

INDIAN CHRONICLE

24 September, 2024 | Tuesday | Volume No:12 | Issue No:193

Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

Govt school students complain about worm-infested food in CM Revanth Reddy's constituency

Kodangal: Students of the Primary and Zilla Parishad School at Kommuru village, Gundamal mandal in Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's constituency of Kodangal are complaining about worm infested rice being used to cook meals for them. After learning about the issue, Kodangal former MLA Patnam Narendar Reddy along with a few other local leaders visited the school on Monday. When the leaders inspected the store room, they came across rice bags infested with worms. Videos of worm infested rice were shared on different social media platforms. In one of the videos, the leaders were seen asking the school staff about the poor quality rice being used for cooking food in the mid-day meals.

PM meets Palestinian PM Abbas in New York, expresses deep concern over Gaza humanitarian crisis

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged India's "unwavering support" to the people of Palestine as he held talks with the President of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas on Sunday (September 22, 2024) evening, during his visit to New York and the United Nations. The meeting comes days after India abstained on a U.N. resolution calling on Israel to vacate the Occupied Palestinian Territories within the next 12 months. During Sunday's (September 22, 2024) meeting, Mr Modi discussed "India's support to Palestine at the United Nations" the government readout of the meeting said. India's abstention vote last week was driven by concern of sanctions and arms export embargoes on Israel, The Hindu reported. The explanation of the vote said India wanted the U.N. "to build bridges" between Israel and Palestine. Prime Minister expressed deep concern at the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza and the deteriorating security situation in the region and reaffirmed India's unwavering support to the people of Palestine, including continued humanitarian assistance, a government readout of Sunday's meeting said.

"Mr. Modi emphasized that only a two-State solution would deliver peace, as he called for a ceasefire between Israel and Palestine, the release of hostages, and a return to diplomacy and dialogue," the government readout said. Mr Modi is not expected to meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the United Nations General Assembly session this year, with Mr Netanyahu arriving in New York on September 24, the day after Mr



Modi departs for India. Mr. Modi also held talks with Nepali Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli on Sunday. They discussed a range of subjects, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said, listing hydropower cooperation, people to people ties and increasing connectivity. The Prime Minister also met, for the first time, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, the Crown Prince of Kuwait. "They noted with satisfaction that the two countries were supporting each other with energy and food security requirements," the MEA said in its readout of the meeting. The Indian diaspora in Kuwait was also part of Sunday's (September 22, 2024) bilateral discussions. Forty five Indians died in a fire in a labour housing facility in Kuwait in January this year and their relatives had urged the government, as per reports, to do more for the safety of the diaspora in Kuwait.

KTR questions BJP's silence on AMRUT tenders scam

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao questioned the silence of BJP leaders from Telangana on the alleged Rs.8,888 crore scam in AMRUT tenders involving Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. He was surprised that while he received congratulatory messages from senior Congress leaders for exposing the issue, the BJP's response was notably absent. "Ajab Prem Ki Ghazab Kahani Hain Yeh RR Aur BJP Ki..." (sic) remarked Rama Rao on the possible understanding between Revanth Reddy and the BJP in Telangana.

Rama Rao had previously called for an in-depth investigation by the Centre into the tenders under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) scheme. He also sent a letter to union Ministers Manohar Lal Khattar and Tokhan Sahu last Friday, urging them to take action against the alleged corruption. He stated that the Chief Minister himself got involved in massive corruption shortly after assuming office. In a separate post on X, the BRS working president also rebuked the Congress for its hypocrisy over the government agreements with the Adani Group. In response to the Congress terming the bids won by Adani Group in Maharashtra for



power supply as "rigged deal", he took a dig, questioning whether the Congress-led Telangana government's deal with the same Adani Group was "squeaky clean", and sought to know Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's response.

Transformative steps taken for healthcare, pandemic preparedness in India: Nadda



GNS News Agency, Sept 23

New Delhi: The Union government has taken transformative steps for healthcare innovations, and pandemic preparedness in India, said Union Health Minister JP Nadda, on Monday. He said this while announcing the successful implementation of the 100-day programme of the Union Health Ministry's Department of Health Research (DHR). Med-Tech Mitra; National One Health Mission (NOHM) for pandemic preparedness; Integrated Research and Diagnostic Laboratories (IRDLs); programme for the development of indigenous drugs for rare diseases; and Centre for evidence-based guidelines are some of the key achievements and initiatives undertaken by the DHR in the last 100 days.

"These initiatives represent transformative steps in healthcare innovation, pandemic preparedness, and the development of indigenous medical solutions, contributing to a healthier, more resilient and Atmanirbhar Bharat," Nadda said. Med-Tech Mitra is a joint initiative by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), developed to overcome challenges in the process of developing regulation-compliant products, their clinical validation, and scaling up. The NOHM is an integrated approach to tackling diseases at the intersection of human, animal, and environmental health. The mission is a crucial step toward building India's capacity to manage zoonotic diseases and pandemics. Six of the Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratories (VRDLs) across the country are being converted into IRDLs covering a larger domain of

infectious diseases. Construction of Zonal laboratories of the National Institute of Virology (NIV) has also been initiated, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said.

As part of India's drive towards becoming a global leader in affordable healthcare, DHR is set to launch a programme developing 12 Indigenous drugs for eight rare diseases. The initiative will aim to drastically reduce the cost of treatment for conditions like Muscular Dystrophy and Gaucher's Disease, making life-saving therapies accessible and affordable for the masses.

With a purification ritual and new ghee, Tirupati laddus are back, officials tell devotees: 'Set aside doubts'

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Tirupati temple laddoo row purification rituals were performed in and around the temple "to ward off ill effects and restore the sanctity of laddoo prasadam", the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) said.

Calling on devotees to set aside apprehensions about the laddoo prasadam served at the Sri Venkateswara temple in Andhra Pradesh's Tirupati district, officials of the board that manages the temple have said that they are now using ghee supplied by the Karnataka Milk Federation to prepare the laddoos.

Moreover, purification rituals were performed in and around the temple "to ward off ill effects and restore the sanctity of laddoo prasadam", the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) said. This comes after allegations emerged that the ghee that was being used to make the laddoo had been adulterated with animal fat. A R Dairy Food Private Limited, the Tamil Nadu-based company that had been supplying the ghee, have denied allegations that their ghee was adulterated.

DV Srinivas Rao assumes charge as Director (Technical) of Bharat Dynamics Limited

Hyderabad: DV Srinivas Rao has assumed charge as Director (Technical) of Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), a leading public sector enterprise under the Ministry of Defence, Government of India. Srinivas Rao brings with him over three decades of extensive experience in the defence sector, having held key leadership roles at BDL. Prior to this appointment, he served as General Manager (Design & Engineering), where he led the in-house Research and Development (R&D) Division of BDL. During his career, Srinivas Rao played a pivotal role in spearheading numerous defence projects, many of which are now deployed and extensively used by the Indian Armed Forces.

Be part of India growth story, PM Modi urges global tech CEOs

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

New York: Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged CEOs of US majors to take advantage of India's growth story as the country is making all efforts to become the third largest economy of the world in his third term. India is currently the fifth largest economy of the world after the US, China, Germany and Japan with a GDP of around \$3.9 trillion. India has been the fastest growing large economies of the world with GDP growth rate of over 7 per cent for the last three consecutive years. Addressing CEOs of the large US tech firms, Modi said India will make every effort to become the third largest economy in the world in his third term (2024-29). Companies should take advantage of India's growth story for collaboration and innovation by co-developing, co-designing, and co-producing in India for the world, harnessing the opportunities from the country's economic and technological growth, he said. Assuring the business leaders of India's deep commitment to the protection of intellectual property and to fostering tech innovation, Modi highlighted the economic transformation happening in the country, particularly in electronics and information technology manufacturing and semiconductors.

Modi asserted that his government was committed to making India a "global hub of semiconductor manufacturing". The meeting took place at the Lotte New York Palace Hotel on Sunday during the second leg of Modi's three-day US visit. It saw the participation of CEOs of 15 major US-based firms working on cutting-edge technologies such as AI, quantum computing and semiconductors. "Had a fruitful roundtable with tech CEOs in New York, discussing aspects relating to technology, innovation and more. Also highlighted the strides made by India in this field. I am glad to see immense optimism



towards India," Modi said in a post on X.

During the conference, Modi said technology collaboration and efforts such as the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (ICET) lie at the core of the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership, according to a Ministry of External Affairs press release. Organised by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) School of Engineering, the CEOs of top US tech firms, including Google CEO Sundar Pichai, Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayana, Accenture CEO Julie Sweet and NVIDIA CEO Jensen Huang attended the meeting. Others who participated in the roundtable included AMD CEO Lisa Su, HP Inc. CEO Enrique Lores, IBM CEO Arvind Krishna, Dr Nouraf Afeyan, Chairman of Moderna, and Verizon CEO Hans Vestberg. Modi also talked about India's BIO E3 (biotechnology for environment, economy and employment) policy to develop the country into a biotech powerhouse and on the topic of AI, noted that India's policy is to promote AI for all, underpinned by its ethical and responsible use.

India reports first Mpox Clade 1 case; strain declared public emergency by WHO: Report

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

India on Monday has reported the first case of the Mpox clade 1 strain, official sources told PTI. This is the same strain which led to the World Health Organisation (WHO) declaring Mpox a public health emergency last month. The Mpox clade 1 strain has been detected in an individual from Kerala, reported Sources said. Clade 1b strain has been detected in the 38-year-old man from Malappuram district who had recently returned from the United Arab Emirates. The patient is currently stable and under observation.

"This was the first case of the current strain that led to the World Health Organization declaring Mpox a public health emergency last month for a second time," the official sources said. Manisha Verma, a spokesperson for the health ministry, confirmed the strain after news agency ANI cited official sources as saying that the mpox case reported in Kerala's Malappuram district last week belonged to clade 1. The earlier case of Mpox that emerged in the national capital was a 26-year-old resident of Haryana's Hisar who has tested positive for the previous West African Clade 2 strain earlier this month. Since the 2022 declaration of Mpox as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the WHO, 30 cases were reported in India. Mpox clade 1b is a type of monkeypox



which is currently endemic in Central Africa and can cause severe illness. The strain is fast-spreading, which is why WHO sounded a public health emergency after hundreds of infections across African countries. Earlier in the day, WHO said that over 30,000 suspected cases of mpox were reported from Africa this year so far, with most of them in Democratic Republic of Congo where tests have run out. More than 800 people died of suspected mpox across the continent at that time, the U.N. health body said in its report. Congo's central African neighbour Burundi has also been hit by a growing outbreak, the organisation said.

Harish Rao refutes Sridhar Babu's claims on turncoats meeting CM



GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Hyderabad: Former Minister and senior BRS leader T Harish Rao countered Legislative Affairs Minister D Sridhar Babu's remarks regarding turncoat MLA Arekapudi Gandhi's presence at the Congress Legislative Party (CLP) meeting. He refuted Sridhar Babu's claim that Gandhi met the Chief Minister as a courtesy, asserting that Sridhar Babu's justification lacked credibility. "Sridhar Babu claimed that the meeting took place in Gandhi's constituency and hence, he paid a courtesy visit. If the Chief Minister attends an official event, such courtesy calls are valid, but attending a party meeting is an entirely different matter," he remarked. Speaking to mediapersons here on Monday, Harish Rao questioned why the other turncoat MLAs Prakash Goud and Kadiyam Srihari attended the meeting, if it was merely a courtesy call. He ridiculed Sridhar Babu's explanation, dubbing it as "blatant lie" and accusing the Congress

government of undermining democratic values. He added that the Congress was trying to mislead the people in this regard, but the latter were aware of its tactics. "How many more lies will you tell?" he asked, stating that the Congress government's actions had exposed their disregard for democracy.

Maharashtra govt renames Pune Airport as 'Jagadguru Sant Tukaram Maharaj International Airport'

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

The Eknath Shinde-led Maharashtra government on Monday approved a proposal to rename Pune's Lohegaon International Airport as "Jagadguru Sant Tukaram Maharaj Pune International Airport".

The decision was made during a state cabinet meeting, and the proposal will be forwarded to the Centre. The plan for the renaming was put forward by Union minister of state for civil aviation Murlidhar Mohol, who is from Pune. Mohol expressed gratitude on X (formerly Twitter) to the ruling Mahayuti alliance, which includes the BJP, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, and the Nationalist Congress Party led by Deputy CM Ajit Pawar. "Thank you, Mahayuti government! Thank you, Devendraj! The first step towards naming of the international airport in Pune as 'Jagadguru Sant Tukaram Maharaj Airport' has been taken today and the proposal given by me has been approved at a cabinet meeting.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Lankan mandate

TWO years after an economic meltdown sparked an uprising in Sri Lanka, Marxist-leaning Anura Kumara Dissanayake has bested Sajith Premadasa in the presidential election. Incumbent President and six-time Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe finished a distant third, underlining the voters' resolve to herald a new beginning in the beleaguered island nation. Dissanayake, the candidate of the National People's Power (NPP) alliance, rode to victory on the back of his anti-corruption and pro-poor agenda. His promise of slashing taxes elicited with people who are reeling under poverty or finding it hard to keep pace with the high cost of living. Involved in two armed uprisings against the Lankan government (1971 and 1987-89), Dissanayake's Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) has been active in mainstream politics in recent decades. It remains to be seen if the NPP will give him and his party the freedom to do something revolutionary on the economic front. A deal with the International Monetary Fund has helped Sri Lanka's economy make a tentative recovery, with inflation falling to 0.5 per cent from an alarming high of 70 per cent. The major challenges for Dissanayake are to enable the country to repay its debt, regain investors' confidence and pull one-fourth of its population out of poverty. He can't afford to let down the masses, whose anger and discontent had fuelled the 2022 protests that led to the ignominious ouster of then President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. Those nightmarish scenes of food and fuel shortages are fresh in the people's minds. Playing its cards well, the Modi government had hosted Dissanayake in February, notwithstanding the anti-India rhetoric the JVP was once infamous for. Going by Delhi's diplomatic success in making pro-China Maldives President Muizzu see reason, India will hope to sway Dissanayake in case he starts cosy up to Beijing.

Ammunition from India enters Ukraine, raising Russian ire

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Artillery shells sold by Indian arms makers have been diverted by European customers to Ukraine and New Delhi has not intervened to stop the trade despite protests from Moscow, according to eleven Indian and European government and defence industry officials, as well as a Reuters analysis of commercially available customs data.

The transfer of munitions to support Ukraine's defence against Russia has occurred for more than a year, according to the sources and the customs data. Indian arms export regulations limit the use of weaponry to the declared purchaser, who risks future sales being terminated if unauthorised transfers occur. The Kremlin has raised the issue on at least two occasions, including during a July meeting between Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his Indian counterpart, three Indian officials said. Details of the ammunition transfers are reported by Reuters for the first time. The foreign and defence ministries of Russia and India did not respond to questions. In January, Indian foreign ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told a news conference that India had not sent or sold artillery shells to Ukraine.

Two Indian government and two defence industry sources told Reuters that Delhi produced only a very small amount of the ammunition being used by Ukraine, with one official estimating that it was under 1% of the total arms imported by Kyiv since the war. The news agency couldn't determine if the munitions were resold or donated to Kyiv by the European customers. Among the European countries sending Indian munitions to Ukraine are Italy and the Czech Republic, which is leading an initiative to supply Kyiv with artillery shells from outside the European Union, according to a Spanish and a senior Indian official, as well as a former top executive at Yantra India, a state-owned company whose munitions are being used by Ukraine.

