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Ganesh laddu auctioned for whopping Rs. 1.87 cr in Hyd!

Hyderabad: The Ganesh laddu from Keerthi Richmond Villas in Bandlaguda here has hit the headlines yet again for its expensive bid in the State. The laddu prasadam went under hammer for a staggering Rs.1.87 crore, marking an increase of Rs.61 lakh compared to last year. The organisers who conducted the laddu auction on Monday night saw intense bids from the devotees, pushing the price to a new record. However, the organisers did not reveal the name of the successful bidder. Last year, the laddu fetched the organisers Rs.1.26 crore. In 2022, it went under hammer for Rs.60 lakh.

Ganesh idol immersion procession was supervised by 20,000 police force, says CV Anand

Hyderabad: Ganesh idol immersion procession was passing off peacefully in the city under the watchful eyes of the 20,000 strong police force said the City Police Commissioner, CV Anand, here on Tuesday. Interacting with the media, he said the police had started planning for the mega event for a few months and with the help of other government departments and cooperation of public the process is going smoothly. He said Khairatabad Ganesh idol was immersed at 1.30 pm in Hussain Sagar. "It happened because of hard work of our officers who had spent a whole day planning the journey of the 70 feet idol," said Anand. To ease the stress on crane operators and related works, shift system was worked out and the police force was deployed on shift basis for the procession.

PM Modi interacts with PMAY-Urban beneficiaries on his 74th birthday in Bhubaneswar



GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Prime Minister Narendra Modi celebrated his 74th birthday on Tuesday (September 17, 2024) by interacting with beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-Urban). Earlier in the day, Mr. Modi received a ceremonial welcome on his way to Shabar Sahi

in the Gadakana area of Bhubaneswar. The route from Biju Patnaik International Airport to Gadakana was flanked by folk dancers and musical bands.

Accompanied by Chief Minister Mohan Majhi, the Prime Minister attended the housewarming ceremony of a PMAY-Urban beneficiary, offering prayers at the newly built home. He was also served kheer as part of his birthday celebrations. During the event, Mr. Modi inquired about any challenges faced by the beneficiaries in accessing the housing scheme. Earlier, in a social media post, the Prime Minister expressed his joy at being in Odisha for the launch of SUBHADRA, a new scheme by the Odisha Government. He stated that this initiative would enhance women's empowerment and promote financial independence for women. Under the Subhadra scheme, which is a key promise of the BJP's 2024 election manifesto, over one crore women will receive ₹50,000 each over a five-year period.

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Hyderabad: Telangana on Tuesday saw three different celebrations of the same event, the merger of the erstwhile Hyderabad State with the Indian union on September 17, 1948, as each of the three major political parties in the State had their own versions for the day. While the BRS commemorated the day with the National Integration Day celebrations at Telangana Bhavan, the Congress-led State government organised its version as the Telangana Praja Palana Dinotsavam.

The BJP, on the other hand, was part of the Centre's version of the day, the Hyderabad Liberation Day, as part of which programmes were organised at Parade Grounds. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, speaking at the State's official celebrations of Telangana Praja Palana Dinotsavam, warned against any attempt to derive political mileage from the Telangana armed struggle and said it would be akin to ignoring the sacrifices of Telangana martyrs of yesterday by calling it Integration Day or Liberation Day. Interestingly, his party's headquarters, Gandhi Bhavan, celebrated the day as Integration Day. Similarly, many district units and leaders of the Congress continued to call it Integration Day. Not just Gandhi Bhavan, even

BRS, Congress, BJP celebrate own versions of Sept 17



the official X handle of Telangana Congress @INCTelangana also called it Integration Day.

Sharing a few images and videos on X, the @INCTelangana said "Telangana Integration Day celebrations at Gandhi Bhavan. TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud, Khairthabad MLA D Nagender and others participated..." Addressing party leaders at Gandhi Bhavan, TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud said the Congress was celebrating the day since September 17, 1948, as Integration Day. However, the BJP, which was not even established then, was demanding to celebrate it as Liberation Day, he said. A few district Congress units, including those in erstwhile Nalgonda and Warangal, also celebrated the day as Integration Day.

Meanwhile, union

Coal Minister G Kishan Reddy, speaking at the Hyderabad Liberation Day programme of the Centre, alleged that successive governments refused to officially celebrate the occasion on September 17, due to appeasement and vote bank politics. The BRS, which had officially celebrated the National Integration Day while in power, on Tuesday continued the same version with party working president KT Rama Rao hoisting the national flag at Telangana Bhavan here.

Earlier, he performed a "palabhishekam" to the statue of Telangana Talli on the Bhavan premises to mark the State-wide protests launched by the BRS, opposing the State government's installation of a statue of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in front of the Secretariat, where the previous government had plans to install

a statue of Telangana Talli. Stating that Revanth Reddy installed Rajiv Gandhi's statue to appease the Congress leadership while ignoring Telangana's sentiments, Rama Rao said the Chief Minister had insulted the people of Telangana by unveiling Rajiv Gandhi's statue in the place specifically earmarked for Telangana Talli's statue. Reiterating that once BRS returned to power, the statue would be removed and sent to Gandhi Bhavan with full honours, he said it would be replaced with the statue of Telangana Talli. Rama Rao also ridiculed Revanth Reddy's comments on Rajiv Gandhi's contributions to India's technological advancements. Stating that the Chief Minister lacked basic knowledge, he said it was not Rajiv Gandhi, but Charles Babbage who invented the computer.

Two children among 5 dead in Firozabad factory explosion

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Five persons, including two children and a woman, were killed due to an explosion at a firecracker godown-cum-factory here, a police official said on Tuesday, adding the explosion caused damage to nearby houses. Eleven persons sustained injuries in the blast, which occurred in the factory located in the Naushera area under the Shikohabad police station limits on Monday night, they said.

On Tuesday, based on the complaint lodged by the son of a deceased woman, a case was registered against Bhoora alias Navi Abdullah, who manufactures and sells firecrackers, and his two sons. SHO of the Shikohabad police station Pradeep Kumar Singh, on Tuesday told PTI, "The house where the explosion took place belongs to Prem Singh Kushwaha and it was completely razed to the ground. The house was taken on rent by Bhure Khan, who manufactures and sells firecrackers. No one was injured in the house, where the explosion took place. Based on the complaint lodged by Pawan Kushwaha, son of deceased Meera Devi Kushwaha, a case has been registered against Bhoora and his two sons — Taj and Raja — under relevant sections of the BNS and the Explosives Act," Singh said.

In his complaint, Pawan Kushwaha said, "In our village Naushera, Bhoora alias Navi Abdullah was into firecrackers' business for a long time... Bhoora along with his sons Taj, Raja and others had, as part of a conspiracy, stored huge amount of explosive material inside his rented house. The three as part of a conspiracy ignited the explosive substances, and ran away. As a result of this, there was a huge explosion, in which my family members and that of my neighbour were buried under the debris, and they died," he said. Local residents also said that around one dozen houses were damaged due to the



blast, and the roofs of some of the houses were also damaged. "Five persons, including two children, were killed in the explosion that took place in a firecracker godown-cum-factory. Eleven persons were injured in the incident," Circle Officer Shikohabad Praveen Tiwari told PTI. According to local residents, there was a blast in the firecracker godown around 10.30 pm due to which the walls of the building collapsed and about seven people got buried under the debris. Meera Devi (45), Aman Kushwaha (17), Gautam Kushwaha (16), Kumari Ichha (4) and Abhinay (2) died in the incident, officials said. The two kids are siblings, the circle officer said, adding they were identified based on the information obtained from the district hospital. The bodies of the deceased were handed over to their kin after post-mortem, officials said. Shikohabad MLA Mukesh Verma said the DM spoke to the Chief Minister's Office regarding compensation to family members of the deceased. He got an assurance that a compensation of Rs 4 lakh will be given to the kin of each deceased, after which the family agreed to perform the last rites, Verma said. The MLA also said that he has requested the DM to arrange a 100-yard plot for those whose homes have been destroyed in the blast.

Supreme Court rejects Bengal's plea to halt live streaming of RG Kar Hospital rape and murder case



GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Supreme court, RG Kar hospital alleged rape murder case, Indian express "We have a reputation. We have 50 years of reputation which is being destroyed overnight," Sibal said adding the court had in the past held that "held...that matters of this nature should not be live streamed." The Supreme Court on Tuesday turned down the West Bengal government's request to stop live streaming of the court proceedings in the case of the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at the R G Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on August 9.

While presiding over a three-judge bench Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud told Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal, who is representing the Bengal Government and made the request, "We will not stop this." Sibal told the bench, also comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, "I have great concern at what's happening. Your Lordships took suo motu cognisance of the matter to find out what is happening on the ground. Now what happens is if you livestream matters like this...which have emotive implications, huge emotive implications. We are not for the accused, we don't stand for the accused, we are only called upon to tell you what the state has done." "We have a reputation. We have 50 years of repu-

tation which is being destroyed overnight," Sibal said adding the court had in the past held that "held...that matters of this nature should not be live streamed." Sibal said "Our reputations are also at stake. Why should we be vilified in this fashion to say I am laughing? Where was I laughing? I was not laughing at anything. I was not laughing at what had happened. It is the most heinous crime that was committed." Sibal was referring to reports which said he laughed during the hearing of the matter on August 22. The reports also said Solicitor General Tushar Mehta appearing for the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is probing the case, took exception to this and made his displeasure evident. Meanwhile, the SC, which perused the status report filed by CBI, said it did not want to make public what has been said by the Central agency. "We have looked at the status report of CBI. Making a disclosure today about what CBI is doing will jeopardise the course of the investigation.... You understand why we cannot also disclose the lines of the further investigation that CBI is conducting. Let me only assure you that the line of further investigation which is being carried out by CBI is intended to unearth the absolute truth and the further truth and any further leads that may emerge apart from the accused who has been arrested," said the Supreme Court. "We will keep it at that so as not to jeopardise the further possibility of the investigation. As all of you know, apart from the principal, there has been an arrest of the SHO himself. He's in the custody of CBI, and there are significant pieces of (evidence)... would be revealed in the course of the investigation," the court added. On being informed that Wikipedia still carries the name of the victim on its pages, the Supreme Court directed that the same be removed. The state government said though it had asked Wikipedia to remove the name, it had refused to do so saying it would not be censored. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said it is not censoring, but asking not to commit an offence under Indian law.

KTR challenges Revanth Reddy to fulfill electoral promises, stop diversionary tactics



GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Hyderabad: BRS working president and former Minister KT Rama Rao launched a fierce attack on Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy over the installation of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's statue in front of Dr BR Ambedkar Telangana State Secretariat. He said Revanth Reddy installed the statue to appease the Congress leadership, while ignoring Telangana's sentiments. "Revanth Reddy insulted people of Telangana by unveiling Rajiv Gandhi's statue in the place specifically earmarked for Telangana Talli's statue. Once BRS returns to power, we will remove Rajiv Gandhi's statue and send it to Gandhi Bhavan with full honours. It will be rightfully replaced with the statue of Telangana Talli," he vowed. Commemorating integration of the Hyderabad State into the Indian union on Tuesday, the BRS organised "National Integration Day" celebrations at Telangana Bhavan here. Rama Rao hoisted the national flag on the occasion. Earlier, he performed "Palabhishekam" (pouring milk) to the statue of Telangana Talli on the Telangana Bhavan premises, to mark the State-wide protests launched by the BRS, opposing the State government's decision regarding the statue installation.

Speaking to mediapersons on the occasion, Rama Rao ridiculed Revanth Reddy's comments on Rajiv Gandhi's contributions to India's technological advancements. He stated that the Chief Minister lacks basic knowledge. "Not Rajiv Gandhi, but Charles Babbage invented computer. Similarly, it wasn't Rajiv Gandhi who introduced computers to India. The Tata Institute of Fundamental Research Automatic Calculator (TIFRAC) started computer services in 1956 when Rajiv was just 12 years old," he said, dismissing Revanth's remarks as uninformed rhetoric. The BRS working president lashed out at the Congress government of failing to deliver its prom-

ises, including the Rs 15,000 financial assistance under Rythu Bharosa, enhanced pensions, and two lakh jobs for the unemployed. He condemned the current state of governance, especially the law and order situation in Hyderabad, lack of basic amenities in schools, and also increasing health emergency situation with diseases like dengue spreading across the state. Rama Rao questioned the delay in filling the two lakh government jobs promised by the Congress to the youth of Telangana. He pointed out the Congress government is about to complete one year in power in next couple of months, but has done nothing for the State. He suggested that Revanth Reddy should focus on governance rather than employing diversionary tactics. "If possible, deliver on your 420 promises," he said. He demanded for the immediate release of BRS student leaders who were arrested during protests against the installation of Rajiv Gandhi statue. "These students protested peacefully against the disrespect shown to Telangana's heritage. They must be released immediately," he asserted.

Will work to bring back Kejriwal on Chief Minister post, says Atishi

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

New Delhi: In her first remarks after being designated the next Chief Minister of Delhi, senior AAP leader Atishi on Tuesday said she was sad that party supremo Arvind Kejriwal was resigning from the post, and added that she will work towards bringing him back as CM. Atishi, who currently holds several portfolios in the Delhi government, said only a party like Aam Aadmi Party would have given a "first-time politician" like her such responsibilities. The Aam Aadmi Party said Kejriwal proposed her name as his successor in a meeting of the party's legislators, to which all MLAs unanimously agreed. "I will work with one goal for the next few months to bring back Kejriwal on CM's post. I will work as CM under Arvind Kejriwal's guidance and protect the people of Delhi," Atishi said addressing a press conference. She requested her party MLAs to not congratulate her as it was a "sad occasion". "Kejriwal trusted me, made me an MLA, then a Minister and now Chief Minister. I am thankful to him. A first-time politician can only get such opportunities in AAP.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

One nation, one poll

THE first 100 days of Modi 3.0 have been marked by policy flip-flops prompted by coalition pressures. Dependent on allies for the first time in a decade to stay in power, the ruling BJP has struggled to come to terms with the changed reality. In a desperate effort to assert itself and appear unfazed by its weakened position in the Lok Sabha, the party has gone back to its 'one nation, one election' (ONOE) plank. In his Independence Day address last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed to various political parties to unite in backing his initiative. He reiterated that frequent elections were impeding India's progress. Now, it has been reported that the NDA government is optimistic about implementing this all-important poll reform during its current term. This optimism, bordering on overconfidence, conveniently overlooks the fact that several Opposition parties have opposed the idea of holding simultaneous polls. The BJP's renewed push for ONOE is understandable: it continues to be the predominant political party in the country despite the significant gains made by the Congress in this year's Lok Sabha elections. The saffron party stands to benefit the most if voters exercise their franchise once in five years rather than every two years or so. However, regional parties not aligned with the NDA may be at a disadvantage if the Assembly and parliamentary polls — which are often contested on dissimilar issues — are held together. A level playing field is a must in a democracy. The BJP would do well to try harder to build consensus on ONOE and dispel doubts raised by stakeholders regarding its feasibility. This will be an uphill task as the Opposition is no longer a push-over. The point that 'one election' will ensure continuity in governance and reduce the burden in terms of manpower and finances is well taken, but the threat it can pose to India's federal structure should not be dismissed lightly.

'Like cutting a person's limbs': Historic banyans of Chevella face the axe for highway expansion

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

A few kilometres from Moinabad, on the Hyderabad-Vikarabad highway, travellers find a welcome reprieve in the shade of giant banyan trees. Stretching across this section of road, the nearly 900 banyans provide respite for motorists and shelter for hawks, and are also home to a variety of animals, birds and insects. But these canopies could soon be a thing of the past as the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is all set to commence four-laning of NH-163.

