz's level from somewhere near the floor to somewhere closer to his ceiling. Sinner responded with remarkable nonchalance, merely going up another gear to win four games in a row and wrap up the straight sets victory.

Later, Fritz admitted that he was far from his best on the day. He will have to wait for another opportunity to prove whether or not the best level of his big-serving, flat-hitting game will be enough to contend with Sinner's all-court excellence on a stage like this. If he continues to play the way he did on Monday, he is unlikely to get that chance. Sinner, meanwhile, put a Grand Slam bow on one of the best ATP seasons since Novak Djokovic in 2015 despite the potential doping ban hanging over his head. He became the first Italian man to win the US Open, the first man since Guillermo Villan in 1977 to win his first two shingles Majors in the same year, and just the fourth man to win both hard court Majors in the same year.

The Italian was rewarded with another Major for his incredible consistency. He has extended his lead as the World No. 1 to over 4,000 points. His win percentage on tour now stands at a whopping 91.66% (55 wins, 5 losses) in 2024. He has lost only two hard court matches all year. It is success on the big stage, and not consistency, that often marks the best players in the world though. And that is where Carlos Alcaraz had surged ahead after his French Open and Wimbledon double. Sinner's victory underlines that he too has the mettle to succeed on these stages, and with both players sweeping the Slams in 2024, it also means that the younger generation has officially leapfrogged the one above it. Between the two of them, players born in the 2000s have now won all six of the Major finals they have played, while players born in the 1990s – the original 'Next Gen' of which Fritz is very much a part – have only won two in 19 attempts. But most importantly, Sinner proved that no matter what storm is raging around him, he is capable of taking care of business without much of a bother. As the doubts continue to do the rounds over his doping violation, and the conspiracies continue to float, he can take solace in the fact that it will not stop him from winning.

At Global Chess League, Vaishali excited to join forces with Viswanathan Anand at Ganges Grandmasters, visit London Eye



GNS News Agency, Sept 12

Vaishali will be joined by India's Viswanathan Anand and Arjun Erigaisi at the Ganges Grandmasters in this season's Global Chess League. (PHOTO: GCL) Vaishali will be joined by India's Viswanathan Anand and Arjun Erigaisi at the Ganges Grandmasters in this season's Global Chess League. Vaishali R will make her debut in the Global Chess League when the second season starts next month, after she missed the first season.

Picked by Ganges Grandmasters in the draft before the Global Chess League's second season, Vaishali will be in the same team as chess legend Viswanathan Anand. Speaking about playing for Ganges Grandmasters alongside Viswanathan Anand – who was India's first grandmaster and has played a part in the development of most of India's top prodigies including Vaishali – she said, "This will be a very special event for me to play alongside Vishy sir in the same team. It is a wonderful opportunity for me. My brother Pragg is on Magnus Carlsen's team, which is great as well. Of course, we won't compete against each other, but our teams are different." Vaishali's brother Praggnanandhaa will turn out for the Alpine SG Pipers, the same team he represented last season. "It is a very interesting and unique format, which we never had in chess events before. To have many strong players in one team, we get to discuss a lot about the game and share ideas. It will definitely help players improve individually," Vaishali added while discussing the unique team format. The Global Chess League's second edition will take place in London from 3rd to 12th October at Friends House, and Vaishali has already planned her off-the-board adventures in the city. "The last time I visited London was five years ago. Back then, I missed going to the London Eye ride, so it's

the best opportunity for me to visit this time," Vaishali revealed. The stellar line-up of icon players for the second season of Global Chess League includes Magnus Carlsen (Alpine SG Pipers), Viswanathan Anand (Ganges Grandmasters), Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Mumba Masters) Ian Nepomniachtchi (Triveni Continental Kings), and debutants Hikaru Nakamura (American Gambits) and Anish Giri (PBG Alaskan Knights). Apart from retaining Tan Zhongyi, PBG Alaskan Knights picked Alina Kashlinskaya. Meanwhile, Vaishali R and Nurgul Salimova were drafted by Ganges Grandmasters, while Alexandra Kosteniuk and Valentina Gunina were acquired by Triveni Continental Kings. American Gambits filled in their quota of Superstar Women with Bibsara Assaubayeva and Elisabeth Paetz, while Grandmasters Koneru Humpy and Harika Dronavalli were retained by Mumba Masters.

Spin legend Muralitharan believes no one can beat his Test record

GNS News Agency, Sept 12

New Delhi: Sri Lanka's spin-bowling legend Muttiah Muralitharan said he was definitely worried about the future of Test cricket, adding that his record of picking 800 wickets in the longer format won't be surpassed by any bowler. The next best off-spinners after Muralitharan in Test cricket are Australia's Nathan Lyon (530 wickets) and India's Ravichandran Ashwin (516 wickets).

"I am definitely worried about Test cricket. Every country will play maybe only six or seven Test matches. England and Australia might play the Ashes. But in some other countries, not many people are watching. There will be very little Test cricket." It's very hard (for someone to surpass 800 Test wickets), because emphasis has shifted to short-form cricket. Also, we played for 20 years. Careers are shorter now," said Muralitharan, who played 133 Tests for Sri Lanka, to Daily Mail on Monday.

Muralitharan, who also took 534 wickets in 350 ODIs, believes Sri Lanka, despite being on the verge of winning third Test against England at the Oval, said the visitors' lost the series because they haven't got the consistency needed in playing the longer format. "Consistency is the problem. It's not about how good they are, because they all are talented. The only thing is how can they become experienced? Nowadays, it's difficult. There are too many tournaments and things in their heads." The last time Sri Lanka won a Test match at the Oval was in 1998, when Muralitharan took 16-220 to give the visitors a famous ten-wicket win. "