The Indian official said that Delhi was monitoring the situation. But, along with a defence industry executive with direct knowledge of the transfers, he said India had not taken any action to throttle the supply to Europe. Like most of the 20 people interviewed by Reuters, they spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter. The Ukrainian, Italian, Spanish and Czech defence ministries did not respond to requests for comment. Delhi and Washington, Ukraine's main security backer, have recently strengthened defence and diplomatic cooperation against the backdrop of a rising China, which both regard as their main rival. India also has warm ties with Russia, its primary arms supplier for decades, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has refused to join the Western-led sanctions regime against Moscow. But Delhi, long the world's largest weapons importer, also sees the lengthy war in Europe as an opportunity to develop its nascent arms export sector, according to six Indian sources familiar with official thinking. Ukraine, which is battling to contain a Russian offensive toward the eastern logistics hub of Pokrovsk, has a dire shortage of artillery ammunition.

The White House declined to comment and the U.S. State Department referred questions on Delhi's arms exports to the Indian government. India exported just over \$3 billion of arms between 2018 and 2023, according to data compiled by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute think-tank. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said at an Aug. 30 conference that defence exports surpassed \$2.5 billion in the last fiscal year and that Delhi wanted to increase that to about \$6 billion by 2029. Commercially available customs records show that in the two years before the February 2022 invasion, three major Indian ammunition makers — Yantra, Munitions India and Kalyani Strategic Systems — exported just \$2.8 million in munitions components to Italy and the Czech Republic, as well as Spain and Slovenia, where defence contractors have invested heavily in supply chains for Ukraine. Between February 2022 and July 2024, the figure had increased to \$135.25 million, the data show, including completed munitions, which India began exporting to the four nations. Arzan Tarapore, an India defence expert at Stanford University, said that Delhi's push to expand its arms exports was a major factor in the transfer of its arms to Ukraine. Unlisted Italian defence contractor Meccanica per l'Elettronica e Servomeccanismi (MES) was among the companies sending Indian-made shells to Ukraine, said the former top Yantra official.

Dress code, CCTVs, safety audits — after RG Kar, Odisha rolls out policy to keep healthcare workers safe



GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Odisha healthcare workers, Odisha government, Kolkata doctor rape and murder, Kolkata doctor rape case, R G Kar Medical College hospital, R G Kar Medical College rape, RG hospital rape murder, RG hospital violence, goons enter RG hospital, fight in RG hospital, Kolkata doctor murder, Kolkata doctor murder protest, Kolkata doctor murder timeline, Bengal doctor rape, Bengal doctor murder, Mamata Banerjee on Kolkata doctor murder, CBI investigation in Kolkata doctor case, Sanjay Roy Kolkata doctor murder, Kolkata doctor murder accused, RG Kar Medical College controversies. All institutions should foster a respectful workplace culture, addressing harassment, bullying or discrimination, and promoting a culture of inclusivity and respect, it went on to say. "There must be zero tolerance for any harassment or bullying," read the policy. Dress code and ID card for all employees and workers, CCTV at strategic locations and a control room to monitor them, well-lit and secure parking areas, and regular safety audits — these are among the measures suggested to ensure a safe workplace for doctors, medical students and other healthcare personnel. The Odisha government Wednesday approved the policy, which emphasised on respectful workplace culture and a clear emergency plan. The move assumes significance in the wake of rape and murder of a junior doctor in RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, West Bengal. "A clear emergency response plan should be developed for all health institutions, which may include panic buttons, emergency phones, mobile apps etc to respond quickly to any threat and in emergency

situations. A specific phone number can be set-up in the main security control room to report any emergency or security issue at any time," said the policy.

It suggested that the healthcare institutions should establish a clear "incident reporting process" ensuring confidentiality and prompt action on reported incidents. "Any incident of violence against medical students should be promptly investigated by the college management and (an) FIR should be lodged with the Police within six hours by the Head of the Institution. A detailed action taken report on any incident of violence should invariably be sent to the National Medical Commission (NMC), within 48 hours of the incident," the policy said.

All institutions should foster a respectful workplace culture, addressing harassment, bullying or discrimination, and promoting a culture of inclusivity and respect, it went on to say. "There must be zero tolerance for any harassment or bullying," read the policy. Prominent signage must be displayed in the campus stating that patients' attendants and family must behave in respectful manner to all the medical and supporting staff. "Signage highlighting the penal provisions under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Odisha Medicare Service Persons and Medicare Service Institutions (Prevention of Violence and Damage of Property) Act, 2008 should be placed in front of the health institutions," the policy said. It has also asked the police superintendents to take immediate and appropriate action under the law in order to discourage people from such activities. All health institutions should maintain a close liaison with the inspector/SHO/Officer-in-Charge of the nearest police station. All health institutions should have a perimeter boundary wall with defined entry and exit gates. The entry of the general public and vehicles is to be regulated to stop use of health institution premises for thoroughfare. Besides, a visitors' pass system is to be followed for indoor patients, the policy said. "Only two entry passes are to be issued per patient, for attending the patient during official visiting hours and the attendants entering the ward should be frisked by the internal security guards to check for possession of any dangerous/objectionable items," the policy said, adding that there should be duty rooms and washrooms for male and female doctors and nurses in all wards.

Army officer's fiancée shifted to AIIMS after 'assault' at police station, Odisha court takes stern view



GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Assault on Army officer, fiancée in Odisha. The court granted bail to the petitioner furnishing a bail bond of Rs 30,000. The Orissa High Court on Wednesday observed that the allegation with regard to police atrocities on a woman and her fiancée, an Army officer, should be dealt with "utmost seriousness" and the case shall be taken to its logical conclusion. While hearing a petition for bail by Ankita Pradhan, who, along with her fiancée, was arrested and allegedly manhandled by the Bharatpur police in Bhubaneswar, the single-judge bench of Justice A K Mohapatra said the arresting officer has failed to follow the procedure laid down in Section 35 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). The court also granted bail to the petitioner on furnishing a bail bond of Rs 30,000 with two local solvent sureties. As her bail plea was earlier rejected by a lower court, the High Court also ob-

served that "the learned magistrate has failed to apply his/her judicial mind and has acted in a mechanical manner".

During the hearing, the counsel appearing for the petitioner stated that the petitioner was brutally assaulted by the police personnel at Bharatpur station, as a result of which she has sustained grievous injury. On the basis of the verbal order of the Orissa high court on Tuesday, the victim was shifted to AIIMS, Bhubaneswar, where she was undergoing treatment.

The petitioners counsel also stated that the Petitioner, who is a young lady and practising lawyer and happens to be the daughter of a Brigadier of the Indian Army, had come to the police station to lodge a complaint road rage complaint. "However, instead of registering the complaint, the police personnel present in the P.S. started misbehaving and assaulting the petitioner and her fiancée Major Guruvank Singh Ghosal and they both were kept in police lock up for several hours illegally," the counsel argued. The court, in its order, also stated that taking into consideration the seriousness and gravity of the allegation, it appears that "the allegations are very serious in nature." Even as a probe has already been ordered into the incident, DGP Y B Khurania on Wednesday suspended five police personnel, including the inspector-in-charge of the Bharatpur police station, a sub-inspector, two women ASIs and a constable. Meanwhile, hundreds of ex-servicemen staged a protest in Bhubaneswar, demanding a strict action against the erring police personnel and seeking a judicial inquiry.

Supreme Court defers to Oct 16, 17 hearing on pleas seeking review of 2022 PMLA verdict



GNS News Agency, Sept 23

pmla cases, money laundering act, supreme court, review petition, 2022 PMLA verdict review, PMLA constitutional validity, bail conditions, ed powers, constitutional validity, Prevention of Money Laundering Act, Indian express news. Appearing for the ED, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta sought one more week's time as he was yet to get all the petitions. The Supreme Court Wednesday deferred hearing on petitions to October 16 and 17, seeking a review of its July 27, 2022 verdict upholding the constitutional validity of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, as amended from time to time, including provisions dealing with the powers of the ED regarding arrest, search, attachment and seizure in money laundering offences.

The matter was to be taken up Wednesday afternoon by a bench of Justices Surya Kant, C T Ravikumar and Ujjal Bhuyan. Appearing for the ED, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta sought one more week's time as he was yet to get all the petitions. Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for some of the petitioners, initially opposed it but agreed subsequently. The court had initially deferred the matter to October 3, but later in the day, the apex court said it will be heard on October 16 and 17 as Justice Ravikumar has some difficulties with the earlier date. In November 2017, a bench of Justices Rohinton Fali Nariman and Sanjay Kishan Kaul, in Nikesh Tarachand Shah vs the Union of India, had declared the

'twin test' of bail under PMLA as "unconstitutional" since it was "manifestly arbitrary".

"We must not forget that Section 45 is a drastic provision which turns on its head the presumption of innocence which is fundamental to a person accused of any offence. Before application of a section which makes drastic inroads into the fundamental right of personal liberty guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution, we must be doubly sure that such provision furthers a compelling State interest for tackling serious crime," the bench had said. It had also said that stringent bail conditions can be imposed in exceptional circumstances such as anti-terrorism laws but cannot be "manifestly arbitrary".

On July 27, 2022, this was overruled by a three-judge bench presided by Justice A M Khanwilkar and comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and C T Ravikumar in Vijay Madanlal Choudhary vs the Union of India. The bench held as valid the twin conditions for bail laid down in Section 45 of the Act. The provision says when the public prosecutor opposes the bail plea of an accused, the court can grant relief only if it is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds to believe the accused is not guilty of such an offence and is not likely to commit any offence if released on bail. Ruling on a batch of 242 pleas, the bench upheld the PMLA law, as amended from time to time, including provisions dealing with the powers of the ED regarding arrest, search, attachment and seizure in money laundering offences. The bench underlined that "the principle of innocence of the accused/offender is regarded as a human right" but "that presumption can be interdicted by a law made by the Parliament/Legislature". An ECIR cannot be equated with an FIR and supplying a copy of the ECIR in every case to the person concerned is not mandatory, the bench had said, adding that "it is enough if ED, at the time of arrest, discloses the grounds of such arrest". Taking up a review petition in August 2022, a three-judge bench, presided by the then CJI N V Ramana, had said that "at least two of the issues" raised in the petition requires reconsideration — the finding that a copy of ECIR need not be given to the accused and two, reversal of the presumption of innocence.

Facial recognition for ration starts on pilot basis, aim to plug loopholes



GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Annapurna Devi, Jharkhand Ration beneficiaries, Ration beneficiaries in Jharkhand, Jharkhand Government, Jharkhand govt, Indian express news, current affairs. One Anganwadi worker said: "There is a POSHAN tracker application... However, we have to deal with networking issues as well as we lack training just to get the data entered in the system."

Union Minister for Women and Child Development (WCD) Annapurna Devi Wednesday announced that the Central government has introduced a facial recognition two factor authentication process for delivering Take Home Ration (THR) in six districts in six states including Ranchi as a model project. Devi said that the THR scheme will be implemented in Ranchi by the end of this month, where the beneficiary's photo will be captured and a one time password will be sent on their phones.

The Minister also said that on paper, the Centre has also given a go ahead to upgrade 2,500 mini Anganwadis and also upgrade Anganwadi centres, more than 30,000 in the state as 'Saksham Anganwadi' or the Integrated Nutrition Support Programme. "The idea is that whenever a beneficiary comes to get the THR their picture will be captured and then an OTP will be sent for authentication. If this becomes successful it will be replicated throughout the country," said Devi in Ranchi. Anganwadi workers showed reluctance to the model project on the scheme. One Anganwadi worker said: "There is a POSHAN tracker application... However, we have to deal with networking issues as well as we lack training just to get the data entered in the system."

MQ-9B Sea Guardian drone on lease from US ditches at sea, detailed report sought

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

One of the two MQ-9B High-Altitude Long-Endurance (HALE) Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA), leased by the Navy from the US-based General Atomics (GA) in 2020, had to carry out a controlled ditching at sea off Chennai on Wednesday after it encountered a "technical failure" while on a routine surveillance mission. The Navy had leased the two RPAs from the US-based GA in 2020 in the aftermath of the Galwan Valley clashes in eastern Ladakh. As per the Navy, the RPA was operating from INS Rajali, Arakkonam near Chennai, and encountered a technical failure at about 1400 hrs Wednesday while it was on a routine surveillance mission. The RPA, it said, could not be reset in flight. It was navigated to a safe area over sea and carried out a controlled ditching at sea off Chennai, the Navy said, adding that a detailed report has been sought from the Original Equipment Manufacturer.

The development comes at a time when India is learnt to have made significant progress in the ongoing negotiations with the US on various aspects of the deal to procure 31 MQ-9B High-Altitude Long-Endurance (HALE) UAVs. One of them is to have a greater percentage of indigenous content in the UAVs.

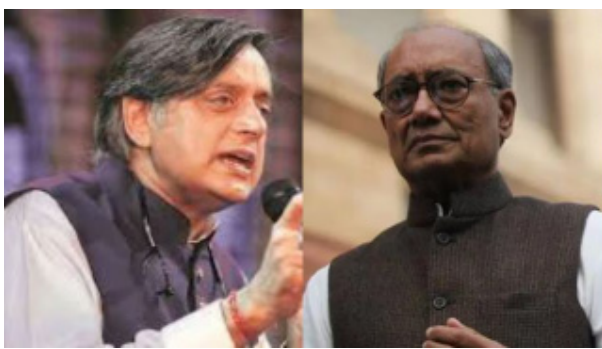
The MQ-9Bs, to be assembled in India, will enhance the ISR (intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance) capabilities of India's armed forces. They can also carry out precision strikes on strategic targets in mountains and the maritime domain during long-endurance missions. GA will also establish a Comprehensive Global MRO facility in India to support India's long-term goals to boost indigenous defence capabilities, a joint statement issued by India and the US earlier had said. During Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's official visit to the US last month, India and the US have agreed to advance priority co-production projects, including jet engines, unmanned platforms, munitions and ground mobility systems, under the US-India Roadmap for Defence Industrial Cooperation. The acquisition of the MQ-9B—16 Sky Guardian and 15 Sea Guardian HALE RPAs for the Indian Armed Forces from the US through the Foreign Military Sale (FMS) route was cleared by the Defence Acquisition Council in June and was among the key announcements made in the defence sector during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's State visit to the US in June.

Rs 35k crore allocated for PM-AASHA

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

pm-aasha, PM-AASHA 35k crore allocation, farmers msp, price volatility, price support scheme, price deficit payment scheme, market intervention scheme, oil-seeds, cabinet approval, Indian express news. PM-AASHA will now have the components of PSS, PSF, Price Deficit Payment Scheme (PDPS) and Market Intervention Scheme (MIS), it said. The Union Cabinet approved the continuation of schemes of PM-AASHA Wednesday to provide remunerative prices to farmers and control price volatility of essential commodities for consumers. According to an official statement, the compensation of difference between MSP and sale/modal price to be borne by the Centre was "limited to 15% of MSP" under the Price Deficit Payment Scheme, one of three components of the PM-AASHA. "The total financial outgo will be `35,000 crore during 15th Finance Commission Cycle up to 2025-26," it said. As per the existing PDPS guidelines, "The farmer would be paid the difference between the MSP and the monthly modal price/actual sale price subject to a maximum of 25% of the MSP value based on MSP notified for the year/season."