Since 2019, the proposed highway expansion has sparked resistance from environmentalists and activists, who argue that these ancient trees are irreplaceable. For the NHAI, however, they are "as good as any other tree." The officials argue that the road expansion project should be looked at "positively", and that they would translocate the banyans. "As children, every Hyderabad must have taken a trip to Vikarabad and Ananthagiri Hills. Even if you are not a Hyderabad, if you have travelled once on this stretch, you will fall in love with the banyans of Chevella," says Asiya Khan, a member of 'Save Banyans of Chevella', a citizens collective, advocating for the protection of the 100-year-old trees. "Will take up translocation NH-163, earlier a Nizam-era state highway, has been a contested site since 2019 when the NHAI announced the road-widening project, saying the proposed expansion will lead to better commute and reduce accidents. But activists and nature lovers opposed the idea and launched several campaigns to raise awareness about the need to protect local ecosystems. The contention between eco-warriors and the authorities reached the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in November 2021 when the citizens collective, Save Banyans of Chevella, filed a petition. The activists said the stretch includes 1036 banyans, but NHAI put the number at 759. Later, an NGT-appointed committee found 915 banyan trees on the 46-km stretch between Moinabad and Manneguda which may be affected during road expansion. It said the proposed alignment would need 683 trees to be translocated and 232 trees would be saved. In its November 2023 order, the green tribunal had ordered the NHAI to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) study to minimise the loss of trees and directed the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) to issue terms of reference (ToR) and complete the process within four months. Even as activists cite last year's NGT order to claim a moral victory, NHAI officials said all clearances have been received. "Everything (case) is over, we are going to take up this work this month or next month. All clearances are given," NHAI project director Nageswara Rao told indianexpress.com. Asked about the trees, he said, "They have given clearance for translocation. So, we will take up translocation. We are building so many things, why can't this be done. We can think of it positively," he said.

The minutes of the meeting of the expert appraisal committee (EAC) of the MoEFCC in July 2024 suggest that an EIA study was submitted to the ministry in June 2024, with recommendations of an EAC sub-committee visit to the site. However, neither this document nor the recommendations are available in the public domain yet. On the Parivesh portal, where the timeline of the project is available, there is no mention of the EIA report though it mentions that the terms of reference were granted in February 2024. The NHAI has also been exempted from holding a public hearing on their request to the ministry.

banyans Even as activists cite last year's NGT order to claim a moral victory, NHAI officials said all clearances have been received. (Express Photo/ Rahul V Pisharody) In the EAC meeting, NHAI submitted that the design has been modified to save another 50 banyan trees, thus taking the total number of trees to be retained to 393 and to be translocated to 522. It added that there is no proposal to widen the road along Murgavani National Park. Meanwhile, activists have raised questions over the 'mysterious' EIA study, saying it should have been made available on the Parivesh portal as with the case of other projects in the country, affected by the environment. The fact that it is not available in the public domain only suggests either such a study has not been done, or the authorities have something to hide, they say.

Save Chevella Banyan has been running a campaign 'Road bhi Jhad bhi' since 2019. Call it the HYDRABAD effect, activists who have been fighting to save the Chevella banyans seek the chief minister's intervention.

Armani/Caffè comes to India in Mumbai's BKC; Here's what to expect



GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Armani Caffè Mumbai Mirroring its signature palette, the 52-seater Armani/Caffè, parked right beside the Giorgio Armani boutique, is designed in soft blues and greens accented with palm-print screens, offering a cosy and luxurious ambience. Twenty-six years after its inception in Paris, Armani/Caffè has made its debut in India, with an outpost at Jio World Plaza in Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), Mumbai. Mirroring its signature palette, the 52-seater Armani/Caffè, parked right beside the Giorgio Armani boutique, is designed in soft blues and greens accented with palm-print screens, offering a cosy and luxurious ambience. Armani cafe Mumbai The menu features Italian classics and we have heard that the menu

also features designer Giorgio Armani's favourite dishes.

The menu features Italian classics and we have heard that the menu also features designer Giorgio Armani's favourite dishes. Among them are Carpaccio di Gamberi e Sedano Croccante, Pappa al Pomodoro e Burrata, Insalata Cesare Armani, the rich and flavourful Maiale Con Tonnato, and the classic Ciabatta Con Pomodoro Bufala. The authentic Italian dishes are paired with 52 of the finest wines flown in from Italy and three champagnes from France.

"I always wanted the Armani brand to become an expression of style as a lifestyle, of sophisticated simplicity as a sign of elegance in every field, and food that is one of the most important elements of everyday life could not be missing," Giorgio Armani was quoted as saying in a statement issued by the café. Festive offer Armani Mumbai There are also Roman-style pizzas — baked on a stone heated to 350 degrees Celsius — in variations like Pizza Napoli and Pizza Medina alongside pasta options like Spaghetti ai Tre Pomodori, Gnocchi Alla Sorrentina and Lasagna Alle Verdure. There are also Roman-style pizzas — baked on a stone heated to 350 degrees Celsius — in variations like Pizza Napoli and Pizza Medina alongside pasta options like Spaghetti ai Tre Pomodori, Gnocchi Alla Sorrentina and Lasagna Alle Verdure. To round off the meal, there is an array of desserts, including coffee-bean shaped Tiramisu Chicco, the classic Eclair alla Nocciola and Panna Cotta Alle Fragole amongst others.

BJP's losing candidate expresses desire to contest Nanded Lok Sabha bypoll, Maha seat may again witness 'Chavan versus Chikhalikar' poll duel



GNS News Agency, Sept 17

The Nanded Lok Sabha seat might again witness a Chavan versus Chikhalikar poll contest, just months after Congress candidate Vasant Chavan defeated former BJP MP Pratap Patil Chikhalikar in the parliamentary elections. Chikhalikar has reportedly expressed his desire to contest the seat, which has fallen vacant following the death of Vasant Chavan last month. Meanwhile,

the Nanded District Congress Committee has recommended the name of Ravindra Chavan, the son of late Vasant Chavan, as the party nominee.

The home seat of former Congress chief minister Ashok Chavan, the Grand Old Party received a jolt when the latter decided to join the BJP right before the general elections earlier this year. In such a scenario, Vasant Chavan was asked by the party to contest the seat. Vasant Chavan, who had almost retired from politics, had taken on the challenge and trounced Chikhalikar to wrest the Nanded seat from him. In 2019, Chikhalikar defeated Ashok Chavan in Nanded. Post the 2024 poll loss, Chikhalikar had taken the blame on himself and refused to attribute it to anyone else.

He once shared an uneasy relationship with Ashok Chavan but is said to have buried the hatchet since the former chief minister was nominated to the Rajya Sabha. Asked if he can contest the Lok Sabha bypoll, Ravindra Chavan replied, "Party workers have urged me to fight the bye-election. They said they would work like they did to get my father elected."

Patient's relative threatens woman doctor at private hospital in Kolkata, arrested: 'will make R G Kar here'

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

A relative of a patient at a private hospital in Kolkata allegedly threatened a woman doctor on Thursday after her friends and family got into an altercation with her over what they said was delayed treatment. After the incident, doctors at the hospital protested, and threatened to stop admissions unless the accused was arrested. This comes amid nationwide protests over the rape and murder of a junior doctor at R G Kar Medical College and Hospital. "We have arrested one Dipak Singh who insulted and threatened doctors on duty at the hospital over alleged delayed treatment to a patient. The person became violent, and intimidated on-duty doctors," said a police officer.

According to hospital sources, the incident took place in the afternoon at the hospital located on E M Bypass. The friends and relatives of the patients, admitted to the ICU ward, met the woman doctor, reportedly saying they were unhappy with the treatment. After an alleged altercation began, Singh reportedly made the threat saying, "Ek hane R G Kar kore debo (We will make [an incident like] R G Kar happen here)". The doctors on duty then raised an alarm and hospital authorities called the police. "A 58-year-old female patient was admitted on September 9, 2024, with complaints of shortness of breath and altered mental status. The patient is admitted with a diagnosis of sepsis with Acute Ischemic Stroke. The patient is currently critical," said the private hospital in a statement.

"The patient's son and his friends have been ha-



arrassing the hospital staff with abusive behaviour in spite of the hospital staff exercising restraint considering the condition of the patient. However, the patient's family and friends have continued to be abusive and threatening in their behaviour towards the hospital staff," it added. A case has been registered at Phoolbagan police station under Section 79 (insult to modesty of women) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Section 4 (violence against medicare service personnel and damage to property of medicare service institutions) of the West Bengal Medicare Service Persons and Medicare Service Institutions Act. A day after the rape and murder of the junior doctor at R G Kar Medical College and Hospital, a civic volunteer was arrested by the police for threatening a woman doctor at the Bhatar state general hospital in Purba Medinipur district with a similar threat.

Maharashtra minister's daughter joins NCP (SP); may contest assembly polls against father

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Maharashtra minister and NCP leader Dharmarao Baba Atram's daughter Bhagyashri Atram joined the NCP (SP) on Thursday, despite attempts by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar to dissuade her from crossing over to the Sharad Pawar-led party. State NCP (SP) president Jayant Patil and party leader Anil Deshmukh were present at the function held at Aheri in Gadchiroli district, where the minister's daughter joined the opposition party.

This development sparked speculation about a possible contest between Bhagyashri and her father, who is an MLA from Aheri, in the state assembly elections likely to be held in November. Bhagyashri said when her father was kidnapped by Naxalites, it was Sharad Pawar who ensured his safe return. "This is my way of paying gratitude," she said, lamenting that her father left Sharad Pawar's side when the NCP split after Ajit Pawar joined the Shiv Sena-BJP government in Maharashtra.

Atram was kidnapped and held hostage by Maoists in 1991, who were demanding release of their supporters from jail. Sharad Pawar was the state chief minister at that time. Patil said Bhagyashri didn't approve of her father's decision. "We postponed her return to the party because we wanted to see if she is firm on her decision," he said. Patil also said the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi



(MVA), comprising the NCP (SP), Congress and Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT), will form the next government in the state and will fight to win all the seats it contests. "We will work to provide employment to the locals here (in Gadchiroli)," he said, the 'adivasi' (tribal) youth will be given skills training to get jobs. There is a shortage of Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) buses, Zilla Parishad schools, primary healthcare centres in the district, he lamented. Targeting the government, Deshmukh claimed that the "threat" to the Constitution still persists and that there is a need to stay alert.

Cigarettes from Dubai worth Rs 11.4 crore seized



GNS News Agency, Sept 17

The Special Intelligence and Investigation Branch of customs department at Jawaharlal Nehru Custom House (JNCH), Nhava Sheva, Navi Mumbai, intercepted and seized nearly 57 lakh sticks of foreign-origin cigarettes worth Rs 11.40 crore imported from Dubai on September 8.

The consignment, consisting of a 40-footer container, was falsely declared as "Gipsam Plaster Board" and destined to ICD Sanathnagar, Hyderabad. For smuggling cigarettes in gypsum plaster board, the contraband was concealed within specially crafted cavities inside the plaster board pallets. The smuggling technique involved creating concealed compartments or cavities inside the plaster boards, where the cigarette cartons were tightly packed, said a source from the customs department. The shipment was falsely declared as a consignment of gypsum plaster boards destined for a legitimate location. By using everyday construction materials as a cover, the smugglers attempted to avoid detection, exploiting the high volume and weight of legitimate shipments of similar goods, which would typically attract less scrutiny, said the source.

Passenger's ornaments worth Rs 7.37 lakh stolen from local train recovered; 4 held



GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Police have recovered a passenger's ornaments of Rs 7.37 lakh stolen from a local train in Maharashtra's Thane district and arrested two persons and detained as many juveniles in this connection, an official said. The theft took place on August 31 when the 54-year-old passenger was travelling from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) in south Mumbai to Kalyan in Thane on a suburban train, senior police inspector, Crime Branch Government Railway Police, Arshuddin Sheikh said on Wednesday.

The passenger noted that his black bag, which he had kept on the overhead rack, was missing. The bag contained nearly 7 kg of silver and 19.96 gm of gold ornaments, with a total value of Rs. 7.37 lakh, he said. The passenger noticed a group of individuals hastily alighting the train at Thakurli station, located before Kalyan station, in Thane district and subsequently filed a complaint at the Dombivli railway police station. The police registered a case under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita section 305(C) (theft of any article or goods from any means of transport used for the transport of goods or passengers), the official said.

A joint team of the Special Task Force and Kalyan Crime Branch unit launched an extensive investigation. The team analysed CCTV footage from multiple railway stations along the route from CSMT to Thakurli and employed technical resources and informant tips to track down the suspects. The operation culminated on September 5 with the arrest of Altmaz Razzak Khan (25) and Shubham Sandeep Thasale (20) along with the detention of two juveniles from Thane city, the official said. Following interrogation, the entire booty was recovered from their possession, he said. The juveniles were later handed over to their parents, the police added.

After demand from aspirants, BJP, Karnataka govt postpones PSI recruitment examination

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

The government will now hold the examination, which was earlier scheduled on September 22, on September 28. The government will now hold the examination, which was earlier scheduled on September 22, on September 28. The Karnataka Examination Authority (KEA) on Thursday postponed the written examination for the recruitment of 402 Police Sub-Inspectors (PSI) following mounting pressure from aspirants and opposition parties of the state. The government will now hold the examination, which was earlier scheduled on September 22, on September 28.

The decision to postpone the examination came after several candidates and BJP leaders demanded the state government to postpone the examinations citing Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) main examinations and Staff Selection Commission examinations which will be held on the same day.

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Thursday said that he had received a memorandum from many aspirants where they had mentioned that many of the PSI aspirants who had attended UPSC preliminary examination have cleared it and wanted to appear for the mains. "BJP leaders, including C N Ashwath Narayan, had also met me and demanded to postpone the exam. After holding discussions, the KEA informed us that there is no slot to conduct the examination till December. Later, I requested Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa to provide one day and it was decided to hold the examinations Saturday, September 28."

In Dehradun, iconic Ghantaghar stops ticking – and police try to solve whodunnit



GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Dehradun Police on Wednesday junked the claims about unidentified thieves entering Dehradun's iconic Ghantaghar (clock tower) and dismantling the copper wires installed in it. According to police, there was no evidence of forced entry or stolen items inside the tower.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Kotwali SHO Chandrabhan Singh said that they are investigating the case and at present anyone with access to the tower keys is a suspect. "We are yet to find out who did this and why. We are investigating the case," said Singh, adding that the Municipal Corporation is also conducting a departmental inquiry at their level regarding possible negligence. After the allegations on Tuesday, an FIR was registered at Nagar Kotwali police station on the Execu-

tive Engineer Municipal Corporation Dehradun complaint regarding the damage to the wires of the motor and flood light installed in the Ghantaghar. The Municipal Commissioner, the City Circle Officer (CO), along with the forensic team inspected the spot. The double locks of the Ghantaghar control room were found in perfect condition, but the wires of the clock and flood light were found to be cut. All the valuable equipment was on the spot and no evidence of theft or forced entry was found.

The locks of the control room were found to be intact on the spot, prima facie indicating that the wires had been tampered with, which might have been done by those persons who had access to the keys of the control room.

According to the senior police officials, they have corresponded with the Municipal Corporation to conduct a departmental inquiry at their level regarding the negligence shown in the maintenance of the keys of the control room. "The cut wires in the control room were found on the spot itself. They were neither stolen nor was an attempt made to take them away. The forensic team was called on the spot and photography and videography of the spot was done," said Dehradun police in a statement issued. Dehradun's Ghantaghar, or Clock Tower, is a historical landmark built between 1940 and 1953, symbolising the city's growth during the British era. Located at the heart of the city, its six-faced structure reflects British architectural influence. The foundation stone was laid by Sarojini Naidu, adding to its significance.