Shashi Tharoor to head Standing Committee on External Affairs, Digvijaya Singh to chair panel on Education



GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Days after the government and Congress wrapped up negotiations for the Parliamentary Standing Committees, the Opposition party has decided the allocations for chairs of the four committees it was allotted. While Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor will head the Standing Committee on External Affairs, former Punjab chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi will lead the Parliamentary panel on Agriculture. Koraput MP Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka will head the panel on Rural Development and Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh will head the Standing Committee on Education, reported on September 16 that the Congress will receive chairs for the Standing Committees on External Affairs, Agriculture, and Rural Development in the Lok Sabha. In the Rajya Sabha, the Opposition party will chair the Standing Committee for Education. Negotiations between the government and the

Opposition parties over the committees had been going on for a couple of months. The Congress had sought chairs for five Parliamentary Standing Committees — four of Lok Sabha and one of Rajya Sabha. One chair each is also likely to be granted to INDIA partners Samajwadi Party, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, and Trinamool Congress. For the one chair in the Rajya Sabha committees, the Congress had sought the crucial committee on Home Affairs. Several rounds of meetings between the government representatives and Opposition members took place before the government decided to allocate the Standing Committee chairs to the Opposition.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju and Union Minister of State for Law and Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Arjun Ram Meghwal attended the meetings. The Congress was represented by Deputy Leader in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi and party Chief Whips Kodikunni Suresh and Jairam Ramesh. On August 16, five standing committees of Parliament were constituted, with Congress MP and general secretary in charge (organisation) K C Venugopal named as the chairperson of the Committee on Public Accounts. As per convention, the post of chair of the Committee on Public Accounts is given to the Opposition. The other committees constituted were the Committee on Welfare of Other Backward Classes, which will be headed by Ganesh Singh (BJP); Committee of Estimates, which will be headed by Sanjay Jaiswal (BJP); Committee on Public Undertakings, which will be headed by Baijayant Panda (BJP); and Committee on Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, which will be headed by Fagga Singh Kulaste (BJP).

Psychological test for Agniveers, anti-drone systems

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

From framing a basic psychological assessment test for selection of Agniveers to the Armed Forces and developing directed energy weapon systems for killing rogue aerial objects to giving statutory status to certification bodies under it, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) hopes to complete a set of critical projects this year. The Indian Express has learnt. Officials said the basic assessment test being developed will aid the psychological evaluation of Agniveers selected by the Army, Navy and the Indian Air Force. It is expected to be adopted by the Armed Forces this year itself as soon as the DRDO is ready with it.

At present, the eligibility criteria for prospective Agniveers are specified educational qualifications that allow them to take an online common entrance examination. Those who qualify subsequently undergo physical fitness and measurement tests, followed by medical tests before a final merit list is drawn. No psychological assessment tests were conducted during recruitment, either for Agniveers or regular soldiers recruited prior to the launch of the Agnipath scheme. However, officers undergo a written examination and an interview by the Services Selection Board, where their psychological parameters are assessed.

The Defence Institute of Psychological Research (DIPR) under the DRDO carries out research in psychology for armed forces personnel. Last year, a DIPR-developed psychometric test was tested on a trial basis for Agniveer aspirants at a recruitment rally. Defence forces personnel serve in difficult terrains for extended periods of time in isolation and work conditions that are highly stressful. A psychological assessment test helps assess the mental fitness and resilience of personnel to be able to serve in such conditions. Since the start of the Agnipath scheme in 2022, an Agniveer in the Army died of a self-inflicted injury. In the Navy, a woman Agniveer died by suicide last year and in July this year, an Agniveer with the IAF died by suicide while on sentry duty. Aside from the test, granting the Final Operational Clearance of AEW&C-K1 for the IAF is also among DRDO's priority list this year, officials said.

Named Netra, the platforms are used to detect and track enemy aircraft or UAVs, while enabling operators onboard and on ground to identify, assess the threat and guide interceptors to take them out. Currently, two AEW&C systems are being used by IAF for various operations



after they were granted the Initial Operation Clearance (IOC). The DRDO is also prioritising development of a 30 kW Directed Energy Weapon (DEW) system to target and kill aerial objects. This is a niche technology being tested and employed by a handful of advanced militaries. In the backdrop of small and advanced unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) emerging as a significant security threat, the system uses concentrated electromagnetic energy to combat enemy assets.

Last year, Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari had said India's defence industries need to push the development of such advanced weapons and integrate them into its airborne platforms to get the desired range and accuracy. He had said that DEWs, particularly lasers, provide significant advantages over traditional weapons such as precision engagement, low cost per shot, logistical benefits, and low detectability. The Army has also identified 16 tech clusters comprising subject specialists, each on certain emerging technologies which are at a conceptual stage. One of them is DEW and counter-unmanned aerial systems. In July, IAF Vice Chief, Air Marshal AP Singh, had said that impetus is also being given in the fields of directed energy weapons, close-in weapon systems and modernising India's aerial platforms and surface-to-air guided weapon systems. Officials said the DRDO also plans to prioritise development of other key systems this year such as standalone 1-km range Anti-drone High Power Microwave System to take out enemy drones and the maiden launch of the Long-Range Land Attack Cruise Missile for the IAF. There are plans to develop the system for all aerial, naval and land platforms. DRDO plans to give statutory status to regulatory and certification bodies such as the Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification and Centre for Fire Explosive and Environment Safety, officials said.

In a first, MU launches university dept ranking framework on the lines of NIRF

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

In a first such initiative, Mumbai University has launched University Department Ranking Framework (UDRF) on the lines of National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) which will evaluate and rank multiple departments, study centres and sub-campus functioning under varsity. The top-ranked department will be awarded the research and infrastructure grant of Rs 5 to 25 lakh. The competition along with recognition varsity administration believes will motivate varsity departments to excel. Mumbai University (MU) has developed its own quantitative evaluation system which is a combination of parameters from NIRF, QS Ranking, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) among others which are used to rank or rate institutions of higher education (HEIs). The University of Mumbai has 15 departments under the Science faculty, 8 under Commerce, Skills, Online/ Distance Education and Management, 10 under Humanities and Social Sciences, 15 under Languages, 12 under Interdisciplinary Studies, and 20 Centres of Studies. According to information shared by MU, all these departments will be evaluated through the quantitative evaluation system designed by MU along with two model colleges run by the varsity. It will be applicable from the current academic year. The University Research and Development Cell (RDC), Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), NIRF Cell, and Board of Deans have contributed to the development of this ranking framework. It includes six main aspects: Research and Professional Activities; Departmental Administration and Management; Student-Support Achievements Progression; Teaching-Learning-Assessment Process; Faculty Output; Conferences Workshops and Collaborations.

This will further include parameters such as grants and funding received from various government agencies

and industries, research and development projects undertaken by the departments including quality of research publications as governed by scientific databases, consultancy output, granted patents, technology transfer, various academic MoUs and industrial linkages, initiatives for courses under Swayam and MahaSwayam which are government run portals for online courses, outstanding performance of students in research, sports and cultural activities, alumni support, philanthropic funding, teaching reforms, green initiatives and peer perception. Talking about the novel approach, Vice Chancellor of MU, Prof Ravindra Kulkarni, said, "The decision to rank the University Departments using the parameters of QS, NIRF, Times Rankings, and NAAC/ NBA Accreditations is a significant step toward fostering academic excellence and innovative research. This evaluation process will motivate University Departments to excel well by focusing on their potential, and strengths and undertaking continuous upgradation of their capabilities, in line with global quality standards." The External Expert Committees will evaluate the departments under respective categories and overall ranking of all 80 departments, schools, institutions, centres, model colleges will also be announced. The top-ranked department in each category will be awarded a prize of Rs 5-25 lakh. Whereas departments with lower rankings will be encouraged and supported to undertake the necessary reforms, progress, and transformations through the "VC Initiative Mechanism". The top-performing department under the Overall Category will receive an additional Research Grant of Rs 10 lakh, and the second-ranked department will receive an additional Rs 5 lakh. Also, the promising departments under the research and professional activities category will be given funding support under the title of "Department with Potential for Research Excellence".

Delhi HC seeks report from ED on AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan's plea



GNS News Agency, Sept 23

The Delhi High Court Thursday sought a detailed status report from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a petition filed by AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan challenging the legality and validity of his arrest by the central agency and, consequently, his remand. On September 2, the ED arrested Khan, the Okhla MLA, in connection with a money laundering case related to alleged illegal recruitments in the Delhi Waqf Board.

The agency, represented by advocate Zoheb Hossain, however, raised a preliminary objection on the maintainability of Khan's plea on the grounds of suppression of facts. Hossain said Khan failed to disclose

that based on the same material and facts, his anticipatory bail plea was earlier rejected by the HC which was then upheld by the SC as well. Khan's lawyer, senior advocate Vikram Chaudhari, contended that "this can never be treated as a preliminary objection".

Justice Neena Bansal Krishna, while issuing notice, recorded that it remains open for the ED to raise preliminary objections. The court has kept the matter next for consideration on October 18.

The case against Khan stems from two FIRs: one filed by the CBI concerning alleged irregularities in Waqf Board appointments, and another by the Delhi Anti-Corruption Branch regarding an alleged case of disproportionate assets. In April, the ED had summoned Khan and questioned him for 13 hours. According to the agency, he allegedly acquired "huge proceeds of crime" through illegal recruitment of staff, and invested the amount to purchase immovable assets in the name of his aides. As per the ED, it had issued him 14 summons and he appeared only once. Senior advocate Chaudhari told Justice Krishna Thursday that Khan had failed to appear despite the summons owing to "exigencies", adding that his mother is suffering from cancer. Khan sought that his arrest be quashed and set aside and that his remand order also be set aside.

NHAI begins work to build 2 new bridges over Mutha river, respite for those travelling on Mumbai-Bangalore highway soon

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Identifying black spots on the Mumbai-Bangalore bypass, the Union government has initiated rectification work, starting with the construction of two major four-lane bridges over the Mutha River, parallel to the existing bridge. This development aims to alleviate traffic congestion in Warje, Vadgaon, Narhe, and Ambegaon. Following the expansion of Chandni Chowk, which streamlined traffic at the junction on the Mumbai-Bangalore bypass, the existing bridge on the Mutha River has become a bottleneck. Traffic jams at this bridge have had a cascading effect, impacting vehicles traveling between Pune, Mumbai, Goa, and Bangalore, as well as daily commuters between Katraj and Hinjewadi.

The National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) will thus lay the foundation stone for the expansion of the bridge on the river this Saturday. The project includes adding lanes on either side of the existing two-lane bridge in both directions. Union Highways and Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari will preside over the ceremony to lay the foundation stone. "The project, costing Rs 52.68 crore, will cover a 1.605 km stretch on the bypass, where two four-lane bridges will be constructed on both sides of the existing bridge. There will also be two underpasses, along with ten minor bridges over nullahs and two canals, which will help in developing a missing service road that will connect Sinhad Road to Warje along the bypass," said an NHAI official. The NHAI has identified black spots on the bypass at Bhumkar Chowk, Navale Bridge, Mutha Bridge, Bavdhan, and Wakad. "The rectification of these black spots includes completing missing links of service roads, constructing foot overbridges for pedestrians at Bhumkar Chowk and Chandni Chowk, and building major bridges at the Mula and Mutha rivers," the official added, noting that the work has been divided into two projects for more efficient and speedy construction.

The first project covers a 5.95 km stretch, including Bhumkar Chowk, Navale Bridge, Bavdhan, Wakad, as well as foot overbridges at NDA Chowk and Bhumkar Chowk. This part of the project is estimated to cost Rs



27.54 crore and includes a bridge on the Mula River in Wakad. The second project, which is larger in scope, spans from Warje to Narhe and includes the construction of two bridges on the Mutha River. The work falls within the Khadakwasla Assembly constituency, represented by BJP legislator Bhimrao Tapkir, and the Baramati Lok Sabha constituency, represented by NCP (SP) working president Supriya Sule.

The demand for the bridge was initially raised by Sule in 2019, pointing out that while the construction of the multi-level flyover at Chandni Chowk would ease traffic at the junction, it would also increase traffic flow along the Warje stretch of the bypass, as the existing river bridge was too narrow to accommodate the increased volume. The traffic situation in Warje worsened after Chandni Chowk's traffic was streamlined, leading to a cascading effect that caused jams on the bypass. Vehicles began entering the Warje area in search of alternate routes to their destinations. This stretch has also seen several accidents recently. "Sule took up the issue with Gadkari, and NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar also intervened to push for the faster implementation of the project," said former NCP (SP) corporator Sachin Dodke from Warje. Additionally, the foundation stone for the four-laning of the existing two-lane, 13.25 km stretch from Dive Ghat to Hadapsar and the widening of a section of Palkhi Marg will be laid by the NHAI.

Rs 120-crore CCTV surveillance for mangroves across MMR, e-tender to close Sept 24



GNS News Agency, Sept 23

The State Forest Department has floated a Rs 120 crore tender to install a high-tech CCTV camera network aimed at protecting the city's mangroves. The surveillance system will cover Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) from Dahisar to Panje wetland and Colaba to Panvel. Under the ambitious project, 669 cameras will be installed across 195 sensitive mangrove zones in five key areas—Mumbai, Thane, Bhiwandi, Navi Mumbai, Panvel, and Uran. The cameras will be monitored through a centralised control system to ensure safety and security of mangrove ecosystems, an important environmental asset for the city.

The network will be equipped with advanced features, including automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) and integration with key databases such as VAAHAN Sarathi, passport, crime and criminal tracking network and systems (CCTNS), Prisons and the Automated Multimodal Biometric Identification System (AMBIS). A request for proposals (RFP) for the project was issued Wednesday, with e-tenders set to close September 24. Officials expect the system to be operational within a year, provided there are no delays.

BN Kumar, director of NatConnect Foundation, said "At last, the government is acting. However, the CCTV network will only cover areas under jurisdiction of the forest department. Mangroves under control of other government bodies, such as CIDCO and JNPA, still remain vulnerable," lamented Kumar. Nandakumar Pawar, head of Sagar Shakti environmental group, welcomed the news. He said, "This is like an official recognition of the 289-hectare inter-tidal water body as a wetland, a status

that has long been disputed by local authorities." Additional principal chief conservator of Forests and Mangrove Cell head, SV Rama Rao, emphasised that this "high priority" project is designed not only to protect the environment but also to reassure citizens that their surroundings are being pro-actively safeguarded. "This initiative will instill confidence among people that the city's ecological health is being preserved," said Rao. The surveillance system will include night-vision cameras to monitor illegal activities that could damage the mangrove ecosystems. It will feature a central control room, zonal recording stations, and an alarm management module for continuous monitoring and event-triggered alerts.

Pre-orders for 'made in India' iPhone 16 surges, set to break export records

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

New Delhi: Apple has seen a surge in pre-orders for its 'Make in India' iPhone 16 in the country, as the company gears up to make its latest iPhone line-up available on September 20, trade analysts said on Thursday, adding that the new devices are set to break previous export records. The ongoing channel checks suggest that iPhone 16 Pro models are also witnessing a strong traction from buyers, owing to its more strategic and accessible pricing, in comparison to the 15 series. The new iPhones will be available at Apple retail and online stores in India — Apple BKC (Mumbai) and Apple Saket (New Delhi) — along with the company's authorised sellers, from September 20. According to Counterpoint Research Director Tarun Pathak, there is a strong pre-order demand for the base iPhone 16 model compared to last year, and with attractive financing options, "the new 16 series is set to break previous records". The analysts expect a healthy mix of upgrades this year for Apple in the country. The momentum is great with the government's thrust on local manufacturing as the iPhone 16 models are being manufactured/assembled in India with simultaneous availability along with global market.

Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan to meet farmers every Tuesday, discuss problems affecting agriculture sector

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Emphasising "seedha samvad (direct dialogue)" with farmers, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Thursday announced that he would meet farmers and representatives of farm organisations every Tuesday to discuss and solve issues affecting the sector. Addressing a press conference on decisions and initiatives taken by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare in the first 100 days of the third Narendra Modi-led government, Chouhan said he has held meetings with several state agriculture ministers and their teams in the last few days.

"Now, I am trying to go to the fields as the Agriculture Minister. We are holding meetings in Krishi Vigyan Kendras (VKVKs); trying to meet [them] in the fields as well," Chouhan said. Stating that agriculture is a state subject, Chouhan said the Centre works and cooperates with the states.

Chouhan further said that Krishi Bhawan, which houses the Agriculture Ministry and several other ministries, is not just for Union ministers and Central officers. Let the state officials also come, and discuss, he added. So far, meetings with agriculture ministers of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Assam, Meghalaya, and Haryana have already been held, the minister said. Chouhan said his endeavour is to make farmers' lives better and keep the country's food security robust. "Personally, for me, serving farmers is like the worship of God," he said. Chouhan's remarks assume significance in view of recent farm protests. Farmers from Punjab and Haryana have been protesting at the Shambhu border since the beginning of this year. Chouhan also announced that a new program - modern Krishi Chaupal - will be launched on All India Radio and Doordarshan in October 2024, wherein farmers can interact directly with agricultural experts through



live question-and-answer sessions. He also announced that a call centre would be launched for redressal of farmers' grievances.

Chouhan said the government is working on a "six-point strategy" for farmer welfare and agricultural development. This includes increasing production and productivity and bringing down the cost of production. To increase crop production, the prime minister recently dedicated new seeds of 109 varieties of 65 crops to the farmers, which are climate-friendly, pest-resistant and high-yielding, Chouhan said. Chouhan also said that the government is committed to ensuring that cheap fertilisers are made available to the farmers on time. A bag of urea costs Rs 2,366, while it is made available to farmers for Rs 266; a bag of diammonium phosphate (DAP) costs Rs 2,433 but is made available to farmers for Rs 1,350, he said. Asked about the Committee on Minimum Support Price, formed by the Centre following the withdrawal of three farm laws, Chouhan said, "About 23 meetings of the committee have taken place. The report has not been finalised yet. The committee is working continuously." Later, on the sidelines, he said the government would soon release the committee's report.

Delivery executive dies by suicide after argument with customer over delayed groceries

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Due to difficulties locating the house, the delivery was delayed, which reportedly angered the customer, a woman whose identity has not been disclosed. (Express Archives) Due to difficulties locating the house, the delivery was delayed, which reportedly angered the customer, a woman whose identity has not been disclosed.

A 19-year-old delivery executive, working part-time for a food aggregator in Chennai city, died by suicide at his residence in Kolathur on Tuesday. According to police, the death was due to consequences he faced following an altercation with a customer over a delayed grocery delivery. The youth, identified as J Pavithran, a B.Com student, was balancing his studies and part-time work. According to the police, on September 11, Pavithran was assigned to deliver groceries to a customer in Korattur. Due to difficulties locating the house, the delivery was delayed, which reportedly angered the customer, a woman whose identity has not been disclosed.

A police officer known to the case said there was an argument between the woman and Pavithran when he finally reached her house. "The woman allegedly berated him for being late. The tension between the two escalated when, later that day, the woman lodged a formal complaint with the delivery platform, requesting that Pavithran not be assigned to her deliveries in the future. We have information that the company had taken action against him. We are yet to get a clear picture on the action he was faced with," the officer said. Two days after the initial confrontation, Pavithran returned to the customer's residence and allegedly hurled a stone at her



window, breaking the glass. The woman lodged a police complaint with the Korattur police, who tracked down Pavithran the following day. He was called in for questioning and issued a stern warning, though no formal charges were pressed given his status as a student. However, Pavithran's turmoil appeared to linger. On Tuesday, five days after the argument, his family discovered him unresponsive in his room. "His suicide note cited the altercation with the customer and her complaint as the reasons behind his decision to end his life. We have registered a case and initiated a probe into the circumstances leading to the death," an officer said. "We are also probing the actions of the delivery platform and trying to gather details on whether there were any additional pressures on him from his work." According to statements that are part of the police probe, Pavithran was a diligent worker who was trying to juggle his studies and the financial demands of his job.

Group of influential nations urges G20 countries to increase climate finance

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

A group of influential countries has urged the G20 nations to increase the overall pool of financing for climate action and urgently shift away from investments in fossil fuels. In a letter to the G20 bloc, the High Ambition Coalition (HAC) said all countries must work together to mobilise as much funding as possible to tackle the climate crisis as they convene to set a New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan. The NCQG is the new amount that developed nations must mobilise annually, starting in 2025, to support climate action in developing countries.

However, slow progress in mid-year UN talks in Bonn, Germany, and technical discussions in Baku has cast doubt on the possibility of setting an ambitious new climate finance target at the conference. The HAC emphasised that G20 countries, responsible for around 80 per cent of global emissions and holding 85 per cent of global GDP, had the power, resources and responsibility to "change the course of our planet's future". "We urge the G20 to lead all parties in collectively increasing the overall pool of financing for climate action from all sources and to urgently shift away from investments in fossil fuels," the coalition said.

"As the costs of climate change rise and we work together to set a New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance (NCQG), we must deliver as much funding as possible to tackle the climate crisis. We must approach COP29 in a spirit of collaboration," it added. The HAC said trillions of dollars were needed annually to meet the evolving needs of developing countries, as well as a redesigned international finance system that addressed long-standing inequities and mobilised resources for climate action on a much larger scale.

According to a report released by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on September 10, between USD 5.012 trillion and USD 6.852 trillion would be needed cumulatively until 2030 to support developing nations in achieving their nationally determined contributions (NDCs), which are national plans to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. Earlier this year, India said that in line with the needs of developing countries, developed nations needed to provide at least USD 1 trillion per year, prima-



rily in the form of grants and concessional finance. Developing countries argue that loans and private finance at market rates cannot be considered climate finance as they increase their debt burden.

The HAC said debt constraints and the high cost of capital hindered many countries' ability to achieve their climate and development goals. "We must address unsustainable debt burdens, align all financial flows with the Paris Agreement, and advance the commitment to equity at the heart of the agreement," it said.

The coalition said finance was crucial for a truly global energy transition that left no one behind. G20 members can support this by increasing public finance investment in the transition, closing loopholes in international fossil fuel investment commitments, and repurposing investment for renewables and energy efficiency, it added. They said ambition must be rewarded, not punished, through increased financial support and investment. "Finance is key to delivery. NDCs can showcase commitments and plans to potential investors but many ambitious NDCs have so far gone unfunded. Capacity building and technology transfer should not be overlooked; these means of implementation are essential to achieving the goals of many NDCs," the HAC said. The HAC is an influential but informal group of countries committed to advancing progressive climate and environmental goals. Countries in the coalition include Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Chile, Colombia, Finland, Fiji, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the UK, among others.

Andhra CM Chandrababu Naidu claims 'animal fat used in Tirupati laddoos', YSRCP calls allegations 'malicious'

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has accused the previous YSRCP government of using substandard ingredients, including animal fat, in the preparation of the famed Tirupati laddoos, a sacred sweet offered at the Sri Venkateswara temple in Tirupati. Naidu made these claims during an NDA legislature party meeting. "Even Tirumala laddu was made with substandard ingredients... they used animal fat instead of ghee," the CM was quoted as saying by PTI. In response, the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), led by Jagan Mohan Reddy, has categorically denied these allegations. Senior YSRCP leader and former TTD chairman YV Subba Reddy called Naidu's statements "malicious," and accused the TDP leader of stooping "to any level for political gain."



"His comments about the Tirumala prasadam are extremely malicious. No person would speak such words or make such accusations," Reddy added. Andhra Pradesh IT Minister Nara Lokesh, however, criticised, the previous YSRCP administration, expressing shock over the alleged use of animal fat in the prasadam, and claimed it disrespected the religious sentiments of millions of devotees. Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee president YS Sharmila has demanded that Naidu be held accountable for his remarks. She urged him to set up a high-level inquiry if his allegations were genuine, emphasising the need to protect the sanctity of the revered temple.

"TDP and YSRCP are engaging in vile politics, desecrating Tirumala and hurting the sentiments of Hindus. These remarks cast a stain on Lord Venkateswara, who is worshipped by millions of Hindus," she said, adding, "We demand Chandrababu Garu to take action. If your allegations are not politically motivated and you do not intend to play politics over sentiment, and if animal oils were indeed used instead of ghee, then immediately set up a high-level committee or conduct an inquiry with the CBI." Former TTD Chairman Bhumana Karunakar Reddy echoed similar sentiments, calling Naidu's comments shameful and accusing him of betraying public trust. He insisted that such accusations should be retracted and apologised for. "No one who believes in God can do it," he said.

India faces terror threats from Islamic State, Al-Qaeda-linked groups active in J-K: FATF

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

FATF The global terrorist financing watchdog further stated that India has implemented anti-money laundering and combating terror financing system that is effective in many respects. In a major revelation, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on Thursday said India faced "disparate" range of terror threats, most significantly from the Islamic State or Al-Qaeda-linked groups active in and around Jammu and Kashmir.

The observation was made in a 'mutual evaluation report' released by FATF on combating terror financing and anti-money laundering regime. While stating that the county's systems were "effective", it called for "major improvements" to strengthen prosecution in these cases. In the 368-page report, the global terrorist financing watchdog said India has implemented anti-money laundering and combating terror financing system that is effective in many respects. It, however, noted that major improvements were needed to strengthen prosecution in money-laundering and terror financing cases. The global body also added that improvements were required to protect non-profit sector from terror abuse. "India's main sources of money laundering originate from within, from illegal activities committed within country," the FATF report said.



The FATF plenary held in Singapore between June 26-28 this year had adopted the mutual evaluation report for India, stating that it had achieved "high level of technical compliance" with the requirements of the global money laundering watchdog. The FATF had placed India in the "regular follow-up" category - the highest rating given by the global watchdog and a distinction shared by only four other G20 countries including the UK, France and Italy. Countries rated under the 'regular follow-up category' are required to submit a follow-up report to the FATF once in three years on a voluntary basis.

Supreme Court rejects telecom companies' plea for AGR re-computation

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

A bench of Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud and Justices Sanjiv Khanna and B R Gavai, which heard their plea, rejected the prayer to hear it in open court. Curative petitions are usually taken up by judges inside their chambers. SCA bench of Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud and Justices Sanjiv Khanna and B R Gavai, which heard their plea, rejected the prayer to hear it in open court. Curative petitions are usually taken up by judges inside their chambers. The Supreme Court has dismissed petitions filed by telecom companies against its October 24, 2019, order directing them to pay Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) of about Rs 92,000 crore to the Department of Telecom (DoT).

A bench of Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud and Justices Sanjiv Khanna and B R Gavai, which heard their plea, rejected the prayer to hear it in open court. Curative petitions are usually taken up by judges inside their chambers. In the August 30 order, which was made available on Thursday, the court said, "We have gone through the Curative Petitions and the connected documents. In our opinion, no case is made out within the parameters indicated in the decision of this Court in Rupa Ashok Hurra vs Ashok Hurra".

The Supreme Court developed the concept of curative petition in the Hurra case to provide an opportunity for those whose grievance is not addressed in the review petition to approach the court one more time. Allowing a DoT appeal, the Supreme Court on October 24, 2019, paved the way for the recovery of the AGR dues amounting to about 1.6 lakh crore from the telecom companies, upholding DoT's stand on what constitutes AGR as provided in clause 19.1 of the telecom licence agreement with the service providers. Though the Centre urged the



court to allow the telecom companies, which pleaded financial difficulties to pay the dues over 20 years, the SC by order dated September 1, 2020, permitted them to pay the money over 10 years, starting April 1, 2021, with 10 per cent payment to be made by March 31 every year.

By order dated July 23, 2021, the Supreme Court also dismissed applications by telecom companies seeking correction of what they claimed were "arithmetic errors" in the calculation of the AGR. The question of AGR has been a point of dispute since 2003 with the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) ruling that some of the heads of revenue would not fall under AGR. However, the top court said that it had in a 2011 judgement ruled that the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) and the Tribunal do not have the jurisdiction to exclude from its purview, certain items of revenue, which were included in the definition of AGR. "TRAI and Tribunal had no jurisdiction to decide on the validity of the definition AGR in the licence agreement," the SC had said.

33-year-old Rajasthan Administrative Service officer dies after 'botched' surgery, inquiry ordered

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Jodhpur District Collector Gaurav Agrawal then ordered an inquiry by a five-member team led by Bharti Saraswat, the principal of Sampurnanand Medical College (SNMC) in Jodhpur. Bishnoi (33), a 2016 batch officer and a Bikaner native, had undergone an operation at a private hospital in Jodhpur two weeks ago. An inquiry has been ordered after relatives of Rajasthan Administrative Service (RAS) officer Priyanka Bishnoi, who died late on Wednesday while undergoing treatment in Ahmedabad, alleged that a surgery performed on her in Jodhpur was botched.

Bishnoi (33), a 2016 batch officer and a Bikaner native, had undergone an operation at a private hospital in Jodhpur two weeks ago. Subsequently, her condition worsened, and relatives have alleged that medical er-



rors were made during the operation. Jodhpur District Collector Gaurav Agrawal then ordered an inquiry by a five-member team led by Bharti Saraswat, the principal of Sampurnanand Medical College (SNMC) in Jodhpur.

Canada further tightens rules on temporary workers, students



GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Canada is further reducing the number of study permits it will grant to foreign students and tightening eligibility for work permits in a bid to cut down on the number of temporary residents in the country, the government said on Wednesday (September 18, 2024). The announcement comes as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal government, trailing in the public opinion polls and coming off a major by-election loss this week, seeks to reduce the number of temporary residents - including international students and foreign workers - in the country. The issue has become one of the most contentious in Canadian politics with a federal election due no later than October, 2025. The changes announced on Wednesday would reduce the number of international study permits issued to 437,000 in 2025. Canada approved 509,390 in 2023, according to immigration department data, and 175,920 in the first seven months of 2024. The changes would also limit work permit eligibility for spouses of some students and temporary foreign workers.

As Canada sees a spike in the number of refugee claimants, the government said Wednesday it planned to review measures to strengthen visa integrity and was "reviewing visa decision-making so that our highly trained officers have the right tools to detect fraud and reduce the number of non-genuine visitors."

"The reality is that not everyone who wants to come to Canada will be able to—just like not everyone who wants to stay in Canada will be able to," Immigration Minister Marc Miller said in a statement. The government has already pledged to reduce the number of temporary resi-

dents to 5% of the total population. It was 6.8% in April. Canada's temporary foreign worker program has come under fire for being, in the words of a damning United Nations report, "a breeding ground for contemporary forms of slavery" — language Miller called "inflammatory." "The Ministers made no mention not even once about workers' rights, instead continuing to obsess about numbers and cuts," Syed Hussan, executive director of the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change, said in a statement.