BJP slams Rahul Gandhi on quota, meeting Ilhan Omar: His true face, with anti-India forces

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

As leaders of the BJP slammed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his remarks in the US on the issue of reservation in India and his meeting with Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said Wednesday that Gandhi has "once again brought the Congress's anti-reservation face to the forefront" and is "standing with forces that conspire to divide the country" while "making anti-national statements". Defence Minister Rajnath Singh attacked Gandhi for suggesting that Sikhs as a community felt insecure in India, and that China was occupying Indian territory. "The kind of claims he has made on the soil of America regarding the India-China border dispute are misleading and beyond facts," Singh said.

In a post on X, Shah said, "By speaking about abolishing reservation in the country, Rahul Gandhi has once again brought the Congress's anti-reservation face to the forefront. The thoughts that were in his mind eventually found their way out as words. I want to tell Rahul Gandhi that as long as the BJP is there, neither can anyone abolish reservation nor can anyone mess with the nation's security." Referring to Gandhi's meeting with Ilhan Omar – India had protested her visit to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in April 2022 and said her "narrow-minded politics" violated India's "territorial integrity and sovereignty" – Shah said, "Standing with forces that conspire to divide the country and making anti-national statements have become a habit for Rahul Gandhi and the Congress." "Whether it is supporting the JKNC's anti-national and anti-reservation agenda in J&K or making anti-India statements on foreign platforms, Rahul Gandhi has always threatened the nation's security and hurt sentiments," he said, adding, "Rahul Gandhi's statement lays bare the Congress's politics of causing rifts on the lines of regionalism, religion, and linguistic differences."

Gandhi addressed two events in the US Monday, including an interaction with students of Georgetown University where, while responding to a question on caste-based reservation, he said, "If you look at the Indian government, there are 70 bureaucrats who run the govern-

ment... Of the 70 people, there is no tribal, three Dalits and three OBCs, a minority... the fact is they aren't getting participation. We will think of ending reservation when India is a fair place. And India is not a fair place."

He also spoke about the absence of a level-playing field in the recent Lok Sabha elections – alleging that Opposition leaders and parties were harassed – but added that Indian democracy was fighting back and the election results did offer some hope, although it was not good enough yet. Accusing Gandhi of making statements on foreign soil that hurt Indians and also meeting "anti-India" persons, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said, "Mr Rahul Gandhi should apologise not only to Bharat, but he should apologise to every single citizen of India who has felt hurt." Union Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju told reporters, "It is for everyone to see who are the political leaders in our country who are often seen to be moving around with known anti-India elements across the globe, spew venom and speak against India."

Hitting back at the BJP, the Congress said the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha has only talked about upholding the Constitution and asked why the ruling party has a "problem" whenever there is such talk. It also dismissed the criticism over Gandhi meeting Ilhan Omar. Responding to Shah's remarks about Gandhi "standing with forces that conspire to divide the country and making anti-national statements", Congress's media and publicity department head Pawan Khara said, "Ask him to take action, then we will expose the Prime Minister and the Home Minister both. The PM goes abroad and makes horrible comments against India and Indians, that is not anti-national? We are talking about upholding the Constitution of India and that is anti-national? Why is it that BJP has a problem whenever we talk about upholding the Constitution?" Congress MP Manickam Tagore said those preaching about national interest and reservation should first look at the RSS's own track record on social justice. Tagore said Gandhi has always stood for unity and equality, while the BJP and its ideological mentors have done the opposite. The country, he said, knows who is really messing with India's progress.

In J-K campaign, Kharge targets BJP: 'Had we won 20 more LS seats they would have been in jail'

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Mallikarjun Kharge, Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Elections 2024, Jammu Kashmir Assembly polls, Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian express news, current affairs Addressing the Anantnag rally, Kharge announced five guarantees for the people of the Union Territory (UT) – including Rs 3,000 per month for women heads of households and 11 kg grains per family member – if the Congress-National Conference (NC) alliance is voted to power. Campaigning in poll-bound Jammu and Kashmir Wednesday, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge slammed the BJP dispensation on various issues, suggesting that the BJP leaders would have been in jail if the Opposition INDIA alliance had won 20 seats more than their tally in the recent Lok Sabha elections.

Targeting the BJP, Kharge said it used to make claims of "400 paar" (winning beyond 400 seats) in the Lok Sabha polls. "Where are your (BJP's) 400 seats? They stalled at 240. If we (INDIA bloc) had 20 more seats, then all these people would have been in jail, and they deserve to be there," Kharge said while addressing an election rally in Anantnag in south Kashmir. In the Lok Sabha polls, the INDIA bloc, including the Congress, managed to secure 234 seats as against the BJP's 240.

The BJP hit back at the Congress chief, with party spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla saying in a post on X that "Kharge's remark is a clear example of Congress's Emergency mindset... Indira Gandhi had imposed Emergency and put Opposition leaders in jail. Congress wants to continue with that legacy." Later, at a press conference in Srinagar, when asked about his "jail warning", Kharge sought to clarify it, saying "If we had 20-25 seats more, then those would have to suffer legal consequences of the misuse of ED, CBI, IT as well as for threatening people and breaking up other parties to form their government."

Addressing the Anantnag rally, Kharge announced five guarantees for the people of the Union Territory (UT) – including Rs 3,000 per month for women heads of households and 11 kg grains per family member – if the Congress-National Conference (NC) alliance is voted to power. These guarantees pledged by Kharge are related to jobs, food security, healthcare and women empowerment, although the Congress is yet to come up with its manifesto for the upcoming J&K elections. As part of these guarantees, Kharge promised a Rs 25 lakh health insurance coverage for every family member besides interest-



free loans of Rs 5 lakh for women entrepreneurs in self-help groups (SHGs). He pledged jobs for youth that would also involve filling one lakh government vacancies. He was accompanied by NC president Farooq Abdullah and senior Congress leaders including K C Venugopal and Tariq Hameed Karra. At the press conference, Kharge alleged that the BJP was "nervous" about the Congress-NC alliance and was looking for ways to "break" it. "They (BJP) are supporting Independent candidates indirectly in an effort to defeat our candidates. How are so many Independents getting the money to support their campaigns? Who is behind them?" he asked.

Urging the BJP to desist from such attempts, Kharge said the Narendra Modi government is not a "400 paar" government but a coalition one dependent on TDP president Chandrababu Naidu and JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar. "You (BJP) are not permanent as they (TDP or JDU) can pull their support any time." Kharge appealed to the J&K people to elect a "strong" government for addressing the concerns of the people. Holding that for any constitutional amendment to be ratified it is sent to states, he urged them: "Choose a government that has a clear majority. If you try to balance, the BJP will start buying people (MLAs) overnight to form its government. This had happened in Karnataka and Maharashtra, where the BJP formed tod-phod sarkar (government through horse-trading)." Attacking PM Modi over the Manipur crisis, Kharge said, "Manipur is burning... but Modi and Amit Shah (Union Home Minister) are not worried about it. He (Modi) keeps visiting other countries... We have a foreign policy and we are not objecting to his going abroad but he should first take care of what is going on here, in Manipur. There isn't peace here and he is going to other places to establish peace."

After third campus death this year, and amid student protests, IIT Guwahati's Dean of Academic Affairs resigns

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

IIT Guwahati's Dean of Academic Affairs has submitted his resignation in the wake of student protests on campus following the unnatural death of a 3rd year B.Tech. student on September 9. The student, 21-year-old Bimlesh Kumar from Uttar Pradesh had been found dead in his room in the Brahmaputra hostel. This was the third such death of a student on the campus this year and the second in a month, and triggered large-scale protests by students. The IIT Guwahati administration, in a statement, confirmed that it had received the resignation of Dean of Academic Affairs, Professor V K Krishna.

"The institute authorities have received his resignation, and we are discussing this internally. A decision will be taken soon," said the statement. On August 9, a 23-year-old M.Tech. student from Uttar Pradesh, Soumya Kumar, was found dead in her room in the Disang hostel. She allegedly died by suicide. In April, a 20-year-old B.Tech student from Bihar, Sourav



Kumar, allegedly died by suicide and was also found dead in his hostel room. After students learned about the latest death Monday, hundreds gathered to protest outside the administrative building, alleging that academic and administrative pressures had led to Bimlesh Kumar's death. These protests had continued for the next two days and were only withdrawn Wednesday evening, with student protesters claiming they were assured by the Director Devendra Jalihal that four senior administrators would "resign within a week". The institute, how-

ever, has not confirmed that this is the case. Following the outbreak of protests, the institute's administration had convened "open houses" on Monday evening and on Tuesday, led by Director Professor Jalihal – who had taken charge of the institute in May this year – and with senior members of the administrators and students. According to a student, among the core demands they raised were the resignation of some senior administrative members including the Dean of Academic Affairs, and the relaxation of the attendance

policy, which mandates 75% attendance in a course to be eligible to apply in final examinations. "We found the new Director to be open and sympathetic to our demands so it was felt that it is best to call off the protests and wait for the administration's next steps," said a student protester. Protestors have claimed that Kumar was among dozens of students who had been failed in a course last winter due their inability to meet the attendance requirement and was restricted from internships as a result, pointing to that

Top member of Dhaka interim govt says Adani power deal under scrutiny

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

The interim government of Bangladesh, led by Muhammad Yunus, is set to scrutinise Indian businesses including the Adani Group which exports power from its Jharkhand unit under a 2017 agreement. More specifically, the interim government is keen to know the terms of the agreement and if the price being paid for power is justified.

"There will be scrutiny of Indian businesses, like the Adani business... what kind of contracts have been signed, what are the terms and conditions, one cannot have a foreign company not follow the law of the land," said a senior functionary of the interim government who did not wish to be named. "So those investigations will be done; it will be painted as targeting Indian businesses, no... they will be scrutinised for what they are doing here, how much is Bangladesh paying, is it justified, all these questions will come up," the functionary said. In November 2017, Adani Power (Jharkhand) Ltd (APJL) signed a 25-year 1,496 MW (net) Power Purchase Agreement with the Bangladesh Power Development Board. Under this, Bangladesh would buy 100 per cent electricity produced by APJL's Godda plant. The unit, which runs on 100 per cent imported coal, was declared a Special Economic Zone by the Indian government in March 2019. The Godda plant, fully commercially operational during April-June 2023, supplies 7-10 per cent of Bangladesh's base load. In 2023-24, it exported about 7,508 million units of power, or almost 63 per cent of India's total power exports of 11,934 million units to Bangladesh. In value terms, India's power exports to Bangladesh had crossed \$1 billion, almost 10 per cent of India's total exports to its neighbour.

When contacted, an Adani Power spokesperson said: "We have no information of the Bangladesh government reviewing our PPA. In the spirit of true partnership, we continue to supply power to them despite the massive outstanding owed to us. We are in constant engagement with the Bangladesh authorities and have requested them for early liquidation of our dues as it is making our operations unsustainable." The Financial Times reported on September 9 that Adani had warned the Bangladesh interim government that its backlog of overdue payments – of over \$500 million – had become "unsustainable". It quoted Bangladesh energy ad-



visor Muhammad Fozul Kabir Khan saying the country faced total power liabilities of \$3.7 billion, and was late on paying \$492 million to Adani, to whom it owes a total of \$800 million. On August 12, the government amended a 2018 regulation that sought to derisk plants such as that of Adani, permitting connection of such a generating station to the Indian grid. This would facilitate sale of power within India in case of sustained non-scheduling of full or part capacity. Essentially, it clears the decks for the sale of power domestically if there is a delay in payments. As per the annual report of the Bangladesh Power Development Report, the average cost of electricity imported from Indian companies by Bangladesh stood at 8.77 Bangladeshi Taka per unit during 2022-23 (July-June). However, it varied from company to company. In case of the NVVL Ltd it was 4.22-8.45 Bangladeshi Taka per unit; PTC India Ltd 9.05 Bangladeshi Taka per unit; Sencrop Energy India 9.995 Bangladeshi Taka per unit; and APJL 14.02 Bangladeshi Taka per unit.

Elaborating on ties with India, the top functionary said, "We want to have a stable relationship with India, a neutral relationship." He added: "But giving Sheikh Hasina refuge is a problem... First we saw that she was there for some time, and now she is being given space for doing activities against Bangladesh..." the functionary said, referring to ousted Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's statements. On the economic situation which Yunus is also focusing on, the functionary said, "Hasina has left the administration rotten, finances are rotten, corruption is rampant... there are people in the level of people who have amassed crores of Bangladeshi Taka."

Goa CM Pramod Sawant lists steps to protect natural resources

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Land use law tweak: Goa CM lists steps to protect natural resources A paddy field in Tiswadi taluka that has received approval for 'correction' to settlement land. Days after The Indian Express reported that two Goa ministers, politicians cutting across party lines and several real estate companies in the state are alleged beneficiaries of a contentious change in land use law, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant Wednesday said the state government "is aware of the importance of preserving the state's natural resources, particularly its land resources and biodiversity". He also listed six "proactive measures" that have been introduced "to ensure the protection and sustainable management of these critical assets".

As reported by The Indian Express on September 9, the state's Town and Country Planning department approved change in land use for at least 20 lakh sq m of land over the past 18 months, converting "green zones" into "settlements" – allowing construction activity for both residential and commercial purposes, pushing up the land's value manifold. The changes were allowed after a March 2023 amendment [section 17 (2)] to the Goa Town and Country Planning Act 1974. Records show that one beneficiary is a firm that has TCP Minister Vishwajit Rane and his spouse as directors; Environment Minister Aleixo Sequeira is also a beneficiary. The Chief Minister's Office did not respond to a query by on whether there has been a rethink on the amendment. In a post on X, Sawant said his government has enacted The Goa Restriction on Transfer of Agricultural Land Act, which aims to prevent misuse and restrict non-agricultural activities on

farmland. He said the conversion charges have been increased to discourage the conversion of all land types to maintain green cover. "Charges for changing land use have been increased from Rs 200 per square meter to Rs 1,000 per square meter. However, the previous rates have been retained for land parcels up to 500 square meters, providing relief to the general public," he wrote.

The Chief Minister said the government has also constituted a committee to study landslides and propose restoration measures in the state. "In addition, Goa Biodiversity Board has been taken up. Notification of Biodiversity Heritage Sites, Wetland Conservation, State Action Plan for Climate Change, Village-level People's Biodiversity Register are some of the measures taken for protecting Goa's landscape," he said, adding that the government would continue to bring in measures to ensure preservation of Goa's natural heritage for future generations. Goa Pradesh Congress Committee president Amit Patkar said, "This is all a farce. If the government is 'aware' about preserving the state's natural resources, why have they brought these amendments, which are facilitating a back-door entry for the real estate players to change the land use pattern to destroy its biodiversity? If you want to preserve, then scrap these amendments and bring a proper regional plan for the state." "Land is a scarce resource in Goa. Why is the Chief Minister not talking about the amendment [section 17 (2)] through which the land use pattern is being changed? Why is he silent on rampant hill cutting across the state?" Patkar asked. "Increasing the conversion charges for changing land use is not going to dissuade people from purchasing land and applying for conversion."

Rajasthan CM in Japan, plea in Jaipur court seeks to cancel his bail in 2011 riots case for travelling abroad



GNS News Agency, Sept 17

As per the petition filed Thursday, one of the conditions of Sharma's bail was that he cannot travel outside the country without the court's prior permission. Petitioner Sanwar Mal Chaudhary, an advocate by profession, said that Sharma should be arrested under Section 483(3) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) which

says that "A High Court or Court of Session may direct that any person who has been released on bail under this Chapter be arrested and commit him to custody." "An anticipatory bail was granted to Mr Bhajan Lal Sharma in 2013 by a Jaipur district court in the 2011 Gopalgarh (Bharatpur) riots case. One of the main conditions was that you cannot travel outside the country without the court's prior permission," Chaudhary told The Indian Express. After travelling to South Korea, the CM is currently in Japan as part of an outreach to attract investment ahead of an investment summit in December this year. "Now since he has violated the condition of the bail, the bail should be cancelled and he should be jailed," the petitioner said. Asked about his locus standi in the case, Chaudhary said that "any person can make a prayer in the courts about an offence. The crime is against the society and I am a member of the society." "The 2011 clashes had taken place between two communities over a land-related dispute. In the violence that lasted a night in September 2011, at least nine people were allegedly killed in police firing while 22 others were injured.

Supreme Court stays NGT order limiting number of participants in 'dhol-tasha-zanj' troupes during Ganapati immersion processions in Pune

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the August 30, 2024, direction of the Western Zone bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) limiting the number of members in each dhol-tasha-zanj troupe to a maximum of 30 persons during the Ganapati immersion procession in Pune. A three-judge bench presided by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud passed the interim order while issuing notice on an appeal filed against the NGT direction. "Issue notice. Till the next day of listing, there shall be a stay of operative direction 4 in the impugned order..." the bench also comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra ordered. After dictating the order, the CJ orally remarked, "Let them do their dhol-tasha-zanj. It's the heart of Pune, no? If you suddenly..." The appellants had brought the matter to the notice of the bench Thursday morning and sought an urgent hearing saying the immersion is scheduled to take place on September 17. Accordingly, the bench took it up Thursday afternoon when Advocate Amit Pai, representing the appellants, sought to explain the festival's cultural significance for Pune. He said the direction would seriously affect the troupes that engage in dhol-tasha-zanj work during the Ganapati festival.



sized digital display system to reflect real-time noise pollution levels. It asked the police department to decide in consultation with the MPCB the total capacity of loudspeakers allowed in the case of each Ganesh mandal based on location, considering their proximity to school/hospital/residential complexes. The NGT asked the police to notify that the use of toll (metallic high noise-making unit) and DJ in immersion processions is prohibited. In the case of violation, the police shall proceed in accordance with the law against the defaulters, the NGT said. It asked the MPCB to publish the names of the violators of Noise Rules, 2000, within seven days of the immersion in two local newspapers and to also upload details of such cases on its website to ensure that such information is accessible to public use for 90 days.

The Tribunal had also directed the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) to carry out real-time noise monitoring at a minimum of three locations in/near each Ganapati pandal, and at major traffic junctions in consultation with the police, and install an appropriately

In a jab at Rahul Gandhi, V-P Dhankhar condemns Constitutional post-holder becoming "enemy" of nation



GNS News Agency, Sept 17

In an apparent reference to Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, without naming him, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday said nothing was more condemnable than someone holding a Constitutional post becoming "part of enemies of the nation". During his visit to the United States earlier this week, Gandhi spoke of the condition of politics in India and said "love, respect and humility" was missing. He also spoke of the government's handling of the border dispute with China. It is not clear which of Gandhi's remarks the V-P was refer-

ring to, but he said: "I am pained and disturbed that some people in position have just no idea of Bharat. They have no idea of our Constitution, they have no idea of our national interest. I am sure your heart must be bleeding at what you see. If we are true Bhartiyas, if we believe in our nation, we will never side with the enemies of the nation. We will all stand spinally for the nation." Dhankhar was speaking at Parliament to the third batch of the Rajya Sabha internship programme.

"Imagine, ultimate sacrifice have been given by how many in getting this freedom, in protecting this freedom, in protecting the nation! Our brothers and sisters are also involved in combat position. Mothers have lost their sons, wives have lost their husbands.

We can't ridicule our nationalism. Every Indian outside the country has to be an ambassador of this nation. How painful that one who holds a Constitutional position is doing just the reverse of it! Nothing can be more condemnable, despicable and intolerable than that you become part of enemies of the nation," Dhankhar said. Without naming anyone, he said "they" did not understand the value of freedom and "some people" wanted to "divide our nation". "This is ignorance in extremity," Dhankhar said.

215 Tripura tribal youths given battery-operated autorickshaws at Khumulwng

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

In an effort to empower the indigenous tribal youths of the state, the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) provided battery-operated three-wheelers (E-autos) to 215 beneficiaries at an event held at Khumpui Academy school ground at West Tripura's Khumulwng on Wednesday. Tipra Motha Party (TMP) founder and royal scion Pradyot Kishore Debbarma and Lok Sabha MP Kriti Devi Singh Debbarma flagged off the new vehicles and handed over the keys to the beneficiaries in the presence of Chief Executive Member of TTAADC Purna Chandra Jamatia, different elected representatives and officials of the TTAADC and officials of Tripura Gramin Bank. "Our primary goal is to make our indigenous youths self-sufficient



through financial aid and give them access to government-sponsored schemes," said Jamatia. In July, the TTAADC administration launched an autorickshaw loan scheme - Tipra-Ham (Tripura Indigenous People's Livelihood Resource Assistance and Help for Advancement of

Micro Entrepreneurship) to encourage entrepreneurship livelihood.

In the loan scheme, the beneficiaries would get a 20 per cent subsidy from the TTAADC and could avail loan at the lowest interest rate from Gramin Bank. However, the beneficiaries need to give 15 per cent of the total amount of

the loan. A total of 600 beneficiaries have been selected for the Tipra-Ham scheme. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Tripura Gramin Bank and TTAADC to provide financial assistance to boost economic growth in remote and tribal-dominated regions of the state.

Nobody can suppress our voice, truth is with us: Engineer Rashid in Srinagar



GNS News Agency, Sept 17

The Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) chief, who was released on interim jail from Tihar Jail on Wednesday, went down on his knees and touched his forehead on the road after exiting the airport. The Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) chief, who was released on interim jail from Tihar Jail on Wednesday, went down on his knees and touched his forehead on the road after exiting the airport. Returning home after more than five years in prison, Member of Parliament Sheikh Abdul Rashid, popularly known as Engineer Rashid, on Thursday said no one needs peace more than the people of Kashmir but they want it on their conditions and not on terms set by the Centre.

The Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) chief, who was released on interim jail from Tihar Jail on Wednesday, went down on his knees and touched his forehead on the road after exiting the airport. "We want to tell (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi that no one needs peace more than we do. But that peace will come at our conditions, not yours. We do not want the peace of a graveyard but peace with dignity," he said. Expressing gratitude to his supporters who had assembled outside the airport to welcome him, the Baramulla MP said he wants to convey to the people

of Kashmir that they are not weak at all. "The people of Kashmir will win as the people of Jammu and Kashmir are on the path of truth. The decisions taken by Narendra Modi on August 5, 2019, are totally unacceptable to us. Whether you send Engineer Rashid to Tihar or anywhere else, we will emerge victorious," he said, referring to the revocation of Article 370 by the Centre.

Flanked by his son and party leaders, Rashid asked his supporters not to lose courage as "the truth is with us". "Nobody on earth, be it Narendra Modi, be it Amit Shah, can suppress our voice. The truth is with us and truth will be victorious. We are not begging. We want to be treated like humans. We want the Jammu and Kashmir issue, which has been pending since 1947 and has claimed 4-5 lakh lives, to be resolved so that peace returns to the whole sub-continent, no mother loses her children and nobody is imprisoned," the MP added.

Rashid, who was released from Tihar jail on Wednesday, said that for him, the power of being an MP or an MLA did not matter as "everything comes later on". "First, the self-respect, rights and liberty of Kashmiris have to be protected, preserved and honoured," he said. Asked about the NC and PDP targeting him, Rashid, a two-time legislator in the erstwhile assembly of J-K, said he has high regard for the leadership of both the parties "but I am fighting a fight for those people for whom they do not have the courage to fight". "They were invisible for the last five years. That is why they lost in the parliamentary election. My fight is much bigger than what the PDP and NC are trying today," Rashid said. He said he was not happy over Omar Abdullah's loss in the Lok Sabha polls, "but (I am satisfied) that the people of north Kashmir burst the bubble of Modi's 'naya' Kashmir". "I salute the people of north Kashmir, the people of whole Kashmir," Rashid added. The AIP supremo later left for Baramulla. He was scheduled to address a public gathering at Delina.

NSA Ajit Doval holds talks with Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

The Doval-Shoigu meeting on Wednesday evening took place on the margins of a conclave of national security advisors of the BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) nations. The Doval-Shoigu meeting on Wednesday evening took place on the margins of a conclave of national security advisors of the BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) nations. National Security Advisor Ajit Doval has held wide-ranging talks with his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu in St Petersburg and discussed important issues of "mutual interests" amid fresh calls for India's possible role in finding a solution to the Ukraine conflict. The Doval-Shoigu meeting on Wednesday evening took place on the margins of a conclave of national security advisors of the BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) nations.

It is understood that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv on August 23 figured in the talks between the two NSAs. NSA Shri Ajit Doval had a bilateral meeting with His Excellency Mr. Sergei Shoigu, Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, on the sidelines of the BRICS NSAs meeting in Saint Petersburg. Both sides reviewed progress in bilateral cooperation and discussed... "Both sides reviewed progress in bilateral cooperation and discussed important issues of mutual interest," the Indian embassy in Russia said on the talks between Doval and Shoigu.

Doval's visit to Russia comes two-and-half weeks after Prime Minister Modi paid a high-profile trip to Ukrainian capital Kyiv. In his talks with Zelenskyy, Modi said both Ukraine and Russia should sit together without wasting time to end the ongoing war and that India was ready to play an "active role" to restore peace in the region. The prime minister said India was on the side of peace since the beginning of the conflict and he would even like to contribute personally for a peaceful resolution of the



crisis. Modi's nearly nine-hour visit to Ukraine, the first by an Indian prime minister since its independence in 1991, came six weeks after he held summit talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow. In the last few days, there has been calls for India's potential role in pushing peace talks between Russia and Ukraine as New Delhi has good relations with both the nations. On Saturday, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni following her talks with Zelenskyy said India and China can play a role in finding a solution to the dragging conflict. Russian President Putin, speaking at a panel discussion at the Eastern Economic Forum in the Russian city of Vladivostok last Thursday, named India, Brazil and China as possible intermediaries that could play a role in resolving the conflict. "First of all, it is the Chinese People's Republic, Brazil and India — I am in contact with my partners and I have no doubt that the leaders of these countries — and we have relations of trust and confidence with one another — will be really interested and provide a helping hand," he said. His remarks came in response to a question on possible countries that can act as a mediator between Russia and Ukraine. India has been maintaining that the conflict in Ukraine must be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy.

Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh call back IPS officers heading SITs in Manipur, send replacements

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

A year after multiple Indian Police Service (IPS) officers were sent to Manipur by different states/Union Territories to head their Special Investigation Teams (SITs) to investigate the violence cases, three states—Punjab, Haryana, and Madhya Pradesh—have called back their officers and sent their replacements. On August 3 last year, the Supreme Court appointed former deputy national security adviser (NSA) and former Mumbai Police commissioner Dattatray Padsalgikar to be the "overall monitor" of a CBI probe into the instances of sexual violence in Manipur. "Following the Supreme Court's directions, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs directed all the states/UTs to nominate their officers for the SITs. Later, IPS and local cadre officers from Rajasthan, Odisha, Delhi, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, and Haryana were sent to Manipur as "token officers" to head the SITs of cases probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and also the Manipur police. Some of the token officers reported to the CBI and others to the Manipur Police," a source said. The Indian Express has learnt that a discussion to send them back to their cadre started when some of the IPS officers who came on superintendent of police (SP) rank got promoted to deputy inspector general (DIG) in January and requested their police chiefs to call them back. "All the IPS officers who got promoted had made a request before Padsalgikar to send them back to their home cadre, who, in turn, reportedly sent a letter to the CBI director and the MHA, mentioning the current situation of Manipur and suggested them to initiate rotation policy of all the officers of SITs," the source said. "In the SIT, there are all the police personnel of Manipur Police, and more than working on the cases, they are busier with law and order duties. Padsalgikar has reportedly mentioned the current law and order situation and how it is affecting the daily work of the SIT," the source said.

When contacted, Padsalgikar refused to comment on this matter. Manipur Director General of Police (DGP) Rajiv Singh also did not respond. In an order issued on September 6 on behalf of the Manipur DGP, Javanta

Singh, IG (Admin), Manipur Police, said that Madhya Pradesh cadre IPS officers Alok Kumar and Rajeev Kumar Mishra were relieved from their duties as their replacements Ramsharan Prajapati and Sushil Ranjan reported to the office. "... They should report back to their parent cadre immediately. This has a reference to Home Department, Madhya Pradesh order, dated August 22 this year of Director General of Police, MP," the order said.

In one of the communications sent on August 8 to the chief secretary of Manipur, the additional chief secretary of the Haryana Home Department, said, "I am directed to refer Government of India, MHA letter dated August 16, 2023, to say that Surinder Pal Singh, a 2010-batch IPS officer of Haryana cadre, had been deputed/deployed from Haryana police department, under the supervision of Dattatray Padsalgikar, former DGP, Maharashtra for investigation of FIRs in connection with the Manipur violence, as per directions issued by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, vide their judgement on August 7, 2023." "... Now as per the request of the officer, and in terms of promotion of the officer to the rank of DIG vide Haryana government order February 1, 2024, Rajender Kumar Meena, a 2011-batch IPS officer of same cadre, SP (Commando), Newal, Karnal, is hereby deputed/deployed for the said duty in place of Singh. Therefore, Singh is recalled back from Manipur to home cadre; Haryana," stated the letter, the copy of which was forwarded to the MHA, CBI director, Manipur DGP, and Padsalgikar. Also, two officers of Punjab and Madhya Pradesh who have not been promoted have also been called back by their respective DGPs. "I am directed to refer to the subject cited above and to Shubham Aggarwal, a 2018-batch officer of Punjab cadre, had been deputed/deployed from Punjab police department, under the supervision of Padsalgikar, for investigation of FIRs in connection with the Manipur violence, as per directions issued by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, vide their Judgment. The officer had reported for the said duty on November 23, 2023. Now as per the request of the officer and recommendations of DGP, Punjab, Aditya S.

US demands full accountability for American activist's death in West Bank



GNS News Agency, Sept 17

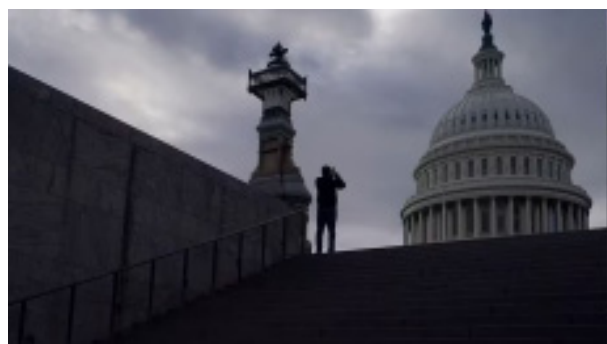
The US government condemns the killing of American activist Aysenur Ezgi Eygi in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, calling it "unacceptable" and demanding full accountability. Eygi was shot during a protest against settlement expansion, and her family has called for an independent investigation. The US government has strongly condemned the killing of a 26-year-old American activist, Aysenur Ezgi Eygi, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, a part of the Palestinian territories, calling it "unacceptable." President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris on Wednesday said Israel must do more to make sure it never happens again. Eygi, also a Turkish national, was shot during a protest against settlement expansion in the West Bank. The US has demanded accountability and continued access to the investigation into the shooting. "There must be full accountability. And Israel must do more to ensure that incidents like this never happen again," said Biden, according to Reuters.

US tightens security for election certification to avoid another insurrection

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

The US Department of Homeland Security has designated the congressional certification as a "national security event" which will allow federal, state and local resources to be utilised to ensure proper security measures are taken. In a bid to avoid the recurrence of the January 6 attack on the capitol building by pro-Trump supporters in 2021, the US government is planning to increase security for Congress' certification of the upcoming November 5 presidential elections.