"Reducing the numbers of migrants will not stop their exploitation; giving them equal rights and the power to exercise those rights will — and that is only possible through permanent resident status for all." Economist and Atkinson Fellow on the Future of Workers Armine Yalnizyan said she was disappointed Wednesday's announcement did not include a plan to transition migrants from temporary status to permanent. "These are not temporary jobs. Why aren't we facilitating permanence for these people?" she asked. "We are not going to grow economically without more newcomers. So we've got to be very clear on what the future path is." Migrants have been blamed for societal problems including a lack of affordable housing and ramped-up cost of living, even as post-pandemic inflation slowed to the Bank of Canada's target of 2% annually in August. Immigrant advocates and some economists argue the link between migrants and economic malaise is an oversimplification, and that vulnerable newcomers cannot be held responsible for complex economic problems. Polls have shown a growing slice of the public thinks Canada is bringing in too many immigrants, and anti-migrant rhetoric and attacks have risen in Canada, once renowned for its welcoming stance toward newcomers. Nonetheless, after years of increasing Canada's ranks of temporary residents, its federal government is seeking to pull back. In January, the government placed a two-year cap on international students, whose approvals are projected to decrease by almost half this year. Earlier this month, the government walked back 2022 expansions to the temporary foreign worker program. In some sectors, it reduced the maximum share of any employer's workforce that can be made up of low-wage, temporary foreign workers. It also ended, in some sectors, low-wage temporary foreign workers in communities with high unemployment rates.

A gold mining town in Congo has become an mpox hot spot as a new strain spreads



GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Slumped on the ground over a mound of dirt, Divine Wisoba pulled weeds from her daughter's grave. The 1-month-old died from mpox in eastern Congo in August, but Ms. Wisoba, 21, was too traumatized to attend the funeral. In her first visit to the cemetery, she wept into her shirt for the child she lost and worried about the rest of her family. "When she was born, it was as if God had answered our prayers — we wanted a girl," Wisoba said of little Maambi Katengey. "But our biggest joy was transformed into devastation."

Her daughter is one of more than 6,000 people officials suspect have contracted the disease in South Kivu province, the epicenter of the world's latest mpox outbreak, in what the World Health Organization has labeled a global health emergency. A new strain of the virus is spreading, largely through skin-to-skin contact, including but not limited to sex. A lack of funds, vaccines and information is making it difficult to stem the spread, according to alarmed disease experts.

Mpox — which causes mostly mild symptoms like fever and body aches, but can trigger serious cases with prominent blisters on the face, hands, chest and genitals — had been spreading mostly undetected for years in Africa, until a 2022 outbreak reached more than 70 countries. Globally, gay and bisexual men made up the vast majority of cases in that outbreak. But officials note mpox has long disproportionately affected children in Africa, and they say cases are now rising sharply among kids, pregnant women and other vulnerable groups, with many types of close contact responsible for the spread. Health officials have zeroed in on Kamituga, a remote yet bustling gold mining town of some 300,000 people that attracts miners, sex workers and traders who are constantly on the move. Cases from other parts of eastern Congo can be traced back here, officials say, with the first originating in the nightclub scene. Since this outbreak began, one year ago, nearly 1,000 people in Kamituga have been infected. Eight have died, half of them children. Not enough awareness about symptoms last month, the World Health Organization said mpox outbreaks might be stopped in the next six months, with governments' leadership and cooperation.

But in Kamituga, people say they face a starkly different reality. There's a daily average of five new cases at the general hospital, which is regularly near capacity. Overall in South Kivu, weekly new suspected cases have skyrocketed from about 12 in January to 600 in August, according to province health officials. Even that's likely an underestimate, they say, because of a lack of access to rural areas, the inability of many residents to seek care, and Kamituga's transient nature. Locals say they simply don't have enough information about mpox. Before her daughter got sick, Ms. Wisoba said, she was infected herself but didn't know it.

Painful lesions emerged around her genitals, making walking difficult. She thought she had a common sexually transmitted infection and sought medicine at a pharmacy. Days later, she went to the hospital with her newborn and was diagnosed with mpox. She recovered, but

her daughter developed lesions on her foot. Nearly a week later, Maambi died at the same hospital that treated her mother. Ms. Wisoba said she didn't know about mpox until she got it. She wants the government to invest more in teaching people protective measures. Local officials can't reach areas more than a few miles outside Kamituga to track suspected cases or inform residents. They broadcast radio messages but say that doesn't reach far enough. Kasindi Mwenyelwata goes door to door describing how to detect mpox — looking for fevers, aches or lesions. But the 42-year-old community leader said a lack of money means he doesn't have the right materials, such as posters showing images of patients, which he finds more powerful than words. ALIMA, one of the few aid groups working on mpox in Kamituga, lacks funds to set up programs or clinics that would reach some 150,000 people, with its budget set to run out at year's end, according to program coordinator Dr. Dally Muamba. If support keeps waning and mpox spreads, he said, "there will be an impact on the economy, people will stop coming to the area as the epidemic takes its toll. ... And as the disease grows, will resources follow?"

Health experts said that, what's needed most are vaccines — even if they go only to adults, under emergency approval in Congo. None has arrived in Kamituga, though it's a priority city in South Kivu, officials said. It's unclear when or how they will. The main road into town is unpaved — barely passable by car during the ongoing rainy season. Once they make it here, it's unclear whether supply will meet demand for those who are at greatest risk and first in line: health staff, sex workers, miners and motorcycle taxi drivers. Congo's government has budgeted more than \$190 million for its initial mpox response, which includes the purchase of 3 million vaccine doses, according to a draft national mpox plan, widely circulating among health experts and aid groups this month and seen by The Associated Press. But so far, just 250,000 doses have arrived in Congo and the government's given only \$10 million, according to the finance ministry. Most people with mild cases recover in less than two weeks. But lesions can get infected, and children or immunocompromised people are more prone to severe cases. Doctors can ensure lesions are clean and give pain medication or antibiotics for secondary infections such as sepsis. Experts say a lack of resources and knowledge about the new strain makes it difficult to advise people on protecting themselves. An internal report circulated among aid groups and agencies and seen by AP, said confidence in the available information about mpox in eastern Congo and neighbouring countries is low. While the variant is known to be more easily transmissible through sex, it's unclear how long the virus remains in the system. Doctors tell recovered patients to abstain from sex for three months, but acknowledge the number's largely arbitrary. "Studies haven't clarified if you're still contagious or not ... if you can or can't have sex with your wife," said Dr. Steven Bilemba, of Kamituga's general hospital. Doctors say they're seeing cases they simply don't understand, such as pregnant women losing babies. Of 32 pregnant women infected since January, nearly half lost the baby through miscarriage or stillbirth, hospital statistics show. Alice Neema was among them. From the hospital's isolation ward, she told AP she'd noticed lesions around her genitals and a fever — but didn't have enough money to travel the 30 miles (50 kilometers) on motorbike for help in time. She miscarried after her diagnosis. As information trickles in, locals say fear spreads alongside the new strain. Diego Nyago said he'd brought his 2-year-old son, Emile, to the hospital for circumcision when he developed a fever and lesions. "I didn't believe that children could catch this disease," he said as doctors gently poured water over the boy to bring his temperature down. "Some children die quickly, because their families aren't informed."

Mission specialist for Titan sub owner to testify before Coast Guard

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

A mission specialist for the company that owned the Titan submersible that imploded in 2023 is scheduled to testify before the U.S. Coast Guard Renata Rojas is the latest person to testify who is connected to Titan owner OceanGate after an investigatory panel has listened to two days of testimony that raised questions about the company's operations before the doomed mission. OceanGate co-founder Stockton Rush was among five people who died when the submersible imploded en route to the site of the Titanic wreck in June 2023.

Earlier this month, the Coast Guard opened a public hearing that is part of a high-level investigation into the cause of the implosion. The public hearing began on September 16 and some of the testimony has focused on the troubled nature of the company. During the hearing, former OceanGate operations director David Lochridge said he frequently clashed with Rush and felt the company was committed only to making money. "The whole idea behind the company was to make money," Mr. Lochridge testified. "There was very little in the way of science."

Also expected to testify on Thursday is former OceanGate scientific director Steven Ross. The hearing is expected to run through Friday with more witnesses still to come. Mr. Lochridge and other witnesses have painted a picture of a company led by people who were impatient to get the unconventionally designed craft into the water. The deadly accident set off a worldwide debate about the future of private undersea exploration. Coast Guard officials noted at the start of the hearing that the submersible had not been independently reviewed, as is standard practice. That and Titan's unusual design subjected it to scrutiny in the undersea exploration community. OceanGate, based in Washington State, sus-



ended its operations after the implosion. The company has no full-time employees currently, but has been represented by an attorney during the hearing.

During the submersible's final dive on June 18, 2023, the crew lost contact after an exchange of texts about the Titan's depth and weight as it descended. The support ship Polar Prince then sent repeated messages asking if the Titan could still see the ship on its onboard display. One of the last messages from Titan's crew to Polar Prince before the submersible imploded stated, "all good here," according to a visual recreation presented earlier in the hearing. When the submersible was reported missing, rescuers rushed ships, planes, and other equipment to an area about 435 miles (700 kilometers) south of St. John's, Newfoundland. Four days later, the wreckage of the Titan was subsequently found on the ocean floor about 330 yards (300 metres) off the bow of the Titanic, Coast Guard officials said. No one on board survived. OceanGate said it has been fully cooperating with the Coast Guard and NTSB investigations since they began. The Titan had been making voyages to the Titanic wreckage site going back to 2021. (AP) GRS GRS

Iranian hackers tried but failed to interest Biden's campaign in stolen Trump info: FBI

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Iranian hackers sought to interest President Joe Biden's campaign in information stolen from rival Donald Trump's campaign, sending unsolicited emails to people connected to the Democratic president in an effort to interfere in the 2024 election, the FBI and other federal agencies said Wednesday. There's no evidence that any of the recipients responded, officials said, preventing the hacked information from surfacing in the final months of the closely contested election. The hackers sent emails in late June and early July to people who were associated with Mr. Biden's campaign before he dropped out. The emails "contained an excerpt taken from stolen, non-public material from former President Trump's campaign as text in the emails," according to a U.S. government statement. The announcement is the latest effort to call out what officials say is Iran's brazen, ongoing work to interfere in the 2024



election, including a hack-and-leak campaign that the FBI and other federal agencies linked last month to Tehran. The Justice Department has been preparing charges in that breach, The Associated Press has reported. The FBI, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency have said the Trump campaign hack and an attempted breach of the Biden-Harris campaign are

part of an effort to undermine voters' faith in the election and to stoke discord. The Trump campaign disclosed on Aug 10 that it had been hacked and said Iranian actors had stolen and distributed sensitive internal documents. At least three news outlets — Politico, The New York Times, and The Washington Post — were leaked confidential material from inside the Trump campaign. So far, each has refused to reveal any de-

tails about what it received. Politico reported that it began receiving emails on July 22 from an anonymous account. The source — an AOL email account identified only as "Robert" — passed along what appeared to be a research dossier that the campaign had apparently done on the Republican vice presidential nominee, Ohio Sen JD Vance. The document was dated Feb 23, almost five months before Trump selected Vance as his running mate.

Japan firm says they no longer make radio reportedly used in Lebanon blasts

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Japanese firm Icom said Thursday (September 19, 2024) that it had stopped producing the model of radios reportedly used in recent blasts in Lebanon around 10 years ago. "The IC-V82 is a handheld radio that was produced and exported, including to the Middle East, from 2004 to October 2014. It was discontinued about 10 years ago, and since then, it has not been shipped from our company," Icom said in a statement.

"The production of the batteries needed to operate the main unit has also been discontinued, and a hologram seal to distinguish counterfeit products was not attached, so it is not possible to confirm whether the product shipped from our company," it said. It added that products for overseas markets are sold exclusively through its authorized distributors, and that its export programme is based on Japanese security trade control regulations. "All of our radios are manufactured at our production subsidiary, Wakayama Icom Inc., in Wakayama Prefecture, under a strict management system... so no parts other than those specified by our company are used in a product. In addition, all of our radios are manufactured at the same factory, and we do not manufacture them overseas," the statement said. In the second wave of device explosions



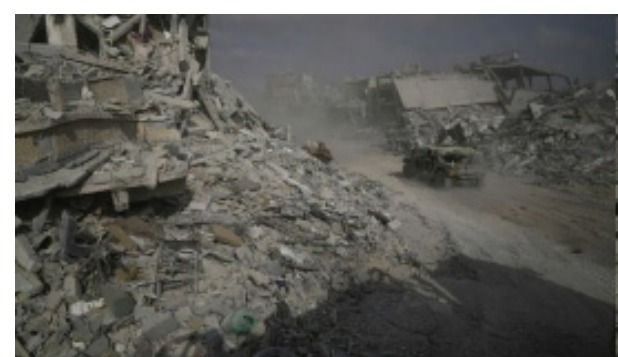
in as many days, 20 people died and more than 450 were wounded on Wednesday (September 19, 2024) in Hezbollah strongholds in Lebanon, officials said. A source close to Hezbollah said walkie-talkies used by its members blew up in its Beirut stronghold, with state media reporting similar blasts in south and east Lebanon. They came a day after the simultaneous explosion of hundreds of paging devices used by Hezbollah killed 12 people, including two children, and wounded up to 2,800 others across Lebanon, in an unprecedented attack blamed on Israel.

Eight killed as Israel bombs Gaza school housing displaced people

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Gaza: At least eight Palestinians were killed in an Israeli attack on a school sheltering displaced people east of Gaza City, said Palestinian sources. Israeli aircraft bombed the 'Ibn Al-Haytham' school housing displaced people in the Shuja'iyya neighbourhood on Wednesday, Xinhua news agency reported quoting Palestinian security sources.

"Our teams recovered the bodies of eight victims, including five children and two women, as a result of the Israeli airstrike," the Gaza Civil Defence said in a press statement. Local sources and eyewitnesses said the airstrike caused significant destruction to the schoolyard and classrooms. Meanwhile, the Israeli army said in a statement that its air force targeted Hamas militants at a command and control centre previously known as the Ibn Al-Haytham school in Gaza City. Israel has been launching a large-scale offensive against Hamas in the Gaza Strip to retaliate against a Hamas rampage through



the southern Israeli border on October 7, 2023, during which about 1,200 people were killed and some 250 taken hostage. The Palestinian death toll from ongoing Israeli attacks in Gaza has risen to 41,272, Gaza-based health authorities said in a statement Wednesday.

Government working on new income tax act. Check inside details



The new tax framework aims to replace the current 1961 act, simplifying the tax process for individuals and businesses. Around 125 sections and subsections of the current act could be abolished in the new law.

The Ministry of Finance is planning to introduce a new Income Tax Act aimed at simplifying the tax system in India, sources told *Indiatoday.in*. The new tax framework is expected to replace the existing act, which has been in place since 1961, with the goal of making the tax process more straightforward for individuals and businesses. An official announcement regarding this new tax law is likely to be made during the Union Budget 2025, scheduled for February. The government is keen on making the tax regime more user-friendly by reducing the complexity of the current system. Aim to simplify existing tax system. The Finance Ministry is working towards simplifying the Income Tax Act by eliminating redundant sections and subsections.