The Secret Service announced on Wednesday in a statement that, in a significant move, the US Department of Homeland Security has designated the congressional certification as a "national security event". The designation given to the event allows the Secret Service to oversee the planning of the event while federal, state and local resources can be utilised to ensure proper security measures are taken. The significant step was recommended in the reports following the probes into the 2021 attacks that put legislators and citizens in danger as pro-Trump supporters broke into the Capitol building, claiming the election was stolen and threatening to harm individuals. As numerous polls show, the presidential showdown between former president Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris is going to be a close one,



leaving the door ajar for speculation and a repeat of what transpired in 2021. In 2020, after losing the election to President Joe Biden, Trump instigated his supporters alleging that the election had been stolen and falsely claimed victory. In response to his message, his supporters stormed the federal building in an unsuccessful bid to stop the certification of the election. Trump's role in the instigation was investigated by a congressional panel and the former president was indicted for trying to illegally overturn the 2020 election results.

Taylor Swift, Donald Trump, and bad blood between them. Also, the US election



GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Taylor Swift's endorsement of Kamala Harris is more headline-grabbing than a political debate. But, will her 'Fearless' stance shake up Trump's chances in 2024 election?

The Democrats, in their wildest dreams, could not have hoped for a better endorsement on the night of the first — and possibly only — presidential debate between Kamala Harris and her Republican rival Donald Trump. It was the one by Ms. Taylor Swift — a multiple Grammy award-winning artist, global megastar, NFL enthusiast. Oh, and one who boasts nearly 300 million fans on social media. Kamala Harris had barely walked off the stage after a debate in which she was widely seen to have outperformed Trump, when Taylor Swift announced her support in an Instagram post. She signed off the post with 'Childless Cat Lady' and a photo of herself with her cat — a not-so-subtle dig at Trump's running mate JD Vance. Typical Tuesday.

How did a 34-year-old global pop sensation's endorsement of the Democratic presidential nominee end up making headlines when the spotlight was all about the presidential debate between Harris and Trump and the November 5 election? And more to the point — will Taylor Swift's endorsement of the Democratic candidate have any impact on Trump's 2024 campaign?

'And now we've got bad blood! It was way, way back in 2018 when Taylor Swift and Donald Trump had their first (sort of) political confrontation. In an Instagram post on October 7, 2018, Taylor Swift endorsed Democratic candidates in Tennessee for the 2018 midterm elections. She criticised Republican candidate Marsha Blackburn and voiced her support for LGBTQ+ rights and the fight against systemic racism.

Then US President Donald Trump dismissed Swift's political stance, saying, "Let's say that I like Taylor's music about 25% less now." A serious confrontation came two years later when Swift criticised President Trump for his response to the unrest following the murder of George Floyd by a police officer. She took exception to Trump's remark, "When the looting starts, the shooting starts," and declared, "We will vote you out in November." There is no real way to calculate how much sway Swift had over the

voters, but in the November 2020 elections, Trump was indeed voted out. Four years later, Swift is once again opposing Trump.

When Trump tried to turn Taylor RedTrump, for his part, has seemingly tried to get Swift's endorsement.

In a post on Truth Social in February 2024, Trump claimed credit for his role in the Music Modernization Act, a piece of legislation that aimed to update copyright and streaming rights laws for the digital age. In a typical Trump manner, he said, "I signed and was responsible for the Music Modernization Act for Taylor Swift and all other Musical Artists... Joe Biden didn't do anything for Taylor and never will. There's no way she could endorse crooked Joe Biden, the worst and most corrupt president in the history of our country, and be disloyal to the man who made her so much money." He did not forget to mention her boyfriend Travis Kelce, the Kansas City Chiefs star, saying, "Besides that, I like her boyfriend, Travis, even though he may be a liberal and probably can't stand me!"

When the indirect appeal did not work, Trump tried another route — an AI, deepfaked version. In August, Donald Trump posted an AI-generated image of Swift dressed in red, white, and blue with a caption that said, "Taylor Swift Wants You To Vote For Donald Trump." "I accept!" Trump proclaimed. Wishful thinking it was, as barely 20 days later, Swift announced her support. And surprise, surprise: it was NOT for Donald Trump.

"...she's [Swift] a very liberal person; she seems to always endorse a Democrat, and she'll probably pay a price for it in the marketplace," Trump said in response to the popstar's endorsement of Kamala Harris.

Will Swift's endorsement end the Democrats' cruel summer?

Kamala Harris wasn't Trump's original opponent. The initial Democratic nominee for the 2024 race was current President Joe Biden. However, the June Biden-Trump debate was a debacle for the incumbent throwing the Democratic Party into disarray. Biden eventually bowed out as age, rhetoric, and perhaps illness weighed against him. But Harris's nomination calmed the turbulent waters for Democrats. And now, Swift's endorsement has added fresh winds to the sail. The influence of Taylor Swift cannot be easily calculated, but it can also not be easily dismissed. Case in point: In 2023, a single social media post from her led to the registration of 35,000 new voters. Another more relevant and recent example is the impact Tuesday's post had. The link shared by Swift on Instagram for the voter registration led over 3.3 lakh people to the curated website. Just to repeat: 3.3 lakh people tapped on the link Taylor Swift mentioned in her post. With less than two months to go, the question now remains: Can Kamala Harris write her name in the blank space that is the first woman US President? And will Donald Trump be able to shake it off — the influence of the real Taylor Swift who came on Instagram and not the AI version?

14 after Russia targets energy infrastructure in Ukraine



GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Russian drones inflicted significant damage to the northern Ukrainian town of Konotop's energy infrastructure in an overnight attack that injured at least 14 people and cut electricity to the settlement, local officials said on Thursday. A view shows a residential building damaged during a Russian drone strike amid Russia's attack on Ukraine in the town of Konotop. Russian drones pound power system in Sumy region town, 14 people hurt, Ukraine says. Russian drones inflicted significant damage to the northern Ukrainian town of Konotop's energy infrastructure in an overnight attack that injured at least 14 people and cut electricity to the settlement, local officials said on Thursday.

Rescuers were working to restore power in the town, which had a pre-war population of about 83,000. Regional officials said there had been 10 explosions during the attack and Mayor Artem Semenikhin said the power system was in critical condition. "At the moment, energy workers are doing everything they can to provide electricity to the hospital and the water supply system," he

said in the early hours of Thursday. Hospitals continued to operate, he added. Konotop is in Sumy region, which has been particularly targeted by Russia in recent weeks. Ukraine used Sumy as a staging ground for a surprise incursion into Russia across the border last month in a bid to try to seize the battlefield initiative as Russian forces inch forward in the east of Ukraine. After making rapid progress initially, Kyiv's advances into Russia's Kursk region appear to have stalled, and a senior Russian commander said on Wednesday his forces had taken back control of about 10 settlements in a counterattack. Ukraine has not commented on the latest Russian reported gains. Reuters was not able to independently verify battlefield developments.

The strike on Konotop was part of a broader Russian attack using 64 drones, the air force said. It shot down 44 of them over nine different regions, it said. Such attacks have become regular, almost nightly occurrences since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. Though Ukraine is heavily outgunned and lacks a large arsenal of long-range missiles, it has tried to take the fight back to Russia by launching hundreds of drones at it. Semenikhin said the authorities in Konotop did not know when the power would be restored and they planned to supply water on hourly basis. The attack also damaged seven apartment buildings, medical and educational institutions, a shop, a bank and a section of the town's tramway, regional prosecutors and local officials said. The Russian drone attack also caused a fire at a furniture storage warehouse in the central Khmelnytskyi region which emergency services were still trying to extinguish in the morning, governor Serhiy Tiurin said. The governor of the northern Chernihiv region said Russia had stepped up its attacks there in the past day, causing damage to the region's infrastructure. He did not say what exactly had been hit.

Floods ravage Thailand's northern province, 33 dead due to rain since August

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

In Thailand's northernmost province of Chiang Rai, floodwaters had started receding from some areas of the hard-hit Mai Sai district, but many riverside settlements were still flooded, said the head of the district, Narongpol Kid-an. Thailand deployed military special forces in the northern province of Chiang Rai on Thursday after flooding marooned thousands that authorities are trying to reach with boats and helicopters.

At least 33 people have died across Thailand since mid-August from a spate of rain-related incidents including landslides, with nine fatalities this week in two northern provinces hit by adverse weather brought by Typhoon Yagi, according to the government. Yagi, the strongest storm to hit Asia this year, has killed at least 197 people in Vietnam, where it made landfall on Saturday and flooded parts of capital city Hanoi. In Thailand's northernmost province of Chiang Rai, floodwaters had started receding from some areas of the hard-hit Mai Sai district, but many riverside settlements were still flooded, said the head of the district, Narongpol Kid-an. "We are rushing to bring out people trapped inside their houses," he told Reuters. "There are still hundreds of people who need to be rescued." Local authorities were using boats and helicopters, with support from Thai Navy SEAL special forces, to conduct rescue operations, he said. "The situation is very delicate," Narongpol said. "When it rains, the water rises very quickly."

The Thai Navy said it deployed nine flat-bottom boats to deliver over a thousand aid packages in Chiang Rai. Floodwaters had also entered parts of Chiang Rai city, one of the largest settlements in northern Thailand, inundating key roads and urban areas. Out of 10 sched-



uled flights into and out of Chiang Rai's airport on Thursday, nine had been cancelled, according to its website. The airport itself had not been flooded, but rising waters had made roads to the facility impassable, said Kornchit Chomphudeng, head of Chiang Rai's Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation. "The flooding this time has spread over a wider area than the recent floods", he said.

A mountainous region bisected by the Kok River, Chiang Rai was one of five northern Thai provinces hit by severe floods last month. Authorities were planning to rely on Thai Air Force helicopters to send food and water to some 3,000 people marooned in Chiang Rai's Ban Kwai Wua Dam area, the provincial office said. Another 200 people were trapped in a school, waiting to be evacuated to a rescue centre. Thailand's Office of National Water Resources on Thursday issued a warning to 36 provinces, including the capital Bangkok, for potential flash floods due to heavy rainfall.

Indian-origin Israeli soldier killed amid escalating tensions in West Bank

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

A 24-year-old Indian-origin Israeli soldier from the Bnei Menashe community was killed in a vehicle-ramming attack close to the West Bank's Beit El settlement, community members said on Thursday.

Staff Sergeant Geri Gideon Hanghal was a resident of Nof HaGalil and a soldier in the Kfir Brigade's Nahshon Battalion, the Israeli Army said. Community members told PTI that they were "in shock at the news of the loss of a young life" on Wednesday near Asaf Junction. Footage from the scene of the attack showed a truck with a Palestinian licence plate veering off a busy highway and barrel full speed into an Israel Defence Forces (IDF) guard post adjacent to a bus stop before coming to a halt. The suspect was named by Israeli security sources as 58-year-old Hayil Dhaifallah, from the central West Bank town of Rafat. Sergeant Hanghal's funeral will be held on Thursday, they said.

Hanghal immigrated to Israel from the northeastern part of India in 2020. Some 300 Bnei Menashe youngsters are said to be doing Army duty during the current war, most of them serving in combat units.

The Bnei Menashe, hailing from India's north-eastern states of Manipur and Mizoram, are believed to have descended from the Israelite tribe of Menasheh, one of the "lost tribes" of ancient times. Shlomo Amar, Sephardic Chief Rabbi, declared them descendants of Menasheh in 2005 paving the path for their immigration to Israel as members of a "lost tribe".

Some 5,000 members of the Bnei Menashe community are said to have immigrated to Israel, including almost 1,500 in the past five years. Another 5,500 still live in India and are waiting to immigrate. Nof HaGalil Mayor Ronen Plot was quoted by Ynetnews as saying, "The city of Nof HaGalil mourns and grieves the loss of Staff Sgt. Hanghal. Gideon was a member of the Bnei Menashe community, which is very dear to my heart—good, humble and patriotic people." The attack follows a series of attempted suicide bombings and shooting incidents emanating from the West Bank and claimed by Islamic Hamas. Hamas on October 7 last year launched an attack on Israel, leading to the ongoing war in Gaza. Israel has said that it is stepping up its counter-terrorism operations in the West Bank claiming that Iran-backed groups are smuggling weapons into the area from Jordan and trying to carry out attacks in Israeli territory.

The Palestinian Health Ministry in the West Bank on Wednesday said that five Palestinians were killed in an Israeli airstrike in Tubas overnight. Another two people



Some 300 Bnei Menashe youngsters are said to be doing Army duty during the current war, most of them serving in combat units

were injured by Israeli fire, one critically, as troops raided Tubas and the neighbouring town of Tammun, Palestinian state agency Wafa reported. The IDF confirmed the airstrikes, once a rare occurrence in the West Bank, saying it targeted members of a terror cell.

The IDF has carried out more than 70 airstrikes in the West Bank since October 7, using drones, attack helicopters, and fighter jets. Local media reports have been eluding that the Israeli defence brass is increasingly worried that the violence in the West Bank could swell into a major conflagration.

The spiralling violence has also been fuelled by hardline Israeli settlers in the central and northern West Bank who have carried out several attacks on Palestinians in recent weeks, including a fiery rampage on a village last month in which a Palestinian man was killed while trying to confront the rioters. The Palestinian Authority (PA) Health Ministry has claimed that more than 670 Palestinians have been killed by Israel since October 7 in the West Bank, which is under the PA control.

The IDF has said that the vast majority of those dead were gunmen killed in exchanges of fire, rioters who clashed with troops, or terrorists carrying out attacks. Israel is said to have also arrested some 5,000 wanted Palestinians across the West Bank over the last eleven months, including more than 2,000 said to be linked to Hamas.

Madhabi Buch has maintained 'complete silence for weeks': Hindenburg on Congress allegations against SEBI chief



US-based Hindenburg Research has said that Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch has maintained 'complete silence' on the recent allegations levelled against her by the Congress. On Tuesday, the Congress alleged that she held 99 per cent shares in a company "actively providing advisory/consultancy services till date" and that her husband Dhaval Buch received Rs 4.78 crore as income from Mahindra & Mahindra while she "as a Whole Time Member of SEBI was adjudicating cases of the same group".

The party further alleged that Agora Advisory Pvt Ltd, owned by the Buchs, received Rs 2.95 crore from five companies in 2016-17, 2019-20 and 2023-24. Following the allegations, three listed companies, Pidilite Industries, Dr Reddy's Laboratories and Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) admitted that they had hired Dhaval Buch as a consultant or leadership coach during various periods and paid remunerations. In a post on X (formerly Twitter), the US-based short seller wrote, "New allegations have emerged that the private consulting entity, 99 per cent owned by SEBI Chair Madhabi Buch, accepted payments from multiple listed companies regulated by SEBI during her time as SEBI Whole-Time Member." The companies include: Mahindra & Mahindra, ICICI Bank,

Dr. Reddy's and Pidilite. These allegations apply to Buch's Indian consulting entity with no details thus far on Buch's Singapore-based consulting entity, it said.

"Buch has maintained her complete silence for weeks on all of the emerging issues," Hindenburg Research wrote. Responding to the Congress's allegations that Dhaval Buch received Rs 4.78 crore from M&M, the group said, "Mahindra Group hired Dhaval Buch in 2019 specifically for his expertise in supply chain and sourcing, soon after he retired as Unilever's Global Chief Procurement Officer." Dr Reddy's Laboratories also informed stock exchanges said it "engaged the services of Dhaval Buch of Agora Advisory Private Ltd for leadership coaching for a total remuneration of Rs. 6,58,000." Pidilite Industries also said, "the company engages with multiple partners and consultants who are renowned professionals in their respective fields. As part of its routine requirements, the company in FY 2019-20 had engaged Agora Advisory's Dhaval Buch, a globally renowned supply chain and procurement professional, for his services in these areas." SEBI did not respond to a mail from The Indian Express seeking its response on the Congress Party's allegations.