"KISS - Keep It Simple Stupid, that's the motto the Finance Ministry has been following nowadays. The government's aim is to simplify the tax regime and the process and around 125 sections and subsections are likely to be abolished," sources told *Indiatoday*. The purpose of this is to make the tax filing process as easy as possible, reducing the burden of compliance on taxpayers. One key aspect of the reform is to remove out-

dated provisions that no longer serve a purpose in today's economic environment. According to sources, the revamp will focus on reducing paperwork and streamlining procedures. The Finance Ministry has been actively seeking feedback from tax experts, businesses, and taxpayers. In these consultations, there has been an overwhelming call to make the tax filing process simpler and less time-consuming. Reducing compliance burdens has been a common theme in these discussions. The ministry has been reviewing the current provisions of the tax code and is expected to finalise the new Income Tax Act in the coming months. Key changes expected

The new Income Tax Act will introduce changes in various areas, including expenditures, investments, assets, liabilities, and sources of income. The government is also expected to provide clearer guidelines on how income is to be reported, which will help reduce confusion and errors in tax filings. While the details of the new provisions are still being worked out, the focus remains on simplifying the tax code while ensuring that it remains robust and effective in generating revenue for the government.

History of income tax in India The current Income Tax Act, which was introduced in 1961, has been the foundation of India's tax system for over six decades. It came into effect on April 1, 1962, and applies to the whole of India. Despite several amendments over the years, the act has become increasingly complex, prompting calls for a comprehensive overhaul. In 2020, the government introduced a new tax regime, offering taxpayers an alternative to the existing system. For the fiscal year 2023-24 (assessment year 2024-25), 72% of taxpayers chose to file their returns under the new tax regime. This highlights the growing demand for simpler tax solutions. India's income tax system dates back to 1860, when it was first introduced by Sir James Wilson, the finance minister of pre-independent India, to address financial losses incurred by the government following the 1857 Mutiny.

Gold prices react to US Fed rate cut: What investors need to know

The US Federal Reserve's rate cuts aim to stabilise the economy but raise concerns about their impact on global markets, particularly on gold prices, a key investment in uncertain times. This is the first time since 2020 that the Fed has reduced rates.

The US Federal Reserve has cut its key interest rate by 50 basis points (bps), bringing it down to a range of 4.75% to 5%. This is the first time since 2020 that the Fed has reduced rates. The decision was made to address concerns about slowing economic growth and easing inflation in the US. While this move aims to stabilise the US economy, it has also raised questions about its potential impact on global markets, including India. One key area being closely watched is the effect on gold prices, a popular investment during uncertain economic times.

Following the Fed's rate cut, gold prices surged, touching a level of \$2,600 per ounce (~Rs 73,750). This is considered a psychological benchmark in the gold market, with the price rise largely driven by expectations of further rate cuts and concerns over the US economic outlook. Dr Renisha Chainani, Head of Research at Augmont - Gold For All, said that the Federal Reserve's decision to cut rates by 50 basis points could lead to another rate cut by the end of the year. The Fed's projections suggest that interest rates might drop further to 3.4% by 2025, and 2.9% by 2026, down from earlier forecasts of 4.1% and 3.1% respectively.

Chainani added, "After reaching the \$2,600 mark, we may see some profit booking in the gold market, with prices potentially retracing to around \$2,500 (~Rs 71,800) and \$2,475 (~Rs 71,000)." This indicates that while gold prices are currently strong, short-term corrections could occur as investors adjust their positions in response to market developments.

Changing focus in gold market The gold market has shifted its attention away from Chinese investment demand and central bank buying. The focus is now on how interest rate cuts in Western economies, particularly the US, will impact gold prices. Lower interest rates typically make gold more attractive as an investment because it does not earn interest, making it a better option compared to other assets in a low-rate environment. Unmesh



Kulkarni, Managing Director and Senior Advisor at Julius Baer India, said, "In the near term, we remain positive on gold. Expectations of further interest rate cuts are boosting sentiment in the futures market and attracting safe-haven investors back to physical gold. However, while rate cuts can support gold prices, history shows that lower rates alone may not always drive prices higher."

Kulkarni mentioned that the impact of rate cuts on gold prices depends on whether the cuts coincide with a recession. "A recessionary environment during rate cuts is usually positive for gold, as investors look for safer assets. However, if the economy avoids a recession despite rate cuts, it may not be as beneficial for gold prices," he said. Outlook for gold prices The gold market is likely to continue reacting to developments in US interest rates. The Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) concluded one of its most anticipated meetings in recent years with the 50 basis point rate cut. This marks the first such cut in over four years, and markets are adjusting to the possibility of more rate cuts in the future. Amit Goel, Co-Founder and Chief Global Strategist at Pace 360, pointed out that, "Bonds and precious metals like gold may trade sideways for a while, but they are likely to start the next upward movement soon." With interest rates set to decline further, many analysts believe that gold will continue to be an attractive investment, especially in uncertain times. However, the extent of the price rise will depend on how the broader economy responds to the Fed's monetary policy.

Global oil prices still volatile, OMCs to wait more before reverting to routine fuel price revisions

Global benchmark Brent crude had slipped to under \$70 per barrel on September 10—the first such instance since December 2021—but has climbed to over \$74 per barrel over the past nine days. Global benchmark Brent crude had slipped to under \$70 per barrel on September 10—the first such instance since December 2021—but has climbed to over \$74 per barrel over the past nine days.

Despite the recent slump in international prices of crude oil, public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) are likely to wait a little longer before passing on the benefit to consumers and returning to the practice of daily revision in prices of petrol and diesel, a top petroleum ministry official said, adding that the international prices continue to be highly volatile. Softening of oil prices in recent weeks had led to speculation that the OMCs—Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL)—could reduce pump prices of petrol and diesel and revert to daily price revisions, which they had suspended over two years ago when international oil and fuel prices had touched multi-year highs amid extreme volatility due to multiple reasons, including the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war. Since then, retail prices of petrol and diesel have been revised rarely—on a couple of occasions due to excise duty reductions and once just before this year's Lok Sabha polls. Currently in Delhi, petrol is priced at Rs 94.72 per litre, while diesel is being retailed at Rs 87.62. Fuel prices vary from one state to the other due to differences in state levies. "We are still seeing a lot of volatility in prices. Yesterday, the US Federal Reserve announced a rate cut. Similarly, there are a lot of decisions globally (which can affect oil prices) that are going through the system. People are looking at various new data points. For example, how much is the draw-down of crude? What is China's PMI looking like? What

kind of numbers are coming out of China in terms of purchase and storage of crude, refinery margins, refinery bankruptcies, etc. All kinds of new information are coming out every day," said the official, who did not wish to be identified. India is the world's third-largest consumer of crude oil and depends on imports to meet over 85 per cent of its requirement. This makes fuel prices in India extremely sensitive to prices in the international market. "We also need to understand that the impact of these factors operates with a lag effect," the official said, adding that the OMCs and the government want the international prices to stabilise before taking any call. The official said that multiple factors that make up the pricing equation need to be carefully analysed before a call is taken. These factors include international oil prices, fuel spreads or margins, dollar-rupee exchange rate, outlook on prices, and market volatility assessments, among others. Global benchmark Brent crude had slipped to under \$70 per barrel on September 10—the first such instance since December 2021—but has climbed to over \$74 per barrel over the past nine days. In early July, Brent was trading at over \$85 per barrel. In the first week of April, Brent had breached the \$90 mark after over five months. Although these prices are significantly lower than the levels seen in 2022, industry officials say that they are prone to volatility given the unpredictable geopolitical situation in some regions and production regulation by major global oil producers. The recent slump in oil prices has mainly been on account of concerns of oil demand in China, a top importer of crude oil. As per industry insiders, OMCs would be comfortable in reverting to daily fuel price revisions once international crude oil prices stabilise under \$80 per barrel. Given the current pump prices and margins on the two automobile fuels in the international market, an oil price level of under \$80 would ensure that the OMCs would not have to bear any under-recovery on petrol and diesel sales.

Between Siddharth and Aditi Rao Hydari, the first to say 'I love you' was...



The beloved power couple Aditi Rao Hydari and Siddharth recently exchanged vows in a picturesque South Indian wedding ceremony at a 400-year-old temple in Telangana. Both bride and groom wore elegant Sabyasachi creations, exuding a timeless charm. Prior to the wedding, 'Mrs & Mr Adu-Siddhu' participated in a "Tell The Truth" interview with *Vogue India*. Their playful banter and seamless completion of each other's sentences revealed their deep connection and mutual understanding.

In the video, Aditi playfully teased Siddharth on what he would do if left alone to which he replied saying he would "wither and die". She also praised his honesty, noting he had never lied to her. When the interviewer asks why Aditi loves him, Siddharth very cutely says, "I know Aditi loves me because she shows it. She shows it every single day."

Spanish man starts business to ruin weddings as a joke, says is now fully booked until December: 'You just need to tell me the time, place, date'

According to *The Independent*, the man charges \$500 (around \$550 USD) to ruin weddings, usually to help brides who feel unsure about how to call off their nuptials at the last minute. According to Spanish news outlet *Antena 3*, Varea released an ad that mentioned, "If you have doubts or don't want to get married and don't know how to refuse, don't worry anymore, I'll object to your wedding." "You just need to tell me the time, place, and date," the ad continued. "I will appear in the middle of the ceremony saying that I am the great love of your life, and we will run away together hand in hand."

The ad started out as a joke until brides started contacting him for help. Since then, he has constantly been receiving offers, he revealed to the outlet. Surprisingly, his unconventional service has garnered enough demand to keep him booked until December. Varea also mentioned charging extra money for family members to "slap him". "Each slap is worth 50 euros," he said, clarifying that his services are not just limited to brides but apply to grooms as well. While some may find humour in the idea, the growing number of couples paying to sabotage their weddings raises serious questions about pre-wedding jitters and relationship doubts. Gurleen Baruah, occupational psychologist and executive coach at *That Culture Thing* says, "It's natural to experience doubts, especially when approaching a big step like marriage. Society often portrays love as straightforward and full of certainty, but the reality is far more nuanced. Many couples go through periods of doubt, sometimes silently. Recognising these signs can be the first step toward understanding what's happening beneath the surface."

Normal pre-wedding nerves and more serious issues that need to be resolved before marriage Baruah tells *indianexpress.com*, "Pre-wedding nerves often focus on the event or the idea of change, like worries about the day running smoothly or how marriage will affect the relationship. These feelings are usually tied to the stress of planning and adjusting to a new phase, similar to the nervousness before a job interview." However, she adds that deeper issues — such as thoughts of life without the partner or anxiety over core differences like children or

Aditi and Siddharth agreed that Siddharth was the more romantic partner and the first to say the magic 3 words, "I love you". The couple last collaborated on the Telugu romantic action film *Maha Samudram* (2021), directed by Ajay Bhupathi. When asked about Aditi's morning routine, Siddharth jokingly described her as an unwelcome alarm clock, waking him up against his will. Aditi countered by emphasising the importance of rising with the sun, to which Siddharth playfully replied that he reluctantly and tearfully accepted the start of his day. He said, "I wake up reluctantly and in tears that my day has begun. Now, the one person in the world who relishes this moment, almost like taking candy from a baby, is this person (Aditi)."

As for Siddharth's best attire, Aditi suggested either his hipster clothes or a traditional veshti, a South Indian garment that the Rang De Basanti actor also wore to their wedding. When asked who is more likely to apologise first, Aditi enthusiastically claimed she would, but Siddharth playfully disagreed, stating that he apologises frequently due to his many mistakes. "I do so many things wrong every five minutes. Ninety per cent of the words I speak to her are 'sorry,' and the remaining ten per cent are 'thank you,'" he said. The couple's differing opinions on their driving skills also led to a humorous exchange. While Aditi insisted she was a competent driver, Siddharth jokingly countered that she wasn't a driver at all. "Tell me the last three times you drove me in the last three years? It never happened because you never drove," he said.



career priorities — signal more serious concerns. "A lack of trust or emotional distance, or constantly focusing on the partner's flaws, suggests deeper dissatisfaction beyond typical pre-wedding jitters. Recognising these signs is crucial for addressing them." Addressing doubts takes intentional effort and honest communication, says Baruah. Some strategies include: Open communication: Initiating a calm, honest conversation about feelings can be the key to clearing up misunderstandings. Sharing thoughts without blame creates a safe space for both partners to express what they're experiencing.

Journaling: Reflecting on doubts through journaling helps sort through emotions and identify whether they are rooted in personal insecurities or relationship issues. Writing with the intention of understanding rather than venting can provide valuable insights. Balancing perspective: Focusing on what is working in the relationship alongside what isn't can provide a more balanced view. Recognising the positive aspects may help appreciate the relationship's strengths. Seek therapy: Couples therapy can be a safe space to explore concerns together, while individual therapy can help work through personal fears or past experiences that may be affecting the relationship. Take it slow: Doubts don't always require immediate action. Sometimes, allowing space to think and reflect before jumping to conclusions can prevent hasty decisions that might

From snail slime to vampire facials, how far will people go in the quest for glowing skin?

With the Internet bombarding us with one skincare trend after another, beauty enthusiasts continue to explore extreme methods for glowing skin. From smearing poo on faces to letting live slugs crawl over them, the journey to glowing skin is not for the faint-hearted. It compels us to ask, where does it all end? Is there a limit to what people will put on their faces in the pursuit of "beauty"? In recent years, we've come across bizarre trends. While some seemed to work, others made us want to hurl our guts out.

"It is appalling to read about things people would apply on their faces," said Dr Sneha Shah, ophthalmologist and aesthetic surgeon. Most of these trends, according to her, originate from ancient practices where manual labour and natural resources were the only means to treat ailments. She also said that some treatments, like the vampire facial—where a patient's blood is processed and reapplied—have proven benefits for skin rejuvenation. However, she warned that the delicate nature of skin demands caution. Period blood facials or "moon masking" are especially dangerous, according to Dr Manali Padhye, aesthetic physician at *I2CAN*. "The risk of bacterial contamination and infection is high, and dermatologists and cosmetologists strongly advise against it," she said. In case of urine therapy, which involves the use of animal urine or faeces, risks outweigh supposed benefits, and may lead to discomfort and infection.

Srijanee Dutta, 24, a civil service aspirant, finds extreme trends like applying period blood on one's face to "gross her out completely." She was initially hesitant to apply snail mucin because it is an animal by-product, but eventually came around after discovering the benefits firsthand. Dr Padhye pointed out that other odd practices, like using lubricants as makeup primers or hot pepper masks, can cause breakouts and allergic reactions. Dr Apurva Sawant, a preventive healthcare expert, said bizarre treatments such as applying breast milk or placenta also lack scientific backing. Similarly, Dr Rupika Singh, a dermatologist and founder of *Akiya Aesthetics*, revealed that some people go as far as using semen masks for an anti-aging effect or even a "nightingale droppings facial" for exfoliation and skin brightening.



Why do people resort to such trends?

According to Dr Padhye, shock value and a desire to try something "natural" or unconventional often drive these trends. However, she stressed "natural" does not always mean better. "Raw, unsterilised materials can cause long-term skin damage," Dr Padhye cautions. Dr Shah concurred, and pointed out the lack of control over formulations in DIY trends compared to well-researched medical products. Social media also plays a role in encouraging risky behavior. "Constant exposure to content makes you want things you don't need," said Sampriti Deb, 24, a postgraduate student from *Delhi University*. Others, like Kruti Dave, another student, are drawn to celebrity-endorsed trends, such as Kim Kardashian's salmon sperm facials. "After some research I found out it helps with anti-aging. So it wouldn't hurt trying out once," she said. Cultural beliefs influence skincare practices as well. Vaneeza Hussain, 23, pointed out that traditions, like using goat or camel's milk for healing in India, may not seem bizarre to some. "As long as nothing is killed, I'm fine trying it," she said.