On September 7, the Congress Media and Publicity Department chairperson Pawan Khera said, "Between 2018-2024, Madhabi Buch, as a whole time member and later as the chairperson of SEBI, had been receiving rental income amounting to Rs 2.16 crore from Carol Info Services Limited (a firm affiliated to Wockhardt Limited)." Mumbai-based Wockhardt Limited in a statement called the Congress claims "baseless" and "misleading" and said it "continues to act in compliance with all applicable laws". On September 2, the Congress had accused Buch of "holding an office of profit at ICICI Bank", and continuing to receive income to the tune of Rs 16.80 crore since she took over the post in 2017. However, ICICI Bank, said the bank or its group companies have "not paid any salary or granted any ESOPs" to Buch after she retired.

Early resumption of India-China direct flights discussed in meeting with Chinese delegation: Aviation minister Naidu

Resumption of direct passenger flights between India and China was discussed in a meeting between India's Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu and Song Zhiyong, the Administrator of the Civil Aviation Administration of China, Naidu said Thursday morning in a social media post on X (formerly Twitter). Curiously though, the post was deleted after a few hours. "As the Chairman for the 2nd Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation, I have been utilising the platform to engage in sideline meetings with foreign delegations. This morning, alongside Secretary Shri Vumlung Vualnam and other senior officials from my ministry, I had courtesy meeting with Chinese delegation led by Mr. Song Zhiyong to exchange views regarding further strengthening civil aviation cooperation between the two countries, especially promoting early resumption of scheduled passenger flights between us," Naidu said in the post, which was later deleted.

A query mailed to the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) spokesperson on why the social media post was deleted did not elicit a response. The meeting was held on the sidelines of the second Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation of the International Civil Aviation Organization Agency (ICAO) being held in Delhi. In the now-deleted post, Naidu had not elaborated further on the discussions with the Chinese delegation. Speaking with reporters shortly after the courtesy meeting with the Chinese team, Naidu said that while the Chinese delegation did put forth their request of resumption of direct air connectivity, a decision will only be taken after consulting all concerned stakeholders, particularly the Ministry of External Affairs.

Direct passenger flight connectivity between India and China was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given that the bilateral relationship soured following the standoff in Eastern Ladakh in 2020 and is still



frigid, direct flights between the two most populous nations have not resumed despite air connectivity returning to pre-pandemic levels globally. In June, Reuters had reported that China was pressing India to resume direct air connectivity between the two countries, while India was resisting it. According to a senior official in the MoCA, airlines—Chinese as well as Indian—have been looking to restart direct flights, as there is high demand for travel between the two countries. "It is not only our (MoCA's) call. There are other ministries and departments involved and the government will have to take a decision based on various considerations and inputs," said the MoCA official, who did not wish to be identified. Prior to the pandemic, there were over 500 direct flights a month between the two countries, majority of which were operated by Chinese airlines Air China, China Eastern, and China Southern. Indian carriers Air India and IndiGo were also operating direct flights between the two countries. Due to the suspension of direct flights, travel between the two countries is being facilitated by connecting flights from hub airports like Hong Kong, Bangkok, and Singapore, increasing duration as well as cost of travel.

International investors seeing higher returns in India: US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti

India is a country with immense investment opportunities where international investors are seeing higher returns compared to the other parts of the world, US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti said on Wednesday. "We see that investment opportunities are growing quickly here (in India). More and more international investors are seeing returns that are above and beyond in other parts of the world," Garcetti said while addressing an event hosted by the Milken Institute in collaboration with the United States Mission in India.

He said as a diplomatic mission, the US is encouraging institutional investors to pay greater attention to India and understand that the country is a complicated place just as the US is. "This (India) isn't a place to make a quick rupee. If you are here for the long haul, you will be richly rewarded," Garcetti said. As partners, India and the US need to be more strategic, he stated. "It isn't just about bottom line returns, but if we



Garcetti noted that India needs investment in strategic sectors as well such as infrastructure, building cities, ports, airports and factories.

are overly dependent on any one country, we will all see economic risk, not just security risk to our people. We have to diversify together and make investments that are catalytic to our people's economic and physical security," he said.

Garcetti noted that India needs investment in strategic sectors as well such as infrastructure, building cities, ports, airports and factories. A US delegation consisting of executives of the top five American pension funds is

currently visiting India to explore investment opportunities. The roadshow, Building Financial Futures, began on September 9. The delegation of five pension executives together manages assets of over \$1.8 trillion.

'This wasn't an error. It was a deliberate act of chicanery': Delhi restaurant slammed for serving cheap mushrooms as gourmet morels



A recent incident at one of Delhi's popular fine-dining restaurants has sparked a heated debate about transparency and authenticity in gourmet cuisine after vascular surgeon and writer Ambarish Satwick took to X to call out the restaurant of a "culinary sleight of hand." Satwick claimed they swapped expensive morel mushrooms with far cheaper button mushrooms in a dish from their tasting menu. He wrote, "The offending dish, an offering on the tasting menu, promised morel, water chestnut, and asparagus, hidden beneath a 'paper roast dosa'." He added, "What arrived under the dosa cone, was not the morel, but a drab cluster of the most ordinary button mushrooms, the kind one might expect in a roadside stir-fry, the fungal equivalent of a counterfeit handbag. If you're going to list morels on the menu, then there better be morels on the plate, not the fungal detritus scraped from the bottom of a vegetable box." The substitution was seen not just as an error but a deliberate act meant to deceive, raising questions about the integrity of high-end dining establishments.

What are morels?

Kanikka Malhotra, consultant dietician and certified diabetes educator tells indianexpress.com, "Morels are a type of wild mushroom known for their unique honeycomb-like appearance and rich, earthy flavour." Morels grow in the wild for a brief period, usually in the spring, and are challenging to cultivate. Their restricted availability increases their price and demand. Nothing compares to the unique, earthy, nutty flavour of morel mushrooms. Chefs highly prize them for their meaty texture, which elevates food to a gourmet level and allows for the creation of distinctive culinary experiences. "Besides being low in calories, morels are rich in minerals like iron, copper, and manganese and contain vitamins like D and

B. Their nutritional nature makes them more appealing, especially to fine dining patrons who are health-conscious," says Malhotra. She continues that morels grow in the wild, often in remote forested areas, making harvesting labour-intensive. Foragers must carefully pick them by hand, adding to their exclusivity and cost.

How do they differ from more common mushrooms?

Malhotra explains, "With their deep, earthy, and nutty flavour, morels distinguish themselves from ordinary button mushrooms and provide a depth and richness that they cannot match. Unlike button mushrooms, which have a softer, more delicate feel, porous, meaty texture that absorbs flavours while keeping a solid bite is a result of their unique honeycomb structure. Morels are a highly sought-after item in fine dining, contributing a strong, smoky aroma that enriches gourmet dishes, while button mushrooms offer a mild and adaptable flavour. The intense taste and substantial texture of morels distinguish them as a genuine gourmet indulgence." Morels have a firm, meaty bite with a unique spongy structure, while common mushrooms tend to be softer and less substantial when cooked. Morels have a firm, meaty bite with a unique spongy structure, while common mushrooms are softer and less substantial when cooked.

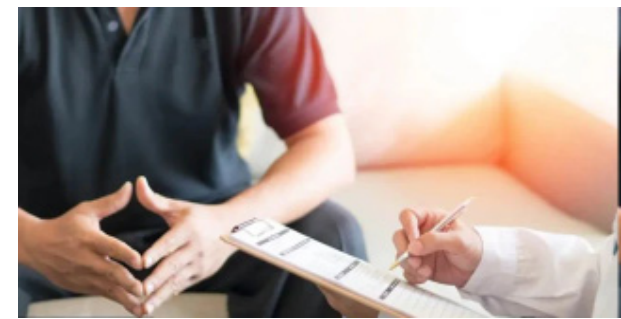
How can consumers differentiate between high-quality ingredients and their more common counterparts?

According to Malhotra, consumers can differentiate between high-quality ingredients like morels and their more common counterparts by paying attention to several key factors: Fine ingredients have unique, complex flavours, such as that of morels. Compared to less expensive alternatives, consumers can frequently distinguish the richness and complexity of flavour in premium products. Premium ingredients usually have a superior texture. Morels have a firm, meaty bite with a unique spongy structure, while common mushrooms are softer and less substantial when cooked. The texture of high-quality ingredients often holds up better in complex dishes. Restaurants with high-quality ingredients often highlight them in their presentations and menu descriptions. Morels, for instance, may be showcased as a key feature of the dish, with their appearance (honeycomb-like structure) adding visual appeal that stands out from ordinary mushrooms. Restaurants that use high-quality ingredients tend to be transparent about their sourcing. Menus often include detailed descriptions of the origin or seasonality of premium items like morels. If the menu is vague about these details, it might suggest using more common, less expensive alternatives.

How age catches up with men as they turn 40: 'While they don't experience a monthly cycle or menopause like women...'

While the concept of a biological clock is mainly linked to women and their fertility, according to the research, men also experience "age-related changes" that can affect their reproductive health. "In men, sperm quality is impacted as they age. Several studies indicate that this happens due to decreased motility and increased DNA fragmentation once they turn 40," said Dr Nisha Pansare, fertility consultant, Nova IVF Fertility, Pune.

Dr Ridhi Bajaj, associate consultant, CK Birla Hospital (R), Delhi also explained that while men don't experience a monthly cycle or menopause like women, their fertility and hormone levels can decline with age, impacting sperm quality, quantity, and overall reproductive health. "In men, their testosterone levels typically decline around the early 40s. This gradual decrease can affect libido, energy levels, mood, and muscle mass. Additionally, sperm motility and morphology also decline with age, posing a higher risk of infertility and potential genetic abnormalities," said Dr Bajaj. Consultant neurologist Dr Sudhir Kumar, Apollo Hospitals, Hyderabad said the most obvious effects are a decrease in muscle mass and bone mineral density. "The drop in testosterone levels is not as steep as the drop in estrogen levels that happen in women after menopause. A drop in testosterone levels in men is associated with an increased risk of infertility and higher chances of birth defects in babies," said Dr Kumar. The risk of several diseases such as erectile dysfunction, obesity, metabolic syndrome, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases is higher in men with lower testosterone levels. According to Dr Kumar, lower testosterone is also associated with a higher risk of premature death.



"In one study, men with low testosterone had a mortality rate of 35 per cent during the eight-year study period compared with a mortality rate of only 20 percent among men with normal testosterone levels. This trend persisted even after controlling for all reasonable variables in the study population. The most common available treatment for low testosterone levels (hypogonadism) is testosterone replacement therapy," said Dr Kumar. However, according to Dr Pansare, while "men don't have a strict biological clock and deadline like women", their ability to conceive healthy offspring can be "affected due to advanced age. Moreover, older fathers may face difficulties while raising children. Hence, men should also take utmost care of their reproductive health." It is essential to speak to a fertility consultant and clear all your doubts. "Try to ensure you follow a well-balanced lifestyle inclusive of a nutritious diet, exercise, avoiding smoking and alcohol, and prioritising sleep. Men should also actively discuss family planning with their fertility consultant," said Dr Pansare.

What precautions should pregnant women take?

In light of an "isolated" Mpox infection detected in a man in India, the Union Health Ministry verified that the case is similar to the earlier 30 cases reported in the country from July 2022. While this case is not part of the current public health emergency (reported by WHO) regarding clade 1 of pox, it still warrants precautionary measures for pregnant women. Public health measures, including contact tracing and monitoring, are in place to ensure the situation is contained. The press release from the ministry on September 9, 2024, stated that there is no indication of any widespread risk to the public at this time.

Dr Shweta Mendiratta, senior consultant, obstetrician, and gynaecologist at Amrita Hospital Faridabad, told indianexpress.com that Mpox, formerly monkeypox, is a viral infection. Pregnant women should be particularly cautious because the pox virus can be transmitted to the fetus during pregnancy. "This transmission can happen if the mother is infected with the virus," said Dr Mendiratta.

What are the risks for pregnant women?

Pregnant women are generally more susceptible to infections due to changes in their immune systems, stressed Dr Mendiratta. Dr Rani Koppula, DGO, MS general surgery, Gleneagles Hospitals, Lakdi Ka Pul, Hyderabad said the viral infection can cause fever, rashes, and swollen lymph nodes. While data on Mpox during pregnancy is limited, some potential risks, according to Dr Mendiratta, include: Severe illness: While Mpox is rare and doesn't spread easily, the virus can cause severe

symptoms if transmitted to a pregnant woman. These symptoms might include fever, skin rashes, and swollen lymph nodes. "In severe cases, the virus may lead to complications such as blindness or secondary infections. Although deaths are rare, especially with the type of Mpox spreading since 2022, it is still essential to be cautious," said Dr Mendiratta. Pregnancy complications: There's a possibility of miscarriage, stillbirth, or preterm delivery, noted Dr Mendiratta. Transmission to the baby: The virus can pass from mother to child during pregnancy or childbirth, said Dr Mendiratta. Precautions To minimise the risk of contracting Mpox, pregnant women should Practice good hygiene: Wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your face. Avoid close contact: Avoid people with known or suspected Mpox infections. This also includes avoiding contact with materials like clothing or bedding that may have been in contact with an infected person, said Dr Mendiratta. Use personal protective equipment: Wear a mask and gloves if you must be around someone with Mpox. Be cautious in high-risk areas: Avoid travel to regions with ongoing Mpox outbreaks. Seek medical attention: If you develop symptoms like fever, rash, or swollen lymph nodes, contact your doctor immediately. "If a pregnant woman is exposed to Mpox or develops symptoms like fever or skin rashes, it's crucial to seek medical advice immediately. Early detection can help in managing the infection and reducing complications," said Dr Koppula. Isolation of the infected persons: If a pregnant woman is infected with Mpox, it's crucial to isolate from others.

Call Me Bae actor Ananya Panday reacts to comparison with Kareena Kapoor's Poo: 'If Bae can become even one percent as lovable as Poo...'



was asked about Karan Johar's statement during the trailer launch about her character, Bae, being a version of Poo. Reacting to his statement, she said, "I don't think we are trying to touch or even come close to what Bebo did because she is a literal icon and the queen. What she did was a legacy; she played such an iconic character. It's our ode to her. If Bae can become even one percent as lovable as Poo did, then I think we all will be happy."

The web show's director, Collin D' Cunha, added, "Every generation needs to have their own Poo. Some of my assistants, who were born in 2001, haven't watched K3G. That's how young they are. They are still 22-23 years old." In Call Me Bae, Ananya Panday stars as a South Delhi born with a silver spoon, who, after losing everything overnight, is forced to move to Mumbai and live independently. She lands a job as a journalist and uncovers a major investigative story. The show chronicles her journey as she navigates the world of journalism, all while maintaining her unique style. The cast also includes Vihaan Samat, Varun Sood, Gurfateh Pirzada, Muskaan Jaferi, and Niharika Dutt in pivotal roles. Call Me Bae is produced by Karan Johar's Dharmatic Entertainment.

During an interaction with Instant Bollywood, Ananya

'Shooting for Shah Rukh Khan's Jawan was my worst experience ever,' says Viraj Ghelani: 'Creators are cast for their clout only'

Shah Rukh Khan's 2023 film Jawan became the biggest hit of his career when it released as the film made more than Rs 1000 crore globally and while many actors in the movie have spoken fondly about the shooting experience of the Atlee directorial, content creator Viraj Ghelani recently described it as his "worst experience ever". Viraj recently appeared on a podcast and said that he had a blink and miss role in the film even though he actually shot for it for almost 10 days. He also spoke about the work culture on set and implied that he was spoken to quite rudely.