Which trend has really been helpful?

Among all these trends, experts agreed that one ingredient stands out for its effectiveness: snail mucin. "Popular in Korean skincare, it contains glycolic acid, hyaluronic acid, and proteins that aid in skin brightening and hydration," said Dr Singh, highlighting its safety for most skin types. D

Krushna Abhishek reacts to aunt Sunita Ahuja's statement that even God can't make them reconcile: 'I love her a lot'



Krushna Abhishek and his troubled relationship with his uncle, the veteran actor Govinda, and Govinda's wife Sunita Ahuja, often makes headlines. Time and again, both Krushna and Govinda have shared their sides of the story. After they fell out, they refused to be seen together, even though both Govinda and Krushna have said that they want to let bygones be bygones. Krushna has also expressed dismay that they haven't resolved these matters yet, and in a recent interview, commented on Sunita's latest remarks against him and Kashmera. She said that she doesn't forgive those who've slighted her, and declared that she cannot collaborate with comedian Kapil Sharma until Krushna is involved with his show.

Speaking to HT City Krushna shared his reaction, and said, "I love her a lot. Mami has always loved me like her kid, and also done a lot for me. She has all the right to be angry on me. I know she says everything in anger, but it is nothing else. Main unka mana lunga, she is my mami (I will console her, she is my aunt after all)."

Appearing on the Time Out with Ankit YouTube channel, Sunita shared the reason why she won't be a part of comedian Kapil Sharma's, mentioning Krushna and his wife. She said, "Arrey rakhte hee nahi hai koi. Pata hai

Kapil Sharma ne bola hai mujhe, 'Inko (Archana) hata ke na aap ko bithana chahiye'. Maine kaha, 'Hata toh kam se kam' (No one invites me to that show. You know, Kapil even told me they should replace Archana with me)." Sunita went on to share, "See, I will tell you one thing, main jhooth nahi bolungi, Krushna-Kashmera se mera nahi jamta hai... toh show karti main, agar woh log nahi hote (I won't lie, I don't get along with Krushna and Kashmera. I would do the show if they weren't involved)." Sunita added, "But he (Krushna) is with Kapil. Otherwise, I would have loved to do it. Mere life ka principle hai ki main agar ek baar kisi ko chhod doon na, phir agar bhagwan bhi mere paas aayega toh main uss insaan ko maaf nahi kar sakti. If it is not my fault and people misbehave, phir main uski shakal bhi nahi dekhti (I can't forgive people if they've wronged me. Even God can't make me forgive them. If it's my fault, I'm happy to apologise, but if they misbehave, I never turn around and engage with them again)." Krushna's sister, actor Arti Singh, celebrated her first Raksha Bandhan after marriage at her mama Govinda's house. Govinda also attended Arti's wedding. But there were visible differences between him and Kashmera.

Karan Johar predicted Alia Bhatt-Ranbir Kapoor 'would last a lifetime' the moment he sensed sparks: 'I knew it'

Alia Bhatt and Vedang Raina, the stars of the upcoming film Jigra, will appear on the season two premiere episode of The Great Indian Kapil Show on Netflix. They will be joined by producer Karan Johar and director Vasana Bala. On the episode, Alia will address her marriage with Ranbir Kapoor, and identify Karan as the person who played Cupid for them. The new season of the variety show will debut on Netflix on September 21.

Kapil Sharma playfully teased Karan about his reputation as a matchmaker in the industry, saying, "Some people believe you run a marriage bureau in the industry." Karan responded with a laugh, "I've helped many people find love, and they're even married today. But I'm still single!"

Sharing her experience, Alia Bhatt shared, "Karan has a sixth sense when it comes to relationships. He predicted that Ranbir and I would make a great couple when we first became friends. He told me, 'Alia, I think this is it.'" Karan added, "I knew it! I knew their friendship would blossom into something special, and it would last a lifetime." Alia and Ranbir first met many years ago, when they were approached to star in a film by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. The film never took off, and they didn't work together till Brahmastra, which was released in 2022. In a recent interview with entrepreneur Nikhil Kamath,



Ranbir revealed that they felt sparks on their first flight together after signing the film. "This is 2018, we started working on a film called Brahmastra. The first thing we did on Brahmastra was that we went to Tel Aviv to work with a movement coach. And on the plane was when we started our romance. That first day, it was on," he said. "We started living together. She lived alone, I lived alone."

Ranbir and Alia tied the knot in 2022. They welcomed their first child, daughter Raha, later that year. Get ready for epic conversations and non-stop laughter! Tune in to The Great Indian Kapil Show, every Saturday, only on Netflix!

Sector 36 real story: Real-life Chumki Ghosh whose case led the cops to Nithari killings accused Surinder Koli, Moninder Singh Pandher



Vikrant Massey-starrer Sector 36, which is currently streaming on Netflix, is loosely based on the Nithari killings that were first investigated in December 2006. Primary accused Surinder Koli and Moninder Singh Pandher have been fictionalised in the film as Prem Singh, played by Massey and Balbir Singh Bassi, played by Akash Khurana. The film by Aditya Nimbalkar suggests that the case of the many missing children was cracked open after the police landed on Bassi's doorstep to investigate the missing case of Chumki Ghosh, played by Tanushree Das.

Who was the real life Chumki Ghosh?

In May 2006, a woman named Payal went missing under suspicious circumstances. As per the book, Deadly Dozen: India's Most Notorious Serial Killers by Anirban Bhattacharya, published by Penguin Random House India, Payal told her father Nand Lal that she was going to Pandher's house to help with domestic chores. When she did not return until 7 pm, he went to check at the house where Surinder Koli, Pandher's house help, told Nand Lal that Payal hadn't been there. When Nand Lal requested to speak to the boss, Koli said that Pandher was in Chandigarh.

"Next day, I went to the police station. I told them that

she had gone to meet Koli at D-5. They paid no attention to me. I kept going to the police station. On the fourth day, they told me that my daughter was a characterless woman and mocked me. They told me to run away from the police station and never come back to bother them," he is quoted in the book. Nand Lal visited the house every single day over the next month and when he finally met Moninder, he was told that Payal never came to his house. In the film Sector 36, events unfold in a similar manner as Chumki's father tries to file a complaint at the police station with Deepak Dobriyal's character for his missing daughter but is initially dismissed.

It wasn't until October 2006 that an FIR was registered, and that too only after intervention by a senior judicial official. When Payal's phone records were investigated, it was found that she had spoken to Pandher days before she went missing. When the police checked his alibi, it was found that Pandher was indeed in Chandigarh for his father's final rites. After aggressive questioning by Vinod Pandey, an investigating officer on the case, Pandher reportedly said that he knew Payal as a sex worker and had paid her Rs 2500. He also claimed that Nand Lal would make his daughter work as a sex worker, and Nand Lal admitted to the same. Payal's phone was eventually tracked by the cybercrime department. Arun Kumar, CBI joint director, claimed Koli used Payal's phone after killing her. He told PTI that he used her phone for personal use with a new SIM card. The phone was eventually found in the hands of a rickshaw-wala. When the cops arrested Koli, he confessed to killing Payal. He also admitted, in front of Pandey, that he dismembered her body and threw the pieces, along with her belongings, in the drain behind the house. When asked why he killed her, Koli said that he did so because she refused to have sex with him, and he killed her in a fit of rage. It seems like the scene in the film where Vikrant's character confesses to his crimes in front of Deepak's cop character was loosely based on this interrogation between Pandey and Koli. In the film, the police cracks open the case only after this confession by Koli.

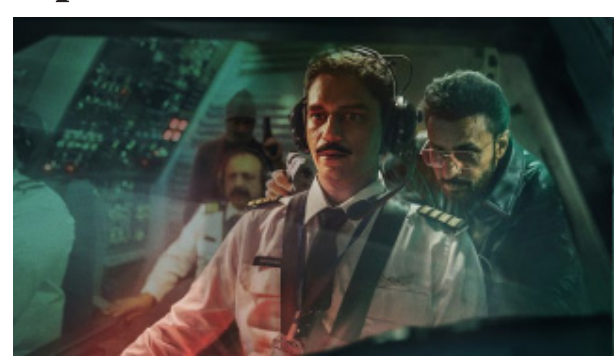
IC 814 survivor recalls hijackers collected donations worth Rs 80,000 for 'poor Afghans', a man from Karol Bagh offered to print pamphlets for their cause

The hijacking of the Indian Airlines flight IC 814 was dramatised in the recent Netflix series IC 814: The Kandahar Hijack, which gave a glimpse not only of what transpired inside the aircraft across eight days, but also in the corridors of power. Since the show's release, several people involved in the incident, including captain Devi Sharan, former R&AW chief AS Dulat, the then Punjab Police top cop Sarabjit Singh, and many passengers, have recalled their memories. One passenger, Jeevan Bhatt, recently said that the hostages experienced a level of Stockholm Syndrome during the ordeal, and recalled that everybody contributed cash for the 'poor Afghans' who'd been dragged into the mess.

In an interview with the Face to Face YouTube channel, the passenger said that some hostages even participated in games and told jokes to the hijackers. "Burger was the kingpin. He would come around and say, 'You look upset, let's sing songs and tell jokes'. Basically everybody inside the plane was a victim of Stockholm Syndrome. One man from Karol Bagh even promised to print pamphlets for their cause the minute he got back to India. They kept telling us about the atrocities that Indian forces had committed against Kashmiris, and said that they would never stoop to that level because they're good people," he recalled in Hindi.

He continued, "You won't believe it; they told us that people in Afghanistan are in such poor condition, and urged us to contribute money for them. They took donations from the passengers! I think they collected around Rs 80,000. Everybody contributed. The airhostesses would walk down the aisles with bags, and we pooled in our cash. It was around 80,000 — a big amount even back then. It was all for the poor people in Kandahar." Jeevan Bhatt said that one hijacker, the same one who killed the hostage Rupin Katyal, also tried to preach Islam to everybody. "He conducted two sessions, I think. This was the same hijacker who killed Rupin Katyal. They would say that Masood Azhar is a writer, and has falsely been branded as a terrorist," he said.

In a recent interview with India Today TV, another passenger, the Chandigarh-based Pooja Kataria, cor-



He continued, "You won't believe it; they told us that people in Afghanistan are in such poor condition, and urged us to contribute money for them. They took donations from the passengers! I think they collected around Rs 80,000. Everybody contributed

robored Jeevan's comments about donating money. "They [hijackers] really insisted that Afghanistan was very poor, and we should do charity for them. So, we collected 85,000 from all the passengers and gave it to them for Afghanistan," she said. In his memoirs, the flight engineer Anil K Jaggia recalled what happened on the last day, after negotiations with Indian authorities had successfully ended. He wrote, "At about 3.00 p.m. Burger came out of the cockpit and addressed the passengers. He apologised for the hijack and the agony they had been forced to bear. He bid them goodbye. He even asked them to pray for his safe journey. As he walked down the aisle exchanging pleasantries with the passengers, he came up beside me in seat 25B. 'I'm sorry for causing you any trauma,' he said sincerely."

Alia Bhatt opens up about life after Raha, says raising a child has filled her with 'fear and nerves': 'Haven't had a therapy session in two months'

It is often said that heroines in Indian cinema have a shelf life. They get married, they have kids, and one fine day, they are not allowed to play lead roles anymore. They are relegated to playing supporting characters, or worse, mothers to men older than them. But these archaic norms are gradually changing as a new brigade of actors takes over Hindi cinema, and one of the brightest talents at the forefront of this evolution is Alia Bhatt. After she and her husband, Ranbir Kapoor, welcomed their daughter Raha, Alia immediately returned to work, starring in Karan Johar's blockbuster romance, Rocky aur Rani ki Prem Kahaani. She is now gearing up for the release of the action-packed Vasana Bala film, Jigra. However, she is also balancing her professional commitments with motherhood, and in a recent interview with Allure, she opened up about juggling these two roles with panache.

Describing Raha as "naughty and chatty," Alia said that her daughter is a really bright baby, who has moments of shyness even when being completely her own person. According to Alia, the real challenge is managing the two exacting fields of acting and motherhood. "How do I ping-pong between the two and do them well, but also find a way to carve out time for myself, which I'm not able to do. I'll be very candid right now—there's no such thing as me time. I've not even been able to get a therapy session for the last two months," revealed Alia, who has no qualms admitting that becoming a mother has changed her.



In the interview, Alia emphasised the importance of understanding that parenting doesn't mean owning the life of your children, but being there for them. She also admitted that motherhood left her with oscillating emotions. "Your soul is sort of fulfilled, but you are also always full of fear and nerves because of just wanting to do it right and wanting to do it well," she said. Sharing the advice that her parents gave her about raising a child, Alia said, "Children come through you. They're yours, you are a catalyst, you are a source for their life, but their life is not yours. Their life is theirs, and you just need to give them the tools to deal with their life." Alia is currently awaiting the release of Jigra, which will be out on October 11. Apart from this project, Alia also has Shiv Rawail's Alpha, which is the seventh installment of the YRF spy universe, and features Sharvari, Bobby Deol, and Anil Kapoor alongside her.

Lokesh Kanagaraj disappointed over leaked Nagarjuna scene from Coolie: 'Two months of hard work gone in vain'



Advancement in technology has changed the game across many fields, including cinema. However, it also has its share of disadvantages. With everyone on the sets of a film being equipped with a smartphone, it is getting harder for producers and studios to keep a lid on plot details and other surprises. In a world where films are relying more heavily on star cameos, this can lead to major problems for producers. Director Lokesh Kanagaraj has been affected by leaks not once but twice in his five-film-old career. After being forced to reveal the presence of Suriya in his film, Vikram, due to certain behind-the-scenes stills from the film being leaked to the media, he took to social media to condemn the leaked video of actor Nagarjuna from the sets of Rajinikanth's Coolie.

A dejected Lokesh wrote, "Two months of hard work by many people have gone in vain because of one recording. I humbly request everyone not to engage in such practices, as they spoil the overall experience. Thank you." Although the makers revealed character posters of the primary cast, including Rajinikanth, Nagarjuna, Soubin Shahir, Upenendra, Sathyaraj, and Shruti Haasan, the clip of Nagarjuna in action revealed details about his character. And this was enough of a reason for Lokesh to get irked.

In contrast, a recent video featuring Rajinikanth from the sets of Coolie became quite the rage with the Superstar dancing to "Manasillaayo," his Vettaiyan number, on the festive occasion of Onam. Considering that this was an official release, there was no problem. But this time around, the clip of Nagarjuna was obtained illegally. Backed by Kalanithi Maran's Sun Pictures banner, Coolie has music by Anirudh Ravichander, and cinematography by Girish Gangadharan.

Apart from Coolie, Rajinikanth is also waiting for the release of the star-studded Vettaiyan, which features the likes of Amitabh Bachchan, Fahadh Faasil, Manju Warrier, Ritika Singh, Dushara Vijayan, and Rana Daggubati. The TJ Gnanavel-directed film will be released on October 10.

Bangladesh missed a trick by holding back Shakib Al Hasan: Tamim Iqbal



After the first day, Shakib had figures of 8-0-50-0 and his economy rate of 6.12 was the worst amongst all the six bowlers that Bangladesh used. Tamim said that the Tigers should have used Shakib earlier to take more advantage of the damp conditions at the Chepauk. "Bangladesh missed a trick as Shakib should have bowled earlier when the ball was newer. The wicket was damp and he would have got some assistance. In my opinion, he came too late," Tamim told the broadcasters.

Ashwin and Jadeja took the attack to Shakib right from the word go, hitting him for fours and sixes. Leaking 21 runs in his first two overs, the Magura-born Shakib was put under pressure from the outset.

Hasan Mahmud shines After opting to field first, Bangladesh made early inroads into the Indian batting lineup. Hasan Mahmud dismissed Virat Kohli, Shubman Gill, Rohit Sharma and Rishabh Pant to take the Tigers off to a flying start. With India at 339 for six, the visiting team was well on top. Nahid Rana and Mehidy Hasan Miraz picked up the wickets of Yashasvi Jaiswal and KL Rahul respectively. Thereafter, Ashwin and Jadeja put on an unbeaten partnership of 195 runs for the seventh wicket. From being in a commanding position, the Tigers have found themselves in some sort of strife.

GNS News Agency, Sept 23 IND vs BAN: Shakib Al Hasan did not have the best of days after he had figures of 8-0-50-0 on Day 1 of Bangladesh's first Test against India at the MA Chidambaram Stadium. Tamim Iqbal said that Bangladesh made a mistake by holding back Shakib Al Hasan on Day 1 of their opening Test against India. On Thursday, Shakib was introduced into the attack as late as in the 53rd over when Ravi Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja got their eyes in. Shakib came into the Test after his five-wicket haul against Somerset in the County Championship, but looked out of sorts against India.

R Ashwin's Chennai Test century ignites meme-fest on social media

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Ravichandran Ashwin's century in India's first Test against Bangladesh not only turned the game in India's favor but also sparked a meme-fest on social media, with fans humorously celebrating his evolution into a dependable middle-order batsman.

Ravichandran Ashwin's sensational century in India's first Test against Bangladesh in Chennai has sparked a hilarious meme-fest across social media. After India's top-order batting collapse on September 19, Ashwin, along with Ravindra Jadeja, delivered a crucial partnership that rescued the team from the clutches of the Bangladesh bowling attack at the MA Chidambaram Stadium. Ashwin's unbeaten 102 off 112 balls became an instant highlight, with fans quick to flood social media with creative memes. Many hailed Ashwin as a full-fledged batter, humorously acknowledging his shift from being a primarily renowned bowler to a reliable middle-order batsman.

India's top-order had faltered, losing big names like skipper Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, and Shubman Gill in quick succession. The situation looked grim until a crucial partnership between Yashasvi Jaiswal and Rishabh Pant provided some relief, helping India reach 144 runs. However, both players soon lost their wickets to Nahid



Rana and Hasan Mahmud, respectively. What followed was a game-changing performance from Ashwin and Jadeja, whose partnership effectively turned the tide in India's favor. Their combined efforts not only stabilized the innings but also snatched away Bangladesh's early advantage. At the close of Day 1, India stood at a much-improved 339/6, thanks to the pair's resilience. Ashwin's century, coupled with the humorous reactions from fans, became one of the main talking points of the day. Social media was ablaze with praise, memes, and celebrations of the all-rounder's stunning knock, setting the stage for an exciting continuation of the Test.

Malaysian badminton coach Sankar Annamalai focusing on mental strength as he guides juniors at National Centre of Excellence



GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Badminton coach Sankar Annamalai from Malaysia with assistant coach Anand Tiwari. (Express Photo by Kamleshwar Singh) Badminton coach Sankar Annamalai from Malaysia with assistant coach Anand Tiwari. (Express Photo by Kamleshwar Singh) Cherish this loss. It will teach you something."

This is what 54-year-old Sankar Annamalai, a badminton coach at the National Centre of Excellence (NCE) in Guwahati, told the doubles pairs that exited the Yonex Sunrise 31st Smt Krishna Khaitan Memorial All India Junior Ranking Prize Money Tournament. It was a mixed day for the Malaysian coach because two pairs also advanced to the finals at the Tau Devi Lal Sports Complex.

Mental strength is what junior players need in abundance, Annamalai believes. "India's junior players have started gaining key skills much earlier than before. But they lack power as compared to Ma-

laysians and Indonesians. But at the Under-15, Under-17 and Under-19 levels, mental strength is most important and building that is one of our targets," Annamalai said. The Badminton Association of India's NCE started last year and currently hosts 42 players from across the country. Korean Park Tae-Sang and Annamalai are the specialist singles coaches, while Russian Ivan Sozonov is the doubles badminton coach. The other coaches there are Sachin Rana, Saiyam Shukla, Saurabh Sharma and Anand Tiwari, along with four physios and a team of strength and conditioning experts. Annamalai has been part of the Malaysian junior programme earlier, playing a role during the formative years of former world champion and multiple Olympic medallist Soh Wooi Yik, multiple world doubles medallist Koo Kien Kiat and Tokyo Olympics medallist Soniia Cheah.

"Malaysian badminton coaches focus a lot on skill at the Under-12 level. And add to that, the power factor. In Malaysia, be it the top

both Park and I is to ensure top juniors get international exposure and are able to train abroad too.

A key decision for badminton coaches at the NCE is whether a particular player should focus on singles or doubles. "One thing which we have told the juniors is that you don't need to specifically decide about singles or doubles at a very young age. But whenever you decide, it should be only one format with the right kind of mental training as well as skill training for that very format. Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty too started late but look how (coach) Tan Kim Her made them think like doubles players and worked on them," Annamalai said. The NCE has a talented bunch in its ranks. Among them are Sanskar Saraswat, who is excelling in singles, as well as former junior world No.1 doubles player Tasneem Mir.

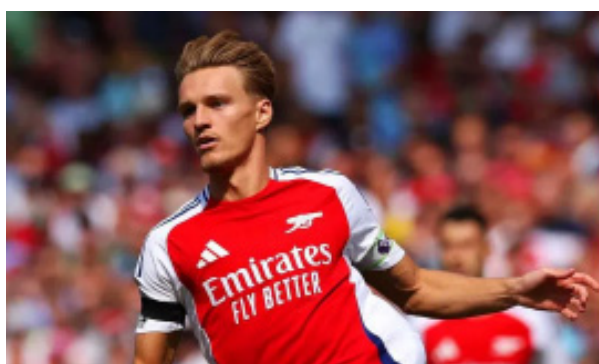
junior or senior players, all train at the national training centre. India's top juniors should be at the NCE too. Park Tae-Sang has been focusing on improving the attacking skills of the players, apart from shots like drops and high smashes. Similarly, Ivan has been working on the drive and smashes of doubles players as well as their defence. The idea of

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

India vs Bangladesh Hasan Mahmud Bangladesh's Hasan Mahmud celebrates the wicket of India's Virat Kohli during the first test cricket match of a series between India and Bangladesh, at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, in Chennai.) Before Hasan Mahmud boarded the flight to Rawalpindi last month, his career was at a crossroads. He had everything in his armoury – pace, accuracy, swing and was a reliable fielder too. Despite being at the forefront of Bangladesh's fast bowling hopes, Mahmud, who had been predominantly a white-ball bowler till then, had found himself out of favour in the longest format. According to Test captain Najmul Hossain Shanto and head coach Chandika Hathurusinghe, Mahmud's lethargic, laid-back attitude was uncharacteristic for a fast bowler.

But of late, Mahmud is showing why Ottis Gibson and Allan Donald named him the best pacer to emerge

Arsenal skipper Odegaard 'out for a while' with ankle injury, confirms Arteta



GNS News Agency, Sept 23

The Arsenal captain limped off during Norway's Nations League victory over Austria on September 9 after twisting his left ankle. He needed assistance from physios before leaving the field for further treatment. Odegaard, 25, then returned to London for an MRI scan and missed Arsenal's win in the north London derby against Tottenham Hotspur. London: Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta has revealed that Martin Odegaard's significant ankle injury will rule him out of action for a while. The Arsenal captain limped off during Norway's Nations League win over Austria on September 9 after twisting his left ankle. He required the help of physios before leaving the pitch to receive further treatment. Odegaard, 25, then returned to London for an MRI scan and missed his side's win in the north London derby against Tottenham

Hotspur. "After everything was scanned, they showed that there was some damage, especially in one of the ligaments in the ankle so we're going to miss him. I don't want to (put a timeframe on it) because I am not a doctor but it is something quite significant so we're going to lose him for a while – hopefully not months but let's see," Arteta said in press conference ahead of facing Atalanta in the Champions League on Thursday.

The Gunners captain is essential to the team's performance. Finding a replacement for the Norwegian, who finished the previous season with 11 goals and an equal number of assists, will be a challenging task. "He's our captain. He's one of our biggest players. He's been one of the most consistent players in the last two or three seasons. Our identity is very related to his way of playing and his way of behaving.

"We're going to have to deal with (his absence) and that's a great test for the team as well – how capable we are to show maybe a different face. The fact is we have other players and other options that can be very effective," Arteta added. In addition, Arsenal faced further uncertainty in defense, with Riccardo Calafiori doubtful after suffering a calf injury during Italy's Nations League match against France. However, there is some positive news for the Gunners, as Arteta provided an update on Calafiori, saying, "He was able to train on Wednesday so he will be available. He's in the squad and that's great news because, as we all know, we've been quite short in the past few weeks."

Manchester City held to goalless draw by Inter Milan in Champions League opener

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

New Delhi: Manchester City were held to a goalless draw with Inter Milan in their opening game of the Champions League campaign at Etihad Stadium. In a replay of the 2023 Champions League final and only the second ever competitive meeting between the two clubs, there was nothing to separate the sides as both sets of defences dominated their attacking counterparts.

The first half saw chances at both ends, Erling Haaland shooting narrowly wide for Manchester City and Marcus Thuram heavily involved in Inter's best opportunities. After the restart, both teams had near misses from close range, Henrikh Mkhitaryan off target for the visitors and City's Ilkay Gundogan heading a Josko Gvardiol cross at Yann Sommer. It's the first time City have failed to score in a home Champions League match since the March 2022 draw with Sporting CP. The result means City begin the new-look Champions League with one point from the first of eight games as part of the 36-team league phase.

In other match, Paris Saint-Germain snatch 1-0 win over Girona at the Parc des Princes. A late Paulo Gazzaniga own goal denied Champions League debutants Girona a fine point in Paris. Girona, the 14th Spanish club to play in the competition proper, defended well all night and looked well set to keep last season's semi-finalists at bay. Paris winger Ousmane Dembele failed to get a shot away when clear on goal and also hit the crossbar from the edge of the penalty area. Substitute



Randal Kolo Muani also twice put chances wide before Nuno Mendes' cross-shot went in via goalkeeper Gazzaniga. Elsewhere, Jamie Gittens' double and Seirou Guirassy's cool spot kick ensured last season's runners-up Borussia Dortmund got off to a winning start in Bruges. Hugo Vetlesen almost gave the hosts an early advantage but hooked his powerful volley against the bar. Club Brugge's display forced BVB coach Nuri Sahin to make a host of attacking changes in the second half, including the introduction of Guirassy and Gittens.

The England Under-21 international struck twice in 11 minutes late on, the first a deflected effort before a dazzling piece of individual brilliance doubled the lead. Fellow replacement Guirassy added a third with a chipped penalty in added time.

Gukesh's victory secures win over China; women's team defeats Georgia to stay unbeaten

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

Budapest: World Chess championship Final Challenger Dommaraju Gukesh came up with a superb performance under time pressure as he scored the lone win as India defeated third-seeded China in the seventh round of the Open section of the 45th Chess Olympiad here on Wednesday. India continued their winning spree in the women's section too with Vaishali Rameshbabu and Vantika Agarwal winning with black pieces to help the team defeat a strong Georgia side 3-1. Georgia are a former winner of the Chess Olympiad in 2008. Both the Indian men's and women's teams maintained their unbeaten run, taking their tally to 14 points as they remained the sole leaders in the standings after seven rounds. In the Open section, Uzbekistan, Iran and Hungary moved back into contention by winning their respective matches. Iran defeated Vietnam, who had stunned China in the previous round, 2.5-1.5. Hungary got the better of Lithuania by the same margin while Uzbekistan defeated Ukraine 3-1.

However, as action resumed after a rest day, all eyes were on the clash between India and China. The fans' hopes of seeing World Championship Final contenders Ding Liren and Gukesh battle it before the mega clash in Singapore did not materialize. The Chinese side rested the reigning World Champion in this round, and it seemed a prudent move, especially after Ding Liren had lost to Le Quang Liem of Vietnam in the sixth round. Though he did not face the World Champion, Gukesh still was the star



performer for India as he defeated top Chinese Grandmaster Wei Yi on the first board. In a battle between two players with nearly the same rating, Gukesh emerged winner in a game in which he had a slight edge initially but the Chinese GM fought back bravely and got an advantage. However, the pendulum swung again as Gukesh came up with some precise moves to wrest back the advantage and eventually won the game in 80 moves in a complicated finish capitalising on some loose moves by the Chinese. The big news for Indian fans was that this

Laid-back pacer Hasan Mahmud, who ran through top order, represents their fast bowling ambitions

GNS News Agency, Sept 23

India vs Bangladesh Hasan Mahmud Bangladesh's Hasan Mahmud celebrates the wicket of India's Virat Kohli during the first test cricket match of a series between India and Bangladesh, at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, in Chennai.) Before Hasan Mahmud boarded the flight to Rawalpindi last month, his career was at a crossroads. He had everything in his armoury – pace, accuracy, swing and was a reliable fielder too. Despite being at the forefront of Bangladesh's fast bowling hopes, Mahmud, who had been predominantly a white-ball bowler till then, had found himself out of favour in the longest format. According to Test captain Najmul Hossain Shanto and head coach Chandika Hathurusinghe, Mahmud's lethargic, laid-back attitude was uncharacteristic for a fast bowler.

But of late, Mahmud is showing why Ottis Gibson and Allan Donald named him the best pacer to emerge

from Bangladesh. After a five-fer in the last Test against Pakistan, Mahmud ran through India's top-order at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Thursday picking up four wickets. That attitude had been a hot topic in Bangladesh cricketing circles. In an era of celebratory appeals, despite taking a maiden five-wicket haul in an ODI against Ireland at Sylhet in May 2023, Mahmud had a muted celebration. Asked about it in a press conference, his response had surprised even his teammates. "I don't really celebrate and there's no real reason why. You could say that if I celebrate after taking a wicket, it will make the batter feel more upset so that's why I don't celebrate," he had said. Even on Thursday, as Mahmud cut India's top order to size by picking up the wickets of Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli in the first session, his celebrations were not over the top. In a team that wears its emotions on its sleeves, he is an exception. After trou-

bling Rohit and Kohli with his movement, and making them edge to the waiting cordon behind the stumps, Mahmud would just indulge in a fist pump and a few high-fives. It was only after removing Rishabh Pant in the third over after lunch that he winked at the batsman. "That is not a celebration, but just a simple gesture of mine. I'm just happy. When you take their wickets who are the best right now, naturally one would be happy," Mahmud would say at the end of the day. For Bangladesh, though, it was definitely a big deal. Having chosen to field after winning the toss on a gloomy day, more than Taskin Ahmed and their other pace sensation Nahid Rana, it was Mahmud who made the ball talk. With a smooth, open-chested action, Mahmud's USP lies in his wrist positioning that enables the ball to move both ways. Just like Pakistan's Mohammad Asif, Mahmud uses his wrist to flick the ball at the very last moment, and invariably the ball listens to him.