Viraj appeared on The Having Said That Show and when he was asked about his cameo in Jawan, he immediately responded by saying, "Don't talk. F*ck. Why did I do it?" Viraj said that many of his followers came up to him after watching the film and appreciated his work. "People are very sweet who watched the film for me that I watched your part," he said and added, "But it was my worst experience ever." When asked why, Viraj Ghelani said that films like these have enough star power so they don't take content creators seriously. "Because see the thing is... they don't consider you because they have Sanjay Dutt, Shah Rukh Khan and two Shah Rukh Khans and all those things," Viraj said. He then spoke about the work culture on Jawan set and shared, "The work culture was 'yahan khada ho ja, yeh kar le (stand here, do this)'. Viraj implied that he was spoken to in a rude way when he was given directions on set. Viraj, who was playing a cop, said that while filming he was given a prop gun during a close up but wasn't given the prop again during the



wide shot. "There was this scene where in the close ups, I have a gun because I am a cop and then they go for a wide shot. Then I said that prop guy has taken my gun. They said gun will come to you, stand here. I was like okay. But the gun never came," he recalled.

Viraj Ghelani said that his closest friends never watched Jawan. "They were like, f*ck that," he said. Viraj said that he had shot for 10 days but his part was negligible in the film and he wasn't even prepared for it. "I came and I went. I am just a blurred image in the background. I had (shot) proper dialogues. I had shot for 10 days in Madh Island in the heat of May. Then suddenly, I see that whatever we had worked on for 15 days, they only used what we shot during the first 30 minutes on the first day," he said. Viraj then said that "creators are cast for their clout only". Viraj has previously appeared in Dharma Productions' Govinda Naam Mera.

Diljit Dosanjh's Dil-Luminati India Tour tickets sold out within minutes



Diljit Dosanjh has once again created history as tickets for his Dil-Luminati India Tour were sold out within minutes of it being available for sale. On Thursday, the tickets went on sale for the public at 1 pm, and within minutes they were all sold. This was after the pre-sales for the concerts began on Tuesday for HDFC Pixel Credit Card holders. Those too sold out within minutes.

The cheapest ticket was priced at Rs 1499 for the Silver Area. The Golden Area was sold for Rs 3999, Rs 4999, and Rs 5999 in different phases. The other areas were the fan pits, which were sold at Rs 9999 and Rs 12999. These include the ones where the Early Bird Dis-

count was provided for the ones who managed to make the cut. In an interview with NDTV, Janamjai Sehgal, Business Head of Saregama India Ltd. and organiser of Diljit Dosanjh's concert said, "We've already sold 1.5 lakh tickets. We are bound by venue limitations, and while there is enormous demand, due to the rules, regulations, and venue capacities, we're expecting around 2 lakh people across 10 venues." He added, "On the first day of pre-sale, 8-10,000 transactions were made in a single minute. We sold 1 lakh tickets within 15 minutes. People are going to be surprised by the Delhi show. We're doing one of the biggest setups that people in India have ever seen." In Delhi, only two ticket categories were available—Gold (Phase 3) and Fan Pit—which were priced at Rs 12,999 and Rs 19,999, respectively.

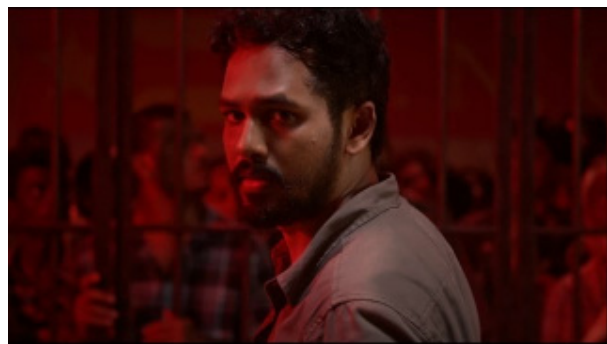
Diljit Dosanjh's India tour will kick start on October 26 in Delhi followed by Hyderabad (November 15), Ahmedabad (November 17), Lucknow (November 22), Pune (November 24), Kolkata (November 30), Bangalore (December 6), Indore (December 8), Chandigarh (December 14), and Guwahati (December 29). In the two-months-long tour, the Punjabi singer-writer will visit 10 Indian cities. In between, Diljit will be travelling to Abu Dhabi on November 9 for the Middle East leg of Dil-Luminati.

Hiphop Tamizha Adhi goes all guns blazing in this political-action drama

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Hiphop Tamizha Adhi, known for his light-hearted entertainers, is seemingly taking on a rather serious theme in his next directorial, Kadaisi Ulaga Por. Adhi is also taking on the directorial responsibilities in the film, which also stars cinematographer-actor Nataraj, Anagha, Azhagam Perumal, Elango Kumaravel, Harish Uthaman, and Munishkanth among others. The trailer of the film was released recently, and it has only added on to the intrigue of the Adhi venture, which is produced by the musician-filmmaker under his banner Hiphop Tamizha Entertainment.

The action-packed trailer has elements of political satire, conspiracy, terrorism, friendship, and an overarching sense of utopia mixed with grounding reality. This is the first time we are seeing Adhi in an out-and-out action mode with guns, bombs, bloodshed, and everything else. However, the final IPL vuvuzela music also gives us a hint about something different hiding beneath all these layers. Will this be a satirical anti-war film that also questions the political undertones in today's society? Will this be a spoof film masquerading as a serious subject? Will this reflect the social consciousness of the multi-hyphenate talent at the middle of it all? All the answers will be out on September 20 as Kadaisi Ulaga Por



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battles it out at the box-office with Lubber Pandhu, Sattam En Kaiyil, Kozhipanna Chelludurai, and Nandhan, among others. "With cinematography by Arjun Raja, and editing by Pradeep E Ragav, Kadaisi Ulaga Por will have stunts by Garudan-fame Mahesh Mathew.

Sundar C and Vadivelu reunite after 14 years for Gangers; Khushbu Sundar to back the project



There is no doubt that actor Vadivelu has made an indelible mark in Tamil pop culture, and he will go down in history as one of the most well-documented talents in Indian cinema. His impact grew manifold with the growth of social media, and Vadivelu has since become a household name despite his long absence from the big screen in the past decade till he made a resounding comeback with Mari Selvaraj's Maamannan.

Director Sundar C's collaboration with Vadivelu would easily feature in the lists of top comedy perfor-

mances by the actor, and it is even more special because they haven't worked together since 2009, which effectively means it is the nostalgia of their films that continue to reflect in their popularity even now. In an attempt to rekindle the same, Sundar C, fresh off the blockbuster success of Aranmanai 4, revealed the title of his next, which reunites him with Vadivelu 15 years after Nagaram Marupakkam (2010). Titled Gangers, the film also marks the first time Vadivelu is working under Sundar C's direction since Rendu (2006).

Gangers also features the likes of Catherine Tresa, Bagavathi Perumal, Mime Gopi, Hareesh Peradi, and Munishkanth. With music by Sathya C, a regular in Sundar C's films, the movie will be shot by E Krishnasamy, and backed by Khushbu and Sundar C under their Avni Cinemax banner. Will Gangers' Singaram join the likes of Kaipulla (Winner), Vedimuthu (London) and Veerabahu (Giri) is the big question, and we might just have the answer later this year. Meanwhile, Sundar C has multiple films in the pipeline, including K Thirugnanam's One 2 One, which also stars Anurag Kashyap. On the other hand, Vadivelu is working in Sudeesh Shankar's Maareesan, which reunites him with his Maamannan co-star Fahadh Faasil.

ARM movie review: A landmark film in Tovino Thomas' career

Ajayante Randam Moshanam – ARM movie review: It is doubtful that any other Malayalam actor of his generation has been as unlucky as Tovino Thomas. Despite a golden opportunity to catapult into stardom with the superhero film Minnal Murali, and that too an exceptional one, Tovino couldn't make the best use of it due to the necessity of a direct-to-OTT release caused by the Covid situation. The cheers, whistles and confetti that would have filled theatres at his on-screen appearances — he missed out on so much. Not many actors are fortunate enough to receive such an opportunity twice, but Tovino has been given a second shot with debut director Jithin Laal's exhilarating visual spectacle Ajayante Randam Moshanam Set across three distinct eras, all linked by a common element, Ajayante Randam Moshanam masterfully combines fantasy, adventure and action, offering the cast and crew ample space to showcase their best — especially Tovino, who takes on three roles. While Sujith Nambiar's screenplay occasionally shifts between timelines, the story is mostly told in a chronological manner, though the film also ties the three narratives together through clever cross-references. First, we meet Kunjikelu (Tovino), a Kalaripayattu warrior from Haripuram, tasked by the King to drive out non-native miscreants who have taken control of the market. Upon successfully completing his mission, the King offers him any reward of his choice and Kunjikelu requests the Chiyoythi Vilakku (Chiyoythi Lamp), a powerful idol forged from a meteor that struck Haripuram years ago. The King agrees and Kunjikelu returns to his village with the dream of installing the lamp in a place accessible to people of all castes. However, his efforts are in vain, as the idol becomes the 'property' of the savarna.

In the second timeline, we meet Maniyan (Tovino), a thief with exceptional martial arts skills and the speed of a leopard, who terrorises the elites of Haripuram. Despite numerous efforts, the police fail to capture him. Born into a lowered caste, Maniyan, his wife Manikyam (Surabhi Lakshmi) and their daughter endure constant harassment from the powerful, but only when Maniyan is away since no one in Haripuram can challenge him. However, his attempt to steal the Chiyoythi Vilakku, intending to gift it to Manikyam after she faces a humiliating incident at the Chiyoythi Kaavu (temple), backfires. He is rounded up and killed by the locals.

The third storyline centres around Ajayan (Tovino), Maniyan's grandson, who works as an electrician. Despite his efforts to distance himself from his grandfather's 'legacy', the elite in Haripuram view him with suspicion, labelling him a potential thief. His only solace comes from his relationship with Lakshmi (Krithi Shetty), belonging to an affluent family. Ajayan has only committed theft once, as a child, and vows to steal only one more time — referring to his planned eloping with Lakshmi. However, his life takes an unexpected turn when his fate becomes entwined with the Chiyoythi Vilakku, forcing him to follow in his grandfather's footsteps. Will he or won't he: that forms the rest of the film.

One of the film's greatest strengths is its ability to elevate the hero to extraordinary heights, a goal in which both Jithin and Sujith succeed. From Tovino's very first appearance, the makers never miss an opportunity to deliver impactful moments. While Kunjikelu's introduction could have benefited from more buildup, given that it's the first time we see Tovino on screen, the actor's commanding presence compensates for it. Besides, Maniyan's story also makes up for the lack of intensity in certain Kunjikelu moments.

Jomon T John's extraordinary cinematography, which gives each era a distinct visual identity suited to the atmosphere of the story, works wonders in Ajayante Randam Moshanam. From close-ups to extreme long shots, are powerful and grand, skillfully capturing the film's emotional nuances too. In the action sequences, Jomon joins forces brilliantly with editor Shameer Muhammed, delivering high-energy moments that never feel dull or sluggish. Vikram Mor and Phoenix Prabhu's action choreography also deserves significant recognition for the freshness of the stunt sequences. They avoid relying on typical pan-India or mass-masala templates, instead crafting each fight to feel authentic and aligned with local martial arts and the eras depicted. However, the number of slow-motion shots could have been halved, as their overuse becomes noticeable. Unlike most films set in bygone eras where the antagonists are typically the British or foreign invaders, Ajayante Randam Moshanam addresses casteism and highlights how the savarna seek to confine the oppressed to their 'hereditary occupations,' preventing them from breaking free from these imposed roles. Since Maniyan was a thief, Ajayan is targeted by the locals, who try to prove that he too must be one. Even in the 1990s, Ajayan and his mother (Rohini) are still barred from entering Chiyoythi Kaavu, supposedly because of Maniyan's past crime — though it's clear this is just a pretext to deny entry to lowered caste. In Ajayan's home, we see portraits of Babasaheb BR Ambedkar and Ayyankali on the walls, as well as Ajayan teaching local children about their constitutional rights. Meanwhile, we meet Sudev Varma (Harish Uthaman), an outsider who claims to have dropped his caste surname, in line with a popular trend. But, Lakshmi's father quickly points out that dropping the name doesn't erase his family's legacy.



Soon, we see Sudev visibly irritated when a Dalit man touches him and later, Ajayan being forced by him into robbery for his gain, underscoring how savarnas removing their caste names is far from the revolutionary act they claim it to be and does nothing to eliminate the deep-seated casteism within them.

Ajayante Randam Moshanam, Ajayante Randam Moshanam movie review, Ajayante Randam Moshanam rating, arm, arm movie, Tovino Thomas, arm tofino, arm review, arm movie review, a.r.m movie, tofino thomas arm, tofino thomas movies, tofino thomas new movie, Krithi Shetty, Aishwarya Rajesh, Basil Joseph, malayalam movies, malayalam movies 2024, malayalam movies tofino Thomas Actor Tovino Thomas appears in three roles in Ajayante Randam Moshanam. Sujith's script, however, seems to hold back at certain points, likely due to concerns about backlash, given that it's a mainstream film. This restraint was unnecessary, especially since the movie centres around Ajayan and Maniyan. While Sujith occasionally struggles with smoothly transitioning between timelines, the material from each storyline is well-balanced, with Ajayan's narrative getting the most screen time rightfully, followed closely by Maniyan's. Although the writer does a good job of fleshing out the major characters, Sudev doesn't quite live up to the buildup, partly because of the overt focus on Ajayan. By drawing parallels between events in Maniyan's and Ajayan's lives, Sujith also transforms their village into a key character, highlighting the superficiality of both the place and its people.

From beginning to end, Ajayante Randam Moshanam is a Tovino Thomas showcase, with the actor excelling in all three roles. He brings clear distinctions to each character and his nuanced performances as Kulu, Maniyan and Ajayan emphasise his skills as an actor. His dedication to the physically demanding action sequences also pays off. Tovino's chemistry with his co-stars, including Krithi Shetty, Surabhi Lakshmi, Jagadish (as Naanu, Maniyan's friend) and Basil Joseph (as KP Suresh, Ajayan's friend), is also remarkable. Despite Malayalam not being her first language, Krithi Shetty shines as Lakshmi, with her lip-syncing being impressively accurate, unlike many non-Malayalam actors. Surabhi Lakshmi, Jagadish, Basil Joseph and Sudeesh also deliver strong performances in their respective roles. Meanwhile, Rohini, Aishwarya Rajesh, Harish Uthaman and Biju Kuttan leave a mark, despite their characters lacking depth. Dhibu Ninan Thomas's background score stands out, especially in the mass-appeal moments, though his songs are not all equally memorable. Gokuldas's production design, Praveen Varma's costume design and Ronex Xavier's makeup also deserve recognition for their contributions.

Paresh Rawal, Rajpal Yadav, Asrani join Akshay Kumar for Priyadarshan's 'Bhoot Bangla'

Mumbai: Actors Paresh Rawal, Asrani and Rajpal Yadav will be seen starring alongside actor Akshay Kumar in the upcoming horror comedy "Bhoot Bangla" by filmmaker Priyadarshan.

According to a statement, Paresh Rawal, Rajpal Yadav, and Asrani join Akshay Kumar in a hilarious comedy of errors. This highly anticipated film blends laughter with a spooky twist, promising a rollercoaster of emotions. The film is set to begin production in early 2025, with a theatrical release planned by the end of the year. The casting process is still ongoing, with three female lead roles yet to be filled.

Akshay has previously worked with Paresh in films such as "Hera Pheri", "Phir Hera Pheri" and "Garam Masala". The "Khiladi" star shared screen space with Rajpal in "Bhoot Bhulaiyaa" and "Bhagam Bhag". Asrani and the "Kheh Khel Mein" actor worked together in "Khatta Meetha". On his 57th birthday on September 9, Akshay announced that he is joining forces with director Priyadarshan once again after 14 years for the film.

Akshay took to X, formerly called Twitter, where he shared the motion poster of the film. In the image, Akshay could be seen holding a bowl filled with a black cat standing on his shoulder.

Virat Kohli played a big role in turning cricket around: Ricky Ponting



GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Australian great Ricky Ponting hailed former captain Virat Kohli's "big role" in revolutionizing Test cricket in India and said the country's batters don't fear the big stage anymore, evidence of which is their success in challenging conditions overseas. Ponting also lauded the contributions of former head coach Rahul Dravid, who stepped down from the post after guiding India to the T20 World Cup title triumph in June. "Going back to Kohli's start of captaincy, (he) played a big role in turning the cricket around, and (Rahul) Dravid has continued the same in the recent four years. The influence of someone like that (Kohli) around a team would be great, and they've got star players," Ponting told Sky Sports. Under Kohli's captaincy, India became the first Asian side to win a Test series in Australia, besides recording some memorable wins elsewhere. With his aggressive captaincy, Kohli made everyone believe that the Indian team can win over-

seas as well, and his confidence rubbed on the side even when he was not around.

During the last Test series in Australia in 2020-21, Kohli left for India after the first match due to the birth of his daughter Vamika. But India, under the captaincy of Ajinkya Rahane, battled injuries and the absence of key players to eke out a historic 2-1 series win. "They won a game at the Gabba, which just doesn't happen. I think their batters adapt to overseas batting conditions very well. "I don't think they're as daunted by the Gabba or the Optus Oval as they maybe once were. Maybe it is a selection thing, or they just don't fear the big stage anymore," observed Ponting. During Kohli's tenure, India won 40 matches and lost 17, with 11 ending in draws out of the 68 Tests they played.

This time around, Kohli will tour Australia under long-time India colleague Rohit Sharma's captaincy. "Their fast-bowling depth is great. The leadership in the last 6-7 years has been strong." Ponting also praised the Indian Premier League for producing players who like to play fearless cricket. "For the last 10 years being around the IPL, I've noticed that a lot of the young guys (play aggressively without fear) as the IPL is high-pressure. It is like a World Cup for them. "Their batsmen are all very aggressive stroke-making players. They are not scared of failing," he concluded. The Aussies have failed to win the Border-Gavaskar Trophy since their last series victory in 2014-15 at home. The Indians have claimed the title on four successive instances since then, winning twice each at home and away.

Ishan Kishan makes First-Class comeback with Duleep Trophy hundred for India C vs India B

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Playing as a specialist No. 4 batter in his return to the domestic grind, Kishan walked in after India C lost two successive wickets before leading a counter alongside Baba Indrajith. India C were in trouble after skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad retired hurt second ball of the match after an ankle injury before Sai Sudharsan and Rajat Patidar were dismissed in the space of four deliveries after a 92-run stand. Kishan feasted on a steady supply of fours and sixes and got to his half-century in 48 balls after lunch. He upped the ante soon after with Indrajith holding fort at the other end. Kishan eventually got to his seventh First-Class hundred off 120 balls post Tea, laced with 14 fours and 2 sixes. Incidentally, Kishan's knock is also the maiden First-Class hundred at the Anantapur Cricket Ground's 'B' venue, hosting its inaugural First-Class match. The innings was Kishan's first First-Class match since turning up for Jharkhand in the Ranji Trophy in December 2022 with his previous FC century coming against Kerala in Ranchi. Kishan later played two Tests for India in West Indies in mid-2023 before being dropped from the XI.

Last month, Kishan got his preparatory leg for the season off to a bang with Jharkhand in the Buchi Babu Trophy, scoring a ballistic 114 off 107 balls against



Madhya Pradesh in Tirunelveli. In February 2024, Kishan and Shreyas Iyer were snubbed from the BCCI central contracts after the duo were deemed to have skipped domestic red-ball matches. Kishan returned to competitive cricket with the Mumbai Indians for the IPL 2024 season, scoring 320 runs in 14 games with a solitary half-century. "I was scoring runs and then I found myself on the bench. These things do happen in a team sport. But I experienced travel fatigue. It meant there was something wrong, I was not feeling well or right and so I decided to take a break. However, sadly, barring my family and few close people no one understood that," Kishan told The Indian Express in an exclusive interview as he explained his decision to take a break from the national set-up.

Former Indian selector picks KL Rahul over Sarfaraz Khan: sometimes some big player comes in after an injury, you lose your place

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Earlier in the year Sarfaraz Khan made his debut for India and impressed everyone with his attacking batting against England. A slot for Sarfaraz was opened because of the absence of the regular players. However, for the upcoming home Tests and series against Australia later Down Under former Indian selector Krishnamachari Srikanth said he would prefer to have KL Rahul to Sarfaraz. With top four batting positions filled with Rohit Sharma, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, and Virat Kohli the number five is the slot up for the grabs with either Rishabh Pant or Dhruv Jurel locked in for a keeper spot at six after which bowlers and all-rounders are to follow. "I feel bad for Sarfaraz Khan, even if you play well, sometimes some big player comes in after an injury, and you lose your place," Srikanth said on his YouTube channel. Sarfaraz scored 200 runs at an average of 50 from three matches.

"KL Rahul, at the end of the day, in the back of your mind you should keep the Australia series in mind. New Zealand series is next - so KL Rahul is the man - KL Rahul Rolls Royce has done very well in Australia," he said. Rahul in five innings scored 187 runs at an average of 20.78 in Australia. "Difficult bowling - KL Rahul, Great Bowling - KL Rahul - you have nobody else - Classy



Rolls Royce Rahul," he added.

However, Rahul did play a sublime innings playing as a keeper-batter in Centurion in December last year when the team was in trouble. "I think KL Rahul has played quality Test innings in South Africa and Australia. And leading up to the Australia tour (Rahul's form) is going to be crucial I feel and it's going to probably be one of the greatest Test series of our time." Additionally, Rahul also chipped in a crucial 85 in the first Test against England in Hyderabad earlier this year on slow and low pitch before getting injured and was ruled out for the rest of the series.

Najmul Shanto leads 16-member squad, Jaker replaces Shoriful from historic Pakistan tour



GNS News Agency, Sept 17

Bangladesh have announced their 16-member squad for the upcoming two Test-match series against India. Najmul Shanto will lead the Tigers, fresh from their historic series victory in Pakistan. India's home season will open with the first Test against Bangladesh in Chennai on September 19, followed by the second match in Kanpur from September 27.

The hosts have announced their squad for the first Test, with senior stars Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli head-

lining the side. India are currently atop the World Test Championship 2023-25 cycle standings with Bangladesh jumping up to the fourth spot after their wins in Pakistan. Bangladesh have only made one change to their squad for the Pakistan tour, with Jaker Ali taking the spot of injured pacer Shoriful Islam. The Tigers recorded their first-ever series win in Pakistan, drubbing Pakistan 2-0 in Rawalpindi last month. India hosted Bangladesh previously during the 2019-20 season where they beat the visitors 2-0 in the Test series. The forthcoming Test series will also be followed by three T20Is in Gwalior, Delhi and Hyderabad.

Bangladesh squad for India Test series: Najmul Hossain Shanto (C), Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Zakir Hasan, Shadman Islam, Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, Litton Kumer Das, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, Nayeem Hasan, Nahid Rana, Jaker Ali, Hasan Mahmud, Taskin Ahmed, Syed Khaled Ahmed. India squad for first Bangladesh Test: Rohit Sharma (C), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant (WK), Dhruv Jurel (WK), R Ashwin, R Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj, Akash Deep, Jasprit Bumrah, Yash Dayal.

Ruturaj Gaikwad retires hurt second ball of India C vs India B Duleep Trophy match, returns to bat after Tea

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

India C captain Ruturaj Gaikwad retired hurt after the second ball of the Duleep Trophy match against India B at the Rural Development Trust Stadium "B" in Anantapur on Thursday. After being put into bat, Gaikwad hit the first ball of the match for four off India B seamer Mukesh Kumar before being forced to retire hurt off the next delivery. Gaikwad reportedly twisted his ankle while attempting a run. Madhya Pradesh's Rajat Patidar replaced Gaikwad as he walked in at 3 in the first over to join Sai Sudharsan. Gaikwad later returned to bat in the last session of the day at the fall of the third wicket in centurion Ishan Kishan's (111) dismissal and got going with two boundaries. In the previous round in Anantapur, Gaikwad's side had secured a thrilling victory over India D. Chasing down a 236-run target in a closely fought contest, Gaikwad had set the tempo with a quickfire 48-ball 46 for India C. However, a quick collapse had put them in trouble before Manav Suthar and Abishek Porel took the side over the line.

Gaikwad has endured a stop-start red-ball journey in recent months. Last December, the Chennai Super Kings captain was named in the Indian Test squad for the



South Africa tour before being ruled out due to a ring finger injury. The 27-year-old has since not made his way back into the Test squad. Ruturaj made his First-Class debut for Maharashtra in October 2016 and has since struck over 2000 runs, averaging over 42 with six centuries and 10 half-centuries. Meanwhile, Mayank Agarwal-led India A is facing Shreyas Iyer's India D in the other Duleep Trophy contest, held at the Anantapur Cricket Ground's main facility. India D won the toss and opted to bowl against India A.

Praggnanandhaa and Vaishali, siblings of destruction, get India off to winning start

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

The Indian chess team signalled its intent to win a gold medal in the open section of the ongoing Chess Olympiad after defeating a hapless Morocco team 4-0 in the first round of the tournament on Wednesday. The Indian women's team also won 3.5-0.5 against the Jamaican team with Vaishali — playing on the top board for India in the absence of Harika Dronavalli — winning her game. Tania Sachdev and Divya Deshmukh also claimed wins while Vantika Agarwal was held to a draw by Raehanna Brown. With the 18-year-old world championship contender Gukesh choosing to sit the first round out, Praggnanandhaa played on the top board for India. And Praggnanandhaa responded by putting his opponent Mohamed Tissir — at 47 years of age more than twice the age of Praggnanandhaa — under heavy duress from the 18th move itself.

Tissir, an International Master with a rating of 2355 and currently ranked 2639 in the world among active players, was overmatched. His peak rating of 2490 came in October 2006, when Praggnanandhaa would have been one-year-old. Playing with black pieces, the Moroccan was 50 minutes behind on the clock by the 20th move. But at least his king was safely ensconced in the h8 square. Or so he must have thought. Soon, the air around his king started to constrict and things got claustrophobic as pieces retreated behind to ward off Praggnanandhaa's attacks from the g and h files. By the 26th move, the Indian teenager had forced the time on his clock to just 37 seconds. He eventually lost on time. On the other boards, the rest of the Indian team also responded to Praggnanandhaa's win with victories: Arjun Erigaisi taking down Elbilila Jacques, Vidit Santosh Gjrathi beating Ouakhir Mehdi Pierre and Harikrishna Pentala defeating Moayad Anas to hand India the perfect start. The Indian team is seeded second in the open section behind Team USA, who are missing the services of their top-ranked player, Hikaru Nakamura. Playing against Panama in their



opening round, United States of America won 3 1/2 to 1/2 with Wesley So being held to a draw on the top board, after Fabiano Caruana chose to rest the opener. Other top players like Ding Liren (China) and Magnus Carlsen (Norway) also opted to rest in the first round. The Indian women's team beat Jamaica 3.5-0.5 with Vaishali (centre), Divya Deshmukh (left) and Tania Sachdev (not in photo) claiming wins. Meanwhile, Vantika Agarwal was held to a draw. The Indian women's team beat Jamaica 3.5-0.5 with Vaishali (centre), Divya Deshmukh (left) and Tania Sachdev (not in photo) claiming wins. Meanwhile, Vantika Agarwal was held to a draw. Vaishali's win with black pieces over Woman FIDE Master Adani Clarke saw a fascinating run of play where there was a massacre for the control of the e4 square in the middle game. Both players lost one pawn, one bishop and one knight each — in the space of six moves — in trying to control that square.

Despite the Vaishali's obvious rating advantage over the Jamaican, the Indian player only held a slight advantage on the eval bar in the middle game. That changed when Clarke blundered a knight in the 22nd move. There were further blunders on the 26th and 28th moves from the Jamaican as Vaishali finally claimed victory with 29 moves.

Para-badminton champ Nitesh Kumar cries foul at BAI's 'apathy', wants PCI to take over operations

GNS News Agency, Sept 17

India's sole Paralympics badminton champion Nitesh Kumar on Wednesday said that para shuttlers, who returned with 5 medals (1 gold, 2 silver, 2 bronze) from Paris, deserve a more professional set-up than is currently in place at the Badminton Association of India (BAI). Treating para-shuttlers at par with able-bodied ones and heeding their needs was crucial, Nitesh said. In a tweet on Wednesday, Nitesh wrote, "Irrespective of the social media appreciation from BAI (which is very rare), we the athletes are highly dissatisfied with the response & the interest from BAI regarding Para badminton responsibilities. We sincerely request BAI & SAI (sports authority) to hand over para badminton to PCI (Paralympic Committee of India). "Delayed logistical support on visas, travel and hotel bookings, local transport keeping in mind the special needs of wheelchair and prosthetic-using athletes, and timely sending of entries were some of the issues Nitesh highlighted when speaking to The Indian

Express. Not managing this properly had led to "humiliation" for para-shuttlers when they travelled, he said. BAI, responding to queries, told this paper, "We got an official handover some time back." Stressing that they had done due diligence on the matter, BAI added it will check and respond. On X, BAI responded to Nitesh saying, "BAI is working on a concrete plan for Para badminton & its future growth. Each of the medallists, coaches & staff will be hearing from us personally to understand, get insight on the action plan which is not alone about celebrating the success but long-term projects." They ended with #badmintonforall and hinted that a domestic circuit structure, first of its kind for any para sport, will be put in place. However, Nitesh claimed that "BAI has hardly been encouraging para shuttlers though we won 5 medals at Paralympics. They didn't even tweet congratulations until much later. We had 21 medals at the Para Asian Games and several at the Para World Championships. But there was no acknowledgement. They keep posting even the

smallest detail of junior able-bodied shuttlers. Are we not good enough to recognise?" he lamented. What prompted Nitesh to request for the PCI to step in was a meeting with the sports minister, who received the victorious para medallists. "When all medallists met the sports minister, we told him of our concerns and that we would be happy if PCI took over. He told us that he understands the situation and himself suggested that we go to PCI and that he will guide the ministry to initiate the handling of this matter. It's only after the ministry prompted that there was a tweet congratulating all of us from BAI after the Paralympics," Nitesh said. PCI runs other programs like para athletics, swimming, cycling and table tennis. But Badminton World Federation (BWF), which holds circuit tournaments, coordinates with BAI. India's para shuttlers have endured years of logistics apathy, despite winning medals internationally. "It's been difficult for para shuttlers for a while. When I started back in 2016-2017, the Badminton Association of India and Paralympic Committee

of India were sharing responsibilities, but there used to be miscommunication. When players needed something, we would get shuffled between them. Later on, BAI took over from PCI," Nitesh said.

Para shuttlers' miseries centre around administrative back-up that's important for athletes who need to travel extensively to collect qualification points. "Because there is no adequate administration for para matters at BAI, we are left requesting them for help before every tournament. During the qualification period, there were plenty of times when there was no transport arranged, room bookings would be late, and there would be a lot of humiliation in getting basic things. Wheelchair players need help in advance and always struggle. Those like me and Manasi Joshi, who wear prosthetics, need special shower chairs in hotel rooms. All these things can be easily done if planned in advance. But we are just not a priority," Nitesh said. The Paris Qualification period was a nightmare, multiple shuttlers recounted. "BAI would miss sending entries.